

OpenTheo

Luke 19:28 - 20:19



Gospel of Luke - Steve Gregg

Transcript

Once again, we got partway through a chapter. We did not get to the end of it, so we're picking up in the middle of Luke chapter 19. Once again, it's very close to the exact middle of the chapter.

And we're picking up at verse 28. Now here we have the triumphal entry of Christ on Palm Sunday. And that means this marks the exact last week, the beginning of what we call the Passion Week.

For those of you who don't know the word passion, which I'm sure you've heard with reference to Christ's sufferings, is the Latin word for suffering. And since so much of the titles for things in the Gospel history have come from a time when the Church was speaking Latin, a lot of these words have been retained. Passion means suffering in Latin, and it means that Jesus' week of suffering.

Now, of course, He has suffered a lot of things prior to this, but this is the week that ends up with His crucifixion. The exact day of His crucifixion is disputed. Some are going to put it on Wednesday, some on Thursday, and some on Friday.

In any case, we know that He was resurrected by Sunday morning, and this is the Sunday before that. So exactly one week before the resurrection, Jesus enters Jerusalem in a way that seems to declare Himself to be the Messiah publicly for the first time. Now, He doesn't announce that He's the Messiah.

People have been recognizing Him individually in that way, like the blind men who called Him Son of David. That's a messianic title. Lots of people did not recognize Him as Messiah.

Even people who had favorable views of Him weren't so sure sometimes. Remember, some thought He was John the Baptist, some thought He was Elijah, some thought He was Jeremiah or one of the prophets. We saw that earlier.

But some did recognize Him as the Messiah, yet He never came out and said, I am the Messiah in public. He privately said that He was when He was talking to the woman at the well, and also privately with His disciples when Peter said, You're the Messiah, the Son of the living God. But now, although not verbally, yet by His actions, He seems to declare Himself publicly to be the Messiah.

And we read of it here, when He had said this, He went on ahead going up to Jerusalem. And it came to pass, when He came near to Bethphage and Bethany at the mountain called Olivet, that He sent two of His disciples, saying, Go into the village opposite you, where, as you enter, you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever sat. Loose him, and bring him here.

And if anyone asks you, Why are you loosing him? Thus you shall say to him, Because the Lord has need of him. So those who were sent departed, and found it just as He had said to them. And as they were loosing the colt, the owners of it said to them, Why are you loosing the colt? And they said, The Lord has need of him.

Then they brought him to Jesus. And they threw their own garments on the colt, and they set Jesus on him. And as He went, they spread their clothes on the road.

Then as He was now drawing near the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice, for all the mighty works they had seen, saying, Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord. Peace in heaven and glory in the highest. And some of the Pharisees called to Him from the crowd, Teacher, rebuke your disciples.

But He answered and said to them, I tell you, that if these should keep their silence, the stones would immediately cry out. Now this is obviously an important day, because He said, These people are proclaiming Me to be the Messiah, and if they wouldn't do it, the stones would do it. That is, God has determined that I be declared to be the Messiah.

These people are fulfilling that purpose, but God would do something else if they didn't, because this is the time for the announcement to be made that I'm the Messiah. And no doubt this outward sign of Him playing the role as the Messiah was something that would give the Jews opportunity to accuse Him before Pilate, and say, this man claims to be the King of the Jews. Jesus had never actually said that He was the King of the Jews.

However, we know that Jesus was here fulfilling a prophecy of Zechariah. Zechariah 9, and it says there in verse 9, Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you. He is just and having salvation, lowly and riding on a donkey.

A colt, the foal of a donkey. Now, this is fulfilled by Jesus riding on this colt, this foal of a donkey. And essentially, Christians have always recognized this, and the Jews, I think,

recognize this too.

He was fulfilling the announcement that the King of Jerusalem is coming, the King of the Jews. It is Zion or Jerusalem that is told in this prophecy to rejoice, because their King is coming. So, by riding this foal of this donkey in this way, He is proclaiming Himself to be the King of Jerusalem, and therefore the King of the Jews.

So, this is the first time and first manner in which Jesus seemed to overtly accept the title, King of the Jews. And if you look at the parallel to this, in Mark chapter 11, look what the people were proclaiming when He rode. It is rendered a little differently, a little more completely in Mark than it is in Luke.

In Mark 11, 9, it says, Then those who went before and those who followed cried out, saying, Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the kingdom of our father David that comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest! Notice what they are announcing. This is the coming of the kingdom of David. This is a reference to the fulfillment of the promises God made to David that one of His seed would sit on His throne forever.

