

Jesus is making His way to Jerusalem in order to be crucified at the right time (Luke 9:51) and Luke is continuing to describe various encounters and the things that Jesus said and did along the way. In this chapter, Jesus speaks of judgment on those who do not repent, responds to the criticism that He healed a woman on the Sabbath, and states that many who think they are saved will not enter the kingdom of God.

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1 There were present at that season some that told him of the Galilaeans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices.

**“There were present at that season [a span of time]”** – As Jesus was journeying to Jerusalem (Luke 9:51), He was teaching, preaching and performing miracles in the various towns and villages along the way. It was during this span of time that some people brought Him news of a recent event.

**“some that told him of the Galilaeans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices”** – We have no other record of this event and so we have to speculate on what may have happened. Some 20 years prior to this, a man named “Judas of Galilee” had taught that it was unlawful for Jews to pay tribute to Rome (Acts 5:37). This man had been killed by Rome and his followers scattered. Commentators suggest that some remnants of his movement may have attempted to rebel again and that Pilate had crushed their movement by killing them while they were offering sacrifices. Apparently their blood had been mingled with the animal blood or substituted for the animal blood in a mockery of the Jewish religion. Such a defilement of the sacrifices would have been offensive to the Jews.

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2 And Jesus answering said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galilaeans were sinners above all the Galilaeans, because they suffered such things? 3 I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.

As had happened before, it’s possible that those who brought this news wanted to tempt Jesus to comment and offend either the Roman authorities or His Jewish countrymen, depending on His answer. However, Jesus wisely did not take sides but commented on the reason that God had allowed these things to happen. In that day, it was a strongly held belief that bad things only happened to bad people. If something bad happened to you, it was because of some sin you had committed. Thus, it would be assumed that these Galileans must have been guilty of some great sin for them to die in such a way. However, Jesus states that these Galileans did not die because of excessive sins. The truth of the matters is that we all deserve to die because of our sin, no matter how large or small (**Rom. 6:23a** “*For the wages of sin is death...*”).

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

This is another event of which we have no other record. Siloam was an area in the southern end of Jerusalem and apparently 18 people had died there when a tower had collapsed. Jesus makes the same point about these people that He did about those killed by Pilate. Their deaths were not because they were the most wicked people in Jerusalem and Jesus again states that our own sins make us worthy of similar deaths.

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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. 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? 8 And he answering said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it: 9 And if it bear fruit, *well*: and if not, *then* after that thou shalt cut it down.

To illustrate the need for repentance, Jesus used a parable about the owner of a vineyard who was frustrated because the fig tree he had planted was not producing any fruit. He was ready to have it cut down but his worker suggested that the owner give the tree one more year, during which the worker would fertilize it and work the soil under it. Then if it still didn’t produce fruit, he would cut it down. The point behind this parable seems to be that we are currently alive despite our sin because God is willing to give us time to repent, even giving us the best opportunity and conditions in order to do so. However, if we still refuse to repent then we will suffer His judgment. Many commentators point out that this parable may have been aimed primarily at the nation of Judah, warning them of their upcoming judgment if they did not repent.

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10 And he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the sabbath. 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*.

**“And he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the sabbath”** – Luke now moves on to an occasion when Jesus was teaching in a synagogue on the sabbath. The fact that it was the sabbath day will become significant later in the narrative (v. 14).

**“And, behold, there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity [weakness of the body] eighteen years”** – This woman had a physical problem in her body that had afflicted her for almost two decades. The word “spirit” suggests that her problem was due to an evil spirit despite the fact that Jesus doesn’t seem to handle this situation in the same way that He did other cases of demonic possession.

**“and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself”** – Without a physical examination, we can only speculate why this woman could not stand upright. She may have had spinal issues, weak back muscles, or perhaps her stomach muscles had contracted in such a way to keep her constantly bent over. It was a terrible way to have spent the previous 18 years.

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12 And when Jesus saw her, he called *her to him*, and said unto her, Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity. 13 And he laid *his hands on her*: and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God.

**“And when Jesus saw her”** – Perhaps she had just entered the synagogue while He was teaching, or else He just happened to see her in the crowd since she would have been shorter than the other adults in the room.

