

# Luke 13 Commentary

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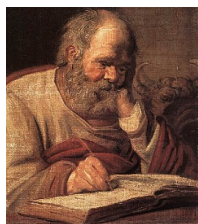
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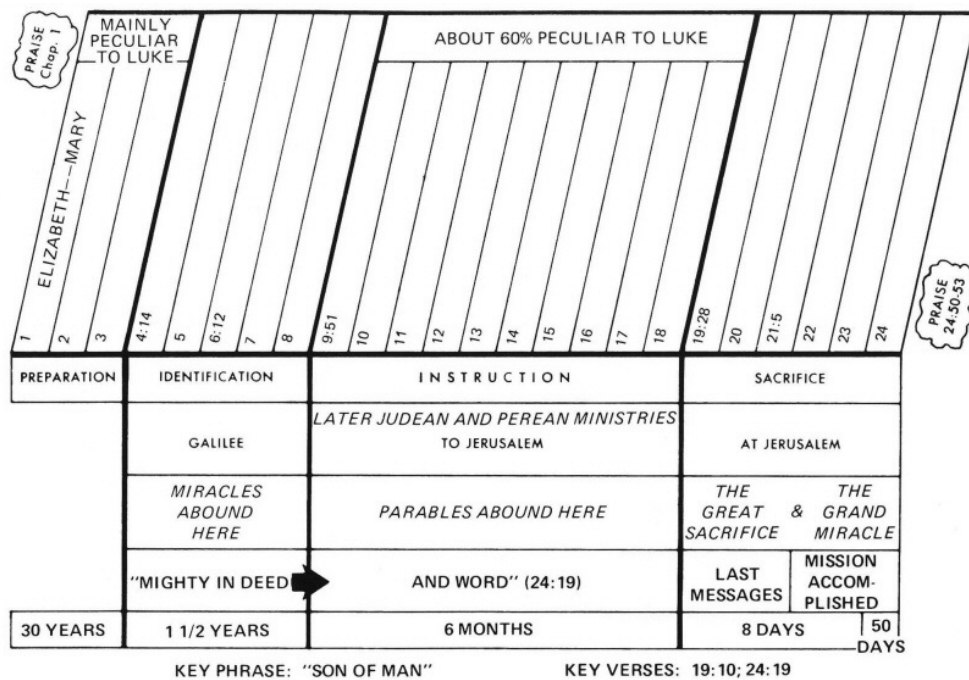
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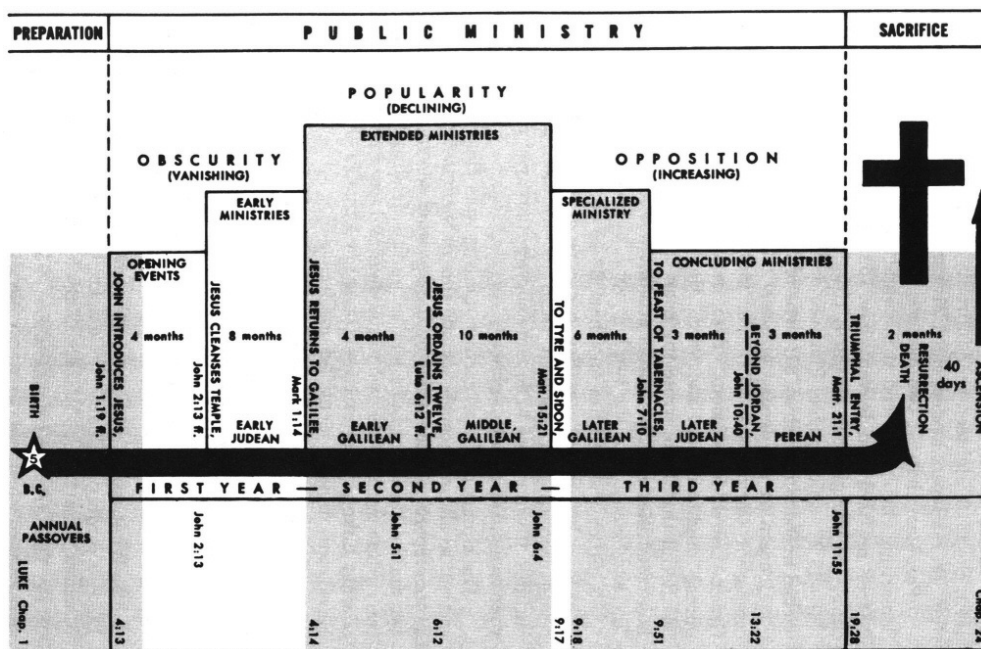
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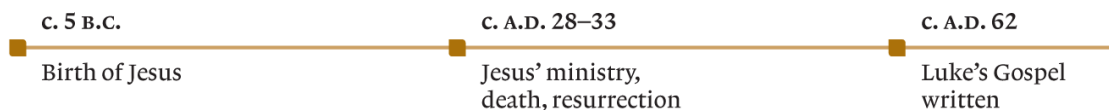


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John MacArthur's Introduction to the Gospel of Luke  
Charles Swindoll's Introduction to Luke  
Luke Overview Chart by Charles Swindoll



Click chart to enlarge LIFE OF CHRIST IN GOSPEL OF LUKE (See Shaded Areas)  
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## Rod Mattoon's Outline of Luke 13

- Luke 13:1-9 The Precautions about Perishing
- Luke 13:10-17 A Crooked Woman that Jesus Straightened Out
- Luke 13:18-30 The Burden of Being Left Out
- Luke 13:31-35 The Shepherd, the Fox, and the Baby Chicks

- Luke 13:1–5 Be Converted or Perish
- Luke 13:6–9 The Parable of The Barren Fig Tree and The Magnanimous Vineyard-Keeper
- Luke 13:10–17 The Healing of a Crippled Woman on the Sabbath
- Luke 13:18–21 The Parable of The Mustard Seed and The Parable of The Yeast
- Luke 13:22–30 Strive to Enter by the Narrow Door
- Luke 13:31–35 Jerusalem Characterized and Lamented

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#### John Butler -

- A. The Providence of Calamities (Luke 13:1–5)
  - B. The Postponing of Judgment (Luke 13:6–9)
  - C. The Physician in the Synagogue (Luke 13:10–17)
  - D. The Portrayals of the Kingdom (Luke 13:18–21)
  - E. The Pedagogy on a Journey (Luke 13:22–30)
  - F. The Peril in Herod (Luke 13:31–33)
  - G. The Pity of Christ (Luke 13:34,35)
- (Butler, J. G. [Analytical Bible Expositor: Luke. Clinton, IA: LBC Publications](#))
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#### John MacArthur's Outline of Luke 13

- Luke 13:1–9 Living on Borrowed Time
  - Luke 13:10–17 Christ Creates Conflict in the Synagogue
  - Luke 13:18–21 The Increasing Influence of the Kingdom
  - Luke 13:22–30 Are Just a Few Being Saved?
  - Luke 13:31–33 Who Really Killed Jesus?
  - Luke 13:34–35 Divine Compassion for Those Deserving Condemnation
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#### Steven Cole's Outline of Luke 13

- Luke 13:1-9 What We Should Learn From Tragedies
  - Luke 13:10-17 Religion Versus Reality
  - Luke 13:18-21 Why You Want To Be On Jesus' Side
  - Luke 13:22-30 The Narrow Door
  - Luke 13:31-35 Christ Would, But They Would Not
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#### John Hannah's Outline of Luke 13

Instructions concerning repentance (Luke 13:1-9)

1. The need for repentance (Luke 13:1-5)
2. The nearness of judgment (Luke 13:6-9)

Instructions concerning the kingdom of God (Luke 13:10-19:27)

1. Instructions concerning the nature of the kingdom (Luke 13:10-35)
  - a. The confrontation in the Synagogue (Luke 13:10-17)
    1. The condition (Luke 13:10-11)
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  - d. The individuality of entrance into the kingdom (Luke 13:22-30)
  - e. The failure to seek His kingdom (Luke 13:31-35)

**Luke 13:1 Now on the same occasion there were some present who reported to Him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mixed with their sacrifices.**

KJV Luke 13:1 There were present at that season some that told him of the Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices.

- **the Galileans** Acts 5:37
- **whose blood Pilate had mixed with their sacrifices** Lam 2:20; Ezek 9:5-7; 1 Pe 4:17,18
- [Luke 13:1-9 What We Should Learn From Tragedies](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 13:1-5 Supernatural Lessons from a Natural Disaster](#) - John MacArthur
- Multiple Sermons and Commentaries - Luke 13 Resources

## THE GROUP OF GALILEANS WHICH WAS MURDERED

In Luke 13:1-5 two disasters are mentioned and Jesus uses these to direct His hearers' attention to a far greater disaster that they all faced if they refused to repent.

**Now on the same occasion** - This time phrase begs the question "What **occasion**?" The "occasion" began in Luke 12:1+ through Luke 13:9, which was in part an encouragement to disciples and in part an evangelistic invitation, calling for the people to become disciples (be saved). A closer "occasion" is found in Luke 12:49-59+ where Jesus had warned His hearers about coming judgment and the importance of settling accounts lest they be thrown into prison, clearly a picture of eternal suffering in hell. Here in Luke 13, Jesus uses the report of Pilate's shedding of Jewish blood to continue His warning of the uncertainty of one's day of death and the certainty of impending judgment unless they repent (Lk 13:1-5).

**Rod Mattoon** adds that "In this portion of Luke, we find the Lord Jesus Christ trying to wake up His listeners about judgment to come. If they do not take this matter seriously, if they do not heed what He is saying, they will surely perish. Nothing has changed, beloved. If a person does not know Christ as His Savior and dies, he will perish in Hell. (John 3:18+ "He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."). If a Christian is not fruitful (cf Jn 15:5,8), and if he does not live his life for Christ, he too, will lose something. His reward will perish. (Read 2 John 1:8 "**Watch** [present imperative do this enabled by the Spirit - [see note](#)] yourselves, that you do not lose what we have accomplished, but that you may receive a full reward"). Christ gives these folks two stories about catastrophes and a story about an unfruitful fig tree to get them to be prudent about perishing. ([Treasures from Luke](#))

**There were some present who reported** ([apaggello](#) - informed, carried back word from a happening) **to Him about** - This is the third time Jesus has been "interrupted" in this lengthy discourse (Lk 12:13, Lk 12:41 and Lk 13:1). As noted above this discourse actually began in Luke 12:1+ and the chapter break does not represent a new discourse but a continuation of the discourse. Luke 12 ends with Jesus focusing on the topic of judgment and Luke 13 carries on His discourse related to the same topic. He was talking about judgment and Jews believed catastrophes were a reflection of divine judgment and this was the case with the Galileans.

**Spurgeon** - This was a matter of common town talk, so of course they brought the news to Jesus. Notice how wisely he used this shameful incident. You and I too often hear the news of what is happening, but we learn nothing from it; our Saviour's gracious mind turned everything to good account; he was like the bee that gathers honey from every flower. ([Luke 13](#) - exposition)

**The Galileans whose blood Pilate had mixed with their sacrifices** - This group died while performing their religious duty! See [Josephus below](#) for his mention of Pilate and Jewish deaths (but the truth is we can only speculate). Apparently recently the **Galileans** (Jews) were put to death in some way under the auspices of Pilate. The phrase "**blood...mixed with their sacrifices**" is interesting because presumably the Galilean Jews whose blood had been shed had come to the Temple to offer sacrifices (animal blood)! And if their human blood had literally mixed with (or mingled with) the blood of their sacrifices, this detail indicates they were slain while they were carrying out the sacrifices. Only a depraved, callous man (like Pilate) would stoop to the low level of ordering such savage slaughter while men were carrying out acts of worship!

**Robertson** observes that "Jesus comments on the incident, but not as the reporters had expected. Instead of denunciation of Pilate he turned it into a parable for their own conduct in the uncertainty of life."

**NET Note** - This is an event that otherwise is unattested, though several events similar to it are noted in **Josephus** (see excerpt below). It would have caused a major furor.

(Excerpt adapted from [Josephus 2.9.2-4](#)) After this he (Pilate) raised another disturbance, by expending that

sacred treasure which is called Corban upon aqueducts, whereby he brought water from the distance of four hundred furlongs. At this the (Jewish) multitude had indignation; and when Pilate came to Jerusalem, they came to his tribunal, and made a clamor. Now when he was apprized aforehand of this disturbance, he mixed his own soldiers in their armor with the multitude, and ordered them to conceal themselves under the habits of private men, and not indeed to use their swords, but with their [staves](#) to beat those that made the clamor. He then gave the signal from his tribunal [to do as he had bidden them]. **Now the Jews were so sadly beaten, that many of them perished by the stripes they received, and many of them perished as trodden to death by themselves;** by which means the multitude was astonished at the calamity of those that were slain, and held their peace.

**(AS AN ASIDE** HERE IS ANOTHER FASCINATING EXCERPT FROM JOSEPHUS THAT MENTIONS JESUS - Now there was about this time Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man; for he was a doer of wonderful works, a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him both many of the Jews and many of the Gentiles. He was [the] **Christ**. And when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men amongst us, had condemned him to the cross, those that loved him at the first did not forsake him; for he appeared to them alive again the third day; as the divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him. And the tribe of Christians, so named from him, are not extinct at this day. - [Josephus Antiquities of the Jews 18.3.3](#))

**Pilate** ([JESUS BEFORE PILATE](#)) (*Pontius Pilātus*, Greek: Πόντιος Πιλάτος, *Pontios Pilatos*) was the fifth [prefect](#) of the Roman province of [Judaea](#) from AD 26–36. He served under Emperor [Tiberius](#), and is best known today for the trial and crucifixion of Jesus.

[Click for article on Pontius Pilate](#) in Holman Bible Dictionary (Or [another article in ISBE](#))

**Wikipedia excerpt on Pontius Pilate** - The sources for Pilate's life are an inscription known as the [Pilate Stone](#) ([SEE PICTURE OF THIS GREAT ARCHAEOLOGICAL DISCOVERY IN 1961 MUSEUM PICTURE](#)), which confirms his historicity and establishes his title as *prefect*; a brief mention by Tacitus; Philo of Alexandria; Josephus; the four canonical gospels; the Acts of the Apostles; the First Epistle to Timothy; the Gospel of Nicodemus; the Gospel of Marcion; and other apocryphal works. Based on these sources, it appears that Pilate was an equestrian of the Pontii family, and succeeded Valerius Gratus as prefect of Judaea in AD 26. Once in his post he offended the religious sensibilities of his subjects, leading to harsh criticism from Philo, and many decades later, Josephus. According to Josephus circa AD 93, Pilate was deposed and sent to Rome by Lucius Vitellius after harshly suppressing a Samaritan uprising, arriving just after the death of Tiberius which occurred on 16 March in AD 37. Pilate was replaced by Marcellus.

**John MacArthur** has an interesting note on the man Pontius Pilate - As governor, Pilate displayed insensitivity and brutality (cf. Luke 13:1). Reversing the policy of the earlier governors, Pilate marched his troops into Jerusalem carrying standards bearing images that the Jews viewed as idolatrous. Outraged, many protested heatedly against what they saw as a sacrilege. Pilate ignored their protests and ordered them, on pain of death, to stop bothering him. But they called his bluff and dared him to carry out his threat. Unwilling to massacre so many people, Pilate removed the offending standards. The story reveals his poor judgment, stubbornness, arrogance, and vacillating weakness. Pilate also enraged the Jews when he took money from the temple treasury to build an aqueduct to bring water to Jerusalem. In the ensuing riots, his soldiers beat and slaughtered many of the protesters. Ironically, the incident that finally triggered Pilate's removal from office involved not the Jews, but their hated rivals the Samaritans. A group of them decided to climb Mount Gerizim in search of golden objects Moses had supposedly hidden on its summit. Mistakenly thinking the Samaritans were insurrectionists, Pilate ordered his troops to attack them, and many were killed. The Samaritans complained about Pilate's brutality to his immediate superior, the governor of Syria. He removed Pilate from office and ordered him to Rome to be judged by Tiberius, but Tiberius died before Pilate reached Rome. At that point, Pilate disappeared from history. Some accounts claim that he was banished, others that he was executed, still others that he committed suicide. (See [Luke Commentary](#))

**Mattoon on Pilate** - The first illustration Jesus uses to warn these people about perishing is about the massacre of Galileans by Pilate. Pilate was notorious for his treachery and vile treatment of people. His treatment of the Jews and Samaritans drove these people to rebellion several times. They hated this man with despicable disdain. Josephus recorded several of the collisions between the Romans and the Jews. At one Jewish Passover he related how three thousand Jews were butchered, and the temple courts were filled with dead corpses. On the occasion of another of these Jewish feasts, two thousand perished by being slaughtered. Luke records the death of Galileans at the hand of Pilate here. Galilee was a hotbed for fanatics that strived to overthrow the Roman occupation of Israel. Galilee was not under Pilate's jurisdiction, but when these Galileans came to Jerusalem, Pilate had them killed. Pilate's treachery eventually caught up with him. Several years after the crucifixion of Christ, a prophet claimed to possess a supernatural gift that enabled him to locate consecrated Jewish vessels, allegedly hidden in secret places by Moses. When this prophet announced that he would unearth these vessels, Samaritans turned out in large numbers to observe the event. Pilate, who

thought the entire affair was a disguise for some other political or military activity, dispatched Roman forces to assault and massacre the crowd that had gathered. In the end, it became apparent that nothing political had been intended. The Samaritans felt such great loss for those who died, they<sup>3</sup> formally requested that the governor of Syria intervene in this matter. Their complaints of Pilate became so numerous that he was eventually summoned to Rome in 36 A.D. to give account for his actions before the Emperor Tiberius himself. These indictments resulted in his removal from office and exile to Gaul (modern-day France). Eusebius, the well-known early Christian historian, later wrote that Pilate fell into misfortune under the wicked Emperor Caligula and lost many privileges. According to Eusebius, this man Pilate — who was ultimately responsible for the trial, judgment, crucifixion, and burial of Jesus, and who had ruled Judea ruthlessly and mercilessly for ten years, finally committed suicide. ([Treasures from Luke](#))

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### **Croft Pentz - PERSECUTION-PATIENCE-PERFECTION Luke 13:1–17**

These three words are very important to the Christian. Persecution comes to all those who follow Christ (2 Tim. 3:12). All Christians need more patience. A Christian's patience should grow as he serves the Lord. God wants to heal His people. He wants to heal broken lives, spirits, bodies, and vows. He wants man to be whole.

#### **I. THE PERSECUTION—vv. 1–5**

1. Persecution—v. 1. Pilate killed some Jews as they were making sacrifices at the temple in Jerusalem.
2. Purpose—vv. 2–3. Were these people worse than other sinners? Why did they suffer? God treats all the same!
3. Parable—vv. 4–5. When the tower of Siloam fell on eighteen people, did this mean they were worse sinners than others?

Of course not. Note in verses 2–3 the importance of repentance!

#### **II. THE PATIENCE—vv. 6–9**

1. Problem—v. 6. There is no fruit upon the fig tree. The master is angry (note the words of John 15:2).
2. Plan—v. 7. The master wants to cut down the tree and destroy it since it has no fruit.
3. Patience—vv. 8–9. The tree is given another chance—it is allowed to stand another year, before being destroyed.

#### **III. THE PERFECTION—vv. 10–13**

1. Place—v. 10. Jesus is teaching in the synagogue on the sabbath. Though busy, He always had time for the house of God.
2. Problem—v. 11. A woman who could not stand erect comes to Christ for healing. She had been in this condition for eighteen years!
3. Perfection—v. 12. She is healed by Christ. He wants men to have healthy bodies as well as souls.
4. Praise—v. 13. After being healed, the woman praises and glorifies the Lord.

#### **IV. THE PROBLEM—vv. 14–17**

1. Reaction—v. 14. The ruler of the synagogue complains because Jesus has healed on the sabbath. These people never praised Christ for His good work. They always opposed Him for doing good. They were not sympathetic toward man's needs.
2. Reasoning—vv. 15–16. If an ox fell into a ditch on the sabbath, they would remove it, feeling they did no wrong. In this way they broke their own sabbath laws. Why shouldn't this woman, who had been sick for eighteen years, be healed on the sabbath?
3. Rejoicing—v. 17. Those accusing Christ become ashamed. The people rejoice at the healing.

The Jews were so concerned with their own man-made laws that they couldn't accept the good that Jesus did. These man-made laws had no feelings toward man and his need. These rulers were inconsistent—they did not keep their own laws. Laws are all right, if they agree with the Scriptures and show concern toward mankind. ([Expository Outlines from Luke](#))

**Luke 13:2 And Jesus said to them, "Do you suppose that these Galileans were greater sinners than all other Galileans because they suffered this fate?"**

KJV Luke 13:2 And Jesus answering said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galilaeans were sinners above all the Galilaeans, because they suffered such things?

- **Do you suppose that these Galileans were greater sinners** Lk 13:4; Job 22:5-16; Jn 9:2; Acts 28:4
- [Luke 13:1-9 What We Should Learn From Tragedies](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 13:1-5 Supernatural Lessons from a Natural Disaster](#) - John MacArthur
- Multiple Sermons and Commentaries - Luke 13 Resources

**Related Passages:**



John 9:2-3 And His disciples asked Him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he would be born blind?" 3 Jesus answered, "It was neither that this man sinned, nor his parents; but it was so that the works of God might be displayed in him.

## WAS THEIR FATE RELATED TO THEIR DEGREE OF SIN?

**Do you suppose ([dokeo](#)) that these Galileans ([Galilaios](#)) were greater sinners ([hamartolos](#)) than all other Galileans ([Galilaios](#)) because they suffered ([pascho](#)) this fate?** - What is Jesus alluding to with this question? He knew that they Jews held a common belief (a "bad" theology, pun intended) that disasters such as the Galileans suffered was their punishment for being bad people and thus those who died **were greater sinners**. John alludes to this Jewish belief even among Jesus' disciples. We recall their question "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he would be born blind?" (John 9:2) Even here Jesus replied that the man's blindness was not related to sin but that God might be glorified. (Jn 9:3). And do not miss the fact that these Galileans did not expect to die that day, which adds a strong note of urgency to Jesus' call to **repent** in the next verse!

**Gilbrant** - Many people still today believe that sudden catastrophes occur because God is angry with the victims. In certain instances in the Bible that did happen, e.g., the Flood of Noah's time, the destruction of Sodom, the annihilation of the family of Ahab, etc. However, the Bible does not teach that every time there is a murder the victim was extremely evil. The people of Jesus' day made the false assumption that these men murdered by Pilate and the people upon whom the tower fell (Lk 13:4) were sinners above others that God was punishing. ([Complete Biblical Library](#))

**MacArthur** on the fate of the **Galileans** - The real question is not why bad things happen to good people, but why good things happen to bad people. That they do reflects God's compassion, grace, and mercy to undeserving sinners. (See [Luke Commentary](#))

**Spurgeon** paraphrases Jesus' question - "Do you imagine that there was some extraordinary guilt which brought this judgment upon them, and that those who were spared may be supposed to have been more innocent than they were?" ([Luke 13](#) - exposition)

To **suppose** means to assume that something is the case on the basis of evidence or probability but without proof or certain knowledge. Their [supposition](#) (belief held without proof) was based on their false theology (cf Jn 9:2)

**ILLUSTRATION** - When the blind English poet John Milton was old and obscure, he was visited one day by Charles II, son of the king that the Puritans had beheaded. "Your blindness is a judgment from God for the part you took against my father," said the king. Milton replied, "If I have lost my sight through God's judgment, what can you say of your father who lost his head?" (Wiersbe)

**Mattoon** - The Jews felt that tribulation, trauma, and great trouble were part of God's judgment on an individual because of some great sin. That was true in the case of the Genesis Flood and Sodom and Gomorrah, but it was not true at all concerning the trials of Job. ([Treasures from Luke](#))

So how would you expect the Jewish crowd would answer Jesus' question? Obviously they would think those killed by Pilate were **greater sinners** but they would be obviously wrong. They would falsely reason that the victims of Pilate's wrath must have been especially sinful or wicked or otherwise God would not have allowed them to be killed.

Jesus Himself answers this question in the next verse, indicating that these **Galileans** were not **greater sinners** than other **Galileans**. The implication is that their sin had nothing to do with their specific fate. It was simply their time to die, for sin results in physical death for everyone.

Notice that Jesus did not ask if they were **sinners** (that is assumed) but whether they were **greater sinners than all other Galileans**. It was their **greater** sin to which Jews ascribed their tragic fate, not to the fact that they were just **sinners**. The implication is that the Jews knew they were **sinners**, but they were just not as "bad" a group of **sinners** as those who they thought were punished by God for their **greater** sin. Jesus will correct their faulty theology. It is not **greater** sin that calls down God's wrath (cf Ro 1:18+ "already revealed" is literally "already BEING revealed" - even now), but **ONE** sin that kills a man, "For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all." (James 2:10).

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**Galileans** ([Wikipedia](#))(1057)([Galilaios](#) from [Galilaia](#) - northern region of Palestine - [see map](#) or [Galilee in the time of Jesus](#)) refers in general to any inhabitant of Galilee. Specifically, it is used of Jesus and the majority of His followers (Matthew 26:69; Acts 1:11; 2:7); of victims who were murdered by Pilate (Luke 13:1); and of an insurrectionist named Judas (Acts 5:37). Galileans were notable among the Jews as a problem to their Roman masters.

**Galilaios** - 11x in 10v - Galilean(4), Galileans(5), Galilee(2). No uses in the Septuagint

Matthew 26:69 Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard, and a servant-girl came to him and said, "You too were with Jesus the **Galilean**."

Mark 14:70 But again he denied it. And after a little while the bystanders were again saying to Peter, "Surely you are one of them, for you are a **Galilean** too."

Luke 13:1 Now on the same occasion there were some present who reported to Him about the **Galileans** whose blood Pilate had mixed with their sacrifices.

Luke 13:2 And Jesus said to them, "Do you suppose that these **Galileans** were greater sinners than all other **Galileans** because they suffered this fate?"

Luke 22:59 After about an hour had passed, another man began to insist, saying, "Certainly this man also was with Him, for he is a **Galilean** too."

Luke 23:6 When Pilate heard it, he asked whether the man was a **Galilean**.

John 4:45 So when He came to Galilee, the **Galileans** received Him, having seen all the things that He did in Jerusalem at the feast; for they themselves also went to the feast.

Acts 1:11 They also said, "Men of **Galilee**, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven."

Acts 2:7 They were amazed and astonished, saying, "Why, are not all these who are speaking **Galileans**?"

Acts 5:37 "After this man, Judas of **Galilee** rose up in the days of the census and drew away some people after him; he too perished, and all those who followed him were scattered.

**Sinners** (268) (**hamartolos** from **hamartáno** = deviate, miss the mark which some lexicons say is from a = negative + meiromai = attain -- not to attain, not to arrive at the goal) is an adjective (e.g., "*that through the commandment sin might become utterly **sinful***" - see Ro 7:13-[note](#)) that is often used as a noun (as in this verse and Ro 5:19-[note](#)) to describe those who are continually erring from the way, constantly missing God's mark, living in opposition to His good and acceptable and perfect will (Ro 12:2). Thus a sinner is one who lives in opposition to the divine will. In a more selective use, in the view of the Pharisees a **sinner** was a Jew who was one not careful in the observance of ceremonial duties (Mt 9:10ff, Lk 15:1ff, Mk 2.16). The Jews arrogantly called the Gentiles sinners or despisers of God and considered them heathen or pagan. Jesus' purpose for coming into the world was to save sinners (Mt 9:13 1Ti 1:15) **Sinners** were frequently placed in the same category as despised tax-collectors - Mt 9:10, 11, Mt 11:19, Mk 2:15, 16, Lk 5:30, Lk 7:34, Lk 15:1, Lk 18:13. In the **secular writings** of Aristophanes (ca. 450-385 B.C.) the substantive appears as a barbarism and carries a disparaging and sarcastic nuance. In the **Septuagint**, where hamartōlos appears frequently, it usually translates the Hebrew *rāshā'*, "wicked" or "criminal." It also translates other Hebrew terms, especially those which describe someone who has violated the covenant with God or who has sinned against His law.

**Suffered** (3958) (**pascho**) means essentially what happens to a person, to what they experience. It means to undergo something, to experience a sensation, to experience an impression from an outside source, normally with the implication of physical or psychological suffering. Here the [perfect tense](#) of **pascho** speaks of this as the Galileans irrevocable (irreversible, unchangeable) fate. Physical death is final and irrevocable to be sure, but it is not the final fate of every Christ-rejecting soul who will suffer eternally in Hell! Some people think Hell will not be so bad since it will be a place of unhindered partying. They will have a rude awakening to the horrible experience that Hell is the absolute antithesis of partying!

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D A Carson - FEBRUARY 27

Exodus 10; Luke 13; Job 28; 1 Corinthians 14

PILATE WAS A WEAK, wicked man. Thus the account in Luke 13:1–5 is entirely credible. The details may be obscure, but the general picture is clear enough. Some Galileans had offered sacrifices: if they were Jews, they must have done so at the temple in Jerusalem. Perhaps they were involved, or were perceived to be involved, in some wing of the nationalistic Zealot movement, and Pilate saw them as a threat. He had them slaughtered, and their blood mingled with the blood of the sacrificial animals they themselves had brought. If the mingling of blood is literal, this means that Pilate had them slaughtered in the temple courts—sacrilege mingling with slaughter.

When this incident is brought up to Jesus for his comment, he launches out in a direction that must have astonished his interlocutors. Perhaps some expected him to denounce Pilate; perhaps others wanted him to comment on the Zealot movement; a few may have hoped he would offer a few waggish denunciations about these rebels getting what they deserved. Jesus opts for none of those paths. "Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans because they suffered this



way? I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish” (13:2–3).

The point he was making might well have been lost in the political sensitivities of this tragedy, so Jesus promptly refers to another disaster, this one stripped of Galileans, Pilate, the temple, sacrifices, and mingled blood. Eighteen people died when a tower collapsed. Jesus insists that they were no more wicked than anyone else in Jerusalem. Rather, the same lesson is to be learned: “unless you repent, you too will all perish” (13:5).

Jesus’ surprising analysis makes sense only if three things are true: (a) All of us deserve to perish. If we are spared, that is an act of grace. What should surprise us is that so many of us are spared so long. (b) Death comes to all of us. Our world often argues that the worst disaster is for someone to die young. Not so. The real disaster is that we all stand under this sentence of death, and we all die. The age at which we die is only relatively better or worse. (c) Death has the last word for all of us—unless we repent, which alone leads us beyond death to the life of the consummated kingdom.

Have you heard of the millions massacred under Pol Pot? Have you heard of the savage butchery in southern Sudan? Have you seen the massed graves in Bosnia? Or the pictures of the Florida swamp where ValuJet Flight 592 crashed? I tell you the truth: unless you repent, you too will all perish. (See [For the Love of God](#))+

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### **Before the Face of God - Surprised by God’s Mercy**

“Unless you repent, you too will all perish.” [Luke 13:5b]

Jesus had been speaking of the coming judgment of God, when the righteous would be blessed and the wicked punished. In this context a man asked him about some Galileans “whose blood Pilate had mixed with their sacrifices” (Luke 13:1). These men had been offering sacrifices to God, in obedience, yet they had been brutally slain. Where was God when all of this happened?

The Bible provides a number of answers to questions about suffering. For instance, as the book of Job teaches, we do not always know God’s reasons, but we know he has a holy purpose for everything he allows to happen. Also, suffering in this world lasts only an instant compared to eternity.

Jesus, however, answers the question about suffering another way: He says we deserve to suffer as fallen sons and daughters of Adam.

“Do you think,” asked Jesus, “that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans because they suffered this way? I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish” (vv. 2–3). The crowd might have thought, “Well, these Galileans must have been worse than the rest of us for this to happen to them.” Jesus rejects that thought. He says that all humanity stands under God’s judgment, and, apart from his mercy, all will be destroyed.

Our problem is that we tend to become so accustomed to God’s mercy that we have begun to think we deserve it. Then we are astonished when we suffer. Jesus says we should not be surprised at suffering; rather, we should be amazed that we do not suffer more. What is truly astonishing is that so many live without excruciating suffering.

Most of us wonder, “Why do I suffer so much?” Yet, do any of us ever ask, “Why is it that I suffer so little, when I deserve to suffer so much?” I am afraid most of us believe God owes us a life free of suffering and heartache. Yet, if we really understand the depth of our sinfulness, we will not be surprised by suffering, but by mercy.

**Coram Deo** = Christians sometimes feel they must defend God’s goodness in a world of pain and injustice. But the problem of pleasure is perhaps more difficult to understand. Why is God good to fallen sinners? That is the really profound question. Even the least amount of pleasure must be accounted for, and we all tend to enjoy considerable pleasure in this life. Enjoy God’s goodness and benefits to you today, both through grateful prayer and testimony to others. **Luke 13:3 “I tell you, no, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.**

KJV Luke 13:3 I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.

BBE Luke 13:3 I say to you, It is not so: but if your hearts are not changed, you will all come to the same end.

GWN Luke 13:3 No! I can guarantee that they weren’t. But if you don’t turn to God and change the way you think and act, then you, too, will all die.

- **unless you repent** Lk 13:5; Lk 24:47; Mt 3:2,10-12; Acts 2:38-40; Acts 3:19; Rev 2:21,22
- **you will all likewise perish** Lk 19:42-44; 21:22-24; 23:28-30; Mt 12:45; 22:7; 23:35-38; 24:21-29
- [Luke 13:1-9 What We Should Learn From Tragedies](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 13:1-5 Supernatural Lessons from a Natural Disaster](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 13:1-5 Unless You Repent You Will All Likewise Perish](#) - John Piper

- [Luke 13:1-5 Accidents, Not Punishments](#) - C H Spurgeon
- Multiple Sermons and Commentaries - Luke 13 Resources

#### Related Passages:

Luke 24:46-47+ - and He said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day, 47 and that **repentance for forgiveness of sins** would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem.

2 Ti 2:25+ with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, **if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth**

Acts 5:31+ "He is the one whom God exalted to His right hand as a Prince and a Savior, **to grant repentance** to Israel, and **forgiveness of sins**.

Acts 11:18+ When they heard this, they quieted down and glorified God, saying, "Well then, God has granted to the Gentiles also the **repentance that leads to life.**"

Ro 2:4+ Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and tolerance and patience, not knowing that the **kindness of God leads you to repentance?**

### REPENT! TURN OR BURN!

**I tell you, no** - Can you imagine the look of shock and surprise on the faces of the hearers when Jesus said **No!** Their aberrant theology (cf Jn 9:2) called for a "Yes." But not only did Jesus say "**No**", His "**No**" was the no of absolute negation and was emphatically the first word in the Greek sentence, signifying absolutely not ("I tell you, no!" = NIV, "By no means!" = NAB)! That is, the Galileans who died at the hands of Pilate were not greater sinners than other Galileans. Their problem was the same as that of all men -- they were sinners in need of salvation. Sinners may escape calamities, but they will not escape the judgment of God in Hell for eternity unless they repent.

God uses [calamities](#) to remind all people that death is often an imminent surprise for which they need to be prepared!

-- John MacArthur

**MacArthur** has an interesting comment noting that while "It is true that God sometimes immediately judges sinners for a specific sin, as He did Herod (Acts 12:21–23). There are also built-in judgments for sinful behavior, such as alcohol abuse leading to cirrhosis of the liver, immorality leading to sexually transmitted diseases, or criminal behavior leading to a violent death. Those judgments are not in view here. Jesus was not referring to the inevitable consequences of sin, but rather to catastrophic calamities that fall on people seemingly without discrimination....The Lord's point is that those who perish in such calamities are no worse sinners than those who survive. Those who live do so because though they deserve to die, God withholds what they deserve for a time in mercy. He allows sinners to live because He is compassionate, gracious, merciful, and "**patient toward [them], not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance**" (2 Peter 3:9+). But God uses [calamities](#) to remind all people that death is often an imminent surprise for which they need to be prepared (cf James 4:14, Job 7:7, Ps 90:9). The exhortation of Jim Elliot, missionary and martyr, is fitting: "*When it comes time to die, make sure that all you have to do is die*" (See [Luke Commentary](#))

**Hendriksen** - The notion that personal disaster is the result of personal sin was deeply rooted in the consciousness of the Jew; see, for example, Job 4:7; 8:20; 11:6; 22:5-10; John 9:2. Jesus not only refuted it but also emphasized that without genuine conversion no one is saved; *all* perish. (Borrow [Exposition of the Gospel of Luke](#))

### WARNING NUMBER ONE

**But unless you repent** ([metanoeo](#)) (if you do not repent) - Note that the context is a sudden, unexpected death. The point is that no human being knows how many seconds he or she has remaining to accept and obey Jesus' gracious call to **repent** that they might live, even if they die unexpectedly, for **NOW, TODAY** is the day of salvation! Jesus gives his hearers a clear warning that without repentance they will perish and He is not speaking of their temporal death (which they had addressed with the deaths of the Galileans) but their eternal death.

"for He says, "AT THE ACCEPTABLE **TIME** I LISTENED TO YOU, AND ON THE **DAY** OF SALVATION I HELPED ([boetheo](#)) YOU." **Behold**, **now** is "THE ACCEPTABLE **TIME**," **behold**, **now** is "THE **DAY** OF

Note that the verb **repent** is [present tense](#) which calls for repentance to be one's lifestyle. Dear believer, when was the last time you repented? Second, note that **repent** is in the [active voice](#) which calls for a personal choice of one's will. God will not force us to repent, but He does provide us with the gift of repentance (2 Ti 2:25+, Acts 5:31+, Acts 11:18+, cf Ro 2:4+) that enables us to make the choice to repent. That statement is somewhat mysterious, but does reflect the juxtaposition of our personal choice or will and God's sovereign provision and power. This juxtaposition can be clearly seen in 2 passages in Philippians, where Paul commands the saints to "**work out** ([present imperative](#) - Make this your habitual practice - only possible as we are enabled by and depend upon the Holy Spirit - see [the Need for the Holy Spirit to obey NT commands](#)) your salvation in fear and trembling" (e.g., repenting) (Php 2:12-[note](#)). Then in the next verse Paul explains how this "spiritual work out" is possible, declaring that it is "God (His Spirit) Who is at work ([present tense](#) = continually) in you, both to will ([present tense](#) = continually) and to work ([present tense](#) = continually) for His good pleasure." (Php 2:13-[note](#)) Php 2:13 is God's sovereign provision of His indwelling Spirit Who continually energizes us giving us the necessary desire and supernatural power to successfully obey the command to **work out** our salvation (Php 2:12-[note](#)). Mysterious? To be sure! But absolutely Biblical, even if it is not fully understandable (cf 1 Cor 13:12, cf Isa 55:8-9).

**MacArthur on repent** - It is a turning 180 degrees, so it's turning from sin to something and the something or someone is always Christ. When I go to Russia, always refreshed, but the fact that the believers never say I was born again, I was saved, I was redeemed, I was converted. They always say, "I repented, I repented, I repented." That's what they always say. And they understand in that repentance is the full embracing of the only one who can deliver them from sin's power, sin's penalty, and sin's presence, namely Jesus Christ. ([Supernatural Lessons from a Natural Disaster](#))

Luke records a similar message from Jesus to His disciples after His death, burial and resurrection

Then He opened their minds (His 11 Disciples) to understand the Scriptures, and He said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day, and that **repentance for forgiveness of sins** would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. And behold, I am sending forth the promise of My Father upon you (THE HOLY SPIRIT); but you are to stay in the city until you are clothed with power ([dunamis](#) - supernatural power) from on high (Acts 1:8-[note](#))." (Lk 24:45-49-[note](#))

**Darrell Bock** writes "the point is that repentance involves a reorientation of perspective, a fresh point of view. When dealing with God's plan, it means to see that plan in a new way and to orient oneself to it. Luke demonstrates the fruit of repentance expresses itself concretely (Lk 3:10-14). Repentance expresses itself in life, especially in how one treats others." (**Gulp!**) There can be no genuine conversion without genuine repentance. A heart that has never turned to God and from sin, has never experienced regeneration and is still dead it trespasses and sins (Eph 2:1).

**Metanoeo** in the NT - notice most of the uses are by Luke.

Matt. 3:2; Matt. 4:17; Matt. 11:20; Matt. 11:21; Matt. 12:41; Mk. 1:15; Mk. 6:12; Lk. 10:13; Lk. 11:32; Lk. 13:3; Lk. 13:5; Lk. 15:7; Lk. 15:10; Lk. 16:30; Lk. 17:3; Lk. 17:4; Acts 2:38; Acts 3:19; Acts 8:22; Acts 17:30; Acts 26:20; 2 Co. 12:21; Rev. 2:5; Rev. 2:16; Rev. 2:21; Rev. 2:22; Rev. 3:3; Rev. 3:19; Rev. 9:20; Rev. 9:21; Rev. 16:9; Rev. 16:11

**God uses at least four factors to prompt repentance =**

**(1) The knowledge of God's Truth should prompt repentance** (Mt 11:21-24 - where Chorazin, et al refused to repent at the Truth; cp Lk 16:30-31-note which also illustrates the sufficiency of the Truth to prompt repentance.) Note the deadly deception - one can have Truth (as well as #2 sorrow) without true repentance! Beware!

**(2) Sorrow for sin can lead to repentance** (2Cor 7:9-10), but the sorrow per se should NOT be confused with true repentance. E.g., Judas felt sorrow for betraying Jesus but did not repent.

**(3) God's kindness prompts (leads to) repentance** (Ro 2:4-[note](#)).

**(4) Fear of final judgment can motivate one to true repentance.**(Acts 17:30-31-[note](#)) Indeed, realization that there is no other way of escape but through Jesus, should cause any "rational" person to repent.

It is crucial to understand that (contrary to what some "evangelical" writers say) **repentance** is not an act separate from faith, but saving faith includes and implies the true change of heart/mind which is called repentance. As noted in the use of the [present imperative](#) (as commanded by John the Baptist in Mt 3:2 and the Lord Jesus in Mt 4:17, Mk 1:15), to repent is not just an event at the time of conversion, but represents an ongoing lifestyle -- we sin daily, and sometimes we get caught in a "rut" (habit) of sin, and so we are daily in desperate need of God's gracious gift of repentance. In the parable of the two sons, our Lord Jesus Christ gives a

beautiful illustration of what true repentance looks like (Read Mt 21:28-31 = notice the second son changed his mind and his behavior!).

"False repentance dreads the *consequences* of sin;  
true repentance dreads *sin itself*."  
--Albert Barnes

It is notable (and probably no coincidence) that the most "concentrated" use of **metanoeo** (10/34x) is found in the Letters to the Seven Churches of Asia Minor in Revelation 2-3 (which is intriguing since John the human author of The Revelation, is the only Gospel that does not use **metanoeo** in his Gospel). This begs the question - Does the modern church need to be reminded of its need to continually repent? I recall years ago hearing that the new believers behind the (then) "[Iron Curtain](#)" called themselves "**Repenters**" rather than believers! ([Read the incredible note in MacArthur's book "The Vanishing Conscience" which is actually 3 books "The Gospel According to the Apostles"](#) being the one with the quote on "**repenters**") How wonderful would it be to be part of a local body of Christ full of habitual **repenters**!

**Kenneth Wuest** - **Repent** is the translation of *metanoeō* which in classical Greek meant "to change one's mind or purpose, to change one's opinion." The noun *metanoia* meant "a change of mind on reflection." These two words used in classical Greek signified a change of mind regarding anything, but when brought over into the New Testament, their usage is limited to a change of mind in the religious sphere. They refer there to a change of moral thought and reflection which follows moral delinquency. This includes not only the act of changing one's attitude towards and opinion of sin but also that of forsaking it. Sorrow and contrition with respect to sin, are included in the Bible idea of repentance, but these follow and are consequent upon the sinner's change of mind with respect to it. The word *metamelomai* is used in Mt. 21:29, 32, 27:3; 2Cor. 7:8; Heb. 7:21, where it is translated "repent." *Metanoeō* is the fuller and nobler term, expressive of moral action and issues. It is the word used by NT writers to express the foregoing meaning. In the case of Judas, *metamelomai* means "remorse." In the case of Heb. 7:21 it means only to change one's mind. The act of repentance is based first of all and primarily upon an intellectual apprehension of the character of sin, man's guilt with respect to it, and man's duty to turn away from it. The emotional and volitional aspects of the act of repentance follow, and are the result of this intellectual process of a change of mind with respect to it. This means that the correct approach of the Christian worker to a sinner whom he wishes to lead to the Lord is that of clearly explaining the issues involved. When the unsaved person is made to clearly understand the significance of sin, the intellectual process of changing his mind with respect to it can follow, with the result that sorrow, contrition, and turning away from it will also follow. A mere emotional appeal to the sinner is not the correct one. The Greek word *metanoeō* tells us that the intellectual appeal must come first, since the act of repenting is basically a mental one at the start. (Wuest's word studies from the Greek New Testament: for the English reader)

**You will all likewise perish** ([apollumi](#)) - Notice this is in a sense a conditional clause, a "promise" (albeit a negative one), so to speak, so that if one does not repent, then Jesus promises they will surely **perish**. Notice the adjective "**all**" is "all inclusive." In other words there is no "escape clause" in Jesus' solemn, hopefully sobering words! Jesus is **not** saying (as some commentaries suggest) the hearers would perish in the same horrible manner or just as suddenly. His point is that His hearers should not delude themselves and imagine they will escape the judgment of God on sin and sinners, which is to perish eternally! The Jews had a misunderstanding that since their father was Abraham, they had a "free pass" regarding God's judgment of sin.

**Ryrie's** note on Mt 3:9+ explains that "The common teaching of that day said that the Jews participated in the merits of Abraham, which made their prayers acceptable, helped in war, [expiated](#) sins, appeased the wrath of God, and assured a share in God's eternal kingdom. Consequently, the people were startled when John (Mt 3:2, 8) and Jesus (Mt 4:17) preached **the necessity of personal repentance**." (Borrow [Ryrie Study Bible Expanded Edition](#))

**Spurgeon** - There would come upon them also, because of their sin, a sudden and overwhelming calamity. When we read of the most dreadful things happening to you we may conclude that something similar will happen to us if we are impenitent; if not in this world, yet in that which is to come. ([Luke 13](#) - exposition)

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**Repent** ([3340](#)) (**metanoeo** from *meta* = with, among + *noeo* = to think, exercise the mind <> from *nous* = mind - see study = *metanoia*) means to have another mind. **Metanoeo** means to change one's mind in respect to sin, God, and self. To turn to God and from sin (Luke 15:7 = "one sinner who **repents**", cf 1Th 1:9+). It is not an intellectual decision but a change of mind that issues in a change of behavior. This change of mind may, especially in the case of Christians who have fallen into sin, be preceded by sorrow (2Cor 7:8-11); but sorrow for sin, though it may cause repentance, is not repentance.

Metanoeo - 32v - repent(26), repented(5), repents(3). **(TAKE A MOMENT AND WORK THROUGH THESE IMPORTANT PASSAGES ON REPENTANCE TAKING NOTES ABOUT WHAT EACH TEACHES)** Matt. 3:2 (e.g., tells you why repentance is urgent); Matt. 4:17 (e.g., tells you why you must repent); Matt. 11:20; Matt. 11:21; Matt. 12:41; Mk. 1:15 (e.g., tells you repentance is intimately related to believe, both being energized by

God's grace, God's Spirit); Mk. 6:12; Lk. 10:13; Lk. 11:32; Lk. 13:3; Lk. 13:5; Lk. 15:7; Lk. 15:10; Lk. 16:30; Lk. 17:3; Lk. 17:4; Acts 2:38; Acts 3:19; Acts 8:22; Acts 17:30; Acts 26:20; 2 Co. 12:21; Rev. 2:5; Rev. 2:16; Rev. 2:21; Rev. 2:22; Rev. 3:3; Rev. 3:19; Rev. 9:20; Rev. 9:21; Rev. 16:9; Rev. 16:11

**Will perish** (622)(**apollumi** from **apo** = away from or wholly + **olethros** = state of utter ruin <> **ollumi** = to destroy <> root of **apollyon** [Re 9:11] = destroyer) means to destroy utterly but not to annihilate, that is, not to cause to cease to exist. Most often it describes the utter ruin of man without Christ as their Refuge (Ps 46:1, Ps 18:2) from the storm to come (1Th 1:10). In Lk 13:33 it describes Jesus perishing that men who accept His sacrifice might not perish and thereby suffer eternal ruin. Sadly, those who perish, will wish that it had meant cessation of existence because their eternal torment will be so horrible (Lk 13:25-28+)! The picture of the verb **apollumi** is of a human life that is forever ruined and is no longer usable for its intended purpose. In other words **apollumi** is not the loss of **being** per se, but is more the loss of **well-being**. The utter, eternal tragedy is that the person can no longer serve or fulfill the purpose for which they were created in the **imago dei**, that purpose being to **"to glorify God, and to enjoy Him forever"** as succinctly expressed in the first point of the Westminster Shorter Catechism. J I Packer says it is *"the regular Greek word for wrecking and ruining something, so making it useless for its intended purpose."* **Apollumi** speaks of the absolute antithesis of what man was meant to be before God, Paul explaining that the Lord Jesus and His mighty angels will be revealed from heaven "dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the Gospel of our Lord Jesus (Who on earth declared "repent and believe in the Gospel" Mk 1:15+). These will pay the penalty (dike - judgment) of **eternal destruction** (olethros, root word of **apollumi**), **away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power**(2 Th 1:7-9+)

In short **apollumi** means to render useless. The Gospel promises everlasting life for everyone who repents and believes in Jesus. The failure to possess this life will result in utter ruin and eternal uselessness but not cessation of existence!

**Apollumi - 86v - bring(1), destroy(17), destroyed(9), dying(1), end(1), killed(1), lose(10), loses(7), lost(14), much(1), passed away(1), perish(14), perishable(1), perished(4), perishes(1), perishing(6), put to death(1), ruined(3).** Matt. 2:13; Matt. 5:29; Matt. 8:25; Matt. 9:17; Matt. 10:6; Matt. 10:28; Matt. 10:39; Matt. 10:42; Matt. 12:14; Matt. 15:24; Matt. 16:25; Matt. 18:11; Matt. 18:14; Matt. 21:41; Matt. 22:7; Matt. 26:52; Matt. 27:20; Mk. 1:24; Mk. 2:22; Mk. 3:6; Mk. 4:38; Mk. 8:35; Mk. 9:22; Mk. 9:41; Mk. 11:18; Mk. 12:9; Lk. 4:34; Lk. 5:37; Lk. 6:9; Lk. 8:24; Lk. 9:24; Lk. 9:25; Lk. 9:56; Lk. 11:51; Lk. 13:3; Lk. 13:5; Lk. 13:33; Lk. 15:4; Lk. 15:6; Lk. 15:8; Lk. 15:9; Lk. 15:17; Lk. 15:24; Lk. 15:32; Lk. 17:27; Lk. 17:29; Lk. 17:33; Lk. 19:10; Lk. 19:47; Lk. 20:16; Lk. 21:18; Jn. 3:16; Jn. 6:12; Jn. 6:27; Jn. 6:39; Jn. 10:10; Jn. 10:28; Jn. 11:50; Jn. 12:25; Jn. 17:12; Jn. 18:9; Acts 5:37; Acts 27:34; Rom. 2:12; Rom. 14:15; 1 Co. 1:18; 1 Co. 1:19; 1 Co. 8:11; 1 Co. 10:9; 1 Co. 10:10; 1 Co. 12:23; 1 Co. 15:18; 2 Co. 2:15; 2 Co. 4:3; 2 Co. 4:9; 2 Thess. 2:10; Heb. 1:11; Jas. 1:11; Jas. 4:12; 1 Pet. 1:7; 2 Pet. 3:6; 2 Pet. 3:9; 2 Jn. 1:8; Jude 1:5; Jude 1:11; Rev. 18:14

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## Two Sorts of Men - Puritan Daily Readings

I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. Luke 13:3

But I foresee there are two things that are likely to harden the unconverted, and make me lose all my labor, except they can be taken out of the way: and that is, the misunderstanding on those two words: [the wicked] and [turn.] Some will think to themselves, it is true, the wicked must turn or die; but what is that to me? I am not wicked, though I am a sinner, as all men are. Others will think, "it is true that we must turn from our evil ways; but I am turned long ago: I hope this is not now to do." And thus, while wicked men think they are not wicked, but are already converted, we lose all our labor in persuading them to turn. I shall therefore, before I go any farther, tell you here who are meant by the wicked, and who they are that must turn or die; and also what is meant by turning, and who they are that are truly converted...a wicked man and a converted man are contraries. No man is a wicked man that is converted, and no man is a converted man that is wicked; so that to be a wicked man, and to be an unconverted man, is all one.

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## LUKE 13:1-5 "Repent, and believe in the gospel" (Mark 1:15+).

Ever wondered about people who say they believe in Jesus yet demonstrate no evidence of a change of heart? They show no remorse for wrongdoing, no longing for righteousness. They lack repentance.

Several years ago a prominent underworld figure attended a large evangelistic crusade. Realizing that the cause of evil would be weakened if this man would be converted, those conducting the meeting witnessed to him about Christ. One night they urged him to "open the door" of his heart and let Jesus in. The man supposedly accepted the Lord, but as the months passed his lifestyle remained the same. When confronted with this fact, the gangster said that no one had told him that in saying yes to Jesus he would be turning his back on his former life. He knew of Christian football players, Christian cowboys, Christian politicians—why not a Christian gangster? When they explained the need for repentance, the man wanted nothing more to do with Christianity.



The Greek word for repentance, *metanoia*, means "to change the mind." This involves thinking rightly about sin, self, and God. We recognize that we are condemned sinners before God and unable to save ourselves. We turn from our self-sufficiency to Christ and by faith receive Him as our Savior.

If we are willing to repent, God will empower us. But we need to know that turning to Christ means turning from sin. We can't have one without the other. —D.J.D.

We do not repent in order to go to Christ;  
we go to Christ in order to repent.

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### **Vance Havner - "Except Ye Repent" Luke 13:1-9**

WE have almost forgotten that repentance is necessary to salvation. In this superficial day, when people glibly "accept Christ" and join the church on a "decision day" with no sense of sin or joy in salvation—the depths having never been stirred—we need to remember the words of our Lord, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."

In the thirteenth chapter of Luke, our Lord mentions two disasters of that time in which a number of people had been killed. It was the common opinion that such people were greater sinners than the average to bring down such calamity upon themselves. But our Lord declares that "there is no difference." All are sinners, and unless we repent we shall all alike perish.

We have our own way of reckoning one man a worse sinner than another, but in God's sight we are all lost until we are saved; and if a man is lost, he cannot be more lost than another. If you are not a believer on Christ, you need not be any worse than you are right now to be lost, for it is your lack of believing that condemns you (John 3:18).

Jesus told a parable of a barren fig tree, whose owner was about to destroy it, when the vinedresser interceded to give it another chance. He was speaking of the Jews—typified in Scripture by the fig tree—who had the opportunity for the Messiah's ministry but had not received Him. It should also remind us that God is giving us an opportunity to bear fruit unto Him, and He wants fruit, not mere leaves of profession.

He healed a crippled woman on the Sabbath, and immediately the Pharisaic ruler of the synagogue objected. Jesus sternly calls His accuser a hypocrite and rebukes him. He speaks of the woman as one "whom Satan hath bound," which throws light upon His attitude toward sickness as a shackle of Satan. Often we regard sickness as the will of God, when we ought to face it as a scourge of the devil. When Jesus was asked whether few would be saved (Luke 13:23) He did not answer directly, but bade His hearers to strive to enter in at the strait gate. Many who were highly favored will be cast out, while the babes and simple souls will be saved. It has ever been so: the privileged Jews first refused Him while the untaught Gentiles received Him. Through the ages the first have been last and the last first.

When warned that Herod would kill Him, our Lord replies by calling the king a "fox" and telling him that He could not be hindered by any king. Jesus adds a statement of awful irony about Jerusalem: "I must get on to Jerusalem, for it is unthinkable that a prophet should be killed elsewhere. They have killed so many there that it is natural to expect it."

He closes with a lament over the city that He gladly would have gathered unto Himself. One day He will return, and Israel shall look upon Him whom they have pierced and shall say, "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord." Today, the papers tell us of continuous return to Palestine and the revival of that land—the greatest miracle of modern times. The stage is being set for the Lord's return. Are you ready?

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**Walter Chantry** - Our ears have grown accustomed to hearing men told to "accept Jesus as your personal Saviour," a form of words which is not found in Scripture. It has become an empty phrase. These may be precious words to the Christian—"personal Saviour." But they are wholly inadequate to instruct a sinner in the way to eternal life. They wholly ignore an essential element of the Gospel, namely repentance. And that necessary ingredient of Gospel preaching is swiftly fading from evangelical pulpits, though the New Testament is filled with it.... Paul confronted the intellectuals of Mars' Hill by preaching, "God now commandeth all men everywhere to repent" ( Acts 17:30 ). This was no optional note on the apostolic trumpet. It was the melody, the theme of their instructions to sinners. Merely to talk about "accepting a personal Saviour" eliminates this crucial imperative. (from Today's Gospel: Authentic or Synthetic?)

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**J I Packer on preaching hell** - To announce the reality of hell is a testing and grueling task. The compassion and fellow-feeling that should mark all Christian communicators require us to do it, not with gloating and contempt, but **with tears**, if not in our eyes, then in our hearts. Any appearance of off-handness in our manner will surely discredit our matter, just because it discredits us as human beings. It is hard to take seriously a message from a messenger who does not appear to take it seriously himself, or at any rate not

to feel about it as a good man should. R. W. Dale once said that D. L. Moody had a right to preach about hell because he so clearly did so from a weeping heart.

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**John MacArthur on the need for repentance** - Over the past five years or so, I have had opportunities to minister in many of the nations that we used to call “Iron Curtain” countries. There I have encountered a surprisingly vigorous evangelical church—solidly biblical, doctrinally orthodox, and alive. Western Christians generally do not comprehend or appreciate the vitality of Eastern European churches without visiting them firsthand. The churches are full—often uncomfortably packed—with crowds standing outside looking through windows. The people are earnest in their commitment to Christ in a way that is rare among Western Christians. Their services are worshipful, subdued, yet intensely passionate. Spontaneous weeping is as common as laughter. Prayer for the lost and personal evangelism are on the hearts and minds of these people more than social activities and sports. The focus of their message to the world is a clear call to repentance.

Eastern European Christianity typically refers to new Christians as “**repenters**.” When someone comes to Christ, fellow believers say the new Christian has “repented.” Usually new believers are given the opportunity to stand before the church and verbalize their repentance. In nearly every church service I have attended in the former Soviet Union, at least one new convert has made a public confession of repentance.

It is entirely biblical for the church to make repentance the chief feature of its message to the unsaved world. After all, the gospel calls people to come to the One who can deliver them from sin. People who don’t feel guilt and want to be delivered from the power and penalty of sin wouldn’t even want a deliverer.

Did you realize that our Lord’s Great Commission demands that we preach repentance? Luke alone of all the Gospels records the content of the message Jesus commanded His disciples to preach: “that repentance for forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in His name to all the nations” ( Luke 24:47). As we shall shortly see, repentance was the substance of the church’s message to a hostile world throughout the Book of Acts.

The Bible is clear:

**Repentance is at the heart of the gospel call. Unless we are preaching repentance we are not preaching the gospel our Lord has charged us to preach. If we fail to call people to turn from their sins, we are not communicating the same gospel the apostles proclaimed.**

The Western church has subtly changed the thrust of the gospel. Instead of exhorting sinners to repent, evangelicalism in our society asks the unsaved to “**accept Christ**.” That makes sinners sovereign and puts Christ at their disposal. In effect it puts Christ on trial and hands the judge’s robes and gavel to the inquirer—precisely opposite of what should be. Ironically, people who ought to be concerned about whether Christ will accept them are being told by Christians that it is the sinner’s prerogative to “accept Christ.” This modified gospel depicts conversion as “a decision for Christ” rather than a life-transforming change of heart involving genuine faith, repentance, surrender, and rebirth unto newness of life. (Borrow [The Vanishing Conscience](#))

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**A. W. Tozer** wrote - The formula “Accept Christ” has become a panacea of universal application, and I believe it has been fatal to many.... The trouble is that the whole “Accept Christ” attitude is likely to be wrong. It shows Christ [appealing] to us rather than us to Him. It makes Him stand hat-in-hand awaiting our verdict on Him, instead of our kneeling with troubled hearts awaiting His verdict on us. It may even permit us to accept Christ by an impulse of mind or emotions, painlessly, at no loss to our ego and no inconvenience to our usual way of life. For this ineffectual manner of dealing with a vital matter we might imagine some parallels; as if, for instance, Israel in Egypt had “accepted” the blood of the Passover but continued to live in bondage, or the prodigal son had “accepted” his father’s forgiveness and stayed on among the swine in the far country. Is it not plain that if accepting Christ is to mean anything there must be moral action that accords with it? (See chapter “[What it Means to Accept Christ](#)”)

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**P G Matthew - But unless you repent, you too will all perish.** —Luke 13:3

In Luke 13, Jesus was told by some in the crowd that Pilate had killed some Galileans while they were worshiping. Perhaps they had committed a serious crime against Pilate and the authority of Rome, and they mistakenly had assumed that they would be safe in Jerusalem and in the temple courts, that the law would not catch them.

The real issue in this passage, however, is that those Jews who reported this to Jesus did so with the assumption that those who had been murdered by Pilate must have been very wicked people. And they meant by implication that they themselves must be very righteous. In fact, if we study Judaism, whether it is conservative, reformed, or orthodox, we will notice that there is no conception of salvation based on genuine repentance and faith. No, the Jews thought they were already God’s children.

But, notice, Jesus spoke something in reply that was absolutely unexpected. What did he say? “Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans because they suffered this way? I tell you, no!” And then he gave a further bombshell. He looked directly at those who thought they were righteous, who assumed they had no need for a Savior, and warned, “I tell you, unless you repent, you too will all perish.”

Jesus focused his attention on the most important issue in the life of these self-satisfied people. He was saying plainly that all people are sinners in need of a Savior. Not only the Gentiles, not only the Galileans, whom the Jerusalemites looked down upon, but all are sinners. Notice how quickly he directed his listeners to the issues of sin, death, and hell. He said, in effect, “You who pretend to be righteous and think you have no need for salvation, you who like to talk about theology—it is you who are in serious danger right now.”

There is a real hell where all impenitent sinners shall suffer eternally. Jesus warns all self-righteous and impenitent people what awaits them. But, thank God, we can be saved if we repent and cry out to him, “Lord, have mercy on me, a sinner.” Jesus came to save sinners, and only sinners, from perishing. Let us acknowledge our sins and cry out to him.

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## **Who’s to Blame When Towers Fall? By Dr. Ed Dobson**

Scripture: Luke 13:1–8, especially verse 3 Unless you repent you will all likewise perish.

Introduction: This week, the news, ceremonies, and perhaps our own minds will remind us of the terrible tragedy of September 11, 2001. When tragedies strike, who is responsible? Some well-known TV Christian personalities pronounced September 11th as God’s judgment on America for their sins. Some people blame governments, some people blame God, some people blame the victims for their sin. So who is to blame? Jesus was once asked a very similar question that will help us sort out this issue.

1. Background. This passage is not intended for those whose lives have been broken because of their personal falling towers. This is written to those of us who at a distance observe tragedy, observe falling towers, and wonder, “Why God? Who’s to blame? Who’s responsible?” The disciples and Jesus were discussing two events:

A. A Story of Terrible Personal Suffering (v. 1). Pilate apparently discovered a plot by the Galilean Zealots, the violently nationalistic Jews, to attack the Roman army or authorities. When these Galileans came to Jerusalem, to the temple to offer their sacrifices, Pilate instructed his soldiers to go into the temple to the altar and kill these Galileans. Their own personal blood mingled with the blood of the animals they brought for sacrifice.

B. A Story of Inexplicable Personal Disaster (v. 4). The next story Jesus brings up as an example: It’s about a falling tower. Nobody killed the people in the tower, but the tower simply fell. It had to be a rather large tower by first-century standards, because 18 people were inside. Without warning, without notice, the tower falls and they are killed in the rubble.

2. Questions Raised by Jesus.

A. Were the Victims Worse Sinners (v. 2)? The essence of Jesus’ question suggests that terrible personal suffering, or inexplicable national disaster, can always be traced to personal sin. If you were a first-century Jew, and you heard about the Galileans you would say, “They deserved it. God zapped them, they were terrible sinners.” So Jesus raises the question: Do you think these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans because they died such a terrible death?

B. Were the Victims Guiltier (v. 4)? The people in the first century thought that God had this ledger or this scale and when you do something wrong, you become indebted to God, you are guilty before God, and you owe God something. Somehow the people in the tower of Siloam had accumulated such a heavy debt to God, that God had had enough of them.

3. Jesus’ Answer (v. 3). I love the answer of Jesus, “I tell you, no.” However, with Jesus, just about the time you take a “Whew, great answer,” He turns right around and gets in your face: “but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish” (v. 3).

A. We Are All Sinners. Jesus is saying to the crowds, “You’re in the business of making judgment about who’s the worse sinner? Who is more indebted to God? Who is guiltier before God?” Jesus said, “I’m here to tell you, ‘You’re a sinner as well.’ ”

B. We All Need to Repent. What is repentance? It’s a change of heart and a change of mind that leads to a change of direction. Paul said being sorry for your sin is not enough (2 Cor. 7:10). It must be a godly sorrow that through the working of the Holy Spirit in your life brings about genuine repentance, a change of heart, a change of mind, a change of direction—turning to the Lord.

C. We All Need to Repent While We Can (v. 6). We’re the fig tree in this story. The gardener who allows more time for repentance is God, but He’s also the One who cuts the tree down when it doesn’t bear fruit.

**Conclusion:** If you’ve never repented of your sin, turned to Christ, and given your life to Him, you are living somewhere between the

second chance and the last chance. The fact that you are here this morning may indicate that God is cultivating the soil of your heart. The Holy Spirit is plying, touching, convicting, convincing, drawing you to Christ. Jesus is saying, not only are you a sinner, not only do you need to repent, but you need to repent now. While God is kind, while He is long-suffering, while He is patient, while He is the God of the second chance, at some point He will become the God of the last chance. And who knows when the tower will fall on you or fall on me? ([Who's to Blame when Towers Fall](#))

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## REPENT OR PERISH - E F Hallock

TEXT: Luke 13:1–5.

INTRODUCTION: Noah preached repentance to his generation; they repented not and perished. Jonah preached repentance to Nineveh; they repented and lived. Jesus has preached repentance to us; He “came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, and saying, ‘The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel’” (Mark 1:14–15).

### I. Elements of repentance.

- A. It is not mere penance, sorrow, and confession; they may follow it, however.
- B. It is a change of mind, attitude, and purpose; these result in forsaking of sin, and in faith in our Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 20:21).

### II. Reasons for repentance.

- A. God will judge you (see Acts 17:31; Rom. 14:10c–12; 2 Cor. 5:10).
- B. God has commanded you to repent.
- C. God will allow you to perish unless you repent.
- D. God is good (Rom. 2:4).

### III. Obstacles to repentance.

- A. Love of sins.
- B. Fear of evil companions.
- C. Religious prejudice.
- D. The pride of learning (not learning but the pride of learning).
- E. Willful selfishness—“The set of your soul.”

**CONCLUSION:** “Those whom I love, I reprove and chasten; so be zealous and repent. Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any one hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me” (Rev. 3:19–20).

**Luke 13:4 "Or do you suppose that those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them were worse culprits than all the men who live in Jerusalem?"**

KJV Luke 13:4 Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem?

NLT Luke 13:4 And what about the eighteen people who died when the tower in Siloam fell on them? Were they the worst sinners in Jerusalem?

- **in Siloam** Neh 3:15; Jn 9:7,11
- **the tower...fell and killed them** 1 Ki 20:30; Job 1:19
- **were worse culprits.** Luke 13:7:41,42; 11:4; Mt 6:12; 18:24
- [Luke 13:1-9 What We Should Learn From Tragedies](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 13:1-5 Supernatural Lessons from a Natural Disaster](#) - John MacArthur
- Multiple Sermons and Commentaries - Luke 13 Resources

[Pool of Siloam](#)

**JERUSALEMITES KILLED  
SUDDENLY, UNEXPECTEDLY!**

**Or do you suppose that those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them were worse culprits([opheiletes](#)) than all the men who live in Jerusalem** - So those who died in Lk 13:1 at the hands of Pilate are now mentioned on the same

plane as those who died in this accident. Again Jesus leaves no doubt that they were are no worse (not more guilty or more highly indebted to God - see [opheiletes](#) = debtors) than all the others who lived in Jerusalem. He is speaking very clearly, and not in parable, so His hearers can be sure to understand what He is saying.

**THOUGHT** - Jesus' choice of **culprits** ([opheiletes](#)) is surely not accidental, for every sinner is like these 18, a debtor to God because of committing countless sins against Him. Play [A Debtor to Mercy Alone](#).

A debtor to mercy alone,  
Of covenant mercy I sing;  
Nor fear, with Thy righteousness on,  
My person and offering to bring.  
The terrors of law and of God  
With me can have nothing to do;  
My Savior's obedience and blood  
Hide all my transgressions from view.  
(AMEN! HALLELUJAH!)

The work which His goodness began,  
The arm of His strength will complete;  
His promise is yea and amen,  
And never was forfeited yet.  
Things future, nor things that are now,  
Not all things below nor above  
Can make Him His purpose forego,  
Or sever my soul from His love.

My name from the palms of His hands  
Eternity will not erase;  
Impressed on His heart it remains  
In marks of indelible grace.  
Yes, I to the end shall endure,  
As sure as the earnest is given  
More happy, but not more secure,  
The glorified spirits in heaven.  
(See Inscribed on His Hands)

**MacArthur** explains that "The people of Jerusalem and Judea looked down on the Galileans as inferior (cf. John 7:52). But Jesus' follow up question, (Lk 13:4) referred to an incident involving Jerusalemites. (See [Luke Commentary](#))

**Cornerstone Biblical Commentary** – This particular incident, unrecorded by Josephus, presented Jesus with an ideal opportunity to comment on the pressing need for his hearers to clean up their acts in genuine turning to God in the light of disturbing recent events. Talbert has astutely observed, Jesus is dealing with two forms of tragedy here: tragedy due to human causes (the massacre), and tragedy due to a natural cause (the collapse of the tower). "Tragedy, says Jesus, is not the measure of one's sinfulness and one's need to repent. Those whose lives are tranquil likewise need to repent" (1989:145). (See [Luke, Acts](#))

**Siloam** - ([Wikipedia](#)) Water flowed into the [pool of Siloam](#) (John 9:7) from the [Gihon spring](#) ([illustration](#)) in the [Kidron Valley](#) through [Hezekiah's tunnel](#) (2 Kings 20:20) There is no archaeological record of a **tower** but in view of the name (**tower of Siloam**), it is very likely associated with the pool of Siloam.

**NET Note** - Unlike the previous event, when the tower in Siloam fell on them, it was an accident of fate. It raised the question, however, "Was this a judgment?"

As an aside, Jesus had just alluded to **debtor's prison** in Lk 12:58-59, and here uses the term translated **culprits** in the NAS but is more literally rendered "debtors."

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**Culprits** (Literally "**debtors**" - "offenders" - ESV, "sinners" - KJV, NLT, "more guilty" - NIV) [3781](#)([opheiletes](#) from [opheilo](#) = owe, conveying the basic meaning of owing a debt) means one who owes another. [Opheiletes](#) in other words describes one who has committed a misdeed and owes it to the law to make it right - in such case this person is called a guilty person, an offender or a sinner (Lu 13:4). **Opheiletes** describes one who owes God or from whom God can demand punishment as something due. All sinners owe a sin debt we can never pay, and only faith in Messiah "pays our debt," for He Alone paid for this debt, a debt He did not owe. **Richards** writes that words in the [opheilo](#) word group (including [opheiletes](#)) = "Words in this group originally expressed



the idea of a legal or personal obligation. The Greeks had both financial and, later, moral obligations in mind when they used this term. (Borrow [Expository Dictionary of Bible Words: Regency](#))

**EXCURSUS ON OUR DEBT PAID IN FULL** - The payment required for sin is death (cf Ge 2:17<sup>+</sup>, Ro 5:12<sup>+</sup>, Ro 6:23<sup>+</sup>) and when Christ said [TETELESTAI](#) in John 19:30<sup>+</sup>, He was saying that the sin debt was "PAID IN FULL!" If you believe that dear reader, His righteousness has been credited to your account (Ro 4:3<sup>+</sup>, Ro 4:24<sup>+</sup>, Gal 3:6-7<sup>+</sup>). We owed a debt we could never pay. Jesus paid a debt He did not owe! **Tony Evans** says "All the funds necessary to pay for our total redemption were put up by Jesus Christ on the Cross." Or as **Warren Wiersbe** put it "He took my bankruptcy and covered it with His solvency." He didn't just make a down payment and then expect me to keep up the installments. "But now he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of Himself" (Hebrews 9:26<sup>+</sup>). His empty tomb and His resurrection are indisputable testimony to the fact that the Father accepted His Son's payment for sin on our behalf, as our Substitute (The resurrection is the Father's "Amen" so to speak). Thus in John 19:30-[note](#) Jesus' cry of [TETELESTAI](#) was not a cry of defeat of a dying Man, but a cry of triumph of a Living, Life Giving Redeemer, a divine proclamation that the WORK OF REDEMPTION had been fully, finally and forever accomplished (cf Jn 4:34<sup>+</sup>, Jn 17:4<sup>+</sup>). [HALLELUJAH! AMEN!](#) (From the article entitled [Tetelestai - Paid in Full!](#))

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#### QUESTION - [Why did Jesus mention the tower of Siloam in Luke 13:4?](#)

**ANSWER** -Jesus mentions the tower in Siloam in the context of answering a question about a recent tragedy in Jerusalem. Some people told Jesus about a group of [Galileans](#) who had come to the temple to sacrifice, and Pontius Pilate slaughtered them, probably due to a public disturbance the Galileans were causing (Luke 13:1). The men who related this story to Jesus may have been trying to lure Him into taking sides, either for or against Pilate, or they may have simply been curious about Jesus' reaction to the massacre. Whatever their motivation, Jesus' response is sobering: "Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans because they suffered this way? I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish" (verses 2-3).

Jesus continues the conversation by mentioning another current event, this one involving the tower of Siloam: "Or those eighteen who died when the tower in Siloam fell on them—do you think they were more guilty than all the others living in Jerusalem? I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish" (Luke 13:4-5).

The fall of the tower of Siloam is not mentioned in other historical records, and, since the Bible gives no more detail of the structure's collapse, we cannot be sure what the tower was for or why it fell. The tragedy was obviously well-known to Jesus' hearers. Siloam was an area just outside the walls of Jerusalem on the southeast side of the city. A spring-fed [pool](#) was there, which was the scene of one of Christ's miracles (John 9). The tower of Siloam may have been part of an aqueduct system or a construction project that Pilate had begun. In any case, the tower fell, and eighteen people were killed in the catastrophe.

Here are two current events—the massacre on the temple mount and the collapse of the tower of Siloam, yet the same lessons are drawn from each. First, Jesus warned His audience not to assume that the victims of those tragedies had been judged for their great evil. It's always a temptation to assign sudden, unexplainable deaths to the judgment of God in response to secret (or open) sin. Jesus says not so fast; it is a mistake to automatically attribute such tragedies to the vengeance of God. Whether it is a man-made tragedy (Pilate's slaughter of the Galileans) or a naturally caused tragedy (the fall of the tower of Siloam), it is wrong to assume that the victims are somehow worse sinners than everyone else and thus deserve to die.

The second point Jesus made concerning both events is that everyone needs to repent. [Repentance](#) is a change of mind that results in a change of action. Jesus highlights the importance of repentance twice in this passage: repent or perish, He says; turn or burn. Instead of conjecturing on the Galileans' sin, focus on your own sin. Rather than assigning wickedness to those killed by the tower of Siloam, examine your own heart.

When tragedies strike, such as what happened at the tower of Siloam, it's natural for people to start asking why. Thoughts creep in such as maybe the victims deserved it somehow. Maybe they were bad people, and that's why bad things happened to them. But then sometimes it really seems like the people affected by tragedies are good. Especially when the victims are children. Why do [bad things happen to good people](#)? Why do bad things happen at all?

In commenting on the fall of the tower of Siloam, Jesus negates four assumptions that people often make:

- 1) Suffering is proportional to sinfulness.
- 2) Tragedy is a sure sign of God's judgment.
- 3) Bad things happen only to bad people.
- 4) We have the right to make such judgments.

To each of these assumptions, Jesus says, no.

When we read of a tragedy in the headlines, we should resist the temptation to assign guilt to the victims, as if they had received God's judgment. Rather, Jesus bids us look to the sin within us and take the headline as a warning to repent. The sudden death of someone should not be an occasion for blame but for self-examination.

Whether you're from Galilee or Jerusalem, from Kansas or Kenya, from the country or the city; whether you're rich or poor, young or old; whether you think of yourself as a sinner or a saint; and whether or not you even want to think about spiritual things—the fact is you are under God's judgment unless you repent and have faith in Jesus. [GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org)

#### Related Resources:

- [Why does God allow bad things to happen to good people? | GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org)
- [Why does God allow good things to happen to bad people? | GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org)
- [What does it mean that all things work together for good \(Romans 8:28\)? | GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org)

#### Luke 13:5 "I tell you, no, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish."

KJV Luke 13:5 I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.

- **unless you repent, you will all likewise perish** Lk 13:3; Isa 28:10-13; Ezek 18:30
- [Luke 13:1-9 What We Should Learn From Tragedies](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 13:1-5 Supernatural Lessons from a Natural Disaster](#) - John MacArthur
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### CALL TO REPENT REPEATED!

**I tell** (present tense - continually) **you, no** - Jesus clearly states that the men killed when the tower fell were not worse sinners than the people (sinners) in Jerusalem. They (WE) are all "culprits" (all debtors to God, cf their wages in Ro 6:23a+) and all guilty before a Holy God.

**But unless you repent** ([metanoeo](#)), **you will all likewise perish** ([apollumi](#)) - But is a strong contrast by Jesus, calculated to turn their thinking from a *catastrophe* to a *crisis*, a personal *crisis of faith*, in this case manifest by personal, genuine repentance (cf Mt 3:8+ - proven genuine by the supernatural fruit in one's life) The punishment of those murdered or killed by accident is the same (both perish) unless they **repent**. The fact that Jesus does not just say "they died" but that they **'perish'** supports the assumption that none of this group of 18 had placed their faith in Jesus. Also when believers are described as dying, most often Scripture says they fall asleep (Acts 7:60, 1Th 4:13) So they did not just die temporally, but they perished eternally! Unless we as believers are [raptured](#), we will all "fall asleep," but as believers none of us will **perish** because we are [eternally safe and secure in Christ Jesus](#) (cf Jesus' promise that "they will never perish" - Jn 10:14, 27-29). When the flood of God's righteous judgment comes, we will be found safe in the "Ark" (in Christ) having been rescued from the wrath to come by our great Rescuer and Redeemer, Christ Jesus (1 Th 1:10+, cf Col 1:13+).

"There is nothing that keeps wicked Men at any one Moment, out of Hell,  
but the meer Pleasure of GOD!"

-- Jonathan Edwards

**Likewise** - Jesus is not saying they will physically die in the same manner, but that spiritually they will all suffer the same judgment of eternal torment in [Gehenna](#), also known as the [Lake of Fire](#), the place the [Second Death](#).

**MacArthur** - In the terms of the Lord's analogy, they need to settle their case before they face the divine judge and it is too late (see exposition of Luke 12:58–59). Most of the Jewish people were caught up in a works-righteousness system that forced people to view themselves as good based on selective and superficial perception. Consequently, they refused to see themselves as sinners and therefore rejected (Matt. 11:20) Jesus' call for them to repent (Matt. 4:17), just as they had John the Baptist's before Him (Matt. 3:2). Ultimately, it was because Jesus rejected the Jewish people's hypocritical self-righteousness, categorized them as spiritually blind and impoverished, and boldly confronted their need for repentance that they plotted to murder Him. (See [Luke Commentary](#))

**Mattoon** - The evidence of saving faith is repentance from sin or a turning from and hatred for sin. A Sunday School teacher once

asked a class what was meant by the word "repentance." A little boy put up his hand and said, "It is being sorry for your sins." A little girl also raised her hand and said, "It is being sorry enough to quit." Spurgeon said, "Repentance is an inseparable companion of faith." The tear of repentance glitters in the eye of faith. Faith and repentance are like Siamese twins, they are virtually joined together. They are two spokes of the same wheel or two handles of the same plow. Repentance is a heart broken FOR sin and FROM sin. True repentance has a double aspect. It looks upon things in the past with a weeping eye, and upon the future with a watchful eye. If your sorrow is because of certain consequences that have come on your family because of your sin, this is remorse, not true repentance. If, on the other hand, you are grieved because you also sinned against God and His Word, then you are on the right road. Late repentance is seldom true but true repentance is never late. Repentance is a turning from sin and returning to the Lord. **Repentance adds nothing to faith but is rather an integral part of it. Saving faith is repentant faith.** Repentance and faith are inseparable. Acts 20:21— Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, **repentance** toward God, and **faith** toward our Lord Jesus Christ. The Bible refers to **salvation** as **repentance** at times. Romans 2:4, 2 Peter 3:9. If a person genuinely loves God, he will have a built-in hatred for sin. It is impossible to love two things contradictory of one another. If you love gardens, you will hate weeds. If you love babies, you will hate abortion. If you love God you will hate sin. Proverbs 28:13 ([note](#)) says "He who conceals his transgressions will not prosper, But he who confesses and forsakes them will find compassion." **This verse links the two inseparable parts of true repentance: confession and forsaking sin. True repentance is more than being sorry for your sins.** Some are sorry they got caught. This is not repentance. Hell is full of people sorry for their sins. Judas was sorry for betraying Jesus. He thought he could solve his problem by giving the money back to the priests. It did not work. He ended his anguish by committing suicide. We never saw any repentance in Judas or asking for forgiveness. Judas knew only the burden of broken fellowship and it destroyed him. The test of true repentance does involve a godly sorrow that one has disobeyed and offended the Lord.

2 Corinthians 7:8-9+— For though I caused you sorrow by my letter, I do not regret it; though I did regret it—for I see that that letter caused you sorrow, though only for a while—I now rejoice, not that you were made sorrowful, but that you were made sorrowful to the point of repentance; for you were made sorrowful according to the will of God, so that you might not suffer loss in anything through us.

The truly repentant person, who wants freedom from the burden of broken fellowship, comes to the Lord with no pride, self-will, rights, and no claim to worthiness. He sees himself as a repulsive sinner who has no claim to salvation apart from the abundant grace of God. Without repentance, we will perish. ([Treasures from Luke](#))

**Hendriksen** applies Luke 13:1-5 stating that "Every man in the audience should examine his own heart and life, and should ask himself the question, "Has the basic change, from Satan to God, from darkness to light, from sin to holiness, taken place in my own life? Have I truly repented and do I really place all my confidence in God, serving him alone? In other words, Am I converted?" If not, let him ask God to enable him to take that important step. Says Jesus, "Unless you are converted, you, too, will perish." (Borrow [Exposition of the Gospel of Luke](#))

## **WARNING NUMBER TWO!**

Jesus does not always repeat things but when He does it behooves us to "Listen Up!" We need to hear and heed His clarion call in Luke 13:3 and Luke 13:5 regarding the necessity of personal repentance! This charge reminds me of the warning He repeats to the Jews in John 8 declaring

"I said therefore to you, that **you shall die in your sins**; for unless you believe that I am He, **you shall die in your sins**." (John 8:24)

**Comment:** The difference of here is that in place of **repent**, Jesus has **believe**. Genuine belief will always include true repentance. Note that every person alive today is either still **IN ADAM** (in his sin - Ro 5:12+) or **IN CHRIST** (in His salvation - 2 Cor 5:17+). Physical death will be the great divider of every person who has ever lived on earth. Repent and believe **IN CHRIST** by grace or otherwise **you shall die in your sins! How tragic would it be for you, dear reader, to have heard these living and active words** (Heb 4:12-13+) **from the lips of Jesus, and to fail to respond with genuine faith and repentance! Unless you too repent you will perish without Christ and be eternally separated from God** (cf 2Th 1:8-9+).

