

The Gospel of Luke – The Acts of the Apostles

The Theme of Jerusalem Outward

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Foreground Action: Jerusalem the Focal Point of World History

Lk.1:5 In the days of Herod, king of Judea, there was a certain priest named Zacharias, of the division of Abijah, and he had a wife from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. 6 They were both righteous in the sight of God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and requirements of the Lord. 7 But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and they were both advanced in years. 8 Now it happened that while he was performing his priestly service before God in the appointed order of his division, 9 according to the custom of the priestly office, he was chosen by lot to enter the temple of the Lord and burn incense. 10 And the whole multitude of the people were in prayer outside at the hour of the incense offering. 11 And an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing to the right of the altar of incense. 12 Zacharias was troubled when he saw the angel, and fear gripped him. 13 But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your petition has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will give him the name John. 14 You will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth. 15 For he will be great in the sight of the Lord; and he will drink no wine or liquor, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit while yet in his mother's womb. 16 And he will turn many of the sons of Israel back to the Lord their God. 17 It is he who will go as a forerunner before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers back to the children, and the disobedient to the attitude of the righteous, so as to make ready a people prepared for the Lord." 18 Zacharias said to the angel, "How will I know this for certain? For I am an old man and my wife is advanced in years." 19 The angel answered and said to him, "I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news. 20 And behold, you shall be silent and unable to speak until the day when these things take place, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their proper time." 21 The people were waiting for Zacharias, and were wondering at his delay in the temple. 22 But when he came out, he was unable to speak to them; and they realized that he had seen a vision in the temple; and he kept making signs to them, and remained mute. 23 When the days of his priestly service were ended, he went back home. 24 After these days Elizabeth his wife became pregnant, and she kept herself in seclusion for five months, saying, 25 This is the way the Lord has dealt with me in the days when He looked with favor upon me, to take away my disgrace among men. 26 Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city in Galilee called Nazareth, 27 to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the descendants of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. 28 And coming in, he said to her, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." 29 But she was very perplexed at this statement, and kept pondering what kind of salutation this was. 30 The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; for you have found favor with God. 31 And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus. 32 He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of his father David; 33 and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and his kingdom will have no end." 34 Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" 35 The angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy Child shall be called the Son of God. 36 And behold, even your relative Elizabeth has also conceived a son in her old age; and she who was called barren is now in her sixth month. 37 For nothing will be impossible with God." 38 And Mary said, "Behold, the bondservant of the Lord; may it be done to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.

Questions

1. Where does Zacharias serve as a priest? The Jerusalem Temple.
2. What is his life like?
3. Who were Abijah and Aaron? Priests. What does that mean about Zacharias and Elizabeth? They are priests from the right families when the other priests in Jerusalem weren't really from the right families.
4. What were their lives like? What were their hopes and dreams?
5. Where did the Jews like Zacharias and Elizabeth believe the center of world history was? Jerusalem.

6. Why? Because God once dwelled there in the Temple, and said he would return and from there, rule over the nations.

Soundtrack/Background Music: Jerusalem, God's City on a Hill

- Micah 4:1 And it will come about in the last days that the mountain of the house of the LORD will be established as the chief of the mountains. It will be raised above the hills, and the peoples will stream to it. 2 Many nations will come and say, "Come and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD and to the house of the God of Jacob, that He may teach us about His ways and that we may walk in His paths." For from Zion will go forth the law, even the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. 3 And He will judge between many peoples and render decisions for mighty, distant nations. Then they will hammer their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks; nation will not lift up sword against nation, and never again will they train for war. 4 Each of them will sit under his vine and under his fig tree, with no one to make them afraid, for the mouth of the LORD of hosts has spoken.

7. In what sense is Jerusalem significant? We'll try to decipher that. Where else has the angel Gabriel appeared? Only to Daniel.

