

Lesson 34 –the end of the period between 10/26/29 AD and 12/19/29 AD which included the Feast of Dedication

As we finished Lesson 33 a man had just asked Jesus to intervene with the man's brother in the division of their inheritance. Jesus pointed out that He was not on earth to settle property disputes and He pointed out that earthly possessions did not define a man and that greed was a terrible trap. He then went on to tell the gathered crowd of thousands a parable:

Luke 12:16-21 **And he told them this parable: “The ground of a certain rich man produced a good crop. He thought to himself, ‘What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.’ “Then he said, ‘This is what I’ll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I’ll say to myself, “You have plenty of good things laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry.” “But God said to him, ‘You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?’ “This is how it will be with anyone who stores up things for himself but is not rich toward God.”**

The meaning of this parable is pretty self-evident. It applies to believers or unbelievers who live as if material things are the most important things in life. Firstly, this life is not all there is. Beyond our physical death, eternity stretches out infinitely. The title deeds to every material thing we own in this life expire with our physical death. The only thing we can carry out of this life is our spiritual inheritance. Secondly, the testimony of countless lives proves that material things cannot give lasting happiness. They are often the cause of unhappiness.

Luke 12:22-23 **Then Jesus said to his disciples: “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; or about your body, what you will wear. Life is more than food, and the body more than clothes.**

Jesus addressed this to his disciples. Because of their relationship with God, they did not have to worry about the provision of material things. This is also what Jesus had taught over a year earlier in Galilee in the “Sermon on the Mount” (Matthew 6:25-34).

Luke 12:24 **Consider the ravens: They do not sow or reap, they have no storeroom or barn; yet God feeds them. And how much more valuable you are than birds!**

God has taken care to take provide food for the simplest of His creatures. He certainly has the power to provide for His children.

Luke 12:25-26 **Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life? Since you cannot do this very little thing, why do you worry about the rest?**

God has already written down the days of our life in His book. He will provide what we need to fulfill His plan for our life. When He is ready to take us home, He will.

Luke 12:27-28 **“Consider how the lilies grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today, and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, how much more will he clothe you, O you of little faith!**”

God has dressed the lilies in physical beauty. He has clothed us with the righteousness of Christ which is infinitely more splendid than the lily or the finery of Solomon. Furthermore, we will wear Christ’s righteousness forever.

Luke 12:29-31 **And do not set your heart on what you will eat or drink; do not worry about it. For the pagan world runs after all such things, and your Father knows that you need them. But seek his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well.¹**

God will give us food and drink which is far more sustaining than physical food and drink. We will drink of Christ’s death and eat of His life, and it will sustain us forever. He will also provide us with whatever we need to eat and drink physically for whatever time He assigns to us on earth.

Luke 12:32 **“Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom.**”

We become heirs of and part of the kingdom of God from the moment of our saving faith in Christ. That kingdom will stretch into the infinitely long future. We are heirs with Christ. It is noteworthy that although Jesus was addressing a large crowd of thousands (verse 1), He knew that those who were His disciples (verse 22) only made up a “little flock.”

Luke 12:33a **Sell your possessions and give to the poor.**

The only thing we truly possess is the real wealth of God’s salvation and favor. We should give up our slavery to material things to give our real wealth to the “poor.” Those that were “poor” were all those who are separated from Him by unbelief.

Luke 12:33b **Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will not be exhausted, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys.**

In this way you gain rewards at the Judgment Seat of Christ. Those rewards will be eternal.

Luke 12:34 **For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.**

¹ This was also a theme touched on in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 6:26:34).

The more you give of yourself to God's will, the more you will see God. The more you see God, the more you will want to give.

Luke 12:35 **“Be dressed ready for service and keep your lamps burning,**

We should be dressed in the righteousness of Christ. We should always keep the light of God's truth burning in our hearts.

Luke 12:36 **like men waiting for their master to return from a wedding banquet, so that when he comes and knocks they can immediately open the door for him.**

If we do those things we will be ready for Christ when we meet Him. That meeting may be at our death or on His return.

Luke 12:37 **It will be good for those servants whose master finds them watching when he comes. I tell you the truth, he will dress himself to serve, will have them recline at the table and will come and wait on them.**

Those ready servants will gain extra rewards upon our meeting Him.

Luke 12:38 **It will be good for those servants whose master finds them ready, even if he comes in the second or third watch of the night.**

The second or third watch would have been between 9 PM and 3 AM. ² I think this is just to warn that Christ's return might be later than some of His disciples in the 1st Century AD expected. It also warned that it might be at a time of maximum darkness.

Luke 12:39 **But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have let his house be broken into.**

This tied into an analogy that Jesus often used and had used just days earlier:

Luke 11:21-23 “When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own house, his possessions are safe. But when someone stronger attacks and overpowers him, he takes away the armor in which the man trusted and divides up the spoils.”

The owner of the house was Satan. The thief who was going to take away what he owned was Jesus Christ. This spoke of the fact that it had not been revealed when Jesus would return to

² “Both the Romans and the Jews divided the night into four watches - 6 p.m. to 9 p.m.; 9 p.m. to midnight; midnight to 3 a.m.; and 3 a.m. to 6 a.m.” William Barclay, *The Gospel of Matthew* (Edinburgh: The Saint Andrew Press, 1963), II, p. 380.

take the world from Satan. He warned us that it might be later than we thought. It is already almost 2000 years later than some of those then listening anticipated.

Luke 12:40 You also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.”

In the forthcoming age, the disciples should live their lives in constant expectation of being face to face with Christ. For most of us that will come in the hour of our death. For some it will come at the Rapture.

Luke 12:41 Peter asked, “Lord, are you telling this parable to us, or to everyone?”