This was now coming to realization. The people recognized this. I say this here and point this out because there are those, the dispensationists, who say that the kingdom of David did not come, but will be established instead in the millennial reign after Jesus returns.

They say that Jesus intended to bring the kingdom of David and to fulfill those promises, but that the Jews rejected Him in that role and their rejection caused that to be postponed. Nonetheless, these people claim that the kingdom of David is at this time coming. It's the present tense where it says that comes in the name of the Lord.

The kingdom of David is coming right now in the name of the Lord in the person of the king of the Jews, of the seed of David. This is recognized by the people who are shouting out as the fulfillment of the promises God made to David that His seed would establish His kingdom. Now, one could argue that these people were mistaken, that they didn't realize that the kingdom of David was not, in fact, going to be established at this time.

The problem with that suggestion is that Jesus said if these people didn't say it, the rocks themselves would cry out. Certainly, He's saying that God Himself would see to it that this proclamation was made if these people were silent. It would take a miracle for the rocks to cry out, but God would do that miracle.

In other words, God is determined that this announcement be made. What? That the kingdom of David is being established right now through Christ. That the promises made to David are fulfilled in Christ's death and resurrection and ascension, really.

And so we find in the book of Acts when Peter is preaching on the day of Pentecost that

he says that God has fulfilled the promise He made to David in raising up Jesus from the dead. Paul says the same thing in Acts 13 when he's preaching in the synagogue of Pisidian Antioch. He says the promises God made to David are fulfilled in God raising Christ from the dead.

So, the kingdom of David restored in David's seed, the Messiah, is coming at this point in the narrative. And it's not only the opinion of the people, it's the opinion of the rocks themselves who would announce it if the people did not. Now, I'll just say before we move along from this a couple of things.

One, Jesus was clearly proclaiming Himself to be the King of the Jews. This is just the kind of thing the Romans would find troublesome. There were other Jews before Jesus who had, in fact, proclaimed themselves to be the Messiah.

They had started revolutions against Rome and had been put down. They'd been crushed by Roman authority. Virtually every person who claimed to be the Messiah before this was killed in war or crucified by the Romans.

The Romans were the rulers of the Jews. They didn't like the Jews having these populist movements of Jewish leaders claiming to be the real rulers at the expense of the Romans. Now, there was in Jerusalem a man named Pontius Pilate who was the Roman procurator of the region.

This kind of demonstration we read about here could hardly have missed his notice. The Romans were always on the lookout for these kinds of messianic pretenders. They were dangerous.

And especially when a whole bunch of people were following them and proclaiming, this is it. This is our kingdom coming. Our Messiah is here.

Now, even if Pilate couldn't hear the shouting from the window of his home, he certainly had soldiers posted everywhere throughout the region. And they would report back things like this. We don't read of it happening, but it could hardly have failed to happen.

Pilate could hardly have failed to be interested in this particular event. And yet, soldiers were not sent out. The Jews who were critical of Jesus told Jesus to rebuke his disciples because they were certainly afraid that this kind of an outcry would enrage the Romans.

Quick, Jesus, tell them to be quiet. Well, why? Because, no doubt, the Romans are going to be really upset with this display. What's interesting is the Romans did not seem to be very upset with it.

They didn't even respond to it. And later, only a few days later, when Jesus stood on trial before Pilate, and his accuser said, he said he's the king of the Jews. Pilate said, are you the king of the Jews or not? And Jesus said, well, my kingdom is not of this world.

If it was, my servants would have fought. Pilate says, I don't find any fault with this man. Now, for Pilate not to find any fault with a Jew is remarkable enough because Pilate hated the Jews and they hated him.

And Jesus, who clearly was hailed as the king of the Jews, would have been particularly regarded as a threat. However, Pilate didn't seem threatened. He was willing to give him, you know, absolve him of all things that were accused against him and let him go.

It even says in retrospect in Peter's sermon when Peter preaches in Jerusalem in the early chapters of Acts that he said Pilate was resolved to let him go and you people required him to be killed. Why was Pilate not concerned? Why were the Romans not concerned here? We can only assume that they had already looked into Jesus. Jesus had been quite a phenomenon for some time in the region.

And the Romans would certainly have investigated him. We know, for example, that in the Gospel of John, chapter 7, it tells us that the chief priest sent out soldiers to arrest Jesus. And they went and they apparently heard Jesus preach.

And they came back without him. And they said, no one ever spoke like this man. There were already some investigations into Christ by the powers that be, but they had heard him and did not find him apparently to be a political threat at all.

