

LUKE

Chapter 19

Jesus and Zacchaeus

He entered Jericho and was passing through. 2 And behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus. He was a chief tax collector and was rich. 3 And he was seeking to see who Jesus was, but on account of the crowd he could not, because he was small in stature. 4 So he ran on ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him, for he was about to pass that way. 5 And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, “Zacchaeus, hurry and come down, for I must stay at your house today.” 6 So he hurried and came down and received him joyfully. 7 And when they saw it, they all grumbled, “He has gone in to be the guest of a man who is a sinner.” 8 And Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, “Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor. And if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I restore it fourfold.” 9 And Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house, since he also is a son of Abraham. 10 For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.”

This pericope “brings to an end that part of the Lukan travel account which has been called the ‘Gospel of the Outcast.’ “ Luke has situated this story (from Jericho) at the end of Jesus’ journey to Jerusalem to bring to conclusion the themes of Jesus’ Galilean ministry and the travel account. “To the deliverance there [in Jericho] of a man lost in blindness and poverty corresponds now the deliverance of a man lost in wealth and corruption. The popular support for the former is to be contrasted with the popular dismay of the latter.” (CC p. 717)

It is right to interpret this story as part of Luke’s theme of Jesus’ table fellowship because Jesus says he must “abide” with Zacchaeus, who welcomes him, and because the onlookers complain that Jesus entered the man’s house “to lodge.” This implies that they shared at least one meal together. The symmetry of Luke’s structure is evident by the way in which the table fellowship of Jesus *outside Jerusalem* begins and ends with a meal with a man who was both a tax collector and a sinner. Just as Jesus’ feast with Levi the sinful tax collector was programmatic for all other Lukan meals by foreshadowing the themes of Luke’s table fellowship matrix (see comments on 5:27–39), so now Jesus’ stay with Zacchaeus completes Luke’s matrix by illustrating its major themes. The logion of 19:10 is climactic for Jesus’ activity at the table where he teaches and eats with sinners: “For the Son of Man came in order to seek and to save the lost.” Jesus’ journey to Jerusalem concludes with him as the Good Shepherd rescuing the lost sheep of the house of Israel from destruction. It “may fittingly be regarded as the epitome of the message of this Gospel.” (CC pp. 717-718)

The stark contrast between the Pharisees and the tax collectors was heightened by Jesus in 18:9–14 in the unique Lukan parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector.

W. P. Loewe, “Toward an Interpretation of Lk 19:1–10,” 322, says: “Luke takes up and expands the figure of the publicans. ... They are linked with sinners in general but respond positively to God’s plan by seeking baptism from John. Thus they stand in contrast to the self-righteous, the Scribes and Pharisees. The Son of Man seeks out their company, eating and drinking with them. This is his mission, to call sinners.” Cf. also J. Sanders, *The Jews in Luke-Acts*, 109–10, 206. (CC p. 718)

That parable affirmed what the hearer already knew: that Jesus' ministry is characterized by bringing sinners to repentance, thereby exalting the humble. That parable was also a direct attack against the self-righteousness of the Pharisees, who exalted themselves. It may be linked with the parables of Luke 15 in Luke's "parables of mercy—about God's mercy shown to a sinner who stands before him and acknowledges his own worthlessness." Zacchaeus (a tax collector) stands in contrast to someone like the rich young ruler (a Pharisee) in 18:18–23. Zacchaeus is happy to give alms, whereas the rich young ruler will not give up his addiction to his possessions. (CC p. 718)

The account unfolds in a straightforward way. After the introduction (19:1), Luke reports Zacchaeus' seeking (19:2–4), Jesus' response (19:5–8), and Jesus' concluding pronouncement about his ministry (19:9–10). (CC p. 718)

19:1 *entered Jericho*. Having restored the blind beggar's sight, Jesus now rescues Zacchaeus, who is lost in his wealth. Cf 18:22. (TLSB)

διήρχετο—The imperfect locates the action *in* Jericho. (CC p. 715)

Luke has brought the hearer to the outskirts of Jerusalem and assembled three elements in a "Jericho narrative." As Jesus approaches Jericho, he heals a blind man. Once in the city (probably the new Herodian city), he encounters Zacchaeus and abides with him. Jericho is also the locale for the parable of the minas (see comments on 19:11–28). (CC p. 718)

Jesus arrived at Jericho on the Thursday before Passion Week. He was on His way to Jerusalem where He would suffer many things to save sinners. What a shame if people would think He died for "them that are whole," for the "righteous," rather than for the ungodly, the sinners!

19:2 *Zacchaeus* – A name of Hebrew origin signifying "pure" or "innocent." Quite ironic. Chief among the despised publican was he; a superintendent and rich – but not honestly so.

chief tax collector. A position referred to only here in the Bible, probably designating one in charge of a district, with other tax collectors under him. The region was prosperous at this time, so it is no wonder that Zacchaeus had grown rich. (CSB)

The first major theme of Jesus' ministry and table fellowship is that it is for sinners, i.e., it is an inclusive event (see comments at 5:27–39 and the excursus "Jesus' Table Fellowship"). This is reemphasized here by Luke's description of Zacchaeus as the "chief tax collector" (19:2). In 5:27, Luke emphasizes Levi's position as a *τελώνης*, a "tax collector," who is an abject sinner; this highlights Jesus' table fellowship *with sinners*. In 7:29 and 7:34, Luke again places the tax collectors in the center of Jesus' table fellowship as those who accept him as the Messiah prophesied in the OT. In 15:1–2, the murmuring Pharisees lay down a charge against Jesus that sums up their opinion of his table fellowship: "This man welcomes sinners and eats with them." (CC pp. 718-719)

Finally in 19:2 Luke points out (emphatically, *αὐτός*, "he") that Zacchaeus is a *chief* tax collector (*ἀρχιτελώνης*). This is the only use of this word in the NT—indeed, in all of Greek literature. Already this suggests that he is very wealthy, like the rich ruler in 18:18–30. It helps give the pericope a "culminating, paradigmatic character." As *chief* tax collector, Zacchaeus' response to Jesus represents the response of tax collectors and sinners in general. (CC p. 719)

was rich – But Luke also adds the emphatic note (καὶ αὐτός, “and he”) that Zacchaeus is rich (πλούσιος; 19:2). The proper use of possessions is a theme of Jesus in Luke that affects table fellowship in connection with the “theology of poverty.” A concern for riches runs through this pericope (cf. 16:13, 14, 19–31; 18:18–30). (This concern for possessions has also appeared in other pericopes associated with Jesus’ table fellowship: 7:36–38; 14:12–14.) Zacchaeus represents all those whom the Pharisees regard as outcasts in society because he is a tax collector and sinner. But from the perspective of Jesus, he is an outcast because he is rich. Luke alone calls the Pharisees “lovers of money” (16:14), the very thing Jesus speaks against throughout his teaching in Luke. Thus, from the different religious perspectives both of the Pharisees and of Jesus, Zacchaeus is a person in need of salvation. (CC 719-720)

He used his position for his own benefit. Cf v 8. (TLSB)

19:3 *was seeking to see who Jesus was* – ἐζήτει—The imperfect here magnifies Zacchaeus’ persistence in “seeking” to see Jesus, similar to the persistence of the blind man in the previous pericope. Luke frames this story with this word, since Jesus has come “in order to seek [ζητῆσαι] and to save the lost” (19:10). (CC p. 715)

Zacchaeus is seeking to see who Jesus is (ἐζήτει ἰδεῖν τὸν Ἰησοῦν τίς ἐστίν [19:3]). In this he “was seeking the kingdom of God,” like the Greeks who wish to see Jesus in Jn 12:21. Zacchaeus’ desire to see Jesus may indicate that he has heard of the preaching of Jesus about salvation, the days of the Son of Man, and the kingdom and wants to see for himself if they are true. Climbing a tree is unusual for someone of his position. The reports about Jesus have reached him and motivated him to uncharacteristic action. (CC p. 720)

He was curious, having heard about Jesus. Though Zacchaeus was looking, it is Jesus who found him. (TLSB)

19:4 *he ran ahead* – ἀνέβη ἐπὶ συκομορέαν—In the ancient Near East, it was considered demeaning for an honorable man to run (see comments on 15:20) or to climb trees. Zacchaeus was so serious about seeing Jesus that he did what was considered in his culture to be humiliating, foolish behavior. (CC p. 715)

a sycamore-fig tree. A sturdy tree from 30 to 40 feet high, with a short trunk and spreading branches, capable of holding a grown man. (CSB)

Climbing a tree is unusual for someone of his position. The reports about Jesus have reached him and motivated him to uncharacteristic action. (CC p. 720)

pass that way – ἐκείνης—Translated “that way” with ὁδοῶ understood and supplied in the translation. It is genitive because of διὰ in the verb διέρχεσθαι. (CC p. 715)

19:5 *looked up and said* – Zacchaeus may be eager to see who Jesus is, but when they meet, it is Jesus who calls Zacchaeus, just as he called Levi. (CC p. 720)

Did Jesus always look up into trees? Wrong question. Does He know your name? Know every thought, every word on your tongue and still love you with great compassion? He did not despise and shun the despised and shunned, and He would have all learn why He had come.

come down – σπεύσας— Here is another example where Luke uses a participle followed by an imperative. (CC p. 715)

Zacchaeus may be eager to see who Jesus is, but when they meet, it is Jesus who calls Zacchaeus, just as he called Levi. Jesus' invitation in 19:5 contains key words from the vocabulary describing Jesus' mission: *σήμερον γὰρ ἐν τῷ οἴκῳ σου δεῖ με μέναι*, "for today in your house it is necessary for me to abide." The use of *δεῖ* ("it is necessary") in connection with *μέναι* ("abide") suggests the significance of *the presence of Jesus* in order for salvation to come to that house today (*σήμερον*). This is a part of God's divine plan (*δεῖ*) of salvation, of which Zacchaeus is a part, since he epitomizes the "lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Mt 15:24). This anticipates the Emmaus meal in Lk 24:29, where Luke uses *μένω* ("abide") twice to indicate the presence of Christ at the meal at Emmaus. Although the story of Zacchaeus makes no explicit references to a meal or to the act of eating, *μέναι* ("abide") and *καταλῶσαι* ("lodge") strongly suggest that Jesus will eat a meal with Zacchaeus at his home. To spend the night at someone's house implies that a meal would be eaten. (CC p. 720)

I must stay at your house. Implies a divine necessity. (CSB)

"Must" implies God required this. Jesus has found the seeker and extends mercy to the despised tax collector by asking to stay with him. (TLSB)

μέναι—"To abide" accents the lasting real presence of Christ in Zacchaeus' home. This word will be significant in the Emmaus story (24:29). See comments at 1:46–56; 9:4; 10:7. The KJV sometimes translates *μένω* with "abide"; in John *μένω* occurs in many familiar passages. Some occurrences in John have the same literal dimension as our passage. (CC p. 716)

Jesus' insistence on staying at Zacchaeus' home caused the onlookers to grumble. This should not surprise the hearer, for previously in the gospel Jesus' inclusive table fellowship had precipitated complaints. Jesus' practice violated the table fellowship laws of the Pharisees and would also have been considered unclean. By eating in his home, Jesus would have become the equivalent of Zacchaeus—a sinner and an outcast. (CC p. 720)

today – *σήμερον γὰρ ἐν τῷ οἴκῳ σου δεῖ με μέναι*—The word order of the Greek emphasizes "today" (first) and Jesus' presence in Zacchaeus' house (last). In the center of the sentence is the word Luke often uses for divine necessity, *δεῖ*. (CC p. 715)

19:6 *came down and received him joyfully* – The quickness and joyfulness show that Zacchaeus recognized that Jesus' kindness and friendliness had love, acceptance, and forgiveness written all over them. Being warm and friendly opens many a door for effective Christian witness today. (CC p. 716)

χαίρων—See comments at 15:1–10 and 15:11–32 where joy *at the table* is a major theme (15:5, 7, 10, 32). (CC p. 716)

The coming of Jesus was a sign of fellowship and forgiveness. (TLSB)

19:7 *they all muttered* – In marked contrast to the joy of Zacchaeus is the murmuring. Neither is it the scribes and Pharisees doing it, but "all!" The all must have included some followers of Jesus. Even among the children of God there is frightfully much weakness. The people overlooked that Zacchaeus was a real sinner in the eyes of Jesus and that Jesus did not countenance sin. (CC p. 716)

διεγόγγυζον—This is the typical reaction of Jesus’ opponents. See comments at 5:30; 7:34, 39; 15:2. (CC p. 716)