Peter looked at the large crowd around them and was confused as to whom Jesus was talking. He had been talking to His “little flock”, which were all those who had trusted in Him. That included some in the larger crowd, as well as His faithful attendants. It was not “everyone.”

Luke 12:42 The Lord answered, “Who then is the faithful and wise manager, whom the master puts in charge of his servants to give them their food allowance at the proper time?

Jesus seemingly ignored Peter’s question. Instead, He told a parable of a faithful manager. This parable challenged Peter and the other disciples with what their concern was to be. They were to be like the faithful manager. Peter was one of the eleven Apostles who would be primarily charged with teaching the new Church during the first six years after Pentecost.

Luke 12:43-44 It will be good for that servant whom the master finds doing so when he returns. I tell you the truth, he will put him in charge of all his possessions.

Peter should be like the faithful manager who pleased his master. The faithful manager was rewarded with even more responsibility.

Luke 12:45 But suppose the servant says to himself, ‘My master is taking a long time in coming,’ and he then begins to beat the menservants and maidservants and to eat and drink and get drunk.

Peter was to take a lesson from the example of the master and his servant. In that case the servant was faithless in the conviction that his master would be a long time in returning, Consequently, he neglected his duty.

Luke 12:46 The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he is not aware of. He will ~~cut him to pieces~~ *punish him severely* and assign him a place with the ~~unbelievers~~ *faithless*.

In the human example Jesus gave, the master did return and the faithless servant got the reward that his faithlessness deserved. The master in the example rewarded the faithless servant as one rewards a faithless servant. This does not imply that believers who fail are sent to Hell with unbelievers. We know that is not true. However, they would be punished in this life and lose the rewards in the next that they would have gotten if they had been faithful and wise.

Sadly, we have seen many instances in the history of the “organized Church” when leaders have used their positions solely to accrue to themselves great wealth and power while actually squelching the teaching to the Word of God.

The Greek word translated “cut him in pieces” is διχοτομέω {dē-kho-to-me'-ō}. According to Thayer’s Greek Lexicon it came to mean “to punish severely” although the word itself literally meant “to cut in two.” In the same way, modern English usage uses “crush” or “crucify” to mean something less than the literal meaning.

Luke 12:47 “That servant who knows his master’s will and does not get ready or does not do what his master wants will be beaten with many blows.

Here, we clearly see that being “severely punished” is only compared to a flogging with many blows.

Luke 12:48 But the one who does not know and does things deserving punishment will be beaten with few blows. From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked.

The servant who does not know what is expected and fails will be punished, but not as severely. This pointed out that there was a higher responsibility that came with knowing the truth. Peter and the other disciples had that greater responsibility.

Luke 12:49 “I have come to bring fire on the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled!

The fire that Jesus would bring will happen at His Second Advent. It was described by John the Baptist:

Luke 3:16b “He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.”

The Baptism of the Holy Spirit happened after Jesus’ First Advent. He will come with fire to judge the earth at the end of the Great Tribulation at His Second Advent as Peter himself wrote:

2 Peter 3:10-12 “But the day of the Lord will come like a thief.³ The heavens ⁴ will disappear

³ *This seems to be speaking of the end of the Tribulation, as the term “the day of the Lord” most often refers to that judgment.*

with a roar; the elements (*world system*)⁵ will be destroyed by fire (*judgment*), and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare. Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens⁶ by fire, and the elements (*world system*) will melt in the heat (*perish in the judgment*).

Luke 12:50 But I have a baptism to undergo, and how distressed I am until it is completed!

The English word “baptize” is from the Greek word βαπτίζω {bāp-tē'-dzō}. It means “to immerse so as to change the identity.” It was the word which was anciently used to describe the ceremony whereby Greek warriors dipped their new spears in blood to mark them for their use. There are at least ten types of baptism which I found mentioned in the New Testament. They are listed below. The baptism Jesus referred to here is number five on the list. It refers to the actual identification of Jesus with the sins of all mankind:

1. Ritual Baptism of John – baptism signifying repentance ((Matthew 3:11, Mark 1:4, Luke 3:3, John 1:26).
2. Ritual Baptism of Jesus by John – baptism of identifying Jesus as the Son of Man who would die for their sins (Matthew 3:13, Luke 3:21).
3. Ritual Water baptism of believers by Jesus’ disciples (John 3:22, 4:1-2, Acts 8:36-39, 10:47, 16:15,16:33. 18:8, 22:16, 1 Corinthians 1:14-16)
4. Symbolic baptism of Noah (1 Peter 3:18-22)
5. Actual Baptism of Jesus – baptism of identifying Jesus with the sins of all mankind (Luke 12:50, Mark 10:38-39)
6. Actual Baptism through Jesus with the Holy Spirit – for Believers (Matthew 3:11, Matthew 28:19, Luke 3:16, Acts 1:5).

⁴ *This is speaking of “the heavens” which consist of what we call “the atmosphere.”*

⁵ *The word here is the Greek word στοιχεῖον {stoi-khā'-on} which can also be translated “basic principles” as in Colossians 2:8 where it is used to speak of the “basic principles” of the world. In other words it is speaking of the world “system” or “worldly wisdom.” I believe that is the meaning intended here. As far as understanding it as referring to physical “elements” we should remember that the understanding of that word was quite different from what it is today in the modern age of science and chemistry where we have identified 118 separate “elements.”*

⁶ *It must be remembered that there three things identified in both the Old Testament and New Testament by the word “heavens.” They are: 1. the atmosphere around the earth, 2. the universe, and 3. the seat of God. Some have interpreted the word here to be speaking of the universe. I do not think this can be true since we know that scripture promises that the sun and the moon will never disappear (Psalm 72:5). I believe this is just speaking of the atmosphere surrounding the earth. This view seems to be confirmed by Psalms 148:3-6 which in part says of the stars “He set them in place for ever and ever.” Also, Daniel 12:3 which says the stars will shine “for ever and ever.”*

7. Actual Baptism by Jesus with Fire – for Unbelievers at the Last Judgment (Matthew 3:11, Luke 3:16)
8. Actual Baptisms into the Name of Christ (Acts 2:38, 19:5, Romans 6:3, Galatians 3:26, Ephesians 4:5, Colossians 2:12). The “one” baptism into the body of Christ (Ephesians 4:5)
9. Actual Baptism of Moses (1 Corinthians 10:2)
10. False Baptism for the Dead – false baptism (1 Corinthians 15:29)

The fact that there are multiple types of baptism is affirmed in Hebrews 6:2 which refers to “baptisms.”