It's very possible that there were soldiers with an whether they should pay tribute to Rome or not. An opponent of Rome would say, no, we shouldn't pay tribute to Rome. God is our king, not Rome.

But Jesus said, this is Caesar's face. Give Caesar what is Caesar's. And give God what is his.

Jesus seemed to support giving Romans their tribute money. This is not something that political messianic pretenders would ever have done. We don't know how much Pilate knew about Jesus, but he must have known enough to know that despite all this talk of kingship and kingdom and so forth, Jesus was not really much of a threat to the Romans.

And I assume that's because Pilate already had a file on Jesus. Jesus was certainly in that particular few years that Jesus was public, probably the most visible person who could be regarded as a messianic pretender by the Romans. And yet what's amazing is their lack of concern.

And even when the Jews brought Jesus to the Romans, Pilate still remained not concerned, more interested in letting Jesus go. Of course, there's reasons for that. He was definitely impressed with Jesus, but he probably also knew that Jesus was not interested in a political revolution.

In chapter 13 of Luke, people had brought a report to Jesus that Pilate himself had

slaughtered Galileans in the temple, an opportunity where Jesus could have said, let's rise up and overthrow that tyrant. Instead, he said, well, if you don't repent, you're all going to die the same way. I mean, Jesus was, it's like trying to light wet tinder to get him politically involved.

They couldn't get him to, they couldn't get him to make political statements at all. And so Jesus' career had been marked by his avoidance of violence, his avoidance of stirring up rebellion against Rome. And so a demonstration like this, it might have made the Romans a little uncomfortable to see this demonstration, but I assume that they were probably watching it.

But they saw that Jesus didn't seize this opportunity and lead, you know, armed Jews against the capital of Pilate's house. You know, I mean, this was an opportunity where Jesus had a huge amount of public support that he could have exploited. But he had that before too.

In John chapter 6, when he fed the 5,000. In John 6, 15, it says, when Jesus saw that the people are about ready to come and forcibly make him king, he sent the crowds away and went alone to the hills to pray. John 6, 15.

At that time, he had thousands of people ready to hail him as king and forcibly take him to Jerusalem and drive out the Romans, no doubt. And he didn't do it. He wouldn't do it.

These kinds of things, no doubt, had been observed by Pilate so that when the Jews accused Jesus of being king of the Jews, Pilate wasn't so sure that Jesus had those aspirations that they were accusing him of, at least not the kind that were a threat to Rome. And we can see that it wasn't. Because this is the time when Jesus could have said, okay, I've got all this popular support.

Let's go for it. Drive Pilate and the bad guys out. Instead, he didn't.

In fact, in one of the other Gospels, it says that Jesus, after the triumphal entry, came into Jerusalem, went into the temple, looked around, and went home. He just went back to Bethany and spent the night there. He didn't seize this popular thing that was happening and exploit it in any way that would be a problem to the Romans.

And so, we do find him, however, in this account, weeping over Jerusalem. In verse 41, it says, now as he drew near, oh, by the way, I should, before I say that, there's one other thing. It's a small thing.

But with reference to the previous account, Jesus predicted his disciples would find the colt and that someone would challenge them and that they'd say, the master's in need of it and it'd go right. And then it happened just that way. Many people think this is like another example of a miracle of Jesus.

Wow, he prophesied that this would happen. The Bible doesn't indicate in the telling of it that this was miraculous. It leaves open at least the possibility that Jesus had made these arrangements before with the owner of the donkey.

He said, now I'm going to send some guys later today and they're going to take your donkey and if you wonder if they're the guys, ask them what they're doing and they'll just say, the Lord has need of it. In other words, the owner of the donkey may very well have been one of Jesus' sympathizers that he had made these arrangements with unbeknown to the disciples. It's entirely possible.

We don't know. It's not necessary to assume that this was a case where Jesus supernaturally knew this is what's going to happen. The owner apparently was sympathetic toward Christ anyway because the statement, the Lord has need of him, without any further explanation of who the Lord is, was immediately understood by the owner of the donkey and he said, oh, okay.

My assumption is that this is not one of the miracles of Jesus. I mean, there certainly are plenty of miracles of Jesus. This is not represented by Luke or anyone in the Bible as one of the miracles, but rather it may be telling us that Jesus had a lot more supporters, sort of underground supporters, than even his own disciples knew about.

That he had, of course, those who were publicly following him and naming him as their Lord and they were the ones who were the disciples that everyone associated with him, but even there were others that were not of them like the owner of this donkey who were more or less, less publicly known. Even the disciples might not have known him. Or else he could have said, just go to Joe's house, you know.