Remember that inherent in the verb **repent** is a changed life, so if you have made **approfession** of Christ at some point of time in the past and yet your life and lifestyle since that **profession** have exhibited NO CHANGE, then it is very likely that you are not a "**possessor**" of Christ, and that you are still spiritually dead in your trespasses and sins (Eph 2:1+). It behooves all of us to take Paul's admonition seriously and to "**Test** (peirazo - present imperative) **yourselves** (*yourselves* is first in the Greek sentence for emphasis - not others but judge yourself!) to see if you are in the faith (= a genuine follower of Christ); **examine** (dokimazo - present

imperative) Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you—unless indeed you **fail the test** ([adokimos](#) = rejected)? (2 Cor 13:5+)

**Spurgeon** rightly reminds us that it is "Not talking, but doing, not loud profession, but quiet, practical godliness, wins the day!" ([Luke 13](#) - exposition)

**Jesus** asked a poignant question "Why do you (continually - present tense) **call Me, 'Lord, Lord,'** and (continually - present tense) **do not do** what I say?" (Luke 6:46+)

If we are merely **professors** who have never experienced a Spirit enabled changed life (signifying true repentance and indicating that one truly possesses the indwelling Spirit of Christ - Ro 8:9+, cf Ro 8:13-14+), we will one day hear these fateful words from the lips of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Judge of the living and the dead (2 Ti 4:1+):

Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' (IT IS NOT PROFESSION OR CONFESSION WITH THE LIPS, BUT CONFESSION BACKED UP BY EVIDENCE OF A CHANGED LIFE) will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who **does** (present tense - not perfectly but as the "general direction" of your life) the will of My Father Who is in heaven will enter. 22 "**Many** (**WOE!** cf **MANY** in Mt 7:13+ and **FEW** in Mt 7:14+) will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles? (NOTICE HE DOES NOT DISPUTE THEIR CLAIM!)' 23 "And then I will declare to them, 'I never (AT ANY POINT IN TIME) knew you (INTIMATELY - IN COVENANT, IN UNION WITH). **DEPART** FROM ME ([aorist imperative](#) = They may never have obeyed a single command from Jesus during their life, but they **WILL OBEY** this command to **depart** from His presence forever!), YOU WHO **PRACTICE** (present tense - as the "general direction" of your life) LAWLESSNESS ([anomia](#)).' (Mt 7:21-23+)

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#### **James Smith - NECESSITY OF REPENTANCE BIBLE "EXCEPTS," No. 2.**

"Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13:3, 5).

In Scotland there is a ruined tower known as the **Tower of Repentance**. A sceptic passed by it one day, and seeing a shepherd-boy reading his Bible, scoffingly asked: "Can you tell me the way to Heaven?" Instantly the lad replied, "By way of yonder Tower!" It was the right answer. The boy had certainly read the Book of books to profit. Repentance was our Lord's first message on commencing His short earthly ministry, and it is His first word to all sinners. What He asks first of us is not our appreciation, but our repentance.

"Do you mean to tell me that there is no chance of me getting to Heaven unless I weep and wail; this is quite ridiculous."

We quite agree with you.

"How can you? You have just said that my repentance is essential, and is not repentance being sorry, mourning, and weeping?"

By no means. Our definitions are often woefully astray. To repent is to be sorry for our sins, is often said. It is nothing of the kind. It is quite distinct from it: "Ye sorrowed to repentance" (2 Cor. 7:9). Here sorrow is spoken of as something quite apart from repentance, though leading up to it. Mere sorrow is not repentance. If so, then what about Esau? "He found no place for repentance, though he sought it (the blessing) carefully with tears." Judas, the betrayer of our Lord, was filled with sorrow and remorse on accomplishing his dastardly work, yet he went out and hanged himself. Don't forget the lesson of Acts 2.

Under the mighty preaching of Peter at Pentecost, the people were pricked to the heart, and cried, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" There was most certainly real and genuine sorrow, yet the preacher replied, "Repent." There can be sorrow without repentance, yet no repentance without genuine and heartfelt sorrow.

The events which gave rise to this pronouncement are unrecorded. Who these Galileans were is uncertain. They were fiery and turbulent people, often in rebellion. Probably many of them came to observe one of the feasts at Jerusalem, and Pilate, who had long desired to arrest some of them, surprised them whilst they were offering sacrifices, and slew them. The Tower in Siloam incident is unknown. It is evident that the people foolishly sat in judgment upon these unfortunate individuals who had so suddenly lost their lives, assuming that they must have been wicked to have merited such fate, and self-righteously imagined that they were much better because they had not so suffered.

This statement of our Lord's proved to be prophecy, and was literally fulfilled thirty-five years afterwards in the siege of Jerusalem, when over one million perished. Multitudes of the priests, who were going on with the sacrifices, were slain, and their blood mingled with the blood of their victims; and multitudes were buried under the ruins of walls, houses, and temple.

But this word is for all, dear reader. "Except ye repent, ye shall ... perish." Awful word, dreadful in its significance! It is unfathomable. Twice over our blessed Lord repeated this "Except," and the repetition is impressive, emphasising its importance.

Repentance simply means “a change of mind.” This was the first great truth that Luther discovered, and from which the Reformation came. It means a change of mind leading to a change of heart and purpose. First, a change of mind about myself, about my spiritual state, and the right object in life. I discover that instead of being all right I am all wrong. This will most assuredly lead to great sorrow; and if my eyes do not weep, my heart will. Second, there will be a radical change of mind about sin. Sin, that seemed so light a matter before, is seen as a hateful thing, something to be detested and dreaded. Then there will be a change of mind about God. I shall see God as an outraged Being: a Divine One of infinite love and compassion.

It is, of course, a change of mind leading to a change of conduct. Some years ago we were much impressed with the statement of a cultured Jew, who said that “the chief difference between Jewish ethical books and Christian devotional writings is that in the former repentance does not mean weep but return.” Of course, he was labouring under the erroneous definition so many give of repentance. Return to God; that is the fruit of repentance. There is often a return, but not to God: “They return, but not to the Most High” (Hosea 7:16). This may be a return to some duties or spiritual exercises; but these, instead of a return to God will be of no avail.

And what is the producing cause of repentance? The goodness of God as manifested in the Cross (Rom. 2:4). This is well illustrated in the account of Dr. Pentecost’s conversion. Impressed by some revival services, he tried, but in vain, to produce what he imagined to be repentance. In a despairing mood he went again to church, but at the close of the sermon he was so devoid of feeling as not to recollect the subject. But as he stepped into the aisle, the dying love of Jesus was made real to him. In a moment he saw that Jesus died for him. Justification by faith, which at that time he had never heard stated, was as clear as it had been ever since. Darkness was gone, and all deadness of heart. He was not thinking of himself, but of the work of redemption wrought out by the Redeemer. He knew that he was saved, not through his efforts, or resolves, not even on account of faith, but because Jesus had put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. Said he to himself: “If God is satisfied with what Christ has done for me, I ought to be, and I am.” With a glad, peaceful heart he went forward; and so may we.

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**A Call To Repentance:** Do you think that they were worse sinners . . . ? I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish. --Luke 13:4-5

A mixture of thoughts and emotions swept over me when I heard that a plane had crashed near Pittsburgh, killing everyone aboard. I felt numb. So many people were suddenly ushered into eternity. I thought about the panic that swept over the passengers and crew as the plane hurtled downward. I wondered how many were ready to meet the Lord. My heart went out to those who had loved ones or friends on that flight. When I learned that two of my friends had flown into Pittsburgh a week earlier with the same airline, I thought of the words of Jesus found in Luke 13:1-5. Why did those people die? Not because they were any better or worse than the rest of us. Since all of us sin, none of us has a right to think we are too good to die this way. There’s no room for self-righteous smugness. Nor is there room for bitter complaint. In our fallen world, death comes to all of us--one way or another--in God’s own time. Disasters are a call to repentance. They should remind us of our need to confess our sins and turn to Jesus for salvation or renew our commitment to Him.

Lord, help us to respond properly whenever we are confronted by tragedy. --H V L ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Come to Christ, for time is fleeting,  
Harden not your heart today;  
For it’s Christ you will be meeting  
On that glad or dreadful day.  
--Anon.

It’s never too soon to repent, but soon it may be too late.

**Luke 13:6 And He began telling this parable: "A man had a fig tree which had been planted in his vineyard; and he came looking for fruit on it and did not find any.**

KJV Luke 13:6 He spake also this parable; A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none.

- **A man had a fig tree which had been planted** Ps 80:8-13; Isa 5:1-4; Jer 2:21; Mt 21:19-20; Mk 11:12-14
- **and he came looking for fruit on it and did not find any** Lk 20:10-14; Mt 21:34-40; Jn 15:16; Gal 5:22; Phil 4:17
- [Luke 13:1-9 What We Should Learn From Tragedies](#) - Steven Cole



- [Luke 13:6-9 Living on Borrowed Time](#) - John MacArthur
- Multiple Sermons and Commentaries - Luke 13 Resources

### Related Passages:

Isaiah 5:1-7+ Let me sing now for my well-beloved (ISRAEL) a song of my beloved concerning His vineyard (HERE A VINEYARD INSTEAD OF A FIG TREE). My well-beloved had a vineyard on a fertile hill (FERTILE PROMISED LAND OF CANAAN!). 2 He dug it all around, removed its stones, And planted it with the choicest vine. And He built a tower in the middle of it And also hewed out a wine vat in it; Then He expected it to produce good grapes, But it produced only worthless ones. 3 "And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah, Judge between Me and My vineyard. 4 **"What more was there to do for My vineyard that I have not done in it? Why, when I expected it to produce good grapes did it produce worthless ones?"** 5 "So now let Me tell you what I am going to do to My vineyard: I will remove its hedge and it will be consumed; I will break down its wall and it will become trampled ground. 6 **"I will lay it waste;** It will not be pruned or hoed, But briars and thorns will come up. I will also charge the clouds to rain no rain on it." 7 **For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel And the men of Judah His delightful plant. Thus He looked for justice, but behold, bloodshed; For righteousness, but behold, a cry of distress.** (Isaiah 5:1-7+)

Matthew 21:19-20 (SECOND MENTION OF FIG TREE - THIS ONE LITERAL BUT ALSO A PICTURE OF ISRAEL) Seeing a lone fig tree by the road, He came to it and found nothing on it except leaves only; and He \*said to it, "No longer shall there ever be any fruit from you." And at once the fig tree withered. 20 Seeing this, the disciples were amazed and asked, "How did the fig tree wither all at once?"

Mark 11:12-14+ (SAME AS ABOVE) On the next day, when they had left Bethany, He became hungry. 13 Seeing at a distance a fig tree in leaf, He went to see if perhaps He would find anything on it; and when He came to it, He found nothing but leaves, for it was not the season for figs. 14 He said to it, "May no one ever eat fruit from you again!" And His disciples were listening.



Fig Tree

## THE PARABLE OF A FRUITLESS FIG TREE

**And He began telling** (imperfect tense) **this parable** ([parabole](#)) - Jesus uses the simple and straightforward analogy of a fig tree, something that would have been readily understandable to the those in an agrarian society. Jesus is of course speaking to the Jews so the primary application of this **parable** is to the Jewish Nation (and to individual Jews), but it also applies to every soul that reads and/or hears these words, because in its conclusion it speaks of a judgment which is inevitable! Notice also that this parable marks the end of the long evangelistic discourse that began in Luke 12:1 and serves to emphasize "Jesus' point that everyone is living on borrowed time." (MacArthur)

**THOUGHT** - Let us, every one, read this parable as if our Lord Jesus Christ were now speaking it for the first time to each of us. There is a lesson here which we shall do well to heed. It was a fig tree, a fruit-bearing tree by profession, so it ought to have borne fruit. It was planted; it was not a wild tree, it was planted in a vineyard, in the proper place for fig trees to grow, in good soil; and therefore the owner of it had a right to come and look for fruit on it; but he found none. Have we not here, tonight, some who are planted in the Church of God who ought, by their *profession*, to be bearing fruit, but they are not? Christ has come, and he has looked for fruit; but he has found none (WOE!). (Spurgeon)

**J C Ryle** adds that "THE parable we have now read is peculiarly humbling and heart-searching. The Christian who can hear it and not feel sorrow and shame as he looks at the state of Christendom, must be in a very unhealthy state of soul."

Now comes a parable that brings out two things:  
the need for repentance and God's slowness to punish.

-- Leon Morris

**Utley** - The fig tree was often used as a symbol of Israel (cf. Hos. 9:10; Joel 1:7). However, in the account in Matt. 21:19ff, the fig tree is a symbol of Israel's leaders only. In the OT allusion from Isa. 5, the bad fruit came from God's special vineyard. This context seems to refer to national Israel as a whole, whose spiritual life and priorities were characterized in her leaders.

The parable in Lk 13:6-9 clearly "depicts the nation (of Israel) on the edge of judgment and God as a patient God, allowing the nation one final chance to respond to him in faith." (Bock)

**Barclay** - Here is a parable at one and the same time lit by grace and close packed with warnings.

**Leon Morris** - Now comes a parable that brings out two things: the need for repentance and God's slowness to punish. The preceding passage has stressed the importance of repenting and this one highlights the fact that opportunity does not last for ever. (Borrow [The Gospel According to St. Luke: An Introduction and Commentary](#))

**Hendriksen** - If the central lesson of Lk 13:1-5 is "Be converted," then that of Lk 13:6-9 is "Be converted NOW." Do not delay! (Borrow [Exposition of the Gospel of Luke](#))

**Mattoon** - Jesus has used the stories of two catastrophes to stress the importance of repentance. He continues this train of thought and gives the reason why repentance is vital in this parable of an unfruitful fig tree. ([Treasures from Luke](#))

**Liefeld** - Once more Jesus alludes to Micah 7, this time to Micah 7:1+, with its lament over unproductive fig trees. The symbolism, like that of the vine in Isaiah 5:1-7, applies to Israel. Luke includes this parable instead of the cursing of the fig tree (found only in Mt 21:18-22; Mk 11:12-14, 20-25). Here the tree is not immediately destroyed, as it was in the cursing incident, but is given an extra year of grace (Lk 13:8), even beyond the three years its owner had already waited (Lk 13:7). Israel failed to recognize her season of opportunity (cf. Lk 12:56+; Lk 19:41-44). (Borrow [The Expositor's Bible Commentary](#))

**A man had a fig tree ([suke](#)) which had been planted in his vineyard** - Fig trees generally take some time after planting before they begin to bear fruit, but their ultimate purpose IS to bear fruit. This **fig tree** was planted in the the man's own vineyard (where soil was especially rich for the grapes in the vineyard) and had the watch care of a vineyard-keeper, and thus had ideal conditions to bear fruit.

**Mattoon** - Fig trees were valued for their fruit and for their shade (Nathanael was sitting under one - Jn 1:48). Like the vine, fig trees became a symbol of security and of prosperity. A fruitful tree was a symbol of godly living. They grew wild, and in a wild state, the female fig blossoms had to be pollinated by a wasp that developed inside the inedible caprifigs, which grew several times a year. When the fig tree was cultivated over a period of time, it did not need the insect pollination. The cultivated tree was often planted in a vineyard. If the tree was allowed to grow to its full height, it could reach thirty feet, but if it was on rocky soil or was cut back regularly, it could be limited to a bush. The leaves of the fig tree were large enough to serve as coverings for Adam and Eve (Genesis 3:7). The leaves developed at the end of spring, at the end of April, and were therefore a sign that summer was approaching (Matthew 24:32). Fruit could be found on the tree for about ten months of the year. The first-ripe figs were ready in June, but the main crop matured in August. There was then a small crop of winter figs that often remained until the spring. ([Treasures from Luke](#))

**Barclay** - The **fig-tree** occupied a specially favored position. It was not unusual to see fig-trees, thorn-trees and apple-trees in vineyards. The soil was so shallow and poor that trees were grown wherever there was soil to grow them; but the fig-tree had a more than average chance; and it had not proved worthy of it. Repeatedly, directly and by implication, Jesus reminded men that they would be judged according to the opportunities they had. C. E. M. Joad once said, "We have the powers of gods and we use them like irresponsible schoolboys." Never was a generation entrusted with so much as ours and, therefore, never was a generation so answerable to God. The parable teaches that uselessness invites disaster....Further, the parable teaches that nothing which only takes out can survive. The fig-tree was drawing strength and sustenance from the soil; and in return was producing nothing. That was precisely its sin. In the last analysis, there are two kinds of people in this world—those who take out more than they put in, and those who put in more than they take out. ([Luke 13 Commentary](#))(**Below are Barclay's points on the parable summarized**)

1. Uselessness invites disaster
2. If something only takes, it can not survive

3. God gives second chances
4. There is a final chance

**He came looking for fruit on it and did not find any** - The fig tree has relatively large leaves which tend to obscure the fruit, so that one has to come closer and look carefully for the fruit in order to find it. In this case the leaves did not obscure the fruit, because there was none.

**James Smith** - For three years God in Christ sought fruit and found none. Yet the compassionate Saviour interceded, crying, "Father, forgive them" (Luke 23:34). And though spared for a season to get the "digging" of His teaching and proofs of His resurrection, yet remaining in unbelief they were cut off (Rom. 11:20). Cumberers will not always be permitted in His vineyard. This parable contains solemn and searching lessons for every Christian.

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**Parable** (3850) ([parabole](#) from **para** = beside, near + **ballo** = throw, cast; English "parable") is literally a throwing beside or placing of one thing by the side of another (used in classic Greek to describe juxtaposition of ships in battle). The metaphorical meaning is to place or lay something besides something else for the purpose of comparison. (Mt 24:32, Mk 13:28, Mk 3:23, Lk 14:7). An illustration (Mt 13:3). In Hebrews 9:9 the idea is of something (OT Tabernacle) that serves as a model or example pointing beyond itself for later realization and thus a type or a figure.

**MacArthur** says [parabole](#) is "A spiritual or moral truth would often be expressed by laying it alongside, so to speak, a physical example that could be more easily understood. A common, observable object (IN THIS CASE A FIG TREE) or practice was used to illustrate a subjective truth or principle. **That which was well known was laid alongside that which was not known or understood in order to explain it.** The known elucidated the unknown. The parable was a common form of Jewish teaching... Teaching through parables and other figurative means is effective because it helps make abstract truth more concrete, more interesting, easier to remember, and easier to apply to life. When a truth is externalized in the figures of a parable, the internalizing of moral and spiritual meaning is much easier. In the series of parables in Matthew 13, Jesus uses such familiar figures as soil, seed, birds, thorns, rocks, sun, wheat, tares, mustard seed, leaven, hidden treasure, and a pearl. But in these particular parables themselves the truth is not made clear, because the basic story tells nothing but the literal account, without presenting the moral or spiritual truth. It was only to His disciples that Jesus explained what the soil, the seed, the thorns, and the other figures represent. And an unexplained parable was nothing but an impossible riddle, whose meaning could only be guessed at." (See [The MacArthur Commentary](#)).

**Wuest** note on **symbol** ([parabole](#)) of the **Tabernacle** in Hebrews 9:9 - Parable "is an illustration thrown in alongside of a truth to make the latter easier to understand... The Greek word means "that which is thrown alongside of something else" to explain it. Thus, the **tabernacle** was an object lesson used to explain spiritual truth. As long as it remained an object lesson, thus a recognized institution, it was clear that the actual tabernacle to which it pointed was not yet in use. The **tabernacle** in Israel, and later, the **temple**, remained that object lesson during the history of Israel, **until the veil of the temple was rent.**" ([Hebrews Commentary](#))

**Luke's** uses of **parable** - Lk. 4:23; Lk. 5:36; Lk. 6:39; Lk. 8:4; Lk. 8:9; Lk. 8:10; Lk. 8:11; Lk. 12:16; Lk. 12:41; Lk. 13:6; Lk. 14:7; Lk. 15:3; Lk. 18:1; Lk. 18:9; Lk. 19:11; Lk. 20:9; Lk. 20:19; Lk. 21:29

**Fig tree** (4808) ([suke](#) from **sukon** = a fig) is the fig-tree the Latin word *figus* (see [Wikipedia](#)). The LXX distinguishes between the early fig and the (unripe) late fig (*olunthos*), and also has *sukon* for the "fig orchard." The fig tree is an ancient and important tree in Palestine and claims special dignity in Judges 9:7ff. To sit under one's vine and fig tree is to enjoy peace. Figurative use occurs in, e.g., Isa 28:4; Jer. 8:13; Hos. 9:10; Mic. 7:1; Pr. 27:18. The fig tree is the only tree mentioned in Eden (Ge 3:7). Today the fig tree is still common in Palestine. Casting its leaves in autumn, it seems very bare, but its big leaves offer shade in summer. The early fruits form in March and are ripe in May. The late figs ripen on the new shoots and are the main crop (August to October). The fig tree is of no special importance in Jn 1:48, 50, where the point of the story is not that Nathanael is under this tree but that Jesus has an inner knowledge of Nathanael that is demonstrated by mentioning a fact that is readily checked, namely, his being under the fig tree. The figure in Mt. 7:16 and Lk. 6:44 combines grapes and figs (as in the OT) in contrast to thorns and thistles. In context it illustrates the saying about the bad tree that cannot bear good fruit with a reference first to words (Lk. 6:45) but mainly to acts (Lk 6:46ff.; Mt. 7:21ff.). The saying, which has the character of proverbial wisdom, forms a general rule but carries a sharp edge against opponents whose words and acts betray their evil disposition.. James 3:12 recalls Mt. 7:16 but is directed against sins of the tongue. That the same mouth should bless and curse is just as unnatural as that one tree should bear the fruits of another. The comparison is not exact, for the tree does not carry two different fruits, some good and some bad. The point, however, is that the use of the tongue for both good and ill is contrary to nature.. In the parable of the unfruitful fig tree in Lk. 13:6ff. Jesus teaches that his summons to repentance offers a final period of grace before judgment strikes. The cursing of the fig tree in Mk 11:12ff, and Mt 21:18ff. is the only miracle of judgment in the Synoptists and symbolizes the cursing of unfruitful Israel. In its setting it raises the question whether one might expect to find edible figs (possibly early unripe figs or late figs from the previous season) at the time of the Passover. To deal

with this problem various theories have arisen, e.g., that the story is misplaced, or that it is a legend explaining a prominent withered fig tree, or that it rests on a misunderstood saying. The parable of the fig tree in Mk. 13:28-29; Mt. 24:32-33; Lk. 21:29ff. is related to the apocalyptic signs of the end, i.e., future signs of future events. A theory advanced by some scholars is that originally it refers to signs of the kingdom in the works of Jesus (cf. Lk. 12:54ff.), but its present context is plain. Rev. 6:13 compares the stars that plunge from heaven to the ounthoi that the storm shakes from the fig tree (cf. Is. 34:4). (from TDNT Abridged edition)

See also [ISBE article](#) on fig trees

**Zodhiates** - The [fig tree](#) has been cultivated in Palestine from ancient times (Dt. 8:8; Isa. 34:4), and is also found growing wild. The fruit is pear-shaped and the small, green figs appear before the leaves. At a certain size their interior is filled with minute, white flowers which leads to the common impression that this tree never blossoms. When the leaves have appeared, if there is no fruit among them, the fig tree will be barren for that season (Mt. 21:19). Two types of figs are mentioned in the Bible. One is the early fig of which a few ripen and are gathered in June (Isa. 28:4; Hos. 9:10; Mic. 7:1), but most of this early fruit falls off before it is perfected (Rev. 6:13). The second or main crop ordinarily does not ripen until August. These are the "green figs" of Song 2:13. Bethphage means "house of green figs." The sprouting of the fig tree was one of the earliest indications of summer (Song 2:13; Mt. 24:32; Lk 21:29, 30), and a failure to bear fruit was a great calamity (Jer 8:13; Joel 1:7, 12; Hab. 3:17, 18). A long, dark-colored fig sometimes hangs on the trees all winter. These various kinds of figs are eaten as they come from the tree and are also dried in clumps or cakes (1 Sa 25:18). They seem to have been a common item of food and to have possessed medicinal properties (2 Ki 20:7). The Lord's cursing of the fig tree in Mk 11:14, 21 occurred about the beginning of April when, as Mark states, the time for ripe figs had not come. It seems, then, that Christ should not have sought figs out of season. However, the tree was in leaf and fruit might have been expected. Jesus pronounces a curse upon the tree that it should from that time never bear fruit. Mt 21:20-22 and Mk 11:20-24 clearly indicate that the purpose of Jesus' action is to give to His disciples an object lesson about the power of faith. Interpretations which find in the fig tree a symbol of apostate Israel or religious hypocrites are unwarranted by the context. (Borrow [The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament](#))

**Suke** - 16x in 15v - fig tree

Matthew 21:19 Seeing a lone **fig tree** by the road, He came to it and found nothing on it except leaves only; and He said to it, "No longer shall there ever be any fruit from you." And at once the **fig tree** withered.

- MacArthur's sermon - [Matthew 21:18-22 The Way of The Fig Tree: The Promise Without Performance](#)

Matthew 21:20 Seeing this, the disciples were amazed and asked, "How did the **fig tree** wither all at once?"

Matthew 21:21 And Jesus answered and said to them, "Truly I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what was done to the **fig tree**, but even if you say to this mountain, 'Be taken up and cast into the sea,' it will happen.

Matthew 24:32 "Now **learn** ([aorist imperative](#)) the parable from the **fig tree**: when its branch has already become tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near;

- The first figs ripen in late May or early June.
- MacArthur's sermon - [Matthew 24:32-35: The Imminence of Christ's Return](#)

Mark 11:13+ Seeing at a distance a **fig tree** in leaf, He went to see if perhaps He would find anything on it; and when He came to it, He found nothing but leaves, for it was not the season for figs.

**Vine** - Note: A "fig tree" with leaves must have young fruits already, or it will be barren for the season. The first figs ripen in late May or early June. The tree in Mark 11:13 should have had fruit, unripe indeed, but existing. In some lands "fig trees" bear the early fruit under the leaves and the later fruit above the leaves. In that case the leaves were a sign that there should have been fruit, unseen from a distance, underneath the leaves. The condemnation of this fig tree lay in the absence of any sign of fruit

**MacArthur** - Fig trees were common as a source of food. Three years were required from planting until fruit bearing. After that, a tree could be harvested twice a year, usually yielding much fruit. The figs normally grew with the leaves. This tree had leaves but, strangely, no fruit. That this tree was along the

side of the road (cf. Mt 21:19), implies it was public property. It was also apparently in good soil because its foliage was ahead of season and ahead of the surrounding fig trees. The abundance of leaves held out promise that the tree might also be ahead of schedule with its fruit. **not the season for figs**. The next normal fig season was in June, more than a month away. This phrase, unique to Mark, emphasizes the unusual nature of this fig tree. (MacArthur Study Bible)

- See also MacArthur's sermon - [Mark 11:12-21 Nothing but Leaves](#)

Mark 11:20 As they were passing by in the morning, they saw the **fig tree** withered from the roots up.

Mark 11:21 Being reminded, Peter said to Him, "Rabbi, look, the **fig tree** which You cursed has withered."

Mark 13:28 "Now **learn** ([aorist imperative](#)) the parable from the **fig tree**: when its branch has already become tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near.

- MacArthur's sermon - [Mark 13:28-37 The Final Generation, Part 1](#) [Mark 13:28-37 The Final Generation, Part 2](#)

Luke 13:6 And He began telling this parable: "A man had a **fig tree** which had been planted in his vineyard; and he came looking for fruit on it and did not find any.

Luke 13:7 "And he said to the vineyard-keeper, 'Behold, for three years I have come looking for fruit on this **fig tree** without finding any. Cut it down! Why does it even use up the ground?'

Luke 21:29 Then He told them a parable: "Behold the **fig tree** and all the trees;

John 1:48 Nathanael said to Him, "How do You know me?" Jesus answered and said to him, "Before Philip called you, when you were under the **fig tree**, I saw you."

John 1:50 Jesus answered and said to him, "Because I said to you that I saw you under the **fig tree**, do you believe? You will see greater things than these."

James 3:12 Can a **fig tree**, my brethren, produce olives, or a vine produce figs? Nor can salt water produce fresh.

Revelation 6:13 and the stars of the sky fell to the earth, as a **fig tree** casts its unripe figs when shaken by a great wind.

**Suke** - 25x in 25v in the Septuagint - Ge. 3:7; Nu 13:23; Num. 20:5; Deut. 8:8; Jdg. 9:10; Jdg. 9:11; 1 Ki. 4:20; 2 Ki. 18:31; Neh. 2:13; Ps. 105:33; Prov. 27:18; Cant. 2:13; Isa. 34:4; Isa. 36:16; Jer. 8:13; Hos. 2:12; Hos. 9:10; Joel 1:7; Joel 1:12; Joel 2:22; Mic. 4:4; Nah. 3:12; Hab. 3:17; Hag. 2:19; Zech. 3:10

Here are some interesting uses of suke in the Septuagint - the first use is particularly interesting as it represents our spiritual parents first set of self made clothes, clearly a picture of man's attempt at a bloodless religious of good works in an attempt to be righteous (and to hide shame).

Genesis 3:7 Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed **fig** leaves (Lxx = leaves of the fig tree) together and made themselves loin coverings.

Isaiah 34:4 And all the host of heaven will wear away, And the sky will be rolled up like a scroll; All their hosts will also wither away As a leaf withers from the vine, Or as one withers from the fig tree.

Jeremiah 8:13 "I will surely snatch them away," declares the LORD; "There will be no grapes on the vine And no figs on the **fig tree**, And the leaf will wither; And what I have given them will pass away.'"

Hosea 2:12 "I will destroy her vines and **fig trees**, Of which she said, 'These are my wages Which my lovers have given me.' And I will make them a forest, And the beasts of the field will devour them.

Hosea 9:10 I found Israel like grapes in the wilderness; I saw your forefathers as the earliest fruit on the **fig tree** in its first season. But they came to Baal-peor and devoted themselves to shame, And they became as detestable as that which they loved.

**Comment:** The firstfruits of the fig tree were considered a great delicacy. God had found this type of delight in His people at the inception of Israel's history.

Joel 1:7 It has made my vine a waste And my **fig tree** splinters. It has stripped them bare and cast them away; Their branches have become white.



**MacArthur** - Instead of symbols of prosperity and peace (1Ki 4:25; Mic 4:4; Zec 3:10), the vine and fig tree had become visual reminders of divine judgment.

Habakkuk 3:17+ Though the fig tree should not blossom And there be no fruit on the vines, Though the yield of the olive should fail And the fields produce no food, Though the flock should be cut off from the fold And there be no cattle in the stalls,

Zechariah 3:10 'In that day,' declares the LORD of hosts, 'every one of you will invite his neighbor to sit under his vine and under his fig tree.'

Jehovah is referring here to the time of the [Millennium](#).

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#### **James Smith - THE BARREN FIG-TREE. Luke 13:6-9.**

"Praise, O Lord, for grace bestowed,  
If fair graces in me have showed;  
Praise for growth as of leaf or flower  
By Thy Spirit's quickening power;  
But fruit, 'much fruit,' O Lord, I ask  
As 'neath Thy sweet shining I bask;  
Enrich me as I urge my suit,  
With nothing less than plenteous fruit."

The Jews as a nation were more highly favoured than any other. Taken out of barren Egypt and planted by the hand of God in fertile Canaan, with all the care and protection that divine wisdom and power could bestow, much fruit was naturally expected. But the heart of Him who planted was grieved and disappointed. For three years God in Christ sought fruit and found none. Yet the compassionate Saviour interceded, crying, "Father, forgive them" (Luke 23:34). And though spared for a season to get the "digging" of His teaching and proofs of His resurrection, yet remaining in unbelief they were cut off (Rom. 11:20). Cumberers will not always be permitted in His vineyard. This parable contains solemn and searching lessons for every Christian.

#### **I. The Tree Mentioned. Observe its—**

##### **1. HOPEFUL CHARACTER. "A fig-tree" (v. 6).**

It is the right kind of a tree for a garden. It was a fruit tree. It belonged without doubt to a valuable class of trees. None could dispute its good connection. This fig-tree represents one who has been born from above, who has received a new nature, and who is a new creature, one who belongs to the family of God. He is perfectly assured of his honourable connection. Once he had another name and a more disreputable character, but now he is classed as a Christian.

##### **2. GREAT PRIVILEGE. "Planted in the vineyard" (v. 6).**

This fig-tree did not grow by the wayside. It was more highly favoured. It was chosen by the Lord of the vineyard and carefully planted in the most favourable place, under the immediate eye and hand of the skilful dresser, and within the enclosure of the separating walls. In short, it was chosen, planted, supplied, and protected. Such is the privilege of every chosen one. "I have chosen you, and ordained you, that you should bring forth fruit" (John 15:16). Ye are the Lord's planting, and in the place of blessing has He put you "by the rivers of water" (Psa. 1:3).

##### **3. BARREN CONDITION. "Fruitless" (v. 7).**

Fruit sought and none found. Is it possible? A fruit tree in a vineyard and yet no fruit? Quite possible, and, alas, far too common. Then who is to blame? Neither the dresser nor the ground, but the tree, which refuses or neglects to rise up to its great privilege. It was planted there not for an ornament, not merely to be fed, but to bear fruit, failing this all is failure. It might boast of its life, leaves, and opportunities, but there is nothing to satisfy the Lord. Many are fruitless Christians just for the same reason. Failing to prove their nature by their fruits they fail to rise to their high calling. The Lord seeks fruit, and has a right to expect it from every fruit-tree in His vineyard. Your presence in the vineyard proves His claim.

#### **II. The Master's Complaint. "Behold these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig-tree" (v. 7). From His own language we have suggested three thoughts. His—**

##### **1. LONG SUFFERING GRACE. "These three years." (v. 7).**

"He is long suffering to usward, not willing that any should perish" (2 Peter 3:9). The three years suggest something like a threefold failure. Yet hitherto no judgment was passed. It stands by grace alone. How his heart must have been grieved at seeing such great grace bestowed in vain, or worse, only used for self-aggrandisement. How is it with you? What about all your privileges? Has the Master found fruit in your life? He, no doubt, has been seeking fruit. How long is it since you was converted, or planted in the vineyard? Have you only been a receiver, drinking up the sap and the sunshine of His gifts, while he, the Master, receives nothing? Oh, ungrateful heart!

## **2. WEARIED PATIENCE. "Cut it down" (v. 9).**

"Hope deferred maketh the heart sick" (Isa. 7:13). The trees in the vineyard are judged by their works, those outside by their nature. By our works are we justified or condemned. Fruit-bearing constitutes the only title we have to our continuance in the vineyard (Isa. 15:2). "My Spirit will not always strive with men." Privileges abused will be privileges lost. He that hid his lord's money lost it, and suffered besides. Shall we sin that grace may abound? God forbid! for the grace of God teacheth us to deny ungodliness and to live soberly and righteously in this present world. Mere lip profession will not save us from becoming a castaway as a servant (1 Cor. 9:27).

## **3. SOLEMN QUESTION. "Why cumbereth it the ground?"**

Every fruitless tree is a cumberer. Why should it be a hindrance? Who can reply against this? Who can defend the fruitless? Every unfruitful professor is a burden and a hindrance. Their roots, or motives, get intertwined with those of the fruit-bearing, and drink up that which should have gone to the fruit-making. And how often we spread forth our barren branches over others, hindering the bright sunshine, and so affect their fruit-bearing. The inconsistencies of professing Christians have been the destruction of much fruit; they act as a biting frost upon the tender bud.

## **III. The Dresser's Intercession. He—**

### **1. PLEADS FOR MORE GRACE. "This year also" (v. 8).**

How interesting that he who had been at all the labour and watchfulness, without receiving any credit or honour through it, should yet advocate its cause and plead in its name. Here Jesus is seen, and His voice is heard. He maketh continual intercession for us. "I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world" (John 17:15). That some Christians are still in the place of fruit-bearing, but in a barren condition, living only for self, how much is this owing to the priestly work of Jesus? "This year also." This may be your last.

### **2. PROMISES MORE WORK. "I shall dig about it, and dung it" (v. 8).**

This speaks of grace more abundantly. If fruit is found at all it must be the result of grace alone. Other trees are not to be impoverished for the sake of this, hence the extra digging, etc. The unfruitful Christian has often been perplexed and amazed at the unusual digging about the roots of his being, which looked very much like a removal at the time. Such times of affliction and trial are solemn warnings. They seem to whisper, "More fruit," or less privilege. The shaking of the roots indicate the presence of the Gardener. After the digging comes the additional supply.

### **3. AGREES THAT THE RESULTS SHOULD BE FINAL. "After that" (v. 9).**

Oh, how very solemn is this "after that!" This is known only to themselves, the owner and the dresser. The last effort grace may expend in order to fruit bearing may be a season of affliction, a searching sermon, or some providential incident. In the case of many this may have already taken place. The present may be the brief season of His waiting. Waiting on God, and God waiting on us, are widely different thoughts. The fruit of a fig-tree is figs, the fruit of a Christian is Christ. **(ED: I PREFER THE FRUIT THAT IS THE RESULT OF ABIDING IN CHRIST - John 15:5).**

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Oh, how dreadful the thought — to go to Hell through the church of God! - James Smith

"A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he went to look for fruit on it — but did not find any. So he said to the man who took care of the vineyard: For three years now, I've been coming to look for fruit on this fig tree — and haven't found any. Cut it down! Why should it use up the soil!" Luke 13:6-7

Let us look at Christ's figure a little:

- **A fig-tree — or a professor of the religion of Christ.**
- **A fruitless fig-tree — or a barren, useless professor.**
- **A fig-tree with leaves of profession — but not the fruit of holiness.**

No place is as dangerous for an unconverted person — as the church of God! It is to be feared that many join the church before they are truly converted; and yet very, very few are ever converted after.

Once under a profession — God expects you to live up to that profession.  
If you are planted in His vineyard — God expects you to bring forth fruit.

The owner of the vineyard comes and seeks fruit; He comes again, and again; and if He find none, He passes this solemn sentence, "Cut it down! Why should it use up the soil!"

Concerning every fruitless professor God says, "Cut it down! Why should it use up the soil! It drains the ground of its nourishment, for no good purpose. Labor is but lost upon it; expectation is disappointed by it; therefore, Cut it down! My patience and forbearance are worn out; I have come three years seeking fruit — and find none; so, Cut it down!"

It is a fearful sentence! God gives the command to some disease — He says, "Go, cut that barren professor down!" He sends death, like the woodsman with his sharpened axe — at length he strikes the fatal blow; and then the fruitless professor falls!

This command of God is fearful — it is full of terror — it includes utter destruction!

This command is irresistible — we cannot evade it — we cannot brave it out — the boldest heart fails — the strongest body yields to God's "Cut it down!"

This command is final! There is all that is dreadful wrapped up in it — even a certain, fearful expectation of God's judgment, and the raging fire that will consume His enemies!

The fruitless professor is to be cut down and committed to the eternal flames of Hell!

Here is wrath — fearful wrath!

Here is justice — inflexible justice!

Here is vengeance — the vengeance of an infinite God!

O fruitless professor. . .

Consider!

Fear!

Tremble!

Repent!

God looks for fruit from every professor. He will certainly punish — if there is no fruit.

Fruitless professor — where will you be soon? The axe lies at your root, even now! The executioner is only awaiting the command!

Divine mercy will soon urge her last plea; the year of reprieve will soon expire — and then, "Cut it down!" is all that remains! Oh, how dreadful the thought — to go to Hell through the church of God! To profess that you are traveling to Heaven — when in reality you are going with the lost multitude to eternal perdition!

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#### **QUESTION - [What is the meaning of the Parable of the Fig Tree?](#)**

**ANSWER** - Jesus told the Parable of the Fig Tree—Luke 13:6-9—immediately after reminding His listeners of a [tower](#) over the [pool of Siloam](#) (John 9:7) which unexpectedly fell and killed eighteen people. The moral of that story is found in Luke 13:3: "Unless you repent, you will likewise perish." To reiterate this moral, Jesus tells the story of the fig tree, the vineyard owner, and the gardener who took care of the vineyard.

The three entities in the story all have clear symbolic significance. The vineyard owner represents God, the one who rightly expects to see fruit on His tree and who justly decides to destroy it when He finds none. The gardener, or vineyard keeper who cares for the trees, watering and fertilizing them to bring them to their peak of fruitfulness, represents Jesus, who feeds His people and gives them living water. The tree itself has two symbolic meanings: the nation of Israel and the individual.

As the story unfolds, we see the vineyard owner expressing his disappointment at the fruitless tree. He has looked for fruit for three years from this tree, but has found none. The three-year period is significant because for three years John the Baptist and Jesus had

been preaching the message of repentance throughout Israel. But the fruits of repentance were not forthcoming. John the Baptist warned the people about the Messiah coming and told them to bring forth fruits fit for repentance because the ax was already laid at the root of the tree (Luke 3:8-9). But the Jews were offended by the idea they needed to repent, and they rejected their Messiah because He demanded repentance from them. After all, they had the revelation of God, the prophets, the Scriptures, the covenants, and the adoption (Romans 9:4-5). They had it all, but they were already apostate. They had departed from the true faith and the true and living God and created a system of works-righteousness that was an abomination to God. He, as the vineyard owner, was perfectly justified in tearing down the tree that had no fruit. The Lord's ax was already poised over the root of the tree, and it was ready to fall.

However, we see the gardener pleading here for a little more time. There were a few months before the crucifixion, and more miracles to come, especially the incredible miracle of the raising of Lazarus from the dead, which would astound many and perhaps cause the Jews to repent. As it turned out, Israel as a nation still did not believe, but individuals certainly did (John 12:10-11). The compassionate gardener intercedes for more time to water and fertilize the fruitless tree, and the gracious Lord of the vineyard responds in patience.

**The lesson for the individual is that borrowed time is not permanent. God's patience has a limit. In the parable, the vineyard owner grants another year of life to the tree. In the same way, God in His mercy grants us another day, another hour, another breath. Christ stands at the door of each man's heart knocking and seeking to gain entrance and requiring repentance from sin. But if there is no fruit, no repentance, His patience will come to an end, and the fruitless, unrepentant individual will be cut down. We all live on borrowed time; judgment is near.** That is why the prophet Isaiah wrote, "Seek the LORD while he may be found; call on him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way and the evil man his thoughts. Let him turn to the LORD, and he will have mercy on him, and to our God, for he will freely pardon" (Isaiah 55:6-7). [GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org)

**Luke 13:7 "And he said to the vineyard-keeper, 'Behold, for three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree without finding any. Cut it down! Why does it even use up the ground?'"**

KJV Luke 13:7 Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none: cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?

- **for three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree** Lev 19:23; 25:21; Ro 2:4,5
- **Cut it down** Lk 3:9; Ex 32:10; Da 4:14; Mt 3:10; 7:19; Jn 15:2,6
- **Why does it even use up the ground** Ex 32:10; Mt 3:9
- [Luke 13:1-9 What We Should Learn From Tragedies](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 13:6-9 Living on Borrowed Time](#) - John MacArthur
- Multiple Sermons and Commentaries - Luke 13 Resources

#### Related Passages:

Matthew 3:8-12+ Therefore **bear fruit in keeping with repentance**; 9 and do not suppose that you can say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham for our father'; for I say to you that from these stones God is able to raise up children to Abraham. 10 "The axe is already laid at the root of the trees ; therefore **every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down (ekkopto) and thrown into the fire.**(COMPARE THE "FIG TREE" IN THIS PARABLE IN Luke 13:9!) 11 "As for me, I baptize you with **water for repentance**, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, and I am not fit to remove His sandals; **He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.** 12 "His winnowing fork is in His hand (SPEAKS OF SEPARATING WHEAT FROM CHAFF, THE GENUINE BELIEVERS FROM THE HYPOCRITES), and He will thoroughly clear His threshing floor; and He will gather His wheat into the barn, but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." (ETERNAL PUNISHMENT)

Lk 3:3, 8+ And he came into all the district around the Jordan, preaching a **baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins**; (3:8) "Therefore **bear fruits in keeping with repentance**, and do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham for our father,' for I say to you that from these stones God is able to raise up children to Abraham.

**And he said to the vineyard-keeper for three years I have come looking (zeteo) for fruit (karpos) on this fig tree without finding (heurisko) any** - Generally three years were required from planting until fruit bearing. Note that in this passage three years was not from the time of planting, but from the time it should have started bearing fruit. In other words, presumably it had been

planted and was at the age where fruit could be expected. And for 3 years there was no fruit. Here we see the patience of God in judgment. One wonders if Jesus is not making at least some allusion to the fact that He ministered in Israel (the "fig tree") for 3 years? Once fig trees begin to bear fruit, they could be harvested twice a year, usually yielding much fruit, so this was a very unexpected and disappointing outcome. What would be the fruit one would have expected from Israel? Fruit in keeping with repentance, but since (for the majority of Israel) there was no fruit, clearly their had been no genuine repentance. This makes one think of the crowds coming to be baptized by John's "baptism of repentance." Apparently their "repentance" was as we say a "flash in the pan," for most of Israel was rejecting the Messiah.

**THOUGHT** - Let's apply this to our lives - As the Lord looks at our life right now, does He find any fruit? Are you as convicted as I am? An even more sobering question is "What is the evidence in my life that I am really a follower of Christ?" The best way to identify a tree is by its fruit. As Jesus said (in the context of false prophets but applicable in principle to us personally) "So every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit." (Mt 7:18) He then followed up with another principle regarding divine judgment declaring that "Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire." (Mt 7:19) Woe! So let me ask you again, what is the evidence that identifies you as genuine believer. If you are a true believer, you have the indwelling Spirit which begs the question "Is the fruit of the Holy Spirit evident in your life -- "love ([agape](#)), joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control" (Gal 5:22-23+)? Let's be practical -- if you are a husband who professes to be a believer, is there evidence of [agape](#) love for your wife obeying Paul's command "Husbands **love** your wives" (Eph 5:25+) The verb **love** is [agapao](#) and is a command in the [present imperative](#) which calls for us to display unconditional love as our "lifestyle." It is not a call for *perfection*, but for "direction." It can ONLY be carried out by jettisoning self-reliance and humbly surrendering to dependence on the enabling power of the indwelling Spirit ([See Need for Spirit to obey NT commands](#)). The upshot is that if you are completely UNABLE to demonstrate [agape](#) (unconditional, sacrificial) love toward your wife, one reason may be that you do not possess the supernatural power source, the indwelling Spirit. And again, don't get hung up on obeying the command to love your wife perfectly, because none of us are able to do that. But there should be at least some evidence of the "FRUIT" of [agape](#) love in your relationship. ([See more evidence of fruit](#))

As **Guzik** says "The fruit of our life shows what kind of person we really are. An apple tree will bring forth apples, not watermelons. If Jesus Christ has truly touched our life, it will show in the fruit we bear—even if it takes a while for the fruit to come forth."

**Mattoon** - God is not satisfied with our growth and neither should we. He will prune us, even when we are fruitful, to make us more fruitful. Trials are pruning times to develop fruitfulness and blessing. In January, 1993, the Galeras volcano in Columbia, South America, erupted. A week later, Dr. Fraser Goff, was sampling gas vents in a canyon west of the volcano summit. The guide who was with him jokingly said, "Do you want to look at some gold?" Dr. Goff picked up some of the rocks and cut them into thin slices and sure enough, there was gold laced into the rocks. This was the first time scientists had detected visible gold particles in an active volcano. A year later, the doctor announced that this volcano was spewing more than a pound of gold each day into the atmosphere and 45 pounds of gold per year into the rocks lining the crater. The magma brought the gold to the surface from a vein of gold at the base of the volcano that was at least ten feet wide. As the pressure and heat brought the gold to the surface, the pressure of fiery trials brings forth spiritual gold and blessing into our lives. When we respond properly to our trials, we find the gold of increasing faith, character, fruitfulness, blessing, and closeness to the Lord. Beloved, we are pruned by His removal of that which is dear to us. Pruning cuts at the bad, good, and the better to produce the best in us. It hurts and also helps. We do not enjoy it, but we need it. We need to be fruitful to be useful. What fruit is the Lord trying to produce in your life? ([Treasures from Luke](#))

**Spurgeon** - The owner seems to say, "If I had not found fruit the first year, I should have thought that the season was unfavourable; if I had found no fruit the second year, I might have thought that peradventure the tree was a little out of condition, and would come round again; but when I come for three years, and three years consecutively I find no fruit, then it is clear that the fig tree is a barren one. Why should it stay here, and spoil the soil, occupy the place that a good fig tree might have occupied, and take away the nutriment from other trees?" So if, after many years, some of you have brought forth no fruit, God may well complain about you. You are eating the bread that might have nourished a saint. You are occupying a place in which your influence is injurious to others. Others do less because you do nothing. I pray the Holy Spirit to bring this home to the conscience of any barren professor whom it may concern, lest the command should go forth, "Cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?" ([Luke 13](#) - exposition)

**Cut it down!** ([ekkopto](#)) **Why does it even use up** ([katargeo](#)) **the ground?** - The command is [aorist imperative](#) calling for this to be done immediately! Do not delay! Time is up! What is he saying with this question? The point is that the useless fig tree was using up space and nutrients in the ground that could have been used for other fig trees. For example, it's root system would be drawing water and minerals that could be utilized by other trees. Thus the command to **cut it down**.

**Mattoon** - Let me say that I believe the Lord will sometimes call a wayward Christian home to glory because their testimony is hurting the cause of Christ. The **barren believer** is doing more harm than good (**ED: BUT BE VERY CAREFUL, BECAUSE A PERSON WHO CLAIMS TO BE A BELIEVER AND ABSOLUTELY NEVER BEARS FRUIT NEEDS TO BE WARY AND SOBERLY READ 2Cor 13:5+, cf Lk 8:15+).** Where would this idea come from in the Bible? Paul hints of this in the first letter to the Corinthians which was a very carnal church. Notice what he says about those who had a frivolous attitude about the Lord's supper. Read 1 Corinthians 11:28-30. These folks brought God's judgment upon themselves. They ended up "sleeping" which is a term for death. Many of them died. ([Treasures from Luke](#))

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**Behold** (2400) ([idou](#)) Spurgeon reminds us that "**Behold** is a word of wonder; it is intended to excite admiration. Wherever you see it hung out in Scripture, it is like an ancient sign-board, signifying that there are rich wares within, or like the hands which solid readers have observed in the margin of the older Puritanic books, drawing attention to something particularly worthy of observation." I would add, **behold** is like a divine highlighter, a divine underlining of an especially striking or important text. It says in effect "Listen up, all ye who would be wise in the ways of Jehovah!" **Idou** is used by the Biblical writers to (1) prompt or arouse the reader's attention (introducing something new or unusual), (2) to mark a strong emphasis ("Indeed!" Lk 13:16) and (3) to call the reader to pay close attention (very similar to #1) so that one will listen, remember or consider

**Idou in Luke and Acts** - Lk. 1:20; Lk. 1:31; Lk. 1:36; Lk. 1:38; Lk. 1:44; Lk. 1:48; Lk. 2:10; Lk. 2:34; Lk. 2:48; Lk. 5:12; Lk. 6:23; Lk. 7:27; Lk. 7:34; Lk. 9:30; Lk. 10:3; Lk. 10:19; Lk. 11:31; Lk. 11:32; Lk. 11:41; Lk. 13:7; Lk. 13:16; Lk. 13:30; Lk. 13:32; Lk. 13:35; Lk. 14:2; Lk. 15:29; Lk. 17:21; Lk. 17:23; Lk. 18:28; Lk. 18:31; Lk. 19:8; Lk. 19:20; Lk. 22:10; Lk. 22:21; Lk. 22:31; Lk. 22:38; Lk. 22:47; Lk. 23:14; Lk. 23:15; Lk. 23:29; Lk. 24:4; Lk. 24:13; Lk. 24:49; Jn. 4:35; Acts 1:10; Acts 2:7; Acts 5:9; Acts 5:28; Acts 7:56; Acts 8:36; Acts 9:10; Acts 10:17; Acts 10:19; Acts 10:21; Acts 10:30; Acts 11:11; Acts 12:7; Acts 13:11; Acts 13:25; Acts 13:46; Acts 20:22; Acts 20:25; Acts 27:24;

**Looking** (2212) ([zeteo](#)) implies giving attention and priority to and deliberately pursuing after. The most common sense of this word is to "**seek**". Webster says that to **seek** means to go in search or quest of, to look for, to try to discover, to search for by going from place to place. In this verse zeteo is in the [present tense](#) signifying the owner of the vineyard was continually seeking fruit from the fig tree.

**Zeteo in Luke and Acts** - Lk. 2:48; Lk. 2:49; Lk. 5:18; Lk. 6:19; Lk. 9:9; Lk. 11:9; Lk. 11:10; Lk. 11:16; Lk. 11:24; Lk. 11:29; Lk. 12:29; Lk. 12:31; Lk. 13:6; Lk. 13:7; Lk. 13:24; Lk. 15:8; Lk. 17:33; Lk. 19:3; Lk. 19:10; Lk. 19:47; Lk. 20:19; Lk. 22:2; Lk. 22:6; Lk. 24:5; Acts 9:11; Acts 10:19; Acts 10:21; Acts 13:8; Acts 13:11; Acts 16:10; Acts 17:5; Acts 17:27; Acts 21:31; Acts 27:30

**Fruit** (2590) ([karpos](#)) is used in its literal sense to refer to fruit, produce or offspring, which describes that which is produced by the inherent energy of a living organism. **Karpos** is what something (a tree, a plant, etc) **naturally** produces. In most of the NT uses **fruit** refers to what a saint **supernaturally** produces by the enabling power of the Holy Spirit ([see types of spiritual fruit](#)), by Whom we "**abide**" in the Vine, our Lord Jesus Christ, Who made it clear that "apart from (Him) we can do (absolutely) nothing (supernatural and of eternal value, cf Jn 15:5 and Jn 15:16 = "that you would go and bear fruit, and **that your fruit would remain** [[present tense](#) = continually]").

**Luke's uses of karpos** - Lk. 1:42-note; Lk. 3:8-note; Lk. 3:9-note; Lk. 6:43-note; Lk. 6:44-note; Lk. 8:8-note; Lk. 12:17-note; Lk. 13:6; Lk. 13:7; Lk. 13:9; Lk. 20:10; Acts 2:30

**Finding** (2147) ([heurisko](#)) means to find after searching and so to discover (Mt 7:7), to find accidentally or without seeking (Mt 12:44), to experience for oneself and to obtain or procure (He 9:12). Figuratively, **heurisko** speaks of a spiritual or intellectual discovery gained through observation = reflection, perception, investigation (Ro 7:21). Because **heurisko** is such a common verb and has various meanings, always examine the context to help you discern the most appropriate definition.

**Heurisko in Luke and Acts** - Lk. 1:30; Lk. 2:12; Lk. 2:45; Lk. 2:46; Lk. 4:17; Lk. 5:19; Lk. 6:7; Lk. 7:9; Lk. 7:10; Lk. 8:35; Lk. 9:12; Lk. 9:36; Lk. 11:9; Lk. 11:10; Lk. 11:24; Lk. 11:25; Lk. 12:37; Lk. 12:38; Lk. 12:43; Lk. 13:6; Lk. 13:7; Lk. 15:4; Lk. 15:5; Lk. 15:6; Lk. 15:8; Lk. 15:9; Lk. 15:24; Lk. 15:32; Lk. 17:18; Lk. 18:8; Lk. 19:30; Lk. 19:32; Lk. 19:48; Lk. 22:13; Lk. 22:45; Lk. 23:2; Lk. 23:4; Lk. 23:14; Lk. 23:22; Lk. 24:2; Lk. 24:3; Lk. 24:23; Lk. 24:24; Lk. 24:33; Acts 4:21; Acts 5:10; Acts 5:22; Acts 5:23; Acts 5:39; Acts 7:11; Acts 7:46; Acts 8:40; Acts 9:2; Acts 9:33; Acts 10:27; Acts 11:26; Acts 12:19; Acts 13:6; Acts 13:22; Acts 13:28; Acts 17:6; Acts 17:23; Acts 17:27; Acts 18:2; Acts 19:1; Acts 19:19; Acts 21:2; Acts 23:9; Acts 23:29; Acts 24:5; Acts 24:12; Acts 24:18; Acts 24:20; Acts 27:6; Acts 27:28; Acts 28:14

**Cut down** (1581) ([ekkopto](#) from **ek** =from, out + **kópto** = cut) literally means to cut off or from (literally of a tree - Mt 3:10). It was used as a military metaphor meaning to cut in on, throw obstacles in the way of, or cut up the road so that normal movement was



impossible. It means to cause to cease by removing, to do away with, to eliminate and more figuratively as in the present verse to hinder, frustrate, impede or retard.

**Ekkopto - 10v - cut...off(5), cut down(5).** Matt. 3:10; Matt. 5:30; Matt. 7:19; Matt. 18:8; Lk. 3:9; Lk. 13:7; Lk. 13:9; Rom. 11:22; Rom. 11:24; 2 Co. 11:12

**Use up (2673) (katargeo** from **kata** = intensifies meaning + **argeo** = to be idle or inactive from **argos** = ineffective, idle, inactive from **a** = without + **érgon** = work) literally means to reduce to inactivity or to make the power of something ineffective (in this case the soil or ground) and reduced to inactivity (i.e., not able to be used for other fig trees).

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**What is some of the fruit a believer might look for in their life?**(adapted from Mattoon) ([Treasures from Luke](#))

1. The Fruit of Soul-winning - Pr 11:30, Jn 4:36
2. The Fruit of Spiritual Growth - Ro 6:22 Mt 13:23
3. The Fruit of the Spirit of God - Gal 5:22-23.
4. The Fruit of Surrender and Supplying Others Needs. - Ro 15:26,28.
5. The Fruit of Service to Christ - Colossians 1:10
6. The Fruit of Speaking Praises to God - Heb 13:15
7. The Fruit of Serenity or Peace - John 14:27
8. The Fruit of Shunning Sinfulness & Shame - Matthew 3:8
9. The Fruit of Submission and Obedience to the Lord - John 15:10

#### Related Resources:

- [What is the key to bearing fruit as a Christian?](#)
- [What does it mean to be a fruitful Christian?](#)
- [What is the fruit of the Holy Spirit?](#)
- [The Fruit of the Holy Spirit – What is love?](#)
- [The Fruit of the Holy Spirit – What is joy?](#)
- [The Fruit of the Holy Spirit – What is peace?](#)
- [The Fruit of the Holy Spirit – What is patience?](#)
- [The Fruit of the Holy Spirit – What is kindness?](#)
- [The Fruit of the Holy Spirit – What is goodness?](#)
- [The Fruit of the Holy Spirit – What is faithfulness?](#)
- [The Fruit of the Holy Spirit – What is gentleness?](#)
- [The Fruit of the Holy Spirit – What is self-control?](#)

**Luke 13:8 "And he answered and said to him, 'Let it alone, sir, for this year too, until I dig around it and put in fertilizer;**

KJV Luke 13:8 And he answering said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it:

NET Luke 13:8 But the worker answered him, 'Sir, leave it alone this year too, until I dig around it and put fertilizer on it.

- **Let it alone, sir, for this year too** Ex 32:11-13,30-32; 34:9; Nu 14:11-20; Josh 7:7-9; Ps 106:23; Jer 14:7-9,13-18; 15:1; 18:20; Joel 2:17; Ro 10:1; 11:14; 2 Pe 3:9
- [Luke 13:1-9 What We Should Learn From Tragedies](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 13:6-9 Living on Borrowed Time](#) - John MacArthur
- Multiple Sermons and Commentaries - Luke 13 Resources

### THE LONG-SUFFERING VINE-DRESSER

**Let it alone** ([aphiemi](#) in [aorist imperative](#)), **sir for this year too** **Until I dig around it and put in fertilizer**- The Vine-dresser pleads for more time (**for this year**) for the fig tree. This is an appeal to the patience and longsuffering of God (cf Lam 3:22-23). The compassionate vine-dresser is interceding for the barren fig tree to be "forgiven" as it were and to be given another chance. Digging

would loosen the soil and fertilizer would be given a chance to exert soil's growth promoting effect.

**Hendriksen** asks a convicting question - It is good to derive comfort from the doctrine of God's patience with us, but are we "imitators of God" in this respect? (Borrow [Exposition of the Gospel of Luke](#))

Paul commands all saints to be imitators of God...

Therefore **be** ([present imperative](#) = command to make this our lifestyle! Only possible as we yield to and depend on [the Holy Spirit to obey NT commands](#)) imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma. (Eph. 5:1-2<sup>+</sup>; cf Eph 4:32<sup>+</sup>, Luke 6:36+)

**Mattoon** - When the Lord looks at your life, does He find fruit or disappointment? The owner of the tree was disappointed because the tree was not fulfilling its purpose. Are you fulfilling God's purpose of for your life? (**ED**: ESPECIALLY Eph 2:10+) Are you doing His will and plan for you? If not, find out His plan and do it. How can we know God's plan or will for our lives? (**ED**: See [The Will Of God](#)) Scripture. The Spirit of God. The Sovereigns or authorities over us. This would include parents, pastors, a husband, government officials, etc.. Situations or circumstances in our lives may reveal His plan. ([Treasures from Luke](#))

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**Let it alone** (863) [aphiemi](#) which is used 133 times in the NT and about 49 times is translated forgive (forgave, forgiven)! 1. let go, send away Mk 4:36; give up Mt 27:50; utter Mk 15:37 ; divorce 1 Cor 7:11ff. Cancel, pardon Mt 18:27, 32; remit, forgive sins, etc. Mt 6:12, 14f; Mk 3:28; Lk 12:10; Ro 4:7; 1 John 1:9; 2:12.—2. leave lit. Mt 4:11; 19:27; Mk 13:34; Lk 10:30; abandon Mk 14:50. Let someone have something Mt 5:40; give peace Jn 14:27. Fig. give up, abandon Ro 1:27; Hb 6:1; Rev 2:4; neglect Mt 23:23.—3. let, let go, permit, tolerate Mk 5:19; Ac 5:38; Rev 2:20; 11:9. Let someone go on Jn 11:48.

**Aphiemi in Luke and Acts** - Lk. 4:39; Lk. 5:11; Lk. 5:20; Lk. 5:21; Lk. 5:23; Lk. 5:24; Lk. 6:42; Lk. 7:47; Lk. 7:48; Lk. 7:49; Lk. 8:51; Lk. 9:60; Lk. 10:30; Lk. 11:4; Lk. 12:10; Lk. 12:39; Lk. 13:8; Lk. 13:35; Lk. 17:3; Lk. 17:4; Lk. 17:34; Lk. 17:35; Lk. 17:36; Lk. 18:16; Lk. 18:28; Lk. 18:29; Lk. 19:44; Lk. 21:6; Lk. 23:34; Acts 5:38; Acts 8:22; Acts 14:17

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#### **James Smith - Luke 13:7, 8.**

THIS may be regarded as the language of justice and mercy, of law and grace. Note—

1. Some Reasons why it Should be Cut Down.

- (1) It was the EASIEST WAY of getting rid of it.
- (2) It had had SUFFICIENT TIME for trial.
- (3) It showed NO SIGNS of improvement.
- (4) It had never done ANY GOOD.
- (5) It was filling a place that might be BETTER OCCUPIED by another.
- (6) It was having a BAD INFLUENCE on others. A "cumberer."

2. Some Reasons why it Should be Let Alone. What are they? Well, WHAT ARE THEY?

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#### **Time to Flourish**

Read: Luke 13:1–9

"Sir," the man replied, "leave it alone for one more year, and I'll dig around it and fertilize it." Luke 13:8

Last spring I decided to cut down the rose bush by our back door. In the three years we'd lived in our home, it hadn't produced many flowers, and its ugly, fruitless branches were now creeping in all directions.

But life got busy, and my gardening plan got delayed. It was just as well—only a few weeks later that rose bush burst into bloom like I'd never seen before. Hundreds of big white flowers, rich in perfume, hung over the back door, flowed into our yard, and showered the ground with beautiful petals.

God's patience is good news for all of us.

My rose bush's revival reminded me of Jesus's parable of the fig tree in Luke 13:6–9. In Israel, it was customary to give fig trees three years to produce fruit. If they didn't, they were cut down so the soil could be better used. In Jesus's story, a gardener asks his boss to give one particular tree a fourth year to produce. In context (vv. 1–5), the parable implies this: The Israelites hadn't lived as they should, and God could justly judge them. But God is patient and had given extra time for them to turn to Him, be forgiven, and bloom.

God wants all people to flourish and has given extra time so that they can. Whether we are still journeying toward faith or are praying for unbelieving family and friends, His patience is good news for all of us.

I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. (John 15:5). By Sheridan Voysey

God has given the world extra time to respond to His offer of forgiveness.

**INSIGHT** Right before the words of today's passage, Jesus described how His coming causes division between those who accept Jesus and the new reality He brings and those who reject Him (Luke 12:49–56). Words like these could have led some to interpret tragedies like lives lost in a collapsed tower (13:4) as God's judgment. But Jesus rejected this way of thinking (v. 5), teaching that we should not condemn others, but instead look at ourselves. The parable of the barren fig tree (vv. 6–9) illustrates that although God is merciful and has given the world extra time to turn to Him (v. 9), a choice to live in Him must be made. That's the only way to live fruitfully.

How can you, instead of condemning others, focus more deeply on your response to Christ?

**Luke 13:9 and if it bears fruit next year, fine; but if not, cut it down."**

KJV Luke 13:9 And if it bear fruit, well: and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down.

NET Then if it bears fruit next year, very well, but if not, you can cut it down."

NLT If we get figs next year, fine. If not, then you can cut it down."

- **if not, cut it down** Ezra 9:14,15; Ps 69:22-28; Da 9:5-8; Jn 15:2; 1 Th 2:15; Heb 6:8; Rev 15:3,4; 16:5-7

### **JUDGMENT OF THE "FIG TREE" FINALIZED**

If ([kan](#)) it bears fruit ([karpos](#)) next year, *fine* but if not, cut it down ([ekkopto](#)) - The first **IF** (third class conditional) as noted above expresses the possibility that the fig tree might bear fruit, but not the certainty that it would. The second **IF** is a first class conditional statement which simply means that what follows is a certainty. In other words, if it does not actually bear fruit, cut it down. Notice Jesus' uses an interesting technique here -- the parable ends in such a way that Jesus' listeners had to supply their own conclusion. This would force them to really ponder the parable.

**THOUGHT** - And of course the application to all of us today who read this parable is NOT "What happened to the tree?" but "What will happen to me if I refuse to repent?" Today is the day of salvation (2 Cor 6:2+). Do not procrastinate on repentance, for there may be no tomorrow in which you can repent. **REPENT NOW!**

The test of true repentance is fruitfulness.

-- Steven Cole

**Spurgeon** - There is a time for felling fruitless trees, and there is an appointed season for hewing down and casting into the fire the useless sinner. "In that case, I will plead for it no longer, for it will have had its full time of testing, and every opportunity of bearing fruit: 'After that thou shalt cut it down.'" The parable is so simple that it needs no explanation, and therefore our Lord Jesus has not given any. May we all make a personal application of its solemn teaching! Amen. ([Luke 13](#) - exposition)

**Warren Wiersbe** - The parable has an application to individuals and to the nation of Israel. God is gracious and long-suffering toward people (2 Peter 3:9) and does more than enough to encourage us to repent and bear fruit (Mt. 3:7–10 - John the Baptist had laid his axe to the root of the tree -Mt 3:9). He has had every right to cut us down, but in His mercy, He has spared us. Yet we must not presume upon the kindness and long-suffering of the Lord, for the day of judgment will finally come. (God expects us to bear fruit for His glory. Instead of asking, "Why did others die?" we should ask, "Is it worth it to God for me to be alive?") But the tree also reminds us of God's special goodness to Israel (Isa 5:1–7; Ro 9:1–5) and His patience with them. God waited three years during our Lord's earthly ministry, but the nation did not produce fruit. He then waited about forty years more before He allowed the Roman armies to destroy Jerusalem and the temple; and during those years, the church gave to the nation a powerful witness of the Gospel message. Finally, the tree was cut down. (Borrow [Be compassionate](#))

Clearly this speaks of the Lord's longsuffering as described by Peter

The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is **patient** ([makrothumeeo](#) = "a long fuse" so to speak) **toward you, not wishing for any to perish** ([apollumi](#)) **but for all to come to repentance** ([metanoia](#) - note this passage uses "repentance" as a description of salvation!). (2 Pe 3:9<sup>+</sup>)

As suggested in this parable, there does come a time, known only to the Lord, when He says in essence "enough is enough!" Yes, God has a mercifully "long fuse", but it will not last forever for those who continually reject His Son. Once a soul crosses that deadline (known only to God), he is past the point of no return. We see this principle in Genesis 6:3 when before sending the judgment of the global flood God gave the people 120 years to repent. How so? They were watching Noah build an Ark and preach the Gospel, Peter explaining that God

did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah, a preacher of righteousness, with seven others, when He brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly (2 Peter 2:5<sup>+</sup>)

Yes, it is your right to say I won't bend my knee to the Lord. I will not repent. But that will change one day for Scripture clearly teaches that one day in the future

at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Php 2:10-11<sup>+</sup>)

**Hendriksen** has a poem that relates to the words **cut it down...** (Borrow [Exposition of the Gospel of Luke](#))

There is a line by us unseen  
That crosses every path,  
The hidden boundary between  
God's patience and his wrath.

O where is that mysterious bourne  
By which our path is crossed,  
Beyond which God himself has sworn  
That he who goes is lost?

How far can one go on in sin?  
How long will mercy spare?  
Where does grace end and where begin  
The confines of despair?

An answer from the sky is sent:  
Ye who from God depart,  
While it is called today repent,  
And harden not your heart.

**MacArthur** - The parable illustrates the tragic reality that Israel would continue to fail to bear spiritual fruit even after the arrival of Jesus as Messiah, and would finally be destroyed. Like the tree in the parable, Israel was living on borrowed time and demonstrated little reason to hope for anything different in the future. Five implications, which sum up the Lord's teaching in this section, may be drawn from this parable. **First**, the solitary fig tree has an individual application, both national and personal. The national application is to Israel, which like this tree was planted in very fertile, well-tended ground (Isa 5:1–2). The people of Israel had received continual blessings from God, including "the adoption as sons, and the glory and the covenants and the giving of the Law and the temple service and the promises...the fathers, and from whom is the Christ according to the flesh" (Rom. 9:4–5). But despite those rich privileges Israel, like the fig tree, failed to produce spiritual life (Isa 5:3–4; cf. Mt. 21:18–20). The nation was already apostate before Jesus began His ministry. His forerunner John the Baptist had denounced the people as hypocrites (Mt. 3:7), and warned of coming judgment (Mt 3:10). And nothing changed during our Lord's time in the land. In fact, in the last year of Jesus' ministry, the people remained fixed in unbelief and judgment was fast approaching. There was still time to repent and live before the crucifixion; time for them to hear and believe teaching from Jesus and to repent in the face of more displays of His miraculous power—including one of the most remarkable of all, the raising of Lazarus from the dead (Jn 11:1–45). But because of their hardened hearts, there was little hope that they would bear the fruit of repentance (cf. Lk 13:34–35; 19:41–44; 20:9–18; 21:20–24). The axe of divine judgment would fall and Israel would be destroyed in a holocaust by the Romans a mere four decades later. The final four implications are personal. The **second** one is that those who fail to produce the spiritual fruit that accompanies salvation will be cut down in judgment. **Third**, judgment is near; next year in the parable. At any moment the unsaved could perish, lose their last chance of salvation, and face eternal punishment. **Fourth**, the delay in divine judgment is not due to any worthiness on the part of sinners, as the vineyard owner's disgusted statement, Why does it even use up the ground? illustrates. **Finally**, God's patience with those

living on borrowed time is not permanent. Therefore the Bible exhorts sinners to “seek the Lord while He may be found; call upon Him while He is near” (Isa. 55:6). Jesus warned that generation, “For a little while longer I am with you, then I go to Him who sent Me” (John 7:33); “I go away, and you will seek Me, and will die in your sin; where I am going, you cannot come” (John 8:21). For those living on borrowed time “now is the acceptable time, behold, now is the day of salvation” (2 Cor. 6:2), before their time is up and their eternal destiny sealed. (See [Luke Commentary](#))

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If is the conjunction **kan** ([2579](#)) which is a combination of two conjunctions **kai** ( = and) and **ean** (= if). **Kan** is a third class conditional (“IF”) statement which expresses possibility but not certainty.

**Kan** is used 15x in the NT Matt. 21:21; Matt. 26:35; Mk. 5:28; Mk. 6:56; Mk. 16:18; Lk. 12:38; Lk. 13:9; Jn. 8:14; Jn. 8:55; Jn. 10:38; Jn. 11:25; Acts 5:15; 2 Co. 11:16; Heb. 12:20; Jas. 5:15

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**J C Ryle** summarizes the main points of this parable. For elaboration of each point see [Luke 13 Commentary](#)

We learn first from this passage that where God gives spiritual privileges He expects proportionate returns.....

We learn, secondly, from this passage, that it is a most dangerous thing to be unfruitful under great religious privileges.....

We learn, lastly, from this parable, what an infinite debt we all owe to God’s mercy and Christ’s intercession....

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**Steven Cole summarizes the Parable of the Fig Tree**- “But,” you may ask, “how can I know that my repentance is genuine? If repentance spares me from perishing eternally, I want to know that my repentance is real.” The test of true repentance is fruitfulness.

The parable (Lk 13:6-9) underscores the message of Lk 13:1-5, that judgment is approaching and that we must bring forth the fruits of repentance before it is too late. The parable primarily applied to the nation Israel, which was about to reject her Messiah and come under national judgment. The three years of the parable may refer to the three years of Christ’s ministry in their midst, or it may just be a way of saying, “There has been sufficient time for the nation to bear the fruits of repentance. If they don’t bear fruit soon, they will be cut down.”

But, of course, the parable also applies to individual repentance, especially to those of us in the church. The fig tree wasn’t a wild one that sprouted up along the road where someone threw a fig seed. This tree was planted by the owner within the walls of his vineyard, which points to the special privileges of those who sit in church and hear the Word of God. If such people do not respond to the message of God’s grace by repenting of their sins and seeking to be fruitful in God’s kingdom, they are not just neutral. They are destructive to the owner’s purpose, in that they are just using up ground that otherwise could be fruitful. They are endangering their own souls and harming others as well.

**What are the fruits of repentance?** They include the whole process of growth in holiness that begins at salvation and continues until we are with the Lord (ED: AKA PROGRESSIVE SANCTIFICATION). G. Campbell Morgan points out that just as the owner could expect figs from a fig tree, so God expects manhood from men (The Westminster Pulpit [Baker], 4:338). And, the true meaning of humanity, or manhood, is seen in the perfect Man, the Lord Jesus Christ. Thus, fruitfulness is Christ-likeness in our character and in our conduct. The fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23) is a succinct list to begin to work on. While believers will never be sinlessly perfect in this life, they will make continual progress in holiness, not just outwardly, but in the heart, as they walk in repentance and in the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit (Calvin has a very helpful discussion of this process in the Institutes, 3:3:8-20).

**Conclusion** - There is one other aspect of the parable that I have not mentioned: the role of the vineyard-keeper, who appeals to the owner to give him time to dig around the tree and fertilize it, in the hopes that it will yet bear fruit the next year. “If not,” he says, “cut it down.” **This is a beautiful picture of God’s patience and mercy in Christ.** As 2 Peter 3:9 tells us, “The Lord ... is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.” The fact that a tragedy similar to the recent ones in Colorado and Oklahoma has not hit you should show you God’s great patience. If you have not repented of your sins and if you’re not bearing fruit in God’s vineyard, there is still time. **But, don’t mistake God’s patience to mean that His axe will never fall. His patience does have a limit. Death and the final judgment could hit you at any moment. Your need to respond to God’s offer of repentance and pardon is urgent! Life is fragile; none are exempt from tragedies.** But, if you have fled to Christ for refuge and you’re bringing forth the fruits of repentance in your life, you are ready if tragedy strikes. You will not perish! ([What We Should Learn From Tragedies](#))

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**Keathley** summarizes the principles of the Parable of the Fig Tree

1. Times of suffering are sovereignly allowed by God to bring purpose and truth to light.

2. The place of privilege is the place of responsibility (Isa 5:)
3. Responsibility brings accountability.
4. God's gracious delay of judgment is designed to prompt repentance. (2Pe 3, 2Co 7:8-10) The repentance is the change of mind that turns from dead works to faith in God. ([The Fig Tree](#))

**Mattoon** - Like flaming arrows from a Roman garrison, scorners may hurl their doubt and derision about the deity of Christ, but one day every knee will bow and every tongue will confess Jesus Christ as Lord. Liberal politicians may use legislation to erase Jesus from our society like a little boy that smooths the sand on the beach to cover his footprints, but one day every knee will bow and every tongue will confess Jesus Christ as Lord. Followers of Confucius, Buddha, or Muhammad have wrongly put their gods on the throne that only belongs to Christ, but one day every knee will bow and every tongue will confess Jesus Christ as Lord. Tyrants have burned Bibles or buried them in ware houses, they have martyred courageous Christians by drowning, burning, boiling, cutting, hanging, or feeding them to wild beasts, but one day, one day, one day... every knee will bow and every tongue will confess Jesus Christ as Lord. **If you have not put your faith in Christ, why not do it today?** (Read 2 Cor 6:2, cf James 4:14) ([Treasures from Luke](#))

**Luke 13:10 And He was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath.**

KJV Luke 13:10 And he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the sabbath.

- Lk 4:15,16,44
- [Luke 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 13:10-17 Religion Versus Reality](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 13:10-17 Christ Creates Conflict in the Synagogue](#) - John MacArthur

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## STRAIGHTENED ON THE SABBATH Luke 13:10-21

**Hendriksen** points out that "The previous section ended with "But if not, you may cut it down"; that is, if genuine conversion does not result, doom follows. The present section indicates that Christ's opponents, instead of turning to the Lord in sorrow for their sins (i.e., in true repentance) and in faith, became all the more hardened." (Borrow [Exposition of the Gospel of Luke](#))

**And He was teaching** ([didasko](#)) **in one of the synagogues** ([synagoge](#)) **on the Sabbath** ([sabbaton](#)) - So far, so good as they say. Clearly opposition was rising from the religious leaders, but here we see He was still welcomed into a Jewish synagogue to teaching. But He use this Sabbath day to perform a miracle and highlight the dramatic contrast between the Kingdom of God (the Kingdom of light) and the Kingdom of Satan (the Kingdom of darkness).

**MacArthur** - Jesus repeatedly assaulted their Sabbath sensibilities. He knew that if He was going to bring them to understand their true spiritual condition, He had to unmask the hypocrisy of the Sabbath. ([Christ Creates Conflict in the Synagogue](#))

Recall that Jesus had begun His ministry in a synagogue with the prophetic promise

"THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS UPON ME, BECAUSE HE ANOINTED ME TO PREACH THE GOSPEL TO THE POOR. HE HAS SENT ME TO PROCLAIM RELEASE ([aphesis](#)) TO THE CAPTIVES, AND RECOVERY OF SIGHT TO THE BLIND, TO SET FREE ([aphesis](#)) THOSE WHO ARE OPPRESSED, TO PROCLAIM THE FAVORABLE YEAR OF THE LORD." (Lk 4:18-19+)

Here in Luke 13-10-21 we see His last appearance in a synagogue, fulfilling those very words as He proclaimed release to the crippled woman and set her free.

Luke repeatedly emphasized Jesus' teaching ministry (Luke 4:16-21, 31-32, 43; 5:17; 6:6, 17-49; 8:1; 9:11). Keep in mind that here we have the greatest Teacher in the Universe and as shown in this story, hard hearts will always resist His message. God speaking God's words and men continuing to resist! Amazing! So don't be too put out when you sharing of the Gospel falls on deaf ears and maybe even generates a negative backlash. If they did it to Jesus, they will do it to you! (cf Mt 10:24, Jn 13:16, 15:20, 21)



**Barclay** notes that "This is the last time we ever hear of Jesus being in a synagogue. It is clear that by this time the authorities were watching his every action and waiting to pounce upon him whenever they got the chance."

**Steven Cole** adds that "The window of opportunity is closing. But for those who are the objects of His grace, such as this hunchbacked woman in the synagogue, the power of real contact with the Savior transforms their lives." ([Religion Versus Reality](#))

**Spurgeon** - When there happened a very remarkable miracle. The parable that preceded it was a parable of judgment; the miracle that followed was a miracle of mercy and grace. ([Luke 13](#) - exposition)

**Mattoon** - In this passage we find a wide variety of priorities and attitudes in people that are found in our own lives today. A sick woman, a sensitive Savior, the synagogue's ruler, and a smiling crowd all reveal their priorities by their attitudes, actions, and articulation as a crooked woman was straightened out by Jesus. From all these different personalities, we learn what is truly important and what to avoid. Your priorities will determine the decisions you make each day. Many times they will influence your behavior and how you treat other people. It is for this reason, we need to make sure that we have proper priorities instead of poor ones. From this story, we will gain insight on what is important to God as Jesus straightens out a crooked woman. What is important to the Lord should be important to us. ([Treasures from Luke](#))

**Bock** - The miracle is a "mirror miracle," in that it replays the Sabbath healings of Lk 4:31–41 and Lk 6:6–11 and will be reinforced by another Sabbath account in Lk 14:1–6. Here is new opportunity and another chance. Will the fig tree bear fruit (Lk 13:6–9)? Have Jesus' previous warnings been heeded when miracles are again displayed on the Sabbath? This miracle examines whether the crowds and leadership have responded to Jesus' strong and explicit warnings. The rebuke of Lk 13:15 shows that they have not...The decision against Jesus fails to discern the time. All that is left for those who refuse to respond is peril. Thus, more warnings will follow this passage (Lk 13:22–35), along with yet another failure to accept what God is doing on the Sabbath (Lk 14:1–6). ([A Sabbath Healing Rejected Luke 13:10-17](#))

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**Synagogue** ([4864](#))([sunagoge](#) from [sunágo](#) = lead together, assemble or bring together) refers to a group of people "going with one another" ([sunago](#)) literally describes a bringing together or congregating in one place. Eventually, **sunagoge** came to mean the place where they congregated together. The word was used to designate the buildings other than the central Jewish temple where the Jews congregated for worship. Historically, the Synagogues originated in the Babylonian captivity after the 586 BC destruction of the temple by Nebuchadnezzar and served as places of worship and instruction.

**Teaching** ([present tense](#) - continually)([1321](#))([didasko](#) from [dáo](#)= know or teach; English = didactic; see noun [didaskalia](#) and adjective [didaktikos](#)) means to provide instruction or information in a formal or informal setting. In all the various forms, the root meaning carries with it the idea of systematic teaching or systematic training. It is the word that is used to refer to a choir director who trains a choir over a long period of rehearsals until they are able to perform. In the 97 NT uses of **didasko** the meaning is virtually always to teach or instruct, although the purpose and content of the teaching must be determined from the context.

**Sabbath** ([4521](#))([sabbaton](#) from [shabath](#) - [07676](#) = to cease from work, intermission - see note on [shabath](#)) has two main meanings:

(1) **Sabbath**, the seventh day of the week, held sacred by the Jews—

**a. singular** = Mt 12:8; Mk 2:27f; Lk 6:7, 9; Jn 5:9f, 18; Acts 1:12; 13:27, 44.

**b. Plural** = of more than one Sabbath Acts 17:2.—*ta sabbata* = for a single Sabbath day Mt 28:1a; Mk 1:21; 2:23f; Lk 4:16; 13:10; Ac 16:13. Jewish Sabbath was the 7th day of week and was kept originally by a total cessation from all labor as even the kindling of a fire, but apparently without any public solemnities except an addition to the daily sacrifice in the tabernacle and the changing of the shewbread (Ex 20:8, 31:13; Lv 24:8; Nu 15:32, 28:9). The custom of reading the Scriptures in public assemblies and synagogues appears to have been introduced after the exile (cf. Neh 8; Lu 4:16). *Sabbaton* is used in Lev 16:31 = "It is to be a **Sabbath of solemn rest** (Lxx repeats the word = "*sabbata sabbaton*") for you, that you may humble (Lxx = [tapeinoo](#) - same verb in Jas 4:10, 1 Pe 5:6) your souls; it is a permanent statute.

(2) **week**—

**a. Singular** = Mk 16:2, 9; Lk 18:12; 1 Cor 16:2.—

**b. Plural** = of a single week Mt 28:1b; Mk 16:2; Lk 24:1; Jn 20:1, 19; Acts 20:7; 1 Cor 16:2

The **Sabbath** was a sign between the Lord and the nation of Israel—the sign of the Old Covenant (the Law)—that they might know He is the Lord Who sanctifies them, sets them apart. Israel was to observe the **Sabbath** because it was holy, set apart, for them. The one who profaned the **Sabbath**, did not treat it as holy, was put to death. The **Sabbath**, the seventh day, was to be a day of

complete rest. Israel was to keep it throughout their generations as a perpetual covenant. But after the captivity arose the school of the Pharisees, and by them the attractive (positive) character of the Sabbatical observances was destroyed. In place of the joy, they imposed upon the people the yoke of a scrupulous, slavish sabbatarianism which made the Sabbath an END instead of a MEANS, hampered the spirit of true worship, and laid greater stress upon a punctilious obedience to mere human regulations than upon God's commands in the Law. **Some of their ridiculous Sabbath prohibitions included:** walking in the grass on the Sabbath because its bruising effect would constitute a kind of threshing; wearing nailed shoes because they would be viewed as carrying a burden. It was against this absurd perversion of the commandment that the Lord Jesus protested. He refused to sanction Pharisaical legalism and vigorously defended His Sabbath miracles ([see table below](#)). Jesus kept the **Sabbath** in the highest sense of the term. He observed every [jot and tittle](#) of the Mosaic Law in the freedom of the spirit. He taught us that acts of necessity and mercy are to be performed always (as in this story in Lk 13:10-17), even on the **Sabbath**, and worldly occupations are to be put as far as possible out of our thoughts. In the Christian church the first day of the week (Sunday) has been substituted for the last day (Saturday) as a day of worship and rest. This, however, is in commemoration of the resurrection of Christ. Christians are to do what the New Testament says. Jesus fulfilled the ceremonial, sacrificial part of the Old Testament law when He died on the cross (Hebrews 10:7-10). He told Peter that the dietary laws no longer applied to the church (Acts 10). True believers keep the moral part of God's laws as they live by His Spirit (Ro 8:1ff -see [notes](#)).