Here in Luke Jesus knew that His Baptism (identification with our sins) on the Cross was coming soon and He was distressed with the thought of it. In the Garden of Gethsemane, He was described as sweating blood. However, He knew that His return in glory could not precede the shame and suffering of His death on the Cross.

Luke 12:51 Do you think I came to bring peace on earth? No, I tell you, but division.

The peace Jesus came to bring was peace with God, not peace between men. In fact, His appearance would bring division between the family of God and the people of the world.

Luke 12:52-53 From now on there will be five in one family divided against each other, three against two and two against three. They will be divided, father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law.”

Although there would be division between the people of God and the world, the persecution would come from the people of the world. In reviewing history, you should always remember that often the people who claimed to be God’s Church were actually the worst persecutors of His true Church.

This had also been prophesied in Micah 7:4b-10a regarding the Jews: “The day of your watchmen has come; the day God visits you. Now is the time of their confusion. Do not trust a neighbor; put no confidence in a friend. Even with her who lies in your embrace be careful of your words. For a son dishonors his father, a daughter rises up against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law-- a man’s enemies are the members of his own household.”

Luke 12:54-56 He said to the crowd: “When you see a cloud rising in the west, immediately you say, ‘It’s going to rain,’ and it does. And when the south wind blows, you say, ‘It’s going to be hot,’ and it is. Hypocrites!⁷ You know how to interpret the appearance of the earth and the sky. How is it that you don’t know how to interpret this present time?

⁷ *Religious Israel, the Pharisees who Jesus had spoken of at the beginning of this discourse.*

The Jews were very good at reading the weather. If the wind blew from the Mediterranean, everyone knew that the moist air would collide against the highlands of central Israel and create rainclouds. If the wind blew out of the arid and hot desert, they knew it would be cloudless and hot. The signs of the times were just as easy to read. All of Old Testament prophecy combined with the 33 years of Jesus' life and the three years of Jesus' ministry to point to the significance of that time in history. Despite this, the bulk of the Jews refused to acknowledge what had been predicted and was happening before their eyes.

Luke 12:57 “Why don't you judge for yourselves what is right?”

Jesus was telling the crowd to quit listening to the Pharisees who were distorting scripture. They should think for themselves.

Luke 12:58 As you are going with your adversary to the magistrate, try hard to be reconciled to him on the way, or he may drag you off to the judge, and the judge turn you over to the officer, and the officer throw you into prison.

As a nation, the Jews were headed for judgment. Because as a people they did not heed this warning, in just a little over forty years (as Ezekiel had prophesied) their nation and Temple would be destroyed. The nation lay wasted for nearly two thousand years.

Luke 12:59 I tell you, you will not get out until you have paid the last penny.”

Perhaps the fact that the nation of Israel has been restored in our time means that God is about ready to let the Seventieth Week of Daniel play out.⁸ That seven year “week” (the Great Tribulation) is when Israel, as a people, will pay the “last penny” by being the missionaries to the world of the whole Gospel. That had always been what the LORD had intended them to be.

The Question about Galileans who were Killed

Luke 13:1-2 Now there were some present at that time who told Jesus about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mixed with their sacrifices.

Unfortunately, there is no historical record of either incident referred to here to give us greater insight. However, we do know that the Zealots, who wanted to overthrow Roman rule, were mainly from Galilee. Perhaps the Galileans that were killed in this riot were Zealots.⁹

Luke 13:2 Jesus answered, “Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans because they suffered this way?”

⁸ *The seventieth week of Daniel 9 is the seven-year Tribulation of Revelation.*

⁹ *This event could only have taken place in Judea or Samaria because Pilate had no authority elsewhere.*

The implication of Jesus' response is that this was exactly what they did think. The Zealots were generally despised by most of Jewish society.¹⁰ This sounds like it might have been a question originally posed by agents of the Pharisees hoping to get Jesus to condemn either Pilate and the Romans or the Zealots. Either way He answered, it would have made enemies for Him.

Luke 13:3 I tell you, no! But unless you repent (*change your mind*), you too will all perish.

Jesus refused to get into politics. He stuck to the greater spiritual issue which was repentance for salvation. The word translated repent is the Greek μετανοέω {me-tä-no-e'-ō} which literally means “change your mind.”

Luke 13:4 Or those eighteen who died when the tower in Siloam fell on them—do you think they were more guilty than all the others living in Jerusalem?

Independently, Jesus brought up another recent disaster which had happened in Jerusalem. You may remember that Siloam was the large pool outside of Jerusalem to which Jesus had recently sent the blind man to wash his eyes. There was evidently a tower there which had collapsed and killed eighteen people. Remember that the Jews of that day tended to think that the bad things that happened to individuals in this world were a result of their sin. They thought that so long as they avoided certain gross personal sins they would be protected. This ignored the fact that they were all under the penalty of sin and all needed God's mercy.

Luke 13:5 I tell you, no! But unless you repent (*change your mind*), you too will all perish.”

Jesus told them that they all needed to change their minds (and believe in Him) or they would all perish. The perishing He was talking about was not physical death but eternal separation from God.