The grumbling of those who disagree with Jesus’ table fellowship with sinners and tax collectors is another link between 5:30 (ἐγόγγυζον); 15:2 (διεγόγγυζον); and 19:7 (διεγόγγυζον). This is another indication of Jesus’ table fellowship fulfilling OT precedents. “The Exodus background to the murmuring supplies the key to Luke’s thought here.” The faithless Israelites in the wilderness kept complaining about food (γογγυσμός, LXX Ex 16:7–12, etc.; [δια]γογγύζω, LXX Ex 16:7; 17:3; Num 14:27–29; etc.), while the faithful ones received God’s blessings with thanksgiving. Physical eating and spiritual reception in faith are compared also in John 6 and 1 Cor 10:1–13 in light of the Exodus background. (CC p. 719)

Others likely hoped to have the great Teacher as their guest. Some thought that for Jesus to eat with such a man as Zacchaeus was to become a partner with him in his sins. (TLSB)

sinner – ἁμαρτωλῶ—Tax collectors and sinners appear together also at 15:1, where Pharisees and scribes are grumbling that “this man welcomes sinners and eats with them” (15:2). (CC p. 716)

Jesus’ insistence on staying at Zacchaeus’ home caused the onlookers to grumble. This should not surprise the hearer, for previously in the gospel Jesus’ inclusive table fellowship had precipitated complaints (15:1). Jesus’ practice violated the table fellowship laws of the Pharisees and would also have been considered unclean. By eating in his home, Jesus would have become the equivalent of Zacchaeus – a sinner and an outcast. (CC p. 720)

19:8 stood – σταθείς—BAGD points to Lk 18:11; 19:8; and Acts 2:14; 5:20; 11:13 to suggest “*step up* or *stand* to say something or make a speech” (s.v. ἵστημι, II 1 b). (CC p. 716)

Lord – Much seems to be omitted here. We assume that Jesus spoke at some length to Zacchaeus and his family or household; also that a number of friends and guests were present. Zacchaeus’ public and courageous standing, his addressing the Lord as Lord, the thank-offering he gratefully vows, his confession and promised generous restitution were plain evidence of a new heart. Here was a changed man – moved by the pardon, comfort, peace Jesus brought. When the Lord enters a house, unrighteousness moves out. With jubilant trust in divine forgiveness came the grateful resolve to lead a God-pleasing life. – Any response in faith – no matter how small or large – is looked upon with favor by God.

Defrauded anyone – ἐσυκοφάντησα—L. T. Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke*, 286, notes an echo here to the preaching of John the Baptist: “John told the soldiers ‘not to shake down anyone or extort from anyone’ using the same verb, *sykophanteo*, as here (3:14). John also told tax-agents to take no more than what was owed them (3:13).” (CC p. 716)

restore – δίδωμι ... ἀποδίδωμι—The present tense of these two verbs could be understood either as “customary presents” (which would mean that Zacchaeus has regularly been giving to the poor) or as “futuristic presents” (which would suggest that these acts of charity will result from Zacchaeus’ conversion). The second possibility is the better explanation. J. Nolland, *Luke 18:35–24:53*, 906, notes:

The view that Zacchaeus is describing his regular practice and not his newfound intention has recently gained a certain popularity. ... This involves taking the present tense verbs as iterative, rather than as futuristic. The story then becomes a vindication story rather than a

salvation story. But the whole tone of the story finally counts against this view, from the image of Zacchaeus that emerges in vv 3–4, via the mission echoes of v 6, through the role of the other statements similar to v 7 in the Gospel account, to the salvation-of-the-lost emphasis of vv 9–10. (CC p. 716)

half of my goods – Zacchaeus’ reaction has been interpreted two different ways. When Zacchaeus promises, “Behold, half of my possessions, Lord, I give to the poor, and if anything of anyone I have extorted, I give back fourfold” (19:8), is he speaking of an activity that he *already* engages in on a regular basis, or is this a future action that will result from his new faith that Jesus is the Son of Man who seeks and saves the lost? It is preferable to understand this as referring to a new, future activity. As was noted at 7:47, Jesus does not forgive the sinful woman *because* of her love, but rather, her love flows from Jesus’ forgiveness. Likewise, Jesus does not grant Zacchaeus an audience because of his almsgiving; rather, Zacchaeus’ generosity to the poor results from the forgiveness Jesus extends to him by asking to stay in his home. Zacchaeus’ reaction is a sign of his repentance and his reception of Jesus’ forgiveness by faith. (CC p. 716)

D. Moessner, *Lord of the Banquet*, 170, notes:

Zacchaeus, by this decisive action, imitates the unjust steward (16:1–9). But Zacchaeus also repents, shows that he will serve only the one master (16:13), the Lord of the house, and is thus faithful to receive the true riches of salvation (v. 9; cf. 16:10–12). ... He thus stands in contrast to the lawyer (10:25), to the synagogue official (13:10–17), to the rich ruler (18:18–30), and particularly to the Pharisees (11:37–54; 14:1–24; 16:14–15). This means that Zacchaeus is likened to the “child” who can receive Jesus as the Lord and thus enter the Kingdom of God (9:46–48; 10:21–24; 18:15–17). (CC p. 721)

His words and actions show true repentance. Cf 3:10–14. (TLSB)

fourfold – Almost the extreme repayment required under the law in case of theft (Ex 22:1; 2Sa 12:6; cf. Pr 6:31). (CSB)

Past extortion is not in doubt. (TLSB)

19:9 *today salvation has come* – Jesus spoke a confirming word of absolution to Zacchaeus. Salvation is rescue from sin, death, devil, and hell. It is a restoration to God’s favor and sonship. Today indicates conversion is no long, drawn-out process. – So also Jesus will promise the malefactor on the cross, “Today with me you will be in paradise.” (23:43). (CC p. 716)

τῷ οἴκῳ τούτῳ ἐγένετο—“Happened to this house”: the aorist here requires the English perfect. The dative is of advantage, and οἴκῳ designates the people of his household (cf. Acts 10:2; 11:14; 16:15, 31; 18:8). (CC p. 716)

In the story of Zacchaeus, the coming of Jesus as a guest is the means by which God’s kingdom comes. The present reality of salvation “today” in the life of Zacchaeus reaches a climax in 19:9–10, when Jesus announces, “Today [σήμερον] salvation [σωτηρία] happened to this house, since also he is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came in order to seek and to save [σῶσαι] the lost.” (CC p. 721)

J. Nolland, *Luke 18:35–24:53*, 906–7, notes a relationship between this verse and Ezekiel 34 (cf. Ezek 34:16: “I will seek the lost, and I will bring back the strayed, and I will bind up the crippled, and I will strengthen the weak, and the fat and the strong I will destroy; I

will feed them with justice”), emphasizing “a Davidic role for this Son of Man,” so that “the strand of royal messianism begun in 18:35–43 continues here” (p. 907). I. H. Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, 698, notes that “the saying as a whole is thus couched in Shepherd imagery (J. Jeremias, *TDNT* VI, 492), and this strongly anchors it in the teaching of Jesus.” (CC p. 721)

Lk 19:9 is also filled with the Lukan vocabulary of salvation: σήμερον (“today”) and σωτηρία (“salvation”) are significant in the Lukan vocabulary to announce the presence of the kingdom of God in the person and ministry of Jesus, who inaugurates the new era of salvation. The presence of Jesus with Zacchaeus means that *today* salvation has come to this house. So also Jesus will promise the malefactor on the cross, “*Today* with me you will be in paradise” (23:43). This Lukan usage embraces the OT understanding of “that day,” “the day of the Yahweh,” and “today” as meaning “fulfillment, revelation, whether as salvation or disaster.” (CC p. 722)

E. Fuchs, σήμερον, *TDNT* 7:271. Fuchs elaborates:

Thus what is said “to-day,” if it is the word that is to be said to-day, e.g., an oath or a covenant, ... inaugurates that which decides concerning the being or non-being of God’s people, its existence. ... Thus “to-day” can be the means as well as the content of revelation. In it God’s Word goes forth and also the answer to it, whether it be questioning or prayer (worship). God’s Word and what takes place “to-day” can and should be commensurate with one another. This means that all that takes place should be expressed and decided before God and by God. To-day history becomes address, word ([Pss] 94:7; 2:7). For this reason “to-day” looks back to the past and forward to the present. It thus discloses its truth as the eschatologically accentuated claim to obedience of the Lord of history who teaches His people what they should do, Dt. 4:1. “Today” is the ever actual time of decision between God and His people, Dt. 26:17–19. (CC p. 722)

Thus, “today” the era of God’s salvation is present in Zacchaeus’ house, embracing God’s salvific acts in Israel’s past and God’s present and future salvific acts in the work of Jesus, God’s Messiah. “Today” signals the climax of the ministry of Jesus’ table fellowship outside Jerusalem. (CC pp. 721-722)

The Lukan Gospel theme of the Great Reversal is in full force. The kingdom of God comes with the death and resurrection of Jesus, and those who are to be saved will first lose their life. Their former way of life perishes as they enter the kingdom while following Jesus in a cruciform life. In 13:22–30, “those who are being saved” (13:23) “recline at table in the kingdom of God” (13:29), where in the Great Reversal “some are last who will be first, and some are first who will be last” (13:30). (CC p. 722)

The coming of Jesus means the lost Zacchaeus has been sought and now found. (TLSB)

son of Abraham. A true Jew—not only of the lineage of Abraham but one who also walks “in the footsteps” of Abraham’s faith (Ro 4:12). Jesus recognized the tax collector as such, though Jewish society excluded him. (CSB)

A descendant of Abraham and now a “true” son through faith in Jesus. (TLSB)

καὶ αὐτός—L. T. Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke*, 286, observes, “Jesus says ‘to him’ that salvation has happened, but the explanation ‘because he too’ is in the third person rather than the second person. We are to picture Jesus turning to the crowd with this last part of the pronouncement.” See R. Tannehill, *Narrative Unity I*, 123–24, on the difference between the demands on the rich

young ruler to give *all* his possessions and Zacchaeus' agreement to give only *half*. Perhaps the difference is that the rich young ruler was trying to earn his way into the kingdom through works (Law), so Jesus replies that he must give away all and fulfill the Law completely, which is impossible, as the man realizes. Zacchaeus, on the other hand, enters the kingdom by grace (Gospel) at Jesus' invitation ("Zacchaeus, hurrying, come down ..." [19:5]). Zacchaeus' offering of half of his possessions is his *response* to Jesus' grace, and any response in faith—no matter how small or large—is looked upon with favor by God. Similarly, Christians are not obligated to give ten percent or any set amount; Christians are free to respond to God's grace as they are able and as they see fit. They know that all they have—one hundred percent—is a *gift* from God, and their giving should be in this same spirit of lavish generosity. (CC pp. 716-717)

The Lukan Gospel theme of the Great Reversal is in full force. The kingdom of God comes with the death and resurrection of Jesus, and those who are to be saved will first lose their life. Their former way of life perishes as they enter the kingdom while following Jesus in a cruciform life. In 13:22–30, "those who are being saved" (13:23) "recline at table in the kingdom of God" (13:29), where in the Great Reversal "some are last who will be first, and some are first who will be last" (13:30). (CC p. 722)

The Great Reversal is found in the declaration of Zacchaeus' status as "a son of Abraham." God promises salvation for those who are the true children of Abraham, but those who claim Abraham as their (physical) father are not excluded from the call to bear fruits of repentance (3:8–9). The Great Reversal is evident in that Zacchaeus *who is a tax collector and sinner* is a son of Abraham. Jesus eats with him and declares that salvation is present in his house, not because he is (physically) a son of Abraham, but because he is a son of Abraham as a repentant tax collector and sinner. Zacchaeus responds by bearing fruits of repentance (19:8). He is paradigmatic of all lost sinners who are saved by Jesus.

Cf. J. O'Hanlon, "The Story of Zacchaeus and the Lukan Ethic," 18–19:

What it means to be lost can be learned from the way Luke develops the concept in the parables of the Lost Sheep and the Lost Coin and fleshes it out in the portraits of the Prodigal Son and the Tax Collector of 18:9–14. The lost is anyone separated from that which gives identity, meaning and value to one's life. The lost is personified in the chief tax collector, Zacchaeus. He has sold his identity as a son of Abraham to the foreign oppressor and he has batted on his own people, literally robbing them (19:8c) to fill his own coffers. He has gone into his own far country. But the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost. (CC p. 724)

In place of his riches, Zacchaeus has received the ultimate wealth, salvation, forgiveness of his sins (Jesus eats with sinners while they are still sinners but this fellowship brings about repentance) and that is "good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over" (6:38). (CC pp. 723-724)

The significance of σωτηρία ("salvation") is heightened by its association with the forgiveness of sins. Luke makes the connection in 1:77: "to give knowledge of salvation to his people in the forgiveness of their sins" (cf. 3:3–6) and in 7:47–50. ἄφεσις ("forgiveness, release") occurs in the context of salvation preaching: in the programmatic sermon of Nazareth in 4:18 (twice) in connection with "the year of the Lord's favor" and in Luke's commissioning of the disciples in 24:47. The objects of salvation are the outcasts of society, the lost sinners (19:10). (CC p. 723)

Although ἄφεσις ("forgiveness, release") does not occur in 19:1–10, salvation "today" is expressed through the forgiveness of sins within the context of Jesus' miracles, teaching, and

table fellowship. All the key ingredients are here: the chief tax collector (and sinner) Zacchaeus, the presence of Jesus in his home and at his table, the declaration of salvation “today,” and the summation of Jesus’ ministry for sinners: “For the Son of Man came in order to seek and to save the lost” (19:10). (CC p. 723)

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Abraham is the Father of all believers (Gal 3:7; Rom 4:11,16). Salvation came today inasmuch as the faith of Abraham had been created in Zacchaeus’ heart.

