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Session 4 - Luke 19 Part 2

Bible Passages

Luke 19:28-48

Brief Notes

The journey Jesus began back in 9:51 now reaches its climactic conclusion. Jesus is shown to be in complete control of events. Strongly contrasting emotions within the crowds are revealed, as well as some strongly contrasting emotions within Jesus.

19:28-34

It is not made clear whether Jesus had made prior arrangements or not, we needn't speculate, the clear impression is that Jesus is in complete control of what is happening, he's not about to be taken by surprise as events unfold, indeed he knows all that is about to occur. Choosing to ride for the last mile into Jerusalem, having walked all the way so far, was clearly a deliberate public statement, declaring unequivocally that he was Zion's long awaited Messiah and King. Up to now he had tended to draw back from such unambiguous public claims, but now he chooses to publicly announce himself as the Messiah. The background to his action is Zechariah 9:9. Here is the king who brings salvation (both themes have been present earlier in the chapter).

19:35-40

For the disciples, this was a moment they have been waiting for, and they are quick to acclaim him king, which they signify both by their actions, throwing their cloaks on the colt and before him on the road (cf. 1Kings 1:33,34; 2 Kings 9:13), and by their words. After all they had seen, the miracles Jesus had performed, they now break out in loud praise, declaring to all their conviction that Jesus is the long promised king.

The Pharisees though think such hysteria should be stopped and call on Jesus to silence them. One might almost hear the echo of v.14 – “We don’t want this man to be our king!” But even if they don’t recognize their king, Jerusalem’s very stones will. The stones have more spiritual insight than the Jews’ religious elite.

19:41-44

Cheers and sneers now give way to tears. The word “wept” implies loud and deep lamentation, wailing. Presumably the crowds are still all around him as he does so. The king who comes to proclaim peace (Zech 9:10) has been clearly announced, but they didn’t see it. And the consequences would be appalling, judgment that would befall Jerusalem in AD70.

19:45-48

If Jesus’ tears reveal one side of his attitude to the judgment that hangs over Jerusalem, this episode reveals another – the divine indignation that requires it. If Zech.9:9 is the unstated but clear background to vv.28-44, then Mal.3:1 would seem to be the unstated background to these verses – “See, I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before me. Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come, says the LORD Almighty. But who can endure the day of his coming? Who can stand when he appears? For he will be like a refiner’s fire or a launderer’s soap.” It is a little surprising that Luke doesn’t include in the quotation from Isaiah 56:7 that the Temple was to be a house of prayer “*for all nations*”, given that that is a theme in Luke’s Gospel, so the fact that this trading was happening in the Court of the Gentiles is probably not the target of Jesus’ anger. More simply it seems his concern is that instead of it being a place of prayer, a place to draw near to God, it has become a place where they fleece one another. It is an example of sin – not honouring God, and consequently, because self-interest is their chief concern, not loving their neighbour either.

The last two verses show the division that is happening: the clearer Jesus’ claims, the sharper the divide. And in contrast to Jesus’ mastery of all that is happening seen at the start of this section, his enemies are shown not to be in control.

Discussion Questions

From vv.28-40

- Though this is the culmination of a journey begun back in 9:51, how does the previous parable shape our understanding of this entrance into Jerusalem?
- What is the impression given in vv.28-34?
- Why should Jesus choose to make the last mile of his journey in this manner?
- Look up Zech.9:9. What is Jesus, unambiguously and publicly, choosing to announce?
- How do the disciples respond?
- Why do the Pharisees want Jesus to rebuke his disciples?
 - How is that the attitude of many today?
 - How is that reflective of the attitude of the subjects in the previous parable?

From vv.41-44

- This is not what we are expecting. Why does Jesus weep?
- Why is such judgment inevitable?
- What do we learn about how Jesus feels about those who do not submit to him today?

From vv.45-48

- Why should he have gone straight to the Temple?
- Alongside his profound grief at the consequence of sin, what do we learn here about his attitude to the fact of sin?
 - What exactly is he indignant about?
 - How is the sin he found in the Temple courts typical of our attitude and behaviour?
- What do we see in the final two verses?
 - What has heightened their opposition to Jesus?
 - How can we see something similar in people today?
- What do we learn from this passage about who Jesus is and what he's like? So what?

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