The Parable of the Fig Tree

Luke 13:6 Then he told this parable: “A man had a fig tree, planted in his vineyard, and he went to look for fruit on it, but did not find any.

This is an interesting parable which has echoes in another passage in the Gospels. It was a comment by John the Baptist warning the Jews that they needed to repent. It was earlier in Luke:

Luke 3:8-9 “Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. And do not begin to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ For I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up

¹⁰ They often made their living as outlaws and bandits.

children for Abraham. The ax is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.”

Clearly, in both places, the tree represented Israel, and the cutting down for the lack of fruit represented destruction because of a lack of repentance (change of mind).

Luke 13:7 **So he said to the man who took care of the vineyard, ‘For three years now I’ve been coming to look for fruit on this fig tree and haven’t found any. Cut it down! Why should it use up the soil?’**

In the parable, the man who own the vineyard had looked at the tree at the time of fruiting for three years and had not found any fruit. The man represented Jesus. For three Passovers ¹¹ (which was in the spring, at the time of fruiting) Jesus had looked at the tree of Israel and had not found the fruit of any significant repentance.

Luke 13:8-9 **“‘Sir,’ the man replied, ‘leave it alone for one more year, and I’ll dig around it and fertilize it. If it bears fruit next year, fine! If not, then cut it down.’”¹²**

In the parable, the tree was given one more year to give fruit before it was condemned as unfruitful. In the same way Jesus gave Israel one more Passover to bear the fruits of repentance or its time as the special people of God would come to an end.

About four months later, just after His entry into Jerusalem three days before the next Passover, Jesus signified His judgment on the repentance of the Jews by a peculiar miracle:

Mark 11:11 “Jesus entered Jerusalem and went to the temple. He looked around at everything, but since it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the Twelve. The next day as they were leaving Bethany, Jesus was hungry. Seeing in the distance a fig tree in leaf, he went to find out if it had any fruit. When he reached it, he found nothing but leaves, because it was not the season for figs. Then he said to the tree, ‘May no one ever eat fruit from you again.’”¹³

Jesus’ Healing of the Crippled Woman on the Sabbath

Luke 13:10 **On a Sabbath Jesus was teaching in one of the synagogues,**

To teach in the synagogue required an invitation to speak. Considering this was in Judea and the religious leaders were trying to engineer Jesus’ death I must wonder about the circumstances of

¹¹ *His ministry had included the Passovers of 27 AD, 28 AD, and 29 AD.*

¹² *This passage is also significant in the chronology of Christ in that it helps confirm that Jesus’ ministry lasted into the fourth year. After he came the fourth year and found no fruit he cursed the fig tree. Some have claimed the last Passover was only the third of Jesus’ ministry.*

¹³ *See also Matthew 21:17-19.*

this invitation. Since the synagogue ruler is later described as an opponent of Jesus, it seems unlikely that it was a friendly invitation. It was probably an attempt by the Jews to control the conversation. They could do that in a synagogue better than on a mountainside.

Luke 13:11 and a woman was there who had ~~been crippled by a spirit~~ a spirit of weakness for eighteen years. She was bent over and could not straighten up at all.

“A spirit of weakness” is the literal translation from the Greek. It isn’t “crippled by a spirit” as the NIV has it. The Greek word translated “weakness” is the word ἀσθένεια {ä-sthe'-nā-ä} which means weakness, illness or infirmity. The word is never associated with demon possession. Furthermore, when the woman was healed here, Jesus laid his hands on her. He did not cast out an evil spirit. The laying on of hands is also never associated with casting out demons,¹⁴ but only with the healing of illnesses (see Mark 16:17-18).

Luke 13:12-13 When Jesus saw her, he called her forward and said to her, “Woman, you are set free from your infirmity.” Then he put his hands on her, and immediately she straightened up and praised God.

Notice that Jesus called the woman forward. Since, as a member of that synagogue, she had been seen to be afflicted for eighteen years there could be no doubt as to the genuineness of her healing.

Luke 13:14 Indignant because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath, the synagogue ruler said to the people, “There are six days for work. So be healed on those days, not on the Sabbath.”

Instead of criticizing Jesus, the synagogue ruler implicitly criticized the woman who was one of the “people” of the synagogue. She had done nothing but come to the synagogue. It was Jesus who had called her forth.

Luke 13:15-16 The Lord answered him, “You hypocrites! Doesn’t each of you on the Sabbath untie his ox or donkey from the stall and lead it out to give it water? Then should not this woman, a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has kept bound ¹⁵ for eighteen long years, be set free on the Sabbath day from what bound her?”

During the life of Christ, the work of healing was never the work of Jesus Christ. It was the work of the Father. In the same way, all the Old Testament miracles of healing were always the work of the LORD. The purpose of the Sabbath was to celebrate the fact that God had done all the work. In fact, this synagogue ruler’s objection to the healing that Jesus was doing amounted

¹⁴ *Evil spirits were commanded to come out.*

¹⁵ *Illnesses can be caused by Satan without demon possession. See the case of Job who was struck with sores: Job 2:7 “So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD and afflicted Job with painful sores from the soles of his feet to the top of his head.”*

to objecting to God working. However, this argument would have gone right over the ruler's head. Instead, Jesus made another argument. The Law of Moses only gave the framework for day to day life. It had not really given any instructions for the feeding or watering of their animals. However, the interpreters of the law had decided that once the people were established in the land where their livestock were kept in pens and stalls it was permissible to lead them out to water on the Sabbath. In many desert communities the livestock were watered at a town well or spring and going without water in that hot and dry country for a day could kill or incapacitate them from heatstroke. The LORD here demonstrated the lack of mercy in Pharisaical thinking which showed more concern for materially valuable livestock than they did for the welfare of human beings.