My friend Joe asked for a donkey. He just said, no, go, you'll find this donkey. Some people will ask you questions.

The impression is the disciples didn't know these people who had the donkey, but the people who had the donkey apparently knew Jesus. Likewise, when Jesus later made provision for the Last Supper in the upper room, he also sent two disciples, Peter and John, I believe, in that case, up to, you know, a place where they would see someone carrying a water jar on their head and you'd follow them and you'd go into the house there and you'd say to the owner of the house, where does the master, you know, prepare his meal? It seems obvious that the disciples didn't know this owner of this house because he didn't say who it was. He could just say, go to so-and-so's house and we're going to have dinner there.

Instead, there were people that already were preparing a place for Jesus, but the disciples didn't know who these people were. They had to find out by following someone who's carrying a jar on their head and so forth. That is to say, Jesus had worked out some of these arrangements that would appear with certain sympathizers.

I'm going to borrow your donkey. I need a place for my disciples to eat. The disciples didn't know these people and Jesus had to do all this sort of like secret agent countersign type stuff, you know.

These people were not publicly known to be followers of Jesus. It was dangerous to be a public follower of Jesus and Jesus didn't require all of them to come out of hiding at this particular time. So anyway, this business about the donkey and the countersign and so forth, it's not necessary to assume this is all a miraculous prediction, but it may be more interesting to think that Jesus had sort of a network at another level than his disciples, that his disciples was not fully aware of, that Jesus had a lot more relationships with people than the disciples themselves were part of.

Now verse 41, Now as he drew near, he saw the city and wept over it, saying, this is the city of Jerusalem, if you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things that make for your peace, but now they are hidden from your eyes. For the days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment around you, surround you and close you in on every side and level you and your children within you to the ground, and they will not leave in you one stone upon another because you did not know the time of your visitation. There's no question what he's predicting here.

Your enemies are going to come surround you and destroy you and not leave one stone on another. Clearly a reference to what the Romans would do in A.D. 70 when they besieged and destroyed Jerusalem. What's interesting is here he says about the city itself, not one stone would be left standing on another, whereas later on in chapter 21 he makes a separate prediction about the temple, that not one stone of the temple would be left standing on another.

Both the city and the temple would be raised to the ground all the way to the ground. So the two predictions are different but obviously related. It's the same event.

It's just that the city and the temple would both be reduced to rubble. Now Jesus said this was avoidable. He said this is going to happen to you because you did not know the time of your visitation.

If you'd recognized what time this is and responded appropriately, all this would be unnecessary. It's so unnecessary. You and your children are going to be destroyed.

Totally destroyed. Totally wiped out. It's the end of your commonwealth.

It's the end of your religious system. It's the end of everything for you. And all of this was so unnecessary because you didn't recognize the time of your visitation which I gave you every opportunity to recognize.

He said at the beginning if you had only known the things that make for your peace, that is you actually could have peace. There are things that would have given you peace

instead of this disaster. But you didn't know them.

And now they're hidden from your eyes. Interesting. He says but now they're hidden from your eyes.

They weren't before. They were revealed to them before. Jesus came out publicly before their eyes were blinded and told them the kingdom of God was at hand.

They could have responded. Some did but most didn't. But now that they've blinded themselves, their eyes are darkened.

They've come under a judicial blindness and now there's nothing for it but for this destruction to come upon them. And how tragic it was. It made Jesus weep to think about it.

Jesus could picture this in a way that very few people probably could picture future events. Exactly what's going to happen. He doesn't go into detail but he makes it very clear.

It's a terrible judgment coming upon them because they had not recognized him and his kingdom. So it's very clear this is Jesus' interpretation of a historical event that later happened not on record. That is there's no place in the Bible that records the actual destruction of Jerusalem.

The reason being that all the historical records that are included in the Bible were written before that event. So although they anticipated they don't ever none of the writers saw it to record it historically apparently. Or at least we don't have a record of it.

Therefore the destruction of Jerusalem is we might say an extra-biblical historical event. We might see it as being like the destruction of Troy by the Greeks or the fall of some other empire that fell in history but is not mentioned in Scripture. Not recorded in Scripture.

This however is not just like the fall of another great city even though it happens outside the purview of the historical records of Scripture. It is predicted and interpreted for us. So when we look at the fact that the Romans destroyed Jerusalem we know that this is not only clearly predicted it was interpreted.