**BORROW** [Kittel's Theological Dictionary of the New Testament \(TDNT\) pages 988, 990-991, 992](#) FOR 4 PAGE DISCUSSION ON SABBATON

**Friberg** on **sabbaton** - strictly ceasing from labor, rest;

- (1) both singular and plural used for the seventh day of the week (Saturday) (Mt 12.1, 2);
- (2) as the sacred festival held each week on the seventh day, beginning with sundown Friday evening and ending at sundown Saturday evening (Jn 19.31);
- (3) singular and plural as a designation for the span of seven days week (Mt 28.1b; Lk 18.12);
- (4) combined into phrases
  - *kata pan* = (on) every Sabbath (Acts 13.27);
  - *sabbatou hodos* = literally Sabbath day's journey, i.e. 2,000 cubits or paces, about 800 meters or 875 yards, denoting the distance the traditional law allowed a Jew to travel on the Sabbath (Acts 1.12);
  - *kata mian sabbatou* = every Sunday, on the first day of every week (1 Co 16.2);
  - *(he) mia (ton) sabbaton* = the first day of the week (Jn 20.1);
  - *dis tou sabbatou* = twice a week (Lk 18.12) (Borrow the [Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament](#))

**Gilbrant - OT Background for Sabbath** - This noun is a Greek transliteration of the Hebrew term [shabbāth](#), which was probably derived from the verb *sāvath*, "to cease." "Sabbath" referred to the day when all work ceased (cf. Lev 23:32; 2 Chr 36:21). After God established a covenantal relationship with Israel, He instituted a Sabbath-day observance among the Jews that was to serve as a memorial of the Exodus (Dt 5:15). Exodus 20 shows that the way Israel was to observe the Sabbath was analogous to God's rest (cf. Ge 2:3): no work on the seventh day of each week (Ex 20:8-11). The Israelite Sabbath was a unique institution in the ancient Near East that testified to the covenant relationship between God and His people (Ex 31:12-17; Jer 17:19-27; Ezek 20:12-21). In the Old Testament the Hebrew term *shabbāth* is used most frequently to designate observance of the seventh day by ceasing from work and participating in cultic activity (Ex 16:29; 20:8-11; 31:15; Lev 23:3). The "Sabbath" also came to be used to designate certain feast days. In Leviticus 16:31 (cf. Lev 23:32) it is used of the Day of Atonement, and it can also be found in reference to the Feast of Trumpets (first day of the seventh month, Lev 23:24) and to the first and last days of the Feast of Booths (Lev 23:39). In Leviticus 25:2,4 *shabbāth* is used for the sabbatical year which included the idea of a "Sabbath rest" for the land (leaving it fallow, Lev 25:6). The command to cease from work had a humanitarian as well as religious purpose. Its observance made provision so "thine ox and thine ass may rest, and the son of thy handmaid, and the stranger, may be refreshed" (Ex 23:12). However, it is somewhat difficult to specify the exact nature of this cessation from work. For example, it did not apply to guard duty (2 Ki 11:4-12). By the end of the Old Testament period the emphasis on observing the Sabbath as a day of cessation from work and participation in corporate religious activity also came to include a time of theological reflection (cf. [McCann, "Sabbath," ISBE 4:250](#)). The prophet Jeremiah exhorted the Israelites to "hallow the Sabbath day" (Jer 17:27). Ezekiel echoed this emphasis by saying that such observance would be a "sign" that the people know God (Ezek 20:12,20). From the Exodus to the period of the exile, the Sabbath was to be positively observed, remembered, and hallowed as a witness to God's saving activity in both creation and in deliverance from captivity ([Complete Biblical Library](#)).

**Mounce** - Generally speaking, work is prohibited on the Sabbath. Rabbinic works are replete with lists of what is permitted or prohibited on this day. Various unavoidable obligations (mortal danger, helping in the event of severe sickness, childbirth, the

preparation and implementation of burnt offerings) supersede the Sabbath law. The Sabbath was a time of celebration at home with feasting, the inviting of guests, and special blessings closing the day. It was also a time for worship in the temple or synagogue (Lk. 4:16-note; Acts 13:5, 14, 42-44; 14:1; 16:13; 17:2, 16; 18:4; 19:8). Sabbaton in the NT agrees with Jewish usage and is in keeping with what is known from Jewish sources, e.g., priestly work is permitted (Mt. 12:4-5), picking ears of corn is banned (Mk. 2:23-28), helping the sick is allowed only in life or death situations (Mk 3:1), the body of Jesus is buried before the Sabbath (Mk 15:42), the Sabbath is a day of rest (Lk 23:56), items are not to be carried (Jn 5:9-10), circumcision is also permitted (Jn 7:22-23), travel is limited (Acts 1:12), and Scripture is read (Acts 13:15, 27). Jesus had repeated conflicts with the Jews over observing the Sabbath. Most of these are over what is and is not permitted. Picking ears of corn (Mt. 12:1-8; Mk. 2:23-28; Lk. 6:1-5) is breaking the law according to the Pharisees, and **while Jesus does not challenge the law, he does put forth the concept that human need overrides ritual law**. Several conflicts center around Jesus' healing on the Sabbath: the healing of a man with a withered hand (Mt. 12:9-14; Mk. 3:1-6; Lk. 6:6-11), the disabled woman (Lk. 13:10-17), a man crippled for thirty-eight years (Jn. 5:1-9, 16-17; 7:22), and the man born blind (Jn. 9). Jesus insisted that it was always lawful to do good on the Sabbath (Mt. 12:12). **According to Jesus the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath** (Mk. 2:27-28). That is, in the creation story, God did not create a Sabbath and then create a human being to keep it; rather, he first created a human being, then knowing human beings would need rest, created the Sabbath for their benefit. The Lord wants us to enjoy the day of rest, not be burdened by it. (Mounce's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words)

**W E Vine** - Noun Neuter — sabbaton | sabbata — sab'-bat-on - the latter, the plural form was transliterated from the Aramaic word, which was mistaken for a plural; hence the singular, sabbaton, was formed from it. The root means "to cease, desist" (Heb., shabath; cp. Arab., sabata, "to intercept, interrupt"); the doubled b has an intensive force, implying a complete cessation or a making to cease, probably the former. **The idea is not that of relaxation or refreshment, but cessation from activity. The observation of the seventh day of the week, enjoined upon Israel, was a sign between God and His earthly people, based upon the fact that after the six days of creative operations He rested**, Ex 31:16,17 , with Ex 20:8-11. The OT regulations were developed and systematized to such an extent that they became a burden upon the people (who otherwise rejoiced in the rest provided) and a byword for absurd extravagance. Two treatises of the Mishna (the Shabbath and Erubin) are entirely occupied with regulations for the observance; so with the discussions in the Gemara, on rabbinical opinions. The effect upon current opinion explains the antagonism roused by the Lord's cures wrought on the "Sabbath," e.g., Mt 12:9-13 ; Jn 5:5-16 , and explains the fact that on a "Sabbath" the sick were brought to be healed after sunset, e.g., Mk 1:32 . According to rabbinical ideas, the disciples, by plucking ears of corn (Mt 12:1 ; Mk 2:23 ), and rubbing them (Luke 6:1-note), broke the "Sabbath" in two respects; for to pluck was to reap, and to rub was to thresh. **The Lord's attitude towards the "Sabbath" was by way of freeing it from these vexatious traditional accretions by which it was made an end in itself, instead of a means to an end** (Mark 2:27). In the Epistles the only direct mentions are in Col 2:16-note , "a sabbath day," RV (which rightly has the singular, see 1st parag., above), where it is listed among things that were "a shadow of the things to come" (ie., of the age introduced at Pentecost), and in Hebrews 4:4-11 , where the perpetual sabbatismos is appointed for believers; inferential references are in Romans 14:5 ; Galatians 4:9-11 . For the first three centuries of the Christian era the first day of the week was never confounded with the "sabbath;" the confusion of the Jewish and Christian institutions was due to declension from apostolic teaching. Notes: (1) In Mt 12:1,11 , where the plural is used, the AV (as the RV) rightly has the singular, "the sabbath day;" in Matthew 12:5 the AV has the plural (see above). Where the singular is used the RV omits the word "day," Matthew 12:2 ; 24:20 ; Mark 6:2 ; Luke 6:1 ("on a sabbath"); 14:3; John 9:14 ("it was the sabbath on the day when ..."). As to the use or omission of the article the omission does not always require the rendering "a sabbath;" it is absent, e.g., in Matthew 12:2 . (2) In Acts 16:13 , "on the sabbath day," is, lit., "on the day of the sabbath" (plural). ([Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old Testament and New Testament Words](#))

#### Resources on Sabbath:

- Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology - [Sabbath](#)
- American Church Dictionary [Sabbath](#)
- American Tract Society [Sabbath](#)
- Easton's Bible Dictionary [Sabbath Day's Journey Sabbath](#)
- Fausset Bible Dictionary [Sabbath](#)
- Holman Bible Dictionary [Sabbath Sabbath Day's Journey Second Sabbath](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible [Sabbath Day's Journey Sabbath](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the NT [Sabbath Sabbath Sabbath Day's Journey](#)
- Smith Bible Dictionary [Sabbath](#)
- Vines' Expository Dictionary [Sabbath](#)
- 1911 Encyclopedia Britannica • [Sabbath](#)
- Condensed Biblical Cyclopaedia • [Sabbath and Feasts](#)
- International Standard Bible Encyclopedia • [Court of the Sabbath](#) • [Day before the Sabbath](#) • [Second Sabbath](#) • [Sabbath](#)

- [Sabbath Day's Journey](#) • [Sabbaths of Years](#) • [Morrow after the Sabbath](#)
- Kitto Biblical Cyclopedia • [Sabbath](#)
- McClintock and Strong's Bible Encyclopedia • [Sabbath School](#) • [Sabbath Days Journey](#) • [Second-First Sabbath](#)
- The Nuttall Encyclopedia • [Sabbath](#)
- Jewish Encyclopedia • [Lamp, Sabbath](#) • [Jewish Sabbath Journal](#) • [Sabbath and Sunday](#) • [Sabbath Lights](#) • [Sabbath Leaves](#)
- [Sabbath](#) • [Sunday and Sabbath](#)

#### Questions on the Sabbath:

- [What day is the Sabbath. Saturday or Sunday? Do Christians have to observe the Sabbath day?](#)
- [How is Jesus our Sabbath Rest?](#)
- [What is the Sabbath day?](#)
- [What does it mean that Jesus is the Lord of the Sabbath?](#)
- [Is Sunday the Christian Sabbath?](#)
- [What does it mean to remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy?](#)
- [What is the Lord's day?](#)
- [Is working on Sunday a sin?](#)
- [Did Constantine change the Sabbath from Saturday to Sunday?](#)

**Sabbaton** - 62v - Sabbath(58), Sabbaths(1), week(9). Matt. 12:1; Matt. 12:2; Matt. 12:5; Matt. 12:8; Matt. 12:10; Matt. 12:11; Matt. 12:12; Matt. 24:20; Matt. 28:1; Mk. 1:21; Mk. 2:23; Mk. 2:24; Mk. 2:27; Mk. 2:28; Mk. 3:2; Mk. 3:4; Mk. 6:2; Mk. 16:1; Mk. 16:2; Mk. 16:9; Lk. 4:16-note; Lk. 4:31-note; Lk. 6:1-note; Lk. 6:2; Lk. 6:5; Lk. 6:6; Lk. 6:7; Lk. 6:9-note; Lk. 13:10; Lk. 13:14; Lk. 13:15; Lk. 13:16; Lk. 14:1; Lk. 14:3; Lk. 14:5; Lk. 18:12; Lk. 23:54; Lk. 23:56; Lk. 24:1; Jn. 5:9; Jn. 5:10; Jn. 5:16; Jn. 5:18; Jn. 7:22; Jn. 7:23; Jn. 9:14; Jn. 9:16; Jn. 19:31; Jn. 20:1; Jn. 20:19; Acts 1:12; Acts 13:14; Acts 13:27; Acts 13:42; Acts 13:44; Acts 15:21; Acts 16:13; Acts 17:2; Acts 18:4; Acts 20:7; 1 Co. 16:2; Col. 2:16--[note](#)

**Sabbaton** - 90v in the [Septuagint](#) Ex 16:23,25-26,29; 20:8,10; 31:13-16; 35:2-3; Lev. 16:31; 19:3,30; 23:3,15,32,38; 24:8; 25:2,4,6; 26:2,34-35,43; Num. 15:32-33; 28:9-10; Deut. 5:12,14-15; 2 Ki. 4:23; 11:5,7,9; 1 Chr. 9:32; 23:31; 2 Chr. 2:3; 8:13; 23:4,8; 31:3; 36:21; Neh. 9:14; 10:32,34; 13:15ff,21-22; Ps. 23:1; 37:1; 47:1; 91:1; 93:1; Hos. 2:13; Amos 6:3; 8:5; Isa. 1:13; 56:2,4,6; 58:13; 66:23; Jer. 17:21-22,24,27; Lam. 2:6; Ezek. 20:12-13,16,20-21,24; 22:8,26; 23:38; 44:24; 45:17; 46:1,3-4,12

#### SEVEN SABBATH MIRACLES

Jesus sends a demon out of a man	Mark 1:21-28
Jesus heals Peter's mother-in-law	Mark 1:29-31
Jesus heals a lame man by the pool of Bethesda	John 5:1-18
Jesus heals a man with a deformed hand	Mark 3:1-6
Jesus restores a crippled woman	Luke 13:10-17
Jesus heals a man with swollen arms and legs	Luke 14:1-6
Jesus heals a man born blind	John 9:1-16

#### James Smith - Luke 13:10-16.

I would not champ the hard cold bit  
 As thou—of what the world thinks fit,  
 But take God's freedom, using it.  
 —E. B. Browning.

Coleridge's definition of freedom is, "The unfettered use of all the powers which God for use hath given." Before all the powers that God hath given us can be used for Him the fetters of sin and the power of Satan must be broken. The woman before us here, "whom Satan had bound," and whom Christ set at liberty, is a perfect example of how a sin-bound soul may enter into the freedom of God. She was—

**I. Crooked.** "Bowed together" (v. 11). She had been bound by Satan for eighteen years (v. 16). Completely deformed by the power of the Devil. It is always Satan's business, wherever he can, to bow down the souls of men to the earth. Sin never fails to make a crook in the will and thoughts of those under its dominion. Their name is legion, who are so bound together by the love of the world

that they cannot lift their faces to Heaven. Crooked through the constant use of the muck-rake.

**II. Helpless.** "She could in no wise lift up herself" (v. 11). It was utterly impossible for her to break the cords that bound her face to the earth. She had been so long bowed down that her deformity had become fixed, like a crooked tree of eighteen years old. She was perfectly conscious of her outward disfigurement, and had often tried to straighten herself up, but "she could not." How like this is to those who are morally "bowed together" through drink, lust, or temper, and who again and again have attempted to lift themselves up, but they cannot, back they go to their natural deformity.

**III. Anxious.** She was in the synagogue on the Sabbath day, when Jesus was there (v. 10-11). Perhaps it was because He was there that she was there; at any rate she was putting herself in the way of getting blessing. It does not matter where we take our sin-crooked souls, there is no deliverance for them so long as we avoid the presence of the Son of God and refuse to hear His Word. If Bartimeus had bolted over the fence when he heard that Jesus was passing by, instead of praying, he would have certainly remained in his blindness.

**IV. Invited.** "Jesus called her to Him" (v. 12). He saw many in the synagogue, but He called her, for He came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. The Spirit of the Lord was upon Him to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound (Isa. 61:1). True to His mission, He searches out this helpless one "whom Satan had bound, lo, these eighteen years." Jesus Christ alone hath the keys of all the prison houses of Satan (Rev. 1:18). When He opens no man can shut.

**V. Touched.** "He laid His hands on her" (v. 13). Jesus Christ comes into personal contact with every soul whom He saves. He cannot delegate this great work to another. He is ready to lay His healing and fetter-breaking hand upon all who accept His invitation, as this poor woman did. The woman mentioned in Luke 8:44 came without any special invitation, and touched His garment, and was instantly delivered. The results are the same, whether He condescends to touch us, or suffers us to touch Him, it is all of grace on His part. His hands are the hands of infinite love and power, they are never exercised in vain.

**VI. Delivered.** Notice the terms used, "Loosed from thine infirmity,... made straight,... loosed from this bond" (v. 12). It was to her a full salvation. It consisted of a deliverance from her own weakness, a freedom from the binding power of Satan, and a being made straight for future life and work. She was now a monument of His gracious wonder-working power. Such is His salvation. A loosing of the soul from the bondage of Satan and moral infirmity, and a making of the heart straight for an upright life and loving service. Therefore the song of the saved is, "Unto Him who loved us, and... loosed us from our sin by His own blood" (Rev. 1:5, R.V.).

**VII. Thankful.** "Immediately she glorified God" (v. 13). A new song was put into her mouth as soon as her feet had been taken out of the horrible pit of her eighteen years' bondage through Satan (Ps 40:2, 3). The snare was broken by the power of Him who came "to heal all that were oppressed by the Devil" (Acts 10:38), and now her soul had escaped like a bird, and was singing her song of praise high up in the wide, pure Heaven of God's redeeming love.

**Luke 13:11 And there was a woman who for eighteen years had had a sickness caused by a spirit; and she was bent double, and could not straighten up at all.**

KJV Luke 13:11 And, **behold**, there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself.

Young's Literal - and lo, there was a woman having a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and she was bowed together, and not able to bend back at all,

- **caused by a spirit** Lk 13:16; 8:2; Job 2:7; Ps 6:2; Mt 9:32,33
- **for eighteen years had had a sickness** Lk 8:27,43; Mk 9:21; Jn 5:5,6; 9:19-21; Acts 3:2; 4:22; 14:8-10
- **she was bent double, and could not straighten up at all** Ps 38:6; 42:5; Ps 145:14; 146:8
- [Luke 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 13:10-17 Religion Versus Reality](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 13:10-17 Christ Creates Conflict in the Synagogue](#) - John MacArthur

**BEHOLD A WOMAN  
BENT DOUBLE!**

This story is found only in the Gospel of Luke.

**And there was** - The KJV is much more vivid here, because the Greek is literally "**And lo**" or "**And behold**", which the modern



translations unfortunately ignore, not only in this passage but also in Lk 13:16.

**Spurgeon** - Observe the word "**Behold**" here. Sometimes, in old books, they used to put a hand in the margin to call attention to something special in the text (Ed: Like many of us do today with a **yellow highlighter**! **Behold** is like a "*yellow highlighter*!"), so, this word seems as though nobody in the synagogue was worthy of such special notice as the most forlorn and desolate individual there: "a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and who bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself." It was to be a happy Sabbath for her, though she did not know it. She used to go to the synagogue, though it must have been painful for her to be present; possibly, she could not even see the minister, she was so "bowed together." It must have been a great surprise to her when the Saviour called her to Him, and said to her, "Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity."

The Lutheran commentator **R C H Lenski** writes that the Greek text introducing her with "**and behold**" "shuts out the idea that this woman was in the synagogue from the start and presents her as slowly and painfully making her way into it while Jesus was in the midst of his teaching." (**Ed comment**: While this is possible it does not exclude that she had been listening to Jesus the entire time and at this time **behold** is inserted to direct our attention to her presence.)

**And there was a woman who for eighteen years had had a sickness ([astheneia](#)) caused by a spirit - For eighteen years** should be read literally. Jesus certainly interpreted it literally (Lk 13:16). More literally **caused by a spirit** reads a "spirit of infirmity" or of weakness. This links her physical malady with a spiritual condition. However it does not allow us to state with certainty that she was possessed by Satan (who clearly is identified by Jesus as the cause in Lk 13:16). There was no statement that a demon was cast out when her infirmity was corrected so those who say she was possessed are reading between the lines. How was Satan involved? We do not know specifically how he bound her in this awkward posture. However, we do know from the story of Job that Satan was intimately involved in Job's afflictions, for we read "Then Satan went out from the presence of the LORD and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head." (Job 2:7)

Recall that in Lk 13:1-3ff we discussed that the Jews frequently associated suffering and/or tragedy with sins (cf John 9:1-3). Imagine what the Jews thought about this woman! Talk about social stigma! One is surprised she even had access to the synagogue.

**Mattoon** - She was not demon-possessed because Jesus did not cast out any demon in her and no demon spoke through her. She was, however, demon-oppressed. In some way, Satan was afflicting her. (Note: some speculate that this was specific medical condition - [see below](#)). ([Treasures from Luke](#))

**Hendriksen** on **caused by a spirit** - "having a spirit of infirmity" would seem to favor the suggestion that she was—at the very least, she was demon-influenced. (Borrow [Exposition of the Gospel of Luke](#))

**Fitzmyer** - "'A spirit of infirmity" may be an Aramaism, indicating that the sickness was caused by this spirit."

**Spurgeon** on **bent double** - He (EVIL SPIRIT) must have bound her very cunningly to make the knot hold all that time, for he does not appear to have possessed her. You notice in reading the evangelists that our Lord never laid his hand on a person possessed with a devil. Satan had not possessed her, but he had fallen upon her once upon a time eighteen years before, and bound her up as men tie a beast in its stable, and she had not been able to get free all that while. ([Luke 13](#) - exposition)

**Adam Clarke** - A situation equally painful and humiliating; the violence of which she could not support, and the shame of which she could not conceal.

**Pate** - The physical cause of her inability to straighten up has been examined by J. Wilkinson, who identified the paralysis as the result of [spondylitis ankylopoietica](#), which produces the fusion of the spinal bones.

**Guzik** cautions "We are foolish to think that spiritual issues cause all physical problems, but we are also foolish to think spiritual issues can never cause physical problems."

**Wiersbe** - If I had been crippled for eighteen years, I wonder if I would be faithful to worship God week after week in the synagogue? Surely this woman had prayed and asked God for help, and yet she was not delivered. However, God's seeming unconcern did not cause her to become bitter or resentful. There she was in the synagogue. Ever sensitive to the needs of others, Jesus saw the woman and called her to come forward. It may have seemed heartless to the congregation for Him to do this and expose her handicap publicly (see Mt. 12:13), but He knew what He was doing. For one thing, Satan was in the synagogue and He wanted to expose him and defeat him. But He also wanted the woman to help Him teach the people an important lesson about freedom. (Borrow [Be compassionate](#))

**Spurgeon** on **eighteen years** - For eighteen years she had not gazed upon the sun; for eighteen years no star of night had gladdened her eye; her face was drawn downward towards the dust, and all the light of her life was dim: she walked about as if she were searching for a grave, and I do not doubt she often felt that it would have been gladness to have found one. You can see her



slowly moving along, bent double. Hers was a painful walk, but she came at Christ's call. You can see her slowly moving along, bent double. Hers was a painful walk, but she came at Christ's call. ([Luke 13](#) - exposition)

**R Kent Hughes** gives a vivid description of what this woman may have looked - She lived in a posture of forced humility, her face always toward the dust of the earth, unless she wrenched sideways and peered upward like an awkward animal. She seemed to sink lower and lower as the weight of years pressed upon her. Her gait was a lunging shuffle. "She walked about as if she were searching for a grave." (Spurgeon) At times she probably wished she could find one. And yet this woman's spiritual focus was upward. She was evidently a regular worshiper at the synagogue, for no one took special note of her. Due to her infirmity it would have been much easier to stay at home, but to her credit she sought the solace of worship and the Word. (See [Luke: That You May Know the Truth](#))

**She was bent double** ([sugkupto](#)), and could ([dunamai](#)) not straighten up ([anakupto](#)) at all - **Bent double** was a word from medicine describing the curvature of the spine. **Vincent** notes that **straighten up** ([anakupto](#)) is "Used by Galen ([prominent Greek physician](#)) of strengthening the vertebrae of the spine." The nature of the pathology that caused her to be **bent double** is not absolutely certain, but most observers feel that this was most likely some variation of "[spondylosis deformans](#)." (See [picture of a man affected with this infirmity](#)). It is possible her vertebral bodies had fused into a rigid bent column of bone which explains why no amount of muscular effort would allow her to lift herself up. Others have mentioned a condition known as *skoliosis hysterica* (A non-structural deformity of the spine that develops as a manifestation of a psychological disorder.), but most consider [spondylitis ankylopoietica](#) as the more likely etiology. Picture her pitiful plight pacing, peering permanently at pavement!

**Steven Cole** on **bent double** - Most people looked at her and assumed that she had a physical problem, but Jesus perceived that her sickness was due to an evil spirit. Certainly not all and perhaps not many physical illnesses are caused by evil spirits but, clearly, some are. While demons cannot possess believers, they can afflict us in various ways. Paul attributed his thorn in the flesh to a messenger of Satan that was sent by God to keep him humble (2 Cor. 12:7). In his case, it was not God's will to remove the source of affliction, so that Paul was forced through his weakness to depend on God's strength. In other cases, such as here, it is His will to heal, but not until the problem had gone on for 18 long years. We don't know why God waited that long. Perhaps it was simply that He would be all the more glorified in her cure (John 9:3; 11:4). But in spite of all her years of going to the synagogue, this woman was in bondage to this debilitating illness that Jesus ascribes to Satan. As such, she is a picture of the millions who attend religious services every week for years, but they live in spiritual bondage to sin and to the prince of darkness. They are often sincere people, but they are bent over under the load of sin and guilt. The religious system tolerates their bondage and perhaps even shrugs it off as accepted. But it can't deliver them from it. What they need is what this woman experienced, a personal encounter with the living Lord Jesus Christ. ([Religion Versus Reality Luke 13:10-17](#))

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**Behold** (Lo)([2400](#)) see discussion on [idou](#). This interjection which is used to arrest the reader's attention (saying "slow down and pay attention to this") occurs 6 times in Luke 13 - Lk. 13:7; Lk. 13:11; Lk. 13:16; Lk. 13:30; Lk. 13:32; Lk. 13:35

**Bent double** ([4794](#))([sugkupto](#) from **sun** = with + **kupto** = bend, bow) means to bend completely forwards, to be bowed together and is used only here in the NT. Luke of course was a doctor and it is interesting that he was the only one that mentioned this story in the Gospels. The term is used in contrast to *anakuptō* (350), "to stand straight" or "stand erect." *Sugkupto* is used in Job 9:27 "Though I say, 'I will forget my complaint, I will leave off my sad countenance and be cheerful.'" The Septuagint is somewhat difficult to reconcile with the Hebrew for last part of the verse in Greek is rendered "I will bow my face and groan."

**Could not** ([1410](#))([dunamai](#)) conveys the basic meaning of that which has the inherent ability to do something or accomplish some end. Thus **dunamai** means to be able to, to be capable of, to be strong enough to do or to have power to do something. In this passage *dunamai* is modified by "me" (negative particle) and is in the [present tense](#) indicating she continually lacked the ability to stand erect. One can envision her trying to stand up from time to time, but the verb indicates that she did not have the power to do so and that this went on for 18 years! Next time you walk around in your house bend over as you walk which will help you imagine this woman's pathetic plight.

**Straighten up** ([352](#))([anakupto](#) from **ana** = again, up + **kupto** = to bend, stoop) means to lift or raise oneself up, to bend up, to stand erect. Galen used *anakupto* of straightening the vertebrae of the spine. Metaphorically *anakuptō* speaks of the mind looking up (Thayer = "one's soul: to be elated, exalted") as looking up in hope in Luke 21:28. There is a use of **anakupto** in the papyri in which a person speaks of the impossibility of ever looking up again in a certain place, for very shame. This is similar to the one use in the Septuagint in Job 10:15 where Job laments "If I am wicked, woe to me! And if I am righteous, I dare not **lift up** (Lxx - has *dunamai* and *anakupto* = "I cannot lift myself up") my head. I am sated with disgrace and conscious of my misery." **Anakupto** is used twice to describe Jesus in the context of the episode of the "woman...caught in adultery, in the very act."

**Anakupto** - 4x in 4v

Luke 13:11 And there was a woman who for eighteen years had had a sickness caused by a spirit; and she was bent double, and could not **straighten up** at all.

Luke 21:28 "But when these things begin to take place, **straighten up** (anakupto - [aorist imperative](#) = command to do this now! Don't delay!) and **lift up** ([aorist imperative](#)) your heads, because ([term of explanation](#)) your redemption is drawing near."

John 8:7 But when they persisted in asking Him, He **straightened up** (from Jn 8:6), and said to them, "He who is without sin among you, let him be the first to throw a stone at her."

John 8:10 **Straightening up**, Jesus said to her, "Woman, where are they? Did no one condemn you?"

**Luke 13:12 When Jesus saw her, He called her over and said to her, "Woman, you are freed from your sickness."**

KJV Luke 13:12 And when Jesus saw her, he called her to him, and said unto her, Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity.

- **Woman** Lk 6:8-10; Ps 107:20; Isa 65:1; Mt 8:16
- **you are freed from your sickness** Lk 13:16; Joel 3:10
- [Luke 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 13:10-17 Religion Versus Reality](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 13:10-17 Christ Creates Conflict in the Synagogue](#) - John MacArthur

## **WOMAN THOU ART LOOSED!**

**When Jesus saw her** - "With that quick eye of his which was always in sympathy with his audience." (Spurgeon) What some might have seen as a singular distraction, Jesus saw as a Sabbath opportunity. Keep in mind that Jesus was teaching. If you are a teacher, various distractions (children, people falling asleep, etc) often occur, but you are usually able to "teach through them" so to speak. Jesus saw His "teaching plan" for the Sabbath in this crippled woman!

**THOUGHT** - Lord give us eyes to see the spiritual lessons in the distractions and common place things of life (not that the woman was "common place"). Amen

**Boek** - His effort to help a woman is significant in a culture where men publicly shunned women. It shows the extent to which Jesus responds to those in need

**Jon Courson on Jesus saw her** - Upon entering a situation, some have an eye to see what's wrong. Others have an eye to see what's right. Jesus has an eye to see who's in need. I like that.

**THOUGHT** - Does this picture of the compassion and concern of Jesus not give you great encouragement. You may be like this woman, in a "handicapped" condition, emotionally, spiritually, or even physically. And yet He sees you! In the Old Testament He saw another outcast woman name Hagar, this story giving us His great Name El Roi, The God Who Sees! Dear child of God, rest assured He sees you!

**Steven Cole** - Note how Jesus took the initiative in this healing. **The woman exhibited no faith. She did not appeal to Him. She probably could not even look up at Him, since she was bent over with her face toward the ground.** But Jesus noticed her need and did everything necessary to heal her. G. Campbell Morgan (The Gospel of Luke [Revell], p. 163) points out that Jesus saw her and then adds, "If there is a man or a woman in any assembly of human beings, more in need than any other, that is the man or the woman that Jesus is after." That is true here today. Perhaps, like this woman, you have been coming to church for years in some spiritually bent-over condition. Perhaps people have ignored your need or have been helpless to do anything about it. But Jesus sees you and He wants the power of His Word to touch and heal your soul today. That power transforms you when you make real contact with the living Lord....If we have reality with the Savior, we will be growing in seeing people through His eyes of compassion. Although Jesus concentrated His time on the twelve, He always had time for those who needed His tender touch. The disciples thought that children were wasting the Master's time, but He rebuked the disciples and welcomed the children into His arms. The disciples were baffled that He would take the time to talk with the Samaritan woman at the well, but Jesus knew that she needed the living water He had to offer. While sometimes due to human limitations or other commitments we must say no to the demands of needy people, we should never do so callously. We should grow in compassion as we walk with our compassionate Lord. ([Religion Versus Reality Luke 13:10-17](#))

He called her over and said to her "Woman, you are freed ([apoluo](#)) from your sickness ([astheneia](#)) - KJV = "Woman, thou art loosed." The woman was presumably at the back of the synagogue on the side where women sat and Jesus called her to the front where he addressed her. His call and liberating words demonstrate His great compassion and His unrivaled authority over the powers of darkness. Note that freed is in the [perfect tense](#) which means she was set free in that moment and her freedom was abiding. In short, Jesus provided a permanent cure for her infirmity. What a beautiful picture of the permanent spiritual healing Jesus gives to all who are weary and heavy laden and will come to Him for rest for their souls.

**NET Note** - **Woman** was a polite form of address, similar to "Madam" or "Ma'am" used in English in different regions.

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**Freed** (630) ([apoluo](#) from **apó** = marker of dissociation, implying a rupture from a former association, separation + **luo** = loose) is used often of sending a person or a group away from someone (Mt 14:15, 22, 23, 32, etc). It means to release or free someone from something. **Apoluo** is used in classic Greek of freeing prisoners or releasing from debt. **Apoluo** in the present passage has the sense of to let loose from or release from another's custody, specifically from being bound by Satan (Lk 13:16, cf Acts 17:9). The result was that she was set free from the sickness. As noted "[perfect tense](#) indicates, "you have been freed and are in the state of freedom." (Arndt) The [passive voice](#) implies that God has freed her ("divine passive"). **Vincent** observes that Luke's use of **apoluo** is "The only passage in the New Testament where the word is used of disease. Medical writers use it of releasing from disease, relaxing tendons, and taking off bandages." The power of the evil spirits was to be broken when the days of the Messiah came.

**Sickness** (769) ([astheneia](#) from **a** = without + **sthénos** = strength, bodily vigor) means literally without strength or bodily vigor = want of strength = lacking strength. Literally **astheneia** refers to bodily diseases or ailments (Lk 5:15, 13:11, 12, Jn 5:5, 11:4, 28:9). The basic sense of this word is powerlessness and so the sick are without strength and are incapacitated in some serious way in this case **bent double**.

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**Compare other healings by Jesus** Luke 4:33–35; 7:21; Mark 1:23–26; 5:2–13; 7:25–30; 9:17–27; Acts 10:38)

Luke 4:33-35; In the synagogue there was a man possessed by the spirit of an unclean demon, and he cried out with a loud voice, 34 "Let us alone! What business do we have with each other, Jesus of Nazareth? Have You come to destroy us? I know who You are—the Holy One of God!" 35 But Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Be quiet and come out of him!" And when the demon had thrown him down in the midst of the people, he came out of him without doing him any harm.

Luke 7:21 At that very time He cured many people of diseases and afflictions and evil spirits; and He gave sight to many who were blind.

Mark 1:23-26; Just then there was a man in their synagogue with an unclean spirit; and he cried out, 24 saying, "What business do we have with each other, Jesus of Nazareth? Have You come to destroy us? I know who You are—the Holy One of God!" 25 And Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Be quiet, and come out of him!" 26 Throwing him into convulsions, the unclean spirit cried out with a loud voice and came out of him.

Mark 5:2-13 When He got out of the boat, immediately a man from the tombs with an unclean spirit met Him, 3 and he had his dwelling among the tombs. And no one was able to bind him anymore, even with a chain; 4 because he had often been bound with shackles and chains, and the chains had been torn apart by him and the shackles broken in pieces, and no one was strong enough to subdue him. 5 Constantly, night and day, he was screaming among the tombs and in the mountains, and gashing himself with stones. 6 Seeing Jesus from a distance, he ran up and bowed down before Him; 7 and shouting with a loud voice, he \*said, "What business do we have with each other, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I implore You by God, do not torment me!" 8 For He had been saying to him, "Come out of the man, you unclean spirit!" 9 And He was asking him, "What is your name?" And he \*said to Him, "My name is Legion; for we are many." 10 And he began to implore Him earnestly not to send them out of the country. 11 Now there was a large herd of swine feeding nearby on the mountain. 12 The demons implored Him, saying, "Send us into the swine so that we may enter them." 13 Jesus gave them permission. And coming out, the unclean spirits entered the swine; and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the sea, about two thousand of them; and they were drowned in the sea.

Mk 7:25-30 But after hearing of Him, a woman whose little daughter had an unclean spirit immediately came and fell at His feet. 26 Now the woman was a Gentile, of the Syrophenician race. And she kept asking Him to cast the demon out of her daughter. 27 And He was saying to her, "Let the children be satisfied first, for it is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs." 28 But she answered and \*said to Him, "Yes, Lord, but even the dogs under the table feed on the children's crumbs." 29 And He said to her, "Because of this answer go; the demon has gone out of your daughter." 30 And going back to her home, she found the child

lying on the bed, the demon having left.

Mk 9:17-27 And one of the crowd answered Him, "Teacher, I brought You my son, possessed with a spirit which makes him mute; 18and whenever it seizes him, it slams him to the ground and he foams at the mouth, and grinds his teeth and stiffens out. I told Your disciples to cast it out, and they could not do it." 19And He \*answered them and \*said, "O unbelieving generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring him to Me!" 20They brought the boy to Him. When he saw Him, immediately the spirit threw him into a convulsion, and falling to the ground, he began rolling around and foaming at the mouth. 21And He asked his father, "How long has this been happening to him?" And he said, "From childhood. 22"It has often thrown him both into the fire and into the water to destroy him. But if You can do anything, take pity on us and help us!" 23And Jesus said to him, " 'If You can?' All things are possible to him who believes." 24Immediately the boy's father cried out and said, "I do believe; help my unbelief." 25When Jesus saw that a crowd was rapidly gathering, He rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, "You deaf and mute spirit, I command you, come out of him and do not enter him again." 26After crying out and throwing him into terrible convulsions, it came out; and the boy became so much like a corpse that most of them said, "He is dead!" 27But Jesus took him by the hand and raised him; and he got up.

Acts 10:38 "You know of Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power, and how He went about doing good and **healing all who were oppressed by the devil**, for God was with Him.

**Luke 13:13 And He laid His hands on her; and immediately she was made erect again and began glorifying God.**

KJV Luke 13:13 And he laid his hands on her: and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God.

- **And He laid His hands on her** Lk 4:40; Mk 6:5; 8:25; 16:18; Acts 9:17
- **and immediately she was made erect again and began glorifying God** Lk 17:14-17; 18:43; Ps 103:1-5; 107:20-22; 116:16,17
- [Luke 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 13:10-17 Religion Versus Reality](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 13:10-17 Christ Creates Conflict in the Synagogue](#) - John MacArthur

## **A CROOKED WOMAN STRAIGHTENED OUT!**

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**And He laid His hands on her** (cf Lk 4:40+) **and immediately** ([parachrema](#)) **she was made erect again** ([anorthoo](#)) - The fact that Jesus touched her could be seen by all in the synagogue and would inform the skeptical audience that it was Jesus' power that had healed the woman. This miracle is interesting in that first He declares her free of illness and then He lays His hands on her which results in her being made erect again. **Again** supports the premise that she had once been well (and erect). **Made erect again** is in the passive voice (divine passive), which emphasizes that she was set upright by an external power, the power of God.

**Wiersbe** - Not only does Satan bow people down, but so do sin (Ps 38:6), sorrow (Ps 42:5), and suffering (Ps 44:25). Jesus Christ is the only One who can set the prisoner free. He spoke the word, laid His hands on her, and she was healed and gave glory to God! That was a synagogue service the people never forgot. (**ED**: BUT SADLY THEY REMEMBERED THE SIGN BUT THEY REJECTED THE SAVIOR!) (Borrow [Be compassionate](#))

**MacArthur** - Without confronting or even referring to the demon, with merely a word and a touch, the Lord broke the evil spirit's hold over her. She was completely and permanently freed from her physical malady, as the perfect tense of the verb indicates. Nothing is said about her having faith—whether she believed Jesus could heal her and sought Him out, or was just coming to the synagogue as she always did. The text does not reveal her spiritual condition before or after her healing, or whether she became a true believer in Jesus Christ that day. What Jesus did was completely sovereign, and totally independent of any faith element from her. (See [Luke Commentary](#))

**Mattoon** - The phrase "**made straight**" was used to describe the setting up of a building or the restoration of a ruin. This is how it was used in Acts 15:16. Acts 15:16— After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and **I will set it up** (restore it).

This was a crooked woman that Jesus straightened out! Amen! Like the restoration of ruins, our Lord restored this woman. Christ is in the business of straightening out our own lives today. He can give you the power to conquer sin in your life and heal your hurt, your pain, your discouragement and depression. There are a number of other treasured insights that we find nestled in these two verses that we want to apply to our own lives. First of all, we find the priority of Jesus. Jesus put the needs of a person over the needs of religious man-made traditions of men. He healed this woman on the Sabbath because of the need in her life. Christ was alert to others needs and we need to be alert, too. That will not happen, however, if you are focused on yourself instead of being focused on encouraging or reaching other people for Christ. Secondly, just as the Lord called out to her to come to Him, our Lord continues that same call today for all sinners to come to Him and have their sin cleansed and forgiven, and to be restored in their fellowship with God. If you don't know Christ, He is calling to you. If you have backslidden away from the Lord, He is calling out to you. Thirdly, when the Lord called out to this woman, this would focus the attention of all the people upon her. This would have been humiliating for her because she would have been the center of attention. It would also draw attention to her condition. You will find, however, that many times the Lord will humble people, before He blesses them. Solomon stated in Proverbs that before honor is humility. Humility is not going to hurt you, but your pride will. Humility will not rob you of great blessings, but your pride will rob you. God has honored this woman by recording her story in the Scriptures. We are reading about her life 2000 years later. In the fourth place, the fact that this woman was in the place of worship shows us the importance of being in the place of blessing. Just think what she would have missed because she skipped church that day. She would have not been touched by the Lord. How many blessings have people missed because they were not in the place of blessing? How many solutions to your problems have you missed because you missed an important message in church? ([Treasures from Luke](#))

**Spurgeon** - See what Christ can do. After I had preached this morning, I had to speak with just such a woman as this, one who has been, for many years, the victim of deep despondency. How I wished that I could lay my hands on her, and say, "Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity"! But we cannot work such a miracle as that. It is Christ who must do it all; and blessed be his name, he is always great at a pinch! Christ loves to come in at a dead lift. When we are all beaten, and we have reached *man's extremity*, then it is *Christ's opportunity*. Oh, you poor despairing woman, bent double by your sadness, the Lord's hand can restore you: and we pray for you tonight, even the thousands pray for you at this moment! Lord, lay thine hand upon that poor child of infirmity! His adversaries might well be ashamed, and the people might well rejoice at such a display of his power and mercy; but the point I want you to notice is that the poor woman was set at liberty by the Lord Jesus on the Sabbath-day. There is another Sabbath miracle recorded in the next chapter. (See Lk 14:1-6) ([Luke 13](#) - exposition)

**And began glorifying (doxazo) God** - Imperfect tense pictures her giving praise to God again and again. It is interesting that the woman's gratitude is shown in her praising of God, not Jesus. She praised God because she recognized the connection between Jesus and the act of God's power in healing her.

**Spurgeon** adds on **glorifying God** - I should think she did. We have no record of what she said; she may have merely cried out, "Hallelujah"; but the very look of her, her streaming eyes filled with gratitude, her face beaming with delight, all tended to glorify God. Even if she had said nothing, her being made straight would of itself have glorified God; and, just as that once crooked woman could glorify God, so can a guilty sinner, crushed and helpless, glorify God. It was when Christ's hands were laid upon her that she was made straight. Oh, that he would lay his hands on some of you! May this be to you the saving Sabbath of the year, that God may be glorified in you. ([Luke 13](#) - exposition)

**Matthew Henry** "When crooked souls are made straight, they will show it by their glorifying God"

Her reaction reminds me of Jesus' words in John 9:1-3

As He passed by, He saw a man blind from birth. 2 And His disciples asked Him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he would be born blind?" 3 Jesus answered, "It was neither that this man sinned, nor his parents; but it was **so that the works of God might be displayed** ([phaneroo](#) = caused to be clearly visible) in him.

**Comment:** And compare what happens when clearly supernatural "good works" are "displayed" in us, so that they are clearly understood by the witnesses to be "God works" -- Mt 5:16 says " your good works....**glorify** your Father Who is in heaven."

Compare similar reactions

Luke 5:25-26+ Immediately he got up before them, and picked up what he had been lying on, and **went home glorifying God**. 26 They were all struck with astonishment and began glorifying God; and they



were filled with fear, saying, "We have seen remarkable things today."

Luke 7:16+ Fear gripped them all, and **they began glorifying God**, saying, "A great prophet has arisen among us!" and, "God has visited His people!"

Luke 17:14-15+ When He saw them, He said to them, "Go and show yourselves to the priests." And as they were going, they were cleansed. 15 Now one of them, when he saw that he had been healed, turned back, **glorifying God with a loud voice**, 16 and he fell on his face at His feet, **giving thanks to Him**. And he was a Samaritan.

Luke 18:43 Immediately he regained his sight and began following Him, **glorifying God**; and when all the people saw it, **they gave praise to God**.

**Steven Cole** commenting on the woman's instant cure writes that "The difference that day for this woman was that she didn't just go to a religious service. She had personal contact with the living Lord. Meeting Him personally freed her from bondage to the enemy of her soul and instantly cured a body that probably had severe spinal deformity. The length of the illness was no problem for Jesus. It just brought greater glory to the power of God in releasing her from her problem. It would be wrong to conclude that the moment you meet Jesus Christ all your problems will instantly and miraculously disappear. Some people do experience dramatic deliverance from long term problems, such as alcohol or drug addiction at the moment of salvation. Others struggle against such problems for years after conversion. It would be wrong to imply that such people are not truly converted because they still struggle. God simply has different lessons to teach them or a different purpose in His dealings with them. But even though salvation does not always bring instant deliverance from long-term problems, it always results in an instantaneous, dramatic change of heart that comes from nothing less than the supernatural power of God. Conversion means that the formerly dead sinner receives new life from God. God changes his heart of stone into a heart of flesh that is warm toward the things of God. The formerly blind sinner's eyes are opened so that he now can see spiritual truth. The formerly captive sinner is loosed from his chains and set free so that he now can have power over the sin that held him in bondage. All of these biblical metaphors for conversion teach us that it is not merely a human decision to turn over a new leaf. Conversion requires the life-giving power of God in raising the sinner from the dead. **Before he was converted, John Wesley was an intensely religious young man. Following in his father's footsteps, he was ordained as a priest in the Anglican Church.** Along with some of his friends, such as George Whitefield, Wesley met with the Holy Club at Oxford to promote religion. These men met regularly for prayer, the study of the Greek New Testament, self-examination, and accountability to do works of charity. They sought to practice high moral standards. Wesley went as a missionary to the Indians and colonists in Georgia. But when he returned to England, he lamented, "I went to America to convert the Indians; but, oh, who shall convert me?" During his crossing of the Atlantic, Wesley had been on board with a bunch of German Moravians who had a genuine faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. During a storm at sea, Wesley was gripped by fear for his life, but these people were singing praises to God. When he got back to England, he started attending their meetings. On May 24, 1738, as Wesley listened to a brother read from the preface of Martin Luther's commentary on Romans, he felt his heart "strangely warmed." From then on, Wesley declared, he had only "one point of view-to promote so far as I am able vital, practical religion; and by the grace of God to beget, preserve, and increase the life of God in the souls of men." Wesley's phrase, "the life of God in the souls of men," is the difference between dead religion and the power of reality with the Lord Jesus Christ. ([Religion Versus Reality Luke 13:10-17](#))

**THOUGHT-** Jon Courson applies the truth of this story - When Jesus touches someone addicted to drugs, alcohol, sexual perversion, or any other sin, there comes a moment when he is made straight. Immediately. For some that might sound simplistic. I've seen it happen enough, however, to know that when Jesus touches people through the Word and through the body, they are made straight immediately. "But I've been coming to church for eighteen months, and I'm still caught up in this addiction or bowed down by that activity," you say. Keep coming. Keep believing. Keep worshiping—for, because Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever, there will come a time when, like the daughter of Abraham, you will hear in your heart, "Thou art loosed." And, like her, you'll be able to stand up straight.

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**Immediately** (at once) ([3916](#)) ([parachrema](#) from **pará** = at, and **chréma** = something useful or needed) means suddenly, immediately, at the very moment, on the spot, forthwith, directly after something else has taken place. It sometimes has the implication of unexpectedness in certain context as the withering of the fig tree (Mt 21:19, 20). Note how most of the uses are in the context of a miraculous event and emphasize the absence of delay in the performance of the miracle. The woman immediately stood erect! Her problem was "straightened out!"

Luke's uses of **parachrema** - **Parachrema** is used to describe Peter's mother in law **"immediately"** getting up after Jesus rebuked the fever (Lk 4:39-note), the paralyzed man **"immediately"** got up after Jesus healed him (Lk 5:25-note), the woman's hemorrhage stopping **"immediately"** after she touched the fringe of Jesus' cloak (Lk 8:44-note, Lk 8:55-note), of the woman bent double **"Immediately"** standing erect after Jesus laid His hands on her (Lk 13:13-note), of the blind man **"immediately"** receiving his sight at the command of Jesus (Lk 18:43, 42-note), of Jesus' disciples misconception that "the kingdom of God



was going to appear **immediately** (Lk 19:11-note), before a cock crowed a second time Peter denied Jesus and **immediately** he crowed (Lk 22:60-note), of the man lame from birth who Peter seized by the right "and **immediately** his feet and his ankles were strengthened (Acts 3:7), of Sapphira lying to Peter and "**immediately**" falling dead at his feet (Acts 5:10), of Herod's being struck "**immediately**" by an angel because he did not give God the glory (Acts 12:23), of Saul (Paul) made blind "**immediately**" (Acts 13:11), of the sudden earthquake that **immediately** opened all the prison doors and liberated Paul and Silas (Acts 16:25, 26), and lastly of the **immediate** baptism of the jailer at Philippi (Acts 19:33).

**Was made erect again** (461) (**anorthoo**) from **ana** = up or again + **orthoo** = to erect, from **orthos** = right, upright, erect) means set upright, set straight again. In Heb 12:12 (quoting Isa 35:3) the sense of **anorthoo** is to confirm, strengthen or establish -- the literal picture of strengthening bodily limbs is used metaphorically here to speak of encouraging believers to a steadfast faith (brace up, cause to be strong again). **Anorthoo** was a Greek medical term meaning, "to straighten, to put into natural position, abnormal or dislocated parts of the body." **Anorthoo** speaks of rebuilding or restoring a fallen structure and in the figurative use in Acts 15:16 speaks of restoring the Davidic dynasty, an event which will come to pass when Messiah returns to defeat His enemies and establish His [millennial kingdom](#) on earth. [Maranatha](#) Lord Jesus!

**Anorthoo** - 3 uses in NT - made erect again(1), restore(1), strengthen(1).

Acts 15:16+ 'AFTER THESE THINGS I will return, AND I WILL REBUILD THE TABERNACLE OF DAVID WHICH HAS FALLEN, AND I WILL REBUILD ITS RUINS, AND I **WILL RESTORE** IT,

**MacArthur's comment** - James quotes Amos' prophecy (Amos 9:11, 12) of the [millennial kingdom](#) to prove that Gentile salvation was not contrary to God's plan for Israel.

**Ryrie's comment** on Acts 15:15-17 - The quotation is from the LXX version of Amos 9:11-12. James specifies that the prophecy of Amos will be fulfilled *After these things*, i.e., after the present worldwide witness. Then, after the return of Christ, the *tabernacle of David* (in the [millennial kingdom](#)) will be established, and Jew and Gentile will know the Lord. James assured the council that God's program for Israel had not been abandoned by the coming of Gentiles into the church. (Ryrie Study Bible)

Hebrews 12:12+ Therefore, **strengthen** the hands that are weak and the knees that are feeble,

**Anorthoo** - 14x in 14v in the Septuagint - There are some wonderful, encouraging uses of **anorthoo** (especially if you find yourself somewhat "bent over" in soul or spirit. Read the two psalms below with Spurgeon's encouraging expositions!) 2 Sam. 7:13; 2 Sam. 7:16; 1 Chr. 17:12; 1 Chr. 17:14; 1 Chr. 17:24; 1 Chr. 22:10; Ps. 18:35; Ps. 20:8; Ps. 145:14; Ps. 146:8; Prov. 24:3; Jer. 10:12; Jer. 33:2; Ezek. 16:7

2 Samuel 7:13 "He (DAVID) shall build a house for My name, and I **will establish** (Lxx = **anorthoo**) the throne of his kingdom forever (PROPHECY TO BE FULFILLED BY THE GREATER DAVID'S RETURN AT WHICH TIME HE "**SETS UPRIGHT AGAIN**" GOD'S KINGDOM ON EARTH - which is now "upside down" in the hands of sinful men!).

2 Sa 7:16, 1 Chr. 17:12; 1 Chr. 17:14, 1 Chr 22:10 all give essentially the same prophecy that God's kingdom would be "set upright again!"

Ps 145:14 The LORD sustains **ALL** who fall and **raises up** (Lxx = **anorthoo**) ALL who are bowed down (Heb = bent over; Lxx = katarasso = dashed down, broken in pieces, ruined!).

**Spurgeon - The Lead upholdeth all that fall** (Ps 145:14KJV) . Read this verse in connection with the preceding (Ps 145:13), and admire the unexpected contrast: he who reigns in glorious majesty, yet condescends to lift up and hold up those who are apt to fall. The form of the verb shows that he is always doing this; he is Jehovah upholding. His choice of the fallen, and the falling, as the subjects of his gracious help is specially to be noted. The fallen of our race, especially fallen women, are shunned by us, and it is peculiar tenderness on the Lord's part that such he looks upon, even those who are at once the chief of sinners and the least regarded of mankind. The falling ones among us are too apt to be pushed down by the strong: their timidity and dependence make them the victims of the proud and domineering. To them also the Lord gives his upholding help. The Lord loves to reverse things, he puts down the lofty, and lifts up the lowly.

**And raiseth up all those that be bowed down** (Ps 145:14KJV) Another deed of condescension. Many are despondent, and cannot lift up their heads in courage, or their hearts with comfort; but these he cheers. Some are bent with their daily lead, and these he strengthens. Jesus loosed a daughter of Abraham whom Satan had so bound that she was bowed down, and could by no means lift up herself. In this he proved himself to be the true Son of the Highest. **Think of the Infinite bowing to lift up the bowed, and stooping to be leaned upon by those who are ready to fall.** The two "**ALL'S**" should not be overlooked: the Lord has a kindly heart towards the whole company of the afflicted.

Ps. 146:8 The LORD opens the eyes of the blind; The LORD **raises up** (Lxx = anorthoo) those who are bowed down; The LORD loves the righteous;

**Spurgeon** on raises up those bowed down - This also Jesus did literally, thus doing the work peculiar to God. Jehovah consoles the bereaved, cheers the defeated, solaces the despondent, comforts the despairing. Let those who are bowed to the ground appeal to him, and he will speedily upraise them.

**Glorifying** (1392)(**doxazo** from **doxa** = glory) has a secular meaning of to think, suppose, be of opinion, (Aeschylus, Sophocles, Xenophon, Plato, Thucydides) but generally is not used in this sense in Scripture. **Doxazo** means to praise, honor or magnify (Mt 5:16; 6:2; Lk 5:25f; Ac 11:18; Ro 11:13; 1 Cor 12:26; 1 Pt 4:16) and to clothe in splendor, glorify (John 8:54; 13:31f; 17:1, 4; 21:19; 2 Cor 3:10; 1 Pt 1:8; of life after death John 12:16, 23; Ac 3:13; Ro 8:30). The **imperfect tense** pictures her as over and over, again and again giving glory to God. Wouldn't you have loved to have been present at this "praise and worship service?"

**Doxazo** (and the theme of glorying) is a favorite verb of Luke - Lk. 2:20; Lk. 4:15; Lk. 5:25; Lk. 5:26; Lk. 7:16; Lk. 13:13; Lk. 17:15; Lk. 18:43; Lk. 23:47; Acts 3:13; Acts 4:21; Acts 11:18; Acts 13:48; Acts 21:20;

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**ILLUSTRATION OF THE LORD MEETING YOUR NEED** - Pastor Dale Robbins writes of an occasion early in his ministry when he and his wife were barely making ends meet and the Lord met their need: When I arrived home, my wife Jerri saw the worry on my face. I had \$3 in my wallet and there was one can of soup in the cupboard. After our meager supper, I quietly leafed through my Bible in the dim light. Tears streamed from my eyes. I wondered whether we were really called by God. I felt like giving up. Then I thought, "What alternative do I have? Who else but God do I have to turn to for help?" I read the verse: "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (James 5:16)... Encouraged, yet still burdened, Jerri and I knelt at opposite ends of the little trailer to seek God. Into the night we prayed, until sleep finally overtook us. I was awakened by a pounding at the door. From the window I could see the brilliant orange sunrise behind the city skyline. A fresh, white blanket of snow now covered the ground. Again, the knocking came. "Who is it?" I asked. A mystery voice replied, "I've got something for you." Cautiously, I opened the door. There stood a short man with a grin on his face and two brown grocery bags in his arms. He quickly shoved the bags in the doorway, then turned, and walked away. Jerri joined me. Stunned, we began to look through the bags. There were bread, meat, canned goods, and several cans of my favorite soup. They were the same items and brands we normally purchased. There was also a can of shaving cream. Who knew I had just used my last ounce of shaving cream? On the bottom of one sack was an envelope with cash. Later, I discovered it was the precise amount needed to fill our gas tank to get us to our next destination. On that wintry Saturday morning in Syracuse, my wife and I wept in our trailer and thanked God for hearing and answering our prayer. No one on the planet knew about our need; only our Lord God Almighty. He dispatched a little grinning man to minister to us. Beloved, as the Lord met their need, He can meet your needs, too. (Mattoon) ([Treasures from Luke](#))

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### **The Healing - Luke 13:10-17 - Vance Havner**

ONE of those colorful pictures from our Lord's ministry that carries many human-interest elements is found in Luke 13:10-17. The Lord was teaching on the Sabbath in one of the synagogues. The day of worship found Him at the house of the Lord. He was not one of those whose manner is to forsake the assembling of themselves together with other believers on a pretext of "worshiping in the great outdoors."

He found in His audience a woman afflicted with a spirit of infirmity, bent over for 18 years. I am struck with the phrase "spirit of infirmity." Our Lord went on to say later that it was Satan who had crippled her. There are thousands today shackled with a spirit of infirmity, bound by Satan. Some are not really sick, organically, but bound in mind by fears and obscure mental conditions. They think they are sick, and they need the liberating touch of the Lord.

Jesus healed this woman, and immediately she was made straight and glorified God. It must have been an exciting time. The man who finds himself released from a spirit of infirmity has a right to praise God; and though he may be a disturbing nuisance to the dignified, God is pleased with the praise of His creatures.

It seems almost incredible that anyone should have complained at such an occurrence, but the ruler of the synagogue was angry because Jesus had healed her on the Sabbath. Imagine a soul so warped that it can overlook the loosing of a body bound 18 years and see only the breaking of a custom. But these are still among us. If a revival should break out in the average church today and the "hallelujahs" of souls set free resounded through the house of God, the Pharisees would still object and be more concerned about the infraction of a custom than the freeing of a soul.

Our Lord answered this man by calling him a hypocrite and citing that the Law allowed the loosing of an ox or ass on the Sabbath to lead it to water. Surely then this poor woman could be loosed from her infirmity on the Sabbath day. Jesus looked over everything else to see human need. He was interested in helping souls, not in observing customs. The Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath—and He used the less to serve the greater.

The adversaries were ashamed, we read, and all the people rejoiced. There has never been a great spiritual movement that did not stir up the opposition of the rulers of the synagogue. The great reformers and preachers of the past had to contend with the contemporary preachers of their day, the established customs of their times. Finney was reviled because of his new measures. Wesley and Whitefield met the scorn of established religion. Spurgeon was ridiculed as a wild sensationalist. But the common people have heard them gladly and have rejoiced at the power of God shown through them. Anyone who would walk in the steps of the Lord and give himself to loosening the spirit of infirmity in men and women must expect to displease the rulers of the synagogue, but he will find the poor and weak and despised praising God for him!

**Luke 13:14 But the synagogue official, indignant because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath, began saying to the crowd in response, "There are six days in which work should be done; so come during them and get healed, and not on the Sabbath day."**

KJV Luke 13:14 And the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because that Jesus had healed on the sabbath day, and said unto the people, There are six days in which men ought to work: in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the sabbath day.

- **But the synagogue official** Lk 8:41; Acts 13:15; 18:8,17
- **indignant because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath** Lk 6:11; Jn 5:15,16; Ro 10:2
- **There are six days in which work should be done** Ex 20:9; 23:12; Lev 23:3; Ezek 20:12
- **get healed, and not on the Sabbath day** Lk 6:7; 14:3-6; Mt 12:10-12; Mk 3:2-6; Jn 9:14-16
- [Luke 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 13:10-17 Religion Versus Reality](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 13:10-17 Christ Creates Conflict in the Synagogue](#) - John MacArthur

### **A COLD, CALLOUSED "CLERIC"**

**But** - [term of contrast](#). Into what should have been a scene of joy and focusing on God (as she was doing), arose angry opposition to Jesus' miracle. This is absolutely amazing! And amazingly sad!

**The synagogue official** ([archisunagogos](#)) - As we see over and over in the Gospels, the stiffest opposition to Jesus arose from those who were supposedly the most "religious." Things have not changed much, as much of the most intense opposition to Spirit filled workers for Christ, comes from church leaders, including the lay leaders (deacons, elders). I speak from personal experience!

**Courson** notes that "On the Sabbath, Jesus loosed the woman who had been bound physically. But because of their rules and regulations regarding the Sabbath, this religious leader would remain bound in false piety and hypocrisy."

As an aside, whatever role Satan (or his minions) had in the woman's infirmity, now they jumped on this synagogue official. As **Adam Clarke** quipped "It would seem as if the demon who had left the woman's body (**Ed**: Although there is no evidence she was actually possessed!) had got into his heart."

**MacArthur** - Such an attitude is all too typical of false religion. [Martin Luther's](#) pastoral concern for the common people, who were subjected to crushing burdens by the Roman Catholic Church, helped trigger the Reformation. It was the sale of indulgences (essentially "get out of jail free" passes from purgatory) that was the final straw for Luther. In 1517 the Roman Catholic preacher [Johan Tetzel](#) arrived in the vicinity of Wittenberg selling indulgences, using as part of his sales pitch the catchy advertising jingle, "As soon as the coin in the coffer rings, the soul from purgatory springs." Appalled and horrified that his parishioners were flocking to purchase them, Luther posted his famous Ninety-Five Theses condemning indulgences. That event sparked the Reformation. The Pharisees, too, cared little for the common people, whom they contemptuously dismissed as "this crowd which does not know the Law [and] is accursed" (John 7:49). Jesus denounced them as those who "tie up heavy burdens and lay them on men's shoulders, but they themselves are unwilling to move them with so much as a finger" (Matt. 23:4). The dozens of paralyzing restrictions and regulations associated with it had turned the Sabbath from a day of rest into the most burdensome day of the week. (Ibid)

**Steven Cole** observes "One of the most effective tools that Satan has used to keep people away from a relationship with the living God is dead religion. When our Lord was on this earth, His main battles were not with raw pagans. His main conflicts were with the religious crowd. Down through the centuries, Satan, the master counterfeiter, has smuggled religious people into churches in order to keep the others from a genuine, heart-transforming experience with God. ([Religion Versus Reality Luke 13:10-17](#))

What a contrast this **synagogue official** ([archisunagogos](#)) is compared to another **synagogue official** named Jairus in Luke 8

And there came a man named **Jairus**, and he was **an official of the synagogue**; and he fell at Jesus' feet, and began to implore Him to come to his house; 42 for he had an only daughter, about twelve years old, and she was dying. But as He went, the crowds were pressing against Him. (An inspired "parenthesis" re: the healing of the woman with hemorrhage) 49 While He was still speaking, someone came from the house of the **synagogue official**, saying, "Your daughter has died; do not trouble the Teacher anymore." 50 But when Jesus heard this, He answered him, "Do not be afraid any longer; only believe, and she will be made well." 51 When He came to the house, He did not allow anyone to enter with Him, except Peter and John and James, and the **girl's father (JAIRUS) and mother**. 52 Now they were all weeping and lamenting for her; but He said, "Stop weeping, for she has not died, but is asleep." 53 And they began laughing at Him, knowing that she had died. 54 He, however, took her by the hand and called, saying, "Child, arise!" 55 And her spirit returned, and she got up immediately; and He gave orders for something to be given her to eat. 56 Her parents were amazed; but He instructed them to tell no one what had happened. (Lk 8:41-42-note and Lk 8:49-56-note)

**Spurgeon** on the **synagogue official** ([archisunagogos](#)) - Wretched creature, to be indignant at Christ's doing good! There is no reckoning with self-righteous people. They are mad themselves, and they think others so. In what a cold-blooded, heartless manner he must have said it, you may well imagine. For a man not to rejoice when he saw his poor fellow-creature thus healed, shows that he must have been destitute of much milk of human kindness, and that bigotry had dried up his soul. ([Luke 13](#) - exposition)

**Hughes** adds "What a slab of ecclesiastical granite! He had no heart to pity the poor bent woman's plight, no eye for the beauty of Christ's compassion, no soul to rejoice with the woman's deliverance, no ear for the music of her praise. He was a chickenhearted religious snob. He did not lower himself to address Jesus directly but turned to the people....His heart was pumping great amounts of formaldehyde. He breathed arsenic. He fancied that he was a lover of the Law and its protector. However, his lack of love for the woman showed that he did not love his neighbor as himself, indicating that he did not love God. The cold synagogue leader was about to be "iced" by Jesus." (Ibid)

**Barclay** explains that "The president of the synagogue and those like him were people who loved systems more than people. They were more concerned that their own petty little laws should be observed than that a woman should be helped."

Rabbinic rules governed work on the Sabbath and forbade thirty-nine forms of labor! (see list [Mishnah Shabbat 7.2](#)) The group of Jews at Qumran in general were even stricter than the Pharisees and thus one rule reads, "No one shall help an animal in its delivery on the Sabbath day. And if it falls into a pit or a ditch, one shall not raise it on the Sabbath."

**NET Note** on the official's reaction - The irony is that Jesus' "work" consisted of merely touching the woman. There is no sense of joy that eighteen years of suffering was reversed with his touch.

**Indignant** ([aganakteo](#)) **because Jesus had healed** ([therapeuo](#)) **on the Sabbath** ([sabbaton](#)) - The word indignant in English normally means angered at something unjust or wrong or showing anger or annoyance at what is perceived as unfair treatment. Clearly his indignation was sinful not righteous indignation! Furthermore, his angry reaction shows us how tight a grip the bonds of legalism had on his mind and heart. Little did he recognize that he was the one with the more serious "spirit of infirmity" because his spiritual sickness would take him straight to Hell!

**MacArthur** makes the excellent point that "The synagogue ruler's continued unbelief despite the undeniable miracle he had seen confirms the reality that miracles do not produce faith (Matt. 11:20; Luke 16:31; John 12:37). Saving faith is produced by the Holy Spirit in the hearts of the penitent." (See [Luke Commentary](#))

**Began saying to the crowd in response** - The Greek verb for **response** is usually rendered answer. It suggests the official was trying to "answer" this miracle by attempting to invalidate it because it was performed at the **WRONG TIME!** And notice he answers not to Christ but to the crowd! He did not have the courage to speak to Jesus but it was a **barb** ( an aggressive remark directed at a person like a missile and intended to have a telling effect) clearly directed at Jesus!

**Spurgeon** adds "He did not dare to speak to Christ. I suppose the majesty of Christ's manner overawed him, so he struck at the people directly, and at Christ through them. Now our Lord did not go sideways to work when he replied to him." ([Luke 13](#) - exposition)

**There are six days in which work should** ([dei](#)) **be done** ([ergazomai](#)); **so come during them and get healed** ([therapeuo](#)), **and not on the Sabbath** ([sabbaton](#)) **day** - The irony of his **indignant** reaction is that his soul was far more "crooked" than the poor woman's body and he did not get healed! It is also not clear what "work" Jesus had done for He had only spoken and then touched the woman. These interactions could hardly be called "work" but that small detail would not hold back the cold-hearted synagogue official from accusing Jesus of of "work." What difference did truth make to these hypocrites any way?

**Hendriksen** observes that the **synagogue official** "misinterpreted the divine Sabbath commandment. To be sure, he was literally correct when he said, "There are six days on which work must be done." See Ex. 20:9, 10; Dt. 5:13. But he evidently ignored such interpretative passages as Ge 2:1–3; Isa. 58; and Micah 6:8. (Borrow [Exposition of the Gospel of Luke](#))

He has told you, O man, what is good;  
And what does the LORD require of you  
But to do justice, to love kindness,  
And to walk humbly with your God?  
-Micah 6:8-note

**Barclay** - The Jewish law was that it was perfectly legal to help someone on the Sabbath who was in actual danger of his life. If Jesus had postponed the healing of this woman until the morrow no one could have criticized him; but he insisted that suffering must not be allowed to continue until tomorrow if it could be helped to-day. Over and over again in life some good and kindly scheme is held up until this or that regulation is satisfied, or this or that technical detail worked out. He gives twice who gives quickly, as the Latin proverb has it. No helpful deed that we can do to-day should be postponed until to-morrow.

**Mattoon** - When your priorities are out-of-wack, and your heart is filled with rage, bitterness, or anger, it is difficult to get your focus on the needs that other people have in their lives. How many times through your life have you observed people griping and criticizing others who are trying to meet needs, solve problems, and serve the Lord Jesus Christ? Unfortunately, we have seen many like this in our lives. They deflate instead of inflate our strength. They discourage instead of encourage us in our efforts. They sift our strength and joy like a mosquito that drains blood from its victim and leaves an irritating itch. You will find that those who are backslidden or evil oppose the work of God or good works. ([Treasures from Luke](#))

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**Indignant** (23) (**aganakteo** from **ágan** = very much + **áchthos** = pain, grief) is a verb which means to be oppressed in mind, to be grieved, to be resentful, to be aroused. **Aganakteo** reflects intense displeasure. To be indignant against what is judged to be wrong. It describes Jesus' righteous indignation when His disciples rebuked those bringing children to Him (Mk 10:13-14). More often **aganakteo** is used to describe an unrighteous **indignation** including that manifested by Jesus' own disciples (Mt 20:24 and Mk 10:41 = of the 10 indignant toward James and John, Mt 26:8 and Mk 14:4 = indignation as the "wasting" of expensive perfume anointing Jesus!) and finally the ugly indignation of the hypocritical religious leaders (Mt 21:15, Lk 13:14).

**Aganakteo** - 7x in 7v - feel indignant(1), indignant(5), indignantly(1). Not used in the Septuagint.

Matthew 20:24 And hearing this, the ten (disciples) **became indignant** with the two brothers.

Matthew 21:15 But when the chief priests and the scribes saw the wonderful things that He had done, and the children who were shouting in the temple, "Hosanna to the Son of David," **they became indignant**

Matthew 26:8 But the disciples **were indignant** when they saw this (Mt 26:7), and said, "Why this waste?"

Mark 10:14 But when Jesus saw this (Mk 10:13), **He was indignant** and said to them, "Permit the children to come to Me; do not hinder them; for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.

Mark 10:41 Hearing this, the ten began to **feel indignant** with James and John.

Mark 14:4 But some **were indignantly** remarking to one another, "Why has this perfume been wasted?"

Luke 13:14 But the synagogue official, **indignant** because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath, began saying to the crowd in response, "There are six days in which work should be done; so come during them and get healed, and not on the Sabbath day."

**Healed** (cured) (2323) (**therapeuo** from **therapon** = an attendant, servant) means primarily to care for, to wait upon, minister to. It has two main senses in the NT, one speaking of rendering service (Acts 17:25) and the more common use describing medical aspects such as to take care of the sick, to heal, to cure (Matt. 4:24; 12:10; Mark 1:34; Luke 6:7; 10:9), to recover health, to restore.

**Synagogue official** (752) (**archisunagogos** from **archi** - denotes rank or degree + **sunagoge** - synagogue) was leader or president of a synagogue, a lay person whose duty it was to take care of the physical arrangements for the worship services.

**Work...done** (2038) (**ergazomai** from **ergon** = work) means to engage in an activity involving expenditure of effort. To work effectively.

**Should** - The verb **dei** in expresses necessity. The idea is that God had commanded work **must** or **ought** to be done during the 6 days, and that they were to rest on the Sabbath.



**Steven Cole's Illustration of Dead Religion's joyless anger** - Here this poor woman has this dramatic healing and all this synagogue official can do is get angry and lecture everyone on the proper time to come for healing! Incredible! But we've all met people just like him. I once performed a wedding at a church in San Bernardino, because the bride and groom were afraid that if they held the wedding at our church in the mountains, guests might not be able to come because of snow. The church required that their pastor stand up front with me and have a part in the ceremony. Before the ceremony, he invited me into his office. He lit up a Marlboro and I noticed an overflowing ashtray on his desk. I also noticed a fairly recent certificate of graduation from a seminary on the wall and so I asked, "Did you go into the ministry as a second career?" He said, "Yes, I did it so that I could live with myself." I didn't say anything, but I thought, "What a reason to be in the ministry!" During the ceremony, as I was giving the message, a girl near the front stood up and flashed a snapshot. Nothing had been said to the congregation about not taking pictures, but this minister interrupted me. "Just a minute!" he snapped. Pointing directly at the girl, he snarled, "Pictures are not allowed! This is worship and we don't allow pictures during worship!" I don't remember how I recovered from that one, but it was a classic example of joyless, angry, dead religion breaking through at a time when there should have been great joy. Sadly, many Christian homes are marked more by rules and by anger than by heartfelt joy in the Lord. I'm not suggesting that there should not be any rules or that they should not be enforced. But I am saying that if we have reality in Christ, the atmosphere in our homes should be thick with joy and not with anger. Anger is a deed of the flesh, but joy is a fruit of the Holy Spirit (Gal. 5:20, 22). ([Religion Versus Reality Luke 13:10-17](#))

**Luke 13:15 But the Lord answered him and said, "You hypocrites, does not each of you on the Sabbath untie his ox or his donkey from the stall and lead him away to water him?"**

KJV Luke 13:15 The Lord then answered him, and said, 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?

- **You hypocrites** Lk 6:42; 12:1; Job 34:30; Pr 11:9; Isa 29:20; Mt 7:5; 15:7,14; 23:13,28; Acts 8:20-23; 13:9,10
- **does not each of you on the Sabbath untie his ox or his donkey from the stall and lead him away to water him** Lk 14:5; Jn 7:21-24
- [Luke 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 13:10-17 Religion Versus Reality](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 13:10-17 Christ Creates Conflict in the Synagogue](#) - John MacArthur

## THE INCONSISTENCY OF THE SYNAGOGUE RULER

**But the Lord answered him and said You hypocrites ([hupokrites](#))** - Notice that Luke accentuates Jesus' authority by calling Him Lord or [kurios](#). Jesus responds not with hypocrite singular but in the plural, as the synagogue was surely filled with legalistic hypocrites who were saying "Amen" to the indignant synagogue official rebuke. This is not a "gentle Jesus" reaction, but honest, righteous indignation! Woe! Notice also Jesus' use of the plural, **hypocrites**. The leader was not alone in his hypocritical thinking! Although only one hypocrite had come forth to call Christ out by addressing the crowd, Jesus threw a big net to catch all the religious hypocrites ("*you and all those in agreement with you*"), for any one of them gladly would have spoken the same heartless, evil words. And no doubt there were many in the synagogue that day who sided with the synagogue official.

**Leon Morris** says that his hypocrisy was shown by "his professed zeal for the Law in objecting to a deed which fulfilled the spirit and the purpose of the law." (Borrow [The Gospel According to St. Luke: An Introduction and Commentary](#))

**Steven Cole** points out that this synagogue official "pretended to be concerned about people-they could come and get cured on other days-but he wasn't concerned about people at all. He was just concerned that someone had violated his rules. He was like a store owner I read about who became so obsessed with keeping his store neat that he locked the doors during much of the day to keep out customers because they were messing up his shelves! He had forgotten why he was in business. The Bible teaches a proper use of the Lord's Day. We should set aside one day in seven to worship God and to rest from our normal work. But to come up with intricate rules of what you can and cannot do to observe the Sabbath leads to hypocrisy. People end up focused on the rules and neglecting the point, which is to meet with God and His people and to rest from the regular routine." ([Religion Versus Reality](#) )

**William Hendriksen** notes that although "this ruler professed to be so thoroughly concerned about keeping the law, his real concern was to discredit the Great Benefactor!" (Borrow [Exposition of the Gospel of Luke](#))

**Warren Wiersbe** adds that "The bondage of the ruler of the synagogue was worse than that of the woman. Her bondage affected



only her body, but his bondage shackled his mind and heart. He was so bound and blinded by tradition that he ended up opposing the Son of God! Elbert Hubbard called tradition "a clock that tells us what time it was." The ruler of the synagogue could not "discern this time" (Luke 13:12, 5, 6) and he stood condemned." (Borrow [Be compassionate](#))

**Spurgeon** - It served him right. This is just the word that would naturally come to the lips of the Saviour. Because he was loving and tender, he could not endure this hypocritical indignation: "The Lord then answered him, and said, Thou hypocrite,".....The Jews had reduced the Sabbath to a day of idleness and luxury. The only thing they forbade themselves was the doing of anything. Now the Sabbath was never intended to be spent in idleness and luxury. It should be spent in the worship of God; and works of mercy and works of piety make the Sabbath Day holy, instead of being contrary to its demands. And our Saviour, by giving rest to that poor burdened woman, was in truth, making Sabbath in her body and in her soul. ([Luke 13](#) - exposition)

**Does not each of you on the Sabbath untie ([luo](#)) his ox or his donkey from the stall and lead him away to water him?** - A rhetorical question of course! The obvious answer is yes and thus the hypocritical official could not refute it, for he knew everyone would take care to water his beast of burden on the Sabbath. Indeed even the strict code of the [Mishnah](#) allowed humane treatment of animals, but sadly limited similar humane treatment of humans! What a contrast Jesus presented with the hypocrite who was willing to **untie ([luo](#))** his beast of burden but was unwilling to see a woman **released** or "**untied**" ([luo](#) Lk 13:16) from a horrible deformity!

**Darrell Bock** - Jesus' question is rhetorical, a statement that the Jews often labor for their cattle's sake. They cannot dispute that this is common practice (indicated by hekastos, each), which raises the issue of how an animal can fare better than a human on the Sabbath. Thus the leaders are condemned by their own practice. They show compassion to animals, but not to humans. It is this issue of inconsistency and priority in creation that Jesus raises....how can an animal be treated with more concern on the sacred day than a person? Such an attitude is a reversal of the created order (Luke 12:6-7; 1 Cor. 9:9). ([A Sabbath Healing Rejected](#))

**Leon Morris** - On the Sabbath, animals could be led out by a chain or the like as long as nothing was carried (Shabbath 5:1). Water could be drawn for them and poured into a trough, though a man must not hold a bucket for the animal to drink from (Erubin 20b, 21a). If animals may be cared for in such ways, much more may a daughter of Abraham be set free from Satan's bondage on the sabbath. (Borrow [The Gospel According to St. Luke: An Introduction and Commentary](#))

Jesus made similar arguments in Luke and Matthew

Luke 14:5+ (context Lk 14:1-4) And He said to them, "Which one of you will have a son or an ox fall into a well, and will not immediately pull him out on a Sabbath day?"

Mt 12:11+ (context Mt 12:9-10, 12-14) And He said to them, "What man is there among you who has a sheep, and if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will he not take hold of it and lift it out?"

**Steven Cole** - The religious leaders valued their **rules** over **relationships** and, as Jesus pointed out, they even valued their animals over people. On the Sabbath, they felt free to untie their ox or donkey and lead them to water, but they didn't want Jesus to heal this woman who had been bound by Satan all these years. It was not only in Jesus' day, by the way, that people valued their animals more than they value people. I have encountered people who allow their dogs to come at me with their teeth bared, but when I defend myself, they get angry at me for threatening to harm their dogs! **Dead religion always has mixed up priorities.** It glories when people keep the rules, even if their hearts are far from God. It is happy with outward conformity, even though relationships are shattered. It boasts in numbers, even if there is open sin in the camp. But reality with the Lord focuses on developing and maintaining a heart of love for God and for others.

**Hughes** on Jesus' reply to the official - This was an unanswerable indictment using the canons of Jewish logic [Qal wahomer](#), arguing from the light to the heavy. (**Ed comment:** "[Qal wahomer](#) is also known as an "[a fortiori](#)" argument or line of reasoning "from the **lesser** [treatment of beasts of burden] to the **greater** [treatment of the woman who was burdened!]" **If an animal which they themselves had bound for a few hours should be loosed on the Sabbath, how much more a daughter of Abraham whom Satan has bound for eighteen years.**) (See [Luke That You May Know the Truth](#))

**Bock** - Most see a minor-to-major argument here: what is true of animals is more true of people. Satan had bound the woman for eighteen years, and she should be loosed from this bond, even more than the ox should be loosed on the Sabbath to eat. Jesus is arguing that the woman's relationship to Abraham, the man of God's promise, makes her healing on the Lord's day not wrong but appropriate, even necessary. What better day to reflect on God's activity than the Sabbath?...Jesus argues that his act does not violate the Sabbath, but fits the very spirit of the day. What better way to celebrate the Sabbath! The difference in the views of Jesus and the synagogue leader could not be greater. ([A Sabbath Healing Rejected](#))

**Untie ([luo](#)) his ox or his donkey** - As explained below in using the verb [luo](#), Jesus was clearly making a play on words.

**Spurgeon** - A very conclusive argument. You may do deeds like this on the Sabbath; and you may come and be healed on the Sabbath, even though it should involve you in a journey. It is so needful that you should get the bread of heaven, so needful that you

should get the blessing of Christ, that on this day you may come and be healed. ([Luke 13](#) - exposition)

**NET Note** - The charge here is hypocrisy, but it is only part one of the response. Various ancient laws detail what was allowed with cattle; see Mishnah Shabbat 5 (see below) The Mishnah also describes the wells at which cattle can drink without violating the Sabbath (m. 'Eruv. 2.1–4). At Qumran, CD 11.5–6 allowed travel up to two thousand cubits (three thousand feet) for pasturing (Marshall 1978: 558–59; Manson 1949: 275).

**Hendriksen** - The Sabbath must be observed, to be sure. Jesus never advocated Sabbath laxity. On the other hand, when Sabbath rules and regulations become so rigid that the dictates of both mind (Lk 8:15) and heart (Lk 8:16) are left unheeded, we are on the wrong track. Works of charity and works of necessity are not only allowed; they are required. Study Isa. 58:1-14; John 5:17. (Borrow [Exposition of the Gospel of Luke](#))

**Mattoon** observes how "It is interesting to note that when a society rejects Christ and His Word, there is a tendency for people to value animals over people. That is a priority that is certainly out of balance. It is amazing how people today place more value on whales, birds, minnows, or wolves over the lives of unborn babies that are slaughtered in abortion clinics. Presently, in 2010, California is in a state of emergency because liberal politicians have shut off the water to the food supply just to try and protect a fish, the Delta Smelt, from getting caught in some drain pipes. Unemployment rates are now at 40% because of the water being shut off to the farmers. Hundreds of acres of crops are now dead, shriveled, and turned to dust. One million acres of fields and orchards also have no aboveground water supply. People have to go to food banks for food. Fruits and vegetable prices have skyrocketed in central California. The drought has caused an estimated \$1.15 billion dollar loss in agriculture-related wages and has eliminated as many as 40,000 jobs in farm-related industries in the San Joaquin Valley alone, where most of the nation's produce and nut crops are grown, said Lester Snow, director of the Department of Water Resources. Why? The answer is because a little fish is more important than people....When God's truth is rejected, people tend to be devalued. Since abortion has been made legal in America, we now find that euthanasia has become a popular belief by many people who feel that elderly people are a burden on society, they are of no value, and should kill themselves. It's crazy and wicked, but this is what happens when people reject God's truth. ([Treasures from Luke](#))

**Ed comment:** Here is an excerpt from Wikipedia suggesting that above numbers may not be completely accurate (but the point is still relevant that men opted for fish protection over human protection!) -

The smelt is unpopular among farmers, with a common complaint being that 200,000 acres of farmland have been left fallow due to "four buckets of minnows".[32] Although allegations have been made that this protection has hurt California's agricultural sector, with the devastation of hundreds of thousands of acres of farmland and the loss of tens of thousands of jobs in the Central Valley,[33] a 2009 UC Davis study estimated that job losses due to smelt protection were closer to 5,000.[34] An additional 16,000 job losses in the Central Valley were attributed to the drought California had been experiencing in recent years. ([Wikipedia](#))

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**Hypocrites** (5273)([hupokrites](#) from **hupó** = under, indicating secrecy + **krino** = to judge) describes one who acts pretentiously, a counterfeit, a man who assumes and speaks or acts under a feigned character. A hypocrite is someone who pretends to be something he or she is not.