Soundtrack/Background Music: Gabriel's Pronouncement of Doom

- Dan.9:20 Now while I was speaking and praying and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presting my supplication before the LORD my God in behalf of the holy mountain of my God, 21 while I was still speaking in prayer, then the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision previously, came to me in my extreme weariness about the time of the evening offering. 22 And he gave me instruction and talked with me, and said, "O Daniel, I have now come forth to give you insight with understanding. 23 At the beginning of your supplications the command was issued, and I have come to tell you, for you are highly esteemed, so give heed to the message and gain understanding of the vision. 24 Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, to make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy place. 25 So you are to know and discern that from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince there will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; it will be built again, with plaza and moat, even in times of distress. 26 Then after the sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing, and the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. And its end will come with a flood; even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined."

8. What does Gabriel's reappearance suggest for Jerusalem?
9. What does a supernaturally born son mean to Zacharias and Elizabeth? Joy, gladness, renewal of the prophetic line anointed by the Holy Spirit, restoration of exile for the faithful in Israel, the coming of the Lord.
10. What does the angel want Zacharias to believe?
11. What makes it hard for Zacharias to believe? Whether God can bring a son forth from basically dead bodies.
12. What does Zacharias' lack of faith result in? Temporary silence
13. What could Zacharias' ministry have been if he had believed? Preparing, announcing, proclamation, very important. The Israelites were bereft of Zacharias' preaching for nine months. Zacharias could have been useful in ministry.
14. What Old Testament couple do Zacharias and Elizabeth, an old couple with no children, remind you of? Abraham and Sarah. Elkanah and Hannah. Compare them to the other old couples in Israel's history who had supernaturally born sons:

Old Man	Old Woman	Supernaturally Born Son
Abraham	Sarah	Isaac
Elkanah	Hannah	Samuel
Zacharias	Elizabeth	John

15. What are the similarities between Isaac and John? Supernaturally born, represents a covenant people, promise fulfilled, newness of life
16. Who was Hannah's supernaturally born son? Samuel the prophet. What was so special about Samuel? (answer to prayer, supernaturally born, he was a Nazirite) Who did Samuel anoint to be king? David
17. Who was Elizabeth's supernaturally born son? John the baptist.
18. Who did John anoint to be king? Jesus
19. What is promised to Jesus, as Mary hears it? The throne of his father David; and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and his kingdom will have no end. An eternal kingdom
20. What does it mean about what God is doing with Zacharias and Elizabeth?
21. Why is it appropriate that God begins his announcement of the Messiah at Jerusalem?
22. What do we know happens in Acts? The new covenant family spreads out from Jerusalem. What matters is what comes out of Jerusalem, not going back to the city.
23. Where does Luke start his story in ch.1:5? Jerusalem
24. Where does Luke end his story in ch.24:53? Jerusalem
25. What is Luke saying is the center of world history?
26. Assuming Luke was written in part for the Graeco-Roman world, what city would they have thought to be the center of world history? Rome.
27. What did they associate with Rome?
28. What city (or cities) do we tend to think of as a center of our world?
29. We have the tendency to believe that what happens in our century or in our civilization is most significant. How does it feel to hear that what happened in first century Jerusalem is most significant? What myths do we need to let go of?
30. America was once thought to be 'a city on a hill,' like Jerusalem. Was that an accurate way to poetically use that language? (No – Jerusalem and the symbolism surrounding her was unique. There is no duplicating it.)
31. What are ways we still believe that?

