

AF A9 BIBLE STUDY: "Lord's Journey toward Jerusalem" Luke 13

Scripture of Lesson: Luke's Gospel 13: 22-35

1. Narrow Gate and the Judgment Day consequence

- A. **Seek to enter the narrow gate:** What is the narrow gate, why is it narrow and why must we enter through the narrow gate instead of a broad way? These are fundamental questions about the way of human salvation and yet are neglected by most people including Christian leaders. The Narrow Gate refers to the standard of Jesus Christ. You may wonder why Lord Jesus in the first century emphasized and mandated the narrow gate through His teachings, which the Jewish religious leaders perceived as drastically different from the teachings of Mosaic Law.

Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me. "If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; and from now on you know Him and have seen Him." [John 14: 6-7]

- B. **Jesus Christ is the only way of salvation:** There are many Christian leaders today who openly teach that the way of Jesus Christ is not the only way of salvation. This kind of 'open gospel' directly confronts the teaching of Jesus in the above Scripture. There are also churches and church leaders who fail to teach that the way of the cross is the way of Jesus. They eliminate 'CROSS' from the gospel and preach 'soft gospel' and 'prosperity gospel.' And then there are churches that openly teach 'works gospel' saying that you can attain to salvation through accumulated good works you do during this life. Has God modified His principles over the centuries, then?
- C. **The narrow way of Jesus Christ is the only way of winning the Lord's recognition and acceptance on the Judgment Day:** In verse 27 Lord Jesus forewarned, *But He will say, 'I tell you I do not know you, where you are from. Depart from Me, all you workers of iniquity.'* To whom would He issue such a judgment of cold rejection and refusal to acknowledge their works in life? To those who did not walk the narrow way! They will protest, *'We ate and drank in Your presence, and You taught in our streets.'* They went to churches in the name of Christ and did many good works in His name for many years. They thought their eternal salvation was secure because they maintained a semblance of Christian life, but in reality, they never knew what it was to die in self and to be transformed into the life of Jesus Christ as God's children through the Holy Spirit. If we walk in the narrow way of the cross of Jesus, our Lord will have no problem recognizing us as His own disciples on the Judgment Day.
- D. **The heavenly throng of both Jews and non-Jews:** Lord Jesus indicated that 'Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and all prophets' will be in the kingdom of God but most Jews of the first century would be thrust out, those who refused to accept Jesus as their Lord and Savior. And they will experience great sadness and remorse in the state of God's rejection [v. 13: 28]. Yet, the Lord predicted that there will sit a great throng in heaven of peoples who come from all directions, meaning Christians from all nations and peoples, together with the elect of the Jewish people [v. 13: 29-30]. Apostle Paul interpreted the prophecy of Hosea as follows:

As He says also in Hosea: "I will call them My people, who were not My people, And her beloved, who was not beloved. And it shall come to pass in the place where it was said to them, 'You are not My people,' There they shall be called sons of the living God. [Romans 9: 25-26]

These will be those who walked the narrow way of Jesus Christ including those of the OT era. They knew the Messiah in personal relationships just as we do although they did not have the same privileges of reading the whole Scripture and learning the wonderful teachings of the Lord as we do.

2. Lord's journey towards Jerusalem

- A. Historically significant events regarding Jerusalem

- 1) Jerusalem was a part of the inheritance territory allotted to the tribe of Judah. Joshua 10 famously records the miraculous day when God made the sun stand still for about a whole day while the arm of Israel destroyed the alliance of five kings including the armies of Jerusalem and four Amorite cities. Thus, Judah conquered Jerusalem, but they allowed the Jebusites to live among them. Later during the period of Judges, the tribe of Judah attacked and destroyed the city of Jerusalem.

- However, the remnant Jebusites were allowed to live among the Benjamites in their midst and it eventually became a Jebusite city.
- 2) King David, after being anointed as the successor king of Israel, conquered Jerusalem and established the City of David. Later, David brought the ark of God into a tabernacle he pitched within Jerusalem. David's desire to build a permanent dwelling place for God in the city was not granted, but the privilege was allowed to his son, Solomon. David reigned in Jerusalem for 33 years. King Solomon built the First Temple in Jerusalem.
 - 3) After the division of the kingdom into northern Israel and the southern Judah, Jerusalem remained as the capital of Judah until its defeat and occupation by the army of Babylon in 586 BC. In 538 BC, the Persian King Cyrus the Great granted the Jews of Babylon to return to Judah to rebuild the Temple, which was completed in 516 BC, during the reign of Darius the Great, 70 years after the destruction of the First Temple. Sometime after 485 BC Jerusalem was conquered and largely destroyed by a coalition of neighboring states. In about 445 BC, King Artaxerxes I of Persia issued a decree allowing the city to be rebuilt. Jerusalem resumed its role as capital of Judah and the center of Jewish worship.
 - 4) Jerusalem was later conquered by Alexander the Great, ruled by Ptolemy Epiphanes. The Jewish Maccabean revolt defeated the Macedonian control and established the Hasmonean Kingdom in 152 BC with Jerusalem as its capital. In 63 BC the Romans conquered Judea and later established a puppet regime of an Edomite king Herod. Herod expanded the Second Temple and built other large structures. During the life time of Lord Jesus a Roman prefect [governor] of Judea who represented the emperor over the Roman colony.

B. Lord Jesus wept over Jerusalem:

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, but you were not willing! See! Your house is left to you desolate; and assuredly, I say to you, you shall not see Me until the time comes when you say, 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!' [Luke 13: 34-35]

- 1) **God has sought to provide protection, warmth and safety to Israel as a mother hen does to her chicks:** Lord Jesus' heart was grieved because of the unwillingness of the Jewish people to come under God's protective wing. Considering the many foreign aggressions and defeats, one wonders why the Jewish people held their stubbornness and refusal for so long and had to suffer the consequences. How similar are the hearts of most people today when it comes to the gospel.
- 2) **God is extending the same kind offer of His salvation and grace to all peoples today:** Yet, most people refuse the Creator's invitation in spite of the apparent consequence of the refusal and neglect. Let us learn from the historical lesson of the Jewish people. Soon after the Lord's grief-filled comment on Jerusalem, the city was totally destroyed in 70 AD by the Roman army as prophesied.
- 3) **Lord Jesus will come and establish His throne in Jerusalem when He returns:** And the Lord prophesied that Jerusalem would not see the Messiah until He comes the second time to Jerusalem. This event, we pray, will soon come as prophesied, and the King will sit on His throne established in Jerusalem, from where He will rule the whole earth for 1,000 years. And all Jewish people will see how they have misunderstood and rejected their Savior, and all of them will bow before His majesty and power.

Discussion topics:

1. *Let us discuss the 'narrow way/ gate' in the context of today's American society. What customs/ values/ living styles in our life do we as elements that need to be 'crucified' for the sake of Jesus Christ?*
2. *Let us discuss how Christians can take part in preparing for the End Times including prayers for the Jewish people to accept Jesus as their Savior.*