**William Barclay** on **hypocrites** - Originally the Greek word **hupokrites** meant one who answers; it then came to be specially connected with the statement and answer, the dialogue, of the stage; and it is the regular Greek word for an actor. It then came to mean an actor in the worse sense of the term, a pretender, one who acts a part, one who wears a mask to cover his true feelings, one who puts on an external show while inwardly his thoughts and feelings are very different. **To Jesus the Scribes and Pharisees were men who were acting a part. What he meant was this. Their whole idea of religion consisted in outward observances, the wearing of elaborate phylacteries and tassels, the meticulous observance of the rules and regulations of the Law. But in their hearts there was bitterness and envy and pride and arrogance. To Jesus these Scribes and Pharisees were men who, under a mask of elaborate godliness, concealed hearts in which the most godless feelings and emotions held sway.** And that accusation holds good in greater or lesser degree of any man who lives life on the assumption that religion consists in external observances and external acts. ([Matthew 23 - William Barclay's Daily Study Bible](#))

**Barclay** in another note on **hypocrites** adds that "Anyone to whom religion is a legal thing, anyone to whom religion means carrying out certain external rules and regulations, anyone to whom religion is entirely connected with the observation of a certain ritual and the keeping of a certain number of tabu's is in the end bound to be, in this sense, a hypocrite. The reason is this--he believes that he is a good man if he carries out the correct acts and practices, no matter what his heart and his thoughts are like. To take the case of the

legalistic Jew in the time of Jesus, he might hate his fellow man with all his heart, he might be full of envy and jealousy and concealed bitterness and pride; that did not matter so long as he carried out the correct handwashings and observed the correct laws about cleanness and uncleanness. **Legalism takes account of a man's outward actions; but it takes no account at all of his inward feelings.** He may well be meticulously serving God in outward things, and bluntly disobeying God in inward things--and that is hypocrisy.....There is no greater religious peril than that of identifying religion with outward observance. There is no commoner religious mistake than to identify goodness with certain so-called religious acts. Church-going, bible-reading, careful financial giving, even time-tabled prayer do not make a man a good man. The fundamental question is, how is a man's heart towards God and towards his fellow-men? And if in his heart there are enmity, bitterness, grudges, pride, not all the outward religious observances in the world will make him anything other than a hypocrite. ([Mark 7 - William Barclay's Daily Study Bible](#))

**Untie** (3089)(**luo**) means to loose, release, dissolve. This word means to set free what is bound. What is ironic is that Jesus uses the verb **luo** in His question, which is the root word of the verb **freed** or **apoluo** and is also the verb Jesus used in Lk 13:16 to describe her release! It is as if He was saying, you hypocrite, you will loose a beast of burden but not loose a woman who is burdened! Notice the hypocrite's mouth was shut ("bound" if you will) by the truth of Jesus' question, and thus he dare not answer Him a word! Indeed, **the closing** of the sinful hypocrite's mouth reminds me of Paul's words in Romans 3 regarding the effect of the Law which "is holy and righteous and good" (Ro 7:12-[note](#))...

Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, **that every mouth may be closed**, (phrasso = "may be fenced in" so to speak) and all the world may become accountable ([hupodikos](#) from hupo = under + dike = judgment - so it means under sentence, condemned) to God. (Ro 3:19-[note](#))

**Comment:** Indeed, this hypocrite would give an account of his wretched words at his judgment! Woe!

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Below are some of the **RIDICULOUS REGULATIONS** from the Mishnah which show how their man-made rules favored animals more than human beings!. [Mishnah's Shabbath 5:1-4](#) says

5:1 With what [burdens] may cattle go out [on the Sabbath] and with what may they not go out? The camel may go out with its curb, the female camel with its nose-ring, the Libyan ass with its bridle, the horse with its chain, and all beasts which wear a chain may go out with a chain and be led by the chain; and these things may be sprinkled and immersed without being removed. (**Ed. Comment: Do you see the point they are making with nose-ring, bridle, chain, etc? As long as the beast did not carry a burden you could lead them out.**)

2. The ass may go out with its saddle-cloth if this was fastened on [before the Sabbath].... R. Judah says: Goats may go out [with their udders] bound up if this is to keep them dry, but not if it serves to collect the milk. (**Ed: NOTICE HOW RIDICULOUSLY ABSURD THEIR RULES WERE! IF ONE DID NOT KNOW BETTER, HE WOULD THINK THEY WERE WRITING LINES FOR A COMIC TO PERFORM!**)

3. And with what may they not go out? A camel may not go out with a rag hung to its tail or with fore and hind legs bound together, or with hoof tied to thigh. So, too, is it with all other cattle....

4. The ass may not go out with its saddle-cloth if this was not fastened on [before the Sabbath], or with a bell even though it is plugged, or with the ladder-yoke round its neck, or with its leg-strap.... R. Eleazar b. Azariah's cow used to go out with the strap between its horns, which was not with the consent of the Sages.

(**Excerpts from [Mishnah Shabbath 5:1-4](#)**)

**Gotquestions** has this note on the **Mishnah** - The Mishnah is the oral law in Judaism, as opposed to the written [Torah](#), or the Mosaic Law. The Mishnah was collected and committed to writing about AD 200 and forms part of the [Talmud](#). A particular teaching within the Mishnah is called a midrash. Orthodox Judaism believes that Moses received the Torah (the books of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy) from God and that he wrote down everything God spoke to him. However, they also believe that God gave Moses explanations and examples of how to interpret the Law that Moses did *not* write down. These unwritten explanations are known in Judaism as the **Oral Torah**. The Oral Torah was supposedly passed down from Moses to Joshua and then to the rabbis until the advent of Christianity when it was finally written down as the legal authority called *halahka* ("the walk"). The two main sections of the Oral Torah are the Mishnah and the **Gemara**....The Mishnah (מִשְׁנָה, "repetition") essentially records the debates of the post-temple sages from AD 70—200 (called the *Tannaim*) and is considered the first major work of "Rabbinical Judaism." After the Mishnah was published, it was studied exhaustively by generations of rabbis in both Babylonia and Israel. From AD 200—500, additional commentaries on the Mishnah were compiled and put together as the Gemara. Actually, there are two different versions of the Gemara, one compiled by scholars in Israel (c. AD 400) and the other by the scholars of Babylonia (c. AD 500). Together, the Mishnah and the Gemara form the Talmud. Since there are two different Gemaras, there are two different

Talmuds: the Babylonian Talmud and the Jerusalem (or Palestinian) Talmud. The Talmud can be thought of as rabbinical commentaries on the Hebrew Scriptures, just like there are commentaries written on the Bible from a Christian perspective. In Judaism the Talmud is just as important as the Hebrew Bible. It is used to explain the laws that may not be clear in Scripture. (See also [What is the Talmud?](#), [Wikipedia article on Talmud](#))

**Luke 13:16 "And this woman, a daughter of Abraham as she is, whom Satan has bound for eighteen long years, should she not have been released from this bond on the Sabbath day?"**

KJV Luke 13:16 And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the sabbath day?

- **a daughter of Abraham as she is** Lk 3:8; 16:24; 19:9; Acts 13:26; Ro 4:12-16
- **whom Satan has bound for eighteen long years** Lk 13:11; Jn 8:44; 2 Ti 2:26
- **should she not have been released from this bond on the Sabbath day** Lk 13:12; Mk 2:27
- [Luke 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 13:10-17 Religion Versus Reality](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 13:10-17 Christ Creates Conflict in the Synagogue](#) - John MacArthur

## JESUS CONCLUDES HIS FORCEFUL REBUTTAL

**And this woman A daughter of Abraham as she is** - He has just spoken of the acceptable practice of one treating his ox or his donkey in a humane manner, and carries this logic over to this poor woman's horrible condition. She is a Jewess by blood relationship to father Abraham, one of God's chosen people. The implied question is "Is this **daughter of Abraham** of less importance than an ox or a donkey?"

**Rienecker** on **daughter of Abraham** - It indicates that she has the faith of Abraham and is a member of God's people (s. 4 Macc. 11:28-29; the mother of the seven martyrs is called a "daughter of Abraham" because of her bravery and faith). (Borrow [The New Linguistic and Exegetical Key to the Greek New Testament](#))

**Lowell Johnson** says "I want to point out something about this woman. To me, she is one of the most powerful pictures of faith and faithfulness in the New Testament. She had been sick for eighteen years, but Luke described her as a "daughter of Abraham." That means that she was an avid worshiper of Jehovah God. This was not some woman who came to the synagogue on that day. This woman was a familiar sight at the synagogue. Every Sabbath day you would see this bent-over woman at worship."

**J C Ryle** - This expression certainly appears to me to make it highly probable that this woman whom our Lord healed was a true believer. When Zacchaeus was converted, our Lord said the man was "a son of Abraham" (Luke 19:9). To think of this expression as only meaning a "daughter of Abraham according to natural descent—a Jewess" seems to me a tame and unsatisfactory interpretation

**Jon Courson** agrees writing " Jesus' referring to her as a **daughter of Abraham** (verse 16) means this woman was a woman of faith. And yet for eighteen years, the work of the Enemy bound her physically. Nonetheless, here she was in the synagogue. She would have missed the moment of the miraculous had she stayed home the day Jesus "just happened" to walk in." I can recall specific times in my own pilgrimage when I didn't want to go to a Bible study or a church service but went anyway—to experience Jesus ministering to me in a way I'm convinced He wouldn't have otherwise. Therefore, I have learned this secret: The more I don't feel like meeting with the congregation, the more I need to be there. I am convinced that people walk around needlessly crippled because they're not in the company of believers, not in the place where Jesus is (Hebrews 2:12).

**Steven Cole** proposes that "the woman was a sincere believer in the Lord (**Ed**: MacArthur does not necessarily agree with this statement and other than this statement, it is difficult to state with certainty whether she was a genuine believer, but it cannot be excluded). Jesus calls her a **daughter of Abraham**. He later calls Zaccheus a **son of Abraham** after he believes (Lk 19:9). There is no indication that her problem was directly related to any sin. If so, surely Jesus would have given a word of rebuke or correction, but He gives none. The woman's decided faith is probably indicated by the fact of her presence. Think of the many excuses that she could have come up with to stay away! Her youthful beauty was now disfigured by her hunched back, so she probably was self-conscious about how she looked. She probably experienced constant pain, which distracted her from concentrating on the service. It was difficult to walk the distance to the synagogue. She couldn't look up toward the front to see what was going on. But in spite of these and many other potential excuses, she was there to worship God. ([Religion Versus Reality Luke 13:10-17](#))

**Whom Satan ([satanas](#)) has bound** (Lo - [idou](#)) **for eighteen long years** - While the visible battle was with the synagogue official, the invisible war was between God and Satan (cf Lk 11:17-23+). Did you notice this little detail which Jesus mentioned? As Spurgeon says "Nobody had told him that she had been **eighteen years** bound, (**Ed**: And no one had told him Satan had any role in the malady) but He knew all about it,—how she came to be bound, what she had suffered during the time, how she had prayed for healing, and how the infirmity still pressed upon her. In one minute He had read her history and understood her case." Beloved, what are you dealing with that you think "Jesus doesn't really understand what I am going through in this current adversity? Cast that thought aside -- HE CARES! HE KNOWS! HE IS ABLE! (to "loosen" you if that is His good and acceptable and perfect will!)

**Lo or behold** (Lo)([2400](#)) see discussion on [idou](#). It is interesting that most of the newer translations either omit this "behold" and only the Young's Literal translating it "and this one, being a daughter of Abraham, whom the Adversary bound, **LO**, eighteen years, did it not behove to be loosed from this bond on the sabbath-day?" Notice that here Jesus uses **idou** to emphasize or draw attention to the length of time the poor woman was crippled --**18 long years**. And in fairness the NAS and NET both actually do translate the "**behold**" with the word "**long**" which does have the effect of emphasizing the 18 years of deformity.

**Ryle on Satan has bound** - This is a remarkable expression. It appears that Satan is permitted to inflict bodily illness and disease. See Job 1–2 and 1 Corinthians 5:5.

**Wiersbe** - Perhaps it is a matter of semantics, but I prefer to speak of demonic work in believers as "demon oppression" rather than "demon possession." In fact, the Greek word is "demonized," so we need not think of "possession" in spatial terms. Certainly Satan can and does attack the bodies and minds of God's people. Some satanic oppression could last for many years until someone detects that Satan is at work. Not all sickness is caused by demons (Luke 6:17–19-note), so we must not blame everything on Satan. (Borrow [Be compassionate](#))

**Should ([dei](#)) she not have been released ([luo](#)) from this bond ([desmos](#)) on the Sabbath day?** - The **ESV** is more accurate rendering it "**Ought** not this woman...be loosed from this bond?" Clearly the answer is "Yes, she must be released!" The **NAS** word "**should**" does not really convey the sense of the Greek verb Jesus used here. Jesus argument is so clear and right that it needs no explanation. Of course she should be released. If you religious Jews allow an even lesser "*release*" of a beast to drink water, how much more appropriate and humane to release this woman! And what better day to give her "rest" from her long infirmity, then to do so on the [Sabbath](#), a day of rest and worship.

**Leon Morris** - Jesus uses a strong term and says she '**must**' ([dei](#)) be loosed. The afflicting of the woman was due to Satanic activity and Satan must be overthrown. (Borrow [The Gospel According to St. Luke: An Introduction and Commentary](#))

**Hendriksen** paraphrases Jesus' argument "is it really true that Satan must be allowed to keep this woman in bondage for still another day—on top of the eighteen years during which he has already held her a captive—just because it happens to be the Sabbath? Is not the Sabbath the very day when more than ever one should exert himself to the utmost to destroy the works of the devil?" (Borrow [Exposition of the Gospel of Luke](#))

**NET Note** - Jesus argues that no other day is more appropriate to heal a descendant of Abraham than the Sabbath, the exact opposite view of the synagogue leader.

**Guzik** gives a good summary of Jesus' argument noting that "Jesus gave several compelling reasons why it was appropriate to show her mercy, and more appropriate than helping a distressed animal.

1. She was a **woman**—made in the image of God, and because a woman and not a man, worthy of more care and concern.
2. She was a **daughter of Abraham**, a Jewish woman, with a covenant connection to Abraham. This may also indicate that she was a woman of faith, as well as her attendance at synagogue.
3. She was one **whom Satan had bound**, and every day is a good day to oppose the work of Satan and to set free his captives.
4. She was afflicted **for eighteen years**, long enough to suffer greatly and to draw forth the compassion of Jesus and others.

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**Should** (must be) ([1163](#)) ([dei](#) from **deo** = to bind or tie objects together) refers to what is not optional but needful (binding) out of intrinsic necessity or inevitability. To express the sense of necessity **dei** is translated "one ought", "one must". In English dictionaries **must** means to be obliged and expresses both physical and moral necessity and speaks of something that should not be overlooked or missed.

**Dei in Luke and Acts** - Lk. 2:49; Lk. 4:43; Lk. 9:22; Lk. 11:42; Lk. 12:12; Lk. 13:14; Lk. 13:16; Lk. 13:33; Lk. 15:32; Lk. 17:25; Lk. 18:1; Lk. 19:5; Lk. 21:9; Lk. 22:7; Lk. 22:37; Lk. 24:7; Lk. 24:26; Lk. 24:44; Acts 1:16; Acts 1:21; Acts 3:21; Acts 4:12; Acts 5:29; Acts 9:6; Acts 9:16; Acts 14:22; Acts 15:5; Acts 16:30; Acts 17:3; Acts 19:21; Acts 20:35; Acts 23:11; Acts 24:19; Acts 25:10; Acts 25:24; Acts 26:9; Acts 27:21; Acts 27:24; Acts



**Satan** (4567) (**satanas** transliterated from Hebrew **Satan** - see 07854 and Aramaic sātānā) literally means **Adversary**, the evil antagonist who offers opposition, hostility, resentment, etc. An enemy who that contends with, opposes, resists. An **adversary** is one who hates or opposes another person and tries to harm them or stop them from doing something because of hatred and malice. **Satan** is the **inveterate**, **implacable**, relentless, ruthless, remorseless, merciless, heartless, pitiless, cruel, hard, harsh, hardened, incorrigible, dedicated enemy of God and man. **Satan** is not a myth or a fable, but a created, fallen angel who is a real, supernatural evil being (Mt 16:23; 1 Th 2:18<sup>+</sup>). **Satan** is not divine but is subject to the divine Creator Jesus (John 1:3, Col 1:16<sup>+</sup>). He was the tempter of Jesus and sifter of men like Peter (Mt 4:1, Lk 4:2<sup>+</sup>, Mk 1:13<sup>+</sup>, Lk 22:31<sup>+</sup>).

**Satanas - 33v** - Matt. 4:10; Matt. 12:26; Matt. 16:23; Mk. 1:13; Mk. 3:23; Mk. 3:26; Mk. 4:15; Mk. 8:33; Lk. 10:18; Lk. 11:18; Lk. 13:16; Lk. 22:3; Lk. 22:31; Jn. 13:27; Acts 5:3; Acts 26:18; Rom. 16:20; 1 Co. 5:5; 1 Co. 7:5; 2 Co. 2:11; 2 Co. 11:14; 2 Co. 12:7; 1 Thess. 2:18; 2 Thess. 2:9; 1 Tim. 1:20; 1 Tim. 5:15; Rev. 2:9; Rev. 2:13; Rev. 2:24; Rev. 3:9; Rev. 12:9; Rev. 20:2; Rev. 20:7

**Bound** (bind, imprison, tie) (1210) **deo** means literally to bind, tie, fasten (Mt 12:29, Mt 13:30, Mt 21:2, 22:13, of Jesus = Mt 27:2, of demon possessed man - Mk 5:3, of Jesus' body "**bound** it in linen wrappings" = 19:40, Paul to bring Christians "**bound** to Jerusalem" = Acts 9:2, 14<sup>+</sup>), fasten with chains, to throw into chains (of John the Baptist - Mt 14:3, Barabbas "**imprisoned**" = Mk 15:7, Acts 24:27, Co 4:3). A woman who was bent together, had been "**bound**" by Satan through the work of a demon, Luke 13:16 ([commentary](#)).

**Deo - 40v - bind(7), binding(1), binds(2), bound(23), imprisoned(4), prisoners(1), put...in chains(1), tied(4)**. Matt. 12:29; Matt. 13:30; Matt. 14:3; Matt. 16:19; Matt. 18:18; Matt. 21:2; Matt. 22:13; Matt. 27:2; Mk. 3:27; Mk. 5:3; Mk. 5:4; Mk. 6:17; Mk. 11:2; Mk. 11:4; Mk. 15:1; Mk. 15:7; Lk. 13:16; Lk. 19:30; Jn. 11:44; Jn. 18:12; Jn. 18:24; Jn. 19:40; Acts 9:2; Acts 9:14; Acts 9:21; Acts 12:6; Acts 20:22; Acts 21:11; Acts 21:13; Acts 21:33; Acts 22:5; Acts 22:29; Acts 24:27; Rom. 7:2; 1 Co. 7:27; 1 Co. 7:39; Col. 4:3; 2 Tim. 2:9; Rev. 9:14; Rev. 20:2

**Have been released** (3089) See preceding note on **luo**. This is clearly a play on words, as Jesus uses the same verb for **untying** an ox or donkey as He does for "**untying the knot**" (so to speak) of the woman's body!

**Bond** (Imprisonment, chains) (1199) **desmos** from **deo** = to bind, fasten with chains) literally refers to bonds or the means of restraint such as by tying or fastening like a fetter (chain or shackle for the feet) speaks of "restriction of movement in the literal sense of "chains," and the metaphorical sense of "imprisonment" or "crippling disease." (Renn) **Desmos** in Jude 6 refers to "eternal chains" that keep fallen angels bound in darkness until the judgment day. As a physician, I love the picture of **desmos** in our English word **desmosome** which describes the material that binds one cell to another. In the early church fathers **desmos** was used of the "bond of love" (1 Cl 49:2), describing something that held people together in a common interest.

**Desmos - 18v - bond(1), bonds(3), chains(3), impediment(1), imprisonment(10)**. Mk. 7:35; Lk. 8:29; Lk. 13:16; Acts 16:26; Acts 20:23; Acts 23:29; Acts 26:29; Acts 26:31; Phil. 1:7; Phil. 1:13; Phil. 1:14; Phil. 1:17; Col. 4:18; 2 Tim. 2:9; Phlm. 1:10; Phlm. 1:13; Heb. 11:36; Jude 1:6

**Luke 13:17 As He said this, all His opponents were being humiliated; and the entire crowd was rejoicing over all the glorious things being done by Him.**

KJV Luke 13:17 And when he had said these things, all his adversaries were ashamed: and all the people rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by him.

- **all His opponents were being humiliated** Lk 14:6; 20:40; Ps 40:14; 109:29; 132:18; Isa 45:24; 2 Ti 3:9; 1 Pe 3:16
- **and the entire crowd was rejoicing** Lk 19:37-40,48; Ex 15:11; Ps 111:3; Isa 4:2; Jn 12:17,18; Acts 3:9-11; Acts 4:21
- [Luke 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 13:10-17 Religion Versus Reality](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 13:10-17 Christ Creates Conflict in the Synagogue](#) - John MacArthur

## FIRST EFFECT: ADVERSARIES PUT TO SHAME

**Spurgeon** - You get a little grace tonight; let that Divine Man take but a grain of the mustard seed of his grace, and drop it into your



heart, which he will have prepared like a garden, and there is no telling what will come of it. That sigh, that tear, that wish, will grow into holiness of life and zeal of conduct. It may be but very little in its beginning, but it will grow. Both good and evil begin with very small eggs, but they grow into great things. ([Luke 13](#) - exposition)

**All His opponents** ([antikeimai](#) - literally those lining up face to face with Him) **were being humiliated** ([kataischuno](#) - put to shame, made to feel guilty - but likely not guilty enough to repent!) - **All** means "all" without exception. So the synagogue official was just the front man, the mouthpiece for the host of hypocrites. One can see them now all the more committed to coming up with a way to get back at Jesus and to rid themselves of their Divine [Adversary](#) once and for all! **Were being humiliated** ([kataischuno](#)) is in the vivid [imperfect tense](#), which wonderfully pictures the adversaries of Jesus repeatedly being disgraced and put to shame. "They were not ashamed because they had been convinced, but because they were confounded." (Alford)

This picture recalls the words of the psalmist "There I will cause the horn of David to spring forth; I have prepared a lamp for Mine anointed (mashiyach - clearly a reference to the Messiah). His (Messiah's) enemies **I will clothe with shame**; But upon himself his crown shall shine." (Psalm 132:17-18) Listen to Spurgeon's description of their shame as not just temporal but eternal - "They (ALL HIS OPPONENTS) shall be utterly defeated, they shall loathe their evil design, they shall be despised for having hated the Ever Blessed One. Their **shame** they will be unable to hide, it shall cover them: **God will array them in it for ever, and it shall be their convict dress to all eternity.**" ([Ps 132 - Treasury of David](#))

## SECOND EFFECT: CROWD KEPT REJOICING

**The entire crowd** (throng, confused multitude) **was rejoicing** ([chairo](#)) **over all the glorious things being done by Him** - Notice their joy was not just over the miraculous cure for the woman but **over all the glorious things**. On the other note that they were not **rejoicing** over all the glorious things being said by Him, things that pertained to repentance and belief leading to eternal life! And so while **the entire crowd was rejoicing**, sadly the entire crowd was not believing in Jesus! **Rejoicing over** Jesus is not the same as relationship with Jesus. Rejoicing is in the [imperfect tense](#) picturing the crowd rejoicing over and over. Imagine how this must have added even greater shame to Jesus' opponents, not to mention hardening their resolve to kill Him!

**MacArthur** emphasizes that "although stunned and amazed by Christ's power to heal (cf. Luke 4:36-note; Luke 9:43-note), that does not necessarily mean that they put their full trust in Him. Some did (cf. Luke 16:16+), but others continued to reject Him, likely along with those who hailed Him as Messiah at the [triumphal entry](#), then cried for His blood a few days later (Mt 27:22, 23, 24-26). The woman's healing is analogous to God's sovereign work in salvation, and serves as a metaphor for what God offered to do for Israel. He passes by the religious and self-righteous and chooses the humble, bent over by the burden of their sin, without hope of deliverance by their own power, and sovereignly delivers them from Satan's power and lifts them up to praise and glorify Him." (See [Luke Commentary](#))

**Guzik** - The woman was so obviously healed and the ruler of the synagogue was so obviously wrong that all rejoiced in Jesus' victory.

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**Opponents** (adversaries, enemies) (480)([antikeimai](#) from **anti** = against, opposite + **keimai** = to be placed, to lie or be laid down) means literally to line up against or to lie opposite to, both ideas giving us a vivid picture of the conflict between the Lord and these legalists!

**Were being humiliated** (disgraced, put to shame) (2617)([kataischuno](#) from **kata** = down but here intensifies meaning of verb [aischuno](#) = to shame) means primarily to put to shame, to humiliate, to disgrace. This verb is used in a positive sense to describe what would not happen to those who believed in Jesus (Ro 9:33-note, Ro 10:11-note, 1Pe 2:6-note). It is interesting that the root **aisch-** originally referred to that which was ugly and disgraceful. The root verb [aischuno](#) thus meant originally to disfigure, make ugly! What an interesting picture for "*ugly*" is a good description of hypocritical religion of these pretentious practitioners!

**Rejoicing** (5463)([chairo](#)) means to be "cheer" full, calmly happy or well-off. **Chairo** implies and imparts joy. **Chairo** is used in a whole range of situations in which the emotion of joy is evoked. To be in a state of happiness and well being. **Chairo** means to enjoy a state of gladness, to be delighted.

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**Steven Cole** gives us a powerful personal application of the story in Luke 13:10-17 - Luke concludes this story by noting that Jesus' opponents were being humiliated, but the multitude was rejoicing over all the glorious things being done by Him (Lk 13:17). As we saw before, Jesus and His teaching draw a line that divides. This miracle isn't recorded here so that we can come to church, sit and say, "That's interesting," and go home the same way we were. It's here to make us ask ourselves, "Which side am I on? Am I just

going through the motions of dead religion, or do I have reality with the living Lord Jesus Christ?" Think through these seven contrasts:

- (1) Dead religion is marked by bondage to Satan, but reality with the Lord frees people from long-term problems.
- (2) Dead religion is impotent for lasting change, but reality with the Lord is powerful.
- (3) Dead religion lacks compassion for hurting people, but reality with the Lord results in compassion.
- (4) Dead religion is joyless and angry, but reality with the Lord is full of joy.
- (5) Dead religion is hypocritical, but reality with the Lord is truthful and genuine.
- (6) Dead religion promotes the wrong priorities, but reality with the Lord keeps the right priorities.
- (7) Dead religion brings glory to men, but reality with the Lord brings glory to Him.

**Ask yourself honestly, "Which marks my life: Dead religion or reality with the living Lord?" If you lack reality, your need, like that of this woman, is to make personal contact with Jesus Himself. He alone has the power to release you from dead religion so that you can walk in the joy of new life with Him. ([Religion Versus Reality Luke 13:10-17](#))**

**Luke 13:18 So He was saying, "What is the kingdom of God like, and to what shall I compare it?"**

KJV Luke 13:18 Then said he, Unto what is the kingdom of God like? and whereunto shall I resemble it?

- **What is the kingdom** Lk 13:20; 7:31; Lam 2:13; Mt 13:31
- **the kingdom of God** Lk 17:21; Mk 4:26,30-34
- Luke 13 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 13:18-21 Why You Want To Be On Jesus' Side](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 13:18-21 The Increasing Influence of the Kingdom](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 13:18-19 Mustard Seed for Sunday-School Teacher](#) - C H Spurgeon

#### **Parallel Passages:**

Mt 13:31-32+ He presented another parable to them, saying, "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field; 32 and this is smaller than all other seeds, but when it is full grown, it is larger than the garden plants and becomes a tree, so that THE BIRDS OF THE AIR come and NEST IN ITS BRANCHES."

Mark 4:30-32+ And He said, "How shall we picture the kingdom of God, or by what parable shall we present it? 31 "It is like a mustard seed, which, when sown upon the soil, though it is smaller than all the seeds that are upon the soil, 32 yet when it is sown, it grows up and becomes larger than all the garden plants and forms large branches; so that THE BIRDS OF THE AIR can NEST UNDER ITS SHADE."

**Note:** The corresponding parables in Luke come later in Jesus' ministry than those in Matthew and Luke.

### **JESUS OPENS WITH A QUESTION**

**Warren Wiersbe** on the parables of the Kingdom - Some see in them a picture of the visible outward growth of the kingdom (the mustard seed) and the invisible inward influence of the kingdom (the leaven). By using these parables, Jesus was saying, "You Jewish religious leaders may hold to your dead traditions and oppose the truth, but God's living kingdom will still increase. Satan will be defeated!" (Borrow [Be compassionate](#))

**So He was saying - So** or therefore (**oun**) is a [term of conclusion](#) which shows that Jesus links this teaching with the previous section. How so? What had just transpired? Jesus' miracle had incited indignation from His opponents. So for one thing, this stiff opposition might lead one to think God's kingdom might not succeed. **Bock** explains the connection with the previous section this way - Jesus raises the kingdom question because the woman's release from Satan raises the issue of authority and rule." ([Two Kingdom Parables](#))

**John MacArthur** - The conjunction **oun** (so, or "therefore") connects these parables with the incident in the previous section (Lk 13:10-17). The Lord had interrupted his teaching in a synagogue (Lk 13:10) to heal a woman who had been crippled for eighteen years by a demon-caused illness (Lk 13:11). That demonstration of His power over Satan's kingdom revealed the presence of God's

kingdom (cf. Luke 11:20). The Lord then continued His teaching with these two parables, which illustrate the truth that the divine kingdom both externally and internally would expand exponentially from its small beginnings. (See [Luke Commentary](#))

**Steven Cole** offers a more detailed explanation of the connection noting that "Jesus was facing opposition and rejection from the Jewish religious leaders (Lk 13:14). You have to put yourself back into the times to understand what the disciples must have been feeling. They had left their businesses and way of life to stake everything on the fact that this young carpenter turned preacher was none other than God's Anointed One, the Messiah. He didn't look like what everyone expected the Messiah to look like. He wasn't born to nobility. He didn't have connections with the religious leaders in Jerusalem. He had not been educated in their schools. He had no pedigree in the worldly sense of the term. But His powerful teaching and the miracles He performed had convinced these men that He was the one. They expected Him to inaugurate His kingdom by overthrowing the Roman rule and establishing the throne of David again in Jerusalem. But things weren't going according to expectation. The religious leaders were not lining up on His side. In fact, they were growing increasingly hostile. Rather than trying to win them over, Jesus was boldly confronting them by calling them hypocrites, so that they were being humiliated (13:17). The disciples might have looked at themselves, men who lacked the education and sophistication of the religious leaders, and at the way things seemed to be heading, and have grown discouraged. But these two parables show them and us that in spite of small and seemingly insignificant beginnings, the gospel will prevail. Even though there is conflict and the task seems overwhelming, God's purpose through Christ will triumph. Thus, You want to be on Jesus' side because ultimately He will triumph over all." ([Why You Want to Be on Jesus' Side](#))

**What is the kingdom of God like?** - Mark 4:30 has a very similar introduction to the parable of the mustard seed (Mk 4:30-32).

**Hendriksen** comments that like the Master Teacher He is, Jesus begins with "an oratorical question to arouse interest. Note the striking resemblance in form to the similarly double question found in Isa. 40:18 and to the one in Luke 7:31. Such a question was a device to sharpen the interest of the audience." (Borrow [Exposition of the Gospel of Luke](#))

The word **like** is a [term of comparison](#) and specifically a [simile](#). Jesus uses well known objects to illustrate some of the characteristics of the Kingdom of God. He used similar language in Lk 6:47-49; 7:31-32; 12:36; 13:21.

I tend to agree with Constable's view especially in light of Jesus emphasis on discussing the Kingdom with His disciples after the Resurrection - "To these He also presented Himself alive after His suffering, by many convincing proofs, appearing to them over a period of forty days and speaking of the things concerning the kingdom of God....(NOTICE THEIR QUESTION) So when they had come together, they were asking Him, saying, "Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the **kingdom** to Israel?" (Acts 1:3, 6) In Jesus' reply, He did not refute their statement that the kingdom would be restored to Israel, which is further support that what they were asking about was the Messianic Kingdom or [Millennial Kingdom](#). (cf Rev 20:4-6-note) This aspect of the Kingdom of God is the final phase. In the meantime the "seed" of the Gospel would spread throughout the world regenerating hearts in which the King would reign (each heart being a representation of the "Kingdom of God") until He returns to take His rightful throne in Jerusalem. Is Christ reigning as King in your heart beloved?

**The Kingdom of God** - One must understand that there are two phases to the **Kingdom of God**. The first phase is the invisible, internal **Kingdom of God** and which He later described as "**in your midst**" (Lk 17:21-note), the Kingdom in which the King reigns in the heart of the person who has accepted Jesus as Messiah. To proclaim the Kingdom of God is to preach the Gospel, to proclaim the good news of salvation, explaining how one can enter the Kingdom of God. When the King returns on "**the day that the Son of Man is revealed**," (Lk 17:30-note) the heart of every person will also be revealed as to whether they sought the kingdom of "self" or the kingdom of the Savior! The future phase of the **Kingdom of God** is known as the **Messianic Age** or the [Millennial Kingdom](#). (See more detailed explanation of Jesus' meaning of the **Kingdom of God** in [notes](#) on Luke 17:20-21). Jesus knew the Jews were looking for the future aspect of the **Kingdom of God**, but His preaching and that of His disciples was to explain how one could enter the invisible aspect of the **Kingdom of God** in the present and in that way they would be assured of experiencing the visible **Kingdom of God** in the future.

Luke mentions the **Kingdom of God** more frequently than the other Gospel writers - Lk. 4:43; Lk. 6:20; Lk. 7:28; Lk. 8:1; Lk. 8:10; Lk. 9:2; Lk. 9:11; Lk. 9:27; Lk. 9:60; Lk. 9:62; Lk. 10:9; Lk. 10:11; Lk. 11:20; Lk. 13:18; Lk. 13:20; Lk. 13:28; Lk. 13:29; Lk. 14:15; Lk. 16:16; Lk. 17:20; Lk. 17:21; Lk. 18:16; Lk. 18:17; Lk. 18:24; Lk. 18:25; Lk. 18:29; Lk. 19:11; Lk. 21:31; Lk. 22:16; Lk. 22:18; Lk. 23:51; Acts 1:3; Acts 8:12; Acts 14:22; Acts 19:8; Acts 28:23; Acts 28:31;

**And to what shall I compare it** ([homoioo](#)) - In other words He is basically repeating the question, "What is it like?" As a Master Teacher, Jesus begins with two questions to draw His hearers into His story. This is always a good practice for teachers/preachers to emulate. It makes their mind begin to think.

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**Compare** (3666)([homoioo](#) from **homoios** = similar, of the same kind, of like disposition]) in classic Greek means “to make alike” or “to be like.” In the NT homoioō is used to compare persons and things and to introduce parables. In the present passages in Luke 13 homoioo introduces 2 parables - Lk 13:18, 20 (cf Mk 4:30). In Matthew homoioo introduces four parables of the wheat and the tares (Mt 13:24), the two debtors (Mt 18:23), the marriage feast (Mt 22:2), the ten virgins (Mt 25:1),

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## Related Resources:

- See [in depth comments](#) on [Lk 17:20-21](#) on what constitutes the **Kingdom of God/Heaven**
- [What is the kingdom of God?](#)
- [What did Jesus mean when He said, “The kingdom of God is within you” \(Luke 17:21, KJV\)?](#)
- [What is the difference between the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Heaven?](#)
- [Luke 17:20-37 The Present and Future Kingdom](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 17:20-21 The Invisible Kingdom of God, Part 1](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 17:20-21 The Invisible Kingdom of God, Part 2](#) - John MacArthur
- For those who interpret Rev 20:1-10+ literally here is a proposed schematic...

KINGDOM OF GOD PAST, PRESENT, FUTURE  
FROM BIBLE.ORG

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## Croft Pentz - RECEPTION AND REJECTION Luke 13:18–35

Some of the people who heard Christ preach accepted Him as Savior, the Messiah, the Son of God; others rejected Him. Many of the Jews surely knew the Old Testament Scriptures and the prophecies concerning Christ’s coming and death, but their pride and self-righteousness kept them from accepting Christ as the Son of God.

### I. THE PARABLES—vv. 18–21

1. Mustard seed parable—vv. 18–19. A mustard seed, which is very small, grows into a tree, and the birds lodge in it. So it is with the kingdom of God. It may have started small, but it grows larger than one can anticipate.
2. Measure of meal parable—vv. 20–21. The kingdom of God, like meal with yeast, rises and increases quickly. The growth of His kingdom knows no bounds.

### II. THE PRETENSE—vv. 22–30

1. Savior—v. 22. Jesus goes from city to city, preaching and teaching, heading toward Jerusalem.
2. Salvation—v. 23. The people ask an important question: Who will be saved?
3. Strict—vv. 24–25. The door to heaven is narrow, and only a few will enter (see Matt. 7:13–14). Some will knock, trying to get in, but they will hear these words, “I don’t know you.”
4. Sinful—vv. 26–27. These people were religious, but not righteous! They had a form of godliness, but no relationship with Christ. They could not enter (note the words of Jesus in Matt. 7:21–23). Only the born again (John 3:1–8) will enter.
5. Sorrow—v. 28. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. This means hell.
6. Satisfaction—vv. 29–30. People from all over the world will be in heaven. What great joy this will be!

### III. THE PITY—vv. 31–35

1. Protection—v. 31. Jesus is warned to leave, because Herod was seeking Him, and planning to kill Him.
2. Plan—vv. 32–33. Jesus calls Herod a fox. A fox is cunning and destructive. Jesus would continue His work until His death. No one could destroy God’s plan for man’s salvation.
3. Pity—vv. 34–35. Sorrow fills the heart of Jesus. He is rejected. He foresees the destruction of Jerusalem. They will not see Him again until He comes into the city on Palm Sunday.

Those who believe and accept Christ will be saved; those who reject Him will be lost (Mark 16:16). All who believe in Him will have everlasting life (John 3:16). When man accepts Christ as His Savior, he becomes a son of God (John 1:12). Man has a twofold choice: (1) reception, or (2) rejection. No one can decide for another. It is a personal choice that must be made. ([Expository Outlines from Luke](#))

**Luke 13:19 "It is like a mustard seed, which a man took and threw into his own garden; and it grew and became a tree, and THE BIRDS OF THE AIR NESTED IN ITS BRANCHES."**

waxed a great tree; and the fowls of the air lodged in the branches of it.

- **It is like a mustard seed** Mt 13:31,32; 17:20; Mk 4:31,32
- **threw into his own garden** Song 4:12,16; 5:1; 6:2; 8:13; Isa 58:11; 61:11; Jer 31:12
- **and it grew and became a tree** Ps 72:16,17; Isa 2:2,3; 9:7; 49:20-25; 51:2,3; 53:1,10-12; 54:1-3; Isa 60:15-22; Ezek 17:22-24; 47:1-12; Da 2:34,35,44,45; Micah 4:1,2; Zec 2:11; 8:20-23; 14:7-9; Acts 2:41; 4:4; 15:14-18; 21:20; \*Gr.; Ro 15:19; Rev 11:15
- **and THE BIRDS OF THE AIR NESTED IN ITS BRANCHES** Ezek 31:6; Da 4:12,21
- Luke 13 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 13:18-21 Why You Want To Be On Jesus' Side](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 13:18-21 The Increasing Influence of the Kingdom](#) - John MacArthur

#### Parallel Passages:

Mt 13:31-32+ He presented another parable to them, saying, "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field; 32 and this is smaller than all other seeds, but when it is full grown, it is larger than the garden plants and becomes a tree, so that THE BIRDS OF THE AIR come and NEST IN ITS BRANCHES."

Mark 4:30-32+ And He said, "How shall we picture the kingdom of God, or by what parable shall we present it? 31 "It is like a mustard seed, which, when sown upon the soil, though it is smaller than all the seeds that are upon the soil, 32 yet when it is sown, it grows up and becomes larger than all the garden plants and forms large branches; so that THE BIRDS OF THE AIR can NEST UNDER ITS SHADE."

### FIRST PARABLE LIKE A MUSTARD SEED

#### Tiny Mustard Seeds

So after asking them to ponder what the **Kingdom of God** is like which serves to arouse their interest (because they are looking for the King of an earthly kingdom!), now He gives them a parabolic explanation.

**It is like a mustard ([sinapi](#)) seed ([kokkus](#)) which a man took and threw into his own garden** - Like is a [term of comparison](#), specifically known as a [simile](#). A **mustard seed** is a small round seed usually about 1-2 mm diameter and yellowish white to black. The parallel accounts in Matthew and Mark both emphasize the extremely small size of the mustard seed (Mt 13:32+ "smaller than all other seeds"). Notice Jesus does not refer to a large number of seeds like in the picture above, but refers to a **seed** singular, for this serves His purpose of comparison. In an agricultural society, this was a common picture that could be easily understood by Jesus' audience. Although Luke does not emphasize the tiny size of the seed here in Luke's version as he does in Matthew 13:32+ and Mark 4:31+, he does emphasize a similar result of the seed growing into a large "tree-like" shrub, big enough for birds to roost on and find shade. So Luke's emphasis is not as much on the dramatic contrast between the small size of the seed and large size of the plant, but more on the final result that the plant and the fact that it would be so big its branches would be strong enough to support the weight of birds.

**THE PROBLEM OF THE MUSTARD SEED** - As alluded to above Luke does not emphasize the small size of the mustard seed as does Mt 13:31-32+ ("this is smaller than all other seeds"), and so opponents of the [inerrancy](#) and [infallibility of the Scripture](#), take Jesus' statement on the size of the mustard seed as CLEARLY ERRONEOUS. It is amazing the lengths to which godless men will go to in their futile attempts to obliterate all evidence of God from our world (really "His world" for He created it!) Given that attack below is an excerpt from an article that addresses this issue of seed size.

"In this article the author seeks to demonstrate exegetically and botanically that our Lord Jesus Christ was not merely using the language of accommodation or even proverbial language, necessarily, when he referred to the mustard seed as the "least" of all seeds. The author appeals to the language of the text, the context, and to expert testimony in the field of botany to show that the mustard seed was indeed the smallest garden-variety seed known to man in Bible times."

John Sproule quotes botanist Dr. L. H. Shinnars regarding the **"size"** of the Mustard seed writing that "The mustard seed would indeed have been the smallest of those likely to have been noticed by the people at the time of Christ. The principal field crops (such as barley, wheat, lentils, beans) have much larger seeds, as do vetches and other plants which might have been present as weeds (the biblical tares) among grain.... There



are various weeds and wild flowers belonging to the mustard, amaranth, pigweed, and chickweed families with seeds as small or smaller than mustard itself, but they would not have been particularly known or noticed by the inhabitants....The only modern crop plant of importance with smaller seeds than mustard is tobacco, but this plant is of American origin and was not grown in the Old World until the 16th century and later (Read the entire article - ["The Problem of the Mustard Seed," Grace Theological Journal Spring 1980](#)) (See also William Thomson's 19th century comment in the classic "[The Land and the Book](#)")

**MacArthur adds this note regarding the mustard seed problem** - Dr. L. H. Shinnars, director of the herbarium at Southern Methodist University in Dallas and lecturer at the Smithsonian Institution, stated in a conversation that "the mustard seed would indeed have been the smallest of those to have been noticed by the people at the time of Christ. The principal field crops (barley, wheat, lentils, and beans) have much larger seeds, as do other plants which might have been present as weeds and so forth. There are various weeds and wild flowers belonging to the mustard, amaranth, pigweed, or chickweed families with seeds that are as small as or smaller than mustard; but they would not have been known or noticed by the inhabitants. They are wild and they certainly would not have been planted as a crop.... The only modern crop plant in existence with smaller seeds than mustard is tobacco, and this plant of American origin was not grown in the old world until the sixteenth century or later." (MNTC-Mt)

**Hughes** writes that "These growth parables...have been subject to over interpretation. This was especially true in the nineteenth century when it was commonly taught that the gospel would keep spreading until the world was Christianized and the kingdom was ushered in. For example, toward the end of that century Sidney Gulick wrote a book entitled *The Growth of the Kingdom of God*. The book's argument was that Christianity is inexorably spreading and will ultimately take over the world—so why not convert now?...Those who imagine that the kingdom can be brought in by the preaching of the gospel neglect the teaching of the mystery parables of Matthew 13, such as "the sower" (Mt 13:3–23) and "the weeds" (Mt 13:24–30), which demonstrate that the church and its rule will be neither universal nor perfect. What really put an end to such un-Biblical (though noble) dreams were the great wars—and sins—of the so-called "Christian nations."...The Biblical realism in these two parables does not teach triumphalism (the view that one religion will displace all others), but rather the effective growth of the church and the authentic transforming power of Christ's Gospel. (PTW-Lk)

**James Montgomery Boice** writes that "of all the parables Christ told, none has produced such diametrically opposed interpretations as these two." (Parables of Jesus)

And so not all commentators interpret these parables as portraying "the effective growth of the church and the authentic transforming power of Christ's Gospel."

There are several writers (Wiersbe, W E Vine, J M Boice, et al) who believe "that because wickedness will increase (2 Ti 3:12, 13) and human government will fail, bringing in anarchy and chaos and, in the end time, the universal kingdom of the beast (Rev 13:2–8), that these two parables describe the introduction of evil into the professing kingdom (E.g., see "Gotquestions" answer to [What is the meaning of the Parable](#))." (Crawford) However other writers (these seem to be in the majority, but this is a somewhat subjective assessment) including John MacArthur, Darrell Bock, William Hendriksen, C H Spurgeon, Kent Hughes, et al, favor these two parables as portraying **growth of the Kingdom of God in the positive sense**

#### A LARGE MUSTARD PLANT

**And it grew ([auxano](#)) and became a tree** - A mustard plant is actually not a tree, but if the conditions are favorable, it grows to the size of a small **tree** as depicted above. However **William Barclay** notes that "In the east mustard is not a garden herb but a field plant. It does literally grow to be a **tree**. A height of seven or eight feet is common, and a traveler tells how once he came across a mustard plant which was twelve feet high, and which overtopped a horse and its rider. It is common to see a cloud of birds around such trees, for they love the little black mustard seeds." ([Ref](#))

**Darrell Bock** - Whatever (specific species of) tree is meant, Jesus is saying that **the kingdom will start out small but end up big**....The point is that the kingdom will end up with significant stature and will be a place where people of all races can reside comfortably....Jesus makes the point that the kingdom comes in a surprising form, not the one anticipated. That is why Matt. 13 has this parable in his "mystery" section. But the surprising humble form of the kingdom's coming should not deceive anyone. The kingdom will still end up being a place of comfort and shelter under the protective shade of the Almighty. In fact, the shrub shall transform itself into a tree. This point is important: Jewish expectation had been of the magnificent arrival of a grand kingdom all at once (this is why the disciples wondered what role they would have in ruling). Jesus says that the kingdom comes now, but it starts out small and will gradually assume the grand scale they expected. That is why the parallels speak of the mystery of the kingdom in



such texts. It is still kingdom truth, but it is a fresh element added alongside the OT picture. ([BECNT- Luke](#))

**ESV Study Bible** - The Jews expected the kingdom to come with apocalyptic power (**ED**: see Acts 1:6+), bringing God's judgment on all evil, and hence Jesus' teaching that it would arrive in such an "insignificant" way was surprising (cf. Luke 17:20+ = "The kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed"). (Borrow [ESV Study Bible](#))

**Mattoon** - The **mustard seed** is a classic illustration of the **kingdom of God** because of its qualities. This tiny, little seed can grow quickly into a tree as tall as seven or eight feet in height. Some have grown to heights of twelve feet. Birds flock to these trees because they love the little black mustard seeds. The growth- rate of this seed illustrates the growth of God's kingdom, and even the spiritual growth in your own personal life, if you are spiritually nourished. ([Treasures from Luke](#))

**MacArthur** explains that "The point of this parable is that viewed from an external, visible perspective, the eventually large size of the **kingdom** was not perceivable at the start...at this point there were only a small number of people who followed Jesus. The **kingdom** was obscure; it was not distinguished by any majesty, power, or public display. Those things will mark its consummation, not its beginning. Most of the Jewish people were unaware of it (Luke 17:20–21), since its present form was not Messiah's earthly reign, but the sphere of salvation where God reigns in the hearts of His people. The Lord's illustration is also a powerful prophecy. The **kingdom** will steadily grow until its [consummation](#), which will be amazingly out of proportion to its beginning. That will happen when the Lord Jesus Christ returns in glory (Rev. 19:11–15+) and "the **kingdom of the world** [becomes] the **kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ**; and He will reign forever and ever" (Rev 11:15+). (See [Luke Commentary](#))

**W A Criswell** - The parable of the mustard seed illustrates the unexpected and previously undisclosed nature of the coming of God's kingly reign. The kingdom has come (Lk 17:21+), but, like a mustard seed, it begins as something small and humble; it does not come in the expected form of a glorious manifestation that would usher in the age to come. Only gradually does the kingdom develop, and then from so small an inception. ([Believer's Study Bible](#))

**And THE BIRDS OF THE AIR NESTED ([kataskenoo](#)) IN ITS BRANCHES** This description would also serve to emphasize the fact that the branches could support the weight of birds and thus indicate the substantial size of the mustard plant. While none of the synoptic accounts give an explanation by Jesus to the disciples of the meaning of the Parable of the Mustard Seed, Mark does make a statement that would suggest that He did explain this parable to the twelve. Mark 4:34+ records that "He did not speak to them without a parable; but He was explaining everything privately to His own disciples."

## MEANING OF THE BIRDS?

The mustard seed parable and specifically the meaning of the birds is open to the danger of allegorical interpretation. **Roy Zuck** writes that "**Allegorizing** is searching for a **hidden or secret meaning** underlying but remote from and unrelated in reality to **the more obvious meaning** of a text. In other words the literal reading is a sort of code, which needs to be deciphered to determine the more significant and hidden meaning. In this approach the literal is superficial, the allegorical is the true meaning." In summary, using [allegorical interpretation](#), makes it possible to "find" all manner of meanings beyond the plain sense of the text.

**David Turner** adds that "Both church history and Christian experience testify to the prevalence of imaginative interpretations of Jesus's parables. Multitudes of such "heavenly meanings" have been superimposed upon the "earthly stories" of the parables. The patristic transformation of the parable of the good Samaritan into the story of Adam's fall and redemption (Kissinger 1979: 2–4, 18, 26–27) may be the most notorious example of this allegorizing approach, which atomizes the parables and tends to ignore their historical and literary contexts." (See [Matthew Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament](#))

That said, there are three common interpretations of the **birds**:

1. The fact that they can nest on the mustard plant emphasizes its substantial size and incredible growth
2. Represent Gentiles/nations who come into and contribute to the growth of the Kingdom of God
3. Represent evil forces that come into the Kingdom of God, infiltrating the Church

**#2** - Some commentators (e.g., John MacArthur) interpret the **birds** as representative of "nations" or Gentiles (#2). In the interpretation of the **birds** as nations or Gentiles, the birds would represent believers who by grace through faith come into the Kingdom of God. There is support for this interpretation in at least two ways:

(1) Gentiles coming into the Kingdom of God contribute to the growth of that Kingdom In the book of Acts the spread of the Kingdom of God from "Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth." (Acts 1:8+), a spread which begin primarily with Jewish believers but soon included Gentile believers as the Gospel spread throughout the Roman Empire.

(2) There are OT passages that equate birds with Gentiles. For example Ezekiel writes "On the high mountain

of Israel I will plant it, that it may bring forth boughs and bear fruit and become a stately cedar. And birds of every kind will nest under it; they will nest in the shade of its branches." (Ezekiel 17:23)

**#3** - Some commentators say the **birds** are "representatives of Satan" (#3 above) ([Ironsides](#)) based on Mk 4:15<sup>+</sup>, but places great weight on interpreting the figure of birds in the same way it was interpreted in the parable of the soils. However there is nothing in the context of the mustard seed parable which dogmatically supports this interpretation.

I favor **#1** as most obvious (the kingdom's substantial size and incredible growth) but can see how **#2** is a reasonable interpretation. While **#3** is true of the church over the last 2000 years, that interpretation is less appealing as it would not be very encouraging to Jesus' disciples. And why would Jesus intend this interpretation in the parable of the mustard seed, when He clearly presents the truth in the parable of the tares?

In the final analysis, you will have to make your own decision whether you think Jesus used the picture of **birds** to picture Gentiles. Either interpretation does not detract from the main point of the parable which is that of a small beginning of the Kingdom of God consummating in the large Kingdom of God. Jesus does not tell us when the "time" of growth ends but it is fair to say that the Kingdom growth will not be seen as largest of all until the King of that Kingdom returns at the [Second Coming](#). (See [note](#))

Below are some more comments related to the meaning of the birds.

**Walter Liefeld** writes that "**Birds** are specifically mentioned in each version of the parable (Mt 13:32; Mk 4:32; Lk 13:19) and **may** therefore **be** significant in symbolizing Gentile nations. Plummer (p. 345) cites Ezekiel 17:23; 31:6 as OT evidence for this." (EBC)

**William Lane** takes a "middle road" interpretation of the **birds** (as does James Edwards in Pillar NTC-Mk) - The reference to the **birds** of the air which find shelter in the branches of the mustard shrub may have a deeper significance, but it seems more probable that they are part of the picture of the surprising character of the end when considered from the beginning.....This parable is concerned with the enigmatic present manifestation of the Kingdom as embodied in Jesus' person. Its appearance may be characterized by weakness and apparent insignificance—but remember the mustard seed. The day will come when the **Kingdom of God** will surpass in glory the mightiest kingdoms of the earth, for it is the consequence of God's sovereign action. The **mustard seed** is the word of God proclaimed by Christ. This word possesses the power which one day will make all things new. When the glory of that manifestation breaks forth before men they will be as startled as the man who considers the tiny mustard seed and the mighty shrub (ED: cf Rev 1:7<sup>+</sup>). (NICNT-Mk)

**Steve Cole** writes "Think of the powerful results that can come from the single seed planted. Thousands of new seeds are produced, each one capable of producing thousands more life-giving seeds. And the birds found shelter in the tree that resulted from this single seed. Probably this is a reference to the Gentiles who find shelter in the Gospel that was first given to the Jewish nation (Ezek. 17:23). All who nest there find the shelter of peace with God, freely provided. And the birds always sing. We have some birds outside our bedroom window that now begin singing at 4:30 in the morning, a bit early for my blood! The Bible shows that the preaching of the gospel in all the world will result in myriads from every nation gathering around God's throne, singing praises to Him because of His saving grace. God's means of accomplishing His glorious purpose is through His people sowing the seed of the gospel. The parable of the mustard seed shows that ultimately, Jesus will triumph over all." ([Sermon](#))

**Robert Stein** - Some see in "**the birds of heaven**" (ta peteina tou ouranou) an allegorical reference to the inclusion of the gentiles in the kingdom of God (cf. Ezek. 17:23; 31:6; Dan. 4:12, 21; Jeremias 1972: 147; Hooker 1991: 136). No clear allusion to these OT texts is made in the parable, however, and the reference to the birds, like the reference to the large branches, makes perfectly good sense as an example of the greatness of the final product without allegorizing it. (See NAC-[Mark](#))

Jesus does not explain the meaning of this parable, but clearly it reflects the growth of the **Kingdom of God** which one day will surpass the kingdoms of men. Daniel describes the consummation of this Kingdom describing that future day when all the godless kingdoms of men will be totally demolished when Jesus returns as King of kings and Lord of Lords (Rev 19:11-21+). For example, Daniel writes...

"You (DANIEL DESCRIBING TO NEBUCHADNEZZAR THE DETAILS OF HIS DREAM) continued looking until a **Stone** (CHRIST) was cut out without hands (SUPERNATURAL ORIGIN ~ VIRGIN BIRTH), and it struck the statue (REPRESENTING ALL THE KINGDOMS OF MEN OPPOSED TO THE KINGDOM OF GOD) on its feet of iron and clay and crushed them. 35 "Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver and the gold were crushed all at the same time (IN A MOMENT, THE MOMENT JESUS RETURNS TO TRIUMPH OVER ALL HIS ENEMIES) and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away so that not a trace of them was found (GONE FOREVER - GREECE, ROME, ETC. ALL THE GREAT BUT PREDOMINANTLY GODLESS CIVILIZATIONS AND THEIR UNGODLY INFLUENCES). But the **Stone** (CHRIST) that struck the statue became a great mountain and filled the whole earth (COMPARE THIS WITH

"In the days of those kings (THE TOE STAGE ~ TEN KINGDOMS IN A LOOSE CONFEDERACY IN THE END TIMES - Da 2:42<sup>+</sup>) the God of heaven will set up a kingdom (cf MUSTARD PLANT!) which will never be destroyed, and that kingdom will not be left for another people; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever. 45 "Inasmuch as you saw that a STONE (CHRIST) was cut out of the mountain without hands and that it crushed the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver and the gold, the great God has made known to the king what will take place in the future (THIS PROPHECY IS YET TO BE FULFILLED! BUT IT WILL BE WHEN CHRIST RETURNS! WHY? BECAUSE IT "IS TRUE!"); so the dream is true and its interpretation is trustworthy." (Da 2:44-45<sup>+</sup>)

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**Mustard** (4615)(**sinapi**) refers to the mustard plant, an herb or shrub with extremely small pungent seeds. BDAG says "The precise species cannot be determined, and some may grow to a height of three or more meters." Several writers identify this plant with [Sinapis nigra \(aka Brassica nigra\)](#) but we cannot be dogmatic and we really do not need to know to understand the main point of the parable. The expression **κόκκον σινάπεως** (kókkon = grain), **a grain of mustard seed**, is a proverbial phrase meaning the least, the smallest particle (Matt. 17:20; Luke 17:6).

**Sinapi** - 5x - Matt. 13:31; Matt. 17:20; Mk. 4:31; Lk. 13:19; Lk. 17:6. No uses in the Septuagint.

**TDNT** - The parable of the grain of mustard seed also comes in different versions. The Marcan version stresses the fact of the contrast between the small seed and the plentiful growth, Lk. 13:18-19 pays more attention to the process, and Mt. 13:31-32 combines the two emphases. Behind the parable is the teaching that the kingdom is already present in Jesus but in hidden and inconspicuous form. This form should not be an offense but a ground of confidence, for in the concealment of God's present work lies the promise of his victorious rule. Having made a beginning, God will carry through his cause to the end.

**Gilbrant** - His kingdom starts as an apparently insignificant force in the world but has an amazing power that dominates all others as it brings protection and relief to those who rely upon it (cf. Matthew 13:31; Mark 4:31; Luke 13:19). Jesus also used the same word picture to show that exercising even the smallest faith will have great results (cf. Matthew 17:20; Luke 17:6).

**Mustard** has long been a widely-used herb throughout much of the world, and in modern times it has found additional commercial value in the manufacture of film. Amazingly, years ago it was discovered that cows whose feed was supplemented with mustard seed developed bones that had a superior quality for use in making the silver compounds used in photographic film. (MacArthur)

**Seed** (grain) (2848)(**kokkus**) refers to a seed or kernel of various plants. It was also used of the "berry" from which scarlet dye was prepared for clothing (see [kokkinos](#)). Jesus used kokkus figuratively to speak of the Kingdom of heaven (begins small, grows big), of faith (small but real faith is a still able to "move mountains" metaphorically speaking), and as an allusion to His death, burial (grain) and resurrection (it bears much fruit - Jn 12:24). Paul compares the "sowing" of the mortal body (i.e., when it dies - 1Cor 15:36) to sowing a bare grain, emphasizing that the "fruit" of that body (the resurrected body) is distinct and much better (1Cor 15:37, see 1Cor 15:42-44) All NT uses Matt. 13:31; Matt. 17:20; Mk. 4:31; Lk. 13:19; Lk. 17:6; Jn. 12:24; 1 Co. 15:37

**Grew** (837)(**auxano**; Eng = augment, auxiliary) means to grow or cause to increase. Notice that growth presupposes the germ of life in the seed put there by God. A dried splinter will not grow into a tree like a seed. Surely this is the glorious Gospel, which has the inherent power ([dunamis](#)) of God (Ro 1:16+) **Zodhiates** adds "The verb *auxánō* presupposes the God-given potential possessed by a seed or sperm. For all their scientific ingenuity, people cannot create the tiniest seeds because they cannot infuse life (*zōē*). In one sense, God has restricted humans to lifeless inventions."

**Nested** (2681)(**kataskenoo** from **kata** = down, intensifies meaning of + **skenoo** = to pitch one's tent, to dwell) literally means "to pitch one's tent" and hence to settle permanently. **Zodhiates** - In the NT generally to sojourn or to dwell, spoken of birds as nesting in the branches (Matt. 13:32; Luke 13:19), or under the shadow (Mark 4:32; Sept.: Ps. 104:12; Dan. 4:12). With the meaning of to rest, remain (Acts 2:26 quoting Ps. 16:9). (Complete Word Study Dictionary – New Testament) **Liddell-Scott** - to pitch one's camp or tent, take up one's quarters, encamp, Xen.; generally, to rest, lodge, settle,

**Kataskenoo** - 4x in 4v - live(1), nest(2), nested(1). Matt. 13:32; Mk. 4:32; Lk. 13:19; Acts 2:26 = "**LIVE IN HOPE**") (Quoting Ps 16:9)

**Kataskenoo** - 56x in 55v in the Septuagint - Nu 14:30; 35:34 = "I the LORD am **dwelling** in the midst of the sons of Israel"; Dt. 33:12; 33:28; Jos. 22:19; Jdg. 18:28; 2 Sa 7:10; 1 Chr. 17:9; 23:25; 2 Chr. 6:1-2; Ezr. 6:12; 7:15; Neh. 1:9; Job 18:15; Job 29:25; Ps. 5:11; Ps. 7:5; Ps. 15:1; Ps. 16:9; Ps. 23:2; Ps. 37:3; Ps. 37:27; Ps. 37:29; Ps. 65:4; Ps. 68:16; Ps. 68:18; Ps. 69:36; Ps. 74:2; Ps. 78:55; Ps. 78:60; Ps. 85:9; Ps. 102:28; Ps. 104:12 = "Beside them the birds of the heavens **dwell**"; Ps. 120:5 = "I **dwell** among the tents of Kedar" ; Ps. 139:9 = "If I dwell in the remotest part of the sea"; Pr 1:33; Pr. 2:21; Pr 8:12

(metaphorically) = "I, wisdom, dwell with prudence"; Jer. 7:12 = (God speaking) "I made My name **dwell** (Heb = shakan; lxx - kataskenoo) at the first"; Jer. 17:6; Jer. 23:6; Jer. 51:13; Ezek. 25:4; Ezek. 43:7, 9; Joel 3:17; Joel 3:21; Obad 1:3; Mic. 4:10; Mic. 7:14; Zec 2:10-11; Zec 8:3; Zec 8:8; **Gilbrant** on **kataskenoo** in the **Septuagint** - Ordinarily shākhan stands behind kataskēnoō in the Septuagint. There is a sense of permanence associated with kataskēnoō in many texts (Numbers 14:30, NIV, "make your home"; Deuteronomy 33:28, "live"; cf. Judges 5:17, "stayed, remained"; 2 Samuel 7:10). God himself promises to "live among the Israelites and will not abandon my (God's) people Israel" (NIV, 1 Kings 6:13; cf. Ps 68:16; Ps 74:2). It appears in reference to the setting up of the **tabernacle** (**skēnē**), but this is only in later literature (e.g., Ps 78:55). The temple, too, is associated with kataskēnoō (2 Chr 6:2) as is Mount Zion, the dwelling place of God (Joel 3:17,21; Psalm 15:1). God will live "in the midst" of His people (Zech 2:10,11; 8:3,8; Ezek 43:9).

Notice the use of **kataskenoo** in the Septuagint version of Zechariah 2 as this speaks prophetically of the culmination of the Kingdom of God on earth.

Zechariah 2:10-11 "Sing for joy and be glad, O daughter of Zion; for behold I am coming and I will **dwell** in your midst," declares the LORD. 11 "Many nations will join themselves to the LORD in that day and will become My people. Then I will **dwell** in your midst, and you will know that the LORD of hosts has sent Me to you.

**Comment:** Jehovah prophesies He will dwell in the midst of Israel, which is a clear prophecy of Christ's future reign on earth in the Millennium. At the Second Coming of Christ, the Kingdom of man will become the Kingdom of God. It will be like a large "mustard tree" on which many birds gather, but in this case it will be many peoples, both redeemed Jews and redeemed Gentiles who will enter into the Millennial Kingdom of God.

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### J C Ryle - The parable of the mustard seed

The parable of the mustard seed is intended to show the progress of the Gospel in the world.

The beginnings of the Gospel were exceedingly small. It was like "a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his garden" (verse 19). It was a religion which seemed at first so feeble and helpless and powerless that it could not live. Its founder was a poor man who ended his life by dying a criminal's death on the cross. Its first adherents were a small group of people who probably numbered less than a thousand when our Lord left the world. Its first preachers were a few fishermen and tax collectors who were for the most part uneducated and ignorant men. Its first starting-point was a despised corner of the earth called Judea, a petty province in the vast Roman Empire. Its first doctrines were calculated to provoke enmity from the natural heart; Christ crucified was a stumbling block to the Jews and foolishness to the Greeks (1 Corinthians 1:23). Its first followers were persecuted on all sides. Pharisees and Sadducees, Jews and Gentiles, ignorant idolaters and self-conceited philosophers all united in hating and opposing Christianity. This sect was spoken against everywhere. These are not empty assertions. They are simple historical facts no one can deny. If ever there was a religion which was a little grain of seed at its beginning, that religion was the Gospel.

But the progress of the Gospel after the seed had been planted in the earth was great, steady, and continuous. The grain of mustard seed "grew, became a tree" (verse 19). In spite of persecution, opposition, and violence, Christianity gradually spread and increased. Year after year its adherents became more numerous; year after year idolatry withered away before it. City after city, country after country received the new faith. Church after church was formed in almost every part of the known world. Preacher after preacher rose up, and missionary after missionary came forward to fill the place of those who died. Roman emperors and heathen philosophers, sometimes by force and sometimes by argument, tried in vain to check the progress of Christianity. They may as well have tried to stop the tide from rising or the sun from rising. In a few hundred years the religion of the despised Nazarene—the religion which began in the upper room at Jerusalem—had spread out throughout the civilized world. The grain of mustard seed "grew, became a tree, and the birds of the air perched in its branches" (verse 19). The Lord Jesus said it would be so. And so it came to pass.

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**ILLUSTRATION** - We heard a presentation on Thursday by Dr. Henry Cloud where he told a story from his own life. He was facing having to write his doctoral thesis, something that seemed totally overwhelming to him. He couldn't fathom being able to put together a project so huge. But he felt God speaking to him through the scripture that says, "Consider the ant". He wasn't sure what that was all about, but he went out and bought an ant farm. After setting it up, he watched the ants. They actually didn't do much at all. An ant would take a grain of sand and walk it over to the side of the ant farm, then go take another grain and move it to the other side of the farm. It seemed pretty pointless. He went away for a couple of days and when he came back he was amazed. The ant farm had been transformed into tunnels, mounds, and cities. He realized that all the ants had done was to move one grain of sand at a time. When it came to writing his doctoral thesis, he realized that all he needed to do was just do one little thing at a time, a grain at a time. Be faithful in the little things. Move that grain. Plant seeds. Water seeds. You don't know what might happen as a result. ([Rich Cathers](#))

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**ILLUSTRATION** - When [Matthew Henry](#) was a child he received much impression from a sermon on the parable of the "mustard-seed." On returning home, he said to his child sister, "I think I have received a grain of grace." It was the seed of the Commentary "cast upon the waters."

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**ILLUSTRATION - Small Beginnings** - When Laura Price, a roaring twenties flapper, converted to Christianity one summer, she had no idea what she was getting herself into. She simply gave herself to Jesus, and her lifestyle turned around. A few years later she was married to Carl Woll and en route to Kenya as one of the first Gospel Furthering Fellowship missionaries. She spent the bulk of her adult life living in Kenya, singing, ministering, and sharing the love of Jesus for African people in Swahili. **Big things have small beginnings.** The parable of the mustard seed is a parable of big things with small beginnings. What the seed is and what it becomes do not resemble each other. The seed is buried, hidden, and apparently inconsequential; but it grows into a tree. As in the parallel parable of the yeast, nothing appears to be happening, but in hidden places roots delve and bread expands. These parables illustrate the spiritual principle of slow and hidden growth.

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**ILLUSTRATION OF SMALL THINGS WITH LARGE RESULTS** - Western music is commonly composed of only twelve notes—the seven basic notes and their five sharps/flats. Every symphony, hymn, love song, oratorio, and other piece of music is made up of various combinations and octaves of those same few notes. Similarly, every poem, essay, novel, letter, and other piece of English literature is composed of combinations of the same twenty-six letters. Lord Kelvin once suspended a large piece of metal from a cord in his laboratory. He then proceeded to wad up small pieces of paper into balls about the size of a pea and systematically throw them at the metal weight. At first the almost imperceptible impact of paper hitting metal seemed to have no effect. But eventually the steel weight was swaying rhythmically back and forth due to the cumulative force patiently applied against it. In an immeasurably more dramatic and important way, God would demonstrate through the church how a handful of believers, totally weak and inept in themselves, would in His power turn the world upside down. The kingdom of heaven would grow and prosper in spite of Satan's opposition and would ultimately permeate and influence the whole world in Jesus' name. (MacArthur)

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**ILLUSTRATION** - Within forty years of the Resurrection, there were churches in every major city of the Roman Empire. Within two and a half centuries, the entire Roman Empire was Christianized, not by a sword like Islam did it, but by the grace of Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit. Today we see the last remaining 6000 people groups on earth which have been unengaged with gospel contact being prayed for, strategically chosen, and engaged with the Good News. ([Gene Brooks](#))

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#### **Luke 13:20 And again He said, "To what shall I compare the kingdom of God?"**

- Luke 13 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 13:18-21 Why You Want To Be On Jesus' Side](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 13:18-21 The Increasing Influence of the Kingdom](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 13:18-19 Mustard Seed for Sunday-School Teacher](#) - C H Spurgeon

### **ANOTHER COMPARISON OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD**

**And again He said** - The adjective **palin** in this context obviously means repetition. The truth in this next parable is similar to the preceding. Surely His disciples must have been encouraged by this repetition, which is divine "shorthand" for "We win!" because "God wins!" As alluded to above Jesus encouraged them in some of His last words before He ascended "speaking of the things concerning the **kingdom of God**." (Acts 1:3+) We too need to keep this "future focus" (cf [Vertical Vision](#)) so that we do "not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary." (Gal 6:9+).

**Peter** exhorted the afflicted saints (1 Pe 1:6-7+, 1 Pe 4:12+) to keep a "future focus" (enabled by the Spirit and the Word)...

Therefore, prepare your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, **fix your hope** ([aorist imperative](#) - see our need to depend on [Holy Spirit to obey](#)) completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. (1 Peter 1:13+).

**Comment:** And remember that BIBLICAL HOPE is not "hope so" but "hope sure," an absolute assurance that God will do good to us in the future and in the context of these 2 parables, it is the absolute assurance that God's Kingdom will come just as we have been praying for for the past 2000 years ("Your Kingdom come" - Mt 6:10+).



**To what shall I compare the kingdom of God?**- Essentially the same as the rhetorical question in Lk 13:18 to introduce the second "growth parable."

See [kingdom of God](#) above.

**Luke 13:21 "It is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three pecks of flour until it was all leavened."**

KJV Luke 13:21 It is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.

- **It is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three pecks of flour** Mt 13:33;
- **until it was all leavened** Job 17:9; Ps 92:13,14; Pr 4:18; Ho 6:3; Jn 4:14; 15:2; 1 Cor 5:6; Phil 1:6,9-11; 1 Th 5:23,24; James 1:21
- Luke 13 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 13:18-21 Why You Want To Be On Jesus' Side](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 13:18-21 The Increasing Influence of the Kingdom](#) - John MacArthur

#### Parallel Passage:

Matthew 13:33+ He spoke another parable to them, "The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three pecks of flour until it was all leavened."

### PARABLE OF LEAVEN

**It is like leaven** ([zume](#)), **which a woman took and hid in three pecks of flour**- While **leaven** is often used in a negative sense (Lk 12:1, 1 Cor 5:6), in the present context leaven is used in a positive to convey the fact that the Kingdom of God would spread even as leaven spreads in dough until the entire loaf is leavened. The verb **hid** conveys no special significance except to emphasize the idea that even though it is out of sight, it is still very much at work. So too the is the Kingdom of God. This "prophetic" parable of the Kingdom will not come to complete fruition until the King returns and establishes His 1000 year earthly Kingdom. In the meantime, the Kingdom expands in all whose hearts are transformed by the King's Gospel.

**Steven Cole on leaven...hid in three pecks of flour** - The size of the task proportionate to the smallness of the force is not a hindrance to Jesus' ultimate triumph. The woman's three measures of flour were equal to about 39 liters or 50 pounds of flour, a large amount. The point is that just a small amount of leaven was all that was needed to permeate this large mass of dough....Since **leaven** is often used in the Bible as a symbol for sin, some commentators understand this parable to be referring to the spread of false doctrine in the church. **But this is to overturn the obvious contextual flow of thought** Sometimes in the Bible, leaven is not a symbol for evil (Lev 7:13+; Lev 23:15-18+), and it can be argued that Jesus is using a somewhat different meaning to grab His hearers attention and to give the parable a provocative twist. **So the meaning here is parallel to the meaning of the small mustard seed.** The smallness of the pinch of leaven is not a problem even though the lump is large. The smallness of Jesus and His ragtag band of followers is no problem with regard to the worldwide spread of the gospel. The power does not depend on Jesus' followers, but on the power of God through the Gospel (Ro 1:16+). The leaven must come in contact with the dough for the power to be unleashed. We've already seen the same point with regard to the seed. Here there may be the nuance that once the contact is made, the power works from the inside out. That is how the gospel works as God transforms the hearts of sinners. ([Luke 13:18-21 Why You Want To Be On Jesus' Side](#))

**Until** - [expression of time](#) - This is the preposition **heos** ([2193](#)) which is used here as a temporal conjunction "to link the event marking the end of a time period to another element in the sentence." (Friberg) The English dictionary says until means "happening or done up to a particular point in time, and then stopping; Up to the time that (a condition becomes true)." So what? The implication of **UNTIL** is that the condition will come true! God's Kingdom will prevail over man's kingdom! In fact the Bible gives a prophecy which parallels Jesus' two "prophetic parables"

For the earth will be filled With the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea. (Hab 2:14-note)

**Comment:** This great prophecy is given five times in the OT: Nu 14:21, Ps 72:19 Isa 6:3 Isa 11:9 Hab 2:14.

**A little leaven can leaven a very large lump of dough.**



**Until it was all leavened** - This is a "load" of flour which is about 50 pounds and would make enough bread to feed over 100 people. Why Jesus used such a large amount of flour is not absolutely clear. A reasonable interpretation is that even though the amount of flour is very large, given enough time the leaven will permeate it entirely. The world is large and there are still over 6000 unreached people groups, but the Gospel will eventually spread (like leaven) even to those who are now unreached. The book of the Revelation underscores this truth writing that in the future kingdom there will be men from "every tribe and every tongue and every people and every nation. "You have made them to be a **kingdom** and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth." (Rev 5:9-10+)

**Steven Cole** - These parables do not teach [postmillennialism](#), that the Gospel will spread until all the world is converted, at which point Jesus will return. Many other Scriptures refute this view (e.g., 2 Th 2:1-8). But they do teach that the Gospel will spread to all peoples and that God's sovereign purpose through Christ will be accomplished. He will build His church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it (Mt 16:18). [Dr. Ralph Winter](#) of the U.S. Center for World Mission has shown that in 1430 A.D., the total number of Bible-believing Christians proportionate to the total world population was only one percent. But by 1993, that number had progressively increased to ten percent. He says that the kingdom of Christ is currently expanding at a rate of over three times the rate of world population growth ("Mission Frontiers," May/June, 1994, p. 5). If you're not already on Jesus' side, these two parables should alarm you because you are opposed to that which inevitably will prevail. You need to cross the line by trusting in Christ as your Savior and Lord. If you are on Jesus' side, these parables should encourage you to sow the seed of the gospel, because God will powerfully use it for the conversion of sinners and the fulfillment of His purpose of being glorified in all the earth. You want to be on Jesus' side because ultimately He will triumph over all. ([Luke 13:18-21 Why You Want To Be On Jesus' Side](#))

**Mattoon** - Leaven is normally used to illustrate the influence of sin in the Bible, but here, it is used to illustrate the spreading influence of God's kingdom. The leaven starts out small, but then it changes the entire nature of the dough. That is what Christ does in us as we yield to Him. We are new creatures in Christ. Paul said, "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new (2 Corinthians 5:17-[note](#))." As we yield to Christ in our heart and mind, we change and become more like Him as He works in us. Paul spoke of this surrender and the resulting transformation is us. (cf Ro 12:1-2-[note](#)). The effect of leaven may go unnoticed, but it is working, changing the nature of the dough. God's working in our lives may go unseen at first, but He is working in our hearts. (cf Php 1:6-[note](#)). As the leaven does its work on the inside of the dough, our Lord works in our heart, changing us on the inside, which in turn, effects our behavior on the outside. We have no power to change ourselves. We are incapable, incompetent, inept, and ineffective in cleaning up our wicked heart. The power to change our ways, conquer sinful habits, and conform to the image of Christ must come from the Lord, who works within our heart and soul when our faith and trust are in Him. Without Him, we are helpless. (See Jn 1:12, Jn 15:5) ([Treasures from Luke](#))

In my humble opinion to see the parable of leaven as evil is an incorrect interpretation and totally misses Jesus' point to the disciples. After seeing their leader accused of being demon possessed and after the "poor yield" of the Gospel seed in the parable of the soils, the disciples had to be wondering about the future of the Kingdom of God. Therefore it would not be encouraging to hear that the Kingdom was going to be infiltrated and corrupted by Satanically inspired, sinful people who would profess to be Christians. It seems far more likely that He was giving His disciples the parable of the unstoppable growth of the mustard seed and penetrating influence of the leaven to encourage His men.

And so I am much more in agreement with interpretations like **John MacArthur** who writes "**The first point** in this parable is that small things can have great influence, in the way that a small piece of leavened dough can permeate a large piece of unleavened dough to make it rise. The power of the kingdom of heaven is great, far greater than its initial size and appearance would suggest. The smallest part of the kingdom that is placed in the world is sure to have influence, because it contains the power of God's own Spirit. The influence of the kingdom is the influence of the King, of His Word, and of His faithful people. **The second point of the parable is that the influence is positive.** Leavened bread has always been considered tastier and more enjoyable than unleavened. To symbolize the break with their former life in Egypt, God commanded His people to eat only unleavened bread during the Feast of the Unleavened Bread, which began on Passover evening. They were not even allowed to have leaven of any sort in the house during the seven days of the feast (Ex. 12:15, 18–19). But the bread they ate the rest of the year was leavened and perfectly acceptable to the Lord. To the average person of Jesus' day, Jew or Gentile, there is no evidence that leaven carried any connotation of evil or corruption. **The ancient rabbis often referred to leaven in a favorable way.** One of them wrote, "Great is peace, in that peace is to the earth as leaven is to the dough." When a Jewish girl was married, her mother would give her a small piece of leavened dough from a batch baked just before the wedding. From that gift of leaven the bride would bake bread for her own household throughout her married life. That gift, simple as it was, was among the most cherished that the bride received, because it represented the love and blessedness of the household in which she grew up and that would be carried into the household she was about to establish. (See [The MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#)) (For more background discussion on leaven see Dr MacArthur's companion sermon [The Power and Influence of Christ's Kingdom 2](#))

**ESV Study Bible** - Some think these parables teach only the contrast between the small beginning and large end result, and not the

gradual growth process of the kingdom between start and finish. Others argue that the growth process is also in view. Both sides agree that the parables contrast the apparently small and unnoticed arrival of the kingdom (the “already now”) with its extensive and glorious consummation when the Son of Man returns (the “not yet”). (Borrow [ESV Study Bible](#))

As noted above some writers give this parable giving a negative meaning (see [What is the meaning of the Parable?](#)).

**G. Campbell Morgan** wrote that the leaven represents “paganizing influences” brought into the church. “The parable of the tree, teaches the growth of the Kingdom into a great power; and the second, the parable of the leaven, its corruption.” ([Matthew 13:33](#))

**David Guzik** agrees commenting that “The idea of hiding leaven in three measures of meal would have offended any observant Jew. This certainly isn’t a picture of the church gradually influencing the whole world for good. Even as the recent experience in the synagogue showed religious corruption of some sort, Jesus announced that His kingdom community would also be threatened by corruption and impurity.” ([Matthew 13 Commentary](#))

**Warren Wiersbe** - The leaven—false doctrine (v. 33). The mustard seed illustrates the false outward expansion of the kingdom, while the leaven illustrates the inward development of false doctrine and false living. (Bible Exposition Commentary)

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**Craig Keener** applies the principles of the parable of the mustard seed and the leaven - We Christians sound foolish to those outside Jesus’ circle when we speak of a final judgment and living for a future kingdom; what does that have to do with the troubles of daily life in the present? But those who have pressed into Jesus’ circle today, like those who did so two thousand years ago, know who Jesus really is. Despite the magnitude of the task before us, we dare not despise the “smallness” of our own works, for God’s entire program long ago came hidden in a small package. ([Matthew 13 Commentary](#))

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**Leaven** (yeast)([2219](#))([zume](#) probably from **zeo** = to heat, as occurs in fermentation of dough when leaven is mixed in) was literally a small portion of dough that was retained in order to start a new batch of dough (literal uses - Mt 16:12; Lk 13:21; 1 Cor 5:6; Gal 5:9). Leaven or yeast is a single-celled fungus that promotes fermentation. When put into bread dough, it produces carbon dioxide bubbles that cause the dough to rise. In ancient times, when bread was about to be baked, a small piece of dough was pulled off and saved. That **leaven** or yeast would then be allowed to ferment in water, and later kneaded into the next batch of fresh dough to make it rise. **Zume** was used proverbially to demonstrate great effect from little causes (Gal 5:9). **Leaven** throughout Scripture was used figuratively to describe permeating power or influence, usually the influence of evil, but also of good as here in Lk 13:21 referring to the growth or expansion of the Kingdom of God.

**Luke 13:22 And He was passing through from one city and village to another, teaching, and proceeding on His way to Jerusalem.**

KJV Luke 13:22 And he went through the cities and villages, teaching, and journeying toward Jerusalem.

- **He was passing through from one city and village to another** Lk 4:43,44; Mt 9:35; Mk 6:6; Acts 10:38
- **proceeding on His way to Jerusalem** Lk 9:51; Mk 10:32-34

## JESUS JOURNEYS TO JERUSALEM

Recall that Luke 9:51+ marks a crucial “change of direction” for Christ as He set His sights on the Cross ([Click for chart](#) demarcating this “[crux](#)” point, pun intended because crux = cross!)...

And it came to pass, when the time was come that he should be received up (reference to Jesus’ upcoming return to heaven by crucifixion and resurrection, cf Lk 9:31. LXX of Elijah’s departure in 2 Ki 2:9), He steadfastly set His face (Semitic idiom that speaks of a firm, unshakable resolve to do something -cf Ge 31:21; Is 50:7) to go to Jerusalem, (KJV)

**And (kai)** - This coordinating conjunction links this vignette (Lk 13:22-30) with the previous section.

**Warren Wiersbe** has an interesting note that “The events recorded in John 9–10 fit between Luke 13:21 and Luke 13:22. Note in John 10:40–42 that Jesus then left Judea and went beyond the Jordan into Perea. The events of Luke 13:22 thru Luke 17:10 took

place in [Perea](#) as the Lord gradually moved toward Jerusalem." (Borrow [Be compassionate](#))

**He was passing through** ([diaporeuomai](#)) **from one city and village to another** - It is interesting that there is no mention of entering synagogues in the city or village. That certainly does not exclude that He did enter, but given the fact that He was **passing through** (in the [imperfect tense](#) - implies He was not pausing but continually on the move day after day) suggests He was not in some of the cities on the Sabbath (when the Jews would be meeting in the Synagogue). Jesus was "on the move!" Also there is no note from Luke of religious Jews criticizing Him for too long of a journey on the Sabbath, which suggests on this day He did rest, although He still may have taught. One other note is that there are no more conflicts over the Sabbath. It is as He has made His point very clear in the last Sabbath conflict here in Luke 13.