Foreground Action: The Return of God to Jerusalem

Lk.2:21 And when eight days had passed, before his circumcision, his name was then called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb. 22 And when the days for their purification according to the law of Moses were completed, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord 23 (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, every firstborn male that opens the womb shall be called holy to the LORD), 24 and to offer a sacrifice according to what was said in the Law of the Lord, a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons. 25 And there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; and this man was righteous and devout, looking for the consolation of Israel; and the Holy Spirit was upon him. 26 And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. 27 And he came in the Spirit into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to carry out for him the custom of the Law, 28 then he took him into his arms, and blessed God, and said, 29 "Now Lord, You are releasing Your bond-servant to depart in peace, according to Your word; 30 for my eyes have seen Your salvation, 31 which You have prepared in the presence of all peoples, 32 a light of revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of Your people Israel." 33 And his father and mother were amazed at the things which were being said about him. 34 And Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, "Behold, this Child is appointed for the fall and rise of many in Israel, and for a sign to be opposed 35 and a sword will pierce even your own soul, to the end that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed." 36 And there was a prophetess, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in years and had lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, 37 and then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple, serving night and day with fastings and prayers. 38 At that very moment she came up and began giving thanks to God, and continued to speak of him to all those who

were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem. 39 When they had performed everything according to the Law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own city of Nazareth. 40 The child continued to grow and become strong, increasing in wisdom; and the grace of God was upon him. 41 Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover. 42 And when he became twelve, they went up there according to the custom of the Feast; 43 and as they were returning, after spending the full number of days, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. But his parents were unaware of it, 44 but supposed him to be in the caravan, and went a day's journey; and they began looking for him among their relatives and acquaintances. 45 When they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem looking for him. 46 Then, after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them and asking them questions. 47 And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. 48 When they saw him, they were astonished; and his mother said to him, "Son, why have you treated us this way? Behold, your father and I have been anxiously looking for you." 49 And he said to them, "Why is it that you were looking for me? Did you not know that I had to be in my Father's house?" 50 But they did not understand the statement which he had made to them. 51 And he went down with them and came to Nazareth, and he continued in subjection to them; and his mother treasured all these things in her heart. 52 And Jesus kept increasing in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.

Questions

1. The shekinah glory of God departed from the temple before the Babylonian exile, according to Ezekiel. Did the shekinah glory of God ever return after the temple was rebuilt? No.
2. When Jesus appears in Jerusalem as a baby, what happens?
3. What does Simeon say Jesus' future mission is?
4. What is 'the consolation of Israel?'
5. Skim Micah 4:1 – 5:3, below.

Soundtrack/Background Music: The Exaltation of Jerusalem

- Micah 4:1 And it will come about in the last days that the mountain of the house of the LORD will be established as the chief of the mountains. It will be raised above the hills, and the peoples will stream to it. 2 Many nations will come and say, "Come and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD and to the house of the God of Jacob, that He may teach us about His ways and that we may walk in His paths." For from Zion will go forth the law, even the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. 3 And He will judge between many peoples and render decisions for mighty, distant nations. Then they will hammer their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks; nation will not lift up sword against nation, and never again will they train for war. 4 Each of them will sit under his vine and under his fig tree, with no one to make them afraid, for the mouth of the LORD of hosts has spoken. 5 Though all the peoples walk each in the name of his god, as for us, we will walk in the name of the LORD our God forever and ever. 6 "In that day," declares the LORD, "I will assemble the lame and gather the outcasts, even those whom I have afflicted. 7 I will make the lame a remnant and the outcasts a strong nation, and the LORD will reign over them in Mount Zion from now on and forever. 8 As for you, tower of the flock, hill of the daughter of Zion, to you it will come – even the former dominion will come, the kingdom of the daughter of Jerusalem. 9 Now, why do you cry out loudly? Is there no king among you, or has your counselor perished, that agony has gripped you like a woman in childbirth? 10 Writhe and labor to give birth, Daughter of Zion, like a woman in childbirth; for now you will go out of the city, dwell in the field, and go to Babylon. There you will be rescued; there the LORD will redeem you from the hand of your enemies. 11 And now many nations have been assembled against you who say, 'Let her be polluted, and let our eyes gloat over Zion.' 12 But they do not know the thoughts of the LORD, and they do not understand His purpose; for He has gathered them like sheaves to the threshing floor. 13 Arise and thresh, daughter of Zion, for your horn I will make iron and your hoofs I will make bronze, that you may pulverize many peoples, that you may devote to the LORD their unjust gain and their wealth to the Lord of all the earth. 5:1 Now muster

yourselves in troops, daughter of troops; they have laid siege against us; with a rod they will smite the judge of Israel on the cheek. 2 But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from long ago, from the days of eternity. 3 Therefore He will give them up until the time when she who is in labor has borne a child. Then the remainder of His brethren will return to the sons of Israel. 4 And He will arise and shepherd His flock in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD His God. And they will remain, because at that time He will be great to the ends of the earth. 5 This One will be our peace.