19:10 A key verse in Luke’s Gospel. (CSB)

The whole reason God’s Son became incarnate and was on His way to Jerusalem. (TLSB)

Son of Man.† A Messianic title (Da 7:13) used only by Jesus in the four Gospels, by Stephen (Ac 7:56) and in John’s vision (Rev 1:13). (CSB)

By using this title Jesus indicated that He was the promised Savior. It means: the divine Substitute for mankind; the incarnate Son of God. If the Son of Man was to seek and to save that which was lost, must we not understand what He meant when He said, “As the Father hath sent Me, even so I send you?”

to seek and to save. An important summary of Jesus’ purpose—to bring salvation, meaning eternal life (18:18), and the kingdom of God (18:25). (CSB)

ζητῆσαι καὶ σῶσαι—These complementary infinitives express purpose. (CC p. 717)

Jesus explains that His action in bringing salvation to Zacchaeus’ house was in keeping with His mission, which was to search out, to go after the lost and rescue them. That’s why He was sent.

Matthew 20:28: “just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

lost – They are without God, wrecked by sin, spiritually blind and dead, helpless, hopeless and captives of the devil.

The significance of σωτηρία (“salvation”) is heightened by its association with the forgiveness of sins. Luke makes the connection in 1:77: “to give knowledge of salvation to his people in the forgiveness of their sins” (cf. 3:3–6) and in 7:47–50. ἄφεσις (“forgiveness, release”) occurs in the context of salvation preaching: in the programmatic sermon of Nazareth in 4:18 (twice) in connection with “the year of the Lord’s favor” and in Luke’s commissioning of the disciples in 24:47. The objects of salvation are the outcasts of society, the lost sinners (19:10). (CC p. 723)

Although ἄφεσις (“forgiveness, release”) does not occur in 19:1–10, salvation “today” is expressed through the forgiveness of sins within the context of Jesus’ miracles, teaching, and table fellowship. All the key ingredients are here: the chief tax collector (and sinner) Zacchaeus, the presence of Jesus in his home and at his table, the declaration of salvation “today,” and the summation of Jesus’ ministry for sinners: “For the Son of Man came in order to seek and to save the lost” (19:10). (CC p. 723)

19:1–10 Jesus saves Zacchaeus by visiting him with mercy. Followers of Jesus dare never begrudge the mercy others have received. The Gospel can save one sinner who repents just as well as another. The saving love of Jesus seeks and reaches out to all people. • Lord, in Your name, we welcome all who repent and share in the forgiveness we have received. Grant us willing hearts to share the Gospel freely. Amen. (TLSB)

The Parable of the Ten Minas

11 As they heard these things, he proceeded to tell a parable, because he was near to Jerusalem, and because they supposed that the kingdom of God was to appear immediately. 12 He said therefore, “A nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and then return. 13 Calling ten of his servants,[a] he gave them ten minas, and said to them, ‘Engage in business until I come.’ 14 But his citizens hated him and sent a delegation after him, saying, ‘We do not want this man to reign over us.’ 15 When he returned, having received the kingdom, he ordered these servants to whom he had given the money to be called to him, that he might know what they had gained by doing business. 16 The first came before him, saying, ‘Lord, your mina has made ten minas more.’ 17 And he said to him, ‘Well done, good servant! Because you have been faithful in a very little, you shall have authority over ten cities.’ 18 And the second came, saying, ‘Lord, your mina has made five minas.’ 19 And he said to him, ‘And you are to be over five cities.’ 20 Then another came, saying, ‘Lord, here is your mina, which I kept laid away in a handkerchief; 21 for I was afraid of you, because you are a severe man. You take what you did not deposit, and reap what you did not sow.’ 22 He said to him, ‘I will condemn you with your own words, you wicked servant! You knew that I was a severe man, taking what I did not deposit and reaping what I did not sow? 23 Why then did you not put my money in the bank, and at my coming I might have collected it with interest?’ 24 And he said to those who stood by, ‘Take the mina from him, and give it to the one who has the ten minas.’ 25 And they said to him, ‘Lord, he has ten minas!’ 26 ‘I tell you that to everyone who has, more will be given, but from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. 27 But as for these enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, bring them here and slaughter them before me.’”

19:11–27 Parable recalls when Archelaus, the son of Herod the Great, went to Rome to be confirmed by Caesar as king. (Archelaus ruled 4 BC–AD 6.) A delegation of Jews also went to Rome to protest the appointment. Caesar still appointed Archelaus as king, but he gave him a smaller kingdom. In the parable, Jesus teaches that by His death, resurrection, and ascension, He will gain His kingship. Though the world will protest His reign, Jesus’ disciples are to use the gifts entrusted to them faithfully. At Jesus’ return, He will punish those who have opposed His gracious rule. (TLSB)

Traditionally, 19:11–28 has been called “the parable of the pounds” or “minas” (see textual note on 19:13). However, even though money plays an important role in the narrative, it is more about kingship than the proper use of possessions or stewardship of gifts.

The details of the narrative and especially Luke's introduction confirm this. As to the narrative,

the possessions motif is here a subsidiary to a political one. The story is about a king who goes to get a kingdom, gets it despite opposition, and returns to establish that rule by getting rid of his rivals for power and placing in positions of authority over cities the slaves who have shown themselves trustworthy. The parable is therefore "about" the successful establishment of a kingdom.

Second, Luke's own introduction indicates that *kingship* is the topic, since Jesus told it because "they thought that immediately the kingdom of God was about to appear" (19:11). And third, the location of the parable at the end of Jesus' journey, when he is *near* Jerusalem and about to enter it as king, alerts the reader to this theme. From 18:35 (cf. "Son of David" [18:38]) through 19:46, Luke's concern is "with Jesus as a royal figure,"

J. Nolland, *Luke 18:35–24:53*, 901. R. Stein, *Luke*, 471, offers the following themes for this parable: "the proper use of possessions, the Jewish rejection of Jesus, the return of the Son of Man, the kingship of Jesus, the delay of the parousia." L. T. Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke*, 293, notes that "if Luke intended to downplay the significance of the entry of Jesus as king, he made a thorough mess of it, for it is precisely the parable and its introduction that draws maximum attention to the proclamation of Jesus as king in the story which follows (a proclamation, by the way, that Luke makes more explicit than any other evangelist)." (CC p. 728)

and that is certainly in view here. The hearer is forced to ask what a true king is like and who that king might be. (CC pp. 726-727)

19:11 *these things*. Words spoken in Zacchaeus's house, to which He now adds the parable about kingship. (TLSB)

was near Jerusalem – διὰ τὸ ἐγγὺς εἶναι Ἱερουσαλὴμ αὐτόν—If Jesus is still in Jericho, he is seventeen miles and a three-thousand-three-hundred-foot climb from Jerusalem, since Jerusalem is two thousand five hundred feet above sea level and Jericho is eight hundred feet below sea level. (CC pp. 725)

Jericho was c 15 mi NE of Jerusalem. (TLSB)

they supposed – δοκεῖν αὐτούς—The antecedent for αὐτούς, although not entirely certain, would most likely include those who would have heard Jesus' teaching at the home of Zacchaeus—Jesus' disciples and other guests. Jesus' opponents probably would not have entered Zacchaeus' home, but they seem to be part of the implied audience of the parable. (CC p. 726)

kingdom ... was to appear. They expected the Messiah to appear in power and glory and to set up his earthly kingdom, defeating all their political and military enemies. (CSB)

The hearers expected that God's kingdom would come instantly in glory as Jesus took Jerusalem away from the Romans. (TLSB)

The significance of Luke's introduction to the parable cannot be overstated. He connects it to the previous episode where Jesus invites himself to Zacchaeus' house and announces that "the Son of Man came in order to seek and to save the lost" (19:10). Luke tells the hearer that "while they were hearing these things" (19:11, i.e., the things about Zacchaeus), Jesus added this parable

about kingship. The view throughout this commentary is that Luke uses “hearer(s) of Jesus” and “hearer(s) of the Word” as terms for catechumen(s), so that these words are directed to Jesus’ hearers/disciples/learners/catechumens who need instruction about Jesus, the true king of Israel. Some of these hearers probably sat at table in Zacchaeus’ home as participants in Jesus’ table fellowship, his habit of teaching and eating at table *with his catechumens*. This becomes even more significant since this parable is *Jesus’ final teaching before he enters Jerusalem* and thus concludes the long journey narrative that began at 9:51. In other words, Jesus’ final teaching is juxtaposed with his table fellowship. Jesus lodges with a sinner (19:7) and then informs his audience about the events that are about to take place. (CC pp. 728-729)

Clearly, the hearers of this teaching expected that when Jesus entered Jerusalem, God’s kingdom would come immediately. The urgency of their hopes arise from Jesus’ proximity to Jerusalem, the city of messianic expectations. How ironic that the crowds and disciples were right in hoping that the kingdom would come promptly when Jesus entered Jerusalem, for the kingdom does come when Jesus suffers, enters his glory, and breaks bread at Emmaus. However, they did not expect the kingdom to come *in the way* it did. Even John the Baptist struggled to understand the relationship of mercy and compassion to wrath and judgment in Jesus’ bringing of the kingdom (see comments at 7:18–35). (CC p. 729)

Whether the disciples expected a political kingdom or one that came through military might is hard to determine. But it is fair to say that they were not expecting the suffering and humiliation that Jesus was about to endure, and especially not the horror and embarrassment of the cross. From the introduction of this parable, it is clear that they were confused about what kind of king Jesus was and would be, and the uncertainty continues in the last week of his life. His kingship is an issue as he is acclaimed as king on Palm Sunday by his disciples (19:38), during his final supper with his disciples (22:28–30), in his trials (23:2), and at the cross (23:37–38). One of Jesus’ final acts is to grant entrance into his kingdom (which he calls paradise in 23:43) at the request of one of the thieves on the cross (23:42). Even after the resurrection, the disciples have a question about the coming of the kingdom (Acts 1:6). With this parable, Jesus gives his disciples the assurance of a long-range view of ultimate vindication and triumph for the kingdom despite the king’s impending suffering, which they would first misinterpret as defeat. (CC p. 729)

19:12-27 The parable itself has two main sections, each beginning with an action by the nobleman (19:12–13, 15–26). However, the critical moments in the parable are the reactions that the nobleman’s actions produce, first by some citizens who don’t want him to be king (19:14), and then by the nobleman himself, who orders the slaughter of his enemies who reject his kingship (19:27). At the important points in the narrative, the issue is kingship. Who will receive it and who will reject it? (CC pp. 729-730)

On one level this parable could be heard and interpreted without any reference to Christ, as an illustration of kingship as experienced by the Herods. There were two well-known historical incidents that would be fresh in the minds of Jesus’ hearers. Both Herod the Great and (later) his son Archelaus set off on journeys to gain the kingship over Israel. A delegation of Jews followed Archelaus to Rome to protest his accession to the throne.

