

The scene from chapter 12 has changed, although not much time has expired (12:1). Jesus warns the Jewish nation of forthcoming judgment unless they repent.

A Call to Repentance (13:1-3)

Two separate incidences in first century history are mentioned in Jesus’ call to repentance: (1) A group of Galileans whom the Romans had slain as they were offering sacrifice in the Temple and (2) the accidental death of eighteen men who were killed when the Tower of Siloam fell. Some asked if these men died because they were exceedingly sinful. The philosophy of those who asked the question was that physical suffering came as a result of sin. Jesus denied the philosophy saying, “I tell you nay. . .” (13:3, 5). Nevertheless, He called them to repent or that would face a similar fate pointing to the destruction of the Jewish nation (13:3, 5).

The Parable of the Barren Fig Tree (13:6-9)

To emphasize the lesson, Jesus told the parable of the barren fig tree. The fig tree represented Israel; the owner was God; the dresser of the vineyard was Jesus. The owner re-



peatedly found the fig tree barren and was ready to cut it down. The vine-dresser asked for one last opportunity to get it to bear fruit before cutting it down. God repeatedly found Israel barren and was ready to destroy the nation. At Jesus’ intercession, Israel was given one last opportunity to bear fruit before God destroyed her as a nation.

Healing the Crippled Woman on the Sabbath (13:10-17)

On one Sabbath day while Jesus was teaching in the synagogue, a Jewish woman was present. For eighteen years, she had a “spirit of infirmity” (a case of demon possession) and was stooped over. Jesus healed her on the Sabbath day. The ruler of the synagogue condemned Jesus for healing on the Sabbath day (the criticism itself is an admission that Jesus was able to perform miracles).

In response, Jesus exposed the hypocrisy of the ruler of the synagogue. “Thou hypocrite, doth not each one of you on the Sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering? And ought not this woman being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound,

Repent or Perish

Luke 13

Ox or Ass	Daughter of Abraham
Bound in stall	Bound by Satan
Problem of thirst	Spirit of Infirmity
One day	Eighteen Years

lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the sabbath day?” (12:15-16). Notice the contrast:

Having exposed their hypocrisy, Jesus’ adversaries were shamed and the common people rejoiced.

The Parables of the Mustard Seed and Leaven (13:18-21)

Seeing how the common people reacted to His teaching, Jesus told two parables to illustrate the phenomenal growth of the kingdom of heaven. (1) The parable of the mustard seed illustrates how something which is so small can soon grow large. The Twelve Apostles soon converted thousands of people to Christ. (2) The parable of the hidden leaven spreading in the dough illustrates how the gospel works almost secretly in the hearts of men to bring its effect. It is not like an establishment of an earthly kingdom with outward pomp and show. It works quietly in the heart, leading men to repentance and obedience to the word of God. In this way the kingdom of God is spread.

Few Saved (13:22-30)

Luke reminds us that these episodes of teaching occurred while Jesus was leisurely making His way to Jerusalem prior to His death (12:22). While doing His teaching, one asked Him, “Are there few that be saved?” (12:23).

In response, Jesus told them that the way to life necessitated striving to enter the strait gate; though many

Jesus warned these Jews that many of them would not be in the kingdom of God. Many Gentiles who come from the east, west, north, and south will be in the kingdom whereas many children of Abraham would be rejected. “There are last (Gentiles) which shall be first (in the kingdom), and there are first (Jews) which shall be last (thrust out of kingdom).”

by saying, “Go and tell the fox (denoting Herod’s sly ways), I cast out devils, and I do cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I shall be perfected (completed, finished)” (12:32). This reply assures Herod that there is no conflict between Jesus’ ministry and His political kingdom and announces that He will soon be through and out of His territory.

Jesus then states that “it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem” (12:33). Though some prophets did die outside Jerusalem (for example, John the baptist), Jesus is calling their attention to how Jerusalem has treated God’s prophets through the years. Jesus’ dying in Jerusalem was not because of the Pharisees’ deceitful manipulation. In conclusion, he lamented, “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not” (12:34). Jerusalem’s continued rejection of Jesus would lead to God’s rejection of her. Leaving the temple, Jesus said, “Behold, your house is left unto you desolate” (12:35). The divine glory departed from the Temple even as it did in the days of Ezekiel (10:4). Until a person confessed his faith in Jesus, he would not see Him.

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will not enter that gate, a few will (12:24). He instructed them not to delay their effort to enter in the gate by relating a parable of a master of a house closing the door to his house. After the door was closed, entrance was not granted to anyone. The door of opportunity to enter the kingdom of heaven remains open so long as one is alive and until Jesus comes again; at death or at the Lord’s coming, that door is forever closed, regardless of how many petitions we might make for it to be opened again.

Warning about Herod and Lament over Jerusalem (13:31-35)

On that same day, one of the Pharisees warned Jesus that Herod was seeking to kill Him. Their motives are unclear. However, both Galilee and Perea were ruled by Herod Antipas. The Pharisees wanted Jesus in Jerusalem over which they had greater influence. If they could scare Jesus out of Herod’s dominion, they may be able to accomplish their intention of killing Him more quickly. Jesus responded

Questions

1. What was the Jewish concept of why men suffer in 13:2, 4? _____
2. To what does “perish” refer in 13:3, 5? _____
3. To what did the “vineyard” of 13:6-9 refer? _____
4. To what does “cutting it down” refer (13:9)? _____
5. What was the cause of the woman’s illness in 13:11? _____
6. In what sense is all illness caused by Satan? _____

7. Why was Jesus criticized for healing the woman (13:14)? _____

8. How did He defend Himself (13:15)? _____

9. What is taught by the parable of the mustard seed (13:18-19)? _____

10. What is taught by the parable of the leaven (13:20-21)? _____

11. What was Jesus' answer to the question in 13:23? _____
12. What does "strait" mean in 13:24? _____
13. Why did Jesus reject the people in 13:25-27? _____

14. What is the condition of the one rejected by Jesus (13:28)? _____
15. Who is meant by those from the east, west, north and south (13:29) and the "last" who are "first" (13:30)?

16. What word did Jesus send to Herod (13:32)? _____
17. What does "ye would not" in 13:34 indicate about man's will? _____

18. In what sense would the Jews' house be left desolate (13:35)? _____

True or False

- ___ 1. Sickness is a work of Satan which Jesus destroyed by the cross.
- ___ 2. Healing is available to anyone on the condition of faith in Christ.
- ___ 3. Jesus taught that few would be saved.
- ___ 4. The opposite of the "strait gate" is a crooked gate.
- ___ 5. The reception of Gentiles into the kingdom was foretold by Jesus in chapter 13.

Answering Denominational Error

1. The Jehovah's Witnesses teach that there is no eternal punishment in hell. How did Jesus describe hell in 13:28? _____
2. Denominational folks think most people will be saved. What did Jesus teach (13:23f)? _____

3. Some denominations teach that man will have an opportunity to be saved after death. What did Jesus teach (13:25f)? _____