6. What would happen to Jerusalem when Messiah comes, according to Micah?
7. Would Micah and Daniel have had an argument about that?
8. Could Jerusalem be both exalted and destroyed?
9. Is Anna saying, “Jesus is the redemption of Jerusalem,” or “Jesus instead of the redemption of Jerusalem”?
10. If you could have God change one thing about your world, what would that be? Call it X.
11. In what sense do you say, “Jesus is the redemption of X?”
12. In what sense do you say, “Jesus instead of the redemption of X?”
13. When Jesus appears in Jerusalem as a child, what happens?
14. Why are the temple leaders and scholars amazed at Jesus?
15. How does this hint at his future mission?

Foreground Action: Jesus and the Jerusalem Temptation

Lk.4:1 Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led around by the Spirit in the wilderness 2 for forty days, being tempted by the devil...9 And he led him to Jerusalem and had him stand on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here; 10 for it is written, He will command His angels concerning you to guard you, and on their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.” 12 And Jesus answered and said to him, “It is said, you shall not put the LORD your God to the test.” 13 When the devil had finished every temptation, he left Him until an opportune time.

Questions

1. Why does Luke give the Jerusalem temptation last? (as opposed to Matthew, who gives it second)
2. What was particularly tempting about this?
3. Where was the Messiah supposed to rule or proclaim his rule from, at least in the minds of first century Jews?
4. Why does Jesus refuse the Jerusalem temptation?

Foreground Action: Jesus On the Road to Jerusalem

Lk.9:51 And it came about, when the days were approaching for his ascension, that he resolutely set his face to go to Jerusalem.

Questions

1. If Jesus was going to Jerusalem to be Israel’s king, what did the ascension mean? His inauguration.
2. This is kind of like the “road to the White House” story that George W. Bush invoked in the 2000 Presidential campaign. He said he would get there, change and clean up things. What did Jesus’ disciples expect when they got to the capital?

Lk.12:35 “Be dressed in readiness, and keep your lamps lit. 36 Be like men who are waiting for their master when he returns from the wedding feast, so that they may immediately open the door to him when he comes and knocks. 37 Blessed are those slaves whom the master will find on the alert when he comes; truly I say to you, that he will gird himself to serve, and have them recline at the table, and will come up

and wait on them. 38 Whether he comes in the second watch, or even in the third, and finds them so, blessed are those slaves. 39 But be sure of this, that if the head of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have allowed his house to be broken into. 40 You too, be ready; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour that you do not expect.” 41 Peter said, “Lord, are you addressing this parable to us, or to everyone else as well?” 42 And the Lord said, “Who then is the faithful and sensible steward, whom his master will put in charge of his servants, to give them their rations at the proper time? 43 Blessed is that slave whom his master finds so doing when he comes. 44 Truly I say to you that he will put him in charge of all his possessions. 45 But if that slave says in his heart, ‘My master will be a long time in coming,’ and begins to beat the slaves, both men and women, and to eat and drink and get drunk; 46 the master of that slave will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he does not know, and will cut him in pieces, and assign him a place with the unbelievers. 47 And that slave who knew his master’s will and did not get ready or act in accord with his will, will receive many lashes, 48 but the one who did not know it, and committed deeds worthy of a flogging, will receive but few. From everyone who has been given much, much will be required; and to whom they entrusted much, of him they will ask all the more. 49 I have come to cast fire upon the earth; and how I wish it were already kindled! 50 But I have a baptism to undergo, and how distressed I am until it is accomplished! 51 Do you suppose that I came to grant peace on earth? I tell you, no, but rather division; 52 for from now on five members in one household will be divided, three against two and two against three. 53 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.” 54 And he was also saying to the crowds, “When you see a cloud rising in the west, immediately you say, ‘A shower is coming,’ and so it turns out. 55 And when you see a south wind blowing, you say, ‘It will be a hot day,’ and it turns out that way. 56 You hypocrites! You know how to analyze the appearance of the earth and the sky, but why do you not analyze this present time? 57 And why do you not even on your own initiative judge what is right? 58 For while you are going with your opponent to appear before the magistrate, on your way there make an effort to settle with him, so that he may not drag you before the judge, and the judge turn you over to the officer, and the officer throw you into prison. 59 I say to you, you will not get out of there until you have paid the very last cent.” 13:1 Now on the same occasion there were some present who reported to him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mixed with their sacrifices. 2 And Jesus said to them, “Do you suppose that these Galileans were greater sinners than all other Galileans because they suffered this fate? 3 I tell you, no, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish. 4 Or do you suppose that those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them were worse culprits than all the men who live in Jerusalem? 5 I tell you, no, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.”