It's meaning is this happened to them because they rejected Christ because they had the opportunity to come into his kingdom and didn't choose to do so. Therefore this destruction of the whole system is the punishment upon them for their rejection of Christ and what is followed from it of course is the dispersion of the Jews throughout the whole world. And in the whole world they've been insecure.

They've been punished by people. I'm not saying God was punishing them. He's just not

protected them.

They've been driven to lands where people are hostile toward them and they've been persecuted and so forth. And this has all come upon them because of this one thing. They didn't know the time of their visitation and they could have.

Then he went into the temple and began to drive out those who bought and sold in it saying to them it is written my house is a house of prayer but you have made it a den of thieves. And he was teaching daily in the temple but the chief priests the scribes and the leaders of the people sought to destroy him and were unable to do anything for all the people were very attentive to hear him. Jesus was too popular for them to actually arrest him without getting themselves into trouble and causing a riot.

So this is why they eventually hired Judas to give them some inside information about Jesus' private whereabouts because they wanted to take him when he was hiding out when he was not in public when they could avoid causing a huge stir from the crowds. Now he drove the money changers out of the temple here. This is actually the second time he did so.

All the gospels record Jesus driving money changers out of the temple. The difference is John places an event like this at the beginning of Jesus' ministry and the synoptics place it at the end. This has been thought to be a case where John and the synoptics contradict each other because John does not mention Jesus driving out the money changers at the end of his ministry, only at the beginning.

And the synoptics do not mention it happening at the beginning, but only at the end. So they say, well, John disagrees with the synoptics. He thinks it happened at the beginning of Jesus' ministry and the synoptics think it was at the end.

Well, obviously that's one way you could understand it, but it's not the most reasonable. The most reasonable way is to say Jesus did it twice and John, as he typically does, records those things that are left out of the synoptics and does not repeat the things that are included in the synoptics. Very seldom is there overlap in the material in John and the synoptic gospels.

Apart from the Passion Week and the Resurrection, there's no overlap between John and the synoptics except for the feeding of the 5,000. Everything else is unique to John and, therefore, since it's not in the synoptics, he's filling in what they left out. John knew, and probably the synoptics did too, that Jesus cleansed the temple two times.

But many things Jesus did are not mentioned on the record, and so the synoptics only mention the second time. John fills in what is otherwise missing and has a reference to the first time. Jesus did not say exactly the same thing both times because in John's gospel in chapter 2, at the beginning of his ministry, Jesus went into the temple and it

says he said in verse 16, "...take these things away.

Do not make my Father's house a house of merchandise." So he referred to the temple as his Father's house and said you shouldn't make it a house of merchandise. That just means you shouldn't make it a place where you sell stuff. He does not accuse them in this case of doing anything criminal.

They're just doing something that might be legitimate, but not there. This is not the right place to be selling things. This is a place to worship God.

It's my Father's house. I'm his son. I have the right to drive people out when they're doing things inappropriate in my Father's house.

But in the second instance, recorded in the synoptics in Luke, in verse 46 of Luke 19, Jesus says, "...it is written, my house is a house of prayer." Now this quotation is from Isaiah 56, 7. But then he says, "...but you have made it a den of thieves." Now that's quoting another verse. This one from Jeremiah 7 and verse 11. So Jesus quotes two verses from the prophets from Isaiah and Jeremiah.

My house is to be called a house of prayer. That's the first quote. "...then you have made it a den of thieves." Now calling them thieves is in fact accusing them of more than just saying you're merchants.

Don't make my Father's house a house of merchandise. He says, you've made it a den of thieves, not just merchants, but people who are exploiting and robbing people. Now this was no doubt because the money changers in the temple were those who were changing foreign currencies for temple currency.

When people came to offer sacrifices, they often traveled without animals, as it's much easier to travel from all over the Roman Empire to Jerusalem without bringing along sheep and animals. And so they would buy animals once they came to Jerusalem. But the temple sold animals, but they only accepted temple currency.

And that meant that people who came from Rome or Greece or from Asia Minor or anywhere else, from Egypt, they had their own local currency and couldn't buy animals at the temple until they went to these money changers, just like you have today when you go from one country to another. You go to a bank or to an exchanger that will give you the local currency. However, the rate of exchange was pretty much at the discretion of those in the temple who were doing it.

And since this was a case where people could not decide not to exchange money, because they had to offer sacrifices, that was required of them. They had to worship God this way and they had no choice but to pay whatever the money changers charged. And they took advantage of that.

They ripped people off. They charged much more in the exchange than they should. And Jesus called that thieving.