**A T Robertson** - Making his way to Jerusalem. Note tenses here of continued action, and distributive use of *kata* with cities and villages. This is the second of the journeys to Jerusalem in this later ministry corresponding to that in John 11.

**Teaching** ([didasko](#) present tense) - Was He just **passing through** or was He **passing through** with a purpose? Yes, Jesus was passing through, but was always conscious of **redeeming the time** (Eph 5:16+), knowing that the most evil day in eternity would soon be upon Him. And so here we see Jesus redeeming the precious opportunities by **teaching** the people. These were among some of His last words before the Cross! Clearly they are words everyone would want to hear and heed, for the last words of a dying Man are never wasted words, but always filled with significance and import! Especially if that dying Man is Jesus!

**THOUGHT** - Jesus did not waste one precious moment! And neither should we as we are **'passing through'** this world blinded to His life giving Gospel (2Co 4:4+, 2Co 4:5,6+ Jn 3:18-21+ Acts 26:17-18+)! Like Jesus we are **aliens and strangers** (1Pe 1:1+, 1Pe 2:11+) who are God's workmanship (see [God's Masterpiece, His Poiema](#)) on mission to accomplish the **good works** for our Master (e.g., see Ep 2:10+, Php 2:13+ Ep 5:18+ Gal 5:16+). [Redeem the Time](#)

Beloved, we are called to walk in His steps (1Pe 2:21+, cp Jn 13:15 1Co 11:1 Ep 5:2+ Php 2:3 4+ Php 2:5+ 1Jn 2:6 1 Jn 3:16 Re 12:11+), and yes that will bring **persecution** (Jn 15:19 20 Lk 6:22; 21:17 Jn 17:14 15 Mt 10:34, 35, 36 take comfort in Jn 16:33,14:27), but it also conveys a **responsibility** (and accountability one day future 2Ti 2:15+) to **continually teach** the **Word of Life** (Php 2:16+, 1Jn 1:1) to faithful men and women who will be able to teach others also (2 Ti 2:2+, cp Jesus commission in Mt 28:18 19 20 especially Mt 28:20!)

The [NET Note](#) says that the statement that Jesus was proceeding on His way to Jerusalem "is the first of several travel notes in Luke's Jerusalem journey section of Luke 9–19 w

Luke 17:11 **While He was on the way to Jerusalem** He was passing between Samaria and Galilee.

Luke 18:31 Then He took the twelve aside and said to them, "Behold, **we are going up to Jerusalem**, and all things which are written through the prophets about the Son of Man will be accomplished.

Luke 19:28 After He had said these things, **He was going on ahead, going up to Jerusalem**.

Luke 19:41 **When He approached Jerusalem**, He saw the city and wept over it,

**And proceeding** ([poieo](#) - present tense) **on His way** ([poreia](#)) **to Jerusalem** - More literally this reads "making progress toward Jerusalem" or "making His journey toward Jerusalem." Jesus walked along those dusty roads with His disciples knowing that the end of the road was His death on a Roman Cross, but fully cognizant that this would accomplish His triumph over sin, death and Satan!

Mark summarizes Jesus' journey...

They **were on the road going up to Jerusalem**, and Jesus was walking on ahead of them; and they were amazed, and those who followed were fearful. And again He took the twelve aside and began to tell them what was going to happen to Him, saying, "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be delivered to the chief priests and the scribes; and they will condemn Him to death and will hand Him over to the Gentiles. "They will mock Him and spit on Him, and scourge Him and kill Him, and three days later He will rise again." (Mark 10:32-34+)

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**Passing** (1279) ([diaporeuomai](#) from [diá](#) = through + [poreúomai](#) = to go) means to go or pass through. Used 5x in 5v in **NAS** = Lk 6:1; 13:22; 18:36; Ac 16:4; Ro 15:24+.

**Teaching** (1321) ([didasko](#) from [dáo](#)= know or teach) in the [present tense](#) describes Jesus focus and passion, continually

giving instruction, continually redeeming the time (Ep 5:16KJV-note) which could have been in a formal or informal setting. Luke does not give us more details about the where and when of His continuous **teaching**. One can imagine that walking from one city or village to another was also a time in which Jesus was continually **teaching** His disciples. He knew His days were numbered and soon the disciples would be on their own until He was resurrected (and until His Spirit was sent in Acts 2:1-4, cf Jn 14:16-18).

In Scripture to **teach** means to pass on the truth about the Word of God, the God of the Word and the faith of the saints, with the goal of influencing their understanding (cf Eph 4:23-note, Col 3:10-note) and stimulating obedience to the truth taught and resultant Spirit energized transformation and Christ-likeness (2 Cor 3:18-note, cf Ro 12:2-note). The essence of a disciple in fact is that he or she is a learner. The teacher teaches and the disciple hears and processes what is heard so that this truth affects his or her innermost being. Ultimately the purpose of **didasko** is to shape the will of the one taught. Finally, teaching of sound doctrine is vital to the growth and stabilization of one's faith (cp Ro 10:17-note).

It is notable that in the Gospels Jesus is addressed as **Rabbi** or **Teacher** more than any other name, which clearly attests to the importance He placed on this activity. In fact some 45 of the 58 NT uses of the Greek word for **teacher** (**didaskalos**) are used of Jesus (most of these referring to His public teaching). In addition 47 of 97 occurrences of **didasko** are used in the Gospels to describe the teaching activity of Jesus. **Teaching** was also a primary activity of the leaders of the early church (see Acts 4:2, 18, 5:21, 25, 28, 42, etc). How tragic that we are seeing a drift away from the teaching of **sound doctrine** (1Ti 4:6 2Ti 4:3+ Titus 1:9+) from the pulpits, even in churches that refer to themselves as "Bible churches"!

**Proceeding** (present tense = continually) (4160)(**poieo**) usually means to make, to do or accomplish, this latter in the sense of undertaking some action and here in Lk 13:22 speaking of **making** His way (His *purpose* - see discussion of "way" below) to Jerusalem.

**Way** (4197)(**poreia** from **poreuomai** = to go as in Lk 10:38) is a noun which means a going away, journey (BDAG = "a planned movement over a considerable distance"), a venture and is used here and James 1:11 "so too the rich man in the midst of his **pursuits** will fade away (the rich man on his [business] journeys or more generally in his undertakings or pursuits)." In James **poreia** means conduct, way of life, one's course or manner of life (Of the 'way' that one should take).

**Gilbrant** on **poreia** - In classical Greek **poreia** denotes a "trip" or "journey." It also bears a metaphoric meaning of "behavior" or "way of life" (*Liddell-Scott*). The papyri use **poreia** almost exclusively in the literal sense of "journey" or for concrete items associated with a journey, such as a passport or caravan. The Septuagint uses **poreia** for literal journeys (as in Nehemiah 2:6 and Jonah 3:3,4) and metaphorically for the course of life, both of individuals (Pr 4:27) and nations (Isa 8:11).

**Friberg** - strictly going; literally journey, trip (Lk 13:22); plural, of business comings and goings undertakings, pursuits (probably Jas 1.11-note); figuratively way of life; plural ways (possibly Jas 1.11-note)

**Poreia** is used 17x in 16v in the Septuagint Num. 33:2; Neh. 2:6; Ps. 68:24; Prov. 2:7; Prov. 4:27; Prov. 26:7; Isa. 3:16; Isa. 8:11; Jer. 10:23; Jer. 18:15; Jon. 3:3; Jon. 3:4; Nah. 1:8; Nah. 2:5; Hab. 3:7; Hab. 3:10

Jonah 3:3 So Jonah arose and went to Nineveh according to the word of the LORD. Now Nineveh was an exceedingly great city, a three days' **walk**. 4 Then Jonah began to go through the city one day's **walk**; and he cried out and said, "Yet forty days and Nineveh will be overthrown."

**Luke 13:23 And someone said to Him, "Lord, are there just a few who are being saved?" And He said to them,**

KJV Luke 13:23 Then said one unto him, Lord, are there few that be saved? And he said unto them,

- **are there just a few who are being saved** Mt 7:14; 19:25; 20:16; 22:14
- **And He said to them** Lk 12:13-15; 21:7,8; Mt 24:3-5; Mk 13:4,5; Jn 21:21,22; Acts 1:7,8
- [Luke 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 13:22-30 The Narrow Door](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 13:22-30 Are Just a Few Being Saved? Part 1](#)
- [Luke 13:22-30 Are Just a Few Being Saved? Part 2](#)

**NOT ARE JUST A FEW SAVED  
BUT AM I SAVED?**

**And someone said to Him** - Some have said this may have even been one of His 12 disciples but Lk 13:28 suggests that such

would be unlikely (unless of course it was Judas Iscariot!) Why this question? We do not know. Perhaps He had taught on the Kingdom of God as recorded in Matthew where Jesus plainly stated ""Again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." (Mt 19:24)

This declaration prompted a similar question from His disciples "When the disciples heard this, they were very astonished and said, "Then who can be saved?" And looking at them Jesus said to them, "With people this is impossible, but with God all things are possible." (Mt 19:25-26)

So whoever is asking the question views Jesus as Lord. This does not necessarily mean they are a believer, for this title was sometimes used to convey a sense of respect. But at least they respect Him! It is surprising that they did not address Him as [didaskalos](#) or Teacher (or even Rabbi), given the fact that He was clearly teaching as they journeyed.

**Lord ([kurios](#)) are there just a few Who are being saved ([sozo](#))?** - He is asking the wrong question. The question for every man and woman to ask is "**Am I saved?**" And Jesus turns the question of the solitary man into an answer to the masses (**'to them'**) that were around Him.

**Spurgeon** - What business is that of ours? Our business is far more practical, to be saved ourselves, and to endeavor to be the means of saving others. Jesus did not answer the question; but he did what was better. That is a question that I have heard a great many times. What is the fascination that makes men so fond of asking it? I do think that some ask it as if they almost hoped that there would be few. If they do not go to our Ebenezer or Rehoboth, what can become of them? Surely you cannot expect that there should be any good come to those that do not frequent Salem and Enod. What must they hope? In that spirit the question is often asked; but, brethren, may God lift us up above that spirit, and make us desire that there should be multitudes saved. I suppose that one of the surprises of heaven will be to see vastly many more there than we ever dreamt would reach that place. Jesus Christ gave a very practical answer. It was no answer, and yet was the best of answers. ([Luke 13](#) - exposition)

**Kent Hughes** suggests that this "was a smug, self-complacent **question** because the general understanding among the Jews was that all Jews except the very worst would be saved. The [Mishnah](#) ([See discussion of Talmud](#)) was explicit about this: "**All Jews have a share in the World to Come**, as it says, (Isaiah 60:21), "Thy people are all righteous; they shall inherit the land for ever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified." These have no share in the World to Come: One who says that [the belief of] resurrection of the dead is not from the Torah, [one who says that] that the Torah is not from Heaven, and one who denigrates the Torah." ([Sanhedrin 10.1](#)) ( [Luke Commentary](#))

**Warren Wiersbe** comments on the **question** noting that "As with the question about Pilate, Jesus immediately made the matter personal. "The question is not how many will be saved, but whether or not you will be saved! Get that settled first, and then we can discuss what you can do to help get others saved." I sometimes receive "theological letters" from radio listeners who want to argue about predestination, election, and other difficult doctrines. When I reply, I usually ask them about their prayer life, their witnessing, and their work in the local church. That often ends the correspondence. Too many **professed Christians** want to discuss these profound doctrines, but they do not want to put them into practice by seeking to win people to Jesus Christ! D. L. Moody prayed, "**Lord, save the elect, and then elect some more!**" (Bible Exposition Commentary)

**C H Spurgeon** - A question which has been asked many times since. If a book could be published by authority detailing the number of the saved, many would hasten to read it. It would be far more wise to ask, "Shall I be saved?" We may get a clear answer to that personal inquiry, but upon the larger question we are not yet in possession of more than clouded light. "If but three persons are to be saved, why should not I be one of them?" was a sensible remark we once heard from an earnest seeker. (The Interpreter: Spurgeon's Devotional Bible)

**Henry Cowles** adds that "Jesus answered, not to that question of curiosity, comparatively unimportant, but to a kindred one infinitely more vital—How can ye yourselves be saved!—Noticeably he directed this answer, not to that one person who put the question, but "**to them**"—to the masses who were about Him—the whole audience. ([Henry Cowles - Luke - at top of page enter 168](#))

**John Stevenson** observes that...

This is one of those types of questions that you hear from unbelievers: "What about the man in Africa?" Jesus doesn't immediately answer it. He says, "Instead of worrying about the man in Africa, you should be worrying about the man who is standing in your sandals." Do you see it? The man asks, "Lord, are there just a few who are being saved?" And Jesus answered, "Make certain that you are one of those few."

There are several points made throughout this passage.

- The door is narrow and not everyone enters (Lk 13:24).
- The door is only open for a short time and then it will be shut (Lk 13:25).



- The door will only be open to those who know Jesus and who are known by Him (Lk 13:26).
- There is time for you to know Him today, but tomorrow may be too late.
- The door will be opened to many rather than just a few (Lk 13:29-30). This was the original question. Now it is finally answered. But it is not answered in the way that the question anticipated. ([Kingdom Controversies](#))

**Cyril of Alexandria** explains that Jesus was not evading the question but that it was His practice "to meet His questioners, not of course according to what might seem good to them, but as having regard to what was useful and necessary for His hearers. And this He especially did when any one wanted to learn what was superfluous and un-edifying. For what good was there in wishing to learn, whether there be many or few that be saved? What benefit resulted from it to the hearers? **On the contrary it was a necessary and valuable thing to know in what way a man may attain to salvation.** He is purposely silent therefore with respect to the useless question which had been asked Him, but proceeds to speak of what was essential, namely, of the knowledge necessary for the performance of those duties by which men can enter in at the strait and narrow door." ([Sermon Luke 13:22ff](#))

**Holman Christian Study Bible** - The question "*are there few being saved?*" may reflect two important realities about Jesus' ministry: (1) Many of His teachings insisted that true discipleship comes with many difficult challenges (**Ed:** cp Mk 8:35, Lk 14:33+, et al), and (2) though large crowds came to hear Jesus in every town and village, there were relatively few who authentically followed Him as disciples (**Ed:** cp response of the disciples in Jn 6:66 [most following because of the "benefits" Jesus offered such as "free bread" Jn 6:10-13]) and Jesus' test of discipleship Jn 8:31 directed at those who had "believed" Jn 8:30 but who proved to be only **professors** who manifested intellectual assent and not genuine belief when in this same section sought to stone Him for declaring Himself to be "I Am" - Jn 8:58, 59, cp similar pattern Titus 1:16+). (See [CSB Study Bible](#) - Borrow [HCSB Study Bible](#))

**Utley** notes that this question about the number saved "was a highly discussed issue among the rabbis (cf. Mt 7:13+ = "**destruction...many**", Mt 7:14+ = "**life...few**"). They argued whether all the Jews would be saved from God's wrath on Judgment Day or just certain sects within Judaism (their own). This question may also relate to the OT concept of "**remnant**" (cf. Isa. 10:20-3; Isa 16:14; Micah 2:17; 4:6-8; 5:7-9; 7:18-20). The tragedy of ancient Israel was that although they were the special chosen nation of YHWH, **most never had a personal faith relationship with Him.** (**ED:** I AGREE WITH UTLEY) Israel's history is one of judgment, restoration, and judgment again. The prophets only saw a faithful remnant (she'ar - 07605) returning from Assyrian and Babylonian exile. ([Luke Commentary](#))

**David Guzik** - We often wonder about the salvation of others. But in His reply (Strive to enter through the narrow gate), Jesus points back to the only person's salvation we can really know and asks, "are you yourself saved?" The rabbis of that day used to love to debate the question of whether many or few would be saved. But Jesus won't be drawn into this debate. His only question is, "are you saved?" ([Luke 13 Commentary](#))

**And He said to them** - It is interesting that Jesus often responded to questions with another question, but not this time. In fact this question prompted His sobering teaching on the "narrow door."

**Brian Bell** observes that "The real question is not "are there few who are saved", but "will you be among the saved?" Instead of entering the kingdom, some people only ask questions about it. But...Salvation is not a theory to discuss. It is a miracle to experience. In our soft age we are more concerned with statistics than about spiritual power. ([Luke 13 Notes](#))

**And He said to them** - Notice that "**them**" is plural (in the Greek), so Jesus addresses the following remark to all the audience not just the one who asked the question. Jesus answers the The Lord answered a speculative question with a direct command.

**Godet** - The question of Lk 13:23 was to a certain extent a matter of curiosity. In such cases Jesus immediately gives a practical turn to His answer. Cp. Lk 12:41, 42, John 3:2-3; and hence Luke says (Lk 13:23): "He said to them." Jesus gives no direct answer to the man; He addresses a warning to the people on the occasion of his question. ([Luke 13:22 Commentary](#))

**Matthew Henry** - Our Saviour came to guide men's consciences, not to gratify their curiosity. Ask not, How many shall be saved? But, Shall I be one of them? Not, What shall become of such and such? But, What shall I do, and what will become of me? Strive to enter in at the strait gate. This is directed to each of us; it is, Strive ye. All that will be saved, must enter in at the strait gate, must undergo a change of the whole man (cp 2Co 5:17-note). Those that would enter in, must strive to enter. Here are awakening considerations, to enforce this exhortation. Oh that we may be all awakened by them! They answer the question, Are there few that shall be saved? But let none despond either as to themselves or others, for there are last who shall be first, and first who shall be last. If we reach heaven, we shall meet many there whom we little thought to meet, and miss many whom we expected to find.

**Steven Cole** - Somewhere in some village some unnamed person in the crowd asked Jesus an interesting theological question: "Lord, are there just a few who are being saved?" I don't know the man's motives for asking the question. Perhaps he saw the increasing opposition from the religious leaders and he could sense that the crowds, although superficially interested in Jesus'

message, tended to side with their leaders. But he asked this question, “Are there just a few who are being saved?” Most of us have wondered about that question as we look at the billions of pagans compared with the few committed Christians. It would have made for an interesting theological discussion. But Jesus did not answer the question directly. Instead, He directed the question away from abstract theological speculation and toward specific application for each person in the crowd. The man had asked, “Will the saved be few?” Jesus turned it around to ask, “Will the saved be you?” Remember, Jesus was speaking to a crowd made up mostly of religious Jews. Almost to a person they believed in the one true God. They were not agnostics or polytheists. They believed in the Hebrew Scriptures and lived in basic accordance with them. In giving His answer, Jesus was not addressing a pagan audience. He was talking to the “church” crowd, most of whom assumed that they would go to heaven because they were good Jews. And He gives us church folks some important and practical lessons on the subject of salvation: Salvation requires our earnest effort, our urgent attention, and our careful self-examination (**Ed**: e.g., 2Cor 13:5-note). It requires our earnest effort because the door is narrow. It requires our urgent attention because the door is soon to be closed. It requires our careful self-examination because once it is closed, the door will be eternally-closed. ([Luke 13:22-30 The Narrow Door](#))

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**Lord** (2962) (**kurios** from **kuros** = might or power, related to **kuroo** = to give authority) primarily means the possessor, owner, master, the supreme one, one who is sovereign (used this way of Roman emperors - Act 25:26) and possesses absolute authority, absolute ownership and uncontested power.

**Being saved** (4982) (**sozo**) has the basic meaning of delivering or rescuing one from great peril, in this context the terrifying wrath to come (cp 1Th 1:10-note, 2Th 1:6-10). Additional nuances of **sozo** include to protect, keep alive, preserve life, heal, be made whole. **Sozo** is in the **present tense** (continually) and the **passive voice** (power coming from outside Source, the Spirit = "Divine Passive"). The phrase **being saved** is found 5 times in the NT - Luke 13:23 Acts 2:47 Acts 27:20 1 Cor 1:18 2 Cor 2:15

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**John Piper** exhorts us to - **STRIVE TO ENTER THROUGH THE NARROW DOOR, FOR ALL OF LIFE IS WAR**

And someone said to him, “Lord, will those who are saved be few?” And he said to them, “Strive to enter through the narrow door. For many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able.”—LUKE 13:23–24

Jesus taught us that life is war. When he said, “Strive to enter through the narrow door” (Luke 13:24), the Greek word behind the English strive is recognizable in English transliteration: agōnizesthe. You can see the word agonize in that Greek word. The implication is that we must struggle, wrestle, and exert ourselves. But the most important fact about the word “strive” is that the one other place where we find it on Jesus’ lips is John 18:36, where he says his disciples would be “fighting” if his kingdom were of this world. “My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would have been fighting [agōnizonto], that I might not be delivered over to the Jews.” So here the phrase “strive to enter” means that entering is a battle.

#### **STRIVE TO ENTER WHAT?**

Entering what? The kingdom of God. This is plain from the following context. After saying that we should “strive to enter through the narrow door,” he refers to a master of a house who rises and shuts the door so that no one else can enter (Luke 13:25). Those outside knock and say, “Lord, open to us,” but the master says, “I do not know where you come from.” Then they say, “We ate and drank in your presence, and you taught in our streets.” But he responds, “Depart from me, all you workers of evil!” (Luke 13:25–27).

Then Jesus applies this picture to the real situation of some who will be excluded from the kingdom of God while Gentiles from all over the world will “recline at table in the kingdom of God.” “In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God but you yourselves cast out. And people will come from east and west, and from north and south, and recline at table in the kingdom of God” (Luke 13:28–29).

So the “**narrow door**” through which we must “**strive**” to enter is the door to the kingdom of God. Outside there is “weeping and gnashing of teeth” (Luke 13:28-note). This is one of the ways Jesus refers to hell: “Throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth” (Matt. 13:50). The alternative to entering by the narrow gate is destruction. “Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction” (Matt. 7:13-note). In other words, what is at stake when Jesus demands that we “strive to enter” is heaven and hell. It is an ultimate issue.

#### **THE GREATEST THREAT IS OUR OWN SIN EVERY DAY**

But what does Jesus want us to strive against so that we can enter through the narrow door? What are the obstacles? If life is war, who is the enemy? In our striving, the aim is not to hurt anyone. Jesus is clear that we are to love our enemies and do good to those who hate us (Luke 6:27-note). Saying that life is war does not

mean that we make war on people, but on sin, especially our own. In fact, it is only our own sin that can keep us from entering the kingdom, not anyone else's. The sin of others can hurt us, even kill us. But that does not keep us from entering the kingdom of God. Our own sin is the greatest threat to entering the kingdom of God. But temptation to sin comes from an amazing variety of sources.

Jesus is demanding serious personal vigilance. The command to **'watch'** is one of his most frequent commands. The idea is that we must be awake and alert and ready, lest the temptations of life take us off guard and we be overcome and ruined. Jesus said to his disciples in the Garden of Gethsemane, **"Watch and pray** that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak" (Mark 14:38). This command is relevant to all of life. Temptations abound, and Jesus does not take them lightly. The watchword of all of life is, **watch, be alert.**

I say **all of life** because Jesus warned that the days just before His [Second Coming](#) would be in many ways very normal. It will be, Jesus says, like the days of Noah before the flood came and swept people away who were utterly unsuspecting (**Ed Comment:** This is another reason to support the doctrine of the Rapture as Pre-Tribulation - if it is Post-Tribulation, those days surely will not be "normal"). They were not watchful. Life seemed too normal, so they were not vigilant. "As in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark ... so will be the coming of the Son of Man.... Therefore, stay awake, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming" (Mt. 24:38-39, 42). Nothing is more normal than eating and drinking and marrying. The point is that we must be vigilant all the time, not just when the times feel perilous. They are always perilous. Soul-destroying temptations to unbelief and sin are present in everyday, normal life. Striving to enter through the narrow door is a lifelong, all-day, every-day calling.

### **PAIN AND PLEASURE CAN KEEP US FROM ENTERING THROUGH THE NARROW DOOR**

Jesus' demand for vigilance is all-embracing. Both the pleasant parts of life and the painful parts of life present dangers to the soul. In the parable of the four soils he warns about both. The painful and the pleasant threaten to destroy the faith-sustaining work of the word in our lives. When the word falls on rocky ground it sprouts, then dies. This represents those who hear the word, but then "tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word" (Matt. 13:21), and they fall away. They do not enter through the narrow door.

When the word falls on thorny ground it sprouts, then dies. This represents those who hear the word, but then "they are choked by the cares and riches and pleasures of life" (Luke 8:14-note). They do not enter through the narrow door. One person falls away because of pain (tribulation or persecution); the other person falls away because of pleasure (riches and pleasures of life). The call for vigilance is all-embracing. There is no unembattled place in this life.

Surprising to us perhaps, Jesus' demand for vigilance is directed more often at the pleasures of life than the pain. Some people are driven away from God by their pain, but more are lured away by their pleasures. Pleasures seldom awaken people to their need for God; pain often does. So Jesus is more concerned to warn us about the dangers of prosperity than the dangers of poverty.

### **THE PERILS OF PRAISE AND PHYSICAL INDULGENCE**

One powerful lure away from the kingdom of God is the praise of man. Therefore, Jesus said, "Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes, and love greetings in the marketplaces and the best seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at feasts" (Luke 20:46). "Beware" means be alert, take care, pay close attention to. This is a call for vigilance against the lure of following those who live for the praises of man. "Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them" (Matt. 6:1). We feel good when people speak well of us. It may not be wrong. But it is dangerous. It is a time for vigilance. "Woe to you," Jesus says, "when all people speak well of you, for so their fathers did to the false prophets" (Luke 6:26-note).

Less subtle is the lure of physical indulgence. Jesus focuses on alcohol and the dissipating effects it has on our minds and bodies. He says, "But watch yourselves lest your hearts be weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and cares of this life, and that day come upon you suddenly like a trap" (Luke 21:34). There are drugs and foods and practices that "weigh down" the heart. They make the heart sluggish. This is the opposite of vigilance. We will not "strive to enter through the narrow door" if we are self-indulgent and use drugs or food or drink in a way that dulls our spiritual alertness and vigilance.

### **MONEY IS A MORTAL THREAT TO ENTERING THROUGH THE NARROW DOOR**

The danger Jesus warns against most often is the danger of money. It is a mortal danger. Heaven and hell hang in the balance in our vigilance against the lure of money. Jesus made this as clear as possible with the words, "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God" (Mark 10:25). The issue is entering the kingdom. Striving for wealth is not the striving that leads to the narrow door.

Over and over Jesus warns us to be vigilant against the lure of riches. "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth" (Matt. 6:19-note). "You cannot serve God and money" (Matt. 6:24-note). "Do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?'" (Matt. 6:31-note). "The deceitfulness of riches and the desires for other things enter in and choke the word" (Mark 4:19). "Sell your possessions, and give to the needy" (Luke 12:33-note). "Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Matt. 6:21-note). "Any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:33-note). "But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation" (Luke 6:24-note). "Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God" (Luke 6:20-note). "Take care, and be on your guard against all covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions" (Luke 12:15-note).

### **THE "HEALTHY EYE" WILL HELP US STRIVE TO ENTER THE NARROW DOOR**

It appears, then, that striving to enter the kingdom of God through the narrow door is largely a battle about how we relate to money. We should linger here since Jesus did. He is jealous that we "guard against all covetousness." He is deeply concerned with our "eyes" when it comes to the treasure of our lives. We see this in a puzzling statement he made in Matthew 6:22-23-note. "The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light, but if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!" In other words, if the eye is good (literally, "single"), the whole body will be full of light. But if the eye is bad, the body will be full of darkness. In other words, how you see reality determines whether you are in the dark or not.

You will naturally ask, what does that have to do with money? First of all, notice that these words of Jesus are sandwiched between the command to lay up treasures in heaven (Mt 6:19-21-note) and the warning that you can't serve God and money (Mt 6:24-note). Why is this saying about the good and bad eye sandwiched between two teachings on money? I think it's because what makes the eye good is how it sees God in relation to money. That's the issue on either side of this saying. In Matthew 6:19-21-note the issue is: You should desire heaven-reward, not earth-reward. Which, in short, means: Desire God, not money. In Matthew 6:24-note, the question is whether you can serve two masters. Answer: You cannot serve God and money.

This is a double description of light! If you are laying up treasures in heaven, not earth, you are walking in the light. If you are serving God, not money, you are walking in the light. Between these two descriptions of the light Jesus says that the eye is the lamp of the body and that a good eye produces a fullness of this light. So, what is the good eye that gives so much light and the bad eye that leaves us in the dark?

### **WHAT IS THE GOOD EYE?**

One clue is found in Matthew 20:15. Jesus has just said that men who worked one hour will be paid the same as those who worked all day, because the master is merciful and generous. And besides, they all agreed to their wage before they worked. Those who worked all day grumbled that the men who worked one hour were paid too much. Jesus responded with the same words found here in Matthew 6:23-note, "Is your eye bad because I am good?" (literal translation).

What is bad about their eye? What's bad is that their eye does not see the mercy of the master as beautiful. They see it as ugly. They don't see reality for what it is. They do not have an eye that can see mercy as more precious than money.

Now bring that understanding of the "bad eye" back to Matthew 6:23-note and let it help us discern the meaning of the "good eye." What would the good eye be that fills us with light? It would be an eye that sees the Master's generosity as more precious than money. Which means that the good eye sees God and his ways as the great Treasure in life, not money. The good eye sees things as they really are. God is really more valuable than all that money can buy.

You have a good eye if you look to God and love to maximize the reward of his fellowship—that is, lay up treasure in heaven. You have a good eye if you look at Master-money and Master-God and see Master-God as infinitely more valuable. In other words, a "good eye" is a wisely valuing eye, a discerning eye, an astutely treasuring eye. It doesn't just see facts about money and God. It doesn't just perceive what is true and false. It

sees beauty and ugliness; it senses value and worthlessness; it discerns what is really desirable and what is undesirable. The seeing of the good eye is not neutral. When it sees God, it sees God-as-beautiful. It sees God-as-desirable.

That is why the good eye leads to the way of light: laying up treasures in heaven and serving God, not money. The good eye is a single eye. It has one Treasure: God. When that happens in your life, you are full of light. And this is so important that Jesus adds in Luke 11:35-note, "Therefore be careful lest the light in you be darkness." In other words, be vigilant. Don't be casual or slack or careless about this matter. Strive, wrestle, fight to keep your eye good. That is, do what you must to see God, not money, as supremely valuable and desirable.

In the next chapter we will continue to unfold the implications of Jesus' demand to strive to enter by the narrow door. We will see how he calls for vigilance and watchfulness in regard to false prophets and false christs and the suddenness of his second coming. And then we will turn to the question, how does the demand for vigilance fit with his demand that we rest in him? How does the seriousness of watchfulness fit with the sweetness of Jesus' care? ([Download the free Pdf copy of Dr Piper's book - What Jesus Demands from the World](#)) ([Another source](#))

**Luke 13:24 "Strive to enter through the narrow door; for many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able.**

**KJV** Luke 13:24 Strive to enter in at the **strait gate**: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.

**Greek:** Agonizesthe (2PPMM) eiselthein (AAN) dia tes stenes thuras (door), hoti polloi, lego (1SPA) humin, zetesousin (3PFA) eiselthein (AAN) kai ouk ischusousin (3PFA).

**Amplified:** Strive to enter by the narrow door [force yourselves through it], for many, I tell you, will try to enter and will not be able. ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

**Berkley:** Strain every nerve to enter through the narrow door; for many, I tell you, will try to enter and will be unable to. (Modern Language Bible)

**ESV:** Strive to enter through the narrow door. For many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able.

**GWT:** Try hard to enter through the narrow door. I can guarantee that many will try to enter, but they won't succeed.

**HCSB:** Make every effort to enter through the narrow door, because I tell you, many will try to enter and won't be able

**ICB:** Try hard to enter through the narrow door that opens the way to heaven! Many people will try to enter there, but they will not be able.

**KJV:** Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.

**NET:** Exert every effort to enter through the narrow door, because many, I tell you, will try to enter and will not be able to.

**NLT:** Work hard to enter the narrow door to God's Kingdom, for many will try to enter but will fail. [NLT - Tyndale House](#)

**Phillips:** And Jesus told them, "You must do your utmost to get in through the narrow door, for many, I assure you, will try to do so and will not succeed ([New Testament in Modern English](#))

**Wuest:** And He said to them, Be endeavoring with a strenuous zeal to enter through the narrow door, because many, I am saying to you, will seek to enter and will not be able (Eermans)

**Weymouth:** Strain every nerve to force your way in through the narrow gate," He answered; "for multitudes, I tell you, will endeavour to find a way in and will not succeed.

**Young's:** Be striving to go in through the straight gate, because many, I say to you, will seek to go in, and shall not be able;

- **Strive to enter through** Lk 21:36; Ge 32:25,26; Mt 11:12; Jn 6:27; 1 Cor 9:24-27; Phil 2:12,13; Col 1:29; Heb 4:11; 2 Peter



1:10

- **the narrow door** Mt 7:13,14
- **for many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able** Pr 1:24-28; 14:6; 21:25; Eccl 10:15; Isa 1:15; 58:2-4; Ezek 33:31; Mk 6:18-20; Jn 7:34; 8:21; 13:33; Ro 9:31-33; 10:3
- [Luke 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 13:22-30 The Narrow Door](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 13:22-30 Are Just a Few Being Saved? Part 1](#)
- [Luke 13:22-30 Are Just a Few Being Saved? Part 2](#)

#### Related Passages:

Matthew 7:13-14+ "**Enter** ([aorist imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) through the narrow gate; **for** (TERM OF EXPLANATION - EXPLAINS WHY WE MUST STRIVE TO URGENTLY ENTER THROUGH THE NARROW GATE LEST WE BE ATTRACTED TO ENTER BY THE BROAD GATE) the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. 14 "**For** (TERM OF EXPLANATION) the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it.

[Click to Enlarge](#)

### ENERGETIC EFFORT AND THE NARROW GATE

Keep the context in mind in interpreting this passage - Jesus is on His way to Jerusalem to die. His words of warning in answer to this question are some of the last words He will speak. There is an urgency about His mission and His message speaks of that urgency. O how we all need to seek by the enablement of His Spirit to imitate His passion for people's souls.

**Strive** ([agonizomai](#) in the [present imperative](#) calling for us to [depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) **to enter by the narrow** ([stenos](#)) **door** ([thura](#)) - KJV (based on [Textus Receptus](#)) has **gate** instead of **door** > KJV = "**strait gate**" ([pule](#)).- Jesus says entering to the Kingdom of God (aka "salvation," "born again,") is not easy, but calls for Spirit energized agonizing effort. It's not just that "God has a wonderful plan for your life," so come on in! That soft sell Gospel is deadly and deceives the person who hears it into thinking all they have to do is pray a prayer (just "Ask Jesus into your heart") or make a decision to follow Jesus! (See [easy believism](#)) Then they think that since they have done this, they have "fire insurance" to protect them from eternal Hell. This is a very dangerous teaching, for then it is very difficult to tell someone like this that Jesus said the "**gate is small**" and you must **strive** to enter by the narrow gate! **Strive** ([agonizomai](#)) smacks of self-effort, as if sinners could do anything to merit salvation. Jesus' main point is that salvation is not the easy way some teachers (even so-called evangelical) promote it to be. It calls for self-denial (Lk 9:23+), for love of Jesus greater than love of even one's relatives (Lk 14:26+) or one's possessions (Lk 14:33+), etc. It calls for taking up a cross (Lk 14:27+). And yet it is still a narrow door that is entered only by grace through faith alone in Christ Alone! Although it is discussed more below, note that **strive** is a command in the [present imperative](#) calling for life long agonizing effort, a striving which will only end when we enter into glory! The implication is that once we are in the narrow gate, we cannot take our foot off of the gas pedal, so to speak! This makes sense to me, because I know that I must fight the strong lusts of my fallen [flesh](#) every day (not to mention fighting our other two mortal enemies, the [world](#) and the [devil](#)), knowing those ungodly desires can be conquered in the power of the Spirit (Ro 8:13), but also knowing they will return to tempt me to commit sin (1Pe 2:11). I think this is why Paul uses the same verb [agonizomai](#) in some of his very last words to Timothy - "**I have fought** ([agonizomai](#) in perfect tense) the good fight." (2Ti 4:7+)

If this verse is taken out of context, it might suggest that sinners would be able to do something (some work) that would merit entrance **by the narrow door** and thus one could "work" his or her way to heaven. Nothing could be further from the truth that Jesus intended to convey! Jesus is not teaching works based righteousness (which is nothing but filthy rags at best - Isa 64:6), but that **following Him has a cost**. Jesus and not Jewish legalism (keeping of the laws which no one can do perfectly - Jas 2:10) is the door (Jn 10:9) that enters the house (salvation) in this passage and in Mt 7:13+ He is the narrow gate that leads to the narrow way. He is entered with only one "key" and that is **belief** or **faith** in Him (Jn 14:6, Acts 16:31). The Bible repeatedly states that salvation is **ONLY** by grace through personal faith in the Gospel of Jesus Christ and that this transaction is independent of human works or merit (Ep 2:8, 9+). What Jesus is describing in the issuance of the command to **strive** is the unpopular truth that that the way of salvation is **narrow** and "difficult", truths which are unpacked in more detail in the following comments.

**Spurgeon** introduces his sermon on this verse - THE precepts of our Lord Jesus Christ are dictated by the soundest wisdom. He has given us divine prescriptions for the health of our souls, and his commandments, though clothed with sovereign authority, are spoken in such infinite kindness that we may regard them as the advice of a true and faithful friend. This is not a legal, but a gospel exhortation, "**Strive to enter in at the strait gate.**" He Himself is the only gate, or the door, by which we can find admission, and the

way to enter in through Jesus Christ is not by working, but **by believing**. Then, as to the strife we are urged to carry on, it is an earnest endeavour to steer clear of all the rocks, and shoals, and quicksands of popular fallacies and deceitful traditions, and to sail in the deep waters, with His covenant for our chart, and His Word for our compass, in simple obedience to His statutes, trusting to Him as our pilot, whose voice we always hear, though His face we cannot see. The storm signal may well rouse your fears; the cry of peril had need excite your caution. The mere mention sounds like a menace. **"Many shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able."** Listen to that warning, lest ye be amongst the **"many"** that founder—mayhap you shall be among the few that escape. Harken to what Jesus tells you shall come to pass with the multitude, that it may never come to pass with you as individuals. ([Luke 13:24 The Strait Gate](#))

**NET Bible** on **strive** - The idea is to "strain every nerve to enter" because of the supreme importance of attaining entry into the kingdom of God.

**J B Phillips** gives the right sense of Jesus' command to **strive** to enter - "The Kingdom is not entered by **drifting** but by **decision**." (**ED COMMENT** - But I would add the caveat that it is not just a "*decision*" because one can make a decision without ever having any change of their heart. A mental **decision** without repentance and genuine faith will take a person straight to Hell. Those who make intellectual decisions for Christ are like those who cry "Lord, Lord," but do not do what the Lord says. Their fruitless, ungodly life reveals that what they spoke with their lips was not backed up by a transformed life).

"We are not saved by effort, but we shall not believe without effort."  
-- Alexander MacLaren

**Cyril of Alexandria** exhorts us to listen to Jesus' words in this "hard saying" for even as "A ship is guided to the right port by means of the helm...the word of God pilots the soul of man, and leads him without risk of error to everything that is necessary for salvation." ([Sermon Luke 13:22ff](#))

**Norval Geldenhuys** notes that "As very often happened, the Saviour does not give a direct reply to the speculative question, but points out to those present the practical side of the matter: they are not to waste their time and strength in arguments as to how many will be saved, but everyone must **strive** hard and make sure that he himself is saved, for whether the saved are to be many or few one thing is certain—the gate leading to life is strait, and only those who strive with might and main, and whole-heartedly to enter, will be saved. (Borrow [Commentary on the Gospel of Luke : the English text with introduction, exposition and notes](#))

**D L Moody** - WHO are we to **strive** with? Not with the gate-keeper. The gate-keeper stands with the gate wide open, and he says, "Come in, come in!" All the striving is with the [flesh](#); it is with this old carnal nature of ours....MANY a man would be willing to enter into the kingdom of God, if he could do it without giving up sin. People sometimes wonder why Jesus Christ, who lived six hundred years before Mohammed, has gotten fewer disciples than Mohammed today. There is no difficulty in explaining that. **A man may become a disciple of Mohammed, and continue to live in the foulest, blackest, deepest sin; but a man cannot be a disciple of Christ without giving up sin.** ([Sermon](#))

**Spurgeon** - You can get into the broad road (Mt 7:13) without striving; but you must **"strive to enter in at the strait gate."** Strive for that which requires **self-denial**, that which **humbles** you, that which goes against the grain, that which is not according to human nature. Do not imagine that grace is to be had while you are half asleep, and that heaven is to be gained on a feather bed. **Strive, strive**, for many will seek in vain to enter. Seeking is not enough; it must come to a holy violence: "Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able." When will that be? That will be when you are in another state. ([Luke 13](#) - exposition)

**Strive** (75) ([agonizomai](#) from [agon](#) = conflict or the place of assembly for the athletic contests and then a reference to the contests which were held there, gives us English "agony" - cp the picture portrayed in Lk 22:44 = "**agonia**") means to exert oneself, to fight, to labor fervently, to **strive** (devote serious effort or energy = implies great exertion against great difficulty and suggests persistent effort), to struggle, to contend with an adversary - all of these actions picturing an intense struggle for victory. When you read that the gloves of the Greek boxer were fur lined on the inside, but ox-hide with lead and iron sewed on the outside and that the loser in a wrestling match had his eyes gouged out, you get some sense of appreciation of the intensity of the Greek athletic contests and you can imagine how much effort such a contest might motivate! That is a picture of *agonizomai* which encompassed the concentration, discipline, conviction, and effort needed to win in athletic competition. It pictures a runner straining every nerve to the uttermost ("agonizing") to cross the goal in first place.

Jesus uses the **present imperative** which is a command calling for continual striving, striving that is evidenced as one's lifestyle, one's habitual practice. And continual striving calls for continual dependence upon the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit. The picture is one of a continual contention, a lifelong war (manifest by many "battles"). **But with whom are we to be continually contending and/or warring?** Until we see Jesus face to face, our intractable, unyielding, inveterate, unyielding, entrenched, incorrigible, obstinate, powerful and wily **enemies** are the **world**, the **flesh** and the **devil**. In other words we must never, ever let

down our guard (cp Mt 26:41+), for our mortal enemies never lay down their arms and call a truce! Notice that the verb **strive** is in the plural which addresses this command not just to the questioner but to the entire audience present (and by way of application to every reader/hearer of those words). **How would my day to day life be different if I really understood what Jesus was commanding and if I really daily took up my cross and surrendered to His sweet will (word)?** Consider praying "Search me, O God, and know my heart. Try me and know my anxious thoughts and see if there be any hurtful way in me, and lead me in the everlasting way." (Ps 139:23, 24+).

Study the 8 uses of *agonizomai* in the NT and see if they don't give some additional understanding on what it means to strive - Lk. 13:24; Jn. 18:36; 1 Co. 9:25; Col. 1:29 (e.g., making disciples of Jesus - Col 1:28); Col. 4:12 (e.g., striving in prayer); 1 Tim. 4:10; 1 Tim. 6:12 (e.g., Paul's command to his disciple Timothy); 2 Tim. 4:7 (e.g., Paul final "epitaph")

**Puritan Thomas Watson** wrote "Sometimes the work we are to do for heaven is set out by **striving**. Luke 13:24, "Strive to enter in at the strait gate." **Strive** as in an agony—**strive** as for a matter of life and death. Though we must be men of peace—yet, in matters of religion, we must be men of strife. It is a holy strife—a blessed contention. Indeed, the Apostle said, "Let nothing be done through strife"; but, though strife does not do well *among* Christians—yet it does well *in* a Christian. **He must strive with his own heart—or he will never get to heaven.** ([The Heavenly Race](#))

## SOME THOUGHTS ON WHAT IT MEANS TO STRIVE

Note first that **strive** is a command calling for continual obedience and remember that God never commands something of us that He does not enable or empower. It follows that if someone is able to continually strive (whatever that looks like - which will be elaborated on below), they show themselves to be genuine believers with a new heart and a supernatural power provided by the indwelling Spirit to strive (See also [discussion of the Need for the Holy Spirit to obey NT commands](#)). Stated another way, striving does not save us but it proves we are saved. Faith alone saves, but faith that saves is never alone. We are not saved by works but by a faith that works. One "fruit" of genuine faith is a God given power to strive and fight and keep on doing so to the very end (Mt 24:13).

The English dictionary definition also helps us to understand what it means to **strive** =

to devote serious energy or effort, to endeavor, to struggle in opposition, to make an effort to accomplish an end, implying great exertion against great difficulty and specifically calling for persistent effort. To make great efforts. To use intense exertions. To endeavor with earnestness. To labor hard. The various senses of strive are applicable to exertions of body or mind. A workman strives to perform his task before another. A student strives to excel his fellows in improvement. To contend. To contest. To strain. To struggle in opposition to another. To be in contention or dispute and often followed by *against* or *with* before the person or thing opposed; e.g., *strive* against temptation; *strive* for the truth. To fight vigorously against. Make every effort. To do one's utmost. To "give it one's all." "To knock oneself out." "To make an all-out effort." "To bend over backwards." "To go for broke." "To leave no stone unturned."

**Hendriksen** writes that the verb [agonizomai](#) places us "in the (athletic) arena or in the wrestling-ring. The struggle is fierce. Our opponents are Satan, sin, self (the old, sinful nature). To strive means to exert oneself to the full, to strain every nerve in our struggle with these opponents....these words were not meant to scare God's children. They do not mean that entrance into the palace of salvation is only for those who are without sin. All those who struggle—in obedience to the command, "Strive to enter"—will enter. Another misconception must be removed. The command, "Strive to enter," does not imply that salvation is, after all, the product of human exertion and not of grace. **It is all of grace, enabling grace.** The true situation is described in Php 2:12+, Php 2:13+. (**Ed:** Where **"work out"** is present imperative = command calling for continual effort [cp idea of "striving"] to bring our salvation to completion! Is this not one picture of how believers are to strive to enter the narrow gate?) (Borrow [Exposition of the Gospel of Luke](#))

Note that elsewhere in the Gospels, Jesus uses **agonizomai** to picture a description of a fight. Paul uses **agonizomai** with a similar meaning...

**Fight ([agonizomai](#) in the present imperative)** the good fight of faith; take hold of the eternal life to which you were called, and you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses. (1Ti 6:12+)

**Comment:** Henry Alford renders it "strive the strife". The Christian faith is fight, a war, not a picnic, a bed of thorns (so to speak), not a bed of roses. Beware of anyone who teaches living the Christ life is easy, for it is anything but easy. And that is why Jesus and Paul command **Strive** and **Fight**!

I have fought ([agonizomai](#)) the good fight ([agon](#)), I have finished the course, I have kept the faith (2Ti 4:7+)

Clearly Paul saw the life of a disciple of Christ as a fight, a struggle, a warfare.

The point is that the life of a believer is "war" (against three powerful enemies - the [world](#), the [flesh](#) and the [devil](#)) and calls for us to struggle, wrestle and exert ourselves daily with great vigilance! As **John Piper** says "the phrase '**strive to enter**' means that entering is a battle." (This quote is from his free book [What Jesus Demands of the World](#) - he has 3 chapters on Luke 13:24 "Strive to Enter..." - scroll down to page 164).

And so Jesus' command is to enter through the narrow door which is equivalent to entering the **kingdom of God** (Lk 13:28, 29, which in turn equates with salvation) which in turn equates to salvation. As Jesus said "unless one is **born again** (from above, from God), he cannot see the **kingdom of God**" (Jn 3:3+). So the door through which we are to **strive** to enter is the door to the kingdom of God or Heaven and Jesus of course is the "Door" (Jn 10:9). To not enter this narrow door (cf "enter through the narrow gate" - Mt 7:13+, the "gate [that] is small" - Mt 7:14+) will result in confinement to the place of **weeping and gnashing of teeth** (Mt 8:12; Mt 13:42; Mt 13:50; Mt 22:13; Mt 24:51; 25:30; Lk. 13:28), which is Jesus' description of the occupants of hell. In summary, what is at stake regarding the striving Jesus is calling for is entrance into either **heaven** (through the narrow door) or **hell** (the narrow door shut).

## TRUE CHRISTIANITY IS A FIGHT

**J C Ryle** - True Christianity! Let us mind that word "true." There is a vast quantity of religion current in the world which is not true, genuine Christianity. It passes muster, it satisfies sleepy consciences; but it is not good money. It is not the authentic reality that called itself Christianity in the beginning. There are thousands of men and women who go to churches and chapels every Sunday and call themselves Christians. They make a "profession" of faith in Christ. Their names are in the baptismal register. They are reckoned Christians while they live. They are married with a Christian marriage service. They mean to be buried as Christians when they die. But you never see any "fight" about their religion! Of spiritual strife and exertion and conflict and self-denial and watching and warring they know literally nothing at all. Such Christianity may satisfy man, and those who say anything against it may be thought very hard and uncharitable; but it certainly is not the Christianity of the Bible. It is not the religion which the Lord Jesus founded and His apostles preached. It is not the religion which produces real holiness. True Christianity is "a fight."...The principal fight of the Christian is with the world, the flesh and the devil. These are his never-dying foes. These are the three chief enemies against whom he must wage war. Unless he gets the victory over these three, all other victories are useless and vain. If he had a nature like an angel, and were not a fallen creature, the warfare would not be so essential. But with a corrupt heart, a busy devil and an ensnaring world, he must either "fight" or be lost. (See the entire article - [Are You Fighting The Fight?](#))

**John Bunyan** (author of Pilgrim's Progress) has an **entire book on The Strait Gate (!!!)**. - **Strive** supposes that great idleness is natural to professors; they think to get to heaven by lying, as it were, on their elbows. It also suggests that many will be the difficulties that professors will meet with, before they get to heaven. It also concludes that only the laboring Christian, man or woman, will get here...**What does strive import?** When Jesus says **Strive**, it is as much as to say, Bend yourselves to the work with all your might. "Whatever your hand finds to do, verily, do it with all your might; for there is no activity or planning or knowledge or wisdom in Sheol where you are going." (Eccl 9:10) Thus Samson did when he set himself to destroy the Philistines 'He bent with all his might.' (Jdg 16:30) Thus David did also declaring "Now with all my ability I have provided for the house of my God." (1Chr 29:2) And thus you must do, if you would enter into heaven. When Jesus says **Strive**, he calls for the mind and will, that they should be on His side, and on the side of the things of His kingdom; for **no one strives indeed, except those who have given the Son of God their heart**, (**Ed**: Note Bunyan's emphasizes heart change before one even begins to strive!) of which the mind and will are a principal part; for saving conversion lies more in the turning of the mind and will to Christ, and to the love of his heavenly things, than in all knowledge and judgment. And this the apostle confirms when he says stand "firm in one spirit, with one mind striving (sunathleo) together for the faith of the gospel." (Phil 1:27+) (Here is the link to his book entitled [The Strait Gate or Great Difficulty of Going to Heaven](#) - here is Bunyan's "Preface" = *Plainly proving, by the Scriptures, that not only the rude and profane, but many great professors, will come short of that kingdom: with directions how and why every one should strive to enter in.*)

It is notable that other NT writers present a similar picture of "**striving**" in the context of salvation.

**Peter** charges his readers...

Therefore, brethren, **be all the more diligent** (spoudazo in the aorist imperative = command to do this now! Don't delay!) to make ([present tense](#)) certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice ([present tense](#) - not speaking of perfection but direction!) these things (2Pe 1:5+ 2Pe 1:6 7+), you will never stumble; for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you. (2 Pe 1:10, 11+)

In **Hebrews** in the context of reminders that many in Israel failed to enter God's rest by faith the writer exhorts his readers...

Therefore (Because of the danger of "false faith" Heb 3:18, 19+), let us fear if, while a promise remains of entering His rest, any one of you may seem to have come short of it. 2 For indeed we have had good news preached to us, just as they also; but the word they heard did not profit them, because it was not united by faith in those who heard. (Hebrews 4:1+)

Therefore (because of the risk of not entering God's rest and the rewards of entering that rest)**let us be diligent** (same verb used in Peter's exhortation above = spoudazo) to enter that rest, so that (term of purpose) no one will fall, through following the same example of disobedience. (Hebrews 4:11+)

**Comment:** The picture of **spoudazo** is that of giving careful attention to some goal or objective. The idea is give maximum effort, do your best, spare no effort, hurry on, be eager! Hasten to do a thing, exert yourself, endeavour to do it. **In short it is a call to give your utmost for His highest!** Is this not a picture of striving? In the context of Hebrews 3 and Hebrews 4 the exhortation is to be diligent to concentrate your energy on achieving the goal of entering God's promised Rest in Christ. Diligence in this sense is similar to the idea of **strive** in Lk 13:24 in that it speaks of an intensity of purpose followed by intensity of effort toward the realization of that purpose, of entrance through the narrow Door of Jesus by grace through faith.

**Jesus** warned His disciples

And you will be hated by all on account of My name, but it is the one who has endured to the end who will be **saved (sozo)**. (Mt 10:22, cp Mt 24:13+)

**Comment:** Does this admonition not speak of "**striving**" (Lk 13:24) to enter the narrow gate. Note however that Jesus is not saying that it is by one's endurance (self effort or works) that they will be saved. His point is that one is enabled to endure because of the fact that they are saved - the indwelling Spirit gives them the desire and the power (Php 2:13NLT+). In other words their endurance in spite of persecutions (cf Mt 13:21, Mk 4:17), ridicule, rejection, etc, is sure proof that they have entered the narrow door of genuine salvation (cf Lk 8:15+).

**Jesus** also alluded to the "**striving**" (Lk 13:24) necessary to enter the narrow door of genuine salvation when He declared that...

it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God (i.e., "salvation")." (See **My Personal Testimony**) And when the disciples heard this, they were very astonished and said, "Then who can be **saved (sozo)**? (Mt 19:24, 25,

**Comment:** Be sure to **check the context** Mt 19:16-17 18 19-20 21 22 23. [See parallel in Mk 10:17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24-25 26-28 29 30 31 Luke 18:18-25, 26-28 29-30, see also Lk 12:33 34 Mt 6:19 20 21-note] What did Jesus tell the rich young ruler that would require "striving" ["agonizing"]? Remember that Jesus was not teaching that giving up his possessions [which equates with a self effort] would earn or merit salvation.

**John MacArthur** explains it this way "*He [rich young ruler] sincerely wanted eternal life, but he wanted his riches and his self-righteousness even more. Whoever wants anything more than Christ will forfeit Christ.*" (cp Mk 8:35)

**ESV Study Bible** - The largest land animal in Palestine. **the eye of a needle.** The smallest opening found in the home. Jesus paints a picture of something impossible in order to illustrate that even the seemingly impossible is possible with God. There is no evidence for the popular interpretation that there was a gate in Jerusalem called "the eye of the needle," which camels had to stoop to their knees to enter. Such an interpretation would miss the point: it is not merely *difficult* for the wealthy to be saved; without God's grace it is *impossible*. For the wealthy to shift their primary allegiance to God is humanly impossible, but **with God all things are possible**, as evidenced by the conversions of rich men like Joseph of Arimathea (Mt 27:57) and Zacchaeus (Luke 19:9-10). (Borrow the [ESV Study Bible](#))

**Jon Courson** - It's hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom because riches can make one independent of God and intolerant of others. Riches can cause us to say, "Why should I pray or seek God when I can consult my banker or stockbroker?" Riches can cause us to ask, "Why is everyone so poor? Why don't they have the initiative, the industry, or the energy I do? What's wrong with them?" When you become independent of God and intolerant of others, you forfeit the kingdom. Riches can be dangerous indeed if they make us stiff of knee and hard of heart. (See [Jon Courson's Application Commentary](#))

**Walter Kaiser** comments: This teaching was not given to one special individual; it was intended for



Jesus' followers in general. He urged them to have the right priorities, to seek God's kingdom and righteousness above all else (Mt 6:33). But it is very difficult to do this, he maintained, if one's attention is preoccupied by material wealth. (See [Hard Sayings of the Bible](#))

Jesus equated entrance into the kingdom of God with being saved as indicated by the disciples' question. Humanly speaking, a rich man simply *cannot* be saved. These are "hard sayings" from the mouth of our Lord, but they are the truth about genuine salvation, truth which the world desperately needs to hear and heed in these last days during which the Gospel is being "diluted" (cp Paul's warning in Gal 1:6 7 8 9 10)!

In another place Jesus helps us understand what it means to **continually** (present tense) **strive** when He says...

For this reason you **be** (**present imperative** = command to continually be prepared, in a state of readiness) ready too; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not think He will. (Mt 24:44)

In explaining to His disciples and the multitudes what it meant to come after Him, denying self, taking up one's cross and following Him, Jesus declared that

whoever wishes to **save** (**sozo**) (referring to one's physical life) his life shall lose it (eternally); but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's shall **save** (**sozo**) (spiritually) it (eternally). (Mk 8:34+, Be sure to check the context Mk 8:34, 35, 36)

**John Piper** asks "But what does Jesus want us to strive against so that we can enter through the narrow door? What are the obstacles? If life is war, who is the enemy?" ([see his answer above](#))

In the parable of the soils, Jesus gives us examples of those who **do not keep on striving** and will not be allowed to enter the narrow door...

The one on whom seed (Mt 13:19 = the word of the kingdom = equivalent to the Gospel) was sown on the rocky places, this is the man who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; yet he has no firm root in himself, but is only temporary, and when affliction or persecution arises (**Note**: Not just any affliction and persecution but specifically that which comes) because of the word, immediately he falls away (skandalizo = see related noun skandalon). (Mt 13:20 21+)

The seed which fell among the thorns, these are the ones who have heard, and as they go on their way they are choked (suffocated, caused to die, figuratively causing the Word of God to be ineffective in a person's life) with worries (anxieties) and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to maturity (No fruit = no Root = no Salvation). (Lk 8:14+, cp Mk 4:19+ amplifies Luke's description adding "deceitfulness" and "desires")

**John Piper** comments on the previous two passages that neither of these "enter through the **narrow door**. One person falls away because of pain (tribulation or persecution); the other person falls away because of pleasure (riches and pleasures of life). The call for vigilance is all-embracing. There is no unembattled place in this life." ([Piper, John: What Jesus Demands from the World - go to page 164ff](#)) ([Another source](#))

**Piper** goes on to emphasize that another powerful lure away from the Kingdom of God is the praise of men...

**Beware** (prosecho in present imperative = we must continually pay close attention and be vigilant lest we fall into the trap of men's praises ee [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes, and love respectful greetings in the market places, and chief seats in the synagogues and places of honor at banquets (Lk 20:46+, cp Pr 27:21)

**Piper**: This is a call for vigilance against the lure of following those who live for the praises of man. [What Jesus Demands from the World](#))

**Beware** of (prosecho in present imperative = we must continually be vigilant against ee [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) practicing your righteousness before men to be noticed by them; otherwise you have no reward with your Father who is in heaven. (Mt 6:1+)

**Piper**: We feel good when people speak well of us. It may not be wrong. But it is dangerous. It is a time for vigilance. ([What Jesus Demands from the World](#))

Another striving that must be to avoid self-indulgence

**Be on guard**, (prosecho in present imperative) so that your hearts will not be weighted down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of life, and that day will not come on you suddenly like a trap 35 for it will

come upon all those who dwell on the face of all the earth. (Lk 21:34-35+).

**Piper:** We will not “**strive to enter through the narrow door**” if we are self-indulgent and use drugs or food or drink in a way that dulls our spiritual alertness and vigilance....

The danger Jesus warns against most often is the danger of money. It is a mortal danger. Heaven and hell hang in the balance in our vigilance against the lure of money. Jesus made this as clear as possible with the words,

It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God (Mk 10:25, compare Jesus' frequent warnings related to money and possessions - Mt 6:19, Mt 6:21, Mt 6:24, Mk 4:19, Lk 6:24 12:15 33 14:33).

The issue is entering the kingdom. **Striving** for wealth is not the **striving** that leads to the **narrow door**. ([What Jesus Demands from the World](#))

**Arthur Pink** - That Jesus should employ such an expression (**strive**) clearly implies the slothfulness and carelessness which characterize mere **nominal** (Christians in name only!) **professors**, as it also denotes that there are real difficulties and formidable obstacles to be overcome. The Greek word there used for “**strive**” (agonizomai) is a very expressive and emphatic one, meaning “agonize.”...Ah, my reader, becoming a Christian is not done simply by holding up your hand in a religious meeting or signing some “decision” card. Alas, that such multitudes have been deceived by these satanic catch-pennies....Sermons on repentance and faith in Christ avail us nothing unless they move our hearts to comply therewith. The Greek word here rendered “strait” (Lk 13:24KJV) signifies restrained, cramped, or better “narrow” as it is rendered in the revised version. And what is meant by this strait or narrow door? A “door” serves two purposes: it lets in and shuts out. This door (Jn 10:9) is the only avenue of admittance to that “way” which leads unto life, and all who **enter not** by it are eternally barred from the presence of God and the realm of ineffable bliss. The second use of this “door” is solemnly illustrated at the close of the parable of the virgins. The foolish ones lacked the necessary “oil” (the work of the Spirit in the heart), and when they sought to obtain it the Bridegroom came and “the door was shut” (Mt 25:10), and though they besought Him to open it unto them, He answered “I know you not.” (Mt 25:12) (From [THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT](#))

As **Henry Cowles** explains strive to enter this way - What did he say? This:—Agonize [**strive**] to enter in at the narrow gate; for many, I solemnly assure you, will seek to enter in and shall not be able”— will find it impossible to gain admission. The idea is not that they fail for want of sufficient earnestness and endeavor, there being no stress upon **agony** as successful while ordinary seeking fails; but the distinctive emphasis is upon **striving now while yet the door stands open**, as opposed to **seeking in vain after the door is shut**. The issue turns on the line of making the effort, and not upon the earnestness or the energy of the endeavor. Thus Jesus Himself explains His meaning. When once, in the exercise of his rightful authority, the master of the house has risen up and has officially, solemnly, shut the door, it can be opened no more. From and after that closing of the door...there can be no admittance. ([Henry Cowles - Luke - at top of page enter 168](#))

**John Butler** makes an excellent point that **strive** "does not suggest **works for** salvation but the **emphasis** one should put on salvation. Our salvation must be the most important matter in our life...Many are not saved because they want to enter on their own terms instead of God's terms, or they want to enter on the basis of good works, or they think they will enter because God is love and will not cast out anyone. Some think they can buy their way into heaven. **Many** who think they are going to heaven will not go to heaven when they die. (Butler, J. G. [Analytical Bible Expositor: Luke. Clinton, IA: LBC Publications](#))

**Brian Bell** observes that **strive** although meaning to **agonize** like an athlete or fight like a soldier in war does not signify that we are "saved by our hard work. Rather it warns us to avoid an easy, complacent, and theoretical attitude toward the eternal destiny of the soul. We are to fight, or be at war with... *Who?* - Not who, but *what?*" ([Luke 13 Notes](#))

**Be at war with sin  
(especially your own sin!)**

**Strive** to enter the narrow gate – because God's way is **narrow**. ([Luke 13](#))

**J C Ryle** comments...

Whatever others may do in religion the Lord Jesus would have us know that our duty is clear. The gate is strait. The work is great. The enemies of our souls are many. We must be up and doing. We are to wait for nobody. We are not to inquire what other people are doing, and whether many of our neighbors, and relatives, and friends are serving Christ. The unbelief and indecision of others will be no excuse at the last day. We must never follow a multitude to do evil. If we go to heaven alone, we must resolve that by God's grace we will go. Whether we have many with us or a few, the command before us is plain--"**Strive to enter in.**" ([Luke chapter 13](#))

(**Ryle** commenting on John 10:9 adds) Let us take heed that we use this door, and do not merely stand outside looking at it. It is a door free and open to the chief of sinners--"If any man enter in by it, he shall be saved." (Jn 10:9) It is a door within which we shall find a full and constant supply for every need of our souls. We shall find that we can "go in and out," and enjoy liberty and peace. The day comes when this door will be shut forever, and men shall strive to enter in, but not be able. Then let us make sure work of our own salvation (cp 2Pe 1:10 11-note). Let us not stand tarrying outside, and halting between two opinions. Let us enter in and be saved. ([John 10](#))

**Frederic Godet** writes that **agonizomai** "refers...to the difficulty of passing through the narrow opening (and) in the application, to the humiliations of penitence, the struggles of conversion. ([Luke 13:22 Commentary](#))

**Matthew Henry** ([Luke 13 Commentary](#)) comments on **strive to enter**...

(1.) All that will be saved must enter in at the strait gate, must undergo a change of the whole man, such as amounts to no less than being born again, and must submit to a strict discipline.

(2.) Those that would enter in at the strait gate must strive to enter. It is a hard matter to get to heaven, and a point that will not be gained without a great deal of care and pains, of difficulty and diligence. (**Ed: How does this compare with the "invitation" presented in many churches today? Just a thought to ponder in light of Jesus' words.**)

We must **strive** with God in prayer, wrestle as Jacob, **strive** against **Sin** and **Satan**. We must **strive** in every duty of religion; **strive** with our own hearts, **agonizesthe**—

"Be in an agony.

Strive as those that run for a prize.

Excite and exert ourselves to the utmost."

**Matthew Henry** points out that Jesus' following discussion contains a number of points that should serve to strongly motivate us to submit and obey His command to strive to enter the narrow door...

(1) Think how many take some pains for salvation and yet perish because they do not take enough, and you will say that there are few that will be saved and that it highly concerns us to strive. Many will seek to enter in, and shall not be able; they seek, but they do not strive. Note, The reason why many come short of grace and glory is because they rest in a lazy seeking of that which will not be attained without a laborious striving. They have a good mind to happiness, and a good opinion of holiness, and take some good steps towards both. But their convictions are weak; they do not consider what they know and believe, and, consequently, their desires are cold, and their endeavours feeble, and there is no strength or steadiness in their resolutions; and thus they come short, and lose the prize, because they do not press forward. Christ avers this upon his own word: I say unto you; and we may take it upon his word, for he knows both the counsels of God and the hearts of the children of men.

(2) Think of the distinguishing day that is coming and the decisions of that day, and you will say there are a few that shall be saved and that we are concerned to strive

(3) Think how many who were very confident that they should be saved will be rejected in the day of trial, and their confidences will deceive them, and you will say that there are few that shall be saved and that we are all concerned to strive....Many are ruined by an ill-grounded hope of heaven, which they never distrusted or called in question, and therefore conclude their state is good because they never doubted it. They call Christ, Lord, as if they were his servants; nay, in token of their importunity, they double it, Lord, Lord.

**DON'T PUT OFF UNTIL TOMORROW  
WHAT YOU MUST DO TODAY!  
TOMORROW MAY BE TOO LATE!**

Puritan writer **John Owen** notes that **agonizomai** "embraces in its general sense, not only great and continued effort, but such timely action, as to avoid being excluded in the way referred to in the following verse. The contrast lies principally in the idea of prompt and energetic effort on the one hand and a fatal procrastination (put off from day to day; delay; defer to a future time) on the other. This brings out with emphasis the **NOW**, with which all the offers of salvation are made to men in the Word of God. See Isa 1:18; Jer. 25:5; 35:15; Zech. 1:4; Lk 14:17; Ro. 13:11; 2Co. 6:2; Heb 4:7. It is most unquestionably true, that men are often beguiled to ruin, by mistaking a few vain and feeble efforts for the energetic action requisite to obtain salvation; but that is not here the prominent idea (**Ed: Do not misunderstand - Owen is not saying our efforts merit entry through the narrow door, for by works shall no man be saved**). Our Lord intends to warn men against delaying to enter the strait gate, until it is shut, and they are forever excluded.

This will appear more clear from the following verse (Lk 13:25). (Owen, J. J. Commentary on Luke)

**Frederic Godet** writes that "The **strait gate** represents attachment to the lowly Messiah; the magnificent gateway by which the Jews would have wished to enter, would represent, if it were mentioned, the appearance of the glorious Messiah whom they expected. ([Luke 13:22 Commentary](#))

**Arthur Pink** notes that " It is not enough to listen to preaching about this "gate," nor to study its structure or admire the wisdom of its appointment: it must be entered. Sermons on repentance and faith in Christ avail us nothing unless they move our hearts to comply therewith....**And what is meant by this strait or narrow gate?** A "gate" serves two purposes: it lets in and shuts out. This gate is the only avenue of admittance to that "way" which leads to life, and all who enter not by it are eternally barred from the presence of God and the realm of ineffable bliss. The second use of this "gate" is solemnly illustrated at the close of the parable of the virgins. The foolish ones lacked the necessary "oil" (the work of the Spirit in the heart), and when they sought to obtain it the Bridegroom came and "the door was shut" ( Mt 25:10), and though they sought Him to open it unto them, He answered "I know you not.""

**John MacArthur**: Entering the narrow gate is difficult because of its cost in terms of human pride, because of the sinner's natural love for sin, and because of the world's and Satan's opposition to the truth. (Borrow [The MacArthur Study Bible](#))

**F B Meyer** adds that the **door** was "so narrow that there is no room to carry through it the love of self, the greed of gain, the thirst for the applause and rewards of the world."

"Faith alone is the master-key  
To the strait gate and narrow road;  
The others but skeleton pick-locks be,  
And you never shall pick the locks of God."  
—Walter Smith.

#### **Alexander Maclaren**

We note, first, the all-important exhortation (**Strive**) with which Christ seeks to sober a frivolous curiosity. In its primary application, the 'strait gate' may be taken to be the lowliness of the Messiah, and the consequent sharp contrast of His kingdom with Jewish high-flown and fleshly hopes. The passage to the promised royalty was not through a great portal worthy of a palace, but by a narrow, low-browed wicket (small gate), through which it took a man trouble to squeeze.

For us, the **narrow door** is the self-abandonment and self-accusation which are indispensable for entrance into salvation. 'The door of faith' is a narrow one; for it lets no self-righteousness, no worldly glories, no dignities, through. Like the Emperor at Canossa, we are kept outside till we strip ourselves of crowns and royal robes, and stand clothed only in the hair-shirt of penitence (repentance, grief of heart for sins). Like Milton's rebel angels entering their council chamber, we must make ourselves small to get in. We must creep on our knees, so low is the vault; we must leave everything outside, so narrow is it. We must go in one by one, as in the turnstiles at a place of entertainment. The door opens into a palace, but it is too strait for any one who trusts to himself.

**There must be effort in order to enter by it. For everything in our old self-confident, self-centered nature is up in arms against the conditions of entrance. We are not saved by effort, but we shall not believe without effort.**

The main struggle of our whole lives should be to cultivate self-humbling trust in Jesus Christ, and to 'fight the good fight of faith.' (Read the entire sermon - [The Strait Gate](#))

### **STRIVING... COUNTING THE COST!**

**J C Ryle** has some pithy comments in his article entitled "**The Cost**"...

**THE COST OF BEING A TRUE CHRISTIAN** - Let there be no mistake about my meaning. I am not examining what it costs to save a Christian's soul. I know well that it costs nothing less than the blood of the Son of God to provide an atonement and to redeem man from hell. The price paid for our redemption was nothing less than the death of Jesus Christ on Calvary. We "are bought with a price." "Christ gave Himself a ransom for all" (1Co 6:20; 1Ti 2:6).

But all this is wide of the question. The point I want to consider is another one altogether. It is what a man must be ready to give up if he wishes to be saved. It is the amount of sacrifice a man must submit to if he

intends to serve Christ. It is in this sense that I raise the question: "What does it cost?" And I believe firmly that it is a most important one.

**I grant freely that it costs little to be a mere outward Christian.** A man has only got to attend a place of worship twice on Sunday and to be tolerably moral during the week, and he has gone as far as thousands around him ever go in religion. All this is cheap and easy work: it entails no self-denial or self-sacrifice. If this is saving Christianity and will take us to heaven when we die, we must alter the description of the way of life, and write,

**"Wide is the gate and broad is the way  
that leads to heaven!"**

**But it does cost something to be a real Christian, according to the standard of the Bible.** There are enemies to be overcome, battles to be fought, sacrifices to be made, an "Egypt" to be forsaken, a "wilderness" to be passed through, a cross to be carried, a race to be run.

**Conversion is not putting a man in an armchair  
and taking him easily to heaven.**

It is the beginning of a mighty conflict, in which it costs much to win the victory. Hence arises the unspeakable importance of "counting the cost."...

**1. True Christianity will cost one his self-righteousness...**

**2. True Christianity will cost a man his sins.** He must be willing to give up every habit and practice which is wrong in God's sight. He must set his face against it, quarrel with it, break off from it, fight with it, crucify it and labor to keep it under, whatever the world around him may say or think. He must do this honestly and fairly. There must be no separate truce with any special sin which he loves. He must count all sins as his deadly enemies and hate every false way. Whether little or great, whether open or secret, all his sins must be thoroughly renounced. They may struggle hard with him every day and sometimes almost get the mastery over him. But he must never give way to them. He must keep up a perpetual war with his sins. It is written, "Cast away from you all your transgressions." "Break off your sins . . . and iniquities." "Cease to do evil" (Ezek. 18:31; Dan. 4:27; Isa. 1:16). This sounds hard. I do not wonder. Our sins are often as dear to us as our children: we love them, hug them, cleave to them and delight in them. To part with them is as hard as cutting off a right hand or plucking out a right eye. But it must be done. The parting must come.

**3. Also, Christianity will cost a man his love of ease.** He must take pains and trouble if he means to run a successful race toward heaven. He must daily watch and stand on his guard, like a soldier on enemy's ground. He must take heed to his behavior every hour of the day, in every company and in every place, in public as well as in private, among strangers as well as at home. He must be careful over his time, his tongue, his temper, his thoughts, his imagination, his motives, his conduct in every relation of life. He must be diligent about his prayers, his Bible reading, and his use of Sundays, with all their means of grace. In attending to these things, he may come far short of perfection; but there is none of those who he can safely neglect.

**4. Lastly, true Christianity will cost a man the favor of the world.** He must be content to be thought ill of by man if he pleases God. He must count it no strange thing to be mocked, ridiculed, slandered, persecuted and even hated. He must not be surprised to find his opinions and practices in religion despised and held up to scorn. He must submit to be thought by many a fool, an enthusiast and a fanatic, to have his words perverted and his actions misrepresented. In fact, he must not marvel if some call him mad. The Master says, "Remember the word that I said unto you, 'The servant is not greater than his Lord.' If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept My saying, they will keep yours also" (John 15:20).

I dare say this also sounds hard. We naturally dislike unjust dealing and false charges and think it very hard to be accused without cause. We should not be flesh and blood if we did not wish to have the good opinion of our neighbors. It is always unpleasant to be spoken against and forsaken and lied about and to stand alone. But there is no help for it. The cup which our Master drank must be drunk by His disciples. They must be "despised and rejected of men" (Isa. 53:3). Let us set down that item last in our account. To be a Christian, it will cost a man the favor of the world.

Considering the weight of this great cost, bold indeed must that man be who would dare to say that we may keep our self-righteousness, our sins, our laziness and our love of the world, and yet be saved! Moreover, I grant it costs much to be a true Christian. But what sane man or woman can doubt that it is worth any cost to have the soul saved? When the ship is in danger of sinking, the crew think nothing of casting overboard the



precious cargo. When a limb is mortified, a man will submit to any severe operation, and even to amputation, to save life. Surely a Christian should be willing to give up anything which stands between him and heaven. A religion that costs nothing is worth nothing! A cheap Christianity, without a cross, will prove in the end a useless Christianity, without a crown. ([Read the full article](#))

**R Kent Hughes** tells the story of a well known follower of Christ, Alistair Begg, who was in Cambridge, Mass restaurant putting the final touches on his sermon for a convocation when "he looked across the aisle and saw an Asian girl intently reading what appeared to be a Bible. He watched further and saw that she was indeed studying the Scriptures. So he asked, "I see that you are reading the Bible. Are you a Christian?" She smiled and replied, "**Oh yes. I've found the narrow way.**" Her answer was remarkable. Neither he nor I in all our years in ministry had ever heard anyone answer like that. In the ensuing conversation she explained that she had come from Korea to study at Harvard, and she was the only Christian in her family. Here was a young Christian woman 10,000 miles away from her Buddhist home (with its three million gods, the antithesis of "the narrow way") in the midst of Harvard's aggressive pluralism (which tolerates everything except the narrowness of the gospel) who so profoundly understood her Christian faith that she expressed it with unabashed acumen as "the narrow way." (See [Luke: That You May Know the Truth](#))

**Robert Frost** wrote a secular poem that closely parallels Jesus' teachings

"Two roads diverged in a wood, and I---  
I took the one less traveled by,  
And that has made all the difference."

**H A Ironside** cautions us to remember that Jesus is not saying

that we are to be saved by our own efforts, for by these we would never be saved at all; but we must be in **earnest** (ardent in pursuit, eager to obtain, having a longing desire) when the door to life stands open, and we are invited to enter in. We must be sure that we **heed** (regard with care, give close and careful attention, attend to) the gracious invitation and do not pass carelessly by, lest we find at last that we have lost our opportunity...We may well take these warning words to our hearts today for they are intended for us as truly as for the people of Israel of old. The door into the kingdom of God still stands open, but it is a narrow door. None can pass through that door with their sins upon them. But as Christ Himself is the Door (Jn 10:9), we may find in Him deliverance from our sins, and thus enter into the way of life. The narrow way is that of **subjection** (state of being under the authority or control) to Christ; a way that involves denial of self (cp Mk 8:34, 35) and recognition of our responsibility to live for Him Whose grace alone can save us.

I plead with you to give heed to the words of our Lord, **Strive to enter in at the strait gate.**"

Do not let anything keep you  
from making sure of your eternal salvation.  
(cp 2Pe 1:10, 11+)

But be like the man in Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress, who, when he heard of the impending destruction of the city in which he lived and learned that life was to be found only through entering the **wicket** (small) **gate**, (See [also Wikipedia article](#)) refused to be turned aside by any of his own townspeople, and putting his fingers in his ears, ran from them crying, "Life! Life! Eternal Life!" (**Ed**: Indeed a picture of a man "striving" to enter the **wicket** gate!) and so made his way toward the shining light pointed out to him by Evangelist (see [Pilgrim's Progress by John Bunyan -Part 1, Stage 1](#) - scroll down to "*The man, therefore, read it; and looking upon EVANGELIST very carefully, said, "Whither must I fly?" Then said EVANGELIST, pointing with his finger over a very wide field, "Do you see yonder wicket gate?"*). ([Ironside's Commentary - Luke 13](#))

**David Guzik** comments that "The way is narrow. We can't bring our self-centeredness, pride, lusts, hate or especially our own righteousness. As the famous hymn [Rock of Ages](#) says: Nothing in my hand I bring, Simply to Thy Cross I cling. **Strive to enter**: Therefore, we must strive (the word is literally "agonize") in order to lay these things aside and come in. The Greek word for strive has "the idea of a struggle or prize-fight." (Bruce) Strive to enter through the narrow door is not a call to save yourself by good works. Good works are not the right door. You can strive to enter all your life long, but if it isn't at the right door, it makes no difference. Jesus Himself is the door (Jn 10:9). He is the (only) door. **Then why must we strive to enter?** Because there are many obstacles in the way. The **world** is an obstacle. The **devil** is an obstacle. But probably the worst obstacle is your own **flesh**. ([Luke 13 Commentary](#))

**R Kent Hughes** writes that the image of the **narrow door** "suggests the moral posture of the person who would strive to enter the kingdom. I. H. Marshall notes that "the imagery is akin to that of a camel passing through the needle's eye, and suggests the

difficulty of facing up to the demands of Jesus in self-denial." The passage to Heaven is not through the great portal of a palace, but a narrow, low door through which one must humbly squeeze. And after entering, the road remains narrow, as Jesus explained when he preached at another time: "Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it" (Mt 7:13, 14-note). Few people are willing to assume the humble posture and to shed what is necessary to get through the gate, and few are willing to tread the narrow road. (See [Luke: That You May Know the Truth](#))

**Darrell Bock** - The verb "make every effort" (agonizesthe) speaks of laboring to get in. This implies that there is a specific route by which to enter; that is why Jesus mentions a **narrow door** and sets forth what it is. Those who fail to enter by that **door**, even though they desire to get in, will not succeed. Once the **door** is shut, it will be too late. For individuals, the **door** shuts at death—if not before, because of the **hardness of one's heart** (**Ed Comment:** See repeated warning in Hebrews to not harden one's heart = He 3:8-note, He 3:15-note, He 4:7-note, cp Jn 12:40 quoting Is 6:10-note which speaks of Divine "judicial" hardening - i.e., you continue to refuse to listen to God and finally He delivers a "judicial" hardening so you can no longer hear! Frightening, mysterious thought - God's sovereign hardening and yet not to be divorced from human responsibility and culpability! Woel!). (See [NIV Application Commentary: Luke](#))

**Spurgeon** encourages us to "not be ashamed of being called Puritanical, precise, and particular (in regard to the fact that the way of salvation is **narrow**)....It is a way of self-denial, it is a way of humility, it is a way which is distasteful to the natural pride of men; it is a precise way, it is a holy way, a strait way, and therefore men do not care for it. They are too big, too proud, to go along a narrow lane to heaven; yet this is the right way. (Commenting on the related passage in Mt 7:13-note Spurgeon notes that) There are many broad ways, as Bunyan says, that abut upon it; but you may know them by their being broad, and you may know them by their being crowded. The Christian man has to swim against the current; he has to do more than that, he has to go against himself, so narrow is the road (Ed: And so narrow is the door!); but if you wish to go down to perdition, you have only to float with the stream, and you can have any quantity of company that you like....Do not be ashamed of being called **narrow**. (cp 2Ti 1:8-note, 2Ti 1:12-note) Do not be ashamed of being supposed to lead a life of great precision and exactness. There is nothing very grand about breadth, after all. And I have noticed one thing: the "*broadest*" men I have ever met with in the best sense have always kept to the narrow way, and the "*narrowest*" people I know are those who are so fond of the broad way. (Scroll down page to [Exposition from Mt 7:13-14](#)).

**Steven Cole** comments...

Salvation requires our earnest effort because the door is narrow and exclusive, not wide and all-inclusive. Strive comes from a Greek word used of athletic contests and of war. Obviously, it implies a great deal of effort. You don't win wars or athletic contests by being passive. You never see an athlete receiving the gold medal, who says, "I had never worked out or run in a race until a few weeks ago. I thought it would be fun, so here I am." Every athlete who wins strives to win. He invests great energy and effort into winning. It is not an accident if he wins. It is the result of deliberate and sustained effort. Not everyone receives the prize. Only a few are winners. The fact that the door is narrow implies that it takes some deliberate thought and effort to go through it. There aren't many doors into the same place, so that you can take your pick. There is one and only one door, which is Jesus Christ. He alone is the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except by Him (John 14:6). The entrance is narrow and exclusive, not broad and all-inclusive.

There isn't one great big door that's easy to find and stroll through without thinking about it. There is one narrow door. You might not like the fact that it is narrow. You may think that it's too exclusive. You may say, "I believe that God is loving and that He will accept everyone who tries to do his best. I believe that all sincere people will get through the door." But, the fact is, according to Jesus it is narrow, not wide. He made it narrow without checking with us for our ideas about how wide it should be. Whether you like it or not, Jesus claimed to be the only way to God. You can either enter through the narrow door, which is Christ alone, or you can invent a broad door that includes many ways to God, and thus contradict what Jesus Himself said. Jesus is asking,

"Are you striving to enter the narrow door? Are you making your salvation a matter of deliberate and sustained effort? Are you sure that you're entering the narrow door as defined by Jesus and not a broad door of your own choosing?"

You say, "Whoa! I thought that salvation is a free gift, received simply by grace through faith, not a matter of our effort. How does this harmonize with striving for it?"

Jesus isn't talking about salvation by works or human effort. But He is talking about our attitude toward it. Those who are only mildly interested about salvation will not obtain it. Those who view salvation as an interesting topic for discussion are missing the point. Those who say, "I believe that all roads lead to God and all good people will go to heaven" are engaging in human speculation, but they are not submitting to Jesus' divine revelation. They are putting their thoughts about being open-minded and tolerant above Jesus' words

that the door is narrow. The salvation of your eternal soul should not be a casual subject that is good for an occasional stimulating theological discussion!

It ought to consume your attention. It shouldn't be a matter of mild interest that elicits a halfhearted response. You need to take great pains to make sure that you have entered the narrow door. Jesus doesn't say, "Stroll through the big door sometime when you're not doing anything else and check it out." He says, "Strive to enter by the narrow door." Again, picture the Olympic athlete. He makes winning the gold medal the focus of his life. Everything he does is controlled by his goal of winning the gold. He won't eat anything that is not good for him, because it might hinder his muscles from performing at their maximum on the day of the race. He doesn't go to parties and stay up late the night before, because he wants to be rested and ready to give everything to the race. He will refrain from engaging in fun activities that his other friends enjoy, such as skiing or playing softball, because he doesn't want to break his leg or tear his ligaments. He is disciplined to work out for hours, often when his body is screaming, "That's enough!" because he wants to win.