Questions

1. Why does Jesus warn people of his ‘coming’? What is at stake?
2. What are some words to describe servants waiting for their master to return from a wedding banquet? What are they doing while they wait?
3. What will Jesus do when he finds a faithful and alert servant? He will seat them at the table and serve them, v.37.
4. When does that happen? The last supper and the resurrection.
5. What indications have people like Simeon and Anna given that they were faithful and alert servants?
6. Why is Jesus’ coming like the breaking in of a thief?
7. Discuss whether this applies to the first coming or second coming of Jesus. The following questions will be helpful in figuring that out.
 - a. Notice that Jesus compares the eighteen people killed by falling masonry to the men of Jerusalem in 13:4. Why all of a sudden bring up Jerusalem? Did Jesus expect Jerusalem to be destroyed because of him? Is that a first or second coming issue?
 - b. In 12:50, what baptism does Jesus still have to undergo? Is there a baptism (implied – death and resurrection) associated with the second coming? Is that a first or second coming issue?
 - c. Verses 12:52-53 describe tension in a family caused by Jesus. In what sense will Jesus not bring peace but division? Is that a first or second coming issue?
8. What is the ‘coming of the Son of Man?’ Listen to the soundtrack/background music:

Soundtrack/Background Music: Daniel’s Vision of the Son of Man

- Dan.7:13 I kept looking in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven one like a Son of Man was coming, and he came up to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. 14 And to him was given dominion, glory and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations and men of every language might serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion which will not pass away; and his kingdom is one which will not be destroyed.
9. Is 'the coming of the Son of Man' in Daniel a first or second coming issue? Is it similar to what Luke calls 'the ascension'? When is Jesus presented before God and given a kingdom?
 10. Recall that Daniel's vision in Daniel 7 is further clarified by an angelic visitation in Daniel 9. What would happen to Jerusalem when Messiah comes?
 11. What did Jerusalem mean to most Jews? A symbol of national pride and political independence, kind of like the White House for Americans.
 12. Why would some people have grown lazy and abusive, according to v.42-48?
 13. What are some typical responses to delays in God's fulfilling of His promises?
 14. Who are the lazy and abusive servants?
 15. What does Jesus say will happen to them?
 16. Who fits into the spectrum of servants in between?
 17. Why do the punishments sound so severe? Are they literal or literary (poetic)? I.e. Do they describe what will actually happen or do they symbolize something else?
 18. What would it be like for a Jew to witness Jerusalem being sacked by the Romans in 70 AD?
 19. What would it be like for you to witness your home city, a city that symbolizes national pride and political identity, being sacked by enemies?
 20. Jesus said that Jews who did not expect the master to return, who were abusive and domineering would be 'cut in pieces and assigned a place with the unbelievers.' Could that fit the Pharisees and other revolutionaries? Why would they be 'cut in pieces'? (Because they would be involved in a nationalistic revolt, and lose.) Why would they be 'assigned a place with the unbelievers'? (Because they would lose their privileged status as part of the chosen people.)
 21. How does that fit in with Luke's theme of challenging ethnocentrism?
 22. Jesus said that other Jews will be responsible according to what they know. Why would they 'receive lashes,' either many or few?
 23. Jesus says that they should understand the times. How is Jesus reading the times? What major confrontation is Israel headed for? A military one with Rome.
 24. On what basis is Jesus reading the times? Perhaps Daniel's prophecies about the beastly kingdoms and the coming of the Son of Man.
 25. Why does Jesus encourage his listeners to own up to their wrongs (repent) quickly in v.58? And again in 13:3 and 5?
 26. Repent from what? Nationalistic zeal; the expectation that the Messiah will never come and they need to take things into their own hands.
 27. What will repentance save them from? Sharing in Jerusalem's destruction. Paying the last cent for their resistance to Jesus.