So he drives them out. Some people think it's unlike Jesus or unworthy of Jesus to drive them out because he's supposed to be very gentle and meek. And this show of anger somehow is unfitting for him.

However, it is said in John's gospel when he did this that the disciples remembered a scripture which apparently was fulfilled in this, or at least this was a demonstration of it. In John 2.17 it said, "...then his disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal for your house has eaten me up." And that's a quotation from Psalm 69.9. They saw that Jesus was consumed by zeal for God's house. This was a zeal for God.

This was not anger at something someone did to him. It's something they did to his father and to his father's people. And defiling his father's house made him angry.

Now, we're not told that he hit any people. He did make a whip, but this whip was used to drive animals out. We don't read anywhere that Jesus hit a person with it.

He drove out the animals, started a stampede out of the temple. The owners, of course, weren't going to let their animals get away, so they went after them. Likewise, he turned over their money tables, and their money went, you know, rolling down the steps and out of the temple.

So, of course, people went to retrieve it. He didn't have to strike the people. Where your treasure is, your heart is also.

And so, he drove their treasures out of the temple, and they went with him. Now, chapter 20 says, Now it happened on one of those days, as he taught the people in the temple and preached the gospel, that the chief priests and the scribes, together with the elders, confronted him and spoke to him saying, Tell us, by what authority are you doing these things? Or, who is it who gave you the authority? After all, he was coming into the temple, which was under the, you know, management of the chief priests, and he wasn't one of them. It was also a place for the public.

It was a public access facility. So, why is he acting like it's his? That he can decide if people are going to change money there or sell animals there or not. Who does he claim to be? Who gave him the authority to do this kind of stuff? And he answered and said to them, I will ask you one thing and answer me.

The baptism of John, was it from heaven or from men? And they reasoned among themselves, saying, If we say from heaven, he'll say, Why then did you not believe him? And if we say from men, all people will stone us, for they're persuaded that John was a prophet. So, they probably didn't believe it was from God. They really weren't even committing themselves one way or another.

Maybe they hadn't given much thought. But they knew that if they said John's authority was only from man, this would not go well with the crowds who thought otherwise, so they wouldn't dare to say that publicly. Yet, they couldn't say John's authority was from God, because Jesus would say, Well, why didn't you believe him then? And one thing John said was that Jesus was the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

That he's the bridegroom, coming to take the bride. I mean, John the Baptist definitely confessed Christ to be the Son of God. He said, I testify that this is the Son of God, he said in John chapter 1. If they believe John's message was from heaven, they have to believe Jesus, because John said so.

John said he was the Son of God. You want to know by what authority I do this? I say this is my Father's house. I'm claiming to be the Son of God.

By what authority do I say this? Well, what do you think about John? Now, if they said, Well, John spoke from God, then he'd have to say, Well, there you go. John said, I'm the Son of God. If he spoke from God, then isn't that who I am? Isn't that my authorization here? And they didn't want to say that.

And they didn't want to say the other thing either. So, they answered that they didn't know where it was from. And Jesus said to them, Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things.

In other words, why should I answer your question if you're not willing to give an honest answer to mine? It's not that you don't know by what authority John came. It's that you're not willing to admit because it will go poorly for you in this particular confrontation because I've got you over a barrel. I've got you on the horns of a dilemma.

It either was the case that John came from God or not. If not, then he was from man. Which is it? And you say you don't know, but really the truth is you don't want to say.

Because if you say either thing, you're going to be looking bad. And if you say the truth, I'm going to win this debate. And so you act like you don't know.

If you're not going to be more honest than that, you're not honest enough for me to tell you the answer to your question either. Then he began to tell the people a parable. A certain man planted a vineyard and leased it to vine dressers and went into a far country for a long time.

Now once again we have the going away for a long time. Now at vintage time he sent a servant to the vine dressers that they might give him some of the fruit of the vineyard. But the vine dressers beat him and sent him away empty handed.

Again he sent another servant and they beat him also and treated him shamefully and sent him away empty handed. And again he sent a third and they wounded him also and

cast him out. This is starting to look like a pattern.

Then the owner of the vine vineyard said what shall I do? I'll send my beloved son. Probably they will respect him when they see him. Wrong answer.

When the vine dressers saw him, they reasoned among themselves saying this is the heir. Come let us kill him that the inheritance may be ours. So they cast him out of the vineyard and killed him.

Therefore what will the owner of the vineyard do to them? Jesus answers here but in Matthew's version he asks that question and the people give the answer. Jesus agrees with their answer so Luke just has Jesus giving the answer himself. But actually this was a question in verse 15 that he asked to his listeners and their answer was he will miserably destroy those wicked men and lease his vineyard out to others who will bring forth the fruits in their season.