Herod the Great traveled to Rome in 40 B.C. and was declared king of Judea by Octavian and the Senate. See Josephus, *Antiquities* 14.370–89 (14.14.1–5); *War* 1.274–85 (1.14.1–4); E. Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1973) 1:281–86. After Herod’s death in 4 B.C., his sons Archelaus, Antipas, and Philip all traveled to Rome, seeking to be the new king of Judea. Several delegations from Judea asked that none of the Herodians be made king. Caesar Augustus awarded most of Judea,

Samaria, and Idumea to Archelaus but gave him the lesser title “ethnarch” instead of “king.” See Josephus, *Antiquities* 17.299–320 (17.11.1–4); *War* 2.80–100 (2.6.1–3). E. Schürer (*History*, 1:333, n. 10) comments, “The facts here related may have provided the framework for the Parable of the Pounds (Lk. 19:12–27).” (CC p. 730)

Both kings well deserved the label “severe” (19:21), since they thought nothing of killing any who got in their way, including their own relatives. This parable could be heard as describing the kind of king most Jews had experienced under Herod the Great and his sons. People hated the leadership of Herod and his family and the way he used political favors. For those who used their “minas” wisely, Herod appointed ten towns here, five towns there; those who did not use their “minas” wisely he punished by slaughtering them. Herod was a ruthless king who ruled with vengeance. (CC p. 730)

If Jesus meant for his hearers to think of a hated, vengeful, earthly king, perhaps it was to make a historical comment, to portray the kind of king he himself *was not*. For in the unfolding of the events of this next week, it will be Jesus who is put to death, not his enemies. (A similar interpretive dilemma pertains to Jesus’ parables about the master who praised the unrighteous steward [16:1–13] and the unrighteous judge [18:1–8], where the figures partially represent God but also contrast with God.) It is plausible that Jesus intended some hearers to interpret this parable in this way. Luke’s placement of this parable just before Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem supports this. (CC p. 730)

However, Jesus would expect a different hearing by his disciples. In the context of the gospel too the hearer would expect a Christological interpretation in keeping with the pattern of Luke’s narrative. (It is difficult to imagine Jesus telling a parable that has no Christological significance.) Jesus’ disciples and Luke’s readers need instruction about Holy Week and assurance about the ultimate vindication of Jesus as the Messiah.

Clearly, there is something about the parousia in this parable, but this question needs to be asked: Did Jesus (and Luke by recording this parable where he does) intend to teach his hearers something about the delay of the parousia, or is there another agenda here?

L. T. Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke*, 293, offers a succinct summary of the traditional interpretation of this parable:

The usual interpretation of this parable takes it as an allegory that is only incidentally connected to the Lukan narrative, and to be understood within the framework of early Christian ideas about the end-time. Specifically, Luke has Jesus tell the story to teach something about the *parousia*, that is, the second coming of the Son of Man as judge. The nobleman is Jesus who “goes away” to become king. He is opposed by the Jews. He entrusts the church to the disciples. When he returns, he bestows authority on those who were trustworthy. He punishes those who opposed his rule.

Why did Luke have Jesus tell the parable here? In order to correct the expectation that the entry of Jesus into the city was the final “establishment of God’s kingdom.” In short, it is an allegory that tells Christians to wait patiently for the final appearance of Jesus and to deal faithfully with their possessions in the meantime. (CC p. 731)

How shall Luke’s catechetical readers understand this? (CC pp. 730-731)

19:12 nobleman – The first part of the parable simply sets the stage for the rest of the story. It introduces us to the main character in the story. The man is described as (literally) “well born.” That certainly applies to Jesus’ lineage. Not only is he from David’s line, Luke’s hearers know

that Jesus' conception was by the Holy Spirit and that he is the Son of God (1:26–38). In any Christological interpretation, the nobleman is Jesus. (CC p. 731)

Lit, “well-born.” Certainly applies to Jesus: descended from David and the Son of God, conceived by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary. (TLSB)

Built into His motive for departure is the promise of a return. He does not go off to become a king by himself. He departs intending to bring His kingship back to His people. Ultimately His royalty is for them too. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 8, Part 4)

went – ἐπορεύθη—This is part of Luke's journey vocabulary and would recall for the hearer Jesus' journey to his destiny in Jerusalem. It is used again in Luke's travel notice at 19:28. See comments at 9:51. (CC p. 726)

far country – The overall narrative in Luke's gospel points to theologically meaningful associations. What is under consideration here is Jesus' redemptive descent from heaven to earth and the ascent back to heaven: the Creator God comes from heaven to his creation as creature in order to re-create that creation by descending into the tomb through the cross, rising from the dead to bring in the new creation, and forty days later ascending back to heaven to be enthroned at the right hand of the Father—and *our humanity is enthroned with him*. Luke has called this both an “exodus” (“departure” [9:31; ἔξοδος]) and a “being taken up” (9:51; ἀναλήμψεως). Thus, the far country is heaven, whence Jesus came, whither he will return, and whence he will come again. He receives his kingdom when his entire work of redemption is complete, i.e., his incarnation, birth, life and ministry, passion, death, resurrection, and ascension. Yet the kingdom is also a present reality in that it cannot be separated from Jesus, who is already bringing in that kingdom through his teaching and miracles and by his journey to Jerusalem, the city of his destiny. The final verse of this section (19:28) alludes to the fact that Jesus' going to his death in Jerusalem is an *ascent*, for the evangelist records that Jesus is “going up [ἀναβαίνων] into Jerusalem.” (CC p. 731-732)

to receive for himself a kingdom. A rather unusual procedure, but the Herods did just that when they went to Rome to be appointed rulers over the Jews. Similarly, Jesus was soon to depart and in the future is to return as King. During his absence, his servants are entrusted with their master's affairs (for a similar parable see Mt 25:14–30). (CSB)

RETURN – ὑποστρέψαι—Although this word seems out of place at this point, the entire parable is dependent on the return of the king, who will require his servants to give an account. (CC p. 726)

19:13 *ten minas*. One talent equaled 60 minas (see Mt 25:15) and a mina equaled 100 drachmas, each drachma being worth about a day's wages (see note on 15:8). Thus the total amount was valued at between two and three years' average wages, and a tenth would be about three months' wages. This was small, however, compared with the amounts mentioned in the parable recorded in Matthew. Here all ten are given the same amount. (CSB)

μνᾶς—A “mina” was an OT measure of weight consisting of fifty shekels (Ezek 45:12), used for gold and silver (1 Ki 10:17; Ezra 2:69; Neh 7:71–72). It was “a sixtieth of a talent or about one hundred drachmas, i.e., about three months' wages” (Stein, *Luke*, 473). The Hebrew מִנָּה is transliterated in the Greek and often translated as “pound,” since archaeological evidence indicates that a mina probably weighed about one and a half or two English pounds. Even though

a mina is a much smaller sum than the five talents in Mt 25:15 (which represent a sizable fortune), three months' wages is still a considerable sum of money. (CC p. 726)

Engage in business. The servants are being tested to prepare them for greater responsibilities when the nobleman returns. (TLSB)

The nobleman entrusts to each of ten slaves a mina with which to “do business” while he is gone (19:13). The nobleman is *first and foremost a giver of gifts*. In most readings of the parable, these slaves are followers of the nobleman. But within Luke's narrative, we may be more specific: the ten slaves represent the Twelve and seventy (-two), whom Jesus has already commissioned and sent (Luke 9 and 10). It was *during Jesus' ministry* that they were already given stewardship over the gifts of the kingdom as they were commissioned to preach the kingdom of God and to heal (9:2; 10:9–12). Jesus has instructed them on their responsibility as “stewards of the mysteries” (e.g., 12:35–48; 16:1–13), and he makes the Twelve stewards of that kingdom who judge the twelve tribes of Israel (22:28–30). And so *already now* during his ministry the Twelve and the seventy (-two) have been given the “mina” that Jesus will entrust to them fully when he ascends into heaven. He makes them stewards of the gifts associated with his flesh: his miracles, his table fellowship, and his teaching.

Jesus' ascension and his bestowal of gifts are also linked in Eph. 4:8–16. J. Fitzmyer, *Luke X–XXIV*, 1232, supports this perspective indirectly when he says that “Christian disciples are being taught that they have been entrusted with the ‘secrets of the kingdom,’ which are depicted as gracious bounties bestowed on them, and for which they may expect a reckoning depending on how responsibly they have trafficked with this God-given heritage.” (CC p. 732)

These gifts are given partially during his ministry and fully on Pentecost after he has ascended to heaven. (CC p. 732)

19:14 *hated*. The same hostility of those who rejected Jesus, placing Him on the cross. (TLSB)

sent a delegation. Such an incident had occurred over 30 years earlier in the case of Archelaus (Josephus, *Wars*, 2.6.1; *Antiquities*, 17.9.3), as well as in a number of other instances. This aspect of the story may have been included to warn the Jews against rejecting Jesus as King. (CSB)

Since the kingdom is an ongoing reality wherever Jesus is, already during his ministry there is opposition to this kingdom when enemies struggle against him and reject his kingdom. No doubt the hearer will think of the Pharisees and scribes who have continually opposed Jesus' teaching, taken offense at his table fellowship, and rejected his miracles. They are not able to see that the kingdom has already come in Jesus: “You hypocrites, the face of the earth and of the heaven you know how to examine, but how is it you do not know to examine this critical time?” (12:56). Being unable to interpret the time, they reject the kingdom that Jesus brings. This rejection will reach its climax as soon as Jesus enters Jerusalem, where he will be treated shamefully, humiliated, and put to death on the cross.

Cf. J. Nolland, *Luke 18:35–24:53*, 918: “Here the opposition to Jesus, perhaps especially that which culminates in his death, is in view. In the larger Lukan picture the journey is a journey through death and to God (see Acts 2:33–36), and the return is the anticipated coming of the Son of Man (see Luke 21:27–28).” (CC p. 733)

The implied rejection of Jesus by the Jewish religious establishment, in 19:14 and the corresponding reaction of the nobleman to his enemies in 19:27 are unique to Luke since they are absent in the parable of the talents in Matthew (25:14–30) and the brief parallel in Mk 13:34. The major question at this point in Luke is this: How shall one receive the kingship of Jesus as he is about to ascend his throne in Jerusalem? (CC pp. 732-733)

19:15 *received the kingdom*. Rejection by his enemies did not prevent the nobleman from receiving the kingship. (TLSB)

might know – γνοῖ—This is an ingressive aorist, “come to know.” Probably a large part of the reason they did not want him to be king is that they did not want to be held accountable—to him or to anyone. (CC p. 726)

In this section of the parable there is a call for the slaves to give an account of their stewardship of the mina. While stewardship is an important theme, it is secondary to the theme of Jesus’ kingship. Jesus suggests this with his introduction to this part of the parable: the nobleman returned, *having received his kingship*. Everything that follows must be seen in terms of the nobleman’s acquiring his kingdom and his return to ascertain and respond to what took place while he was gone. The nobleman’s return refers to Jesus’ parousia, when he will return to judge the living and the dead. When he does, he will summon his “stewards of the mysteries” to account for their stewardship of preaching the kingdom, their table fellowship, and their miracles of healing and cleansing through their administration of the Gospel in the Word and in the Sacraments. (CC p. 733)

He inquires as to their faithful use of his gifts. (TLSB)

19:16 *your mina has made*. What Jesus gives, rather than the servant’s skill, produces the increase. Luther: “[Jesus] wants nothing to be offered but the gift which was received; nothing is to be taught except the word of God; nothing is to be done except what God works in us.... We are stewards not of our own riches, but of the manifold grace of God” (AE 44:379). (TLSB)

19:17 *been faithful in a very little* – ὅτι ἐν ἐλαχίστῳ πιστὸς ἐγένου—There is an echo here from 16:10, which follows the parable of the unrighteous steward: “The one who is faithful [πιστός] in a very little [ἐλαχίστῳ] is also faithful [πιστός] in much, and the one who is unrighteous in a very little [ἐλαχίστῳ] is also unrighteous in much.” (CC p. 726)

The story here is straightforward: the mina given to the first servant earned ten minas more, and so his reward is authority over ten towns (19:15–17). The mina given to the second servant made five, and so his reward is five towns (19:18–19). Note that the two servants do not claim to have earned the additional money themselves. Rather, each says, “*Your mina* earned/has made ...” (19:16, 18). It is the gifts of the kingdom—Word and Sacrament—that produce the increase, not the servants. (CC p. 733)

He proved himself faithful in the king’s service, so the reward is great service, proportional to his success. (TLSB)

19:18 Though there are differences in what the servants accomplish, what the king requires is faithfulness. (TLSB)

19:20 Three servants who are rewarded may represent the responses of all 10 (v 13). (TLSB)

laid away in a handkerchief. Luther: “Whoever teaches the Word of God correctly ... does not lay the Word down in his napkin, as a lazy slave does.... He keeps it in use” (AE 28:321). (TLSB)

19:21 *severe.* Strict, exacting. The charge, however, was wrong, because the king was generous to the other servants (vv 17, 19). (TLSB)

reap...not sow – ἀρῆεις ὁ οὐκ ἔθηκας—This could be an agricultural proverb that refers to “putting grain down” on the threshing floor and then “taking it up” after it has been sifted. But this could also be a banking proverb so that banking and agriculture are combined in this accusation against the king. L. T. Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke*, 291, suggests that, in contrast to the reaping and sowing imagery at the end of the verse, Luke resorts here to banking imagery of “withdrawing/depositing.” In either case, Johnson is right to conclude that both are proverbial and that the servant therefore accuses the king of being “so ‘hard’ that he ignores conventional piety in his quest for power and possessions” (p. 291). Also I. H. Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, 707. (CC p. 726)