Foreground Action: Jerusalem, the Prophets' Graveyard

Lk.13:22 And He was passing through from one city and village to another, teaching, and proceeding on His way to Jerusalem.

Lk.13:31 Just at that time some Pharisees approached, saying to him, "Go away, leave here, for Herod wants to kill you." 32 And he said to them, "Go and tell that fox, 'Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I reach My goal.' 33 Nevertheless I must journey on today and tomorrow and the next day; for it cannot be that a prophet would perish outside of Jerusalem. 34 O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, just as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not have it! 35 Behold, your house is left to you desolate; and I say to you, you will not see me until the time comes when you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!'"

Questions

1. Why is Jerusalem the prophets' graveyard? To be answered below...
2. According to Mosaic Law, how many times a year did all able-bodied Jewish men need to make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem? Three times: Passover, Feast of Weeks, and Yom Kippur
3. Where was the priestly headquarters? The Jerusalem temple.
4. Traditionally speaking, where was God's presence most strongly felt? The Jerusalem temple.
5. What did the priests and leaders in Jerusalem think about themselves? That they were the center of God's plan just because God's presence was there and they controlled certain aspects of worship.
6. What made Jerusalem's leadership so offended that God raised up prophets apart from Jerusalem? That God's presence was also on others beyond Jerusalem.
7. What made them so offended that God raised up prophets to challenge Jerusalem? That God's presence would rest more powerfully and with more integrity on others besides themselves.
8. Why does Jesus expect to die there? Because he will challenge Jerusalem to its core.
9. How was Jesus conceived? By the Holy Spirit. So where is God more present? In Jesus or the Jerusalem Temple?
10. Was Jesus' mission going to be fundamentally inward-looking organizationally (towards the center) or outward-looking (towards the periphery)? How would that clash with Jerusalem's traditional role?
11. The rejection of Jerusalem is also related to the movement of God in reaching out. Contrast the notion of a God who actively goes outward to seek the lost like a shepherd searching for a lost sheep, a woman looking for a lost coin, and a father running after a wayward son (Lk. 15), with the notion of waiting for people to come to us.
12. Do we have the tendency to believe that God works most at the center of our ministry organization(s)? Why do we believe that what we have control over is where God is most present?
13. How do we respond when God raises up others who challenge our group-centeredness? Are we thankful for the reminder to be oriented outward?

Foreground Action: Where to Glorify God – in Jesus or in Jerusalem?

Lk.17:11 While he was on the way to Jerusalem, he was passing between Samaria and Galilee. 12 As he entered a village, ten leprous men who stood at a distance met him; 13 and they raised their voices, saying, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!" 14 When he saw them, he said to them, "Go and show yourselves to the priests." And as they were going, they were cleansed. 15 Now one of them, when he saw that he had been healed, turned back, glorifying God with a loud voice, 16 and he fell on his face at his feet, giving thanks to him. And he was a Samaritan. 17 Then Jesus answered and said, "Were there not ten cleansed? But the nine – where are they? 18 Was no one found who returned to give glory to God, except this foreigner?" 19 And he said to him, "Stand up and go; your faith has made you well."