That's the kind of attitude that we should have toward our own salvation, according to Jesus. It shouldn't be a nice thing to think about every once in a while when you don't have anything better to do. It should be on your mind every day. It should govern everything you do. It should determine how you spend your time, your money, and your leisure hours. You must strive to enter because the door is narrow. It's not a great big wide door that you can wander into without thinking about it. You must be earnest to make sure that Christ alone is your hope of salvation. ([Luke 13:22-30 The Narrow Door](#))

### **Jesus Sinners Doth Receive**

**Jesus sinners doth receive;**

Oh, may all this saying ponder

Who in sin's delusions live

And from God and Heaven wander!

Here is hope for all who grieve—

**Jesus sinners doth receive.**

**Come, ye sinners, one and all,**

Come, accept His invitation;

Come, obey His gracious call,

Come and take His free salvation!

Firmly in these words believe:

**Jesus sinners doth receive.**

**Oh, how blest it is to know:**

Were as scarlet my transgression,

It shall be as white as snow

By Thy blood and bitter Passion;

For these words I now believe:

**Jesus sinners doth receive.**

**John MacArthur** - The requirement that sinners **enter through the narrow door** further indicates the intensity of the struggle (cf. Matt. 7:13-14). The door is a tight fit, requiring those who enter through it to strip themselves of their personal baggage. It is also made hard to find by the many deceptive voices luring the unwary and undiscerning to the broad gate that leads to hell. Therefore many will seek to enter and will not be able. (See [Luke Commentary](#))

**John Piper** writes that "the **"narrow door"** through which we must **"strive"** to enter is the door to the kingdom of God. Outside there is "weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Luke 13:28). This is one of the ways Jesus refers to hell: "Throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Mt. 13:50). The alternative to entering by the narrow gate is destruction. "Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction" (Matt. 7:13). In other words, what is at stake when Jesus demands that we "strive to enter" is heaven and hell. It is an ultimate issue. ([Download free Pdf copy of Dr Piper's book - What Jesus Demands from the World](#))"

Many are skeptical, agnostic or even antagonistic regarding Jesus' teaching on the **narrow door or narrow gate** and scoff at the idea of such rigid "exclusivity" regarding salvation. The Gospel message however is very clear, very dogmatic, very exclusive and very narrow! Obviously while we as Christians are not to be narrow-minded people per se, we must be narrow-minded regarding the Way, the Truth and the Life (Jn 14:6), if we truly believe that salvation is found in no one else, and that there is no other name under

heaven that has been given to men by which we must be saved (Acts 4:12). As offensive as such a truth may be to non-Christians, we must continually make it clear in our witness (our life, then our lips!) to them, for without Christ they are lost and bound for the lake of fire (Re 20:11-15-[see notes](#), cp Mt 25:41, 2Th 1:9, Rev 14:11-[note](#), Rev 19:20, 20:10 - see chart on [Births, Deaths, and Resurrections](#)).

Here are a few other NT passages that support this "narrow minded" view and to encourage you to defend the faith once for all delivered to the saints...

**Matthew 5:20** (note) "For I say to you, that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven.

**Comment:** This would have shocked many in the Jewish audience, who knew the Pharisees as the most religious people in the world. But as Jesus alluded to they may have had religion but in their hearts they rejected the "narrow gate" of Christ.

**Matthew 7:21, 22** (note) Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven; but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven. "Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?'

**Comment:** This is a frightening verse, for it clearly teaches that "many" people who profess Christ are self-deceived. It isn't a matter of outward profession, but inward faith and obedience, that saves us.

**John 8:24** "I said therefore to you, that you shall die in your sins; for unless you believe that I am He, you shall die in your sins."

**John 10:9** "I am the door; if anyone enters through Me, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.

**Romans 3:10** (note) as it is written, "THERE IS **NONE** RIGHTEOUS, **NOT EVEN ONE**; 11 THERE IS **NONE** WHO UNDERSTANDS, THERE IS **NONE** WHO SEEKS FOR GOD; 12 **ALL** HAVE TURNED ASIDE, TOGETHER THEY HAVE BECOME USELESS; THERE IS **NONE** WHO DOES GOOD, THERE IS **NOT EVEN ONE**..."23 for **all** have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 being justified (declared righteous) as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus;

**1 Corinthians 3:11** For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. (There is no other foundation for a holy, blessed, abundant, eternal life other than Christ).

**1 Timothy 2:5-6:** For there is one God, and **ONE** mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, Who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony borne at the proper time. (Only one Mediator. Only one ransom, the blood of Christ shed on the Cross.)

**Hebrews 2:3** (note) how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? After it was at the first spoken through the Lord, it was confirmed to us by those who heard

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## The Strait Gate C. H. Spurgeon.

Luke 13:24 Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say to you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.

### I. A GATE WHICH IT IS MOST DESIRABLE TO ENTER.

**1. Because it is the gate of the city of refuge.** Outside of Christ the sword of fire pursues us swift and sharp. From God's wrath there is but one escape, and that is by a simple faith in Christ. Believe in Him, and the sword is sheathed, and the mercy and the love of God will become your everlasting portion; but refuse to believe in Jesus, and your innumerable sins, written in His book, shall be laid at your door in that day when the pillars of heaven shall reel, and the stars shall fall like withered fig-leaves from the tree. Oh I who would not wish to escape from the wrath to come?

**2. It is desirable to enter this gate, because it is the gate of a home.** What sweet music there is in that word "home"! Jesus is the home of His people's hearts. We are at rest when we get to Christ. We have all we want when we have Jesus.

**3. Moreover, it leads to a blessed feast.** Happy the man who believes in Jesus, for he becomes at once content, complacent, and at ease. Not only does he find rest in Christ, but good cheer and great delight, halcyon peace, and hallowed satisfaction are the portion of his lot.

4. **It is the gate which leads to Paradise** And who would not wish to pass through it when he considers the lot of those outside the gate?

## II. THERE IS A CROWD OF PEOPLE WHO WILL SEEK TO ENTER AND WILL NOT BE ABLE.

1. **Some are unable to enter because the pride of life will not let them.**

2. **Some are unable to enter because they carry contraband goods with them.** When you land in France, there stands the gendarme who wants to see what you are carrying in that basket. If you attempt to push by you will soon find yourself in custody. He must know what is there; contraband goods cannot be taken in. So at the gate of mercy — which is Christ — no man can be saved if he desire to keep his sins. He must give up every false way.

3. **Not a few are unable to enter in because they want to postpone the matter until tomorrow.**

4. **Others, and these are in the worst plight of all, think that they are in, and that they have entered.** They mistake the outside of the gate for the inside.

**Conclusion:** Thus it is that a crowd — I had almost said a countless crowd — of people nowadays seek to enter in, but for manifold reasons they are not able to do so. And yet there is a more appalling aspect to the same fact. "Many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able." Panic-stricken, the dying man sends for the minister whom he never went to hear when his health was good and hours hung heavy on his hands. Some years ago I was awakened about three o'clock in the morning by a sharp ring of the door-bell. I was urged without delay to visit a house not very far from London Bridge. I went; and up two pair of stairs I was shown into a room the occupants of which were a nurse and a dying man. There was nobody else. "Oh, sir," said she, "Mr. So-and-so, about half-an-hour ago, begged me to send for you." "What does he want?" I asked. "He is dying, sir," she replied. I said, "I see that. What sort of a man was he?" "He came home last night, sir, from Brighton. He had been out all day. I looked for a Bible, sir, but there is not one in the house; I hope you have got one with you." "Oh," I said, "a Bible would be of no use to him now. If he could understand me I could tell him the way of salvation in the very words of Holy Scripture." I spoke to him, but he gave me no answer. I spoke again; still there was no reply. All sense had fled. I stood a few minutes gazing at his face, till I perceived he was dead. His soul had departed. That man in his lifetime had been wont to jeer at me. In strong language he had often denounced me as a hypocrite. Yet he was no sooner smitten with the darts of death than he sought my presence and my counsel, feeling no doubt in his heart that I was a servant of God, though he did not care to own it with his lips. There I stood, unable to help him. Promptly as I had responded to his call, what could I do, but look at his corpse and go home again? He had, when too late, sighed for the ministry of reconciliation, sought to enter in, but he was not able. There was no space left him then for repentance; he had wasted the opportunity.

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**Narrow** (4728) (**stenos** - derivation uncertain - one source says from histemi = to stand, Vine says from root sten- as in stenazo = to groan) pictures obstacles standing close to each other. The meaning is restricted, less than standard width, limited in size, a small breadth or width in comparison to length. Limited in extent, amount or scope as a narrow gorge between high rocks. **Stenos** comes from a root that means "to groan," as from being under pressure, and is used figuratively to represent a restriction or constriction. **Vine** comments that "the gate which provides the entrance to eternal life (is) **narrow** because it runs counter to natural inclinations, and "the way" is similarly characterized."

**Jesus** by using this figure of speech is saying that choosing for Him is not the popular nor the easy way!

In Mt 7:14 this adjective **stenos** modifies "**the way**", so that both the **gate** and the **way** are narrow.

There are only 3 NT uses of **stenos**, here in Luke and twice in Matthew (Mt 7:13 and Mt 7:14)

Enter (**aorist imperative** = Command to do this now! Don't delay! Conveys a sense of urgency.) by the **narrow** gate; for the gate is wide, and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and many are those who enter by it. 14 For the gate is small, and the way is **narrow** that leads to life, and few are those who find it." (Mt 7:13, 14+)

**Stenos** - 16x in the non-apocryphal **Septuagint (LXX)**- Nu 22:26; 1Sa 23:14, 19, 29; 24:22; 2Sa 24:14; 2Ki 6:1; 1Chr 21:13 (Figurative use - "I am in great distress"); Job 18:11; 24:11; Pr 23:27; Isa 8:22; 30:20; 49:20; Jer 30:7; Zech 10:11. Several of the OT uses are used to translate "stronghold".

Numbers 22:26 The **Angel of the LORD** went further, and stood in a **narrow** (**Hebrew** = tsar = narrow, tight; **Lxx** = stenos) place where there was no way to turn to the right hand or the left. 25 When the donkey saw the



**Angel of the LORD**, she pressed herself to the wall and pressed Balaam's foot against the wall, so he struck her again.

2 Samuel 24:14 Then David said to Gad, "I am in great **distress** (Hebrew = tsarar = to suffer distress; **Lxx** = stenos). Let us now fall into the hand of the LORD for His mercies are great, but do not let me fall into the hand of man."

Jeremiah 30:7-note Alas! for that day is great, There is none like it; And it is the time of Jacob's **distress** (Heb = tsarah = trouble, distress, calamity, anguish, state of very unfavorable circumstance, with a focus on the emotional pain and distress of the situation Dt 31:17 Jer 4:31; **Lxx** = stenos) but he will be saved from it.

**Comment: Jacob's Distress or The Time of Jacob's Trouble** describes a period of time, specifically the last 3.5 years of **Daniel's Seventieth Week**, which Jesus designated as **Great Tribulation** (Mt 24:21-note, cp Mk 13:19, Re 7:14-note). During this time the **Antichrist** ("Beast" of Rev 13-note, "**Little Horn of Daniel 7**") will be allowed by God and empowered by Satan (Rev 13:4-note, Rev 13:5-note where 42 months = 3.5 years) to have essentially "free reign" on the earth and will attempt to destroy the Jews in the greatest "holocaust" the world has ever seen. And yet in the midst of this horrible time to come, God makes the sure promise that He will save Jacob from it or out of it, which is a prophecy of the Messiah's return to deliver Israel (see Ro 11:25,26, 27-note cp Zech 13:8, 9).

**Door** (2374) (thura) referred to a literal door as allowing one to enter and exit some place (Mk 1:33), a courtyard or outer door (Acts 12:13), a reference to the Temple gate (Acts 3:2), the door of a tomb (Mk 15:46), or the door of heaven (Rev 4:1 - this last use being in a sense metaphorical). Figuratively thura referred to Jesus Himself as the metaphorical door through which one could enter into salvation (John 10:7, 9). And so in John we read that **Jesus** taught "I am **the door** (NOTE CAREFULLY - NOT "a door" BUT "THE door!" = the unique, only "DOOR!"); if anyone enters through Me, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture." (John 10:9) and added "I am **THE** (specific, exclusive) way, and **THE** (specific, exclusive) truth, and **THE** (specific, exclusive) life; (absolutely) no one comes to the Father, but through Me." (John 14:6) In Greek the definite article "**THE**" is important as it speaks of specificity...in other words, had Jesus been one of many ways, He would not have used the definite article "**THE**" but would have identified Himself as "a" way, "a" truth, "a" life, one of many gates/ways. Jesus did not teach that there are many roads that lead to the Kingdom of Heaven but clearly taught "I am the only **Way**."

**Friberg** - (1) door; literally, as an opening for entrance and exit; (a) of a house door (MK 1.33); (b) of a courtyard outer door, gate (AC 12.13); (c) of the temple gate (AC 3.2); (d) of a tomb door, entrance (MK 15.46); (e) of heaven door (RV 4.1); (2) figuratively; (a) evpi. qu,raij as a spatial image to denote temporal imminency soon (MK 13.29); (b) as what is possible or feasible opportunity (RV 3.8); (c) as an extended metaphor of Jesus as the one who provides salvation, spiritual safety, and nourishment (JN 10.7, 9) (Borrow [Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament](#))

**Gilbrant** - In classical Greek the thura primarily denotes "a door," usually referring to the place of entry to a home, cave, city, or temple. The thura gained significance, becoming a natural location for education and discussions. Figuratively "at the door" means "near the hand," and used metaphorically it means "the door of your soul." In the **Septuagint** thura translates six Hebrew words, all basically denoting "a door" and ranging in nuance from an opening, a door of a dwelling, or a gate, all being the only normal passage of entry. The thura became an important place socially where court cases and other serious matters occurred (Job 5:4; Ruth 4:1). Figuratively thura describes the "door of heaven" through which God delivers gifts to mankind such as manna (cf. Psalm 78:23f. [LXX 77:23f.]). In the **New Testament** thura denotes "a door," "a gate," or "an entrance" of a tomb. Again, "at the door" figuratively means "near at hand" (Matthew 24:33; Mark 13:29; see also Acts 5:9; James 5:9). It describes the "door of heaven" through which is revealed heavenly glories (Revelation 4:1; see also Acts 7:56). It is used of various types of doors, such as prison doors (Acts 5:19; 12:6-11; 16:26ff.). The resurrected Christ passed through closed doors according to John 20:19,26. Spiritually, God opens doors of faith for the apostolic message to be delivered (Colossians 4:3; Acts 14:27). God may also shut the door, leaving unbelievers to judgment (Matthew 25:10; Luke 13:25; Revelation 3:8). Jesus announced (John 10:7,9) that He is the thura. It is through Him alone that God reveals himself to humanity and through which humanity may gain access to God. See also pulē (4297), "door" or "gate." ([Complete Biblical Library](#))

**Thura - 37v - door(28), doors(6), entrance(3), gate(1), gates(1).** Matt. 6:6; Matt. 24:33; Matt. 25:10; Matt. 27:60; Mk. 1:33; Mk. 2:2; Mk. 11:4; Mk. 13:29; Mk. 15:46; Mk. 16:3; Lk. 11:7; Lk. 13:24; Lk. 13:25; Jn. 10:1; Jn. 10:2; Jn. 10:7; Jn. 10:9; Jn. 18:16; Jn. 20:19; Jn. 20:26; Acts 3:2; Acts 5:9; Acts 5:19; Acts 5:23; Acts 12:6; Acts 12:13; Acts 14:27; Acts 16:26; Acts 16:27; Acts 21:30; 1 Co. 16:9; 2 Co. 2:12; Col. 4:3; Jas. 5:9; Rev. 3:8; Rev. 3:20; Rev. 4:1

**Thura in the Septuagint** - Gen. 6:16; Gen. 18:1; Gen. 18:2; Gen. 18:10; Gen. 19:6; Gen. 19:9; Gen. 19:10; Gen. 19:11; Exod. 12:22; Exod. 12:23; Exod. 21:6; Exod. 29:4; Exod. 29:10; Exod. 29:11; Exod. 29:32; Exod. 29:42; Exod. 33:8; Exod. 33:9; Exod. 33:10; Exod. 36:34; Exod. 36:37; Exod. 38:8; Exod. 38:30; Exod. 39:40;

Exod. 40:5; Exod. 40:6; Exod. 40:12; Exod. 40:29; Lev. 1:3; Lev. 1:5; Lev. 3:2; Lev. 3:8; Lev. 3:13; Lev. 4:4; Lev. 4:7; Lev. 4:14; Lev. 4:18; Lev. 8:3; Lev. 8:4; Lev. 8:33; Lev. 8:35; Lev. 10:7; Lev. 12:6; Lev. 14:11; Lev. 14:23; Lev. 14:38; Lev. 15:14; Lev. 15:29; Lev. 16:7; Lev. 17:4; Lev. 17:5; Lev. 17:6; Lev. 17:9; Lev. 19:21; Num. 3:25; Num. 4:25; Num. 4:31; Num. 6:10; Num. 6:13; Num. 6:18; Num. 10:3; Num. 11:10; Num. 12:5; Num. 16:18; Num. 16:19; Num. 16:27; Num. 16:50; Num. 20:6; Num. 25:6; Num. 27:2; Deut. 15:17; Deut. 22:21; Deut. 31:14; Deut. 31:15; Jos. 2:19; Jos. 19:51; Jdg. 3:23; Jdg. 3:24; Jdg. 3:25; Jdg. 4:20; Jdg. 9:35; Jdg. 9:40; Jdg. 9:44; Jdg. 9:52; Jdg. 11:31; Jdg. 16:3; Jdg. 18:16; Jdg. 19:22; Jdg. 19:26; Jdg. 19:27; 1 Sam. 3:15; 1 Sam. 21:13; 1 Sam. 23:7; 2 Sam. 10:8; 2 Sam. 11:9; 2 Sam. 11:23; 2 Sam. 13:17; 2 Sam. 13:18; 1 Ki. 6:31; 1 Ki. 6:32; 1 Ki. 6:34; 1 Ki. 7:5; 1 Ki. 7:50; 1 Ki. 16:34; 2 Ki. 4:4; 2 Ki. 4:5; 2 Ki. 4:15; 2 Ki. 4:33; 2 Ki. 5:9; 2 Ki. 6:32; 2 Ki. 7:3; 2 Ki. 9:3; 2 Ki. 9:10; 2 Ki. 10:8; 2 Ki. 12:13; 2 Ki. 18:16; 2 Ki. 23:8; 1 Chr. 9:21; 1 Chr. 9:27; 2 Chr. 4:9; 2 Chr. 4:22; 2 Chr. 18:9; 2 Chr. 28:24; 2 Chr. 29:3; 2 Chr. 29:7; Neh. 3:1; Neh. 3:3; Neh. 3:6; Neh. 3:13; Neh. 3:14; Neh. 3:20; Neh. 3:21; Neh. 6:1; Neh. 6:10; Neh. 7:1; Neh. 7:3; Est. 5:1; Job 5:4; Job 31:9; Job 31:32; Job 31:34; Ps. 74:5; Ps. 78:23; Ps. 141:3; Prov. 5:8; Prov. 8:32; Prov. 9:14; Prov. 14:19; Prov. 26:14; Eccl. 12:4; Cant. 5:2; Cant. 7:13; Cant. 8:9; Isa. 26:20; Isa. 45:1; Isa. 45:2; Isa. 57:8; Jer. 49:31; Ezek. 8:8; Ezek. 38:11; Ezek. 40:11; Ezek. 40:48; Ezek. 41:4; Ezek. 41:11; Ezek. 41:24; Ezek. 42:9; Ezek. 46:12; Dan. 3:26; Zech. 11:1; Mal. 1:10;

## Related Resources

- [Just how narrow is the narrow gate?](#)
- [Will more people go to heaven or to hell?](#)
- [Why did God make salvation such a narrow path?](#)
- [How can I, a Muslim, become assured of paradise?](#)
- [Going to Heaven - how can I guarantee my eternal destination?](#)
- [Is there an afterlife?](#)
- [What did Jesus mean when He said "I am the door" \(John 10:7\)?](#)
- [Is Jesus the only way to Heaven?](#)

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**Hebert Lockyer** gives us an example of one who entered the small gate and tread the dangerous way of a disciple in his fascinating book entitled [Last Words of Saints and Sinners \(Borrow this book\)](#) writing that

[John Bradford](#), Chaplain to Edward VI in 1552, was one of the most popular preachers of his day in England. With the accession of Queen Mary, Bradford was arrested for seditious utterances and heresy. Refusing to recant, (he was) condemned to be burnt at Smithfield, and he met his death tied to the same stake as a young man found guilty of the same supposed crime. As the flames covered their bodies, Bradford consoled the youth by saying "*Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it*".

Elsewhere, **Lockyer** gives a tragic quote which is in diametric opposition to that of John Bradford....

[Robert G. Ingersoll](#) (1833-1899), famous American lawyer and prominent agnostic, lectured on Biblical inaccuracies and contradictions. His famed lecture *The Mistakes Of Moses* led one defender of the Bible to say that he would like to hear Moses speak for five minutes on *The Mistakes Of Ingersoll*! Standing by his graveside, his brother exclaimed "*Life is a **narrow vale** between the **narrow peaks** of two eternities. We **strive in vain to look beyond the heights**. We cry aloud, and the only answer is the echo of our wailings*".

**Comment** - This "eulogy" is fascinating in that it uses some of the same words our Lord Jesus Christ used to warn people of the wailing that awaited those who rejected His offer of salvation!

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**John Milton** makes mention of the **small gate** in **Paradise Regained**

*"A deathlike sleep,  
A gentle wafting to immortal life.  
Truth shall retire  
Bestruck with sland'rous darts,  
And works of faith rarely be found.  
And to the faithful, Death **the gate of life**."*

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A correct knowledge of and response to the two gates and two ways is an urgent matter!

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**To Little, Too Late, Regarding the Strait Gate** - The story is told of Professor T. H. Huxley, the father of agnosticism. As he came to the end of life, the nurse attending him said that as he lay dying, the great skeptic suddenly looked up at some sight invisible to mortal eyes, and staring a while, whispered at last, "**So it is true.**" And he died and tragically entered the place of weeping and gnawing of teeth!

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**D L Moody - WHO are we to strive with?** Not with the gate-keeper. The gate-keeper stands with the gate wide open, and he says, "Come in, come in!" All the striving is with the flesh; it is with this old carnal nature of ours.

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**Vance Havner** - The kingdom of heaven is possessed by those who are resolutely in earnest, who make it their chief concern. I am not preaching self-effort nor recognizing any merit in ourselves, for it is all the grace of God (Eph 2:8-9+), but the Scriptures exhort us to strive to enter in at the strait gate (Lk 13:24KJV), to labor to enter into God's rest (Hebrews 4:11+, Hebrews 4:3), to give diligence to make our calling and election sure. God does business with those who mean business. There is a world of difference between leisurely walking down an aisle to join a church and desperately pressing through to Jesus. The preaching of this age has not disposed this generation to get very excited about going to heaven. Some Bible teaching has so minimized personal responsibility that any suggestion of effort on our part is frowned upon.

To be sure, it is all of grace and the fight is a fight of faith (1Ti 6:12 - **fight** in [present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#) = [agonizomai](#) - same verb Jesus uses in Lk 13:24), but it is still a fight and some saints could use a little **sanctified violence** to good profit. Why should we not be as desperately in earnest to possess our possessions in Christ (cf Col 2:3, 2Cor 8:9, 2Pe 1:3) as the world is to lay hold of all the devil has to offer?

Joshua did not invade Canaan in a rocking chair and we do not take our Promised Land on a vacation jaunt.

The saints of the ages have made the kingdom of God their absorbing passion, the main business of their lives (Mt 6:33). With them religion was not a side issue, a matter of an hour at church and a few dollars in a duplex envelope. Paul said, "To me to live is Christ," (Php 1:21) and to him Christ was just that, everything, life itself (cf Col 3:4+). This business of getting saved, living a Christian life and winning others, is a full-time occupation. We have to pray over it and weep over it and study over it and work over it, and **if we possess it, it must possess us.**

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**Spurgeon's Introduction to his sermon on [Luke 13:24 Self-Delusion](#)** - EVERY wise merchant will occasionally hold a stock-taking, when he will cast up his accounts, examine what he has on hand, and ascertain decisively whether his trade is prosperous or declining. Every man who is wise in the kingdom of heaven will do the same by himself; he will cry, "Search me, O God, and try me." And he will frequently set apart special seasons for self-examination, to discover whether things are right between God and his soul. The God whom we worship is a great heart-searcher; of old His servants knew Him as "The Lord which searches the heart, and tries the reins of the children of men." We, who are called to be the mouth for God unto the people, feel ourselves impelled to stir you up in His name to make diligent search, for we would not have you come short of the promised rest. We would be unfaithful to your souls if we did not warn you against deception, and excite you to solemn trial of your state. That which every wise man does, that which God Himself does with you, I may well exhort you to do with yourselves this morning! O may God help you to deal very faithfully with your own hearts. Let the oldest saint here look well to the fundamentals of his piety, for gray heads may cover black hearts; and let not the young believer, in the first flush of his joyous faith, despise the word of warning, for the greenness of youth may be joined to the rottenness of hypocrisy! I shall not, this morning, aim to introduce doubts and fears into your minds; no, verily, I rather hope that the rough winds of self-examination may help to drive them away! It is not security, but carnal security, which we would kill; not confidence, but fleshly confidence, which we would overthrow; not peace, but false peace, which we would destroy. I am sure I am right in taking such a text as this, and in desiring to force it home upon your attention; for Christ, speaking to His own disciples, says, "I say unto YOU." Notice with great care how He repeats the personal pronoun, you, you, yourselves, some 12 times in a few verses; as if this were a matter especially belonging to professors—a subject which ought to come under our immediate notice, not as having reference to aliens and foreigners from the commonwealth of Israel, but to us, the professed followers of Jesus Christ! Let us bow our strength to our solemn work at once. O great Master of assemblies, make our words as goads to the conscience, and fasten them as nails in the memory!

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Oh, choose now the path of salvation  
And enter in at the strait gate!  
Come now, while the Savior is calling;  
Tomorrow may be too late! --Haines

The path that fools have trod is a well-beaten one.

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**Vance Havner** - Some make the Christian life too easy. To them, casting their care on the Lord means dismissing and disregarding serious responsibilities under the pretense of trust. Our Lord made discipleship hard and lost many prospective followers because He called them to a pilgrimage—not a parade, to a fight—not to a frolic. We are to endure hardness, overcome the world, and not merely endure it. **We must strive to enter in at the strait gate, and work out our salvation with fear and trembling** (Php 2:12 which is ONLY possible because of Php 2:13NLT!) Few there be who travel the narrow way and those who do will often be the objects of scorn. There is Scripture on both sides, making it too hard and making it too easy. A proper view of both will make for balanced living. The Saviour gives us the perfect example. A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, He offered joy and peace.

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**F B Meyer** - The question which the disciples asked was for their gratification and curiosity. Men have always been curious to know what will be the numerical result of the Redeemer's work. But to such questions the Lord had no reply. He was only eager that none of those whom He loved should miss the full measure of blessedness that was within his reach; therefore He bade each be sure of entering the narrow door, so narrow that there is no room to carry through it the love of self, the greed of gain, the thirst for the applause and rewards of the world. We may be saved from the penalty of sin by one single glance at the Savior, who lived, and died, and lives for evermore; but we cannot be saved in the deepest meaning of the word, in the sense of being delivered from the love and power of sin, unless we are willing to enter through a door, so constructed and strait, that it seems impossible to effect an entrance. Art thou willing for this, willing to leave behind thy amassed and hardly-gained treasures, thy luggage and impedimenta, thy jewels and gewgaws, thy certificate of merit and credentials, thy notions of self-importance, the weights which thou hast carried so long, the pillows with which thou art always sparing thyself from the stern realities and efforts of a noble life? If thou art willing for this, and prepared to strive, even to the rending of thyself asunder, then thou shalt be saved from the love and tyranny of that wild, dark power, which, hitherto, has always dragged thee downwards. It is not enough to eat and drink of the blessed memorial supper, nor to listen to the voice of Jesus teaching in his Church. Many may do all this, and yet never be included in the Kingdom of Heaven.

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**Stalin's Strange Vision** - According to Svetlana Stalin, when her father, Joseph Stalin, was dying, he was lying with his eyes closed. At the very last moment, he suddenly opened his eyes and looked at the people in the room. It was a look of unutterable horror and anguish. Then he lifted his left hand, as though pointing to something, and dropped it and died. One wonders how many who are attracted to his socialistic views are told how he departed this life to the next?!

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**The Broad Road to Destruction** - In 2001 George Barna reported that 51% of Americans believed that if a person was generally good, or did enough good things for others during their life, they would earn a place in heaven.

## **STRAIT IS THE GATE TO ALL THAT COME**

by Karolina W. Sandell-Berg

[\(Play hymn\)](#)

Strait is the gate to all that come,  
And narrow is the way,  
Which leads unto the heav'nly home,  
Where yet is room for thee,  
Where yet is room for thee.

In Heav'n, where God His own shall take,  
There's also room for thee.  
In Jesus' Name, for Jesus' sake,  
The gates shall opened be,  
The gates shall opened be.

Where thousands stand arrayed in white,  
Whom God His own declared,  
There yet is room and life and light,  
By grace for thee prepared,  
By grace for thee prepared.

In Jesus' heart there's room, I know,  
And in His Heav'n of bliss.  
He in His Gospel tells me so,  
Thanks be to God for this,

Thanks be to God for this.

Now God be praised, that even I  
May in that city dwell,  
Where peace shall reign eternally,  
And all with me be well,  
And all with me be well.

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**THE NARROW PASSAGE** - I have always been amazed to watch the freighters go through the Soo Locks that join Lake Superior and Lake Huron in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. To me, it's a wonder of piloting as I see the captain inch his 1,000-foot-long ore boat safely through the Poe or the Davis Lock. There it can be lowered to the level of Lake Huron or raised so that it can enter Lake Superior. The captain eases the boat through the gates of the lock at a barely discernible pace because it is only a couple feet wider than the ship itself. The process may take a while, but it gets the ship safely through. It would be much easier for the captain to approach the wide mouth of the St. Mary's River that flows alongside the locks and joins the two lakes. But it is shallow, fast-moving, and filled with huge rocks and white-water rapids. A freighter trying that route would be doomed to destruction. If you were the ship's captain, which way would you choose? The narrow way, of course. It's the only safe way

There is a narrow way in the spiritual life; the way of faith in Christ. It leads to heaven. Trust Jesus today Take the narrow way! —D. C. Egner

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**ALL NOBLE THINGS ARE DIFFICULT** - Oswald Chambers on the STRAIT GATE - If we are going to live as disciples of Jesus, we have to remember that all noble things are difficult. The Christian life is gloriously difficult, but the difficulty of it does not make us faint and cave in, it rouses us up to overcome. Do we so appreciate the marvelous salvation of Jesus Christ that we are our utmost for His highest?

God saves men by His sovereign grace through the Atonement of Jesus; He works in us to will and to do of His good pleasure (Php 2:13NLT); but we have to work out that salvation in practical living (Php 2:12). If once we start on the basis of His Redemption to do what He commands, we find that we can do it. If we fail, it is because we have not practiced. The crisis will reveal whether we have been practicing or not. If we obey the Spirit of God and practise in our physical life what God has put in us by His Spirit, then when the crisis comes, we shall find that our own nature as well as the grace of God will stand by us.

Thank God He does give us difficult things to do! His salvation is a glad thing, but it is also a heroic, holy thing. It tests us for all we are worth. Jesus is bringing many "sons" unto glory, and God will not shield us from the requirements of a son. God's grace turns out men and women with a strong family likeness to Jesus Christ, not milk sops. It takes a tremendous amount of discipline to live the noble life of a disciple of Jesus in actual things. It is always necessary to make an effort to be noble

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**Which Highway?** - Roads. They're everywhere. Criss-crossing the landscape, taking us wherever we want to go. Freeways. Avenues. Toll roads. Boulevards.

And now there's yet another type of thoroughfare that's taking us to never-before traveled areas. It's called the "information superhighway," and it promises to be an avenue to discovery and knowledge. Via computer hookups, we can access vast libraries of new information.

Asphalt and concrete roads lead us to physical destinations. Computer highways take us to places of the mind--information destinations that can enlighten, educate, and entertain us. All those roads. All those decisions. All those possibilities.

Yet no road, no highway, no computer network can compare with the only true superhighway--the narrow way.

In Matthew 7, Jesus told us about that way. It is entered through a narrow gate, its course is difficult, and it is not as crowded as the broad way that leads to destruction. Jesus was talking about the path that we take when we put our faith in Him. He was talking about the road to heaven.

Are you on that highway? We have so many paths to take in life, but God's way is the only one that leads to eternal life. --J D Brannon

Oh, choose now the path of salvation  
And enter in at the strait gate!  
Come now, while the Savior is calling;  
Tomorrow may be too late! --Haines



The path that fools have trod  
is a well-beaten one.

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### The Narrow Way

by William Cowper

What thousands never knew the road!  
What thousands hate it when 'tis known!  
None but the chosen tribes of God  
Will seek or choose it for their own.

A thousand ways in ruin end,  
One only leads to joys on high;  
By that my willing steps ascend,  
Pleased with a journey to the sky.

No more I ask or hope to find  
Delight or happiness below;  
Sorrow may well possess the mind  
That feeds where thorns and thistles grow.

The joy that fades is not for me,  
I seek immortal joys above;  
There glory without end shall be  
The bright reward of faith and love.

Cleave to the world, ye sordid worms,  
Contented lick your native dust!  
But God shall fight with all his storms,  
Against the idol of your trust.

FOR MANY, I TELL YOU, WILL SEEK TO ENTER AND WILL NOT BE ABLE: hoti polloi, lego (1SPAI) humin, zetesousin (3PFAI) eiselthein (AAN) kai ouk ischusousin (3PFAI)

- **For:** Pr 1:24 25 26 27 28 14:6 21:25 Ec 10:15 Isa 1:15 58:2 3 4 Eze 33:31 Mk 6:18 19 20 Jn 7:34 8:21 13:33 Ro 9:31 32 33 10:3)
- [Luke 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 13:22-30 The Narrow Door](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 13:22-30 Are Just a Few Being Saved? Part 1](#)
- [Luke 13:22-30 Are Just a Few Being Saved? Part 2](#)

#### Related Passage:

Mt 7:13+ "Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and **there are many who enter through it.**

**For** (terms of explanation) **many I tell you, will seek (zeteo) to enter and will not be able (ischuo)** - **For** introduces the first portion of Jesus' explanation for their need to **strive** to enter. He explains that **they will not be able** to enter if they do not strive to enter. **I tell you** is in the **plural** which indicates that Jesus is addressing this not just to the one who ask the question in Lk 13:23 but to the entire audience. **Many** (pollus) means just that - not a few but a large number of souls. In Mt 7:13 note Jesus clearly warned that there would be **many** who would enter through the wide gate and travel the broad highway which ended in utter, eternal ruin and loss of all purpose for which they were originally created (see **apoleia**). The fact that they will seek indicates that in that horrible moment, they will know that it was all true (see [Huxley](#)) and will try to get in, but it is too late! As an aside Hell was not created originally for man but for Satan and his demons - Mt 25:41. **Not** (ou) signifies absolute negation sounding the death knell of finality when the door is shut!

**Bob Utley** comments "that many of those who thought they were certain of entrance into the kingdom will be surprised (cf. Lk 13:28; Mt 8:12). This is a shocking verse for legalists of all ages and cultures (ED: AND ALL PROFESSORS!). Salvation is not human

effort, but a response of personal faith to God's gift and provision—Jesus (cf. Jn 10:1-18 14:6)."

**Norval Geldenhuys** - When once the gate is shut and the time of grace has expired, many will attempt to enter, but then they will not be able to do so, for it will then be for ever too late. (Borrow [Commentary on the Gospel of Luke : the English text with introduction, exposition and notes](#))

**David Guzik** comments that

The punctuation supplied by translators in Luke 13:24 25 is poor. It should read *will not be able when once the Master of the house has risen up and shut the door*. The point is that there will come a time when it is too late to enter - that is why one must have an urgency to enter now. This is true regarding our soul's salvation.

You can know something about Jesus and not be saved.

You can be in the presence of Jesus and not be saved.

It is likewise true of so many areas where God challenges our lives. We must be urgent to do what God tells us now. For example, many men are terrible husbands, until the day when their wife just gives up - then they wake up, but it may be **too late**! You begin to stand outside and knock at the door, saying, '**Lord, Lord**, open for us': Many will seek to enter (in the sense of wishing to enter), but they will not be able to. When the door is open, it is open; when it is shut, it is shut. There is a real difference between a mere **seeking** and **striving** to enter. A casual wish to be saved isn't enough, because there are too many obstacles on the way. ([Luke 13 Commentary](#))

**Steven Cole** comments that...

Salvation requires our earnest effort because **many will seek to enter and will not be able** to do so. The following verse indicates that they will not be able to enter because they missed the deadline. It is not that many strive to enter, but only some of those striving succeed. Rather, as the following verses show, some will wake up to the serious issues involved in their own salvation too late. They had assumed that all was well with them because they were decent, religious people. **They knew Jesus in a casual way, but they had not taken the Gospel to heart. They had never repented of their sins.** But they didn't consider these matters seriously until it was **too late**...I am making the point that if you follow the crowd you will not follow the Savior into eternal life. Jesus says that there are **many** (and He is talking about the religious crowd) who will not enter through the narrow door (cf Mt 7:13). If you follow them, you will be shut out when that door slams shut. And, it always takes effort, both mentally and morally, to go against the majority. You have to think about matters for yourself and decide, "I will not follow conventional wisdom. I will not go along with group pressure. I will follow the Lord Jesus Christ." So Jesus' first point is that salvation requires our **earnest effort**. If you are **only half-hearted** about it or **go with the crowd**, you will miss it! **You must strive to enter by the narrow door.** ([Luke 13:22-30 The Narrow Door](#))

## **ARE YOU STRIVING OR SEEKING TO ENTER?**

**Alexander Maclaren** notes the reason for the command to **strive to enter**....

It is briefly given (here in the last clause of) Luke 13:24, and both parts of the reason there are expanded in the following verses. Effort is needed for entrance, because many are shut out. The questioner would be no better for knowing whether few would enter, but he and all need to burn in on their minds that many will not. Very solemnly significant is the difference between **striving** and **seeking**. It is like the difference between wishing and willing. There may be a seeking which has no real earnestness in it, and is not sufficiently determined, to do what is needful in order to find. Plenty of people would like to possess earthly good, but cannot brace themselves to needful work and sacrifice. Plenty would like to 'go to heaven,' as they understand the phrase, but cannot screw themselves to the surrender of self and the world (cp Mk 8:35 36 37).

Vagrant, half-hearted seeking,  
such as one sees many examples of,  
will never win anything,  
either in this world or in the other.

We must **strive**, and not only **seek**. (Read Maclaren's entire sermon - [The Strait Gate](#))

**Godet** - I declare unto you, says Jesus: They will think it incredible that so great a number of Jews, with the ardent desire to have part in that kingdom, should not succeed in entering it. The word πολλοί, **many**, proves the connection between this discourse and the

question of Lk 13:23. Only Jesus does not say whether there will be few or many saved; He confines Himself to saying that there will be **many** lost. This is the one important matter for practical and individual application. [Luke 13:22 Commentary](#)

**C H Spurgeon** - Now is the accepted time, but ere long the day of grace and of this mortal life will end, and then it will be too late to seek for mercy. (The Interpreter: Spurgeon's Devotional Bible)

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#### **Norman Geisler - LUKE 13:24—Do all seekers find God?**

**PROBLEM:** Jesus says, "Seek and you will find." Other passages of Scripture reaffirm the same truth (1 Chron. 28:9; Isa. 55:6; Acts 10:35). Yet, according to Jesus, "many ... will seek to enter and will not be able" (Luke 13:24). Likewise, Jesus said in John, "You will seek Me and not find Me" (John 7:34).

**SOLUTION:** All who earnestly seek God, find Him, for "He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him" (Heb. 11:6). In fact, God is "longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish" (2 Peter 3:9).

Of course, there are those who seek God on their own terms (by human works) who will not be saved, since it is "not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us" (Titus 3:5). The Bible says, "there is a way which seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death" (Prov. 14:12). Further, there are those who seek too late, namely, after they die for "it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment" (Heb. 9:27). But there is no one who comes to God in this life in penitence, falling upon His mercy, that does not receive His gracious gift of salvation.

#### **SEEKERS WHO DO FIND GOD    SEEKERS WHO DO NOT FIND GOD**

Those coming God's way	Those coming their own way
Those who come in time	Those who wait too late
Those coming in repentance	Those coming in remorse

Judas regretted his sin (Matt. 27:4), but Peter repented of his. Hence, Judas is lost (John 17:12), and Peter is saved. [\(Luke 13:24—Do all seekers find God? - Defending Inerrancy\)](#)

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**Will seek** (2212) (**zeteo**) means to try to learn location of something often by movement from place to place in process of searching. Try to find by searching for what is lost. Zeteo describes man's search for God (Acts 17:27). There is a seeking which Jesus commends but it is before the door is shut...

Matthew 6:33+ "But (contrast with Mt 6:32) **seek** ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) first His kingdom (and by "default" the King of that kingdom, Christ Jesus) and His righteousness (Which He gives as a gift by grace to those who place their trust in His perfect righteousness and substitutionary atonement), and all these things will be added to you.

**Able** (2480) (**ischuo** from **ischus** = might) means to be strong in body or in resources. **Ischuo** can speak of physical power (Mk 2:17, 5:4, 9:12). It can speak of having the required personal resources to accomplish some objective as in Php 4:13 or conversely with the negative speaks of that which is good for nothing (Mt 5:13-note).

**Ischuo** - 28x in 28v in **NAS** - Mt 5:13; 8:28; 9:12; 26:40; Mark 2:17; 5:4; 9:18; 14:37; Luke 6:48; 8:43; 13:24; 14:6, 29f; 16:3; 20:26; John 21:6; Acts 6:10; 15:10; 19:16, 20; 25:7; 27:16; Gal 5:6; Phil 4:13; Heb 9:17; Jas 5:16; Rev 12:8. **NAS** = able(5), am...strong enough(1), been able(1), can(1), can do(1), could(8), force(1), good(1), healthy(2), means(1), overpowered(1), prevailing(1), strong enough(3), unable\*(2).

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#### **Luke 13:24 - James Smith**

Introduction. The first time He spoke of the Strait Gate was in the Sermon on the Mount. Three years afterwards, when many had forsaken Him and few were pressing forward to the Kingdom, He again spoke of the Strait Gate (Mt 7:13), but added one little word, "Strive." No stronger word is to be found in Bible; it could be better understood by the word "agonise." Strive, agonise, exert every power of body and soul; strain every nerve; let the salvation of your soul for the time being, be the chief business of your life. And we can say, if sinners saw themselves as God sees they would really realise their need, and would strive.

I. Yours Would be the Violence of the Hungry.

1. It's holiday time, children have gone to the Park, they have forgotten all about the time, and do not arrive for dinner until the middle of afternoon.
2. Ravenously hungry—cannot wait—lay hand on crusts and scraps of food.
3. Hunger of soul leads to violence—to intent earnestness.

## II. Yours will be the Violence of the Thirsty.

1. Mungo Park, the one who discovered the Niger, was almost dying of thirst. Rain fell for an hour, and he succeeded in quenching his thirst by soaking his clothes and sucking them dry. He heard a loud croaking of frogs. "A heavenly sound," said he, and he discovered a shallow muddy pool.
2. Soul-thirst will lead you to do desperate things.
3. "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness."

## III. You would Know Something of the Violence of the Drowning.

1. Frank Bullen tells of one who fell overboard, who gripped the rope thrown to him so tightly that it was imbedded in the flesh.
2. Are you sinking in the waters of conviction? If so, you will require no exhortation to earnestness.

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**Warren Wiersbe** - The peril of illusion. Going through the narrow gate ("strait" as in straitjacket) and walking on the narrow way means we must leave behind everything that is not consistent with a dedicated Christian life. Jesus described it as "taking up your cross," and we can't carry our cross and our worldly baggage at the same time. But beware of the illusions in the world. It appears that the broad gate is the easier entrance, but that is pure illusion. "Strive to enter through the narrow gate," says Jesus in Luke 13:24; and the word translated "strive" gives us the English word agonize. It pictures an athlete giving his or her very best and paying a price to win the race. From start to finish, the Christian life is not an easy life. "We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God" (Acts 14:22+). The broad, crowded road seems to be the easier way to go, but that road leads to destruction. The world's illusions will only lead you astray. Beware! (See [New Testament Words for Today: 100 Devotional Reflections](#))

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## **C H Spurgeon - THERE IS A CROWD OF PEOPLE WHO WILL SEEK TO ENTER AND WILL NOT BE ABLE.** Who are these?

If you look closely at the crowd who this day seek to pass, methinks you will see a considerable difference between **seeking and striving**. You are not merely advised to seek; you are urgently bidden to strive. **Striving** is a more vehement exercise than seeking. Are you amongst those who coolly **seek** admission because, forsooth, they suppose it is the proper thing? Many there be who come up to the gate of mercy and seek to enter, not striving, not particularly anxious, certainly far enough from being agitated. And when they look at the gate they object to the lintel because it is too low, nor will they deign to stoop. There is no believing in Jesus with a proud heart. He that trusts Christ must feel himself to be guilty, and acknowledge it. **He never will savingly believe till he has been thoroughly convinced of sin.** But many say, "I will never stoop to that. Unless I have something to do in the work, and share some of the merit, I cannot enter." No, sirs, some of you are quite unable to believe in Christ because you believe in yourselves. As long as a man thinks himself a fine fellow, how can he think well of Jesus? You eclipse the sun; you hold up your own little hands before the sunlight; how can you expect to see? You are too good to go to heaven, or, at least, too good in your own apprehension. Oh! man. I pray God prick that bubble, that blown-up bladder, and let out the gas, that you may discern what you really are, for you are nothing, after all, but a poor worm, contemptible, notwithstanding your conceit and pride, in spite of your poverty, an arrogant worm, that dares to lift up its head when it has nothing to glory in. Oh! bow thyself in lowly self-abhorrence, else thou mayest seek to enter, but shalt not be able!

**Some are unable to enter because the pride of life will not let them.** They come to this gate in their carriage and pair, and expect to drive in, but they cannot get admission. There is no different way of salvation for a peer of the realm than for a pauper in the workhouse. The greatest prince that ever lived must trust Jesus just as the meanest peasant does. I recollect a minister once telling me that he attended the bedside of a very proud woman, of considerable wealth, and she said to him, "Do you think, sir, that when I am in heaven, such a person as Betty—my maid—will be in the same place as I am? I never could endure her company here. She is a good servant in her way, but I am sure I could not put up with her in heaven." "No, madam," said he, "I do not suppose you will ever be where Betty will be." He knew Betty to be one of the humblest and most consistent of Christian women anywhere; and he might have told her proud mistress that in the sight of God meekness is preferable to majesty. The Lord Jesus, in the day of his coming, will wipe out all such distinctions as may very properly exist on earth, though they cannot be recognised beyond the skies. Oh! rich man, glory not in thy riches! All thy wealth, if thou couldst take it with thee, would not buy a single paving-stone in the streets of heaven. This poor stuff—do not trust in it. Oh! lay it aside as a crown of glorying, and pass humbly through the gate with Lazarus!

**Some are unable to enter because they carry contraband goods with them.** When you land in France, there stands the gendarme, who wants to see what you are carrying in that basket. If you attempt to push by, you will soon find yourself in custody. He must know what is there; contraband goods cannot be taken in. So at the gate of mercy—which is Christ—no man can be saved if he desire to keep his sins. He must give up every false way. "Oh!" saith the drunkard, "I'd like to get to heaven, but I must smuggle in this bottle somehow." "I would like to be a Christian," says another; "I do not mind taking Dr. Watts's hymns with me, but I should like sometimes to sing a Bacchanalian song, or a light-some serenade." "Well," cries another, "I enjoy myself on Sunday with God's people, but you must not deny me the amusements of the world during the week; I cannot give them up." Well, then, you cannot

enter, for Jesus Christ never saves us in our sins; he saves us from our sins. "Doctor," says the fool, "make me well, but I'd like to keep my fever." "No," saith the doctor, "how can you be well while you keep the fever?" How can a man be saved from his sins while he clings to his sins? What is salvation but to be delivered from sin? Sin-lovers may seek to be saved, but they shall not be able; while they hug their sins, they cannot have Christ. Some of you are in this grievous predicament. You have been attending this house of prayer a good long time. I do not know what hinders you, but this I do know, there is a worm somewhere eating out the heart of that fair-looking apple. Some private sin that you pamper is destroying your souls. Oh! that you had grace to give it up, and to come in by the strait gate, trusting in Jesus Christ!

Not a few are unable to enter in because they want to postpone the matter until to-morrow. To-day, at any rate, you are engaged with other plans and projects. "A little longer let me revel in some of the sensual enjoyments of life, and afterwards I will come in." Procrastinators are among the most hopeless of people. He that hath "to-morrow" quivering on his lips is never likely to have grace reigning in his heart.

**Others, and these are in the worst plight of all, think that they are in, and that they have entered.** They mistake the outside of the gate for the inside. A strange mistake to fall into, but many do thus delude themselves. They rub their backs against the posts, and then they tell us they are "as near heaven as anybody else." They have never passed the threshold; they have never found shelter in Christ, albeit they may have felt wonderfully excited at a revival meeting, and sung as loudly and lustily as any of the congregation:—"I do believe, I will believe." There is a considerable show of reformation about them. Although they have not got a new garment, they have mended up the old one. They are not new creatures, but still they are better behaved creatures than they were before. And they are "all right." Be not deceived, my dear friends; do beware of mistaking a work of nature for the operation of God's grace. Do not be taken in by the devil's counterfeits. They are well made; they look like genuine; when they are brand new they shine and glitter like fine gold, but they will not stand the test; every one of them will have a nail driven through them one day; they will never pass current with God. If you have a religion, let it be real and true, not feigned and hypocritical. Of all cheats, the man who cheats himself is certainly the least wise, and, as I think, he is the least honest. Do not play the knave with thine own soul. Suspect thyself too much rather than too little. Better journey to heaven in terror of hell than dream of the happy land while drifting in the other direction. "Ah! that deceit should steal such gentle shapes!" Be on your guard, every one of you. Let not any man deceive himself.

Thus it is that a crowd—I had almost said a countless crowd—of people nowadays seek to enter in, but for manifold reasons they are not able to do so. ([Luke 13:24 The Strait Gate](#))

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## James Hastings - THE NARROW DOOR

Strive to enter in by the narrow door: for many, I say unto you, shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able.—  
Luke 13:24.

THIS solemn warning was provoked by a very simple inquiry. One disciple ventured to put into words the question which often rises up, unbidden, in the hearts of us all: "Lord, are there few that be saved?" What could be more natural and innocent to ask? Yet in Christ's ears the question sounded almost frivolous, and He rebuked it by grave, stern sentences which drove home on the questioner's conscience the urgency of his own salvation. Our Lord could never tolerate the theological speculations in which men dissipate their religious earnestness and fritter away their spiritual energies. When we go to Him with our eager questionings about the future, He always brings us back to the unspeakable seriousness of our own present. When we ask Him about the end of the world and the date of the judgment day, we hear Him answer:

"Let your loins be girded about, and your lamps burning; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord." "What I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch." And so also when we speculate over the destiny of those heathen multitudes who have lived and died without the true Light, the New Testament straightway recalls us to our personal accountability: "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light." "Walk as children of light." And again, when we strive to peer into God's final secrets and to forecast the latter end of all souls, we are arrested by these piercing, heart-searching words, and bidden to strive to enter by the door.

Let us ask—

- I. What Door is This?
- II. How are we to Enter?

## I WHAT DOOR IS THIS

The door to which Christ refers is the entrance into His Kingdom. By this figure He places before His hearers the great alternatives of life, and summons them to decision. There are two gates, two ways, two goals, two sides of the throne, two kinds of foundation for the house we build: and we have to make our choice between them. We can go in at the strait gate, or at the wide gate, but not



at both. We can travel in the broad way, or the narrow way, but not in both. We can build on the rock, or on the sand, but not on both. We shrink from making this decisively plain to ourselves, that the decisiveness of our action or inaction may also remain veiled; but it is implied even in this foolish question; it is emphasized in our Lord's answer; and it is the one conviction without which thought on this subject is fruitless. The ideas we have formed of salvation and perdition, of life saved and life lost, of the bright banqueting-hall and the outer darkness, of heaven and hell, may be erroneous enough; but there can be no reason for thinking of such things at all, and as little profit in it, unless we feel that in the very nature of the case these are alternatives which for ever exclude each other. Christ's answer bears directly on this, and is wholly plain and practical. "Strive to enter in by the narrow door."

1. This is a narrow door. In the Authorized Version it is called a "strait gate," and the term "strait" is, of course, quite a different word from "straight." Straight means that which is not crooked; strait is an old-fashioned word meaning narrow. We find the same word used by our Lord in Matt. 7:13, 14; and there He explains fully what the strait gate means. "Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life." The strait gate and the narrow way mean the way of eternal life, the way of salvation, the gate or entrance to the Kingdom.

The gate is strait to our weak, unwilling nature, however gloriously open and free in itself. It is too low for pride, which will not come down from its high horse to enter on foot like a beggar, or like a little child. It is too narrow for philosophy, for the wisdom of this world; it is too definite, exclusive, and dogmatic. It is too strait for earthliness and greed. The rich man cannot bring his gear and his gains in with him, and so from the very threshold he turns away sorrowful, for he has great possessions.

¶ There was a man—a lean, cold, spectral man—never sunny, genial, poetical, for a day in his life; skin and bone—skin and bone. And they called him a Pharisee. He stood in all his erect leanness, and said how often he fasted, what tithes he paid, and what an excellent man he was. Jesus Christ said, "Well, you cannot go in at this gate. You will have to lay down and trample under foot all that fasting and tithe-paying, all that excellent virtue, for 'strait is the gate'!" A man has to lay down a great deal before he can get through this gate. He has to take a great many idols out of his pockets and throw them away; then to go through the chambers of his mind and take out theory after theory, by the hundred, and blow them away. Except ye be converted and become as little children—simple-minded, gentle, pure, loving, trustful children—ye cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. Great, tall men, who believe in themselves—who are afraid they will knock their heads against the stars if they stand right up—cannot, cannot get in. The gate truly is strait and the way narrow!

**(1) The way is called narrow in opposition to the wide gate, and the wide gate is not so hard to understand.** A wide gate is one through which you can pass easily, carrying what you please, and no questions are asked. That, Jesus tells us, is the kind of gate which opens on the way that leads to destruction. You can go in with your money, your pride, your sloth, your appetites, your vices, whatever you please. Nothing is excluded, and there is no toll. The consequence is that many do go in. The wide gate is always busy; the broad way thronged with travellers. You can drift in with the stream, you can have the pleasant sense of being well supported; you can maintain a certain self-respect by pointing to the large numbers of people, of all possible capacities, tastes, and characters, who have taken that way. Nevertheless, it leads to destruction.

¶ Moshesh, the Basuto chief, played fast and loose with the missionaries, giving himself up to the devices of the magicians, and in particular to those of a prophetess called Mantsupha. This witch declared she worshipped the same God as the missionaries, but that, as she had herself been up to Heaven, her information was first-hand, whereas theirs was only second-hand from a book. This information was, first, that polygamy was lawful; secondly, that the way to heaven was not a narrow way, as the missionaries maintained, but a very broad way, for as God was the Supreme Chief, many people must always be coming and going from this place, and consequently the road had to be very wide indeed.

It was about four months before his death, five years later, that Moshesh gave tokens of a real spiritual change. The missionaries had almost ceased to hope for this. One day towards the close of 1869, M. Jousse came to see him, and he begged him to read the Bible. The passage chosen was the 14th of John. It had always been a favourite with the old chief, who when he came to the sixth verse repeated it after him: "No man cometh unto the Father, but by me." "Son of Mokachane," said M. Jousse, "a throne is prepared for you in heaven; believe in Jesus the Saviour of the world, and you will be there."

It was just as if he heard the message of salvation for the first time. A heaven opened to the sinner, and a Saviour who presents it to us—these were the two ideas he grasped. After the missionary left he had this passage read to him again, and reproached the Christians round him with having concealed the Way of Salvation from him, though he had heard it hundreds of times. In the middle of the same night he sent some of them to M. Jousse to say, "Moshesh declares himself a Christian." M. Jousse at once came, and the next day sent to four other missionaries, who all visited Moshesh and were astounded at the reality of the change they witnessed. He summoned each of his sons to his bedside to hear his testimony. He also sent for the prophetess Mantsupha, the same who had declared the road to heaven was a broad road and who since then

had herself become a Christian. Taking both her hands he said, "My sister, my sister, we both come from very far off, but now we must both walk in the narrow way."

**(2) The narrow door is the door of renunciation, and it is left for every man to say what in his case must be renounced before he can enter.** No sin can go through: the narrow door calls for repentance, and renunciation of evil. No sham can go through: it demands renunciation of acted insincerity, and a humble resolve to walk in the truth. No compromising relations with evil can go through, no tenderness for old associations which ignore God, no disposition to fret or pity ourselves; and hence for some there is no entrance unless they pluck out a right eye, cut off a right hand or a right foot, and enter halt or maimed or blind rather than stay outside. To come to the narrow door is to feel that what lies beyond is the one thing needful, and that it is a good bargain, for the sake of it, to renounce all that has ever been dear to us.

Christ here reminds us that the commonest of all temptations is that of making our religion easy. But the path of serious moral effort can never be other than narrow and arduous. And here, as in other things, it is the first step that costs so much. Someone has said that "though it is hard to become a Christian, it is easy to be a Christian." This means, I suppose, that it is the initial stage of a Christian life that is supremely tasking. The struggle is to enter in through the narrow door of renunciation. Christ's purpose here is to make us feel that in the case of every child of man some such struggle is imperative. The old apologue of the choice of Hercules was more profoundly true than was suspected by pagan fathers who taught it to their children. All moral life involves a choice between two distinct alternatives. And Christian life is arduous, because renunciation stands at its threshold; and no one, however he may seek to do so, can enter the Kingdom of God without the serious effort and struggle implied in preferring to the easy way of self-pleasing the rough and difficult pathway of duty.

¶ The whole career of Christian in the Pilgrim's Progress carries out the ideas of the wicket gate and the narrow way leading to life, on which few enter, and in which fewer still persevere to the end. Bunyan realized the gravity and the perils of the spiritual quest in a fashion which is hardly popular to-day. He would have endorsed every syllable of Browning's sentence: "How very hard it is to be a Christian!" The consecrated life of self-surrender and self-denial taxes to their utmost all the highest powers of the soul.

Let no man think that sudden in a minute  
All is accomplished and the work is done;—  
Though with thine earliest dawn thou shouldst begin it  
Scarce were it ended in thy setting sun.

We pervert the Gospel, when we preach it as a broad gate and a smooth way, when we practise it by shunning the thorns and choosing the flowers.

¶ If ignorance and passion are the foes of popular morality, it must be confessed that moral indifference is the malady of the cultivated classes. The modern separation of enlightenment and virtue, of thought and conscience, of the intellectual aristocracy from the honest and vulgar crowd, is the greatest danger that can threaten liberty. When any society produces an increasing number of literary exquisites, of satirists, sceptics and beaux esprits, some chemical disorganization of fabric may be inferred. What was it that Mephistopheles lacked? Not intelligence certainly but goodness.

**2. Look at life and ask what high and noble achievement there is, the doing of which does not make the same severe demands that Christ makes on His followers.** Art and science and literature require of their votaries the homage of an undivided heart. Before supreme excellence can be attained in any pursuit or calling the price has to be paid to the uttermost farthing. Professional life is a winnowing, selecting process that works with automatic energy; and it is a patent fact of observation that in all things requiring strain and effort the few succeed, the many fail. Everywhere in every department of human activity the same spectacle meets the eye; the broad, smooth road of ease and popularity is thronged by the multitudes who are contented to take life as they find it, while the narrow path of strenuous endeavour is trodden by the self-renouncing few.

¶ The artist must bring to his work the ardour of the young lover or the missionary. No matter what his artistic organization, if he is satisfied with a few hours' hard work—no matter how hard—and can throw thought of it aside and say he has done enough for the day and will throw aside "shop"; not for him will be a place on the highest level for all time.

**3. The door, though narrow, is now open.** The entrance is without money and without price. There are no conditions imposed by Him who set it open, and one great difficulty is to convince the entrants that there must be no conditions self-imposed by them. This gate is perfectly open to all who come just as they are. For there are no limits in the invitation, no conditions in the coming, and no objections to the comers. Hear the King's own word: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden." Could words be plainer, sweeter, than these? If there were not another word, were not this enough? But, as if to anticipate every possible objection, He adds: "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." The door is not narrow in the sense of keeping out any who come as

they are invited. The thirsty comer never found the fountain sealed. The purseless comer never was denied the wine and milk because he brought no price—he was expressly told to come purseless. The beggar from the highway has never wanted room at this banquet because he came in rags to the door; the weary and the heavy-laden never came and were refused rest; the greatest sinner that ever lived will not come in vain—when he comes as the chief of sinners, to be saved.

¶ Dr. John Paton, the great missionary to the New Hebrides, tells us in his autobiography a very tender incident. He tells us that his brother Walter was a sailor, that he went to sea when quite a young lad, and that after a voyage or two no more was heard of him. The sea has great secrets to tell some day. But that mother's heart could never conclude that she would never see her boy's face again. At least she resolved that, should he ever come by day or by night, there would be a welcome for him at the old fireside. And so the last thing she did every night before she retired to rest was to take the door off the latch and leave it open to admit the lost boy. Should he ever come, even in the midnight, there was to be no bar against his entrance. And that mother's heart was only a faint picture of what the great Father's heart is in Jesus Christ.

**4. But the door, now open, will be shut one day, and the effort to enter will be unavailing.** Many do not seek entrance till it is too late. What a time to begin to think of entering—when the Master of the house has risen and shut-to the door! Is a man to keep God and the universe in everlasting suspense? Is the world to wait for ever to see whether I will make up my mind? If not, there is the possibility of beginning too late; of refusing to be serious till the door is shut, and seriousness no longer avails. "To-day, if ye shall hear his voice, harden not your hearts." Delay becomes fatal, because it begets irresolution, and nothing more easily than irresolution becomes chronic, incurable, irreparable. Decent people probably lose more by it than by all the sins they confess put together. They lose eternal life by it when it makes them, as it eventually does, incapable of the grand decisive renunciation by which alone we can pass the strait gate.

¶ J. M. Barrie has given us in *A Window in Thrums* a very pathetic picture of Jamie's homecoming. When some of the neighbours saw Jamie prowling about in the gloaming near the old home, his face seemed to them like that of a man who had come "straucht frae hell." He had gone back to the old home. He meant to go back in penitence to find safety and rest, at the old fireside, and in the shelter of a mother's wounded but forgiving and tender love; but he was too late. The door of the old cottage was shut upon all that, and father and mother and sister were gathered to God, and he was alone.

"There is a nest of thrushes in the glen;  
When we come back we'll see the glad young things,"  
He said. We came not by that way again,  
And Time and thrushes fare on eager wings!

"Yon rose"—she smiled—"but no, when we return,  
I'll pluck it then." 'Twas on a summer day.  
The ashes of the rose in Autumn's urn  
Lie hidden well. We came not back that way.

We do not pass the selfsame way again,  
Or, passing by that way, nothing we find  
As it before had been; but death, or stain,  
Hath come upon it, or the wasteful wind.

The very earth is envious, and her arms  
Reach for the beauty that detained our eyes;  
Yea, it is lost, beyond the aid of charms,  
If, once within our grasp, we leave the prize.

Thou traveller to the unknown Ocean's brink,  
Through Life's fair fields, say not, "Another day  
This joy I'll prove": for never, as I think,  
Never shall we come back this selfsame way!

## II HOW ARE WE TO ENTER

**1. "Strive to enter in."** Our Lord turns from the speculative question to the practical one, and declares that effectual salvation must begin in strenuous personal action. Whether many or few attain final blessedness is not an issue fixed by a Divine decree into which we may venture to probe, but rests with each separate seeker after life. In so many words, the Great Teacher says, "Before you concern yourselves with your neighbours' destiny, and that of the race, look well to your own soul." Does not the Master, for the

moment, here seem to put Himself on the side of spiritual selfishness? Such counsels run counter to some things we hear at the present time, and half justify the taunt directed against the evangelical faith of our fathers that its one watchword was, "Give heed to yourself first and make sure of heaven." But no broad survey of the words of Jesus can justify the criticism that, in caring for the spiritual state of the individual, He overlooks the multitude. To give heed to ourselves may be the noblest way of serving our neighbours. By zealously working out individual salvation, we shall further, with supreme success, the spiritual well-being of the community.

**2. Our Lord places momentous emphasis upon struggle.** The word "agonize" which He employs suggests the fierce desperate onset of the wrestler. In modern usage the word has come to stand for keen, bitter suffering, but it implied, at first, the tension of effort in the man himself, rather than the burden of pain laid upon him. He who would enter the Kingdom and find himself secure from all that threatens his well-being, must be a Samson Agonistes. Like Jacob, by the brook Jabbok, he must contend. The strong-willed, dauntless wrestler, whose heart dilates, whose muscles are stretched, whose veins expand, and who puts the entire weight of his body into the work, is the type of the spirit which cannot fail of salvation. A one-sided presentation of the gospel may sometimes depict this supreme task as free from hardship and difficulty. To do some things is child's play, because no barriers lie across the pathway by which we move. Formidable forces, however, bar our progress towards the door which is set before us—the terrible and diversified autocracies of unseen evil, principalities, powers, and the rulers of the darkness of this world; worst of all, in the heart of a man himself they too often find an ally. Sin is no trifling purposeless accident in the history of an irresponsible race, but a camp of unholy legions wedged in between man and his highest destinies, and it must needs be overthrown. He who does not put his whole strength into the task, and that right early, will irretrievably fail.

¶ To send a consumptive nurse to minister to consumptives would be a hollow and extravagant affectation of altruism. Her highest duty is to care for herself and recover the health which fits for service. When the fire-alarm rings a dozen streets away, no one expects the patients in a fever-ward, or in an infectious hospital, to answer the call. It is humanity for all such to stay within bounds till they are convalescent. They may give a hand in putting out the next fire. It is no mark of barbarism to quarantine a plague-stricken ship, even though Red Cross doctors, on the way to the battlefield, may be amongst the passengers. We must save ourselves, before curiously dropping our plummet into the mysteries of the last things, and working out in a curious sum the ratio of the redeemed to the reprobate.

¶ We have all been thrilled with the story of Lucknow in the war of the Indian Mutiny. An English army was mustering on the banks of the Jumna, eager to reach the Oudh capital; but the mutineers in force guarded every approach. At last Havelock thought he was strong enough to try. He made a gallant effort to break the iron circle,—striking boldly, doing his utmost; but in vain. He had to wait for reinforcements. When these came he tried again. Every inch of ground, as it were, he had to battle for. Slowly, painfully, in agonies of conflict, he made his way. And though, when he at last succeeded and reached the beleaguered city, there was boundless welcome for him, it might well be said that he had to agonize through "a strait gate" to his waiting and longing countrymen. So must we agonize to enter the Kingdom of Heaven.

3. This call to a more vehement strife after salvation derives much of its intenseness and solemnity from that significant hour in the Master's own history and in the redemptive destinies of mankind which was so near at hand. The Son of Man had passed that last turn in His pathway which brought the cross into view, and His sensibilities already felt the strain and oppression of the great tragedy. It seemed to Him scarcely conceivable that men could be saved unless they entered into the inwardness of His redemptive passion. He had set Himself to work out the deliverance of the race, through conflict and infinite distress, and the experience of reconciliation with God in each individual member of the race must needs come through a conscious oneness with Himself. Salvation cannot be made so easy by the vicarious act of another that the recipient of it is released from all obligation to strive.

¶ Just as the tremors of the earth are registered by fine instruments placed in a modern observatory, so the cross was a sensitive seismograph in which the forces battling to frustrate and overthrow the Divine in man, displayed all their rage and convulsion. As the Son of Man hung there He felt within Himself the fierce tumultuous upheavings of the nethermost hell, and he endured the cross by a strong transcendent counterpassion. It was inconceivable that the forces which asserted themselves in the crisis of the agony, and were even now rending His sacred soul, would leave the individual to work out his salvation without stress or friction.

¶ The true cross of the Redeemer was the sin and sorrow of this world; that was what lay heavy on His heart, and that is the cross we shall share with Him, that is the cup we must drink of with Him if we would have any part in that Divine love which is one with His sorrow.

¶ Our chemists liquefy atmospheric air by applying portentously cold temperatures, two or three hundred degrees below freezing-point, and it has been found that under these ultra-Arctic conditions chemical reactions

are no longer possible. The sun's rays lose their actinic power. A lecturer at the Royal Institution several years ago exposed to the light sensitized paper, parts of which had been sponged with liquid air. The parts untouched were changed in tint, as in the ordinary processes of photography, but the sponged parts were proof against the action of the sunbeams. In these phenomenally low temperatures substances, which have the most violent chemical affinity for each other, refuse to combine. And is there not a corresponding fact in the sphere of religion? Whilst our natures are abnormally cold the intensest emanations from the Light of the World cannot transform us; the likeness of His death and resurrection fails to imprint itself on our natures.

**Luke 13:25 Once the head of the house gets up and shuts the door, and you begin to stand outside and knock on the door, saying, 'Lord, open up to us!' then He will answer and say to you, 'I do not know where you are from.'**

- **Once the head of the house gets up** Ps 32:6; Isa 55:6; 2 Cor 6:2; Heb 3:7,8; 12:17
- **and shuts the door** Ge 7:16; Mt 25:10
- **Lord, open up to us** Lk 6:46; Mt 7:21,22; 25:11,12
- **I do not know where you are from** Lk 13:27; Mt 7:23; 25:41
- [Luke 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 13:22-30 The Narrow Door](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 13:22-30 Are Just a Few Being Saved? Part 1](#)
- [Luke 13:22-30 Are Just a Few Being Saved? Part 2](#)

**The door is strait and the way narrow and uphill,  
but one moment in heaven  
will make amends for a lifetime of striving to enter!**

**Once the head of the house gets up and shuts the door**- This explains Lk 13:24b, why they **will not be able** to enter the door. The great lesson of this passage is that the call of the Gospel has limitations of time, for the door named "mercy" will not remain open indefinitely - yes, for a time but not forever. Entrance is only possible while the narrow door stands wide open. Every pitiful or plausible plea will be to no avail. The door is sealed shut. Those outside are hopelessly and forever debarred. **Shuts the door** means that conversion and pardon for sin are no longer available, no longer possible! This day comes to every sinner who dies outside of the safety of the "Ark" of Christ Jesus, for once the door of the ark is closed, it cannot be reopened (cp Ge 7:16, 21, 1Pe 3:20). An unrepentant sinner's last heartbeat and last breath is equivalent to the **head of the house** shutting the door, shutting out that person's soul eternally from entrance into the kingdom of heaven and God's very presence! This is a terrible thought to ponder beloved. It should drive us to travel the highways and byways proclaiming the good news while the door of salvation and the day of grace remain open! (Let the following "modernized" version of an old Fanny Crosby hymn motivate you to go forth [cp Mt 9:37, 38] - [Rescue The Perishing](#))

**Matthew Henry** has some poignant comments on the "**door of distinction**"...Now, within the temple of the church there are carnal professors who worship in the outer-court, and spiritual professors who worship within the veil; between these the door is now open, and they meet promiscuously in the same external performances. But, when the Master of the house is risen up, the door will be shut between them, that those who are in the outer-court may be kept out.... As to those that are filthy, shut the door upon them, and let them be filthy still (Re 21:8-[note](#), Re 21:27-[note](#) Re 22:15-[note](#)); that those who are within may be kept within, that those who are holy may be holy still (Re 22:14-[note](#)). The door is shut to separate between the precious and the vile, that sinners may no longer stand in the congregation of the righteous. Then you shall return, and discern betwixt them. **A door of denial and exclusion.** The door of mercy and grace has long stood open to them, but they would not come in by it, would not be beholden to the favour of that door; they hoped to climb up some other way, and to get to heaven by their own merits, and therefore when the Master of the house is risen up he will justly shut that door; let them not expect to enter by it, but let them take their own measures. Thus, when Noah was safe in the ark, God shut the door, to exclude all those that depended upon shelters of their own in the approaching flood. ([Luke 13 Commentary](#))

The **Psalmist** warns of the danger of procrastinating in regard to one's eternal destiny

Therefore, let everyone who is godly pray to You in a time when You may be found; **Surely in a flood of great waters they will not reach him.** (Psalm 32:6-[note](#))

**Isaiah** issues a warning calling for an immediate response from the readers...

**Seek** (red = this is imperative!) the LORD while He may be found (**Ed**: While the "door" is still open!); **Call** upon Him while He is near (**Ed**: Before He closes the "door" **AS HE DID** in Noah's day when the flood came -



**Paul** issues a warning to the unrepentant sinner quoting the Lord Who...

says, "AT THE ACCEPTABLE **TIME** I LISTENED TO YOU, AND ON THE **DAY** OF SALVATION I HELPED YOU." **Behold**, (command to draw the hearer's attention to what follows) **now** is "**THE ACCEPTABLE TIME**," **behold**, **now** is "**THE DAY OF SALVATION**" (2Cor 6:2)

**Comment:** In the preceding context (2Co 5:20), Paul as an ambassador of Christ, has just begged the sinful readers on His behalf to be reconciled to God. Paul echoes Jesus' warning (Lk 13:22-30) that **the acceptable time...the day of salvation** will not last forever. The sinner must strive to enter today! Observe the repetition of expressions of time and two "**behold's**" calculated to grab the reader's attention and bring them to a point of decision (now)!

**Murray Harris** writes that "To emphasize the seriousness and urgency of his appeal and to highlight the privilege of the present and the danger of procrastination, Paul quotes Isaiah 49:8 and then applies the passage to the age of grace." (See [The Expositor's Bible Commentary](#))

**Alexander Maclaren** notes that "in reference to each stage of life, specific opportunities are given in it for securing specific results, and these can never be recovered if the stage is past; so mortal life as a whole is the time for entrance, and if it is not used for that purpose, entrance is impossible. If the youth will not learn, the man will be ignorant. If the sluggard will not plough because the weather is cold, he will 'beg in harvest.' If we do not strive to enter at the gate, it is vain to seek entrance when the Master's own hand has barred it. ([Luke 13:22-30 The Strait Gate](#))

**Spurgeon** - They will be very respectful; they will call him, '**Lord**.' They will be very earnest; they will pray, '**Lord, Lord**.' They will be very simple and very honest in their request: "**Open unto us**." They will be very personal: "**Open unto us**." Such will the prayers of the ungodly be when they wake up to the fact that they are shut out of heaven.

**And you begin to stand outside and knock** ([krouo](#) in present tense - continually) **on the door** ([thura](#)), **saying, 'Lord** ([kurios](#)), **open up** ([anoigo](#) in [aorist imperative](#)) **to us!**" - When the **door** is shut, the day of grace will have come to an end. Today is the day to call Jesus "**Lord**", not when the **door** is shut! And if we call Him "**Lord**" it must not just be with our **lips** but should be reflected by our **lives**! ([see passages below](#)) To call Jesus **Lord** is to surrender to His sweet will, and live obediently. Here when it is too late, even these lost souls recognize Him as **Lord** (cf Php 2:9-11). How much more should saved souls now choose to recognize Him as as Lord and to submit to His will for their life!

Notice how sin deceives these sinners (He 3:13-see deceitfulness of sin) so that they think they can address Jesus as '**Lord**' even though they demonstrated no evidence that they had surrendered their selfish will to His perfect will during their lifetime! They do things like the song says "my way", not "my *Master's* way"! Their sinful behavior points to their self-centered belief. Do not be deceived by a soft profession without a sure possession!

**Then He will say to them "I do not know** ([eido](#)) **where you are from"** - **Then** is after they knock and command that He open the door. Notice that "**them**" is plural, so Jesus is not addressing this only to the one who asked a question (Lk 13:23 "someone said to Him") but to the entire audience (and to all who read His words). Again Jesus uses the plural for "**you**." The point is that they had no personal relationship with the Lord, as emphasized by the Lord's categorical denial of relationship.

**R Kent Hughes** has some piercing comments - We may be preachers and have perhaps ministered to thousands. We may be Sunday school teachers and point many little ones to Christ. We may be missionaries and are held up as paragons of sacrifice, and yet end up as castaways. Why? Because mighty works do not save us, but only vital union with Christ through real faith. **So the burning question is, does Christ know you? Are you in authentic relationship with Him? The corollary question is, has the relationship with Christ that you claim to have turned you away from evil? Are you morally improved from God's point of view? Or will he say, "Away from me you evildoer!"?** The telling question is not a matter of ministry or standing in the church but of authentic righteousness. (See [Luke: That You May Know the Truth](#)) **Woe!**

Other verses that describe the tragedy of calling Jesus Lord but not obeying Him as Lord...

And why do you **call** (present tense = this was their habitual practice!) Me, '**Lord, Lord**,' and **do not do** (poieo in the present tense = this was also their habitual practice, their lifestyle!) what I say? (Lk 6:46+)

**Comment:** Did you notice the "*disconnect*" between what they *said* and what they *did* (more accurately what they did NOT do)? **Profession** never saved anyone! In Titus 1:16+ they were continually **professing** [present tense] but they were also continually **denying** [present tense] by their deeds! Deeds do not save!

Deeds do demonstrate the authenticity of one's profession. Profession must always be coupled with possession. The English definition of profession is an open but often false declaration or claim! Do not be deceived dear reader!

And later the other virgins also came, saying, 'Lord, open up for us.' But he answered and said, 'Truly I say to you, **I do not know you.**' (Mt 25:11, 12)

Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven; but he who does (**present tense** = as their habitual practice - the idea is that this is their general direction, not perfection!) the will of My Father who is in heaven. "Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' (Notice He does not dispute their claims! Miracles don't save us, except one miracle, the miracle of a circumcised heart, a new heart, a new [miraculous] birth!) "And then I will declare to them, '**I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.**' (Mt 7:21-23+)

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**Francis Chan** ([Watch short video entitled "Erasing Hell"](#)) - toward the end of His life, Jesus told a parable about second chances (Luke 13:22–30). Jesus is making His way to Jerusalem, and His disciples ask how many people will end up being saved. Jesus answers that few will be saved, but even worse, many who think they are saved will end up on the "outside" of the kingdom, so to speak. While outside, they'll knock on the door to see if Jesus will let them in. What will happen when Jesus comes to the door? According to those who believe that there are second chances after death, Jesus answers, "Come on in!" He has to, right? To think that Jesus would answer any other way is cruel. It would be unloving and unjust! Could Jesus actually say, " 'Door's locked. Sorry. If you had been here earlier, I could have done something. But now, it's too late' " ? Yes, actually, He could. Though we may wish for the door to fling open, Jesus says that He will do the opposite:

"When once the master of the house has risen and shut the door, and you begin to stand outside and to knock at the door, saying, 'Lord, open to us,' then he will answer you, 'I do not know where you come from.... Depart from me, all you workers of evil!' In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God but you yourselves cast out." (Luke 13:25–28)

This passage "gives no hint whatever that the door will remain permanently open." If Jesus believed in second chances for those who reject Him in this life, then this parable is dangerously misleading. For those who follow Jesus, there is everlasting life in the presence of God, but for those who don't follow Him, there will be punishment. And as we have seen in this chapter, the Bible doesn't seem to hold out hope for a second chance. How scary this is for those who will find themselves on the other side of the door wanting to come in, banging and begging, wishing they had made some different choices while they had the opportunity. It's sobering to think about this parable. Jesus did not say these words so we would one day merely discuss them in a book. Like all Scripture, this parable is meant to impact our souls. Please take some time to at least read it again. Read it with care. Read it with conviction, knowing that there will be people on the outside, in a terrible place of punishment. A place called hell. (From [Francis Chan - Erasing Hell: What God Said About Eternity and the Things We Made Up.](#))

#### **Luke 13:26 "THEN YOU WILL BEGIN TO SAY, "WE ATE AND DRANK IN YOUR PRESENCE, AND YOU TAUGHT IN OUR STREETS"**

- **We ate and drank in Your presence, and You taught in our streets** Isa 58:2; 2 Ti 3:5; Titus 1:16
- [Luke 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 13:22-30 The Narrow Door](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 13:22-30 Are Just a Few Being Saved? Part 1](#)
- [Luke 13:22-30 Are Just a Few Being Saved? Part 2](#)

**Then you** (plural) **will begin to say** - Always take a moment when you encounter an **expression of time** (in this case "**then**") and query the text with questions like "*When is then?*" or "*What will happen then?*", etc. Jesus is warning that *hearing* His words of invitation must be coupled with *heeding* His words of warning!

**We ate and drank in Your presence** - Seeing Jesus or sitting with Jesus at a dinner table never saved anyone. Sharing a meal normally speaks of intimacy in the ancient world (e.g., see Jesus' invitation in Rev 3:20+) but that would not be sufficient to bring about salvation. The speakers may perhaps be alluding to the time when Jesus fed the five thousand (Jn 6:10) but when they were faced with His "hard teaching", refused to become His true followers, even departing from Him in that moment of crisis (cp strive to

enter!) (Jn 6:53-65 -- see the crisis point reached in Jn 6:66). Judas Iscariot had an even closer relationship to Jesus, masquerading as a disciple (who did not depart in Jn 6:66) and yet his subsequent departure proved that Judas was not a genuine disciple (Read Jn 13:26-30, cf 1Jn 2:19+). External appearances, no matter how convincing to other men, mean nothing unless there has been an internal change, a "circumcision" of one's heart (See **Excursus on Circumcision Of the Heart**).

**Spurgeon** - They came to the communion-table. They used to hear sermons indoors and out of doors. "Thou hast taught in our streets."

**Matthew Henry** comments *on what* those who find themselves shut out had falsely placed their confidence...

First, They had been Christ's guests, had had an intimate converse with him, and had shared in his favors: We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, at thy table. Judas ate bread with Christ, dipped with him in the dish. **Hypocrites, under the disguise of their external profession, receive the Lord's supper, and in it partake of the children's bread, as if they were children.**

Secondly, They had been Christ's hearers, had received instruction from Him, and were well acquainted with His doctrine and law: "Thou hast taught in our streets—a distinguishing favour, which few had, and surely it might be taken as a pledge of distinguishing favour now; for would Thou teach us, and not save us?" ([Luke 13 Commentary](#))

**You taught ([didasko](#)) in our streets** - Where? Which streets? (Always practice interrogating the text with the **5W/H questions**) The answer is everywhere Jesus went in Israel, because wherever He went He gave primacy (preeminence, supremacy) to teaching of the Word of Truth, a practice all genuine disciples should diligently seek to imitate (Mt 28:19-20). As an aside note that false disciples refused to continue to follow Jesus (Jn 6:66, cf 1Jn 2:19+). Continuing to follow Jesus (or "abide") is a prerequisite which He Himself laid down to define what constitutes a genuine disciple (see Jn 8:31 - these so called "*believers*" proved themselves to be only *professors*, those who had only an intellectual *belief* as their subsequent *behavior* proved -- genuine **belief** should always issue in Spirit enabled, God honoring **behavior**! Read the entire discourse between Jesus and these "believing" Jews in John 8:31-59, but see especially Jesus "assessment" of their "belief" in Jn 8:44-47 and their subsequent response to Jesus' words in Jn 8:58, 59).

**Taught** ([1321](#)) (**didasko** from **dáo**= know or teach; English = **didactic**; see also studies of noun **didaskalia** and adjective **didaktikos**) means to provide instruction or information in a formal or informal setting. **Didasko** means to teach a student in such a way that the will of the student becomes conformed to the teaching taught. They may have heard Jesus teach but like the old saying, it went in one ear and out the other! The ultimate Teacher, with the ultimate Word and yet they failed to hear in a way that produced any change in their behavior. The problem was not with the Teacher's words but with the hearer's hearts! And to make matters worse, their hearts were deceived (Jer 17:9), thinking that hearing and not heeding Christ would warrant entrance into the kingdom of heaven.

## **THE MOST DANGEROUS PROCRASTINATION IN LIFE!**

**Steven Cole** comments that...

**Salvation requires our urgent attention (because of) the soon-closed door** (Lk 13:25 26 27). We all tend to procrastinate, but Jesus tells us that salvation is the most dangerous matter in all of life to procrastinate about. Salvation requires our urgent attention because the time is coming soon when the door will be shut. The day is coming when the head of the house (God) will get up and shut the door. Clearly, at that point there will not be another chance to get in. Once the door is shut, it is shut. Those inside are in. Those outside are out. You ask,

**"When will the door be shut?"**

That's for the head of the house to decide. The final closing of the door will be at the judgment, which will take place at the **Second Coming** of Christ. John describes the scene:

"And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds.... And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire" (Rev. 20:12-[note](#), Rev 20:15-[note](#)). (**Ed Note:** I believe that this Great White Throne judgment follows a period of 1000 years referred to as the **Millennium**, a period which is inaugurated by the Second Coming of Christ to earth).