Luke 13:17 **When he said this, all his opponents were humiliated, but the people were delighted with all the wonderful things he was doing.**

The logic of Jesus' argument struck home, even to His opponents which left them humiliated in front of the people who loved to see miracles on any day.

The Parables of the Mustard Seed and the Yeast

At this point, Jesus told another parable to teach a spiritual lesson from a physical example.

Luke 13:18-19 **Then Jesus asked, "What is the kingdom of God like? What shall I compare it to? It is like a mustard seed,¹⁶ which a man took and planted in his garden. It grew and became a tree, and the birds of the air ~~perched in~~ *sheltered under its branches.*"¹⁷**

This parable was told by Jesus on at least one other occasion during His Galileean ministry a year and a half earlier.¹⁸ We studied that in lesson 21. In the New Testament faith is compared

¹⁶ In Matthew 17:20 and Luke 17:6, the mustard seed is compared to faith.

¹⁷ The website <https://ww2.odu.edu/~lmusselm/plant/bible/mustard.php> sponsored by Old Dominion University is the source of the following excerpt:

*"There are wild mustard plants over ten feet tall near the Jordan River, and even in moderate climate a mustard plant may grow that tall, provided it gets enough sunshine. It must, moreover, be remarked that generally trees in most parts of the Holy Land do not reach a large stature. The stem of a mustard plant also becomes dry and wood-like, which gives it the aspect of a tree. Many have pointed to another problem: that this plant, or any mustard, could not support roosting birds. It seems questionable whether the Greek word *Kataskènoun* must mean this, as many have thought, partly also on the argument that *kataskènoosis* in Matthew 8:20 & par. does unquestionably mean 'nest.' But a very important point is overlooked: by the end of the summer, when the plant has reached its peak in growth, the time for building nests is long past. The word may simply mean 'rest' or 'lodge', which is the more probable as Mark 4:32 says 'under its shadow.'"*

¹⁸ Matthew 13:31-32 and Mark 4:31-32.

to a mustard seed (Matthew 17:20, Luke 17:6). I believe that is the meaning that should be taken here. Although it starts very small, it can grow very rapidly and become a wonderful shelter from the heat.

Luke 13:20-21 Again he asked, “What shall I compare the kingdom of God to? It is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into a large amount of flour until it worked all through the dough.”

Both the mustard plant and the yeast speak of small beginnings that result in major consequences. In this parable we need to understand that in scripture yeast always spoke of corruption or sin. That is why the bread in the Tabernacle and Temple which represented Christ had to be unleavened (without yeast). That is why on the day before Passover (Day of Preparation – John 19:14) all the houses had to be swept clean of leaven. The woman in this parable seems to represent the Pharisees who were kneading self-righteous legalism into the faith of Israel and corrupting the people. It was having devastating consequences. Jesus had earlier told His disciples:

Luke 12:1b “Be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.”

Luke 13:22 Then Jesus went through the towns and villages, teaching as he made his way to Jerusalem.

Jesus continued His progress through the 35 towns and villages to which He had sent His seventy disciples. I believe that the visit to Jerusalem mentioned below was Jesus’ next to last visit to Jerusalem during His ministry in the south. It was certainly the last one recorded. His next visit after that would start with His triumphal entry, and end with His being taken out to be crucified.

12/17/29 thru 12/24/29 AD
The Feast of Dedication – also known as Hanukkah

John 10:22 Then came the Feast of Dedication at Jerusalem. It was winter,

The Feast of the Dedication was “the Feast of the Renewing” (also called Hanukkah). It was instituted in 164 BC to commemorate the purging of the temple after its pollution by Antiochus Epiphanes in 167 BC. It also celebrated the rebuilding of the altar after the Syrian invaders had been driven out by Judas Maccabaeus. It lasted for eight days, beginning on the 25th of the month Chislev (about December), which is usually a period of heavy rains. It was an occasion of much rejoicing and festivity. There were three other dedications of the Temple in Jewish history:

- (1) the dedication of Solomon’s Temple (1 Kings 8:2; 2 Chronicles 5:3).
- (2) the rededication of Solomon’s Temple in the days of Hezekiah (2 Chronicles 29).

(3) the dedication of the Temple of Zerubbabel after the return from the Babylonian Captivity (Ezra 6:16).

This dedication was the only one that became a permanent Feast even though it was not instituted by the Scriptures. However, the occasion had been prophesied in Daniel 8:12-14. It is quite probable that the date of this Feast was later chosen when Christians wanted a date to celebrate Christmas.¹⁹ The Church chose the 25th day of the comparable month of the Roman calendar which was December.

John 10:23 and Jesus was in the temple area walking in Solomon's Colonnade.

Solomon's Colonnade was the massive, roofed colonnade which was built along most of the borders of the Temple Mount. It ran for at least $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile. It was where Jesus and the later Church leaders generally taught while on the Temple Mount.

John 10:24 The Jews gathered around him, saying, "How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly."

Below are some of the instances recorded in the Gospel of John where Jesus, speaking publicly, had intimated that He was the Christ to anyone who would listen:

John 4:25-26 "The woman said, 'I know that Messiah' (called Christ) 'is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us.' Then Jesus declared, 'I who speak to you am he.'"

John 6:33,35,38 "'For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.' -- Then Jesus declared, 'I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty. --- For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me.'"

John 7:28b-29 "You do not know him (*the LORD*), but I know him because I am from him and he sent me."

John 8:12 "When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, 'I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.'"

John 8:23 "But he continued, 'You are from below; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world.'"

John 8:58 "'I tell you the truth,' Jesus answered, 'before Abraham was born, I am!'"