Questions

1. To who and where does Jesus have the 10 lepers go? Priests.
2. Where are the priests? Jerusalem temple.
3. What did leprosy symbolize to the Jews? Uncleanness and sin.
4. Why does Jesus tell the lepers to go to the priests? It's what the Law required for them to be fully restored to the community.
5. Did they get up with faith? Yes
6. Were all ten healed by faith? Yes
7. Why did the Samaritan alone turn back to Jesus? Samaritans were not allowed in the temple
8. Was only the Samaritan 'saved by faith'? (interesting question – no need to answer it rigorously; the main point is not the faith of the lepers but the impact of the miracle in the social situation)
9. Why does Jesus make these distinctions between the Jerusalem temple and himself? Jesus is declaring himself superior to the Jerusalem temple. God is more present in him than in the temple because the shekinah glory never returned to the temple after the Babylonian exile (the holy of holies was more representative of former procedures than actually filled with God's presence).
10. Why does Jesus make this distinction between Samaritans and Jews? He is declaring the end of the racial exclusivity represented at the Jerusalem temple.

11. What are the areas of our lives and ministries where a “Samaritan” would not be totally welcome if s/he wanted to praise Jesus for what he’s done?
12. What can we do to change that?

Foreground Action: Triumphal Entry – Jesus Comes as Jerusalem’s King

Lk.19:28 After he had said these things, he was going on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. 29 When he approached Bethphage and Bethany, near the mount that is called Olivet, he sent two of the disciples, 30 saying, “Go into the village ahead of you; there, as you enter, you will find a colt tied on which no one yet has ever sat; untie it and bring it here. 31 If anyone asks you, ‘Why are you untying it?’ you shall say, ‘The Lord has need of it.’” 32 So those who were sent went away and found it just as he had told them. 33 As they were untying the colt, its owners said to them, “Why are you untying the colt?” 34 They said, “The Lord has need of it.” 35 They brought it to Jesus, and they threw their coats on the colt and put Jesus on it. 36 As he was going, they were spreading their coats on the road. 37 As soon as he was approaching, near the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of the disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice for all the miracles which they had seen, 38 shouting, “Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord; peace in heaven and glory in the highest!” 39 Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, “Teacher, rebuke your disciples.” 40 But Jesus answered, I tell you, if these become silent, the stones will cry out!” 41 When he approached Jerusalem, he saw the city and wept over it, 42 saying, “If you had known in this day, even you, the things which make for peace! But now they have been hidden from your eyes. 43 For the days will come upon you when your enemies will throw up a barricade against you, and surround you and hem you in on every side, 44 and they will level you to the ground and your children within you, and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not recognize the time of your visitation.” 45 Jesus entered the temple and began to drive out those who were selling, 46 saying to them, “It is written, ‘And My House shall be a house of prayer,’ but you have made it a robbers’ den.” 47 And he was teaching daily in the temple; but the chief priests and the scribes and the leading men among the people were trying to destroy him, 48 and they could not find anything that they might do, for all the people were hanging on to every word He said.

Questions

1. Why does Jesus get a donkey? Listen to the background music:

Soundtrack/Background Music: The King of Jerusalem

- Zechariah 9:9 Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout in triumph, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you. He is just and endowed with salvation, humble, and mounted on a donkey, even on a colt, the foal of a donkey. 10 I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the horse from Jerusalem; and the bow of war will be cut off. And he will speak peace to the nations; and his dominion will be from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth.
 - Genesis 49:10 The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler’s staff from between his feet until Shiloh comes. And to him shall be the obedience of the peoples. He ties his foal to the vine, and his donkey’s colt to the choice vine.
2. So by getting a donkey, Jesus is saying that he is who?
 3. What was going to start after the Messiah arrives in Jerusalem? The obedience of the peoples, peace to the nations.
 4. Why are the disciples and the crowd excited?
 5. What do they call Jesus? The King who comes in the name of the Lord
 6. How do they think the kingdom is going to look? Probably military-political.
 7. How do the Pharisees react?
 8. Why?
 9. What does Jesus say to the city Jerusalem?
 10. What does Jesus do in the temple?