This is found in the parallel in Matthew 21. And Jesus is here giving the answer. He will come and destroy those vine dressers and give the vineyard to others.

And when they heard that they said certainly not. And he looked at them and said what then is this that is written? The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone. This is a quote from Psalm 118 verse 22.

He said whoever falls on that stone will be broken but on whomever it falls it will grind him to powder. And the chief priests and the scribes that very hour sought to lay hands on him but they feared the people for they knew that he had spoken this parable against them. Now the parable to my mind the meaning is fairly obvious but part of that is due to the fact that I have been reading it for years and so forth.

It may not be obvious to everyone so let me just say. The vineyard here is a picture of Israel. The idea of Israel being a vineyard comes from Isaiah chapter 5. In Isaiah 5 Isaiah said that God planted a vineyard and he gave it every advantage to produce good fruit for him.

He built a hedge around it to protect it from wild animals. He built a wine press in it. He irrigated it.

He planted a good vine in it. He did everything that a person would do to guarantee himself a good vintage. But in Isaiah it says when vintage time came all he got was bad grapes.

Wild grapes. It's as if they had never been cultivated at all. Sour stuff.

Cultivated grapes are different than wild grapes and he did all this cultivation but what he got was like something wild. Something uncultivated. And he says what more could I

have done to my vineyard to guarantee that I'd get good fruit? Why is it that when I did all these things I got wild grapes? And then God says he's going to tear down the vineyard or he's going to tear down the hedge and let the nations destroy the vineyard.

He says in Isaiah 5.7 that the vineyard of the Lord of Hosts is the people of Israel and the people of Judah are his plant. The vineyard is Israel. Now Jesus begins his parable very similarly.

In fact, in Matthew 21 the parallel he actually it begins much more similarly to Isaiah than it's rendered in Luke. Because he talks about building a hedge and a vine press and so forth and removing the stones. That's what Isaiah says about and in Matthew's version Jesus is saying those kinds of things too.

Much more similar to the wording of Isaiah chapter 5 than Luke's version is. The point is though that Jesus adds another dimension that Isaiah doesn't. Isaiah doesn't mention the tenants of the vineyard.

Now in Israel most people did not own land. But most people could work land. So landowners who didn't want to work their own land would often lease their land to somebody who was willing to work it.

And the person who would work it was a tenant like somebody renting property. They were leasing the land and they had to pay for it. Now they usually paid once a year because a vineyard produces grapes one time of the year.

So the arrangement would be the owner would let the tenants work the land all year and when vintage time came they had to give him a portion of the vintage as their rent on the land. They could keep the rest. So in one sense although they don't own land they're able to work land and get some profit from it.

It's someone else's land but they have to pay him a share. That was the arrangement. So at vintage time, verse 10 says, he sent a messenger to collect the rent.

Reasonable enough but very unreasonably they killed the messenger. And so he sent more and more and they kept doing the same thing. Finally he sent his son to them.

Now this obviously refers to Israel in Old Testament history. God wants them to produce fruit. What is the fruit of the vineyard? Well actually Isaiah 5-7 tells us.

He was looking for justice. He was looking for righteousness. He gave Israel his laws and the prophets to produce from them justice and righteousness in their society but he never got that from them.

They were unjust and unrighteous. So that's the bad fruit he got. But here Jesus understands that his listeners will know that the fruit God is seeking is justice and

righteousness from his people.

And instead when the prophets come and say where is the justice, where is the righteousness God is looking for, they kill the prophets. These servants that come one after another are the prophets of the Old Testament who said God should be getting more fruit out of you Israel. He should be getting justice and mercy and righteousness from you and he's not.

Well they killed the prophets. So at the end of that Old Testament season God says I'm going to send my son. This is the last messenger I'm going to send to these people.

And when the tenants actually see Jesus they say he's the son. So they know who he is but they don't want him. They say this is the heir.

This is the one the vineyard really belongs to. But if we kill him there will be no heir and we can just keep it. Possession is nine-tenths of the law.

We've already got the vineyard. If the owner doesn't have a son to leave it to then when he dies who's got any way of taking it from us? We will get his inheritance, the vineyard, if we kill the heir. This is saying that the leaders of Israel who are of the same stripe as those ancestors of theirs who killed the prophets they were going to kill Jesus and they had a motivation in this case that they didn't want to lose their position of power.

Jesus was coming as the king of the Jews. The chief priests and Pharisees and those people they were already running the show to their own satisfaction. They had power.