**“he called her to him, and said unto her, Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity”** – Jesus immediately had compassion on the woman and called her to come to him, declaring that He intended to set her free from the physical handicap that she had been suffering.

**“And he laid his hands on her: and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God”** – When Jesus healed her, she was finally able to stand up straight again for the first time in 18 years. It’s easy to understand her desire to glorify God in that moment.

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.

**“And the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because that Jesus had healed on the sabbath day”** – Since Jesus had been allowed to teach in this synagogue, its ruler must not have been offended by Jesus’ teaching. He immediately protested, however, when Jesus healed the woman on the sabbath, seeing the act of healing as Sabbath violating work despite the fact that it was God’s power that did it.

**“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”** – Obviously this ruler prioritized keeping the Sabbath above the well-being of his people. He believed that if a person wanted to be healed, he/she should come on any day besides the Sabbath. This ruler had missed the point of why God instituted the Sabbath (**Mark 2:27** “*And he said unto them, The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath*”).

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?*

Jesus pointed out the hypocrisy of the ruler’s statement. Even though it involved work, everyone there would make sure that their livestock were watered on the Sabbath to prevent the dehydration of their animals. They considered the welfare of their livestock to be an exception.

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?

If they considered watering their livestock to be an allowed exception to the Sabbath, then shouldn’t the healing of this woman also be an allowed exception? She was one of God’s chosen people (being a daughter of Abraham) and had suffered for 18 years in bondage to Satan. She was more worthy of mercy and consideration than livestock.

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.

**“And when he had said these things, all his adversaries were ashamed”** – Jesus exposed hypocrisy of the ruler’s statement so clearly that he and all those in the synagogue that shared his viewpoint were embarrassed and could not say anything in response.

**“and all the people rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by him”** – The rest of the people in the synagogue rejoiced in the fact that they had witnessed the power of God and perhaps because they recognized the freedom from legalism that Jesus taught.

22 And he went through the cities and villages, teaching, and journeying toward Jerusalem. 23 Then said one unto him, Lord, are there few that be saved? And he said unto them, 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.

**“And he went through the cities and villages, teaching, and journeying toward Jerusalem”** – Luke will now mention more things that happened as Jesus continued His journey to Jerusalem.

**“Then said one unto him, Lord, are there few that be saved?”** – The Jews believed that, except for tax collectors and other such “sinners,” all other Jews would be automatically be saved and enter into God’s kingdom. Jesus had been placing a high cost on following Him, such as denying oneself and taking up their cross (Luke 9:23). Also, the numbers of true followers of Jesus were dwindling. This man may have heard Jesus’ teaching and noticed the dwindling numbers and came to the conclusion that those who would be saved would be few in number.

**“And he said unto them, Strive [*struggle; fight*] to enter in at the strait [*narrow*] gate for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able”** – Jesus responds by acknowledging that the way into the kingdom and salvation is indeed narrow and most will not be able to enter in. They should put forth the effort to discover the way (Jesus) and enter through faith in Him alone while the way is open.

25 When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are:

Jesus illustrates the situation by picturing God as the Master of the house Who will eventually shut the door to the kingdom so that no one else can enter. Those standing outside can knock on the door and beg to be let in, but He will reject them and send them away as strangers.

26 Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets. 27 But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity. 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.

They will claim familiarity with the Master of the house but He will deny knowing them and demand that they leave because they are “workers of iniquity.” Jesus warns that there will be intense sorrow and grief for those who are not allowed to enter the kingdom, especially when they see the OT saints enjoying being citizens of the kingdom.

29 And they shall come from the east, and *from* the west, and from the north, and *from* the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God. 30 And, behold, there are last which shall be first, and there are first which shall be last.

**“And they shall come from the east, and *from* the west, and from the north, and *from* the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God”** – The reference to people coming from the four points of the compass indicates that people from all over the world, including Gentiles, will enter the kingdom. This statement was a slap in the face to the Jews who believed that they would automatically be included in the kingdom and that the Gentiles would be excluded.

**“And, behold, there are last which shall be first, and there are first which shall be last”** – On the Jew’s list ranking those that they believed were most likely to enter the kingdom at the top and those who were least likely at the bottom, Jesus said that, in reality, there will be some at the bottom of the list who will be at the top and some at the top who will actually be at the bottom.