¹⁹ *We covered this in Lesson 5 in this series.*

The subsequent actions of these Jews in this chapter (verse 31) prove that they were not really looking for a clear declaration of who He was. They were looking for an excuse to kill him. They decided they had finally gotten it during His trial as recorded in Matthew:

Matthew 26:63b-65a “The high priest said to him (*Jesus*), ‘I charge you under oath by the living God: Tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God.’ ‘Yes, it is as you say,’ Jesus replied. ‘But I say to all of you: In the future you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven.’ Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, ‘He has spoken blasphemy! Why do we need any more witnesses?’”

John 10:25-27 Jesus answered, “I did tell you, but you do not believe. The miracles I do in my Father’s name speak for me, but you do not believe because you are not my sheep. My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me.

Remember, Jesus had told them that only the sheep of the good shepherd heard His voice:

John 10:4b “His sheep follow him because they know his voice.”

John 10:28-29 I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father’s hand.

These verses are a powerful statement of the eternal security of every true believer in Jesus Christ.

John 10:30 I and the Father are one.”

This was a powerful statement affirming that Jesus Christ was God. It isn’t at all surprising that this fact is beyond our limited ability to fully comprehend the infinite and eternal God.

John 10:31-32 Again the Jews picked up stones to stone him, but Jesus said to them, “I have shown you many great miracles from the Father. For which of these do you stone me?”

Remember, Jesus was on the Temple Mount where many of the Jews were members of the establishment and His bitter opponents. These Jews were so outraged that they were more than ready to kill Jesus even though it would have been in violation of both Jewish and Roman law. It was forbidden by Roman law since only the Roman Governor possessed the authority to condemn anyone to death. It was also against Jewish Law because no one was supposed to be executed without a trial. It was also forbidden to defile the Temple with human blood.

John 10:33 “We are not stoning you for any of these,” replied the Jews, “but for blasphemy, because you, a mere man, claim to be God.”

Notice that at the beginning of this confrontation the Jews had asked “are you the Christ?” They had no immediate problem with someone who claimed to be the Messiah (Christ). They had witnessed the coming of several false messiahs over the years, and they had no immediate reaction when Jesus implied that He was the Messiah. However, they had an immediate problem with Him when he then stated that God was His Father and that He and the Father were one. They were ready to stone Him. Here Jesus appealed to the 82nd Psalm to prove that the Old Testament made it clear that the Messiah must also be the son of God.

The Appeal to the 82nd Psalm

John 10:34 Jesus answered them, “Is it not written in your Law, ‘I have said you are gods God’?”

Here Jesus quoted Psalms 82:6. The word in the original Hebrew is אֱלֹהִים {el·ō·hēm'}. It is literally “Gods,” but throughout the Old Testament it is usually translated and understood to refer to “the one God.” It is understood by Christians to refer to the tripartite nature of the LORD. Jesus undoubtedly quoted the original Hebrew text but John writing in Greek about 60 years later translated it literally as “Gods.” We should understand that John expected it to be understood in its Hebrew and Old Testament meaning.

In Psalm 82, the passage quoted, its writer Asaph was puzzling over the fact that the Psalms (Psalm 45:7 and Psalm 2) had clearly stated that the Messiah was to be God and the Son of God. Yet, late in his life David had said that Solomon was the Messiah. It had caused Asaph consternation because Solomon was obviously not God. Solomon was not even a remotely righteous man for most of his life. He had even worshipped other gods.

John 10:35-36 If he called ~~them~~ *Him* ‘gods God,’ ~~to~~ *for* whom the word of God came—and the Scripture cannot be broken-- what about the one whom the Father set apart as his very own and sent into the world? Why then do you accuse me of blasphemy because I said, ‘I am God’s Son’?

In this passage in John, Jesus was asserting that if He was the Messiah, He had to also be “the Son of God” according to the Scripture He quoted.

In answering the Jews, Jesus quoted Psalm 82 by Asaph. To understand what Jesus said, you must understand Psalm 82. Unfortunately, few seem to have taken the trouble to understand that Psalm. However, let us try.

Psalm 82 - “You will fall like every other ruler.”
Written by Asaph during Solomon’s reign.

David had proclaimed to the elders and the people that Solomon, his second son by Bathsheba, was to be the King whose kingdom was forever (i.e. the Messiah). A careful examination of the

revelations of God to David in the scripture show that this was not true. Not only do the scriptures show that God never said that Solomon would be the Messiah, but subsequent events showed that the Messiah could never have been Solomon! The Messiah and Son of God could only have been Jesus Christ! Because of David's misrepresentation, Asaph and all the believers of the whole nation of Israel were terribly disillusioned when Solomon became the very worldly man that he did. In Psalm 82 Asaph questioned God's judgment in allowing Solomon to continue in his apostasy and wickedness. He already had realized that Solomon was not the promised "son of God" but a mere man. However, the typical translation of Psalm 82 creates some problems in understanding its true meaning. I have corrected the NIV translation.

Psalm 82
A psalm of Asaph.

The Psalm was written by Asaph. It was obviously written during a period when the monarchy had declined to a state of greed, corruption, and apostasy. That could have been anywhere during the last twenty years of Solomon's reign, or during all the years of Solomon's son Rehoboam's reign when Asaph was still living.

Psalms 82:1a God presides in the great assembly;

First, we must decide what is the "great assembly" that God was described as presiding over. I think the Book of Job gives us the answer:

Job 1:6 "One day the angels came to present themselves before the LORD and Satan,²⁰ also came with them."²¹

Job 2:1 "On another day the angels came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came with them to present himself before him."

The "great assembly" is a heavenly convocation of elect angels which Satan was allowed to attend.

Psalms 82:1b he gives judgment among the "gods" from God:

The word that the NIV translates "God" in Psalms 82:1a is the identical Hebrew word that appears in Psalms 82:1b and is translated "gods." Both are the Hebrew word אֱלֹהִים {el·ō·hēm'} or Elohim. The word is in the plural form which we understand to refer to the tripartite nature of God (the Trinity). Although "Elohim" is literally "gods" it is usually (90% of the time) translated "God." When the word is translated with a small "g" as "gods" the context is usually

²⁰ The Hebrew is שָׁטָן {sä·tän'} which means "adversary."