19:22 *with your own words.* Luther: “By excusing himself he accuses himself” (AE 1:274). (TLSB)

You knew that I was a man – The master did not admit to the statement of the servant, but repeated it in a question. If this was the opinion of the servant, he should have acted accordingly. (CSB)

19:23 *money in the bank* – ἐπὶ τράπεζαν—The literal meaning is “on a table,” referring to the table of the money changers, here translated “in a bank.” (CC p. 726)

In contrast, the “other” servant was afraid of the nobleman and his fear paralyzed him. He hid his king’s mina in a handkerchief and didn’t bother to invest it (19:20–23). The denouement of the parable is a surprise. The nobleman says to the crowd that has gathered to witness this accounting that the “other” servant who did nothing with his mina must give it to the one who gained ten. Even the crowds find this to be unfair, as the narrative notes parenthetically, “Lord, he has ten minas” (19:25, omitted in some manuscripts). But this simply provides Jesus with an opportunity for a saying that is already familiar to the hearer: “I say to you that to everyone who has, more will be given, but from the one who does not have, even what he has will be taken away” (19:26; cf. 8:18). This logion brings this section of the parable to a close. But what does it teach? (CC pp. 733-734)

If this section of the parable refers *exclusively* to post-parousia rewards, we are dealing here with treasure in heaven. However, there are not many clues in the gospel itself on how we are to understand rewards in heaven, especially when they are pictured to us here in political terms, i.e., authority over towns. But in the narrative there are clear indicators of rewards *now* for the disciples because of their faithful stewardship of the mysteries. After all, the seventy (-two) were sent from house to house, *but they were also sent from town to town* (10:10–12). As is true of houses, so also some towns will receive their preaching of the kingdom of God (10:11) and their healing sacraments, but others will reject them. The disciples are not to rejoice that they have power over demons, serpents, scorpions, and enemies (10:17–19), but rather, that their names are written in the heavens (10:20). What Jesus expected of the seventy (-two) is the same thing the nobleman expected of his slaves to whom he entrusted his minas: faithfulness, especially faithful administration of the kingdom’s gifts.

D. Moessner, *Lord of the Banquet*, 204–5, considers the issue to be faithfulness that depends on the proper view of Jesus’ kingship: “When he returns, Jesus pointedly warns, will he find that all the stewards have been faithful (vv. 15–26)? The disciples and the crowds as a whole thus reflect the thinking of the Pharisees in 17:20–21 who miss the Kingdom of God in their midst while awaiting the glorious triumph of this Kingdom in Jerusalem.” (CC p. 734)

Thus the logion on faithfulness: those who are faithful with the gifts will be given greater authority over the mysteries, but those who are not faithful will have the gifts taken away and added to those who are faithful.

This “other” slave is not punished as is the one in the parable of the talents in Matthew, where he is sent into “outer darkness” where “men will weep and gnash their teeth” (25:30). Neither does he suffer the fate of the nobleman’s enemies in Lk 19:27. He is similar to the man in 1 Cor 3:15 whose work proves worthless, but who nevertheless is still saved by grace. (CC p. 734)

Already now, the disciples are given a glimpse of how their stewardship of the mysteries will be multiplied when they inherit Jesus’ kingdom at Pentecost, as he will promise at his final Passover (22:28–30). Therefore, the parable is not only Christological, concerning Jesus’ whole plan of salvation as a departure out of this world and return with royal authority, but is also sacramental in that he teaches those who would be apostles and ministers about the need to be faithful in the stewardship of the sacramental gifts he will bestow on the church at Pentecost. (CC p. 734)

Tables of money changers. This procedure would have taken little effort, had little risk, and would have given a decent return. (TLSB)

19:24 *those who stood by.* Represents the attendants of the heavenly King, namely, the angels. (TLSB)

19:26 *I tell you.* A principle to answer v 25. Be faithful with whatever amount is given or face the loss of all, even the little, you have. (TLSB)

more will be given ... what he has will be taken away. See 8:18; 17:33; Mt 13:12. Those who seek spiritual gain in the gospel, for themselves and others, will become richer, and those who neglect or squander what is given them will become impoverished, losing even what they have. (CSB)

παντὶ τῷ ἔχοντι δοθήσεται, ἀπὸ δὲ τοῦ μὴ ἔχοντος καὶ ὃ ἔχει ἀρθήσεται—A similar pronouncement is spoken by Jesus in 8:18: “For he who has [ἔχη], it will be given [δοθήσεται] to him; and he who has not [μὴ ἔχη], even what he thinks he has, it will be taken away [ἀρθήσεται] from him.” The major difference is the insertion there of “even what he thinks he has.” (CC p. 727)

19:27 *those enemies of mine ... slaughter them.* Perhaps a reference to Jerusalem’s destruction in A.D. 70. The punishment of those who rebelled and actively opposed the king (v. 14) was much more severe than that of the negligent servant. (CSB)

Ignoring the third servant, Jesus speaks of those who continued to reject Him and oppose the preaching of His Word. (TLSB)

During the time that the slaves were to be faithfully doing business with their minas, the opponents of the king have continued in their enmity. So shall it be, through the time of the church, until the scene envisioned here, at the parousia. It may seem difficult to hear Jesus pronounce such harsh words, but the hearer should not be surprised. Jesus has already told the seventy (-two) what will happen to those cities that reject the preaching of the kingdom and its accompanying miracles. It will be better for Sodom, Tyre, and Sidon than for those cities that reject Jesus' disciples (10:12, 14)! Sodom is an example of God's eschatological judgment in the OT, and now here Jesus is referring to the final judgment at his second coming. A foretaste of that judgment will come with the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. (CC pp. 734-735)

J. Nolland, *Luke 18:35–24:53*, 917, in speaking about the slaughter of the nobleman's enemies, notes that the slaughter has its counterpart in OT victory scenes (e.g., Ex 14:30; 1 Sam 15:33): "In the Lukan use, this will be a picture of eschatological judgment, but since, for Luke, the destruction of Jerusalem is already the first installment of that judgment (see at 17:31 and esp. at chap. 21), the quasi-military imagery here is appropriately to be linked with what is anticipated in chap. 21. The link with chap. 21 is strengthened by the presence in this section of 19:41–44." R. Stein, *Luke*, 474, notes: "Luke and his readers would have interpreted this picture part of the parable as referring to the reality of the events of A.D. 70." (CC p. 735)

slaughter them before me. The final judgment that ends all rebellion against the king. (TLSB)

Although they may live as irresponsibly and faithlessly as they please while the king is away to receive his kingship, those who hate him and reject his kingdom *will be slaughtered* in the final judgment. (CC pp. 734-735)

19:11–27 Our returning King will abolish all opposition to His kingdom and will honor those who faithfully served Him. Never take God's Word for granted, hoarding the gifts you have received. Christ calls you to share His Word faithfully, and He is ever generous and merciful toward you. His gifts work effectively in your life, and, through you, in the lives of others. • Grant, O generous Lord, that we may always remain faithful in our stewardship of Your gifts. Amen. (TLSB)

The Triumphal Entry

28 And when he had said these things, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. **29** When he drew near to Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount that is called Olivet, he sent two of the disciples, **30** saying, "Go into the village in front of you, where on entering you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever yet sat. Untie it and bring it here. **31** If anyone asks you, 'Why are you untying it?' you shall say this: 'The Lord has need of it.'" **32** So those who were sent went away and found it just as he had told them. **33** And as they were untying the colt, its owners said to them, "Why are you untying the colt?" **34** And they said, "The Lord has need of it." **35** And they brought it to Jesus, and throwing their cloaks on the colt, they set Jesus on it. **36** And as he rode along, they spread their cloaks on the road. **37** As he was drawing near—already on the way down the Mount of Olives—the whole multitude of his disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen, **38** saying, "Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!" **39** And some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, rebuke your disciples." **40** He answered, "I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out."

Now occurs another great shift in the Lukan narrative, as the evangelist records, step by step, Jesus' entrance into Jerusalem. Since the turning point at 9:51, Luke's narrative has pointed toward this moment, when Jesus arrives in the city of his destiny. After having taught in Jericho (19:11–27), Jesus will have traveled from Jericho to Bethany on the Friday before Palm Sunday, an uphill walk of about seventeen miles. He then will have spent the Sabbath there, raising Lazarus from the dead and joining the table fellowship of Mary and Martha. None of this is recorded in Luke's gospel but is clearly described in John 11 (see comments at Lk 13:31–35). For Luke, Jericho marks the end of Jesus' teaching outside Jerusalem, and his entrance into the city is the beginning of the end of his earthly pilgrimage. (CC p. 742)

Luke's account of the Great Week, as the early Christians called Holy Week, begins with a series of incidents that set the stage for the climactic events of Jesus' passion, death, and resurrection. The hearer has been given a preview of what will happen in this Great Week in the previous parable of the minas (19:11–28): a man of high birth journeys to receive kingship and a kingdom. The first stage of Jesus' "departure," or (literally) "exodus" (9:31), involves Jesus' entrance, lament, cleansing, and teaching (19:29–48). This narrative has an almost liturgical rhythm: psalmody to cover Jesus' movement into the city (19:29–40), a call to repentance that is composed of the Lord's tears and his violent cleansing of the temple (19:41–46), and teaching in the Holy Place of God's presence (19:47–48). Tempting as it is to suggest that this structure is programmatic for a future liturgical pattern, the evangelist has a different agenda in mind as he reports this series of loosely related scenes. (CC p. 742)

L. T. Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke*, 301, notes: "By ordering the materials the way he has, Luke enables Jesus' entrance of the city, cleansing of the Temple, and occupation of it to take place in one uninterrupted sequence." The sequence is roughly that of Matthew and Mark, but with differences: Matthew places the reaction of the Pharisees later, and both Matthew and Mark place the weeping over Jerusalem elsewhere but incorporate the cursing of the fig tree right before the cleansing of the temple. (CC p. 742)

19:28–44 The Triumphal Entry occurred on Sunday of Passion Week. See charts on "The Life of Christ", and "Passion Week". (CSB)

The first part of this momentous shift in the narrative is governed by the Lukan word "to draw near" (ἐγγίζω). This word will occur three times in the passage, and in each case it will begin a new subsection (19:29, 37, 41; cf. 18:35, 40). As this narrative progresses, Jesus comes closer and closer to the city and to the center of God's holiness, the temple. The OT speaks of degrees or levels of holiness in connection with the presence of God in the tabernacle and temple. The degree of holiness increased the closer one approached to the dwelling place of God, who was enthroned on the cherubim over the ark of the covenant. (E.g., 1 Sam 4:4; 2 Sam 6:2; 2 Ki 19:15; Is 37:16; Pss 80:2; 99:1; 1 Chr 13:6) Unclean persons and things were to remain outside the camp or city, because the holy God was in the midst of his people. (E.g., Deut 23:14 [MT 23:15]; Is 12:6; 29:23; Hos 11:9) The tabernacle and later the temple had three parts, each with an increasing degree of holiness: the outer porch (like the narthex of a church); the Holy Place (like the nave); and the Holy of Holies (like the chancel). The degrees of holiness limited the persons who could enter. The Herodian temple that stood in Jerusalem in Jesus' day restricted Gentiles to the outermost courtyard. Jewish women could enter the closer "women's court." Only Jewish men could enter the "court of Israel" that surrounded the temple proper. Entrance into the temple itself was limited to those who were properly called and sanctified for service there, and at the appropriate times, as Luke describes in some detail regarding the priest Zechariah (Lk 1:5–25). (CC p. 743)

Luke uses this frame of reference to create drama in his narrative. Jesus draws near to Bethphage and Bethany, which are right outside the city (19:29); then he draws near to the descent from the Mount of Olives, where the city of Jerusalem comes into view (19:37); and finally he draws near to the city itself and weeps over it (19:41). In fact, Luke does not record that Jesus entered the city; he moves from Jesus approaching the city (19:41) directly to his entering the temple (19:45). The three uses of ἐγγίζω, “to draw near,” prepare the hearer for Jesus’ immediate entrance into the temple (19:45). They lead to dividing this first part of the narrative into three distinct units: “Preparations for Jesus’ Entrance into Jerusalem” (19:29–36); “The Response to Jesus’ Entrance” (19:37–40); and “The Response of Jesus to Jerusalem” (19:41–44). All three sections are related to Jesus’ impending entrance into the place of God’s holy presence: the temple. (CC p. 743)

