



## Luke 12:35-13:9 – Dial D for Disaster

### Personal Preparation 1

Read Luke 12:13-21.

**Helpful Tip:** Micah 7:1-7 is an Old Testament passage that brings together a lot of the ideas in this passage! Can you make the connections?

#### Introduction

Have you noticed the growing tension between Jesus and Israel's leaders in the past few chapters? Because of their hypocrisy, and because of the way they've persistently persecuted the prophets and apostles... and because he knows they're about to kill HIM... Jesus warns the Jewish law experts that their generation is going to face God's judgment. It's a warning that echoes through the following chapters. Luke 20:20-24 is an example:

20"When you see Jerusalem being surrounded by armies, you will know that its desolation is near. 21Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, let those in the city get out, and let those in the country not enter the city. 22 **For this is the time of punishment in fulfillment of all that has been written.** 23How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers! There will be great distress in the land and wrath against this people. 24They will fall by the sword and will be taken as prisoners to all the nations. Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

Sadly, this is exactly what happened. After a protracted war and siege (from 67-70AD) with Jerusalem surrounded by armies, the walls of Jerusalem fell. The glorious temple was torn down and burned. Thousands fell by the sword or were taken prisoner. Christians, though, forewarned by Jesus, fled to the mountains and survived.

#### Rethinking Old Angles

We're about to come to a section of Luke's gospel that has generated much debate about "the end times." Typically, these passages are read as referring to 'the end of the world' and God's final judgment. However, when we work hard at reading the passages in the context of the unfolding story of the growing tension between Jesus and Israel's leaders, perhaps the 'end times' being spoken about are the end of the nation of Israel! Scholars like William J Dumbrell (The New Covenant: The Synoptics in Context) and NT Wright (The Climax of the Covenant) argue well for this view – but it may require the rethinking of some long held views.

**Here's a summary.** Jesus is on the way to visit Jerusalem. In the person of his Son, God is coming to pay a personal visit to his servants at his temple. Will they be ready to greet him? And what will happen if they're not?

#### Israel's "End Times"?

Read Luke 12:35 to 13:9, testing the view that Jesus is talking about his arrival in Jerusalem, and the coming Judgment on Israel. Write what you find in the sections below.

Luke 12:35-48

Luke 12:49-53

Luke 12:54-59

Luke 13:1-9

thoughts. questions. insights.

## Personal Preparation – Day 2

a) Look again at Luke 12:35-40. We may tend at first glance to think of the second coming. Certainly Paul later picks up this 'thief in the night' idea and applies it to that event (1 Thess 5:2). But in the first instance, this passage seems to apply to Jesus' journey to Jerusalem and the events that will take place there. Jesus is about to appear to God's people at their capital... but the big question is, how will they receive him?

b) What response to his arrival in Jerusalem is Jesus calling for in verses 12:35-40?

c) Read Malachi 3:1b. How will this be a description of Jesus' ministry?

d) Look ahead to Luke 13:31-35 & 19:41-44. What is Israel failing to recognise about Jesus?

Do you see what's happening? As Jesus comes to visit the temple (HIS house) in Jerusalem, he's not going to be welcomed by ready servants! He's warning the disciples – don't be like the REST of Israel!

e) Read Luke 12:41-48 and imagine Jesus is speaking against the PHARISEES and TEACHERS OF THE LAW. What is he saying about them? (See also Luke 20:45-47 for a similar example.)

f) From Luke 12:49-53, what does Jesus expect to be the result of his ministry?

g) Read Micah 7:1-7...

i) What is the similarity with Luke 12:49-52

ii) How does Micah 7:7 emphasise the need for watchfulness among the disciples?

iii) Compare the parable of the fig tree in Luke 13:6-9 with Micah 7:1-4. How is the fig tree a picture of the condition of Israel?

thoughts. questions. insights.

## Group Discussion Questions

1. What thoughts, ideas, and questions do you have from this week's preparation?
  
2. Keeping in mind what we looked at in our preparation, work through Luke 12:54-59 as a group. Who is Jesus talking to here? What timeframe is he talking about? Who is the 'adversary' they need to get right with?
  
3. Jesus said that he came to bring division. He certainly divided Israel!
  - How have we seen Jesus' words here fulfilled already in Luke ?
  - What evidence do you see that Jesus divides people today? (Is Christianity ever going to be 'socially acceptable'?)
  
4. Jesus said that Israel's rejection of him was going to bring God's judgment and destruction on their nation. And it did.
  - What judgment of God should WE fear? (Look back to 12:4)
  - How did verses like 13:3 and 5 apply to the situation Jesus was speaking about? How do they apply to us?
  
5. Has there been much debate in your group about the way we've approached this week's passage? Read Luke 13:31-35. Does this swing your thinking in either direction?

### Awkward Political Question...

The nation of Israel was only resettled in Palestine after the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War. Many Christians argue that this is an essential part of God's plan, because Jerusalem is God's "Holy City." What do you think Jesus would say about this?

6. What can we as Gentiles living after 70AD take from this passage, and what do we need to be wary of applying?"
  - What warning should we draw personally from the passage we've been considering?

## pray.

- That we might not make Israel's mistake, but be ready to receive our Lord.
- That as we wait for the return of our Saviour, that we might our lives wisely.
- That we would be brave & sensitive with our presentation of Christ, even while he causes division.