²¹ Notice that Satan has access to the presence of God. Satan's being cast out of Heaven is pictured twice. First, in Luke 10:18 and then again in Revelation 12:9.

talking about the idols (false gods) of foreign peoples. This context gives no indication of talking about idols.

The choice of the translation of “Elohim” as “God” or “gods” seems to rest with discretion of the translator and depend on the context. However, most translators do not understand that the historical context of verse 6, was during the life of Asaph. At that time Asaph had been struggling to understand why David had led the people to believe that Solomon was the promised “Son of God.” Possibly, because of that misunderstanding, they translated verse 1 wrong. Otherwise, verse six wouldn’t make sense. Psalms 82:1b should be translated “he gives judgment from God.”²²

Although Job 1 and 2 mention God speaking in the assembly of Angels the Angels were called there, “children of God” (בְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים {beni ha elohim}) not “Gods.” The correct translation that I suggest is: “God presides in the great assembly; he gives judgment from God.” The phrase merely reinforces the common scriptural assertion that God alone is the source of all judgment. In fact, in Asaph’s Psalms 75 and 50 that same assertion is also made:

Psalms 75:2 “You say, ‘I choose the appointed time; it is I who judge uprightly.’”

Psalm 50:6 “the heavens proclaim his righteousness, for God himself is judge.”

So, if we have the right translation in place, we understand that in this time of disillusionment with Solomon and the building of temples in Israel to idols, Asaph clung to this rock of truth: “The LORD God is still the Judge who rules in Heaven.”

Psalms 82:2 “How long will you defend the unjust and show partiality to the wicked? Selah

However, given that truth Asaph still wondered why God had allowed the wicked and unjust to thrive and prosper. In this case, the words for “unjust” and “wicked” are in the plural and refer to Solomon and his government.

Psalms 82:3 Defend the cause of the weak and fatherless; maintain the rights of the poor and oppressed.

Although Solomon had started his reign showing great moderation and judgment, by the time Asaph wrote this Psalm, Solomon had enslaved the aliens in the land and conscripted the Hebrew people for heavy labor. Among other things, this was to provide for the building of a palace for himself and his thousand wives and concubines. Besides this he built temples for the

²² The Hebrew word which the NIV translates “among” is *qereb* קָרֵב {keh'-reb} (Strong’s #07130) which can be translated in the sense of: “midst, among, from among.” Here it is speaking of a decision conjointly arrived at by the Triune God.

“gods” of his pagan wives. All of this was contrary to the Law of Moses. He enriched his capital, Jerusalem, at the cost of impoverishing the rest of the country.

Psalms 82:4 “Rescue the weak and needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked.”

Asaph pleaded with the LORD to turn the injustices of Solomon’s wicked government around.

Psalms 82:5 “They know nothing, they understand nothing. They walk about in darkness; all the foundations of the earth are shaken.”

While Asaph had originally thought that the reign of Solomon was leading to an unparalleled era of justice, truth, and knowledge of the LORD, it had instead turned out to be an era of darkness and apostasy. Asaph felt as if the very foundations of what he had believed had been shaken.

Psalms 82:6 “I said thought,²³ ‘You are “gods” God; you are all sons of the Most High.’

First, the word translated “gods” by the NIV is the same word אֱלֹהִים {el·ō·hēm'} or Elohim as in verse 1. It should be translated “God.” Next, we should understand that the “you” is in the plural both times. Who is the “you”? The “you” refers to Solomon and his descendants. We can understand why Asaph had thought that Solomon was a “son of the Most High.” That had been the promise of the Davidic Covenant as David had given Asaph to understand it. Part of that Covenant is given below:

2 Samuel 7:11a-14b “The LORD declares to you that the LORD himself will establish a house for you (*David*): When your days are over and you rest with your fathers,²⁴ I will raise up your seed after you, who will come from your own body, and I will establish his kingdom. He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. **I will be his father, and he will be my son.**”

Asaph had also likely drawn the correct conclusion from both Psalms 2 and 89 below that the LORD’s Messiah and King would be the son of God:

Psalms 2:6-7 “I have installed my King on Zion,²⁵ my holy hill. I will proclaim the decree of the LORD: He said to me, ‘You are my Son; today I have become your Father.’”

Psalms 89:20-29 “I have found David my servant; with my sacred oil I have anointed him. My hand will sustain him; surely my arm will strengthen him. No enemy will subject him to tribute; no wicked man will oppress him. I will crush his foes before him and strike down his

²³ *The Hebrew word here is אָמַר {ä-mar'}, which can be translated “said” or “thought.”*

²⁴ *This is clearly not Solomon, who was appointed King before David was even dead.*

²⁵ *Zion, where Christ was crucified, not Moriah where Herod’s Temple was.*

adversaries. My faithful love will be with him, and through my name his horn will be exalted. I will set his hand over the sea, his right hand over the rivers. He will call out to me, 'You are my Father, my God, the Rock my Savior.' I will also appoint him my firstborn, the most exalted of the kings of the earth. I will maintain my love to him forever, and my covenant with him will never fail. I will establish his line forever, his throne as long as the heavens endure.”

Also, because David named his second son by Bathsheba “Solomon” against the LORD’s instructions,²⁶ Asaph would also have reasoned that Psalm 45 applied to the King Solomon, not the Prince of Peace who was yet to come (Solomon means peace). Certainly, some modern liberal theologians still think that Psalm 45 was about King Solomon. However, this Psalm is part of the Word of God and God does not lie. It clearly refers to the king as God and speaks of his being eternal. King Solomon was neither. In truth, Psalm 45 celebrates the wedding of Christ (the Prince of Peace) to His bride Israel.