19:28 *had said* – καὶ εἰπὼν ταῦτα—The referent of “these things” is Jesus’ dialog with Zacchaeus (19:1–10) and the parable of the minas (19:11–27). This transitional verse shows how intimately connected the parable is with Jesus’ triumphant entrance into Jerusalem (19:29–48). J. Nolland, *Luke 18:35–24:53*, 917, notes “the paralleling of ἀκουόντων ... ταῦτα, ‘hearing these things,’ [19:11] with εἰπὼν ταῦτα, ‘having said these things.’ ” (CC p. 727)

Lk 19:28 is the final travel notice, the conclusion of the journey narrative, the counterpart of 19:11, and the conclusion of this parable. It puts Jesus’ journey to Jerusalem at center stage. The hearer is alerted *one more time* to pay attention to what is about to transpire in the holy city of Jesus’ destiny. The hearer’s response to the events that take place there will be significant for his eternal salvation. It is a matter of eternal life or death! (CC p. 735)

Jesus travels as a king going to His coronation (cf v 11). (TLSB)

He went on ahead. Perhaps drawing away from the crowds who attended Him at Jericho. The road to Jerusalem is very steep. (TLSB)

up to Jerusalem – ἀναβαίνων εἰς Ἱερουσόλυμα—One always ascends to Jerusalem because of its elevation; see textual note on 19:11. But at this particular point in the narrative, this comment has profound theological ramifications. It indicates that the lofty goal of Jesus’ journey is to be lifted up on the cross (9:51). (Cf. Jn 3:14; 8:28; 12:32, 34) That goal is now quite near. Jesus will, on the fortieth day after his resurrection, continue his ascent to his Father in heaven. (CC p. 727)

19:29 *Bethphage.* A village near the road going from Jericho to Jerusalem. (CSB)

Village on the Mount of Olives c 1 mi from the Jerusalem temple. (TLSB)

Bethany. Another village about two miles southeast of Jerusalem (Jn 11:18), and the home of Mary, Martha and Lazarus. (CSB)

Village on the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives, c 2 mi from Jerusalem. (TLSB)

Βηθανία[v]—The importance of Jesus’ movement within Palestine comes to an end for Luke as Jesus draws near to/arrives at Jerusalem. At this moment, Luke provides the hearer with a geographical frame, for the gospel will end with Jesus’ ascension in Bethany (24:50). Bethany lies two miles east of Jerusalem. (CC p. 740)

Olivet. A ridge a little more than a mile long, separated from Jerusalem by the Kidron Valley—to the east of the city. (CSB)

τὸ ὄρος τὸ καλούμενον Ἐλαιῶν—This mountain is referred to by name in Zech 14:4. R. Stein, *Luke*, 478, describes Jesus' movement in this section: "The Mount of Olives lies directly east of Jerusalem [and is] 2,660 feet above sea level. To reach Jerusalem one would proceed west down the Mount of Olives, through the Kidron Valley, and into the temple area through the eastern gate, later called the Golden Gate." (CC p. 740)

two of his disciples. Not named here or in the parallel passages (Mt 21:1; Mk 11:1; cf. Jn 12:14). (CSB)

19:30 Jesus intentionally sought to fulfill Zec 9:9. (TLSB)

you will find. Jesus may have made pre-arrangements, or, more likely, used His divine knowledge to give direction.(TLSB)

Animals that had not been used were esp appropriate for holy purposes (cf Nu 19:2; 1Sm 6:7).

village. Probably Bethphage. (CSB)

colt. In other accounts a donkey colt (Jn 12:15) is specified and the mother of the colt (Mt 21:7) with him. Luke uses a Greek word that the Septuagint frequently employed to translate the Hebrew word for "donkey." Jesus chooses to enter Jerusalem this time mounted on a donkey to claim publicly that he was the chosen Son of David to sit on David's throne (1Ki 1:33, 44), the one of whom the prophets had spoken (Zec 9:9). (CSB)

which no one has ever ridden. One that had not been put to secular use (Nu 19:2; 1Sa 6:7). (CSB)

Animals that had not been used were esp appropriate for holy purposes (cf Nu 19:2; 1Sm 6:7). (TLSB)

Both the colt that had never been ridden and the tomb where no one had been laid are set apart for the holy purposes of a holy person. (CC p. 744)

untie it – That action, through the "sent ones" (19:32 cf. "apostles"), may remind the hearer of Jesus' entire ministry of release. Through his minister Jesus releases those bound by sin. (CC p. 744)

19:31 *The Lord.* Either God or, more likely, Jesus himself, here claiming his own unique status as Israel's Lord. (CSB)

The owners either knew Jesus or knew of Him. (TLSB)

19:32 *were sent...found* – Luke is fond of extended scenes of preparation, and the hearer cannot help but note that Jesus' preparations for his entrance into Jerusalem parallel his preparations for the last Passover he will celebrate with his disciples at the beginning of the passion narrative (22:1–13). The way in which Jesus sends (19:29; ἀπέστειλεν) his two apostles (19:32; ἀπεσταλμένοι) shows his omniscience and the control he will now exert over the events that are about to transpire. God's plan of salvation is quickly moving toward completion—a plan that is

inexorable and will take its ordained course as Jesus draws closer and closer to Jerusalem. The evangelist highlights this point by shaping his narrative in such a way that first Jesus tells the disciples what they are to do and what they should expect when they are questioned about their actions (19:29–31), and then the events transpire *exactly* as Jesus had predicted (19:32–34). This not only reinforces the themes but also alerts the hearer to an important eschatological aspect of these preparations, which has to do with the colt. (CC pp. 743-744)

J. Nolland, *Luke 18:35–24:53*, 922, notes a curious reason why the disciples may have been alerted to a significance of this moment:

If Jesus, who for all his ministry had walked to his destinations, had made a fuss about getting a donkey to ride the last couple of miles into Jerusalem, at a time when he had been speaking in a way that had caused his disciples to believe that his ministry was headed for some kind of crisis or denouement, then with, or perhaps even without, reference to Zech 9:9, there might be good reason to take this as some kind of prophetic symbolic action designed to assert a fundamental orientation of his ministry. (CC p. 744)

19:33–34 Just as Jesus had spoken, so it happened. (TLSB)

19:33 *untying the colt* – There is a special focus here on the colt, which had never been ridden. In the middle of this narrative Luke focuses the hearers’ attention on the colt (19:30). The description contains two main verbs, “you will find” (εὐρήσετε) and “bring” (ἀγάγετε), two references to the colt (πῶλον, “colt,” and αὐτόν, “it”) and two participles, “tied up” (δεδεμένον) and “loosing” (λύσαντες). Luke will close his Jerusalem narrative with a similar reference to “a tomb hewn out of rock where there was not yet anyone lying” (23:53). Both the colt that had never been ridden and the tomb where no one had been laid are set apart for the holy purposes of a holy person (cf. Num 19:2; Deut 21:3; 1 Sam 6:7). Jesus is a king, and he must now receive royal privileges, for as the Son of God he is now the locale for God’s holy presence. He must enter the city as a king, for the Lord is now coming to his temple (Mal 3:1). The refrain in both parts of this section repeats the reason for the colt: “Because the Lord of it has need” (Lk 19:31; 19:34). In both the prediction section and the narrative section, the *loosing of the colt* is at the center. This is the key point of the preparations: to find a colt, *loose* it, and bring it to Jesus. That action, through the “sent ones” (19:32; cf. “apostles”), may remind the hearer of Jesus’ entire ministry of release (see comments on 4:18). Through his ministers Jesus releases those bound by sin. (CC p. 744)

19:35–36 Jesus enters royally, but not as a military hero. (TLSB)

19:36 *spread their cloaks* – ἡπεστρώσαντες τὰ ἱμάτια αὐτῶν – This imperfect captures the continuous movement of Jesus and his entourage as they journey from the Mount of Olives to the temple. (CC p. 740)

ὑπεστρώσαντες τὰ ἱμάτια αὐτῶν—This imperfect captures the continuous movement of Jesus and his entourage as they journey from the Mount of Olives to the temple. (CC p. 740)

But the hearer still asks: Why the colt? The astute student of the OT knows from the prophecies that when the Messiah enters the city, he will do so upon a colt that no one has ridden. There is a clear echo of the promise of Jacob to the house of Judah in Gen 49:11: “Binding his foal to the vine and his donkey’s colt to the choice vine, he washes his garments in wine and his vesture in the blood of grapes.” The “wine” and “blood of grapes” suggest the imminent outpouring of Jesus’ own blood. In this verse in the LXX πῶλον (“colt”) occurs twice. Furthermore, this colt represents both the royalty of the rider and, *at the same time*, his humility. This understanding

comes from Zech 9:9, a prophecy that contains in itself a reference to the prophecy of Genesis. Yet between the messianic passage in Genesis and Zechariah's prophecy (and the fulfillment here), there is considerable tension—the tension between a king and a humble servant—a tension Jesus embraces in himself and will now demonstrate in his actions in Jerusalem, where he is crowned as king on the cross, the focus of his humiliation and shame. (CC p. 745)

Nolland, *Luke 18:35–24:53*, 928, captures the sense of this tension:

There is a dramatic contrast between the royal figure of Gen 49:11–12, who in the best traditions of royal excess and self-indulgence, tethers his own beast to the vine in order to satiate himself on the richness of wine and milk, and the figure (no less royal) in Luke of one who must borrow a donkey in order to stage his royal entry into Jerusalem, and who makes his entry with clear awareness of coming rejection and execution. (CC p. 745)

When great moments of action arrive in the narrative, Luke typically tells them simply and directly. The preparations of Jesus bear fruit as the colt is brought to him, garments are thrown over it, and Jesus' disciples seat him on it. As Jesus journeys into the city, the disciples spread garments on the road before him. (CC p. 745)

This recalls the royal entrance of Jehu as king (2 Ki 9:13 in the LXX): “And when they heard it, they hastened and took every man his garment and put it under him on the top of the stairs and blew with the trumpet and said, ‘Jehu is king.’” Perhaps Luke omits mention of the palm branches to discourage any political or nationalistic interpretation of Jesus' triumphant entrance. Cf. L. T. Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke*, 297; R. Stein, *Luke*, 479; and C. Talbert, *Reading Luke*, 179. (CC p. 745)

Jesus enters the city as a king. The royal acclamation is not the fulfillment of public sentiment, but of OT prophecy. The catechetical road (ὁδός) to Jerusalem, “the city of the great King” (Mt 5:35), is now complete. The king comes to receive his kingship (Lk 19:11–28) by means of the cross. (CC p. 745)

19:37 *Mount of Olives*. The mount named in the prophecy of the Lord's coming (Zec 14:4). (TLSB)

multitude of his disciples – ἄπαν τὸ πλῆθος τῶν μαθητῶν—L. T. Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke*, 297, notes: “Luke has in the course of Jesus' journey created the impression of growth, beginning in 8:1–3 with a small band of followers, and ending here with a ‘multitude of disciples.’” J. Nolland, *Luke 18:35–24:53*, 926, notes: “The ‘multitude’ of the disciples will also represent symbolically the whole fruit of Jesus' disciple-making activity.” (CC p. 740)

began to rejoice. The praise increases at the crest of the mount as Jerusalem comes into view. (TLSB)

all the mighty works. The raising of Lazarus and the healing of blind Bartimaeus were recent examples, but included also would be the works recorded in John on various occasions in Jerusalem, as well as the whole of his ministry in Galilee (cf. Mt 21:14; Jn 12:17). (CSB)

Esp the healing of the blind man (18:35–43) and the raising of Lazarus (Jn 11). (TLSB)

After his narration of Jesus' royal but humble entrance, Luke sets aside an entire section for the two-fold response to his arrival in the holy city. The picture here is vivid. Jesus now overlooks the city from the summit of the Mount of Olives, one of the hills on the east that overlooks the

temple area. As he comes into view of the temple, he receives accolades from “all the multitude of the disciples” (19:37; ἅπαν τὸ πλῆθος τῶν μαθητῶν), suggesting that the Twelve are joined by the seventy (-two) and many others who have joined Jesus’ entourage as he made his way to Jerusalem for the Passover. The throng is not just called “a crowd” or “people.” Luke focuses on the *disciples* who praise God and rejoice over the miracles Jesus has done. It is as though Jesus is surrounded by a host of catechumens who are about to receive their mystagogical catechesis! (CC pp. 745-746)

“Mystagogical catechesis” refers to a method found in the early church in the fourth century A.D. In this pedagogical method, catechumens were instructed in the doctrines of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper. However, the actual rites of Baptism and the Supper were not explained to them until *after* they were baptized and received the Supper for the first time. The reason for this was so that the catechumens would be able to relate the instruction to the rites they had just experienced, rather than to experiences they could only try to imagine. The instruction about the rites lasted for eight days following Baptism and First Communion. (CC p. 746)

Here in Luke, the disciples have received much teaching, but they have not understood it, nor will they until after they witness the death and resurrection of Jesus and he opens their eyes and minds (24:27, 31–32, 35, 45). See further the section “Catechumens” in the introduction in *Luke 1:1–9:50*. This commentary does not necessarily advocate the mystagogical method of catechesis but does wish to recognize its historical existence and the reason for its practice, as well as its relevance for understanding how Jesus instructed his disciples. (CC p. 746)

There is also no mention here of praise and rejoicing for his teaching—only for his miracles. Luke intentionally accents the disciples’ focus on Jesus’ miracles, another irony for the hearer since there have only been six miracles during Jesus’ extended journey to Jerusalem in Luke’s gospel. (I.e., Lk 10:17–20; 11:14–23; 13:10–17; 14:1–6; 17:11–19; 18:35–43) These disciples might say the right things, but the evangelist wants us to know that they do not yet *believe* the right things. This raises the expectation of the hearer that their sense of Jesus’ kingship does not grasp the humility implied by Jesus in his fulfillment of Zech 9:9, nor do they discern the full significance of their own citation of Ps 118:26 at this moment in salvation history.