If Jesus was in fact embraced by Israel as their king what would become of the power of the chief priests and the Pharisees? It's clear Jesus wasn't on their side. If he becomes king and inherits the vineyard then these guys are going to be looking for another job. In fact they may be on the block being executed because they've been plotting to kill him.

They'll be seen as traitors and rebels against his kingdom. They need to get rid of him so they can keep their position because he is challenging their position and so this is why they kill him and the result will be and Jesus says it here but the people themselves acknowledge it in Matthew's version that God's going to destroy those people who killed his son. That's what happened when Jerusalem was destroyed.

That was God punishing those who killed his son as Jesus said in the previous chapter here. But he's going to give the vineyard to somebody else who will produce the fruits of it. In verse 16 here it just says he'll come and destroy those vine dressers and give the vineyard to others but in Matthew it says he'll give the vineyard to others who will produce the fruit.

That is there will be someone else who will give God what he was looking for, will live righteously and just lives. That's the fruit God wants and that people that it's given to is

the church, the people of God, the remnant of Israel who are already faithful who later were joined by believing Gentiles into the body that's called the body of Christ. This is the true vineyard today.

Jesus said I am the true vine and you are the branches and every branch that abides me will bear much fruit. The Christians, the disciples, they're the ones who bring forth the fruit that God's looking for. The kingdom is taken away from Israel and its leaders and given to Jesus and his people who will produce the fruit of it.

That's what he said and that's what he's predicting here. And he said in verse 17 What is this that is written? The stone which the builders rejected has become chief cornerstone. What he's saying here is this, that the leaders of Israel are supposed to be building God's kingdom, building God's house, building God's project.

They are the builders. Now Jesus has come as the chief component of the building, the chief cornerstone, but he doesn't fit the blueprint that the builders have. They've got plans of their own.

They're not building the same way that God wants it built. When he says here's the main cornerstone for the building, they say no, we reject that. That doesn't fit what we're building here, so they reject the stone.

But that same stone becomes the cornerstone of a new building. That is to say the building they're working on, it's not going to be the building anymore. If they can't accommodate the cornerstone, then God's going to make a new building altogether around that cornerstone.

And that's what he's saying. I am the cornerstone. God has sent me to Israel to be the main component that defines the shape of the structure, but the builders reject me, so their building is going to be rejected.

Their kingdom is going to go down. My kingdom is going to be built. God's going to build a new structure around me.

And that's what he's saying. Now he also says in verse 18, whoever falls on that stone will be broken. This is an allusion, I believe, to Isaiah 8, 14, and 15, which falling on that stone means stumbling over that stone.

If you wanted to look in your own time at that passage in Isaiah 8, 14, and 15, Jesus is referred to as a stumbling stone that people will fall over. And so when he says here, whoever falls on that stone will be broken, that's an allusion to what Isaiah said about Jesus as a stumbling stone. So he's bringing stone prophecies out of the Old Testament.

The one from Psalm 118 refers to Christ as a cornerstone. The one in Isaiah 8 refers to him as a stumbling stone for certain people. And then when he says, and whoever that

stone falls on, it will grind him to powder, almost certainly a reference to Daniel 2, where in Nebuchadnezzar's dream there were all these kingdoms, but then a stone came and crushed it to powder.

A stone made without hands, and Daniel identified that as the kingdom of God in Daniel 2, 44. What he's saying is, I'm a stone. One prophet refers to me as a cornerstone.

One refers to me as a stumbling stone. Another refers to me as a crushing stone, perhaps as it were, a millstone. They're going to grind you to powder.

In Daniel 2, the kingdom of God is set up like a stone, and it grows into a great mountain to fill the earth, and it grinds into dust all the other metals of the kingdoms. And they're carried away by the wind like chaff from the summer threshing floor, it says in Daniel. So that Christ's kingdom is going to grind into powder all opposition.

His kingdom will replace all other kingdoms and will become a world empire under him. Not a political one, though. Not specifically political.

And so this is what he predicts, and this caused the chief priests and the scribes that very hour to begin to try to lay hands on him, but they didn't find it an opportune time because, of course, he was much too popular. So we end there, having reached the end of our session, and we're still going to be coming back to the middle of a chapter next time. I was kind of hoping to get to the place where we actually finish a chapter so we could actually do one chapter at a time, but we're kind of off one half, kind of jogged off kilter a little bit, so we keep ending in the middle of chapters, but that's okay.

The material was not originally divided into chapters anyway, so it doesn't make that much difference.