For many of the same reasons, Asaph could have reasoned that Psalm 72, written “concerning Solomon” was about King Solomon, and that he was the one of whom it was written:

Psalms 72:17 “May his name endure forever; may it continue as long as the sun. All nations will be blessed through him, and they will call him blessed.”

Unfortunately, besides giving Solomon the wrong name, David had also twice publicly misrepresented the LORD’s promise regarding the promised King. In the verses below David misrepresented what the LORD had promised him. Instead, he proclaimed that his son Solomon was the fulfillment of the covenant that the LORD had made with him. See 1 Chronicles 22 and 28 below:

David speaking - 1 Chronicles 22:9-10 “But you will have a son who will be a man of peace and rest, and I will give him rest from all his enemies on every side. His name will be Solomon, and I will grant Israel peace and quiet during his reign. He is the one who will build a house for my Name. He will be my son, and I will be his father. And I will establish the throne of his kingdom over Israel forever.”

1 Chronicles 28:5-6 “Of all my (*David’s*) sons--and the LORD has given me many--he has chosen my son Solomon to sit on the throne of the kingdom of the LORD over Israel. He said to me: ‘Solomon your son is the one who will build my house and my courts, for I have chosen him to be my son, and I will be his father.’”

The problem was that the LORD had never said that His King would be David’s son Solomon. or that it would descend through his line through Solomon’s son Rehoboam. The LORD’s King would be David’s seed, Jesus Christ.

²⁶ *The LORD had told David his name should be “Jedidiah” – 2 Samuel 12:24-25.*

Psalms 82:7 **But you (Solomon) will die like mere men; you will fall like every other ruler.”**

But Asaph had his misconceptions and illusions shattered by the lives of both Solomon and his descendants. They were just like every other ruler on the face of the earth. They were not the unique son of God and King of Israel who had been promised.

Psalms 82:8 **Rise up, O God, judge the earth, for all the nations are your inheritance.**

Asaph had come to understand that the King who was the Son of God, and who would be judge²⁷ and inherit all the nations, was yet to come. He called for the arrival of that day.

The correct understanding of this Psalm allows us to understand what Jesus meant when He quoted it in John 10. There He appealed to the Pharisees who claimed to know the word of God. They should have understood what Asaph had concluded by reading Psalms 2, 89, 45, and 72. The promised King would be the “Son of God!” However, the promised Eternal King and “Son of God” was not the ones to whom the promise of God had come (David or Solomon), but “the one whom the Father set apart as his very own and sent into the world” (John 10:33) who was Jesus, David’s greater son who came, at last, a thousand years later, in the time appointed by God. Now, you can read the passage from John with understanding. (I have corrected the rendering from “gods” to “God.”)

John 10:31-36 “Again the Jews picked up stones to stone him, but Jesus said to them, ‘I have shown you many great miracles from the Father. For which of these do you stone me?’ ‘We are not stoning you for any of these,’ replied the Jews, ‘but for blasphemy, because you, a mere man, claim to be God.’ ‘Jesus answered them, ‘Is it not written in your Law, ‘I have said you are God’? If he called them ‘God,’ to whom the word of God came--and the Scripture cannot be broken-- what about the one whom the Father set apart as his very own and sent into the world? Why then do you accuse me of blasphemy because I said, ‘I am God’s Son’?

In John 10, because Jesus had spoken of God as His father, the Pharisees had attacked Him for claiming to be God. The Jews thus accused him of blasphemy worthy of stoning. Jesus pointed out that Asaph in Psalm 82 understood that the Son of the Davidic Covenant would be the Son of God. Asaph, however, originally had mistakenly thought that Solomon was that Son and Messiah. Jesus pointed out that Asaph’s conclusions about the Messiah were true, but only about the true Messiah that the Father sent. He would be the son of God. The Jews of Jesus’ day were always asking Jesus if He was the Messiah. They never asked Him if He was the Son of God. They never realized that the Messiah must be the Son of God just as Asaph had concluded.

Jesus made the same point in Matthew²⁸ about how the Scripture showed that the Messiah would be the Son of God, only there He referred to Psalm 110. I have put both passages below:

²⁷ *Luke 5:22* “Moreover, the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son.”

²⁸ *Also in Mark 12:36, and Luke 20:42*

Matthew 22:41-46 “While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, ‘What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is he?’ ‘The son of David,’ they replied. He said to them, ‘How is it then that David, speaking by the Spirit, calls him ‘Lord’? For he says, ‘The Lord said to my Lord: ‘Sit at my right hand until I put your enemies under your feet.’” If then David calls him ‘Lord,’ how can he be his son?’ No one could say a word in reply, and from that day on no one dared to ask him any more questions.”

Psalms 110:1 “The LORD says to my Lord: ‘Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.’”

The Rest of the Confrontation in the Temple

John 10:37 Do not believe me unless I do what my Father does.

Jesus challenged them to discover anything in His ministry that was contrary to the Word of God. The only thing they could challenge Him on was violating man-made traditions.

John 10:38 But if I do it, even though you do not believe me, believe the miracles, that you may know and understand that the Father is in me, and I in the Father.”

Even if they didn’t believe Jesus’ words, the miracles should have spoken for themselves that Jesus was God.

John 10:39 Again they tried to seize him, but he escaped their grasp.

Perhaps part of their difficulty was that it was the Feast of Dedication. Even in ordinary circumstances, with the large crowd of disciples around Jesus, it would have been difficult to seize Jesus. During any feast, it presented the danger of creating a riot. That would have made for very bad relations with Pilate, the Roman Governor. Of course, it is also possible that the Father had intervened in a miraculous way and made it impossible for them to see Jesus.