19:38 Many from Jerusalem, hearing of His approach, met Jesus. They sang the words used to greet pilgrims entering Jerusalem. Yet, they welcomed Jesus as the messianic King. (TLSB)

blessed is – Luke includes no “hosanna” but does report “Blessed the Coming One... in the name of the Lord!” (CC p. 747)

Both Matthew and Mark frame their hymns with “Hosanna” at the beginning and end. John only begins with “Hosanna,” while Luke omits it entirely. Mark moves from the lesser to the greater, from “Hosanna” to “Hosanna in the highest!” Matthew makes a theological statement by beginning with a messianic reference to the Son of David and concludes like Mark with a liturgical acclamation of salvation “in the highest [heavens]!” Mark emphasizes first the King (“the Coming One”) and then the kingdom (“the coming kingdom”), whereas Matthew highlights that “the Coming One” is the Son of David, and John stresses that “the Coming One” is “the King of Israel.” (CC p. 747)

Luke’s report is different. He includes no “Hosanna” but does report “Blessed the Coming One ... in the name of the Lord!” from Ps 118:26. He places “the King” in apposition to “the Coming One” (as does John, with the expanded “King of Israel”) and concludes with the final phrase from

Ps 118:26a: “in the name of the Lord!” For Luke, when the King enters Jerusalem, he enters to receive the kingdom promised him by his Father (Lk 22:28–30). (CC p. 747)

Before Jesus entered Jerusalem, he had prophesied that the people would acclaim him, “Blessed the Coming One in the name of the Lord” (see comments at 13:31–35). That all four of the evangelists quote this entire line from Ps 118:26 is significant. The three synoptic gospels will also quote from it in the parable of the workers in the vineyard. (John lacks that parable.) This parable will appear shortly as Jesus’ final preview of what will take place in Jerusalem: “The stone that the builders rejected, this has become the head of the corner” (Mt 21:42; Mk 12:10; Lk 20:17, all quoting Ps 118:22; cf. Acts 4:11). Thus, through Psalm 118, all the evangelists announce that Jesus is the Messiah as he enters Jerusalem, and then later on, by means of this same psalm, all the synoptic gospels announce that the Messiah must be rejected before he receives his honor. Here is another hint, in fulfillment of the OT, that the order of the kingdom is suffering before glory. (CC p. 747)

Luke’s final two phrases are unique, though Matthew and Mark both include “in the highest” too. Luke reports words that echo the angelic hymn of Lk 2:14, emphasizing his themes of peace and glory by placing them in the middle of a chiasmic structure with “heaven” and “in the highest” as the frame. At Jesus’ birth and at the beginning of the Great Week, the evangelist records from angelic messengers and from human ones, respectively, that the heavens are filled with glory. The incarnation and “exodus” (9:31) of the Messiah, i.e., the entire divine program of redemption through the Son, bring glory to the highest heaven. (CC p. 747)

But the great mystery to the hearer concerns *peace*: at Jesus’ birth, there is peace *on earth*; as he enters into Jerusalem for his passion and resurrection, there is peace *in heaven*. Thus *earth and heaven* are joined together in peace through the incarnation and atonement of Christ (see comments at 2:1–20). Jesus’ disciples announce to Jerusalem that, as the Great Week begins, there already exists peace between God and humanity through the Lord who now comes to his temple. This is a foretaste of the peace of the atonement, a proleptic announcement of the peace whose source is Christ’s death and resurrection. (CC pp. 747-748)

Peace in heaven. God is reconciled to us in Christ (Rm 5:1). (TLSB)

19:39 *some of the Pharisees* – ἱερεῖς τῶν Φαρισαίων—Luke makes it very obvious that the Pharisees will not be mentioned *by name* once Jesus enters Jerusalem, but the discerning hearer will note that they will be referred to as the “scribes” (19:47) or the “rulers” (24:20). This is the first time they have been mentioned as Jesus’ audience since 17:20, but a Pharisee does appear in his parable in 18:9–14. On the Pharisees in Luke’s narrative, see the excursus “The Opponents of Jesus in Luke.” (CC p. 740)

Teacher. In Lk, Jesus’ opponents often used this title for Him (7:40; 20:21, 28, 39). (TLSB)

Disciples are praising and acclaiming, but others present are merely observing. The opposition of the Pharisees outside Jerusalem comes to an end in their response to Jesus as he enters the city. The last word from the Pharisees in Luke’s gospel is heard in 19:39: “Teacher [διδάσκαλε], rebuke your disciples!” This final opposition to Jesus by the Pharisees is the result of the disciples’ assigning to Jesus the messianic titles ὁ ἐρχόμενος, “the Coming One,” and ὁ βασιλεύς, “the King,” followed by ἐν ὀνόματι κυρίου, “in the name of the Lord,” in 19:38. Only Luke includes this Pharisaic response to accent his theme of rejection. The Pharisees reject in Jesus the fulfillment of the messianic promises of the OT; it is the very rejection Jesus experienced in 4:16–30. So as Jesus enters Jerusalem, the divided reception he has received throughout the gospel

continues: some receive him and others reject him. This should comfort his disciples when they experience both acceptance and rejection in Acts, just as they did when Jesus sent out the Twelve (Lk 9:1–6) and the seventy (-two) (10:1–24). (CC p. 748)

19:40 The rhetorical reply challenged the Pharisees’ silence. Even nature yearns for the coming salvation of the world (Rm 8:19–22). (TLSB)

I tell you – σιωπήσουσιν—The future indicative can replace the subjunctive in conditions “denoting that which may be the outcome of the present situation in certain circumstances” (BDF § 363). Here the future indicative with *ἐάν*, followed by another future indicative, forms a conditional sentence referring to such a future event. This is good Greek but an unusual construction, hence it is rare in the NT (cf. Acts 8:31; 2 Cor 10:8; Rev 2:22), and in every occurrence the textual tradition attests the subjunctive form also. (See BDF, §§ 363, 373 [2]. See also E. Burton, *Moods and Tenses*, §§ 246, 254, on *εἰ* or *ἐάν* with the future indicative.) (CC p. 740)

the very stones would cry out – But Jesus tells the Pharisees that if his followers would be prevented from announcing the arrival of the Messiah to the city, then even inanimate objects such as stones would announce it for them.

L. T. Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke*, 298, says this about stones:

This is the first of a series of sayings in which “stones” (*lithoi*) will figure prominently (19:44; 20:17, 18; 21:5–6; 24:2; cf. Acts 4:11). The reader hears echoes of the saying in 3:8, that God could raise up children to Abraham “from these stones.” And the present statement will find eloquent shading in the prediction in 19:44 that Jerusalem’s enemies will not “leave stone upon a stone” within her. The point of the saying here is that Jesus *is* king, and no silencing of the disciples can deflect that fact. (CC p. 10)

As the hearer may remember from the words of John the Baptist, stones were a metaphor for Gentiles, so here Jesus is warning the religious establishment that if they continue to reject him and prevent others from receiving him (cf. 11:52), then God will cause the Gentiles to gladly accept the mission of announcing his presence (see comments at 3:1–20). The very creation’s worship of God is a subject of the psalms (e.g., Psalms 96, 97, and 98), and one that Jesus acknowledges here in his rebuke of the Pharisees. (CC p. 748)

19:28–40 Jesus fulfills OT prophecy and is acclaimed the messianic King. Take joy in the reign of your Savior, who answers prayers with wonder and grants abiding peace. • “O Lord, how shall I meet You, How welcome You aright? Your people long to greet You, My hope, my heart’s delight!” Amen. (LSB 334:1) (TLSB)

Jesus Weeps over Jerusalem

41 And when he drew near and saw the city, he wept over it, 42 saying, “Would that you, even you, had known this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. 43 For the days will come upon you, when your enemies will set up a barricade around you and surround you and hem you in on every side 44 and tear you down to the ground, you and your children within you. And they will not leave one stone upon another in you, because you did not know the time of your visitation.”

19:41 *Jerusalem...wept over* – Now that both Jesus’ supporters and his opponents have responded to his royal yet humble entrance into Jerusalem, Jesus speaks to the city of his destiny. Luke draws us ever closer to the city; just before entering the city and the temple, Jesus pauses to weep over the city (as Jeremiah did [Jer 9:1; 13:17; 14:17; Lamentations]). “It is finally the sympathy of the suffering prophet, of Deuteronomy’s Moses, of Jeremiah, Isaiah, and Hosea, caught up in the rage, anguish, frustration, and sorrow of God for Israel that constitutes the pathos of the story.” Only Luke records this scene, and it brings together in Jesus’ final approach to the city all the themes that Luke has developed in this narrative and in the gospel itself. Jesus weeps because he knows of the rejection and destruction that await this beloved city of God. And as Jesus is led away to the cross he will say to the daughters of Jerusalem, “Do not weep over me; but over you yourselves weep and over your children” (23:28). Tears for Jerusalem and for Jerusalem’s Peacemaker frame Luke’s Jerusalem narrative. But here, Jesus also chastises Jerusalem for not knowing or believing in the things that make for peace. (CC pp. 748-749)

L. T. Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke*, 301, comments on the literary character of this lament:

Luke however has Jesus utter his lament over the city before entering it (19:41–44). This lament provides an authoritative commentary (by Jesus himself) on the significance of his arrival in the city, and a reminder of important literary themes: Jesus’ arrival is the visitation of God that offers peace; the rejection of the Prophet will lead to destruction; this first rejection is one that is carried out in ignorance (Acts 3:17). We are reminded of the parable about the king who “sued for peace” because he recognized that he was being attacked by a superior force (14:31); Jerusalem lacks this recognition, and so faces destruction. (CC p. 749)

Jesus weeps only here and when Lazarus died. Opposite the rejoicing crowd, Jesus wept for the city because He saw its coming destruction. (TLSB)

19:42 *even had you known* – εἰ ἔγνων ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ταύτῃ καὶ σὺ τὰ πρὸς εἰρήνην—There is no apodosis or main clause here, and Jesus seems to break off the sentence after the protasis (“If ...”) without finishing it. This grammatical feature is called “aposiopesis,” and in Greek literature it is often caused by strong emotion (A. T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research* [Nashville: Broadman, 1934] 1203; BDF§ 482). Here the emotion is the desire of Jesus for the people’s repentance and salvation—a desire that will not be fulfilled. Jesus’ weeping and this broken-off sentence show his profound anguish as he is about to enter the city he loves in order to die for all, even those who will reject him. (CC pp. 740-741)

ἔγνων—This word and its derivatives are Lukan synonyms for faith. See comments at the prologue (1:1–4) and the Emmaus story (24:13–35). (CC p. 741)

ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ταύτῃ—The referent here is to this time when Jesus enters Jerusalem for his passion, death, resurrection, and ascension. (CC p. 741)

Depicts strong emotion. Jesus knew how short-lived the celebration will be. He would be dead before the end of the week. (TLSB)

hidden from your eyes – ἐκρύβη—This is another theological passive: “but now they are hidden from your eyes” by God. The hearer will be reminded of this when the eyes of the Emmaus disciples are closed by God so that they do not recognize Jesus (24:16; cf. also 9:45; 18:34) but then are opened by God so that they do recognize Jesus (24:31). (CC p. 741)