Since the Lord is coming soon, you don't want to procrastinate about salvation! But each person's eternal destiny is fixed before the day of judgment, at the point of death. Hebrews 9:27-note states

It is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment.

Since life hangs by a thread, even for the youngest and healthiest among us, we dare not procrastinate about the matter of salvation. Maybe you're thinking,

"I'm young and healthy and the second coming is probably not going to happen soon. I've got some time before I need to deal with these matters."

But that's not wise because the head of the house might slam shut the day of opportunity for you to respond to His offer of salvation. This was true for Jesus' hearers. Messiah was in their very midst and they were in danger of rejecting Him. They had the unique opportunity of hearing Jesus Himself teaching the Word of God, but that window of opportunity was about to close, because Jesus was heading toward Jerusalem. In a few short years Titus, the Roman general, would destroy Jerusalem and the temple and the Jews would be dispersed for 1,900 years.

As with them, so with us: the opportunity to respond to Jesus is now. Don't mistakenly think, "I've got plenty of time." You might not have another opportunity like that which you have right now as you hear the Word of God proclaimed. You may leave here and your mind gets caught up with work or duties at home or other things, and the tug of the Spirit on your heart fades. It is said of Esau that after he had sold his birthright, later,

when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought for it with tears (Heb 12:17+).

He missed his day of opportunity with God. Once that door is shut, there will be no bargaining or working out a last minute deal. We must enter on God's terms and in God's time, or not at all. At the judgment, everyone will know the truth and realize what a horrible mistake they have made. But it will be too late. As J. C. Ryle puts it, "*Hell is nothing but truth known too late*" (Expository Thoughts on the Gospels [Baker], 3:134). Salvation is an urgent matter! ([Luke 13:22-30 The Narrow Door](#))

**Luke 13:27 AND HE WILL SAY, "I TELL YOU, I DO NOT KNOW WHERE YOU ARE FROM;DEPART FROM ME ALL YOU EVILDOERS":**

- **I tell you I do not know where you are from** Lk 13:25 Ps 1:6 Mt 7:22,23 25:12,41 1Co 8:3 Gal 4:9 2Ti 2:19
- **Depart from me all you evildoers:** Ps 5:6 6:8 28:3 101:8 119:115 125:5 Ho 9:12 Mt 25:41
- [Luke 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 13:22-30 The Narrow Door](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 13:22-30 Are Just a Few Being Saved? Part 1](#)
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## **CHRIST THE RIGHTEOUS JUDGE WILL DISOWN & DISCARD PROFESSORS**

**And He will say "I tell you** (literally = "He will say, I tell you") **I do** (absolutely) **not know** ([eido](#)) **where you are from. Depart** ([aphistemi](#) in [aorist imperative](#) = Do this now! Do not delay!) **from me all you evildoers** (literally workers [\[ergates\]](#) of iniquity [\[adikia\]](#)) - This is a prophecy of a painful pronouncement! The verb **I tell you**" is in the present tense implying Jesus was continually warning them of their painful future for they had refused to repent and believe. The master disavows any relation to these individuals. He will **not know** them because instead of practicing godliness and righteousness, these individuals who professed to know Him (or who now wanted to call Him "Lord" when the reality of Hell sank in) practiced unrighteousness and lawlessness. They may have even looked "moral" to others, but on the inside they were "full of dead men's bones" and were corrupt to their core!

**THOUGHT-** Beloved ambassador of Christ (2Co 5:20+), may our Father cause the Spirit of Christ to take this study on our Lord's command to strive **to enter the narrow door** and **break our hearts**, empowering us by His Spirit to go forth boldly (Acts 1:8+, perhaps we need to ask others to pray for us as Paul did in Eph 6:19-20+) with the message of justification "as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus." (Ro 3:24+). Take a moment and listen to Fanny Crosby's heart piercing words [Rescue The Perishing](#) and then go forth with the Gospel seeking to rescue the perishing from the wide gate and broad road that leads to eternal destruction.

The late comers are shut out because of the evil deeds (manifesting their unregenerate hearts) not because they are "late". Their character is unfit for the mansion of purity.

**Spurgeon** - They shall be judged by their works. If they were workers of iniquity, it proved that they were unrenewed and unsaved. Christ will not endure their company, but will say to them, "Depart from me."

**Matthew Henry** minces no words noting that "This is their ruin, that, under a pretence of piety, they kept up secret haunts of sin, and did the devil's drudgery in Christ's [livery](#) (**Ed**: identifying uniform, distinctive dress, outward appearance - cp 2Ti 3:5-note)."

**Cyril of Alexandria** adds that "the light has no communion at all with the darkness: nor can any one be near unto the perfectly pure God who is held by the pollutions of sin, and whose stain is not yet washed away." ([Sermon](#))

This passage parallels Jesus' declaration in the Sermon on the Mount...

Not everyone who says to Me, '**Lord, Lord,**' will enter the kingdom of heaven (Equates with genuine salvation); but he who **does** (present tense = their habitual practice, the general direction of their life. **Note**: Direction not perfection!) the will of My Father Who is in heaven (i.e., their holy [supernatural not natural!]) behavior proves that they have a holy [supernatural] Source of power, the Holy Spirit - Their works show their faith to be genuine, saving faith. Be careful, Do Not Misinterpret! = their doing of the will of the Father **does not save** them, for by works no man can be saved [justified - declared righteous] Ro 3:20-note, Ro 3:28-note. Their supernaturally enabled works simply show they are saved!). 22 **Many** (This ought to make us weep, beloved! And even more so when we consider the "many" who will go to destruction in Mt 7:13+) will say to Me on that day, '**Lord, Lord,** did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' (Notice Jesus does not dispute or discount their claims of the "miraculous"! **So what?** Beware of following any "miracle" worker whose lifestyle does not produce the good fruit of godliness!) 23 "And then I will declare to them, 'I never (absolute denial that at any time I ever) knew (ginosko - in context this speaks of utmost intimacy ~ union, oneness, in Christ and Christ in us) you; **DEPART** (present imperative = command calling for continuous action!) FROM ME, YOU WHO **PRACTICE** (worked at it with active zeal and the present tense indicates this was their habitual practice, their general lifestyle) **LAWLESSNESS**.' (Mt 7:21+, Mt 7:22, 23+)

**Steven Cole** comments that "Salvation requires our urgent attention because there is a great difference between casual acquaintance with Jesus and a personal relationship with Him. Those who are shut out seem surprised. They call out, "**Lord, open up to us!**" But He says, "**I don't know where you're from.**" They reply, "**We ate and drank in Your presence, and You taught in our streets.**" They were acquainted with Him. But the problem was, He was not acquainted with them. He tells them, **I do not know where you are from. Depart from Me, all you evildoers.**" If you have a genuine personal relationship with Jesus, you will not continue in your evil deeds. Salvation is God's free gift, apart from works, but those who are truly saved will make progress in holiness, apart from which no man will see the Lord (Heb 12:14+). Now, not later, is the time to make sure that you have a personal relationship with Jesus, not just a casual acquaintance with Him. One major evidence of such a relationship is that you are growing in holiness, not just outwardly, but in your heart. Thus salvation requires our earnest effort and our urgent attention. ([Luke 13:22-30 The Narrow Door](#))

**Warren Wiersbe** addresses the question of **why they waited so long to seek entrance...**

(1) **Salvation is not easy.** The sinner must enter a narrow gate and walk a narrow way (Lk 13:24; cp Lk 9:23, 24, 25). The world's crowd is on the easy way, the way that leads to destruction (Mt 7:13, 14-note), and it is much easier to walk with them....

(2) **Their false sense of security.** Jesus had been among them. They had even eaten with Him and enjoyed His fellowship, yet they had never trusted Him. God gave the nation many privileges and opportunities, but they wasted them (see Lk 10:13 14 15 16). God is long-suffering; however there comes a time when even God shuts the door.

(3) **Pride also played a big part:** they would not humble themselves before God. In their own eyes, they were first, but in God's eyes, they were last—and the Gentiles would come and take their place! (see Mt 21:43) Imagine the "unclean Gentile dogs" sitting at the feast with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, while the unbelieving Jews were outside!

(4) **These people were lost because they depended on their ancient religion to save them;** but Jesus saw them as "workers of iniquity," not doers of righteousness (Isa 64:4; Titus 1:16). It takes more than reverence for tradition to get into God's kingdom!

(5) **But the major reason was given by Jesus Himself: "Ye would not"** (Lk 13:34). Their minds had been instructed by the Word (Luke 13:26), and their hearts had been stirred by His mighty works, but their wills were



stubborn and would not submit to Him. This is the deadly consequence of delay. The longer sinners wait, the harder their hearts become. "Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts" (Heb 4:7).

The Spanish composer **Manuel de Falla** was notorious for not answering his mail. When he heard that a friend had died, the composer said, "What a pity! He died before I answered his letter, which he sent me five years ago!" (Borrow [Be courageous](#) Luke 14-24)

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**Depart (868)** (**aphistemi** from **apo** = separation of one thing from another + **histemi** = stand) literally means to stand off from (English = apostasy) means to withdraw, forsake, depart from or remove oneself from. Compare two other occurrences of **Jesus** issuing this same command to unbelievers to "**Depart**" = Mt 7:23+ (depart = apochoreo) and Mt 25:41 (depart - poreuomai = to transport oneself from one place to another = "the eternal fire", referring not to [Hades \[Sheol\]](#) but to [Gehenna!](#))

**Aphistemi - 14v - abstain(1), depart(1), departed(1), deserted(1), drew away(1), fall away(2), falls away(1), leave(1), left(2), let go(1), stay away(1), withdrew(1).** Lk. 2:37; Lk. 4:13; Lk. 8:13; Lk. 13:27; Acts 5:37; Acts 5:38; Acts 12:10; Acts 15:38; Acts 19:9; Acts 22:29; 2 Co. 12:8; 1 Tim. 4:1; 2 Tim. 2:19; Heb. 3:12

**Thayer** summarizes the meaning of **aphistemi**...**Transitively** (denoting a verb which requires a direct object), in present, imperfect, future, 1 aorist active -- to make stand off, cause to withdraw, cause someone to move from a point of reference, to remove; tropically, to cause or excite to revolt, to mislead, to alienate, refers to political defection (Ac 5:37, cp use in Lxx of Dt 7:4 "draw...away"). **Intransitively** (denoting a verb when it does not require a direct object), in perfect, pluperfect, 2 aorist active -- to stand off, stand aloof, with the genitive of person to go away, depart, from anyone (Lk 13:27-note) (from Ps 6:9; cf. Mt. 7:23); Acts 12:10; 19:9; to desert, to leave in a lurch, to withdraw from one, Acts 15:38; to cease to vex one, Lk. 4:13; Acts 5:38; 22:29; 2 Co. 12:8; to fall away, become faithless, to apostatize as in Heb. 3:12-note which is the antithesis of the call to draw near in Hebrews 4:16-note and thus it implies a refusal to listen to God's voice.

**Workers (2040)** (**ergates** from **ergazomai** = meaning to engage in an activity involving considerable expenditure of effort) literally describes a worker who brings about an effect through exertion of effort, whether mental or physical. In the spiritual realm workers are good (Mt 9:37, 38, 1 Ti 5:18, 2 Ti 2:15) and evil (deceitful workers in 2 Cor 11:13, evil workers - Php 3:2, workers of evil literally in Lk 13:27) In other words the individuals Jesus addresses work at their sin!

**Ergates - 15v -** Matt. 9:37; Matt. 9:38; Matt. 10:10; Matt. 20:1; Matt. 20:2; Matt. 20:8; Lk. 10:2; Lk. 10:7; Lk. 13:27; Acts 19:25; 2 Co. 11:13; Phil. 3:2; 1 Tim. 5:18; 2 Tim. 2:15; Jas. 5:4

**Iniquity (93)** (**adikia** from **a** = not + **dikê** = right) is a condition of not being right, whether with God, according to the standard of His holiness and righteousness or with man, according to the standard of what man knows to be right by his conscience.

**Adikia - 24v -** Lk. 13:27; Lk. 16:8; Lk. 16:9; Lk. 18:6; Jn. 7:18; Acts 1:18; Acts 8:23; Rom. 1:18; Rom. 1:29; Rom. 2:8; Rom. 3:5; Rom. 6:13; Rom. 9:14; 1 Co. 13:6; 2 Co. 12:13; 2 Thess. 2:10; 2 Thess. 2:12; 2 Tim. 2:19; Heb. 8:12; Jas. 3:6; 2 Pet. 2:13; 2 Pet. 2:15; 1 Jn. 1:9; 1 Jn. 5:17

**Luke 13:28 "IN THAT PLACE THERE WILL WEeping AND GNASHING OF TEETH WHEN YOU SEE ABRAHAM AND ISAAC AND JACOB AND ALL THE PROPHETS IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD, BUT YOU YOURSELVES BEING THROWN OUT:**

KJV Luke 13:28 There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out.

NET Luke 13:28 There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth when you see Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and all the prophets in the kingdom of God but you yourselves thrown out.

CSB Luke 13:28 There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth in that place, when you see Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and all the prophets in the kingdom of God but yourselves thrown out.

ESV Luke 13:28 In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God but you yourselves cast out.

NIV Luke 13:28 "There will be weeping there, and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, but you yourselves thrown out.

NLT Luke 13:28 "There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, for you will see Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and all the prophets in the Kingdom of God, but you will be thrown out.

- **there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth** Ps 112:10; Mt 8:12; 13:42,50; 22:13; 24:51; 25:30
- **when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets** Lk 16:23; Mt 8:11
- **in the kingdom of God** Lk 14:15; 23:42,43; 2 Th 1:5; 2 Peter 1:11
- **but yourselves being thrown out** Lk 10:15; Rev 21:8; 22:15
- [Luke 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 13:22-30 The Narrow Door](#) - Steven Cole
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## A PAINFUL VISION FOR DECEIVED PROFESSORS

In that place there will be weeping ([klauthmos](#)) and gnashing ([brugmos](#)) of teeth when you see ([optanomai](#) or [horao](#)) Abraham and Isaac and Jacob ([see notes below](#)) and all the prophets in the Kingdom of God ([see notes below](#)), but (here it is a tragic term of contrast) **you yourselves being** (divine passive - supernaturally) **thrown out** ([ekballō](#)) - What place? In view of Jesus' use of the phrase **weeping and gnashing of teeth** and these reactions/emotions having a definite association with eternal punishment in hell in other NT passages, this **place** must refer to the literal place, hell. **Weeping and gnashing** is repeated 7 times in the Gospels most often in the book of Matthew which was written primarily to a Jewish audience (Mt 8:12 Mt 13:42 Mt 13:50 Mt 22:13 Mt 24:51 Mt 25:30 Lk 13:28). **Weeping and gnashing** is a phrase Jesus uses to refer to **hell**. In short, this is a prophecy of future judgment on many Jews sent to hell because of their unbelief in their own Jewish Messiah! **When you see** indicates a real perception of events and thus a real consciousness of what they missed as a result of continually rejecting the Messiah. This of course explains why they are **weeping** (and wailing) and **gnashing** (and grinding) their teeth, but sadly all to no avail throughout eternity! At this time it will then be crystal clear to them that they have forever missed the King and the Kingdom of God! **Being thrown out** is in the present tense picturing them continually being cast away forever from the presence of Christ! The divine passive indicates it is God (or possibly angels - one cannot be dogmatic) Who casts them out from the presence of God. The phrase **Kingdom of God** is tantamount to salvation for Jesus said "unless one is born again (from above, from God), he cannot see ([horao](#)) the **kingdom of God**" (Jn 3:3). In the context of John 3, of course Jesus meant "see" in the sense of entering the Kingdom! In Luke 13:28 they "see" but cannot enter the Kingdom because of unbelief.

I do not agree with the **NET Bible comment** that "*weeping and gnashing is a figure (Ed: Non-literal, a figure of speech) for remorse and trauma.*" Yes there will be remorse and trauma, but if one interprets the text literally, the remorse will be manifest by real weeping and wailing and the trauma will be manifest by real gnashing and grinding of teeth forever and ever in a place separated from the presence of God! This is a horrible, frightening picture! While one might attempt to interpret this repeated description of torment in hell in a figurative sense (Mt 8:12 Mt 13:42 Mt 13:50 Mt 22:13 Mt 24:51 Mt 25:30 Lk 13:28), there is no justification for interpreting it other than in the plain literal sense - hell will be a place of endless tears and continual gnashing of teeth, a manifestation of inconsolable grief and unrelenting torment! We do a grave injustice to our readers and listeners if we attempt to "soften the blow" regarding Jesus' description of Hell in an attempt to not offend their conscience. **Weeping and gnashing of teeth** is an offensive and awful description because hell is an awful place for an unrepentant sinner to be confined for eternity! We are to preach the whole counsel of God's Word, whether it is convenient or not and in so doing we are to reprove, rebuke, and exhort with great patience and instruction (2Ti 4:2+). And we should preach and teach about the weeping in Hell with **weeping** in our hearts, not with joy or exultation. In short we are to afflict the comfortable (reprove, rebuke sinners satisfied and "comfortable" in their sin) and comfort the afflicted (comfort those who desire to repent, speaking to them the soul saving Gospel).

**Hendricksen** comments that...The **weeping** is that of inconsolable, never-ending wretchedness, and utter, everlasting hopelessness. The accompanying grinding or **gnashing of teeth** is that of frenzied anger, unmitigated rage. For this weeping and grinding of teeth there are three causes:

- a. They "**see**" (are made aware of the presence of) Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and all the prophets in the kingdom of God; that is, the kingdom in its final consummation.
- b. They also take note of the fact that ever so many others, including (converted) Gentiles, from every region of the earth—east, west, north, and south—are participating in the Messianic banquet (cf. Mt 8:11, 12).
- c. They themselves are "**thrown out**"; that is, not only was admission refused, but also they were forcefully expelled. [New Testament Commentary: Exposition of the Gospel According to Luke](#)

**When you see** - Not "if" but **when** (See above for [Spurgeon's comments](#) on Ps 112:9-10). - Note the word "when"! How certain is this event? It is not an "if" but a "when" (always query this "time phrase")! This is a prophetic promise that will be fulfilled. Interesting passage - The verb for "**see**" is [optanomai](#) meaning these unbelieving, Messiah rejecting Jews will look at the "father" Abraham, et

al, in the Kingdom of God. They will not simply see them but actually perceive (have cognizance of) what they see! Wow! What a tragic moment in time this will present for their conscious existence throughout their eternal separation from God's presence (Mt 25:41)! Compare the truth that the rich man was able to see Abraham on the "cool side" of Hades (Luke 16:23) We see a similar description of the rich man in [Hades](#) able to visualize the patriarch Abraham "And in [Hades](#) he (the rich man) lifted up his eyes, being in **torment** ([basanos](#)), and saw Abraham far away, and Lazarus in his bosom." (Lk 16:23+, cp Lk 16:28) Notice the rich man's desire expressed in Lk 16:28.+ What did the reality of literally experiencing the torment of [Hades](#) do to the rich man's desire to "witness" to his five brothers? If our passion for lost souls has grown cold, perhaps we might consider asking the Spirit to burn into our hearts some sense of the horror of the torment of those forever lost in Hell so that we might be motivated like the rich man to go to those who are still physically alive and warn them of the horrible wrath to come (1Th 1:10+) so that they repent and believe the Gospel (Lk 16:30+, Mark 1:15+).

**John MacArthur** - Jewish tradition taught that **sinner**s-a term synonymous with Gentiles in their thinking-would spend eternity in the outer darkness of [Gehenna](#). Jesus concurred with them about the destiny of condemned sinners (see Mt 22:13 24:51), but He declared them totally wrong about the identity of those condemned sinners....Being a physical descendant of Abraham was a great privilege and advantage (Ro 3:1 2), but in spite of what most Jews believed, it did not guarantee salvation. It is the children of Abraham's spiritual faith, not the children of his physical body, whom God adopts as His own children (Ro 8:14 15 16 17; Gal. 3:7 89, 26 27 28 29; cf. Ro 4:11, 16). (See [The MacArthur Commentary](#))

**Lawrence Richards** comments that this verse underscores "why repentance and faith in Jesus are such urgent matters. Individuals who failed to turn to Him will be shut out of the future kingdom, where **"there will be weeping . . . and gnashing of teeth."** (Borrow [The 365 Day Devotional Commentary](#))

**Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God** - This description underscores that the primary group Jesus addresses is the Jews, the nation of Israel. The broader application clearly would include Gentile sinners who refuse the Savior's offer of salvation. The Jews saw themselves as descendants of the patriarchs and thus felt that they they had a right to the kingdom of God because of their ancestors. Jesus warned the Jews declaring "do not suppose that you can say to yourselves, **'We have Abraham for our father'**; for I say to you, that God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. (Mt 3:9,10+).

In John Jesus gives a solemn, but indisputably clear warning to Jews who had expressed an "intellectual" belief in Him but who were still clinging to the fact that they were Abraham's physical offspring...

Jesus therefore was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, "If you abide in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; 32 and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." 33 They answered Him, "We are **Abraham's offspring**, and have never yet been enslaved to anyone; how is it that You say, 'You shall become free?'...37 "I know that you are **Abraham's (physical) offspring**; yet you seek to kill Me, because My word has no place in you. 38 "I speak the things which I have seen with My Father; therefore you also do the things which you heard from your father." 39 They answered and said to Him, "**Abraham is our father.**" Jesus said to them, **'If you are Abraham's (spiritual) children, do the deeds of Abraham.** 40 "But as it is, you are seeking to kill Me, a man who has told you the truth, which I heard from God; this **Abraham did not do.** 41 "You are doing the deeds of your (spiritual) father." They said to Him, "We were not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God." (They were deceived! Self-delusion is a frightening state!) 42 Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love Me; for I proceeded forth and have come from God, for I have not even come on My own initiative, but He sent Me. 43 "Why do you not understand what I am saying? It is because you cannot hear My word (They heard His audible words, but did not have spiritual circumcised ears and circumcised hearts to hear the spiritual truth of Jesus' audible words!). 44 "You are of your father the devil, (What proves this to be a true statement?) and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature; for he is a liar, and the father of lies. 45 "But because I speak the truth, you do not believe Me (And their subsequent seeking to murder Jesus proved they belonged to the devil and were not spiritual children of Abraham and did not have genuine, saving faith - see Jn 8:58, 59). (John 8:31-33, 37-45)

And so here in Luke 13:22-30 Jesus upset the expectations of the Jewish audience by announcing that many of the sons of the kingdom would not be allowed to participate in it, and that many Gentiles would be granted entry! Many "sons of the kingdom" (Jews) would find themselves outside the banquet. The upshot of Jesus' statement directed to the Jews is that being Jewish did not guarantee a place in the Kingdom of God! Jews as well as Gentiles must all strive to enter by the narrow door (Jn 10:9)!

**Henry Cowles** agrees commenting that "The obvious sense of these words is that many Jews will be excluded from God's kingdom and many Gentiles admitted. The men who said—"We have Abraham to our father," and yet disowned Jesus of Nazareth, will see Abraham with all the sainted patriarchs and prophets admitted to this kingdom, but themselves excluded. ([Henry Cowles - Luke - at top of page enter 168](#))

**John MacArthur** adds that "The Gospel came through Abraham's seed, as Matthew...attested through Jesus' genealogy (Mt 1:1). But the benefit of the Gospel, which brings salvation, is appropriated by faith, not by genealogical descent. The Jews played an integral part in God's bringing the Messiah and His gospel, and they are yet destined to play an important role in the end times. It was integral to God's plan of salvation that His own Son be born, live, and die as a Jew. But the fact that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob-or any other Jew-will be in the kingdom of heaven will not be because of their Jewishness but because of their saving faith...Those who reject Christ, even though they are physical descendants of Abraham, will have no place at the table with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. (See [The MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#).)

**J C Ryle** alluded to the belated "wake up call" to the Jews who would be cast out of the presence of the King when he said that "Hell is nothing but truth known too late!"

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**Steven Cole** comments "**Salvation requires our careful self-examination because there are two and only two final categories.** The closed door makes a final separation between those inside and those outside. There are none sort of in and sort of out. While there are gradations of rewards for those who are in and gradations of punishment for those who are out, there is a great chasm fixed between the two (Luke 16:26), with nothing in the middle. You won't be basically in heaven because you're a basically good person. Either you're in because you have entered through the narrow door, which is Jesus Christ, or you're out because you have trusted in your own goodness or in the fact that you're a church-going American Christian. You need to examine yourself and carefully answer the question, "If I were to stand before God and He said, 'Why should I let you into My heaven?' what would I say?" The only correct answer is, "I am trusting completely in Your Son Jesus and His shed blood."

Discussion Questions (from Steven Cole) related to Luke 13:22-30..**Are we too casual about salvation because we have disregarded the biblical doctrine of hell?** (Ed: My personal response is "Sadly this is too true of me. May the Spirit break my heart for what breaks my Father's heart and may He give me a clear understanding of the doctrine of hell that serves to set my heart aflame for lost souls so that they do not have to be eternally aflame. In the Vine. Amen" - see Eternal Punishment) Scripture says that without holiness no one will see the Lord (Heb. 12:14+). How can this be harmonized with salvation by grace through faith apart from works (Ep 2:8, 9+)? How can a person who is unsure about his salvation gain true assurance (cp 1Jn 5:10, 11, 12, 13+ - Especially from 1Jn 5:13+, what is the practical step one can take to assure their assurance? [Clue: What are "these things"? See 1Jn 2:29+, 1Jn 3:9, 14+, 1Jn 4:7+, 1 Jn 5:4+] cp Ro 10:17+ If that passage is true [which it is], "listen" to the following Words... Heb 6:11 12+, Sin damages assurance = Ps 32:3+ [*The Spanish inquisition with all its tortures was nothing to the inquest which conscience holds within the heart.*" - Spurgeon] Assurance is a lifelong fight = 1Ti 6:12+ Assurance is to be prayed for = Eph 1:18, 19+; Assurance is God's will and gift to be received = Ro 8:16+)? How can we know that we have entered through the narrow door (cp Jn 20:31, 2 Co 5:17+)? (**Note: Questions modified including addition of Scripture references - [Luke 13:22-30 The Narrow Door](#)**)

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**The Kingdom of God** - One must understand that there are in general (details vary with different writers) two phases to the **Kingdom of God** and these are under the umbrella of the **Eternal Kingdom of God** (see diagram below). The first phase is the invisible, internal **Kingdom of God** and which He later described as "**in your midst**" (Lk 17:21+), the Kingdom in which the King reigns in the heart of the person who has accepted Jesus as Messiah (See "Mystery Form" in diagram below). To proclaim the Kingdom of God is to preach the Gospel, to proclaim the good news of salvation, explaining how one can enter the **Kingdom of God**. (Jn 3:3-5+) When the King returns on "**the day that the Son of Man is revealed**" (Lk 17:30+) the heart of every person will also be revealed as to whether they sought the kingdom of "self" or the kingdom of the Savior! The future phase of the **Kingdom of God** is known as the **Messianic Age** or the **Millennial Kingdom**. (See more detailed explanation of Jesus' meaning of the **Kingdom of God** in [notes](#) on Luke 17:20-21). Jesus knew the Jews were looking for the future aspect of the **Kingdom of God**, but His preaching and that of His disciples was to explain how one could enter the invisible aspect of the **Kingdom of God** in the present and in that way they would be assured of experiencing the visible **Kingdom of God** in the future.

**Kingdom of God** - 66x in 65v in **NAS** - Mt 12:28; 19:24; 21:31, 43; Mk 1:15; 4:11, 26, 30; 9:1, 47; 10:14 15, 23 34 25; 12:34; 14:25; 15:43; Lk 4:43; 6:20; 7:28; 8:1, 10; 9:2, 11, 27, 60, 62; 10:9, 11; 11:20; 13:18, 20, 28 29; 14:15; 16:16; 17:20 21; 18:16 17, 24 25, 29; 19:11; 21:31; 22:16, 18; 23:51; Jn 3:3, 5; Acts 1:3; 8:12; 14:22; 19:8; 28:23, 31; Ro 14:17; 1Co 4:20; 6:9 10; 15:50; Gal 5:21; Col 4:11; 2Th 1:5

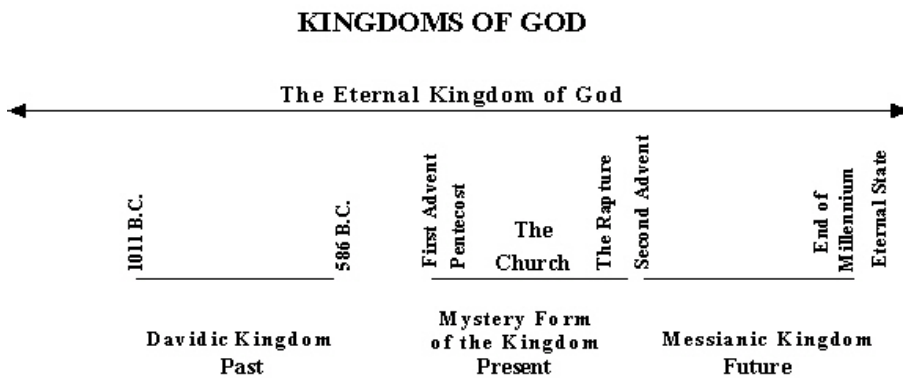
**Kingdom of Heaven** - 32x in 31v in **NAS** - Mt 3:2; 4:17; 5:3, 10, 19 20; 7:21; 8:11; 10:7; 11:11 12; 13:11, 24, 31, 33, 44 45, 47, 52; 16:19; 18:1, 3 4, 23; 19:12, 14, 23; 20:1; 22:2; 23:13; 25:1.

#### Related Resources:

- Kingdom of Heaven or God
- [Expectation of the Jews Regarding the Kingdom of God](#)

- [In depth comments](#) on the Kingdom of God
- [See commentary](#) on the Kingdom of God in [Luke 17:21](#)
- [What is the kingdom of God](#)
- [What is the difference between the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Heaven?](#)
- [What did Jesus mean when He said, "The kingdom of God is within you" \(Luke 17:21, KJV\)?](#)
- [Luke 17:20-37 The Present and Future Kingdom](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 17:20-21 The Invisible Kingdom of God, Part 1](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 17:20-21 The Invisible Kingdom of God, Part 2](#) - John MacArthur

For those who literally interpret Rev 20:1-10+ here is a proposed schematic...



KINGDOM OF GOD PAST, PRESENT, FUTURE  
FROM BIBLE.ORG

**Weeping** (2805) (**klauthmos** from **klaio** = to weep or bewail) is a noun which describes a strong inner emotion which is evoked in weeping, crying, lamentation (cries of grief, the act of bewailing as an expression of sorrow). Hell is a place of conscious sorrow for the unconscious would not weep.

**Klauthmos** - 9x in 9v - Mt 2:18; 8:12; 13:42, 50; 22:13; 24:51; 25:30; Lk 13:28; Acts 20:37

Matthew 2:18+ "A VOICE WAS HEARD IN RAMAH, **WEeping** AND GREAT MOURNING, RACHEL **WEeping** FOR HER CHILDREN; AND SHE REFUSED TO BE COMFORTED, BECAUSE THEY WERE NO MORE."

Matthew 8:12 but the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into the outer darkness; in that place there will be **weeping** and gnashing of teeth."

Matthew 13:42 and will throw them into the furnace of fire; in that place there will be **weeping** and gnashing of teeth.

Matthew 13:50 and will throw them into the furnace of fire; in that place there will be **weeping** and gnashing of teeth.

Matthew 22:13 "Then the king said to the servants, 'Bind him hand and foot, and throw him into the outer darkness; in that place there will be **weeping** and gnashing of teeth.'

Matthew 24:51 and will cut him in pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites; in that place there will be **weeping** and gnashing of teeth.

Matthew 25:30 "Throw out the worthless slave into the outer darkness; in that place there will be **weeping** and gnashing of teeth.

Luke 13:28 "In that place there will be **weeping** and gnashing of teeth when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, but yourselves being thrown out.

Acts 20:37 And they began to **weep** aloud and embraced Paul, and repeatedly kissed him,

In most of these NT uses the tears are genuine, but their effect on the wrath of God is nil, as it is too late for those who shed them. The image is of utter hopelessness and is intended as a **warning** to those who read or hear these difficult to accept sayings!

**Klauthmos** - 30x in the non-apocryphal **Septuagint (LXX)** -Ge 45:2; 46:29; Dt 34:8; Jdg 21:2; 2Sa 13:36; 2



Kgs 20:3; Ezra 3:13; Job 16:16; 30:31; Ps 6:8; 30:5; 102:9; Isa 15:3; 16:9; 22:12; 30:19; 38:3; 65:19; Jer 3:21; 22:10; 31:9, 15 16; 48:5, 32; Lam 5:13; Dan 6:20; Joel 2:12; Mic 7:4; Mal 2:13

The first OT use is of godly Joseph weeping...

(Ge 45:2) And he **wept** so loudly that the Egyptians heard it, and the household of Pharaoh heard of it.

(Ge 46:29) And Joseph prepared his chariot and went up to Goshen to meet his father Israel; as soon as he appeared before him, he fell on his neck and **wept** on his neck a long time.

In contrast to the eternal weeping of the ungodly, the **Psalmist** describes the temporary weeping of the godly

Psalm 30:5 For His anger is but for a moment, His favor is for a lifetime; **Weeping** (klauthmos) may last for the night, but a shout of joy comes in the morning.

The **Psalmist** writes...

Psalm 112:10 The wicked will see it (Ps 112:9) and be vexed, He will **gnash his teeth** and melt away. The desire of the wicked will perish.

**Spurgeon comments:** The last verse sets forth very forcibly the contrast between the righteous and the ungodly, thus making the blessedness of the godly appear all the more remarkable. Usually we see **Ebal** and **Gerizim**, the blessing and the curse, set the one over against the other, to invest both with the greater solemnity.

**The wicked shall see it, and be grieved.** The ungodly shall first see the example of the saints to their own condemnation, and shall at last behold the happiness of the godly and to the increase of their eternal misery. The child of wrath shall be obliged to witness the blessedness of the righteous, though the sight shall make him gnaw his own heart. He shall fret and fume, lament and wax angry, but he shall not be able to prevent it, for God's blessing is sure and effectual.

**He shall gnash with his teeth.** Being very wrathful, and exceedingly envious, he would fain grind the righteous between his teeth; but as he cannot do that, he grinds his teeth against each other.

**And melt away.** The heat of his passion shall melt him like wax, and the sun of God's providence shall dissolve him like snow, and at the last the fire of divine vengeance shall consume him as the fat of rams. How horrible must that life be which like the snail melts as it proceeds, leaving a slimy trail behind. Those who are grieved at goodness deserve to be worn away by such an abominable sorrow.

**The desire of the wicked shall perish.** He shall not achieve his purpose, he shall die a disappointed man. By wickedness he hoped to accomplish his purpose -- that very wickedness shall be his defeat. While the righteous shall endure for ever, and their memory shall be always green; the ungodly man and his name shall rot from off the face of the earth. He desired to be the founder of a family, and to be remembered as some great one: he shall pass away and his name shall die with him. How wide is the gulf which separates the righteous from the wicked (Lk 16:26), and how different are the portions which the Lord deals out to them (Lk 16:23 24). O for grace to be blessed of the Lord! This will make us praise him with our whole heart.

**Gnashing** (1030) (**brugmos** from **brucho** = grind, make sounds striking teeth together)(see [gnashing teeth](#) below) describes striking, grinding or biting of teeth together. The picture is of one making a grating sound by rubbing one's teeth together as an expression of anger, pain, suffering. In the context of the NT uses **brugmos** is a manifestation or picture of the extreme anguish and utter despair of those consigned to eternal torment in hell. **Webster** says gnash means to strike the teeth together as in anger or pain, both emotions probably in play in the fires of hell. The root verb **brucho** is used in Acts 7:54+ to describe the Jews who were "cut to the quick" by Stephen's sermon and began "**gnashing** their teeth at him", clearly a manifestation of intense anger (and guilt). **TDNT** says the root **brucho** was used "of the cry of pain of a stag mortally wounded by snake-bite."

**Brugmos** - 7x in 7v in the **NAS** - Matt. 8:12; Matt. 13:42; Matt. 13:50; Matt. 22:13; Matt. 24:51; Matt. 25:30; Lk. 13:28 (see these passages above under the discussion of weeping) The only OT use is in the **Septuagint** translation of Pr 19:12.= "King's wrath is like the **roaring** (growling; Lxx = brugmos) of a lion."

**See** (aorist middle subjunctive in Luke 13:28 in the Textus Receptus) (3700) (optanomai) means be visible to, appear to. To be seen. To look at, behold; middle present participle; to allow oneself to be seen, to appear: Acts 1:3. **Optanomai** does not appear in classical Greek literature till approximately 164 B.C. (Moulton-Milligan). The term is derived from the aorist passive form of **ōphthēn**, "I let myself be seen, I appear" (Bauer). In its one use as a passive participle in the New Testament, optanomai describes the actual visible appearances, not visions, of Christ during the 40 days following His resurrection. Luke stated that these manifestations

served as “infallible proofs” (Acts 1:3). Strong's Dictionary = 1) to look at, behold 2) to allow one's self to be seen, to appear Origin: a (middle voice) prolonged form of the primary (middle voice) optomai {op'-tom-ahē}, which is used for it in certain tenses,

**Zodhiates** - fut. ópsomai, aor. pass. óphthēn, aor. subjunctive ópsēsthe (Luke 13:28), pass. in Acts 1:3 (1 Kgs. 8:8), used to supply the aor. mid. and pass. and the future tenses for horáō (3708), to see. To see, perceive with the eyes, to look at, trans. implying not only the mere act of seeing but also the actual perception of what one sees, thus differing from blépō (991), to see, behold (Matt. 24:30; 26:64; 28:7; Mark 16:7; John 16:17 [cf. Matt. 5:8; Mark 13:26; 14:62; 16:7; Luke 3:6; 17:22; 21:27; John 1:50, 51; 16:16, 19, 22; 19:37]; Acts 20:25; Rom. 15:21; Heb. 12:14; 13:23; 1 John 3:2; Rev. 22:4). **(I) To look upon, behold, contemplate**, followed by eis (1519), unto (John 19:37 from Zech. 12:10; see Ps. 8:4; Is. 17:8). **(A)** In the form of an aor. pass., óphthē is used in a pass. sense meaning to be seen, appear (Matt. 17:3; Mark 9:4; Luke 1:11; 9:31; 22:43; 24:34; Acts 2:3; 7:2, 26, 30, 35; 9:17; 13:31; 16:9; 26:16; 1 Cor. 15:5–8; 1 Tim. 3:16; Heb. 9:28; Rev. 11:19; 12:1, 3). Particularly and spoken of things, followed by en (1722), in, of place (Rev. 11:19; 12:1, 3); with the dat. of person (Acts 2:3; 16:9). Spoken of angels followed by the dat. of person, such as Zechariah (Luke 1:11, “there appeared unto him an angel”; 22:43; Acts 7:30, 35; see Sept.: Ex. 3:2; Judg. 6:12); of God (Acts 7:2; see Gen. 12:7; 17:1); of dead persons (Matt. 17:3, “appeared unto them Moses”; Mark 9:4); with en, in, of manner (Luke 9:31, “who appeared in glory”); of Jesus after His resurrection (Luke 24:34; Acts 9:17; 13:31; 26:16; 1 Cor. 15:5–8; 1 Tim. 3:16). In the fut., ópsomai (Matt. 28:7, 10 “there shall ye see him”; Luke 3:6 “All flesh shall see the salvation of God” [cf. Is. 40:5; Luke 13:28; John 11:40; Acts 2:17, cf. Joel 2:28; 3:1; Rev. 1:7]). Parallel with the meaning of suníēmi (4920), to comprehend, understand (Rom. 15:21). Fut. pass. ophthēsomai (Heb. 9:28). **(II) In the sense of to visit** (John 16:22; Heb. 13:23). See Sept.: 2 Sam. 13:5; 2 Kgs. 8:29. As mid., meaning to show oneself, present one's self to or before someone (Acts 7:26; Sept.: 2 Kgs. 14:8). **(III) With the meaning to see take place, witness** (Luke 17:22, “to see one of the days”). Fut. pass. ophthēsomai, as causative (Acts 26:16, “a witness both of these things which thou hast seen and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee”). **(IV)** In the fut., sú ópei or in the pl. humeís ópsesthe, see thou to it, look ye to it, a milder form for the imper. (Matt. 27:4, 24; Acts 18:15). **(V) To experience, attain to, enjoy** (John 3:36, “shall not see life” or enjoy life; Sept.: Ps. 48:20. In a wider sense, to see God, to be admitted to His presence, enjoy His fellowship and special favor, the figure being drawn from the customs of oriental courts (Matt. 5:8; Heb. 12:14; Rev. 22:4). (Borow [The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament](#))

**See (3708)(horao)** Note that the aorist mid. and pass. and the future tenses are supplied by óptomai (see above), to see. Horao means to see, perceive with the eyes, look at, trans. implying **not the mere act of seeing, but also the actual perception of some object**, thus differing from [blepo](#), to see.

**Friberg** - ράω impf. ὤρων; fut. mid. ψομαι; 2aor. εἶδον; pf. ὤρακα; 1aor. pass. φθην; 1fut. pass. φθήσομαι; see also εἶδον; (1) transitively; (a) of sense perception - see, perceive, catch sight of (Mt 24:30); go to see, visit (Heb 13:23); (b) as seeing what is being communicated supernaturally - see (Lk 1:22); passive become visible, appear (Acts 16:9); (c) in an experiential way as coming to knowledge - see, experience, know, witness (Jn 1:50); (d) of mental and spiritual perception - perceive, take note, recognize, find out (Acts 8:23); (2) intransitively; (a) look at someone (Jn 19:37); (b) predominately used in warnings and instructions - see to (it) (Mt 27:4); take care (lest) (Mt 18:10); look out for, watch out, be on guard (against) (Mt 16:6); elliptically πᾶ μὴ don't do that! (Rev 19:10) (Borrow [Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament](#))

**Gilbrant** - Classical Greek Various forms of this verb appear in Greek antiquity: horō, horōō, orēmi, and horeō (on the formation and forms see Liddell-Scott). Its meanings in classical Greek include “see, look” (with the eyes), “look at, view, observe” something. In a metaphorical sense “to see” is “to perceive mentally,” “to discern” (ibid.). The idea of “**see**” is conveyed by multiple Greek terms (e.g., blepō, optanomai, theōreō), and there are many derivatives of horaō (e.g., horama, horasis, horatos).

Since “to see” is to participate in life itself (Michaelis, “horaō,” Kittel, 5:316), it is easy to imagine the various roles it assumes. It transcends the language barriers of everyday living and enters the vocabulary of philosophy, religion, and science. Horaō thus describes ordinary “sight” of physical, tangible objects, but it can also denote spiritual perception, seeing in dreams and visions, and “perceiving” or “understanding” mental complexities. “To see” thus captures the quality of many senses; Michaelis notes that “horaō can even be used for akouō (‘to hear’)” (ibid.).

The Greeks viewed “sight” or “seeing” as the main avenue of perception. This is reflected even in their religious systems. The Greeks were a “people of the eye” (ibid., 5:319), in distinction to the Hebrews who were primarily a “people of the ear” (e.g., Deuteronomy 6:4, “Hear ... O Israel”). Whereas Greeks at times erected visible statues or saw gods in terms of human and animal forms, the Israelites served an unseen God (e.g.,

Exodus 19:20, 21). Later as Greeks like Plato drew distinctions between the “real” and “perceived” world, “sight’s” preeminence gave way to the “mind” (nous [3426]), which could perceive “true reality.” “Nevertheless—and this is worth noting—for the Greeks even supreme and purely intellectual striving is always a seeing” (ibid., 5:321).

**Septuagint Usage** Ten Hebrew words are translated by horaō (including the form optesthai). The majority of times rā’āh, “see,” is the counterpart. Horaō concerns visible seeing, such as the land Abraham saw (Genesis 13:15) or the events witnessed by Joshua (Joshua 8:21). Supernatural visions, sights, and events are also “made to appear,” and “sight” or “spiritual perception” plays an important role in the religion of Israel (e.g., Exodus 3:2, 3, 16; 24:11). God “appears” to individuals (e.g., Exodus 4:5, to Moses; Genesis 12:7; 17:1; 18:1, to Abraham). Prophets “see” the revelation of God and His will for the people, although this may often involve a word from the Lord that needs to be heard (e.g., Ezekiel “sees” visions but speaks a word from the Lord [usually blepō]). The spiritual condition of Israel is often depicted as their inability to see and understand (e.g., Isaiah 6:9, 10; Ezekiel 12:2).

“Seeing” also involves “mental perception” and “consideration.” Thus “appearing” leads to “hearing” (Deuteronomy 31:11) and “to see” means “to discover,” “acquire an understanding of” (e.g., 1 Samuel 19:3 [LXX 1 Kings 19:3]). The Septuagint is familiar with all the classical understandings and freely uses horaō in both a religious and nonreligious sense (for more on horaō in the Old Testament see ibid., and Dahn, “See, Vision, Eye,” Colin Brown, 3:513f.).

**New Testament Usage** As in the Septuagint and classical Greek horaō is only one of many terms used to convey the idea of “see, perceive” in the New Testament. The general sense of to “see” with one’s eyes is clearly present in the New Testament (e.g., Acts 20:25), although predominantly horaō concerns a “seeing” on a supernatural or spiritual plane. Thus visions are “seen” (e.g., Luke 1:22; Acts 2:17; 16:9), and divine revelations or manifestations “appear” (Luke 1:11; 22:43; John 1:51; Acts 2:3; 7:2, 30; 9:17; 1 Corinthians 9:1; 1 Timothy 3:16; 1 John 1:1–3). At times the imperative use, hora or horate, “beware” or “see to, take care of, take care” (cf. blepete), occurs. This functions as a warning (Matthew 9:30; Mark 8:15; Luke 12:15; 1 Thessalonians 5:15).

“Sight” during the earthly ministry of Jesus denoted “recognition” that He is indeed who His miracles showed Him to be. Thus in Luke Jesus pronounced His disciples “blessed” because they were seeing the manifestations of the Kingdom that prophets only longed to see (Luke 10:23, 24; Greek, blepō). In the future mankind “will see” the coming of the Son of Man (Matthew 24:30; parallel Mark 13:26; Revelation 1:7) and His reigning in glory (Matthew 26:64; parallel Mark 14:62). Future sight is also part of the age to come (Luke 13:28).

John’s Gospel makes particular use of the motif of seeing. While God is not seen (John 1:18), He can be known by seeing Jesus: “He that hath seen me (Jesus) hath seen the Father” (John 14:9). Jesus is seen with the eyes of faith (John 16:16, 17, 19, 22; cf. Hebrews 11:27). Jesus was “seen” by the witnesses who testified of Him (John 19:35; cf. 3:11, 32), and the witnesses of the Risen Lord declared they had seen the Lord (John 20:18, 25; cf. Acts 22:15; 26:16; 1 Corinthians 15:5–8). Such sight elicits faith, but those who have faith without having seen are blessed (John 20:29; cf. 1 Peter 1:8), and in his first epistle, John wrote that those who insist on sinning have not “seen” Him (1 John 3:2; cf. 3 John 11; cf. Hebrews 12:14).

Thus “seeing” continues to play an important role in the religious language of the New Testament. Sight can even represent “salvation” (cf. Luke 3:6; John 3:36; Hebrews 12:14; 1 John 3:2). “To see” is to grasp by faith that the Son is indeed come and that He offers salvation to all mankind (Romans 15:21).

Horao - 432v - appear(2), appeared(21), appearing(1), behold(3), beware(1), certainly seen(1), do(2), look(5), look after(1), looked(12), perceive(3), recognizing(1), saw(180), see(129), seeing(20), seen(63), seen...see(1), sees(2), suffer(1), undergo(3), underwent(1), watch(2), witnessed(1). Matt. 2:2; Matt. 2:9; Matt. 2:10; Matt. 2:11; Matt. 2:16; Matt. 3:7; Matt. 3:16; Matt. 4:16; Matt. 4:18; Matt. 4:21; Matt. 5:1; Matt. 5:8; Matt. 5:16; Matt. 8:4; Matt. 8:14; Matt. 8:18; Matt. 8:34; Matt. 9:2; Matt. 9:8; Matt. 9:9; Matt. 9:11; Matt. 9:22; Matt. 9:23; Matt. 9:30; Matt. 9:36; Matt. 11:8; Matt. 11:9; Matt. 12:2; Matt. 12:38; Matt. 13:14; Matt. 13:15; Matt. 13:17; Matt. 14:14; Matt. 14:26; Matt. 16:6; Matt. 16:28; Matt. 17:3; Matt. 17:8; Matt. 18:10; Matt. 18:31; Matt. 20:3; Matt. 21:15; Matt. 21:19; Matt. 21:20; Matt. 21:32; Matt. 21:38; Matt. 22:11; Matt. 23:39; Matt. 24:6; Matt. 24:15; Matt. 24:30; Matt. 24:33; Matt. 25:37; Matt. 25:38; Matt. 25:39; Matt. 25:44; Matt. 26:8; Matt. 26:58; Matt. 26:64; Matt. 26:71; Matt. 27:3; Matt. 27:4; Matt. 27:24; Matt. 27:49; Matt. 27:54; Matt. 28:6; Matt. 28:7; Matt. 28:10; Matt. 28:17; Mk. 1:10; Mk. 1:16; Mk. 1:19; Mk. 1:44; Mk. 2:5; Mk. 2:12; Mk. 2:14; Mk. 2:16; Mk. 4:12; Mk. 5:6; Mk. 5:14; Mk. 5:16; Mk. 5:22; Mk. 5:32; Mk. 6:33; Mk. 6:34; Mk. 6:38; Mk. 6:48; Mk. 6:49; Mk. 6:50; Mk. 7:2; Mk. 8:15; Mk. 8:24; Mk. 8:33; Mk. 9:1; Mk. 9:4; Mk. 9:8; Mk. 9:9; Mk. 9:14; Mk. 9:15; Mk. 9:20; Mk. 9:25; Mk. 9:38; Mk. 10:14; Mk. 11:13; Mk. 11:20; Mk. 12:15; Mk. 12:28; Mk. 12:34; Mk. 13:14; Mk. 13:26; Mk. 13:29; Mk. 14:62; Mk. 14:67; Mk. 14:69; Mk. 15:32; Mk. 15:36; Mk. 15:39; Mk. 16:5; Mk. 16:7; Lk. 1:11; Lk. 1:12; Lk. 1:22; Lk. 2:15; Lk. 2:17; Lk. 2:20; Lk. 2:26; Lk. 2:30; Lk. 2:48; Lk. 3:6; Lk. 5:2; Lk. 5:8; Lk. 5:12; Lk. 5:20; Lk. 5:26; Lk. 7:13; Lk. 7:22; Lk. 7:25; Lk. 7:26; Lk. 7:39; Lk. 8:20; Lk. 8:28; Lk. 8:34; Lk. 8:35; Lk. 8:36; Lk. 8:47; Lk. 9:9; Lk. 9:27; Lk. 9:31; Lk. 9:32; Lk. 9:36; Lk. 9:49; Lk. 9:54; Lk. 10:24; Lk. 10:31; Lk. 10:32; Lk. 10:33; Lk. 11:38; Lk. 12:15; Lk. 12:54; Lk. 13:12; Lk. 13:28; Lk. 13:35; Lk. 14:18; Lk. 15:20; Lk. 16:23; Lk. 17:14; Lk. 17:15; Lk. 17:22; Lk. 18:15; Lk. 18:24; Lk. 18:43; Lk. 19:3; Lk. 19:4; Lk. 19:7; Lk. 19:37; Lk. 19:41; Lk. 20:14; Lk. 21:1; Lk. 21:2; Lk. 21:20; Lk. 21:27; Lk. 21:29; Lk. 21:31; Lk. 22:43; Lk. 22:49; Lk. 22:56; Lk. 22:58; Lk. 23:8; Lk. 23:47; Lk. 23:49; Lk. 24:23; Lk. 24:24; Lk. 24:34; Lk. 24:39; Jn. 1:18; Jn. 1:33; Jn. 1:34; Jn. 1:39; Jn. 1:46; Jn. 1:47; Jn. 1:48; Jn. 1:50; Jn. 1:51; Jn. 3:3; Jn. 3:11; Jn. 3:32; Jn. 3:36; Jn. 4:29; Jn. 4:45; Jn. 4:48; Jn. 5:6; Jn. 5:37; Jn. 6:2; Jn. 6:14; Jn. 6:22; Jn. 6:24; Jn. 6:26; Jn. 6:30; Jn. 6:36; Jn. 6:46; Jn. 7:52; Jn. 8:38; Jn. 8:56; Jn. 8:57; Jn. 9:1; Jn. 9:37; Jn. 11:31; Jn. 11:32; Jn. 11:33; Jn. 11:34; Jn. 11:40; Jn. 12:9; Jn. 12:21; Jn. 12:40; Jn. 12:41; Jn. 14:7; Jn. 14:9; Jn. 15:24; Jn. 16:16; Jn. 16:17; Jn. 16:19; Jn. 16:22; Jn. 18:26; Jn. 19:6; Jn. 19:26; Jn. 19:33; Jn. 19:35; Jn. 19:37; Jn. 20:8; Jn. 20:18; Jn. 20:20; Jn. 20:25; Jn. 20:27; Jn. 20:29; Jn. 21:21; Acts 2:3; Acts 2:17; Acts 2:27; Acts 3:12; Acts 3:3; Acts 3:9; Acts 3:12; Acts 4:20; Acts 6:15; Acts 7:2; Acts 7:24; Acts 7:26; Acts 7:30; Acts 7:31; Acts 7:34; Acts 7:35; Acts 7:44; Acts 7:55; Acts 8:18; Acts 8:23; Acts 8:39; Acts 9:12; Acts 9:17; Acts 9:27; Acts 9:35; Acts 9:40; Acts 10:3; Acts 10:17; Acts 11:5; Acts 11:6; Acts 11:13; Acts 11:23; Acts 12:3; Acts 12:16; Acts 13:12; Acts 13:31; Acts 13:35; Acts 13:36; Acts 13:37; Acts 13:41; Acts 13:45; Acts 14:9; Acts 14:11; Acts 15:6; Acts 16:9; Acts 16:10; Acts 16:19; Acts 16:27; Acts 16:40; Acts 18:15; Acts 19:21; Acts 20:25; Acts

21:32; Acts 22:14; Acts 22:15; Acts 22:18; Acts 26:13; Acts 26:16; Acts 28:4; Acts 28:15; Acts 28:20; Acts 28:26; Acts 28:27; Rom. 1:11; Rom. 11:22; Rom. 15:21; 1 Co. 2:9; 1 Co. 8:10; 1 Co. 9:1; 1 Co. 15:5; 1 Co. 15:6; 1 Co. 15:7; 1 Co. 15:8; 1 Co. 16:7; Gal. 1:19; Gal. 2:7; Gal. 2:14; Gal. 6:11; Phil. 1:27; Phil. 1:30; Phil. 2:28; Phil. 4:9; Col. 2:1; Col. 2:18; 1 Thess. 2:17; 1 Thess. 3:6; 1 Thess. 3:10; 1 Thess. 5:15; 1 Tim. 3:16; 1 Tim. 6:16; 2 Tim. 1:4; Heb. 2:8; Heb. 3:9; Heb. 8:5; Heb. 9:28; Heb. 11:5; Heb. 11:13; Heb. 11:23; Heb. 11:27; Heb. 12:14; Heb. 13:23; Jas. 2:24; Jas. 5:11; 1 Pet. 1:8; 1 Pet. 3:10; 1 Jn. 1:1; 1 Jn. 1:2; 1 Jn. 1:3; 1 Jn. 3:1; 1 Jn. 3:2; 1 Jn. 3:6; 1 Jn. 4:20; 1 Jn. 5:16; 3 Jn. 1:11; 3 Jn. 1:14; Rev. 1:2; Rev. 1:7; Rev. 1:12; Rev. 1:17; Rev. 1:19; Rev. 1:20; Rev. 4:1; Rev. 5:1; Rev. 5:2; Rev. 5:6; Rev. 5:11; Rev. 6:1; Rev. 6:2; Rev. 6:5; Rev. 6:8; Rev. 6:9; Rev. 6:12; Rev. 7:1; Rev. 7:2; Rev. 7:9; Rev. 8:2; Rev. 8:13; Rev. 9:1; Rev. 9:17; Rev. 10:1; Rev. 10:5; Rev. 11:19; Rev. 12:1; Rev. 12:3; Rev. 12:13; Rev. 13:1; Rev. 13:2; Rev. 13:11; Rev. 14:1; Rev. 14:6; Rev. 14:14; Rev. 15:1; Rev. 15:2; Rev. 15:5; Rev. 16:13; Rev. 17:3; Rev. 17:6; Rev. 17:8; Rev. 17:12; Rev. 17:15; Rev. 17:16; Rev. 17:18; Rev. 18:1; Rev. 18:7; Rev. 19:10; Rev. 19:11; Rev. 19:17; Rev. 19:19; Rev. 20:1; Rev. 20:4; Rev. 20:11; Rev. 20:12; Rev. 21:1; Rev. 21:2; Rev. 21:22; Rev. 22:4; Rev. 22:9

**Thrown out** (throw, send, drive, take, put) (1544) **ekballō** from **ek** = out + **bállō** = to cast, throw, drive) means to cast, throw out often with the idea of force (Mt. 8:12; 15:17; 25:30; Acts 16:37, 27:38; Lxx - Lev. 14:40). To throw out of an area or object, throw out, jettison (Mt 21:39 Acts 27:18). Frequently used of casting out demons (Mt 7:22, Mt 8:16, 31,9:34, 10:1, etc). Used of casting or throwing unbelievers into outer darkness (hell). In Luke 6:22 ekballo means to scorn one's name ("cast it out" so to speak). Mark 1:12 "Immediately the Spirit impelled Him (Jesus) to go out into the wilderness."

**Ekballo** - 74v - brings(3), cast(28), casting(5), casts(5), drive(4), driven(1), drove(4), eliminated\*(1), leads(1), leave(1), put(2), puts(1), puts forth(1), putting(1), scorn(1), send(2), sending...away(1), sent(3), sent...away(1), take(6), threw(3), throw(3), throwing(1), thrown(1), took(1) Matt. 7:4; Matt. 7:5; Matt. 7:22; Matt. 8:12; Matt. 8:16; Matt. 8:31; Matt. 9:25; Matt. 9:33; Matt. 9:34; Matt. 9:38; Matt. 10:1; Matt. 10:8; Matt. 12:20; Matt. 12:24; Matt. 12:26; Matt. 12:27; Matt. 12:28; Matt. 12:35; Matt. 13:52; Matt. 15:17; Matt. 17:19; Matt. 21:12; Matt. 21:39; Matt. 22:13; Matt. 25:30; Mk. 1:34; Mk. 1:39; Mk. 1:43; Mk. 3:15; Mk. 3:22; Mk. 3:23; Mk. 5:40; Mk. 6:13; Mk. 7:26; Mk. 9:18; Mk. 9:28; Mk. 9:38; Mk. 9:47; Mk. 11:15; Mk. 12:8; Mk. 16:9; Mk. 16:17; Lk. 4:29; Lk. 6:22; Lk. 6:42; Lk. 9:40; Lk. 9:49; Lk. 10:2; Lk. 10:35; Lk. 11:14; Lk. 11:15; Lk. 11:18; Lk. 11:19; Lk. 11:20; Lk. 13:28; Lk. 13:32; Lk. 19:45; Lk. 20:12; Lk. 20:15; Jn. 2:15; Jn. 6:37; Jn. 9:34; Jn. 9:35; Jn. 10:4; Jn. 12:31; Acts 7:58; Acts 9:40; Acts 13:50; Acts 16:37; Acts 27:38; Gal. 4:30; Jas. 2:25; 3 Jn. 1:10; Rev. 11:2

**Torment** (931) (**basanos** - cp "touchstone" - basanite, Latin = lapis Lydius) is used only 3x in the NT (Mt 4:24+ = "pains" [NAS]; Lk 16:23 16:28+) and originally referred to a stone used for testing gold and other metals, and then came to mean applying torture (e.g., the torture-rack) to question and extort prisoners' confessions. Therefore "**basanos**" must refer to a most extreme form or degree of human suffering - severe pain associated with torture and torment!

**basanos** - our English word *basanite* indicates [a] basically, a *touchstone* to test gold and other metals [Basanite was used in this way - If you use one thing as a *touchstone* of another, you use it as a test by which you judge the second thing = a '**Lydian stone**'] used for testing gold because pure gold rubbed on it left a peculiar mark]; [b] *Basanos* described the *instrument of torture* by which slaves were tortured; i.e., were forced to reveal the truth by torturing them [see *metaphor*]; and [c] *torment or acute pain*). The derivative verb **basanizo** means literally to rub on the touchstone (**basanos**) or to test by means of the touchstone and then to test or make proof of anything. Figuratively, the verb **basanizo** refers to any severe distress, and so means to afflict, to harass, to vex, to torment. **Basanizo** then can mean to subject one to severe torment or distress, as with diseases (Mt 8:6), with birth pangs (Re 12:2), by the threat of Jesus' punishment of demonic spirits (Mt 8:29, Mk 5:7, Lk 8:28), by prophetic warnings (Re 11:10), of the torment associated with God's righteous judgment (Rev 14:10, 20:10)

**BDAG** describes **basanos** as "severe pain occasioned by punitive torture" and records an ancient writing from Herodas describing torture ordered by a court to exhort a confession. ([Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., & Bauer, W. A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature](#))

**TDNT** - The **basanos** was originally used by inspectors of coins, then the word became a commercial term for checking calculations, later it was used figuratively for testing, and finally it came to signify putting to the test by torture. ([Kittel, G., Friedrich, G., & Bromiley, G. W. Theological Dictionary of the New Testament. Eerdmans](#))

Specific torments in the Luke passage (Lk 16:19-31) are the flame, in agony, the sight of the righteous, thirst, the victims' memories of their previous lives, and the realization that they are in a hopeless situation.

The related verb **basanizo** means to test by rubbing a [Touchstone \(assaying tool\)](#) .

There are 11 uses of **basanos** in the Septuagint (1Sa 6:3 4, 8, 17 Ezek 3:20; 7:19; 12:18; 16:52, 54; 32:24, 30) and some 45 uses of **basanos** in the Apocryphal writings - 1 Macc 9:56; 2 Macc 7:8; 9:5; 3 Macc 3:27; 4 Macc 4:26; 5:6; 6:27, 30; 7:2, 10, 16; 8:9, 19; 9:5f, 9, 16, 18; 10:11, 16; 11:1, 6, 23; 12:12; 13:15; 14:5, 8, 11; 15:11, 18ff, 32; 16:1f, 17; 17:3, 7, 10, 23; 18:20f; Wis 2:19; 3:1; 17:12; 19:4; Sir 33:27

**Webster** defines a [Touchstone](#) as a black siliceous stone related to flint and formerly used to test the purity of gold - pure gold leaves a yellow streak on the touchstone. Figuratively touchstone ([Touchstone = metaphor](#)) came to mean a test or criterion for determining the quality or genuineness of a thing.

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## Related Resources:

- [Eternal punishment](#)
- [What is the outer darkness in Matthew 22:13?](#)
- [Will there be tears in heaven?](#)
- [What does hell look like? How hot is hell?](#)
- [Is hell literally a place of fire and brimstone?](#)
- [How is an eternity in hell a just punishment for only a human lifetime of sin?](#)
- Steve Lawson - sermon on [The Great White Throne Judgment!](#)
- Richard Mayhue - [Hell: Never, Forever or Just for Awhile?](#) (25 pages)

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## Question: "[What does the Bible mean when it refers to the gnashing of teeth?](#)"

**Answer:** The precise phrase **gnashing of teeth** is found in several places in the Bible and is used exclusively in reference to the final judgment of sinners, where it is combined with either weeping or wailing. The Greek phrase for "gnashing of teeth" literally means "grinding one's teeth together."

Surely, part of what the **gnashing of teeth** communicates is pain, especially when the gnashing is combined with weeping. When a person hits his thumb with a hammer, he will commonly squeeze his eyes closed and grind his teeth together hard. The weeping and gnashing of teeth in Scripture, however, is much more dreadful, partly because it lasts for eternity.

**Gnashing one's teeth** shows up elsewhere in Scripture in contexts other than feeling pain. In Acts 7:54+ the gnashing of teeth is done in anger because of what Stephen had said to the Jewish Council: "They were furious and gnashed their teeth at him." Psalm 37:12 says, "The wicked plot against the righteous and gnash their teeth at them" (see also Psalm 35:16; 112:10; and Lamentations 2:16). In these passages, wicked persons gnash their teeth at righteous persons as the wicked plot against them or disapprove of them. Apparently, gnashing teeth was a sign of great disrespect and anger.

Jesus' first reference to weeping and **gnashing of teeth** comes in Matthew 8:12+ where He compares the kingdom of heaven to a feast where "many" come from all parts of the world to "recline at the table with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob." The others, however, are thrown into "**outer darkness**" where there is weeping and **gnashing of teeth**. In His parable of the weeds sown in the field, Jesus again describes the fate of those who reject Him, this time adding to the description "**the fiery furnace**" into which they will be cast (Matthew 13:41–42+). The story of the guest who comes to the wedding feast of the Lamb without the proper clothing is cast into **outer darkness** where there is **weeping and gnashing of teeth** (Matthew 22:11–13), as is the wicked servant described in Matthew 24:44–51 and the worthless servant in the parable of the talents (Matthew 25:14–30).

All these references to **weeping and gnashing of teeth** have one thing in common—the undeniable fact that those who do not belong to Christ will suffer a terrible fate, while His children will enjoy bliss in heaven with Him forever. Hell will be a place of anguish, remorse, pain, and misery. Heaven will be a place where God eventually "will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away" (Revelation 21:4). The misery that causes the gnashing of teeth will be unknown in heaven, and there will be no weeping, no wailing, and no tears.

Sadly, those who reject God will realize in hell what they have truly lost, and the realization that there is no "second chance" will cause them to feel the full weight of the pain that goes with that knowledge. The anguish of being separated from God does not go away. It is eternal and unrelenting. We all deserve that kind of punishment: "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23), but God, in His mercy, made it possible for us to avoid that eternal pain and suffering. Paul explains, "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:23).

All who accept the gift God has provided through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ will escape the everlasting weeping and gnashing of teeth. Paul proclaims, "If you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved" (Romans 10:9–10). Jesus uses powerful imagery like wailing and gnashing of teeth to illustrate the importance of turning away from the sin that leads to hell and turning to Him who alone provides salvation.

Croft Pentz -

## THE SHUT DOOR

Luke 13:24–30



This parable speaks of opportunities that come our way today but are gone tomorrow. Jesus warns that some day the door to heaven will be shut. In Noah's time (Gen. 6:3), God gave men opportunity to be saved, but they rejected it. Now is the day of salvation—2 Cor. 6:2. We have no guarantee of what tomorrow will bring—Prov. 27:1. The prophets exhort us to seek the Lord while He may be found—Isa. 55:6. Today may be your last opportunity.

#### I. The Way—v. 24

Note the words of Jesus in Matt. 7:13–14.

A. The promise—John 14:1–3. God is preparing a place for us. Note the words of John 3:16, “Not perish, but have everlasting life.”

B. The pathway—John 14:6. Jesus is the only way. There is a way that seems right, but the end is death—Prov. 14:12. Note also Acts 4:12.

C. The people—those who have their names in the Lamb's book of life—Rev. 20:15. Our names are written in this book when we are born again—John 3:1–8.

#### II. The Wrong—vv. 25–26

These people were religious but not righteous. Religion is man's way; righteousness is God's way.

A. Formality without faith—Matt. 7:21–23. One may have all the forms of Christianity, yet not be a child of God. See Eph. 2:8–9.

B. Ritual without reality—Mark 7:6. Too many give only lip service to the Lord—Luke 6:46. The apostle Paul knew the Lord in a personal way—2 Tim. 1:12. To be in Christ is to know Him personally.

C. Religion without righteousness—Titus 1:16. Their works prove they are not God's children. When one is born again, he becomes a new person—2 Cor. 5:17.

#### III. The Weeping—vv. 27–28

A. The separation from God—v. 27.

1. Wicked separated from the just—Matt. 13:49.
2. Sheep separated from the goats—Matt. 25:32.
3. Christian separated from the sinner—Luke 17:34.

B. The sorrow—v. 28.

1. Reality of hell—Ps. 9:17; Dan. 12:2; Matt. 25:41.
2. Residents of hell—Rev. 21:8.
3. Redemption from hell—2 Peter 3:9; Rom. 6:23.

The door to heaven is now open. It may be closed tomorrow. Those who hear God's voice but harden their hearts will be destroyed—Prov. 29:1. Don't depend on a religious experience—accept Christ as your personal Saviour today. He will make you righteous with His righteousness. Being religious is not enough—you must be born again.

**Luke 13:29 "AND THEY WILL COME FROM EAST AND WEST AND FROM NORTH AND SOUTH, AND WILL RECLINE AT THE TABLE IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD:**

- Ge 28:14 Isa 43:6 49:6 54:2,3 66:18-20 Mal 1:11 Mk 13:27 Ac 28:28 Eph 3:6 7 3:8 Col 1:6,23 Rev 7:9,10
- [Luke 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 13:22-30 The Narrow Door](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 13:22-30 Are Just a Few Being Saved? Part 1](#)
- [Luke 13:22-30 Are Just a Few Being Saved? Part 2](#)

#### Related Passage:

Matthew 8:10-12+ (Story of the **healing of the Centurion's son**) Now when Jesus heard this, He marveled and said to those who were following, “Truly I say to you, I have not found such great faith with anyone in Israel. I say to you that **many will come from east and west, and recline at the table with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven**; 12 but the sons of the kingdom (The Jews) will be cast out into the outer darkness; in that place **there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.**” (THE FACT THAT VERSE 12 REFERS TO JEWS AND IS CONTRASTED WITH THOSE COMING FROM EAST AND WEST WOULD SUPPORT THE INTERPRETATION THAT THOSE FROM EAST AND WEST ARE GENTILES.)

## GUESS WHO'S COMING TO DINNER?... AND WHO'S NOT!

**They will come from east and west and from north and south** - The "four corners" of the world. Who is **"they?"** In context this probably refers to Gentiles who have "striven" and entered through the narrow door by grace through faith, the only way (Jn 14:6) into the Kingdom of God, entering through the Door, the Messiah (Jn 10:9).

**Spurgeon** on the identity of the **they** - Rank outsiders, far off heathen, outrageous sinners, harlots; "they shall come," and repent, and "sit down in the kingdom of God," and this shall cut to the quick those who were hearers of the Word, but who perished because they were workers of iniquity.

**Will recline at the table** - This is a prophecy to be fulfilled in the Millennial Kingdom. This banquet represents the fulfillment of the prophecy in Isaiah 25:6-9 (cp the striking contrast presented in Isaiah 65:13-14). In Jesus' day the Jews viewed themselves as uniquely privileged because of the patriarchs and felt that the Gentiles were excluded from the kingdom of God. How wrong they were! Jesus in effect turns their banqueting table upside down! Imagine the shock of the Jews in the audience as they heard Jesus' radical words!

Isaiah 25:6-9 **The LORD of hosts will prepare a lavish banquet for all peoples on this mountain (MOUNT ZION ~ JERUSALEM IN THE MILLENIUM); A banquet of aged wine, choice pieces with marrow, And refined, aged wine.** 7 And on this mountain He will swallow up the covering which is over all peoples, Even the veil which is stretched over all nations. 8 He will swallow up death for all time (1Co 15:55-58+), And the Lord GOD will wipe tears away from all faces (Rev 7:17+, Rev 21:4+), And He will remove the reproach of His people from all the earth; For the LORD has spoken. 9 And it will be said in that day, "**Behold, this is our God for Whom we have waited that He might save us. This is the LORD for Whom we have waited; Let us rejoice and be glad in His salvation.**" AMEN!

Isaiah 65:13-14 Therefore, thus says the Lord GOD, "**Behold**, My servants will eat, but you will be hungry. **Behold**, My servants will drink, but you will be thirsty. **Behold**, My servants will rejoice, but you will be put to shame. 14 "**Behold**, My servants will shout joyfully with a glad heart, But you will cry out with a heavy heart, And you will wail with a broken spirit (cf Mt 13:28).

**C H Spurgeon** - It will very much aggravate the sorrows of **the lost to see so many saved** whose prospects did not appear to be one half so hopeful as their own. The least likely to be saved shall be saved; the blackest sinners, the vilest outcasts, the grossest unbelievers, shall be brought to repentance and faith, and shall be saved; while those who were first in privileges, children of godly parents, professors of religion, those who appeared in every way likely to be saved first, will be left to the last, and be shut out of the kingdom of God, never to enter (cf Lk 13:30). God grant, in his infinite mercy, that nobody in the Tabernacle tonight may be of that unhappy number! Amen.

**William Barclay** writes that "The idea of the Messianic Banquet was at once the seal and the symbol of the new era was a common feature in apocalyptic writings and an extremely popular subject of discussion, thought, and expectation." How sad for the Jews to discuss it but then miss it!

Several Scriptures allude to that glorious future date on the calendar of every believer -- an invitation to dine with the King of kings at the blessed Marriage Supper of the Lamb (cp Mt 22:1-14; Mt 25:1-13; Mt 26:29; Lk 22:16; Rev 19:9+) (See several articles on the Marriage of the Lamb). **Fausset** writes that "*The consummation of this blessed intercommunion shall be at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, of which the Lord's Supper is the earnest and foretaste.*" (cf 1Co 11:26+ = "until He comes"! ) Jesus prophetically promised that He would not partake of the Passover meal again **until** (very important time phrase) He dines with believers in the Millennial Kingdom (Mt 26:29; Mk 14:25; Lk 22:18). Recall Jesus' incredible prophetic blessing for those who are waiting eagerly for the Master's return...

**"Blessed** are those slaves whom the master will find on the alert when he comes; truly I say to you, that he (THIS IS JESUS HIMSELF!!!) will gird himself to serve, and have them recline at the table, and will come up and wait on them. 38 "Whether he comes in the second watch, or even in the third, and finds them so, blessed are those slaves. (Lk 12:37-38+)

As **Henry Cowles** says "This feast is for known friends, not for old enemies." ([Luke - at top of page enter 168](#))

Keep in mind that most Jews believed that because they were Abraham's children Israel as a whole would be saved (a delusion Paul dealt with vigorously in Romans 2) and that the few who were lost would be exceptions to the general rule. Jesus' teaching radically destroys that delusion.

**Young's Literal** - and lo, there are last who shall be first, and there are first who shall be last.' (Luk 13:30 YLT)

**KJV** (ALSO MORE LITERAL - DOES NOT ADD "SOME") And, behold, there are last which shall be first, and there are first which shall be last. (Luk 13:30 KJV)

**NET** Luke 13:30 But indeed, some are last who will be first, and some are first who will be last."

**CSB** Luke 13:30 Note this: Some are last who will be first, and some are first who will be last."

**ESV** Luke 13:30 And behold, some are last who will be first, and some are first who will be last."

**NIV** Luke 13:30 Indeed there are those who are last who will be first, and first who will be last."

**NLT** Luke 13:30 And note this: Some who seem least important now will be the greatest then, and some who are the greatest now will be least important then. "

**NRS** Luke 13:30 Indeed, some are last who will be first, and some are first who will be last."

- Mt 3:9,10 8:11,12 19:30 20:16 21:28 29 30 31 Mk 10:31
- [Luke 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 13:22-30 The Narrow Door](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 13:22-30 Are Just a Few Being Saved? Part 1](#)
- [Luke 13:22-30 Are Just a Few Being Saved? Part 2](#)

#### Related Passages:

Matthew 19:30 "But many who are first will be last; and the last, first.

Matthew 20:16 "So the last shall be first, and the first last."

Mark 10:31 "But many who are first will be last, and the last, first."

Romans 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, **to the Jew first** and **also to the Greek (GENTILES)**.

Acts 13:46 Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly and said, "It was necessary that **the word of God be spoken to you first**; since you repudiate it and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold, **we are turning to the Gentiles**.

Acts 18:6 But when they resisted and blasphemed, he shook out his garments and said to them (JEWISH HEARERS), "Your blood be on your own heads! I am clean. **From now on I will go to the Gentiles.**"

Acts 28:28 "Therefore let it be known to you (JEWS) that this **salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles**; they will also listen."

### PARADOXICAL PLACEMENT

**Behold (idou)** - **Behold** (not found in Luke 12 but found 5x in Luke 13:7, 11, 30, 32, 35!) is an urgent command (aorist imperative) serves as an "attention grabber" and draws the reader's attention to the profundity of Jesus' following statement. It is a call to hear and heed the Master!

**Some who are last who will be first** - Note "**some**" is added by the translators! More literally this reads "behold there are last ones who will be first." There is no "quantitation" as might be suggested by the added word "some." The **last** speaks most likely of the Gentiles (but we need to be careful being too dogmatic - see [Robert Stein's comment below](#)).

**Spurgeon** suggests this means that "Many who, today, seem to be unlikely to be converted, those who are '**last**' in character, will yet be '**first**' in repentance; and there who are '**first**' in privileges, and even in hopefulness, who will be '**last**' in the great day of account. May we take home to our hearts this solemn warning!"

**Some are first who will be last** - Again "some" is added but not in the Greek. The **first** in context most likely refers to the Jews,

who were the first to be privileged with God's favor and the first to receive His gracious call to come into His Kingdom, but who failed to enter because of their unbelief, even as many of the Jews in the Old Testament failed to enter His rest after being warned (cf He 3:7-9+ Heb 3:10 11+) - "And to whom did He swear that they should not enter His **rest** (katapausis), but to those who were **disobedient** (apeitheo)? And so we see that they were not able to enter because of **unbelief** (apistia)." (Hebrews 3:18, 19+) Notice that unbelief is not just a mindset or a heart attitude, but is manifest by disobedience, failure to obey the clear instructions/commands of God.

**MacArthur** - Jesus' concluding statement, And behold, **some are last who will be first and some are first who will be last**, further intensifies the shock these lost Jews will feel. Not only will Gentiles be in the kingdom, but they will also be equal with the Jews who are there. In the realm of salvation "there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for [the redeemed] are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:28; cf. Eph. 2:11-16). (See [Luke Commentary](#))

**I H Marshall** - It may mean here that those who regard themselves as oppressed and hopeless will gain entry to the kingdom, while those who think that they alone are worthy will be excluded (cf. 1:51–53). It is possible that the saying contrasts the Jews, who were first to hear the gospel, with the gentiles (J. Weiss, 476; Grundmann, 286f.). Yet another possibility is that the saying places both groups on an equal footing (cf. W. Michaelis, TDNT VI, 868 n. 14). It is probable that the saying is applied here especially to the relation between Jews and gentiles. (See [The Gospel of Luke](#))

**W A Criswell** - "There are last" refers to the Gentiles and "there are first" refers to the Jews, some of whom would have a lower rank than the Gentiles whom they despise. ([The Believer's Study Bible](#))

The preceding interpretation of **first...last** (first = Jews, last = Gentiles) is favored by most evangelical commentaries, but there is another possibility that the terms "**last...first...first...last**" could relate to degrees of glory in eternity future. In other words, some who were **first** on earth (in terms of privilege, prestige, honor) might be **last** in glory. I personally think that the context favors the interpretation of those who were **first** to receive the Gospel as the Jews and the **last** being the Gentiles but in fairness one cannot be dogmatic. Some writers also think the "first who will be last" refers to those (probably Jews) who are cast out of the Kingdom of God.

**Robert Stein** on **last...first** - Compare Matt 19:30; 20:16; Mark 10:31. The parallels in Matthew and Mark indicate that Jesus used this proverb primarily to signify the admission of Israel's outcasts (tax collectors, sinners, the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind) and the exclusion of the religious elite (Pharisees, scribes, lawyers, priests). Luke and his readers, however, also would have understood this in terms of Acts 13:46; 18:6; and Acts 28:28, i.e., the unbelief of much of Israel and the inclusion of the Gentiles. The lack of the article before "**last**" and "**first**" indicates that neither all the **last** nor all the **first** would experience this reversal. Some Jews (the disciples and the church of Acts 1–9) did believe. The saying contrasts not all the **last** and all the **first** but "**last** ones" kinds of people and "**first** ones" kinds of people. Both the NIV and the RSV seek to convey this in their translations. Compare Luke 1:51–53; 2:34; 6:20–26; 14:11, 15–24. (See [Luke: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition](#))

**Steven Cole** has a most interesting application of Jesus' closing words on this section...

**Salvation requires our careful self-examination because those who assume they're in may be out.**

Jesus says that there will be a great reversal. Many who thought they were **first** will be **last**. Many whom the "first crowd" thought were **last**, will be **first**. The Jews of Jesus' day despised the pagan Gentiles. They thought that if they ate with Gentiles they would be defiled. But Jesus says that many Gentiles will be in the kingdom, eating with the patriarchs and prophets, while many self-righteous Jews would be shut out. These verses demand our careful attention because **we who are in the church** are in the same place as the **Jews** of Jesus' day. We are familiar with the things of God. Perhaps like me, you were raised to know the Gospel. But being in the church is not enough.

**Have you personally entered through the narrow door? Have you come to Jesus as a guilty sinner and laid hold of Him as the only acceptable sacrifice for your sins? Are you seeking to know Him and grow in Him as your Lord and Savior?**

General acquaintance with Jesus won't be enough in that terrible day (cp Mt 7:21-note Mt 7:22 23-note). Don not assume that just because you **know** about Jesus, you **know** Him (**Ed**: And I would add even more important that "He **knows** you!").

**Conclusion** - [David Brainerd, the great missionary to American Indians](#), was once witnessing to a chief who was very close to trusting in Christ. But he held back. Brainerd got up, took a stick, drew a circle in the dirt around the chief, and said, "Decide before you cross that line."

Brainerd knew that if the chief missed that moment he might never be so close again. My prayer is that the Lord will use this message to draw that line around you if you have never entered through the narrow door,

which is Christ alone. Salvation is not just an interesting theological notion to discuss. It is of crucial importance for every person because the door is narrow and it soon will be shut forever. But right now it is still open. Jesus says to you, “**Strive** (present imperative) to enter by the narrow door; for many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able.” ([Luke 13:22-30 - The Narrow Door](#))

It is impossible to take the wrong road and go to Heaven,  
and it is impossible to take the Heavenly road and go to Hell.

**J C Ryle** comments that “our Lord gives us a general caution against **the way of the many** in religion. It is not enough to think as others think and do as others do. It must not satisfy us to follow the fashion, and swim with the stream of those among whom we live. He tells us that the way that leads to everlasting life is **narrow**, and **few** travel in it. He tells us that the way that leads to everlasting destruction is **broad**, and full of travelers. **Many are those who enter in by it.** These are fearful truths! They ought to raise great searchings of heart in the minds of all who hear them. “Which way am I going? By what road am I traveling?” In one or other of the two ways here described, every one of us may be found. May God give us an honest, self-inquiring spirit, and show us what we are! We may well tremble and be afraid, if our religion is that of the multitude. If we can say no more than this, that “we go where others go, and worship where others worship, and hope we shall do as well as others at last,” we are literally pronouncing our own condemnation. What is this but being in the **broad way**? (Mt 7:13-14+) What is this but being in the road whose end is **destruction**? Our religion at present is not saving religion. We have no reason to be discouraged and cast down, if the religion we profess is not popular, and few agree with us. We must remember the words of our Lord Jesus Christ in this passage: **The gate is narrow.** ([Luke 13](#))

Repentance and faith in Christ,  
and holiness of life,  
have never been fashionable.

**Editorial Note on the importance of Repentance:** **Repentance** is not considered by many today as a component of salvation - Let the Scriptures speak for themselves -- John the Baptist called for repentance “validated” by fruit [Mt 3:2, 8, Lk 3:3, 8, Mk 1:4, Acts 19:4, cp Ac 13:24] Jesus began His ministry preaching repent [Mt 4:17, 11:20, 21, 12:41, Mk 1:15, cp Mk 6:12, Lk 5:32, 5, 10:13, 11:32, 13:2,3, 5, 15:7, 8, 9, 10, 16:30, 24:47]. Peter preached repentance [Acts 2:38, 3:19, 5:31] as did Paul [Acts 20:21, 26:20, cp Acts 11:18, cp Ro 2:4+] and as did John [Rev 2:21+]. God desires for all to repent [Ac 17:30 2Pe 3:9+] See [Multiple articles on Repentance](#) or well done article in [Baker Evangelical Dictionary - Repentance](#).