If you, O Jerusalem, had only known (εἰ ἔγνων), but it was hidden from your eyes (19:42), so you must be destroyed (19:43–44a), because you did not know (19:44b; οὐκ ἔγνων). Jerusalem is guilty of not recognizing that “the things that have to do with peace” (19:42; τὰ πρὸς εἰρήνην) are completely tied to God’s visitation in his Son, Jesus (19:44b; τὸν καιρὸν τῆς ἐπισκοπῆς σου). Jesus’ entrance was God’s gracious “visitation” (see textual note on 19:44). How ironic that Jerusalem, which contains “peace” (*salem*) within its name, does not recognize “Peace” when he comes. Even the blind beggar knew who Jesus was (18:35–43). But Jesus had already predicted in his discourse with the Pharisees that “you do not know [οὐκ οἶδατε] to examine this critical time” (τὸν καιρὸν; 12:56). (CC pp. 751-752)

19:43 *your enemies will build an embankment.* See 21:20; fulfilled when the Romans took Jerusalem in A.D. 70, using an embankment to besiege the city. The description is reminiscent of OT predictions (Isa 29:3; 37:33; Eze 4:1–3). (CSB)

Jerusalem’s lack of faith will lead to her destruction, and Jesus prophetically describes with detailed accuracy how utterly devastating the city’s future destruction will be at the hands of Titus. He clearly knows how Hellenistic sieges are staged. (Hellenistic vocabulary describes the event.) And he is not shy about describing the horror of what will take place, with pregnant women being thrown down in the encompassing devastation. (CC p. 750)

Events related to God’s gracious visitation in His Son. (TLSB)

19:43 *the days will come.* Jerusalem would be utterly destroyed by Rome (AD 70). (TLSB)

19:44 *they will not leave one stone upon another* – But his final phrase, “they will not leave a stone upon a stone within you,” recalls a whole nexus of passages: if the disciples were silent, even the stones would cry out at Jesus’ entrance into the city (19:40); he, Jesus, the stone the builders rejected in the crucifixion, becomes head of the corner (20:17); and in the actual destruction of Jerusalem, the continuing rejection of this stone could cause some to be crushed by the stones of *the temple* that fall upon them (cf. 20:18: “Everyone who falls on that stone will be dashed to pieces; on whomsoever it falls, it will crush him”). And as the hearer knows, the *new temple* is none other than Jesus himself, *the stone that the builders rejected*. Jesus makes this explicit in Jn 2:19–22, where he is again speaking of the temple’s destruction—but the primary reference is to his own death and resurrection. (CC p. 750)

In this connection the book of Lamentations is a significant parallel. There the prophet Jeremiah lamented the destruction of Jerusalem and the first temple in 587 B.C. for the same reasons Jesus implies: ignoring God’s call through his prophets to repent and seek the Lord, who alone supplies true peace. Apparently there was enough similarity between the ministries of Jesus and Jeremiah that some considered Jesus to be a new Jeremiah (Mt 16:14). Jeremiah’s lament, while somber and anguished, has many expressions of hope for restoration, “because of Yahweh’s great love ... for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning” (Lam 3:22–23). That hope was partially realized after seventy years of exile when the temple and Jerusalem were rebuilt. However, that hope was fully realized in Christ’s own resurrection. With this in mind, the early church selected Lamentations to be read on Good Friday as a lament over the death of Christ, who embodied all Israel and Jerusalem in particular. (CC p. 750)

the time of your visitation. God came to the Jews in the person of Jesus the Messiah, but they failed to recognize him and rejected him (see Jn 1:10–11; cf. Lk 20:13–16). (CSB)

They ignored or misunderstood God’s gracious visit in His Son. (TLSB)

τῆς ἐπισκοπῆς σου—“Visitation” is an important Lukan word for the incarnation. For the faithful, this “visitation” is a Gospel event, but it will lead to Jerusalem’s destruction. In Luke-Acts the noun occurs only here and at Acts 1:20, where it refers to the office of bishop or overseer (ἐπίσκοπος) vacated by Judas. The verb ἐπισκέπτομαι, “of God’s gracious visitation in bringing salvation” (BAGD 3), occurs in Lk 1:68, 78; 7:16—see comments there—and Acts 6:3; 7:23; 15:14, 36. The OT often speaks of God “visiting” his people, which is a Gospel event for the faithful, but Law for the apostate. See ָקַדַּח in a Gospel sense in Gen 21:1; 50:24–25; Ex 3:16; 4:31; 13:19; Jer 15:15; Ps 106:4 and in a Law sense in Ex 32:34; 34:7; Lev 18:25; Is 26:21; 27:1; Jer 5:9, 29; Ps 89:32); Lam 4:22. (CC p. 741)

19:41–44 Jesus weeps over Jerusalem’s present blindness and future fate. His heart still breaks for those who have not yet received His Word. Pray for your family, friends, and neighbors, that they would receive Jesus, who came in compassion to seek and save the lost. • “Ride on, ride on in majesty! In lowly pomp ride on to die. Bow Thy meek head to mortal pain, Then take, O God, Thy pow’r and reign.” Amen. (LSB 441:5). (TLSB)

Jesus Cleanses the Temple

45 And he entered the temple and began to drive out those who sold, 46 saying to them, “It is written, ‘My house shall be a house of prayer,’ but you have made it a den of robbers.” 47 And he was teaching daily in the temple. The chief priests and the scribes and the principal men of the people were seeking to destroy him, 48 but they did not find anything they could do, for all the people were hanging on his words.

19:45 Mark (11:11–17) makes clear that this cleansing occurred the day after the Triumphal Entry, i.e., on Monday of Passion Week. (CSB)

the temple area. The outer court (of the Gentiles), where animals for sacrifice were sold at unfair prices. John records a cleansing of the temple at the beginning of Jesus’ ministry (Jn 2:13–25), but the Synoptics (see Mt 21:12–13; Mk 11:15–17) speak only of a cleansing at the close of Jesus’ ministry. (CSB)

Jesus came to the temple “like a refiner’s fire” (Mal 3:2). (TLSB)

When Jesus enters Jerusalem in 19:45, Luke portrays him as immediately entering the temple for his final teachings in Luke 20–21. (Cf. Lk 19:47–48; 20:1; 20:9–18, 20–26, 41–44; 21:37–38) The movement here may seem abrupt to the hearer, after the prolonged anticipation of Jesus drawing nearer and nearer to the city, but how appropriate for Luke not to record Jesus *entering the city*, but to picture him immediately *entering the temple*. The temple, which dominated the infancy narrative, will now figure prominently as the place for Jesus’ final teachings. Once again, the Lord returns to his temple (εἰς τὸ ἱερόν), as he did for his presentation and his mother’s purification (2:21–40) and at age twelve for Passover (2:41–52). (CC pp. 750–751)

19:46 *my house...den of robbers* – While the Lord comes to his temple in Mal 3:1, the cleansing echoes Mal 3:2: “But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears?” Jesus’ first act in the Great Week is to cleanse the temple to make it fit for his teaching. The temple will become the locale for his teaching during these final days, so it must be cleansed so that the holiness of Jesus may dwell in a Holy Place. Once again, God’s incarnational presence in Christ comes to God’s “incarnational” presence in the temple. “The verb for ‘cast out’ is

ekballo [ἐκβάλλειν τοὺς πωλοῶντας], which is used in exorcisms, (Lk 9:40, 49; 11:14, 15, 18, 19, 20; 13:32) suggesting that the money changers are roughly equivalent to unclean spirits who profane the holy place.” The temple must return to its original purpose—a place of petitionary prayer for someone like the tax collector in the parable (18:9–14). The outside court of the Gentiles was a place for legitimate commerce in the exchange of money for the necessary sacrificial elements such as wine, oil, animals, etc. But it had become a place for nontemple business, a so-called “cave of robbers” (19:45). Jesus must cleanse it from thieves to make room for the one who will be crucified with thieves. In quoting Is 56:7, Luke leaves off “for all the nations” (cf. Mk 11:7, which includes it). For Luke, the locale for the presence of God has already shifted from the temple to the person of Jesus. This temple built with human hands is a place of prayer *for Israel*. But the place where *all nations* will gather is in the body of Christ, *the new Israel*, where Jesus will be present when his kingdom is proclaimed in the Breaking of the Bread. The OT clearly prophesied that the cleansing of the temple was a sign that the end was at hand (Zech 14:21; Mal 3:1 ff.; Ezekiel 40–48, which is the background of the description of the new Jerusalem in Revelation 21–22). (CC p. 751)

The pilgrims were being cheated; the exchange rates were tantamount to robbery. Cf Mt 21:12–13. (TLSB)

19:47 The temple, prominent in chs 1–2, is the scene of Jesus’ final messages (19:47–21:38). (TLSB)

teaching daily – ἦν διδάσκων τὸ καθ’ ἡμέραν ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ—This is the first of repeated references to Jesus’ teaching in the temple. (Lk 20:1, 28, 39; 22:53; 23:5) Luke’s periphrastic construction suggests the ongoing nature of Jesus’ teaching during this week of his passion. The article τὸ might suggest that Jesus taught as part of the regular daily worship in the temple. (CC p. 741)

Luke records that Jesus is teaching in the temple every day. No miracles occur during his temple teaching because the great miracle of the resurrection is at hand. Jesus now takes possession of the temple for his final teachings. (CC p. 751)

chief priests. See 3:2; 22:52; 23:4; 24:20. They were part of the Sanhedrin, the ruling Jewish council (see note on Mk 14:55). (CSB)

The high priest, ex high priests, and other temple officers, mostly Sadducees. (TLSB)

scribes. Laymen, heads of some of the ancient families. These three groups formed the supreme Jewish Council (also called the Sanhedrin). (TLSB)

οἱ δὲ ἀρχιερεῖς καὶ οἱ γραμματεῖς ... καὶ οἱ πρῶτοι τοῦ λαοῦ—This is a reference to the Sanhedrin. The “foremost of the people” are the leading laymen. They are placed at the end of the sentence in the Greek word order to show that they are separate from the chief priests and scribes. On the chief priests and scribes, see the excursus “The Opponents of Jesus in Luke,” where it is argued that the chief priests represent the Sadducees in Jerusalem and the scribes the Pharisees outside Jerusalem on the Sanhedrin. (CC p. 741)

seeking to destroy him. See 20:19–20 (cf. Jn 7:1; 11:53–57). (CSB)

ἐζήτουν—This imperfect indicates that the Sanhedrin’s attempts to capture and kill Jesus were ongoing during Holy Week. (CC p. 741)

The Jerusalem religious establishment (20:1: οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς καὶ οἱ γραμματεῖς σὺν τοῖς πρεσβυτέροις, “the chief priests and the scribes with the elders”) understood that these teachings were aimed at them (20:19–20). This is why the evangelist reports *at the very beginning of Jesus’ Jerusalem teaching* that “the chief priests and the scribes were seeking to destroy him, and [so were] the foremost of the people” (19:47). Jesus is put to death by the chief priests, his antagonists in Jerusalem, and the Pharisees (the rulers in 24:20), his antagonists outside Jerusalem. The temple is now a place of conflict, and “in Luke’s writing, the rejection of Jesus by the chief priests, their refusal to recognize him as lord of the temple, and their refusal to grant him his rightful control of the temple led to his death.” Thus, Jesus’ teachings will be the basis for his rejection by the Sanhedrin (19:47; 20:19), but the people (ὁ λαός as Israel) continue to respond to him with favor (19:48; 21:38). Throughout Luke’s narrative, the “people” represent the faithful remnant of Israel who are positively inclined toward Jesus and his teaching. They remain faithful to him throughout most of the passion narrative, (Lk 20:1, 6, 9, 19, 26, 45; 21:38; 22:2; 23:27) except on two occasions: they turn against him with the religious establishment (23:13) and then stand by passively as Jesus is mocked (23:35). (CC pp. 751-752)

19:48 *not find* – εὑρίσκον—Another imperfect that balances the Sanhedrin’s seeking. Their ongoing efforts to kill him were repeatedly unsuccessful. (CC p. 741)

people were hanging of his words – ἀκούων—On ἀκούω as a technical term for catechumens, see comments at 5:1 and at the Sermon on the Plain (6:27, 47, 49). (CC p. 742)

Proof of the gripping power of Jesus’ teaching and the anticipation that something great was happening. (TLSB)

The evangelist brings this section to an end by telling the hearer that the people are hearers of the Word, i.e., they are “listening” (ἀκούων) as faithful catechumens should. This encourages us to become attentive hearers of Jesus’ teaching in the temple. The teaching in the temple will conclude at 21:38 with a similar reference: “And all the people [ὁ λαός] were rising early [to go] toward him in the temple in order to hear [ἀκούειν] him.” (CC p. 752)

19:45–48 Jesus goes directly to the temple to cleanse it for proper services: the hearing of God’s Word. Today, beware of worldly distractions from the Lord’s Word. Hang on to it, for Jesus cleanses our hearts by faith in His Holy Word. • Cleanse us, O Savior, from everything that would separate us from Your Holy Word and Your gracious reign. Amen. (TLSB)