**J C Ryle** reminds us that “The true flock of Christ has always been small (cf Lk 12:32+). It must not move us to find that we are reckoned singular, and peculiar, and bigoted, and narrow-minded. This is “**the narrow way**.” Surely it is better to enter into life eternal with a few, than to go to “destruction” with a great company ([Expository Thoughts](#))

**Robert Frost** wrote a secular poem that closely parallels Jesus’ words:

*“Two roads diverged in a wood, and I---  
I took the one less traveled by,  
And that has made all the difference.”*

**Wiersbe** observes that in regard to one’s eternal destiny “the greatest danger is self-deception (cp He 3:13-note; Pr 28:26, Is 44:20, Obad 1:3, Ro 7:11-note; Ep 4:22-note; Jas 1:14-note). The scribes and Pharisees had fooled themselves into believing that they were righteous and others were sinful (cp Mt 5:20-note, Mt 23:29). **It is possible for people to know the right language, believe intellectually the right doctrines, obey the right rules, and still not be saved.** (Borrow [Be compassionate](#)) (Bolding added for emphasis)

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## **Before the Face of God - The First Shall Be Last**

“Indeed there are those who are last who will be first, and first who will be last.” [Luke 13:30]

A man asked Jesus, “Lord, are only a few people going to be saved?” (Luke 13:23). Jesus exhorted the people to press through the narrow door because soon the door would be shut. The people would beg the judge to reopen the door, but it would be too late. The unbelieving Jews of Jesus’ generation will weep and gnash their teeth on that day, because they will behold Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, but they will be cast out (Luke 13:24–28).

On the other hand, said Jesus, “people will come from east and west and north and south, and will take their places at the feast in the kingdom of God” (v. 29). The gospel will be gladly received by the Gentiles.

Then Jesus said that many who are last will be first, and many who are first will be last. There will be some surprises in heaven.



**Some will enter the kingdom with only their salvation, while others will be given great rewards because of their faithfulness. Remember, though, that God's rewards will reflect his perfect wisdom and righteousness. God's mercy, and not obligation, will be the basis for all rewards. Regardless of what reward we receive in heaven, we will rejoice at the rewards all the other people receive. There will be no envy. It will be exciting to hear the stories of these unknown saints.**

In this world, we cater to the big givers and the big doers, forgetting that much is required from those to whom much has been given. These people may be doing no more than is expected of them, and perhaps less. Someone who gives or does only a little may be doing far more than required.

When God judges us, those who gave of themselves most sacrificially will receive the greatest rewards.

Thus, some of those who are greatly honored on earth may not be among the greatest in heaven, while there will be many who are highly honored in heaven who were completely unknown here on earth.

**Coram Deo** In certain kinds of services God desires that we give of ourselves secretly. However, in our egocentric society, many personally herald their own good deeds. Ask God for the kind of commitment that doesn't require headlines. Pray for a contentment to willingly work among the "hidden heroes," those who toil for the Lord in quiet and obscure ways, far from the applause of the crowds. ([THE FIRST SHALL BE LAST – Sermons and Biblical Studies](#))

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There are last who will be first, and there are first who will be last. -LUKE 13:30

The values of the kingdom that Jesus came to establish were radically different than those of His day. The Pharisees and teachers of the law clamored for the spotlight and sought the adulation of the crowds. Many of us still do this today.

In Luke 14, Jesus told a parable that taught His followers not to be like that. The parable talks about people who chose the most honored seat for themselves at a wedding feast (vv. 7-8). He said they would be embarrassed when the host asked them publicly to take their rightful place (v. 9). Jesus went on in His story to talk about whom to invite to such dinners. He said they shouldn't invite friends and family, but "when you give a feast, invite the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind. And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you" (Lk 14:13-14).

Are you disappointed because you have not broken into the more elite group in your church or neighborhood? Or because you are stuck down on rung two when you'd rather be on rung eight or at least climb-ing the social ladder? Listen to what Jesus said: "Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted" (v. 11).

That's the radical and upside-down way of God's kingdom! —DE

Blessed Savior, make me humble,  
Take away my sinful pride;  
In myself I'm sure to stumble,  
Help me stay close by your side. —D. DeHaan

We can face any fear when we know the Lord is with us.

In Christ's kingdom, humility trumps pride every time.

**Luke 13:31 Just at that time some Pharisees approached, saying to Him, "Go away, leave here, for Herod wants to kill You."**

KJV Luke 13:31 The same day there came certain of the Pharisees, saying unto him, Get thee out, and depart hence: for Herod will kill thee.

- **Go away, leave here** Neh 6:9-11; Ps 11:1,2; Amos 7:12,13
- [Luke 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 13:31-35 Christ Would, But They Would Not](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 13:31-33 Who Really Killed Jesus?](#) - John MacArthur



Region of Perea

## A PUZZLING PLEA IN PEREA BY PHARISEES

**Just at that time** ([hora](#)) - More literally "At that very hour," (ESV) the very hour Jesus had given the stern, serious warning for everyone's need to enter the "Strait gate." (Lk 13:24-30) If the the Pharisees heard Jesus warning about Jews not entering the Messianic Banquet in the Kingdom of God, then they were very likely "**gnashing of teeth**" (cf Lk 13:28) at His remarks! The exact reason for the warning by the Pharisees is not clear because we know they wanted to kill Him and as noted, they were probably seething at His "Strait gate" sermonette!

**MacArthur** agrees noting that "At the time, Jesus was ministering in Perea (cf. Matt. 19:1; Mark 10:1; John 10:40–42), a region located east of the Jordan River opposite Samaria and Judea that, like Galilee, was also ruled by Herod Antipas. The Pharisees may have been trying to force Jesus to leave Perea and go to Judea, where the Sanhedrin had jurisdiction. After His strong words of warning that unbelieving Jews will be shut out of the kingdom (see the discussion of Lk 13:23–30), they were even more determined to silence Him temporarily, and eventually permanently. (See [Luke Commentary](#))

Luke uses hora several times in similar phrases...

- Luke 1:10 **at the hour** of the incense offering.
- Luke 2:38 **At that very moment** she came up
- Luke 7:21 **At that very time** He cured many people
- Luke 10:21 **At that very time** He rejoiced greatly in the Holy Spirit,
- Luke 12:12 the Holy Spirit will teach you **in that very hour** what you ought to say
- Luke 13:31 **Just at that time**
- Luke 20:19 The scribes and the chief priests tried to lay hands on Him **that very hour**,
- Luke 24:33 And they got up **that very hour** and returned to Jerusalem,

**Some Pharisees** ([pharisaios](#)) **approached** - They drew near, which is the Greek verb [proserchomai](#) which is the same verb used in Hebrews to describe believers drawing near to God (Heb 4:16, Heb 7:25, Heb 10:1, Heb 10:22, Heb 11:6) and by Peter of "coming to Him as a living Stone." (1 Pe 2:4) These men were not drawing near to Him as God and to receive life but to tell Him about death!

**Luke's** uses of **proserchomai** - Lk. 8:24; Lk. 8:44; Lk. 9:12; Lk. 9:42; Lk. 10:34; Lk. 13:31; Lk. 20:27; Lk. 23:36; Lk. 23:52; Acts 7:31; Acts 8:29; Acts 9:1; Acts 10:28; Acts 12:13; Acts 18:2; Acts 22:26; Acts 22:27; Acts 23:14; Acts 28:9

**Spurgeon** - Think of the Pharisees being concerned about Christ's life! What an affectation of regard! Yet it was only affectation. We must always be on our guard against the foes of God even when they speak most fairly; indeed, it is their agreeable, affectionate words that we have most cause to dread.

**Saying to Him Go away, leave here for Herod wants to kill You-** In Luke's last record of a direct encounter with the Pharisees Jesus had issued several scathing "**Woes**" (Lk 11:42, 43, 44, 46, 47, 52+) and as a result "the scribes and the Pharisees began to be very hostile and to question Him closely on many subjects." (Lk 11:53+). **Go away** is a command in [aorist imperative](#) (Do this

now! Don't delay! is the idea) and **leave** is in the [present imperative](#) (Keep on leaving! is the idea). Keep in mind that at this time Jesus was either in [Perea](#) (favored by MacArthur - cf. Mt. 19:1; Mk 10:1; Jn 10:40–42) or in [Galilee](#) (most favor the latter) both of which were ruled by Herod (Herod Antipas). The question arises is whether this was a genuine threat? While we cannot be dogmatic, the fact that Herod was wicked ([poneros](#) = determined, aggressive, fervent evil that actively opposes good) (Lk 3:19+) and had already murdered one prophet (Lk 9:9+), indicates that he was certainly "capable" of following through and murdering a second Prophet. **Wants** ([thelo](#) in [present tense](#)) means he simply had a desire, but that this was a determined and constant exercise of his will.

This **Herod** should be distinguished from "[Herod the Great](#)" (Mt 2:1, 3, 7, 12, 13, 15, 16, 19) who ruled Palestine from 37 B.C. until he died in 4 B.C. Herod the Great was known for his extensive building projects (including the Temple in Jerusalem) and for his cruelty. Regarding the latter trait, we could say "like father, like son," for Herod Antipas was Herod the Great's son. The **Herod** here in Lk 13:31 is **Herod** the tetrarch of Galilee also known as [Herod Antipas](#) and a son of [Herod the Great](#). (Mt 14:1,3, 6, Lk 3:19, 9:7, Acts 13:1). Herod is called **King Herod** in Mk 6:14 (Mt 14:9) but technically he was not a king but a tetrarch, a ruler with rank and authority lower than a king. A tetrarch ruled over Galilee and Perea (the region through which Jesus was journeying through in this section of Luke) but his rule was only with the approval of the Roman authorities. This was roughly equivalent to being governor of a region. Herod the tetrarch imprisoned John the Baptist (Mk 6:14-29, cf Lk 3:20) and later had him executed (Lk 9:9, Mk 6:27-28). Herod the Tetrarch also had a hand in the unjust trial of Jesus (Lk 23:7-12+) Herod the Tetrarch ruled from 4 B.C.–A.D. 39, sharing the rule of his father's realm with his two brothers ([purple regions in map](#)).

**Wiersbe** reasons that "The Pharisees wanted to get Jesus back into Judea where the religious leaders could watch Him and ultimately trap Him, so they tried to frighten Him away." ([Be courageous](#) Luke 14-24)

[Alfred Plummer](#) notes that "The incident is remarkably parallel to the attempt of Amaziah, priest of the golden calf at Bethel, who first denounced the Prophet Amos to Jeroboam II, and then tried to frighten Amos out of Israel into Judah, equally in vain (Amos 8:10–17)."

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### Before the Face of God - Herod and the True King

He replied, "Go tell that fox, 'I will drive out demons and heal people today and tomorrow, and on the third day I will reach My goal.'" [Luke 13:32]

As Jesus approached Jerusalem, some of the Pharisees warned him to leave because Herod would try to kill him. Jesus replied by calling Herod a fox. This declaration implied that Herod was a sly and untrustworthy thief, lacking dignity and honor.

Not only did Jesus denounce Herod to the crowd, but when he was summoned before Herod, he refused to answer his questions. In doing these things Jesus was making it clear that he was the true king and that he would pass judgment on Herod.

Jesus stated that no one was going to stop him from doing his work. He said that he was going to keep right on driving out demons and healing people until he had achieved his objective. When we read Jesus saying, "On the third day I will reach my goal" (v. 32), we think of the resurrection, but the resurrection was actually more than three days away. In the ancient world, to say something had reached the third day was a way of saying that it had reached completion. Jesus was saying that he was going to finish his work, whether Herod liked it or not.

Perhaps these Pharisees were being friendly to Jesus, but it is more likely that they were trying to silence him by bringing up the threat of Herod. In any event, Jesus went on to issue one more condemnation of Israel, telling the Pharisees, "In any case, I must keep going today and tomorrow and the next day—for surely no prophet can die outside Jerusalem!" (v. 33). This ironic statement calls attention to the fact that the people had repeatedly rejected God's messengers. In one sense the Old Testament reads as a litany of judgments by the unrighteous against the righteous. Jesus would be the culmination of that history of injustice.

Jesus continued, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing!" (v. 34).

The chicks preferred Herod the fox to Jesus the hen, and so they were destroyed.

Coram Deo There is no word Jesus ought to have said but didn't; likewise he spoke no word he was later to regret. Whether calling Herod a fox or condemning Israel or prophesying doom, each word was perfectly suitable. Can the same be said of you? Honor Christ today with your speech. ([HEROD AND THE TRUE KING – Sermons and Biblical Studies](#))

**Luke 13:32 And He said to them, "Go and tell that fox, 'Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I reach My goal.'**

KJV Luke 13:32 And he said unto them, Go ye, and tell that fox, Behold, I cast out devils, and I do cures to day and to morrow, and the third day I shall be perfected.

- **Go and tell that fox** Lk 3:19,20; 9:7-9; 23:8-11; Ezek 13:4; Micah 3:1-3; Zeph 3:3; Mk 6:26-28
- **I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow** Lk 9:7; Mk 6:14; Jn 10:32; 11:8-10
- **the third day I reach My goal** Jn 17:4,5; 19:30; \*Gr.; Heb 2:10; 5:9
- [Luke 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 13:31-35 Christ Would, But They Would Not](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 13:31-33 Who Really Killed Jesus?](#) - John MacArthur

## JESUS ADDRESS TO THE FOX

**And He said to them** - Notice what He does NOT say to them "Thank you for alerting me to the danger!" While the Jewish Pharisees were clearly opposed to the Roman's titular ruler Herod, when it came to the "[Usurper](#)" Jesus (to their spiritually blind eyes), these two enemies became "friends." The **enemy of my enemy is my friend** is an ancient proverb which suggests that two opposing parties can or should work together against a common enemy, and they saw Jesus as their "enemy." We see [collusion](#) between these two enemies in Mark...

Mark 3:6+ The **Pharisees** went out and immediately began conspiring with the [Herodians](#) against Him (Jesus), as to how they might destroy ([apollumi](#)) Him.

Mark 12:13+ Then they \*sent some of the **Pharisees** and [Herodians](#) to Him in order to trap Him (Jesus) in a statement.

**Go and tell** ([aorist imperative](#)) **that fox** - What does Jesus mean by calling Herod a fox? It is not a complement but a phrase expressing "utter contempt" (Leon Morris Borrow [Luke Commentary](#))

**MacArthur** - For Jesus to make such a derogatory statement (CALLING HEROD A "FOX") was highly unusual; Herod is the only individual in the New Testament for whom the Lord expressed such contempt. Some may wonder whether Jesus' comment was a violation of the Mosaic law, which forbids speaking evil of a ruler (Ex. 22:28; Eccl. 10:20; cf. Acts 23:5). While that was normally the case, there were exceptions. God often directly rebuked Israel's rulers through the prophets. Speaking through Isaiah God said to Israel, "Your rulers are rebels and companions of thieves; everyone loves a bribe and chases after rewards. They do not defend the orphan, nor does the widow's plea come before them" (Isa. 1:23). In Ezekiel 22:27 God lamented that Israel's "princes within her are like wolves tearing the prey, by shedding blood and destroying lives in order to get dishonest gain." Hosea 7:3-7 records God's strong rebuke of Israel's wicked leaders. (See [Luke Commentary](#))

One writer says "Upon hearing of Herod's threat, Jesus pegs the Tetrarch as a varmint in the Lord's field, a murderer of God's agents, a would-be disrupter of the divine economy." (Quoted in The New International Commentary on the New Testament – The Gospel of Luke)

**Hughes** adds that "Later when Jesus stood before Herod, the Master would say nothing to him at all, again showing contempt for him. As Leon Morris has remarked, "When Jesus has nothing to say to a man that man's position is hopeless." Herod was a dead man in every way. (See [Luke: That You May Know the Truth](#))

Foxes were well known to be both cunning and dangerous scavengers (cf. La 5:17-18; Ezek 13:4). For example notice the effect of foxes in Song 2:15+ "Catch the **foxes** for us, the little **foxes** that are ruining the vineyards, While our vineyards are in blossom." Joel Green calls this trait "the proclivity of fox for malicious destructiveness."

**John MacArthur** - Rabbinical writings often used "the fox" to signify someone who was both crafty and worthless. The Pharisees, who trembled at Herod's power, must have been astonished at Christ's boldness. (Borrow [The MacArthur Study Bible](#))

**Behold** ([idou](#)) **I cast out** ([ekballō](#)) **demons** ([daimonion](#)) **and perform** ([apoteleo](#)) **cures** ([iasis](#)) **today and tomorrow and the third day I reach My goal** ([teleioo](#)) - Most writers interpret this "triple time reference" as a Hebrew "idiom for a short indefinite time followed by an imminent and certain event" (Ellis). It speaks of journeying on, continuing the miraculous (signs) ministry without interruption or detours! Jesus is simply saying He would continue doing what He set out to do until He was finished, regardless of travel recommendations from the Pharisees or death threats from Herod. He would continue [unperturbed](#) and [unhindered](#). His

miracles would continue to attest to His power and authority over both the supernatural (casting out demons) and the natural world (healing) and were evidence that the Kingdom of God had come upon them (Lk 11:20-note, Mt 12:28). They were signs, that pointed in the "right direction" so to speak, but sadly as described below, for the most part the miraculous signs to the "Way, the Truth and the Life" (Jn 14:6) were not heeded. What is Jesus **goal**? Ultimately His **goal** was to die for the sins of the world, and the resurrection on the **third day** after His crucifixion would attest to the fact that He had conquered sin and death.

**Spurgeon on cast out demons**, etc - That is, "I shall stay my full time here, while I have work to do, I shall do it, and I am not going away until it is finished. I am not afraid of Herod threatening to kill me, for I am immortal till my work is done." He is not even flurried, or put about by such a message as that. Besides when men mean to bite, they do not usually bark; and if Herod had meant to kill Christ just then, he would not have told him what he was going to do.

**NET Note** on time phrases **today and tomorrow and the third day** - The **third day** is a figurative reference to being further on in time, not a reference to (a literal) three days from now. Jesus is not even in Jerusalem yet, and we know that the events of the last days in Jerusalem take a week.

**BDAG** writes that the expression **today and tomorrow and the third day** "refers to a short period of time, the exact duration of which the speaker either cannot or does not wish to disclose."

**THOUGHT TO PONDER:** In using the phrase **third day** could Jesus have been making an allusion to the consummate fulfillment of His goal of redemption made available for sinners, a goal which was validated by His resurrection on the **third day**? It is just a thought, although in context is probably not the intended meaning here. Nevertheless, it is notable that third day is an integral part of the Gospel message as Paul wrote to the Corinthians...

For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the **third day** according to the Scriptures (1 Cor 15:3-4+)

#### **Related references to the third day...**

From that time Jesus Christ began to show His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised up on the **third day**. (Mt 16:21)

And while they were gathering together in Galilee, Jesus said to them, "The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men; and they will kill Him, and He will be raised on the **third day**." And they were deeply grieved. (Mt 17:22-23)

(Jesus) "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem; and the Son of Man will be delivered to the chief priests and scribes, and they will condemn Him to death, and will deliver Him to the Gentiles to mock and scourge and crucify Him, and on the **third day** He will be raised up." (Mt 20:18-19)

(Jesus) saying, "The Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised up on the **third day**." (Lk 9:22)

(Jesus) For He will be delivered to the Gentiles, and will be mocked and mistreated and spit upon, and after they have scourged Him, they will kill Him; and the **third day** He will rise again." (Lk 18:32-33)

(Angels at the tomb) saying that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the **third day** rise again." (Lk 24:7)

But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel. Indeed, besides all this, it is the **third day** since these things (Jesus' crucifixion) happened. (Luke 24:21)

(Jesus) and He said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and rise again from the dead the **third day** and that repentance for forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. (Lk 24:46-47)

(Peter) "God raised Him up on the **third day**, and granted that He should become visible, (Acts 10:40)

**William Hendriksen** - But Jesus reminds Herod also that not the tetrarch's timetable but God's will be carried out. On the third day—that is, on the divinely appointed day, not a day earlier nor a day later—"I will reach my goal," says Jesus. What a glorious way of describing his death. By means of that death he would be reaching his goal, that goal being the redemption of his people. See Matt. 20:28; Mark 10:45. ([Exposition of the Gospel of Luke](#) - borrow)



**Allison Trites** agrees with the thought that the **third day** was an allusion to the resurrection writing "The mention of the "third day" here is a strong pointer to Jesus' coming resurrection. "Luke's readers undoubtedly would call to mind the Lord's resurrection. This meaning is confirmed by the following word, 'finish' [or 'accomplish,' NLT]" (Ellis 1981:190)." (Cornerstone Bible Commentary - [Luke, Acts](#))

**Wiersbe** - Jesus had work to do and He would accomplish it. After all, Jesus walked in the light (John 9:4; 11:9–10), and foxes went hunting in the darkness! (Borrow [Be courageous](#) Luke 14-24)

Regarding **reach My goal** ([teleioo](#)) in John 5 Jesus used the same verb [teleioo](#) declaring

"But the testimony which I have is greater than the testimony of John; for the works which the Father has given Me to **accomplish** ([teleioo](#))—the very works that I do—testify about Me, that the Father has sent Me. (Jn 5:36)

In His great priestly prayer in John 17 Jesus used [teleioo](#) testifying

"I glorified You on the earth, **having accomplished** ([teleioo](#)) the work (so sure is the work to be finished that He speaks in past tense) which You have given Me to do. (Jn 17:4, the fulfillment of Jn 4:34 which also uses [teleioo](#))

The related verb [teleo](#) is used by Jesus in His triumphant cry "**It is finished!**" ([tetelestai](#)) (Jn 19:30<sub>±</sub>) He had reached His goal and the results of His accomplishment would continue throughout eternity! Hallelujah!

**Hughes** adds that "in the wider context of Luke, this was a cryptic reference to Jesus' death and resurrection being under divine control. King Jesus had addressed Herod, the petty monarch, with regal contempt and kingly confidence. This was sovereign premeditation! As the Master said on another occasion when he affirmed that he would lay down his life for his sheep, "No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again" (John 10:18).

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**Behold** (2400) **idou** - As **Spurgeon** says "**Behold** is a word of wonder; it is intended to excite admiration. Wherever you see it hung out in Scripture, it is like an ancient sign-board, signifying that there are rich wares within, or like the hands which solid readers have observed in the margin of the older Puritanic books, drawing attention to something particularly worthy of observation." I would add, **behold** is like a divine highlighter, a divine underlining of an especially striking or important text. It says in effect "Listen up, all ye who would be wise in the ways of Jehovah!"

**Idou in Luke and Acts** - Lk. 1:20; Lk. 1:31; Lk. 1:36; Lk. 1:38; Lk. 1:44; Lk. 1:48; Lk. 2:10; Lk. 2:34; Lk. 2:48; Lk. 5:12; Lk. 6:23; Lk. 7:27; Lk. 7:34; Lk. 9:30; Lk. 10:3; Lk. 10:19; Lk. 11:31; Lk. 11:32; Lk. 11:41; Lk. 13:7; Lk. 13:16; Lk. 13:30; Lk. 13:32; Lk. 13:35; Lk. 14:2; Lk. 15:29; Lk. 17:21; Lk. 17:23; Lk. 18:28; Lk. 18:31; Lk. 19:8; Lk. 19:20; Lk. 22:10; Lk. 22:21; Lk. 22:31; Lk. 22:38; Lk. 22:47; Lk. 23:14; Lk. 23:15; Lk. 23:29; Lk. 24:4; Lk. 24:13; Lk. 24:49; Acts 1:10; Acts 2:7; Acts 5:9; Acts 5:28; Acts 7:56; Acts 8:36; Acts 9:10; Acts 10:17; Acts 10:19; Acts 10:21; Acts 10:30; Acts 11:11; Acts 12:7; Acts 13:11; Acts 13:25; Acts 13:46; Acts 20:22; Acts 20:25; Acts 27:24

**Perform** (658) ([apoteleo](#) from **apó** = intensifies the meaning of + [teleo](#) = complete) means to perfect, accomplish or achieve the natural purpose. **Apoteleo** is a strong word, implying an ultimate and final consummation. The only other NT use of this verb is to describe sin "accomplishing" death (James 1:15+), essentially the opposite end result compared to Luke's use describing Jesus' purpose to cure. In other words in James apoteleo personifies SIN as "running its course" and of reaching its goal (the final stage). Here in Luke, Jesus says in essence I must finish my course (cf Paul's words "I have finished the course" - 2 Ti 4:7<sub>±</sub>)

**Cures** (healings) (2393) **iasis** from **iaomai** = to heal) describes the process or act of healing, of giving a cure, a mode of healing or a remedy. In the present context Luke seems to be emphasizing the physical healing, the lame man's deliverance from physical affliction and now made whole, and restored to bodily health. Three times in the NT - In Luke 13:32 Jesus states He is the One Who is able to "perform cures." And so Jesus is the Healer not only on earth (Lk 13:32), but now in Heaven as Jehovah Rapha (Acts 4:30). **iasis** is used in the great Messianic passage Malachi 4:2 "But for you who fear My name, the **Sun of righteousness** will rise with **healing** (Heb = marpe; Lxx = iasis) in its wings; and you will go forth and skip about like calves from the stall."

**iasis** - 3x in 3v in the NT - Lk 13:32, Acts 4:22, Acts 4:30.

**Reach...goal** (5048) ([teleioo](#) related to [teleios](#) from **telos** = an end, a purpose, an aim, a goal) means to accomplish or bring to an end or to the intended goal (telos). It means finished and wanting nothing necessary for completeness. This verb does not mean simply to terminate something but to carry it out to the full finish, in this case clearly referring to Jesus' mission to provide redemption for sinful mankind.

**Teleioo** - 23v - **accomplish(2), accomplished(1), finish(1), fulfill(1), full number(1), made perfect(4),**

made...perfect(1), make...perfect(1), make perfect(1), perfect(2), perfected(7), reach...goal(1), spending the full number(1). Lk. 2:43; Lk. 13:32; Jn. 4:34; Jn. 5:36; Jn. 17:4; Jn. 17:23; Jn. 19:28; Acts 20:24; Phil. 3:12; Heb. 2:10; Heb. 5:9; Heb. 7:19; Heb. 7:28; Heb. 9:9; Heb. 10:1; Heb. 10:14; Heb. 11:40; Heb. 12:23; Jas. 2:22; 1 Jn. 2:5; 1 Jn. 4:12; 1 Jn. 4:17; 1 Jn. 4:18

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### Vance Havner - "Go, Tell That Fox"

When the Pharisees tried to frighten our Lord with a threat from Herod our Lord gave an amazing answer, found only in Luke. He said in effect, "I have a life work to do and a ministry to perform and I will complete it" (Luke 13:32). When man sets out to do the will of God he will hear from the Pharisees and the "foxes," to use our Lord's word for Herod, who intends to divert and destroy it. But this passage is just another way of saying that when we are in God's work and will we are immortal until our work is done.

When the Pharisees and the foxes try to confuse and discourage us with their predictions and warnings, let us tell them we are on God's schedule and He who has begun a good work in us will finish it. The man who has set out to do the will of God in his life is linked up with heaven, and nothing that happens on earth can defeat him unless he himself departs from what God called him to do and be.

Jesus was often saying, "My time is not yet come." Then on the night of His arrest in the Garden of Gethsemane He said, "This is your hour, and the power of darkness" (Luke 22:53, italics mine). His hour and the Jewish leaders' hour met in a head-on collision. It looked like Jesus lost, but He won through death and resurrection. Whoever lives for Christ is immortal; he lives until his work is finished on earth, and he then continues life in heaven.

**Luke 13:33 Nevertheless I must journey on today and tomorrow and the next day; for it cannot be that a prophet would perish outside of Jerusalem.**

KJV Luke 13:33 Nevertheless I must walk to day, and to morrow, and the day following: for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem.

- **I must journey on today and tomorrow and the next day** Jn 4:34; 9:4; 11:54; 12:35; Acts 10:38
- **for it cannot be that a prophet would perish outside of Jerusalem.** Lk 9:53; Mt 20:18; Acts 13:27
- [Luke 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 13:31-35 Christ Would, But They Would Not](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 13:31-33 Who Really Killed Jesus?](#) - John MacArthur

## THE DIVINE NECESSITY OF JESUS' MISSION

**Nevertheless** - (Term of contrast) - in spite of or despite what the Pharisees had just mentioned. The Pharisees put forward a travel "itinerary", but Jesus countered that He had His own "itinerary." They had told Him to go away and leave, but He responds that He **MUST** journey to Jerusalem. And guess Who prevailed?

**I must (dei) journey on today and tomorrow and the next day** - **I must** speaks of His obligation, a "**divine necessity**," so to speak, for He was compelled to fulfill His goal of dying as the sacrificial Lamb of God, Who takes away the sins of the world (John 1:29). Jesus knows He **must** fulfill the Father's "**predetermined plan**" (Acts 2:23+) of redemption and He would accomplish His Father's will perfectly (Jn 4:34, Jn 17:4). Jesus was not saying that He would arrive in Jerusalem in three days, but that He would continue moving to fulfill His mission and not to escape Herod's evil plans. Jesus was not motivated in His journey by the peril of Herod, but by the plan of His Father. **Journey** is the verb **poreuomai** - used more frequently by Luke than any other Gospel or NT writer. This verb is used in the crucial point in Luke's Gospel which marked Jesus setting His face toward Jerusalem and completion of His mission:

Lk 9:51+When the days were approaching for His ascension, He was determined to **go** (poreuomai) to Jerusalem;

**For it cannot be (endeichomai) that a prophet (prophetes) would perish (apollumi) outside of Jerusalem** (cf the fate of prophets - Lk 4:24-note; Lk 6:22-23-note; cf. Acts 7:52, Neh 9:26; Jer 2:30) - **For** (term of explanation) explains why Jesus had to keep journeying to Jerusalem. God's grand and majestic plan of redemption would not and could not be thwarted by men. He would die in Jerusalem and nowhere else.

**Wiersbe** - The nation not only rejected God's loving invitation to His feast, but they even killed the servants who brought them the invitation! (see Acts 13:27) (Borrow [Be courageous](#) Luke 14-24)

Jesus statement here parallels His earlier word to the Scribes and Pharisees in Luke 11

Woe to you! For you build the tombs of the prophets, and it was your fathers who killed them. 48 "So you are witnesses and approve the deeds of your fathers; because it was they who killed them, and you build their tombs. 49 "For this reason also the wisdom of God said, 'I will send to them prophets and apostles, and some of them they will kill and some they will persecute, 50 so that the blood of all the prophets, shed since the foundation of the world, may be charged against this generation, 51 from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah, who was killed between the altar and the house of God; yes, I tell you, it shall be charged against this generation.' 52 "Woe to you lawyers! For you have taken away the key of knowledge; you yourselves did not enter, and you hindered those who were entering." Lk 11:47-52+

Jesus was the **prophet** foretold by Moses

"The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your countrymen, you shall listen to him. 'I will raise up a prophet from among their countrymen like you, and I will put My words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him.(Deut 18:15, 18+)

The fox Herod had no power to kill the Lamb of God outside of Jerusalem and before the Father's plan would unfold, a plan set in place before the foundation of the world, a truth alluded to in many passages

2 Ti 1:9+ who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity ("before time began" = NET, CSB "before the ages began" = ESV, "before the beginning of time" = NIV, NLT)

Titus 1:2KJV+ - In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, **promised before the world began**; ("before the ages began" = NET, ESV)

1 Peter 1:20+ For He was **foreknown before the foundation of the world**, but has appeared in these last times for the sake of you

**Wiersbe** adds "Our Lord was not afraid of danger. He followed a "divine timetable" and nothing could harm Him. He was doing the will of God according to the Father's schedule (see John 2:4; 7:30; 8:20; 13:1; 17:1). It had been decreed from eternity that the Son of God would be crucified in Jerusalem at the Passover (1 Peter 1:20; Rev. 13:8), and even Herod Antipas could not hinder the purposes of God. Quite the contrary, our Lord's enemies only helped fulfill the will of God (Acts 2:23; 3:13-18)." (Borrow [Be courageous](#) Luke 14-24)

**Bock** - He sees himself functioning as a prophet (a major Lucan theme: Luke 7:16, 39; 24:19; Acts 3:22-23; 7:37; Ernst 1977: 432). He is ready to assume the role of a suffering sent one, a righteous messenger rejected and wronged (also a common theme in Luke: 4:24; 11:50-53; Ellis 1974: 191; Lohse, TDNT 7:329). Jesus knows that his destiny is tied to Jerusalem by divine necessity (so τελειομαι [teleiounmai, I finish my course] in 13:32 and [dei, it is necessary] here). Jesus is determined to carry out what God has sent him to do—and that includes suffering. This is the second time he has predicted his death in the journey section (Lk 12:50) and the fourth prediction overall (Lk 9:21-22, 44). (See [Luke Baker Exegetical Commentary](#))

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**Must** (1163) (**dei** from **deo** = to bind) refers to what is not optional but needful (binding) out of intrinsic necessity or inevitability. Jesus had an inward constraint which is why He "**must**" continue toward Jerusalem. And recall Jesus was continually filled with the Spirit (Lk 4:1, 14, Acts 10:38 = "anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power, and how He went about") and the Spirit had impelled Him into the wilderness (Mk 1:12) so doubtless the Spirit is compelling Him at this time.

Luke repeatedly uses the verb **dei** to speak of **divine necessity** -

Lk 2:49ESV = "I **MUST** be in My Father's House," Lk 4:43 = "I **MUST** preach the Kingdom of God," Lk 9:22 = "The Son of Man **MUST** suffer many things and be rejected," Luke 12:12NET = "the Holy Spirit will teach you at that moment what you **MUST** say," Lk 17:25 = "He **MUST** suffer many things and be rejected," Lk 19:5 "I **MUST** stay at your (Zaccheus') house," Lk 21:9 = "these things **MUST** take place first," Lk 22:37 = "this which is written **MUST** be fulfilled (teleo)," Lk 24:7 = "the Son of Man **MUST** be delivered into the hands of sinful men," Lk 24:44 = "all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled." Acts 1:16 = "the Scripture **HAD** to be fulfilled," Acts 4:12 "there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we **MUST** be saved."

**Be** (1735)(**endechomai**) means to admit, approve, to be possible. It means it is possible and impersonally with a negative as in Lk 13:33 (only NT use - **ouk endechetai**) means it is unthinkable, it cannot be!

**Luke 13:34 "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, just as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not have it!"**

KJV Luke 13:34 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!

- **O Jerusalem, Jerusalem** Lk 19:41,42; Mt 23:37-39
- **he city that kills the prophets and stones those sent to her** 2 Chr 24:21,22; 2 Chr 36:15-16; Neh 9:26; Jer 2:30; 26:23; Lam 4:13; Mt 21:35,36; 22:6; Acts 7:52,59; 8:1; Rev 11:8
- **How often I wanted to gather** Dt 5:29; 32:29; Ps 81:10,13; Isa 48:17-19; 50:2
- **your children together** Lk 19:44; 23:28; Ps 149:2; Lam 1:16; Joel 2:23; Gal 4:25,26
- **as a hen gathers her brood under her wings** Dt 32:11,12; Ruth 2:12; Ps 17:8; 36:7; 57:1; 91:4
- **you would not have it** Lk 15:28; Neh 9:30; Ps 81:11; Pr 1:24-30; Isa 30:15; Jer 6:16; 7:23,24; Jer 35:14; 44:4-6; Ho 11:2,7; Zec 1:4; Mt 22:3; Acts 3:14,15
- [Luke 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 13:31-35 Christ Would, But They Would Not](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 13:34-35 Divine Compassion for Those Deserving Condemnation, Part 1](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 13:34-35 Divine Compassion for Those Deserving Condemnation, Part 2](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 13:34-35 Divine Compassion for Those Deserving Condemnation, Part 3](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 13:34-35 Divine Compassion for Those Deserving Condemnation, Part 4](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 13:34-35 Divine Compassion for Those Deserving Condemnation, Part 5](#) - John MacArthur

## **JESUS' LAMENT OVER JERUSALEM THE CITY OF DESTINY**

**MacArthur** on "O" - The interjection O expresses the strong emotion (cf. Mark 9:19) that the Lord felt for Jerusalem (representing the entire nation, as in Ezek 16:2-3; Mic. 1:5).

**O Jerusalem, Jerusalem** - Jesus uttered this lament with a peculiar [poignancy](#) and [pathos](#) for the Holy City so near and dear to God's heart. But notice that while He uses the name **Jerusalem**, the city of God, it was a symbol of the entire Jewish nation, the majority of which refused to receive Him (Jn 1:11-[note](#)). And so Yeshua with broken heart, sorrowfully laments over His beloved city. As you ponder these words from the lips of our King Who was soon to be rejected by the very city in which He would one day reign as King of kings, take a moment of respite from your study to play this beautiful but sad song [Yerushalayim](#).

**Lament** - A lament or lamentation is a passionate expression of grief, often in music, poetry, or song form. The grief is most often born of regret, or mourning. Laments can also be expressed in a verbal manner, where the participant would lament about something they regret or someone they've lost, usually accompanied by wailing, moaning and/or crying. Laments constitute some of the oldest forms of writing and examples are present across human cultures. Many of the oldest and most lasting poems in human history have been laments. ([Wikipedia](#))

Note that Jesus' double declaration of the name **Jerusalem** is indicative of His deep sorrow. We see a similar repetition by King David at his son Absalom's death

The king was deeply moved and went up to the chamber over the gate and wept. And thus he said as he walked, "**O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom!** Would I had died instead of you, O Absalom, my son, my son!" (2 Sa 18:33, cf repetitive lament in Jer 22:29; cf a lament over Jerusalem in Ps 137:1, 5)

**MacArthur** - Repetition is a familiar way in Scripture of expressing emphasis and pathos. (cf Lk 10:41, Lk 22:31, Acts 9:4)

**The city that kills the prophets and stones those sent to her** - **Kills** and **stones** are both [present tense](#) verbs indicating that they continued to carry out these actions even in Luke's day (see [stoning of Stephen](#) below). The blood of the prophets cries from the dust of the streets of Jerusalem and even more tragically from the courts of God's Holy Temple! Earlier Jesus had said

For this reason also the wisdom of God said, 'I will send to them prophets and apostles, and some of them they will kill and some they will persecute, (Lk 11:49+)

**Joel Green** on stoning the prophets - Stoning is the most common form of execution found in the OT, used in such cases as those involving blasphemy (Lev 24:14, 16, 23) and apostasy (Lev 20:2; Deut 13:11). This OT background is important because the indictment against Jerusalem for stoning "those who are sent to it" thus identifies Jerusalem as attributing blasphemy or apostasy to the very ones whom God has sent. (Ibid)

Below are some of the events to which Jesus likely was making reference:

2 Chr 24:20-22 Then the Spirit of God **came on** (Lxx = [enduo](#) = figuratively to be "clothed" with the Spirit, as in Lk 24:49-note = "you are clothed [enduo](#) with power from on high") Zechariah (not the prophet Zechariah) the son of Jehoiada the priest; and he stood above the people and said to them, "Thus God has said, 'Why do you transgress the commandments of the LORD and do not prosper? Because you have forsaken the LORD, He has also forsaken you.'" 21 So they conspired against him and at the command of the king they stoned him to death in the court of the house (TEMPLE!) of the LORD. 22 Thus Joash the king did not remember the kindness which his father Jehoiada had shown him, but he murdered his son. And as he died he said, "**May the LORD see and avenge!**"

**Comment:** In Luke 13:35 Jesus gives at least one answer to Zechariah's ancient prayer in the form of a prophecy regarding the city that kills the prophets and stones those sent to her!

2 Chronicles 36:15-16 The LORD, the God of their fathers, sent word to them again and again by His messengers, because He had compassion on His people and on His dwelling place; 16 but **they continually mocked the messengers of God, despised His words and scoffed at His prophets**, until the wrath of the LORD arose against His people, until there was no remedy.

Jeremiah 2:30 "In vain I have struck your (JERUSALEM'S - see Jer 2:2) sons; They accepted no chastening. Your sword has devoured your prophets Like a destroying lion.

Jeremiah 26:20-23 Indeed, there was also a man who prophesied in the name of the LORD, **Uriah** the son of Shemaiah from Kiriath-jearim; and he **prophesied against this city** (JERUSALEM) and against this land words similar to all those of Jeremiah. 21 When King Jehoiakim and all his mighty men and all the officials heard his words, then the king sought to put him to death; but Uriah heard it, and he was afraid and fled and went to Egypt. 22 Then King Jehoiakim sent men to Egypt: Elnathan the son of Achbor and certain men with him went into Egypt. 23 **And they brought Uriah from Egypt and led him to King Jehoiakim, who slew him with a sword and cast his dead body into the burial place of the common people**

Nehemiah 9:26 "But they became disobedient and rebelled against You, And cast Your law behind their backs And **killed Your prophets** who had admonished them So that they might return to You, And they committed great blasphemies.

And we dare not forget the "prophetic" (speaking forth of truth, not necessarily predictive) discourse of the first martyr Stephen, for he too was stoned to death in [Yerushalayim \(play song\)](#). Listen to Stephen's words and watch the reaction...

"You men who are stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears are always resisting the Holy Spirit; you are doing just as your fathers did. 52 "Which one of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those (PROPHETS) who had previously announced the coming of the Righteous One, **whose betrayers and murderers you have now become**; 53 you who received the law as ordained by angels, and yet did not keep it." 54 Now when they heard this, they were cut to the quick, and they began gnashing their teeth at him. 55 But being full of the Holy Spirit, he gazed intently into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God; 56 and he said, "Behold, I see the heavens opened up and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God." 57 But they cried out with a loud voice, and covered their ears, and they rushed upon him with one impulse. 58 And when they had driven him out of the city, **they began stoning him**, and the witnesses laid aside their robes at the feet of a young man named Saul. 59 And they went on stoning Stephen as he called upon the Lord and said, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!" 60 And falling on his knees, he cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them!" And having said this, **he fell asleep** (Acts 7:51-60+)

**How often I wanted ([thelo](#)) to gather your children together ([episunago](#)) - How often?** This is rhetorical because He has always wanted to gather Israel together under His protective "wings" but they "**would not!**"



**Bock** notes that "the image of God as a bird is common in the OT and in Judaism (Dt. 32:11; Ru 2:12; Ps. 17:8; 36:7; Ps 57:1; Ps 61:4; Ps 63:7; 91:4; Isa. 31:5). Gentile converts to Judaism were said to come under the wings of the Shekinah. In this image, Jesus reveals God's heart. God's constant desire is to intimately care for, nurture, and protect his people....Only one thing stopped God from exercising such care: the people did not wish him to do so. As a result, the gathering, with its accompanying offer of protection, could not take place." (See [Luke Baker Exegetical Commentary](#))

**Spurgeon** - What a terrible contrast! "I would,.... and ye would not." May the Lord Jesus never have to say that to any of us!

**Just as a hen gathers her brood** (of young birds) **under her wings** - If you have been raised on a farm (as I was), this metaphorical picture is truly worth a thousand words as the saying goes. When does a hen gather her chicks? When she sees danger coming. The irony here is that the Pharisees told Jesus He was in danger, when in fact they were the ones in (eternal) danger and in need of being gathered under the protective pinions (Ps 91:4) of Yeshua!

Take a moment to watch the video below, which has a few poignant titles, but presents an even more poignant picture which will give you just a glimpse into the heart of Jesus and the passion He must have felt as He spoke the haunting words "**Yerushalayim, Yerushalayim.**"

If the melody and lyrics of the song [Yerushalayim](#) did not break your heart like Yeshua's heart broke over Yerushalayim, then watch this [video of a mother hen and her chicks](#). You can almost feel the pain in the heart of our Lord Jesus as you watch this mother hen shelter her precious chicks. Oh my! Indeed, may God grant us grace to join the psalmist in prayer in Psalm 122:6 and PRAY FOR THE PEACE OF JERUSALEM.

**You would** ([thelo](#)) **not have it** - ("you would have none of it! = NET; "you were unwilling" = NIV) Jesus' literal words are "You would not!" He uses the negative particle "[ouk](#)" (from "[ou](#)") which conveys absolute negative. "You ABSOLUTELY would not!" The [pathos](#) of His words ring down through the ages shouting loudly of Jerusalem's (Israel's) unwillingness to be the object of the His redeeming love!

**Spurgeon** - There was their weakness, they were like a brood of chickens; there was his power to protect them, like a hen gathers her brood under her wings; yet there was their infatuation, that they would rather perish than come and be sheltered beneath his almighty wings: "and ye would not."

**Mattoon** -They "**would not!**" This word is very emphatic in the Greek text. They absolutely refused the Lord! Their stubbornness caused them to reject the Savior. Have you ever been rejected? Have you been spurned by others? It can be very painful. Remember that pain, and realize that is how Jesus feels when you reject Him. Israel rejected the Lord that loved them dearly. When Handel's servant used to bring him his chocolate in the morning, he often stood silent with astonishment to see his master's tears<sup>56</sup> mixing with the ink as he penned his composition. It is related that a friend, calling upon the great musician when in the act of composing those pathetic words in Isaiah 53:3, "He was despised and rejected of men," he found him absolutely broken and sobbing. Oh, the pain that Christ must have felt from the rejection of His people and from those who reject Him today. ([Treasures from Luke](#))

John 1:11 He came to His own, and those who were **His own did not receive Him.**

John 5:43 "I have come in My Father's name, and **you do not receive Me**; if another comes in his own name, you will receive him.

John 12:48 "**He who rejects Me and does not receive My sayings**, has one who judges him; the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day.

**MacArthur** on Israel's "**would not**" - By doing so (rejecting God's care) they continued their long history of distrust, disobedience, and rebellion against God that began when they were delivered from slavery in Egypt. They rebelled against Him at least ten times during their years of wandering in the wilderness (Ex 14:10–12; 15:22–24; 16:1–3; 16:19–20; 16:27–30; 17:1–4; 32:1–35; Nu 11:1–3, 4–34; 14:3). As they, at last, stood on the brink of entering the Promised Land, Moses reiterated the law of God to the new generation of Israelites, those whose fathers had rebelled and died in the wilderness (Nu 14:1–38). He reminded them that obedience would bring blessing and disobedience cursing, and they promised to obey (Dt. 26:17). As an object lesson to reinforce that principle, the people were commanded to hold a dramatic ceremony after they entered Canaan. Half of the tribes were to stand on Mt. Ebal (near Shechem) and recite the blessings of obedience (Deut. 27:12), while the other six stood across the valley on Mt. Gerizim and recited the curses for disobedience (Dt 27:13–26). Sadly, throughout subsequent history, Israel chose the path of disobedience, and has experienced the curses. From the repeated cycles of disobedience during the period of the judges, through the time of the divided kingdom, until the destruction and exile first of the northern kingdom of Israel and then the southern kingdom of Judah, Israel's history was largely one of rebellion, as 2 Ki 17:7–17 chronicles. (And the result was 2 Ki 17:18-20) (See [Luke Commentary](#))

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**Gather together** (1996)(**episunago** from **epi** = on, upon, near + **sunago** = to lead or bring together; related = **episunagoge** = a gathering together - 2Th 2:1, Heb 10:25, cf **sunagoge**) means to lead or bring together upon a place. Twice Jesus uses this verb to describe His heart's desire for the Jewish "children" of Jerusalem (Lk 13:34, Mt 23:37). In an almost ironic use, Jesus describes vultures gathering over a dead body (**Lk 17:37**) in the context of time of the Great Tribulation which will purge and refine God's Chosen People to bring forth a righteous remnant. Along the same lines, in the **Septuagint (Lxx)** **episunago** is used by the prophet Zechariah (Zech 12:3, 14:2) as he describes the future end times gathering of the Gentile nations against God's holy city Jerusalem, an event which occurs toward the end of the Great Tribulation, just preceding the establishment of Messiah's Millennial Kingdom on earth. The irony is that Israel refused to be gathered together by their Messiah, so He would allow the anti-Semitic nations to be gathered together against His holy city, but this time He would intervene and save the city and a righteous remnant! Amazing grace indeed!

In Psalm 106:47 the psalmist prays "Save us, O LORD our God, and **gather** (Lxx - episungao) us from among the nations," this request expressing an understanding that Jehovah would scatter the Jews throughout the world because of their continued rebellion (Dt 28:64-65). He will answer this prayer and bring them back to their land in the future in the same general time that the Stone (Messiah) returns (Da 2:34-35-note, Da 2:44-45-note) to set up His **Millennial kingdom** (see Ezek 34:13, 16, 36:24, 25, 26)

**I wanted** (2309)(**thelo**) speaks of Jesus desire, readiness and resolve (see below) to gather in His chosen people. Jesus then uses the identical verb (thelo) to describe His rejection by His chosen people in the Holy City. **Would (thelo)** is a verb which primarily speaks of the exercise of one's will, whether motivated by desire (in this context lack of), a sense of readiness (again lack of) or a feeling of resolve (again lack of). Jerusalem lacked the desire, readiness and resolve to receive her long expected Messiah. Can you imagine Jesus' pain, as the perfect Man, as He spoke these words which would prove tragically true in the coming days.

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#### **James Smith - Luke 13:34.**

THIS lament was over a guilty city, and reveals—

1. A Gracious Purpose. Not judgment, but salvation. "As a hen gathereth."
2. Infinite Mercy. Gathered under His wings. Persecutors, murderers, etc.
3. Almighty Power. "How often would I."
4. Longsuffering Compassion. "How often."
5. Heart - Rending Anguish. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem."
6. Wilful Resistance "But ye would not."
7. Wounded Love. "Your house is left to you desolate"

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**Rod Mattoon** - Have you ever been rejected? Have you been spurned by others? It can be very painful. Remember that pain, and realize that is how Jesus feels when you reject Him. Israel rejected the Lord that loved them dearly. When Handel's servant used to bring him his chocolate in the morning, he often stood silent with astonishment to see his master's tears mixing with the ink as he penned his composition. It is related that a friend, calling upon the great musician when in the act of composing those pathetic words in Isaiah 53:3, "He was despised and rejected of men," he found him absolutely broken and sobbing. Oh, the pain that Christ must have felt from the rejection of His people and from those who reject Him today. Let me add here, that if you are facing rejection right now, there is a Savior that is waiting to embrace you with His arms of love. He can take what seems dark and painful, and turn it into something wonderful. In 1896, a twelve year old African-American girl was raped at knife point in Chester, Pennsylvania. Nine months later, a baby girl was born and her mother named her Ethel. Her mother rejected her and Ethel was raised by her grandmother. Raised in poverty and the tough back streets of Philadelphia, Ethel became a troubled child. Then in 1908, Ethel gave her life to Christ at a Methodist revival meeting. Ethel was gifted with a beautiful voice and in 1917, she began singing in vaudeville shows. She expanded her talents to the theater, film, and television. Throughout her career, Ethel grew closer to the Lord. Then in 1957, Ethel Waters, the once shunned little girl from Chester, Pennsylvania, began touring with Billy Graham. She was a regular during the Graham crusades for the next twenty years. As a gospel singer, Ethel knew God had a special purpose for her life. One of her favorite songs was "His Eye Is On the Sparrow" because, Ethel said, her "precious Jesus always had His eye on this little sparrow." No matter what start you have had in life, Christ has a magnificent future waiting for you. Yes, the Jews rejected the Lord. It did hurt, I'm sure. Why did they do this? Why do people do this today? Why do people reject the Lord Jesus Christ? Let me share some thoughts. ([Treasures from Luke](#))

### **Why do People Reject the Lord?**

#### **1. They Detest His Authority and Word**

Isaiah 5:24— Therefore as the fire devoureth the stubble, and the flame consumeth the chaff, so their root shall be as rottenness, and their blossom shall go up as dust: because they have cast away the law of the Lord of hosts, and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel.

Jeremiah 6:19— Hear, O earth: behold, I will bring evil upon this people, even the fruit of their thoughts, because they have not hearkened unto my words, nor to my law, but rejected it.

1 Samuel 8:7— And the Lord said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them.

## **2. They Doubt His Promises and Power**

At the Promised Land, Israel would not enter because they focused on the size of their enemies instead of the power of God and His promises. For the next 40 years, they wandered in the wilderness. They did not believe God's promises and power to enable them to defeat their enemies. Doubt and unbelief cause people to reject the Lord and His Word today.

Romans 3:3— For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect?

## **3. The Domination and Direction of the Wrong Crowd**

The nation of Israel eventually rejected God's rule over their nation and wanted a king to rule over them because they wanted to be like the other nations around them.

1 Samuel 10:19— And ye have this day rejected your God, who himself saved you out of all your adversities and your tribulations; and ye have said unto him, Nay, but set a king over us. Now therefore present yourselves before the Lord by your tribes, and by your thousands.

## **4. The Desire for Sinful, Wasteful Living**

People also reject the Lord because they have a greater love for their sin than for Him.

2 Kings 17:15— And they rejected his statutes, and his covenant that he made with their fathers, and his testimonies which he testified against them; and they followed vanity, and became vain, and went after the heathen that were round about them, concerning whom the Lord had charged them, that they should not do like them.

Isaiah 66:4— I also will choose their delusions, and will bring their fears upon them; because when I called, none did answer; when I spake, they did not hear: but they did evil before mine eyes, and chose that in which I delighted not.

## **5. Determination to Live Life One's Own Way and Not be Disrupted**

Some folks reject the Lord because they are determined to live their own way. In spite of the truth that is presented to them, they willfully and deliberately reject Christ. These folks refuse to trust in Him. They want to live their life any way they wish with no one telling them what to do and how to live. Their attitude is, "I want NO disruptions." When Christ removed the demons and sent them into the pigs, He disrupted the lives of the people, who in turn, rejected Him and commanded Him to leave.

Matthew 8:34— And, behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus: and when they saw him, they besought him that he would depart out of their coasts.

1 Samuel 15:23— For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, he hath also rejected thee from being king.

John 15:24— If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father.

Isaiah 65:12— Therefore will I number you to the sword, and ye shall all bow down to the slaughter: because when I called, ye did not answer; when I spake, ye did not hear; but did evil before mine eyes, and did choose that wherein I delighted not.

## **6. Deception**

The deceptions of sinful living cause people to reject the Lord. People believe they won't get hurt or make light of their sin. They develop habits that eventually enslave them and their family.

Amos 2:4— Thus saith the Lord; For three transgressions of Judah, and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because they have despised the law of the Lord, and have not kept his commandments, and their lies caused them to err, after the which their fathers have walked:

People also reject the Lord because they have deceived themselves into thinking they don't need Him or there is nothing wrong with them. The Jews rejected Christ because they thought they were righteous and had no need for a Savior.

Acts 13:46— Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.

## **7. The Deduction that Christ and the Cross are Foolish and Not Important**

The message of Christ and the cross are foolish to those who are headed for destruction! Isaiah prophesied that the Lord would be rejected because He would be considered not important at all. This is why folks reject Him today. Jesus is not important to them.

Isaiah 53:2b-3... For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. [3] He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Notice what Paul said.

1 Corinthians 1:18— For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.

1 Corinthians 1:23— But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness;

## **8. Dissatisfaction with God's Plan**

God's plan was to provide His people with manna in the wilderness. Eventually, they became dissatisfied with this food. They griped and complained and longed for the days in Egypt. Their ungratefulness led to bitterness toward the Lord.

Numbers 11:20— But even a whole month, until it come out at your nostrils, and it be loathsome unto you: because that ye have despised the Lord which is among you, and have wept before him, saying, Why came we forth out of Egypt?

## **9. Defects and Discrepancies in the Lives of Christians**

Unfortunately, some folks will reject Jesus Christ because of the sinful or rude behavior of Christians. People watch what we do and how we live. Any flaw or weakness in your life will be magnified in the eyes of people looking for your mistakes. When we are inconsistent, indifferent, immoral, inconsiderate, ill-mannered, intolerable, and impossible to reason with, we flat-out turn people off. They reject our Lord because they reject us.

Christians are ambassadors of Christ. God uses His people to reach out to others.

2 Corinthians 5:20— Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.

Sad to say, some do a lousy job in representing Him! We are warned about being a stumbling block to others.

Romans 14:13— Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way.

1 Corinthians 8:9— But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumblingblock to them that are weak. ([Treasures from Luke](#))

**EDITORIAL COMMENT** - The above elements can be summed up in the truth that root problem is the problem of the heart - sinners hate God and hate His Son because their hearts are hardened by the sin which they love.

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## **James Smith - THE SAVIOUR'S LAMENT LUKE 13:34**

This lament was over a guilty city, and reveals—

1. **A Gracious Purpose.** Not judgment, but salvation. "As a hen gathereth."
2. **Infinite Mercy.** Gathered under His wings. Persecutors, murderers, etc.
3. **Almighty Power.** "How often would I."
4. **Longsuffering Compassion.** "How often."
5. **Heart-Rending Anguish.** "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem."
6. **Wilful Resistance** "But ye would not."
7. **Wounded Love.** "Your house is left to you desolate"

**Luke 13:35 "Behold, your house is left to you *desolate*; and I say to you, you will not see Me until the time comes when you say, 'BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD!'"**

KJV Luke 13:35 Behold, your house is left unto you desolate: and verily I say unto you, Ye shall not see me, until the time come when ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.

- **Behold, your house is left to you desolate** Lk 21:5,6,24; Lev 26:31,32; Ps 69:25; Isa 1:7,8; 5:5,6; 64:10,11; Da 9:26,27; Micah 3:12; Zec 11:1,2; 14:2; Acts 6:13,14
- **you will not see Me until the time comes when you say** Ho 3:4,5; Jn 7:34-36; Jn 8:22-24; Jn 12:35,36; Jn 14:19-23
- **BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD** Lk 19:38-40; Ps 118:26; Isa 40:9-11; 52:7; Zec 12:10; Mt 21:9; Mk 11:9; Mk 11:10; Jn 12:13; Ro 10:9-15; 2 Cor 3:15-18
- [Luke 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 13:31-35 Christ Would, But They Would Not](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 13:34-35 Divine Compassion for Those Deserving Condemnation, Part 1](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 13:34-35 Divine Compassion for Those Deserving Condemnation, Part 2](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 13:34-35 Divine Compassion for Those Deserving Condemnation, Part 3](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 13:34-35 Divine Compassion for Those Deserving Condemnation, Part 4](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 13:34-35 Divine Compassion for Those Deserving Condemnation, Part 5](#) - John MacArthur

Matthew's related passage:

Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling. 38"Behold, your house is being left to you desolate! 39"For I say to you, from now on you will not see Me until you say, 'BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD!'" (Mt 23:37-39)

Jerusalem Destroyed 70 AD  
Click to enlarge

## ISRAEL'S HOUSE WILL BE FORSAKEN

**Behold** (2400) **idou** - This interjection is second person singular [aorist imperative](#), [middle voice](#). You say "so what?" First this is command to each individual (singular), to "initiate" the action of looking and to participate in the results or effect of the looking (that's the sense of the [middle voice](#)). And it is a command in the [aorist imperative](#), which conveys a sense of urgency - Do this now! Do not procrastinate! It is much like an order from a commanding general to his troops! And so Jesus is saying "Pay very close attention to what follows!"

**MacArthur** - Rejecting God's compassion results in His condemnation. The particle **idou** (**behold**) indicates that what follows is surprising and shocking. (See [Luke Commentary](#))

**Bock** - The upcoming rejection requires that the prophet Jesus declare that Israel is in peril. (Ibid)

**Your house is left to you *desolate*** - Note "**your house**" not "God's house!" Note also that the word *desolate* is added by the NAS and the KJV but the ESV and NET have a more accurate rendering "**Your house is forsaken**." The Greek word order places emphasis on forsaken for this verb is before "house." So more literally it (awkwardly) reads "Behold, forsaken you the house." In Matthew's version (Mt 23:38) the word "**desolate**" is included in the Greek "Behold, your house is being left to you **desolate** ([eremos](#))!"



**House** (household, home) (3624)([oikos](#)) refers to a place of habitation here **"your house"** (cf Mt 23:38) seems to refer to the Temple (which was the "house of God" - Mt. 12:4; Mk. 2:26; Lk. 6:4; 11:51; Heb. 10:21) in Jerusalem which was [destroyed by the Romans in 70 A.D.](#) (See description including information from [Josephus](#)). Other writers feel that "house" is not necessarily the Temple but could be a reference to the nation as a whole, or to the city of Jerusalem. In any cast the Temple, the city and nation were all forsaken, so it could be a reference to all three, for all suffer the same fate.

**MacArthur** - The nation had set its course; the day of opportunity was over; God had judicially abandoned them (cf. Rom. 1:24, 26, 28). Jesus "came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him" (John 1:11), because they "loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil" (3:19). They would soon disown "the Holy and Righteous One" and ask "for a murderer to be granted to [them]" (Acts 3:14). It was no longer God's house; the glory had departed and Ichabod was written on it (cf. 1 Sam. 4:21).

**Is left (is forsaken)** (863) ([aphiemi](#)) from **apo** = prefix implies separation + **hiemi** = put in motion, send; See [aphesis](#)) conveys the basic idea of an action which causes separation and thus to send from one's self, to forsake, to hurl away, to put away resulting in total detachment or total separation from a previous location or condition. In context Jesus is saying to the Jews that their precious Temple will be "sent away from" them, so to speak. This verb aphiemi recalls the prophet Jeremiah's fateful words which would be fulfilled by King Nebuchadnezzar in 586 BC...

(Jer 12:7) **"I have forsaken** (Lxx = [aphiemi](#)) My house, I have abandoned My inheritance; I have given the beloved of My soul Into the hand of her enemies.

Compare Jeremiah's later prophecy: "But if you will not obey these words, I swear by Myself," declares the LORD, "that this house will become a desolation." (Jer 22:5)

Of course Jeremiah's prophecies were fulfilled with the destruction of Jerusalem and the First Temple (Solomon's) in 586 BC. That destruction was brought on the Jews because they had rejected Jehovah and gone whoring for other lovers, idols who are really no gods at all. And here on the precipice of rejecting the Messiah, Jesus the greater Prophet, proclaims these tragic words to His people.

And so Jesus' first prophecy is that the **"house"** or Temple of the Jews would be destroyed, a prediction which was fulfilled in 70 AD when the Romans sacked Jerusalem and burned the Temple.

**I say to you, you will not see Me until** - Notice the [expression of time "until"](#) indicating that once a period of time (the rest of this present age however long it lasts) has been fulfilled, Israel will again see the Messiah when He returns at the [Second Coming](#) to inaugurate a new age, the [Messianic Age](#). At that time He will indeed be the returning King of kings and Lord of lords (Lk 19:16-28). This **UNTIL** reminds me of another set of **UNTIL'S** Jesus used as He spoke to His disciples at the Last Supper...

And He said to them, "I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; 16 for I say to you, I shall never again eat it **UNTIL** it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God." 17 And when He had taken a cup and given thanks, He said, "Take this and share it among yourselves; 18 for I say to you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine from now on **UNTIL** the Kingdom of God comes." (Lk 22:15-18+)

**Comment:** The English definition of **UNTIL** is "happening up to a particular point in time, and then stopping." In the present context Jesus use of **UNTIL** refers to what will NOT be happening (He will not eat or drink at the Passover feast) and which instead of "stopping" will "start" (At that time He will celebrate the Passover meal again). In sum, these two "prophetic" **"UNTIL'S"** mark the beginning of the **Kingdom of God** as the time when Jesus Christ will next partake of the Passover Meal. When does "the KINGDOM OF GOD" come? This is clearly referring to the [Millennium](#), when the KING returns set up His KINGDOM on the earth. One wonders how amillennialists interpret Jesus wonderful prophetic promise of celebrating Passover in the coming Kingdom? While one cannot be dogmatic, it is possible that Jesus is referring to the marriage supper of the Lamb (Rev 19:9-[see note](#); See also topic - [Marriage of the Lamb](#))

In light of the truth that Christ Himself will celebrate the Passover Meal with us when He returns, can you see the added significance of Paul's words in 1 Cor 11:26 "For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death **UNTIL HE COMES!**" Did you notice the two comings? Lord's death = first coming, until He comes = second coming.

**Tony Garland** adds - It is in the kingdom of God, when the Messianic Kingdom comes on earth, that Jesus will once again eat the Passover: (Luke 22:15-18) (Garland quotes Dwight Pentecost) = "Since the **marriage supper** consistently is used in reference to Israel on the earth, it may be best to....view the

**marriage of the Lamb** as that event in the heavens in which the church is eternally united to Christ and **the marriage feast or supper** as the [Millennium](#), to which Jews and Gentiles will be invited, which takes place on earth, during which time the bridegroom is honored through the display of the bride to all His friends who are assembled there." ([note](#)) (Ed comment: So clearly we cannot be dogmatic about exactly when the UNTILs of Lk 22:16, 18 will be fulfilled, but of one thing we can be ABSOLUTELY CERTAIN -- THEY WILL BE FULFILLED!

**You will not see Me** marks the time during which God would judge the nation of Israel for rejecting their Messiah. The judgment began at 70 AD but the "heaven" of Anti-Semitism (see [chronicling of Anti-Semitism](#)) continued down through the centuries, permeating every country and leaving a trail of tears and tragedy for the people of Israel, a trail which reached horrible proportions in the [Nazi Holocaust](#), "a genocide in which Adolf Hitler's Nazi Germany and its World War II collaborators killed some six million European Jews. The victims included 1.5 million children, and constituted about two-thirds of the nine million Jews in Continental Europe."

*The time comes when you say, 'BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD!'* - Jesus predicts that the time will come He will no longer be rejected by the Jews but will be received with gladness. He is quoting Ps 118:26 (which was sung during the Passover) "Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the LORD; We have blessed you from the house of the LORD." In ancient Judaism, Ps. 118 was accepted as clearly Messianic.

Here is the Messianic context of Psalm 118:26

I shall give thanks to Thee, for Thou hast answered me; And Thou hast become my salvation (salvation is the Hebrew Word Yeshu'ah [Lxx = [soteria](#)] and Jesus is called Yeshua today by many Messianic Jews and Gentile Christians). 22 The **STONE** (MESSIAH - cf the same "STONE" in Da 2:34-35+, Da 2:44-45+) which the builders rejected (THE JEWISH LEADERS "**would not**", Lk 13:34) Has become the **CHIEF CORNER STONE**. 23 This is the LORD'S doing; It is marvelous in our eyes. 24 This is the day which the LORD has made; Let us rejoice and be glad in it. (WHAT DAY? John MacArthur = "Probably refers to 1) the day of deliverance and/or 2) the day the Stone was made the chief cornerstone, which they now celebrate." J V McGee writes: Well, he is talking about the day "which the Lord hath made," the day of salvation. That day has already been two thousand years long, and "we will rejoice and be glad in it.") 25 O LORD, do save (KJV = "save now") (**COMMENT:** Hebrew = hoshi'ah na = "[Hosanna](#)" cf Mt 21:9 "Save now" = "[Hosanna](#)" the word cried by the common people to Jesus when He entered Jerusalem on [Palm Sunday](#) of [Passion Week](#)), we beseech You; O LORD, we beseech You, do send prosperity! 26 Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the LORD; We have blessed you from the house of the LORD. 27 The LORD is God, and He has given us light; Bind the festival sacrifice with cords to the horns of the altar. 28 You are my God, and I give thanks to You; You are my God, I extol You. 29 Give thanks to the LORD, for He is good; For His lovingkindness is everlasting. (Psalm 118:21-28)

**Comment** - BLESSED IS THE ONE WHO COMES (Quoted SIX TIMES in the NT! = Mt 21:9 Mt 23:39 Mk 11:9 Lk 13:35 Lk 19:38 Jn 12:13) IN THE NAME OF THE LORD: Notice Lu 19:38 quotes it as "blessed is the **KING** who comes in the name of the Lord." 'This blessing was voiced by the people on Palm Sunday when Christ entered Jerusalem (Mt 21:9). When the leaders rebuked the people's praises (Lu 19:37-39+), Jesus then gave the prophecy of Mt 23:38,39 to the Jews as a nation. This is the same prophecy as we see here in Luke 13, and there is no reason to not accept that He spoke it on separate occasions.

**Eerdmans Bible Dictionary - EXEGESIS** [ĕk sə jē'səs] (Gk. exēgēsis "bringing out").† The explanation and exposition of a text, with attention to such matters as determination of text, translation and paraphrase, and interpretation of structure, setting, and purpose. Concern for clarification of meaning, prompted in part by cultural and historical separation of author and reader, has necessitated exegesis of the Scriptures since biblical times; methods employed have been **literal, allegorical, moral, anagogical or mystical, and, more recently, critical** (e.g., literary, historical; see BIBLICAL CRITICISM). In the most basic sense, exegesis is concerned with the meaning of a text as regards the author and ancient addressees, but it may also be conducted with a view toward application to the contemporary situation (sometimes called "exposition"). This endeavor requires an understanding of the Bible's historical, sociopolitical, and cultural milieu and a sensitivity to Hebrew and Greek thought. Personal interpretations (eisegesis) must be avoided, a difficult task since the scholar is often influenced by contemporary cultural theories as well as interpretations influenced by Jewish and Christian tradition.

**WEBSTER ON ALLEGORICAL** - Definition of allegorical 1: of, relating to, or having the characteristics of allegory allegorical paintings allegorical meanings of images allegorical symbols of our culture 2: having hidden spiritual meaning that transcends the literal sense of a sacred text. (READ THAT AGAIN! NOW WHAT MIGHT THAT IMPLY WHEN ONE BEGINS TO INTRODUCE "HIDDEN SPIRITUAL MEANING"? THAT QUESTION IS RHETORICAL! IF YOU ARE A NON-LITERALIST, YOU CAN SEE THE DANGERS OF ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION. IS IT ANY WONDER THAT NON-LITERALISTIC COMMENTARIES ON THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST CANNOT AGREE ON THE ONE INTENDED MEANING OF THE SPIRIT INSPIRED TEXT?!)

**WEBSTER ON EISEGESIS** - eis•ege•sis \,ī-sə-ˈjē-səs, ˈī-sə-,\ noun plural eis•ege•ses \-,sēz\ [Greek eis into (akin to Greek en in) + English exegesis — more at IN] (1892) : the interpretation of a text (as of the Bible) by reading into it one's own ideas — compare EXEGESIS

**MacArthur** - Those who spiritualize the prophecies of Israel's future blessing admit that applying the literal, historical, grammatical and contextual method of hermeneutics—which they themselves apply to the non-prophetic portions of Scripture—to prophecy leads inevitably to the conclusion that there will be a future for Israel. Floyd Hamilton, an advocate of interpreting the prophecies regarding Israel non-literally acknowledges, "Now we must frankly admit that a literal interpretation of the Old Testament prophecies gives us just such a picture of an earthly reign of the Messiah as the premillennialist pictures" (The Basis of Millennial Faith [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1942], 38). Loraine Boettner, who also advocated the **non-literal view**, agrees with Hamilton's assessment: "It is generally agreed that if the prophecies are taken literally, they do foretell a restoration of the nation of Israel in the land of Palestine with the Jews having a prominent place in that kingdom and ruling over the other nations" ("A Postmillennial Response [to Dispensational Premillennialism]," in Robert G. Clouse, ed., The Meaning of the Millennium: Four Views [Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1977], 95). **To adopt a hermeneutical method for interpreting prophecy different from that used to interpret the rest of Scripture is entirely arbitrary. Those who advocate such a method do so because the literal interpretation of the prophecies regarding Israel's future is inconsistent with their theological preferences. Theology, however, should be based on exegesis, not determine it. But what is really at stake here is God's faithfulness.** To put it simply, can He be counted on to keep His promises? In both the Abrahamic and Davidic covenants God promised unconditionally that there would be a future for the chosen nation. The Davidic covenant, first given in 2 Samuel 7:12–17 and referred to throughout the Old Testament, promised that God will establish the Messiah as King, defeat all of Israel's enemies, and grant Israel prosperity and prominence. When Messiah comes to establish His kingdom, Israel will be saved (Rom. 11:25–26). (See [Luke Commentary](#))

**Wiersbe** writes that "there is a future for Israel. The time will come when their Messiah will return and be recognized and received by the people....Israel's house has been left desolate. The nation has no king or priest, no temple or sacrifice (Hosea 3:4–5). But the nation has God's promise that she has not been forsaken (Rom. 11:1ff). There can be no peace on earth until the Prince of Peace (Isa. 9:6+) is seated on David's throne (Isa. 11:1ff+). Pray for the peace of Jerusalem! (Ps. 122:6) Strive to enter in at the narrow gate!" (Borrow [Be courageous](#) Luke 14-24)

**Spurgeon** - There will be no true glory for Jerusalem until the Jews are converted; there will be no return of Christ to that royal city until they shall welcome him with louder hosannas than they gave when he rode in triumph through the streets, and entered into the temple. The Lord grant that we may never reject Christ! Let us run, even now, like little chicks, and hide beneath the wings of the Eternal.

**MacArthur** adds "There is a future for Israel in the plan of God beyond the remnant who are being saved during the church age. The time will come when Israel will say to Christ, Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord (cf. Ps. 118:26). The term until encompasses all of God's covenant promises; see refers to spiritual recognition (cf. Luke 2:30; 2 Cor. 5:16). In that future day when they confess Jesus as their Messiah, Israel will recognize who He truly is. When the "Spirit of grace and of supplication" comes to them, they will "look on [Him] whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him" (Zech. 12:10). Then the fountain of cleansing will come to them from heaven. The rebels will be purged out and Israel saved (Zech. 13:1ff.). Despite the Lord's promise, however, many argue that God is permanently finished with Israel. They believe that there is no future for the nation, though individual Jews will continue to come to faith in Christ and be incorporated into the church. That is an essential tenet of covenant theology. Covenant theologians hold that the curses promised for Israel's disobedience were literally fulfilled. On the other hand, they argue that because Israel rejected Jesus Christ, it is no longer part of God's plan. Therefore the blessings promised for obedience are fulfilled spiritually in the church. That view raises a number of difficulties. First, once the literal meaning of a passage is rejected, how can the spiritual sense be determined? If the normal rules of biblical interpretation do not apply to prophecy, who is to say what the spiritual meaning of the passages regarding Israel's future is? If the Bible does not mean what it says, to what authority can we turn

to determine what it does mean? Further, if those prophecies are not to be taken literally, what meaning did they have for those to whom they were addressed? If the prophecies of Israel's future blessing really apply to the church, why were they addressed to Israel? And why was Israel literally cursed? Finally, spiritualizing those prophecies results in some glaring inconsistencies. As I noted in an earlier volume in this series: It is inconsistent to argue that the cursings [the prophecies regarding Israel] they pronounce apply literally to Israel, while the blessings they promise apply symbolically and spiritually to the church. An example of inconsistency in the spiritualizing method of interpreting prophecy comes from the angel Gabriel's words to Mary in Luke 1:31–33: "And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end." If, as all conservative scholars agree, Jesus was literally conceived in Mary's womb, literally named "Jesus," literally became great, was literally "the Son of the Most High," will He not also literally reign on David's throne over Israel? Can the same passage be interpreted both literally and non-literally? (Revelation 12–22, The MacArthur New Testament Commentary [Chicago: Moody, 2000], 232) Those who spiritualize the prophecies of Israel's future blessing admit that applying the literal, historical, grammatical and contextual method of hermeneutics—which they themselves apply to the non-prophetic portions of Scripture—to prophecy leads inevitably to the conclusion that there will be a future for Israel. Floyd Hamilton, an advocate of interpreting the prophecies regarding Israel non-literally acknowledges, "Now we must frankly admit that a literal interpretation of the Old Testament prophecies gives us just such a picture of an earthly reign of the Messiah as the premillennialist pictures" (The Basis of Millennial Faith [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1942], 38). Loraine Boettner, who also advocated the non-literal view, agrees with Hamilton's assessment: "It is generally agreed that if the prophecies are taken literally, they do foretell a restoration of the nation of Israel in the land of Palestine with the Jews having a prominent place in that kingdom and ruling over the other nations" ("A Postmillennial Response [to Dispensational Premillennialism]," in Robert G. Clouse, ed., The Meaning of the Millennium: Four Views [Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1977], 95). **To adopt a hermeneutical method for interpreting prophecy different from that used to interpret the rest of Scripture is entirely arbitrary. Those who advocate such a method do so because the literal interpretation of the prophecies regarding Israel's future is inconsistent with their theological preferences. Theology, however, should be based on exegesis, not determine it.** (See [Luke Commentary](#)) (The following sermon deals with this same topic - [God is not finished with Israel- Luke 13:34-35 Divine Compassion for Those Deserving Condemnation. Part 5](#))

How tragic that a number of evangelicals have replaced Israel with the Church (see [replacement theology](#); see study of phrase [Israel of God](#)), claiming that God is finished with Israel, but such thinking makes prophecies like this one in Luke 13:35 devoid of their original contextual meaning! Jesus was in Palestine NOT giving this IMMUTABLE PROMISE to the Church (which had not yet come into existence) but to LITERAL Jews who LITERALLY rejected Him! He was prophesying that at His return some of Jews in the nation of Israel ([believing remnant](#)) would receive Him and would shout "**BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD!**" Zechariah describes those Jews who will have experienced a true circumcision (of their heart by grace through faith) and who will cry out Ps 118:6

"It will come about in all the land," Declares the LORD, "That two parts in it will be cut off and perish; But the third will be left in it. 9 "And I will bring the third part through the fire, Refine them as silver is refined, And test them as gold is tested. They will call on My name, And I will answer them; I will say, 'They are My people,' And they will say, 'The LORD is my God. (Zechariah 13:8-9+)

Luke quotes Ps 118:26 in reference to Jesus' [Triumphal Entry](#) into Jerusalem

As soon as He was approaching, near the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of the disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice for all the miracles which they had seen, shouting: "**BLESSED IS THE KING WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD**; Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!" (Lk 19:37-38+)

**Comment:** Even this drew opposition from the religious leaders (Lk 19:39-40). This acclamation of Jesus as "the King" occurred on [Palm Sunday](#), but the crowds who were crying out "[Hosanna](#)" on Palm Sunday were later in the week crying "Crucify Him!...Crucify Him!" (Mt 27:22–23).

Note that this seeming acceptance by some in Lk 19:37-38 is followed by another lament (and warning from Jesus) in Luke 19:41–44.

When He approached Jerusalem, He saw the city and wept over it, 42 saying, "If you had known in this day, even you, the things which make for peace! But now they have been hidden from your eyes. 43 "For the days will come upon you when your enemies will throw up a barricade against you, and surround you and hem you in on every side, 44 and they will level you to the ground and your children within you, and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not recognize the time of your visitation."

Jesus quotes again from Ps 118:26 in Matthew's Gospel, but this prediction is given AFTER HIS [TRIUMPHAL ENTRY](#) into

Jerusalem (specifically on "[Holy Tuesday](#)" of "[Passion Week](#)"). So here in Luke 13:35 while there may be an allusion to His triumphal entry prior to His crucifixion, it is clear that Jesus is looking past His [triumphal entry](#) and ultimately to His [Second Coming](#) which will be a true and lasting "triumphal entry." The first time He entered Jerusalem on a donkey bringing peace, but the second time (the second coming) He comes riding as the conquering King of kings and Lord of lords (Rev 19:16+) on a white horse to bring judgment to all who reject Him (see Rev 19:11-16+), both Jews and Gentiles. At that time only the [believing remnant of Israel](#) will acclaim Him as their King.

Zechariah records Jehovah's prophetic promise which will be fulfilled by the [believing remnant of Israel](#)...

"I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him like the bitter weeping over a firstborn. (Zech 12:10+)

John records in the Revelation

BEHOLD, HE IS COMING WITH THE CLOUDS, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him. So it is to be. Amen. (Rev 1:7+)

**Tonyy Garland comments:** The OT Scriptures predicted a "coming one" (Dy 18:15-18; Ps 2; 22; 118:26; Isa. 9:6; 48:16; 53; 61:1; Jer. 23:5-8; Da 9:25; Mic. 5:2; Zec. 2:8-11; 6:12-15; etc.). This was the expectation of those among whom Jesus ministered (John 1:21; 1:45; 6:14; 7:40). John the Baptist knew of these predictions and sent his disciples to Jesus inquiring, " 'Are You the Coming One (erchomenos), or do we look for another?' " [emphasis added] (Mat. 11:3; Luke 7:19). Peter and Stephen explained it was Jesus who fulfilled these predictions (Acts 3:22; 7:37). Yet this Coming One represented a Scriptural enigma. At times, He was said to be victorious king who would reign forever (Num. 24:17; Isa. 9:6-7). But He was also forsaken, despised, rejected, and crushed (Ps. 22; Isa. 53). How could these seeming contradictions be reconciled? Some chose to apply these passages to two different individuals, a "suffering Messiah" (Messiah ben-Joseph) and a "victorious Messiah" (Messiah ben-David). Others held that the fulfillments were mutually exclusive and which would eventuate depended upon the obedience of Israel. The key which unlocks this mystery is the resurrection of Messiah (Ps. 16:10; Isa. 53:10). He would come once, die for the sins of the world, be resurrected back to life, and come a second time in judgment. His First Coming, death, and resurrection are now past. All that remains is His reappearance as described to John here and elsewhere in the NT. "It has been estimated that one out of every twenty-five verses in the New Testament refers to the Second Coming."

Jesus came the first time in humiliation; He will return in exaltation. He came the first time to be killed; He will return to kill His enemies. He came the first time to serve; He will return to be served. He came the first time as the suffering servant; He will return as the conquering king. The challenge the book of Revelation makes to every person is to be ready for His return. (MacArthur - Revelation)

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**Rod Mattoon describes the destruction of Jerusalem** (See [Wikipedia article](#)) - The siege of Jerusalem was a blood bath of destruction and desolation. The Jews were celebrating Passover. The Romans surrounded the city so that no one could get out at all. This army under the command of General Titus attacked Jerusalem.

The defenses of the city and the Temple were phenomenal. The walls were five stories high and very thick. General Titus believed Rome could not conquer Jerusalem unless God delivered the city into his hands. The Jewish historian Josephus revealed that the people defending Jerusalem had access to unlimited water supplies and abundant grain reserves within the city. Yet, these advantages did not spare the Jews or the Temple from God's hand of chastisement and the fulfillment of Jesus' words.

The siege of Jerusalem was a catastrophe and beyond imagination. In the five-month siege, 1.2 million Jews died. Six hundred thousand people starved to death in the streets. Bodies were thrown over the walls at a rate of 4000 per day. The sickening stench of death and hoards of annoying flies were unbearable. The Jewish historian Josephus records cannibalism among the starving and panicky. The three million people who were crammed within the walls had quickly depleted food reserves.

It is interesting to note that Titus ordered the Temple to NOT be destroyed. The Jewish defenders, however, would not surrender and a battle ensued. The Roman soldiers were so angry they threw torches into the Temple, setting it ablaze. Josephus saw General Titus beating back his soldiers with his sword in front of the Holy Place in an attempt to save the Holy of Holies, but his efforts were in vain. When Titus saw that the flames had reached the inner sanctuary, he fell to his knees and cried out, "As God is my witness, this was not done by my order."

These Roman soldiers and General Titus were being used of God to fulfill two key prophecies in Scripture. Six hundred years earlier



the prophet Daniel prophesied the Temple's destruction.

Daniel 9:26 ([see commentary](#))— And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. We will direct your attention to two key points in this verse.

1. It was the people, the Roman soldiers, that were responsible for the devastation of the Temple, not their leader, "the prince."
2. The phrase "the prince that shall come" refers to the prince of the Empire of Rome. When Titus began the Jewish War in the beginning, he was not considered royalty. In A.D. 69, circumstances changed for Titus. His father, General Vespasian, became the emperor of Rome making General Titus a prince when the Temple was destroyed in 70 A.D. God's Word was fulfilled exactly as prophesied.

A second prophesy was fulfilled by the Roman soldiers in the Temple's destruction. This one was given by the Lord Jesus.

Luke 19:41-44— ... And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, [42] Saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. [43] For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, [44] And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.

The fire caused the overlaid gold in the Temple's construction to melt and seep between the cracks of the stones. Roman soldiers took the Temple apart stone by stone with crowbars and wedges in their search for this gold. Not one stone was left standing and the words of Jesus were fulfilled exactly to the "T".

The Jews were broken and crushed. The Romans wasted no time in punishing them. According to Josephus, so many Jews were crucified during the siege of Jerusalem that there was not enough room for crosses, nor wood enough to crucify those people that Titus condemned to death. Even the olive trees on the Mount of Olives were used for crosses. The nation was left in desolation.

Jesus continued and said, "Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." The crucifixion would prepare the Lord for His return to Heaven. He doesn't force Himself on people. He does not stay where He is not wanted.

After He arose from the grave, Jesus appeared only to those who believed in Him. The rest of the Jewish people did not see the Lord. Their rejection of Christ led to separation from Christ. That truth applies today. When you reject the Lord, you separate yourself from Him. When you turn your back on Christ, you open yourself up to major trouble and problems like you would not believe. The problems that America is facing right now are in direct correlation to the attitude of our nation toward Him.

Jesus said that when the Jews changed their attitude about the Lord, they would see Him again. Christ is coming back to earth someday soon. One day, the Jewish nation will recognize and receive Jesus as their Messiah and Savior. Their hearts will be changed and eyes will be opened. That will be a great day!

Until that time, men will continue to hide from the Lord or hide Him out of their lives. An interesting verse is found in Mark 7:24. Jesus is trying to find a secluded place from the crowds, but He cannot be hid. ([Treasures from Luke](#))