11. What does Jesus' presence in the temple mean? That God has returned to it.
12. Had the temple been used to proclaim truth or falsehood?
13. How is Jesus reclaiming it? Jesus is reclaiming it as a place to proclaim God's truth.

Foreground Action: Jerusalem Seals Her Fate

Lk.20:1 And it came about on one of the days while he was teaching the people in the temple and preaching the gospel, that the chief priests and the scribes with the elders confronted him...21:1 And he looked up and saw the rich putting their gifts into the treasury. 2 And he saw a poor widow putting in two small copper coins. 3 And he said, "Truly I say to you, this poor widow put in more than all of them; 4 for they all out of their surplus put into the offering; but she out of her poverty put in all that she had to live on." 5 And while some were talking about the temple, that it was adorned with beautiful stones and votive gifts, he said, 6 "As for these things which you are looking at, the days will come in which there will not be left one stone upon another which will not be torn down"...20 But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then recognize that her desolation is near. 21 Then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains, and those who are in the midst of the city must leave, and those who are in the country must not enter the city; 22 because these are days of vengeance, so that all things which are written will be fulfilled. 23 Woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days; for there will be great distress upon the land and wrath to this people; 24 and they will fall by the edge of the sword, and will be led captive into all the nations; and Jerusalem will be trampled under foot by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled. 25 There will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and on the earth dismay among nations, in perplexity at the roaring of the sea and the waves, 26 men fainting from fear and the expectation of the things which are coming upon the world; for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. 27 Then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. 28 But when these things begin to take place, straighten up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near"...37 Now during the day he was teaching in the temple, but at evening he would go out and spend the night on the mount that is called Olivet. 38 And all the people would get up early in the morning to come to him in the temple to listen to him.

Lk.23:27 And following him was a large crowd of the people, and of women who were mourning and lamenting him. 28 But Jesus turning to them said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, stop weeping for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. 29 For behold, the days are coming when they will say, 'Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bore, and the breasts that never nursed.' 30 Then they will begin to say to the mountains, 'Fall on us,' and to the hills, 'Cover us.' 31 For if they do these things when the tree is green, what will happen when it is dry?"

Questions

1. How does Jesus appear from the perspective of the chief priests and scribes and elders?
2. In chapter 20 (unprinted), those parties challenge Jesus' authority and his knowledge of the Scriptures. Jesus shows them up. Right after those wranglings, Jesus praises the widow (21:1-4). How does the widow compare to the chief priests, scribes, and elders?
3. Does Jesus praise the temple itself? No. Why not?

Soundtrack/Background Music: Where Will God Dwell?

- Isa.66:1 Thus says the LORD, "Heaven is My throne, and the earth is My footstool. Where then is a house you could build for Me? And where is a place that I may rest? 2 For My hand made all these things, thus all these things came into being," declares the LORD, "But to this one I will look, to him who is humble and contrite of spirit, and who trembles at My word."
4. As a result of the rejection of Jerusalem's leadership, what does Jesus declare?
 5. Jerusalem's destruction would thus be a sign of what?

Foreground Action: His Law Goes Forth From Zion – In an Unexpected Way

Lk.24:33 And they got up that very hour and returned to Jerusalem, and found gathered together the eleven and those who were with them, 34 saying, “The Lord has really risen and has appeared to Simon.” 35 They began to relate their experiences on the road and how he was recognized by them in the breaking of the bread. 36 While they were telling these things, he himself stood in their midst and said to them, “Peace be to you.” 37 But they were startled and frightened and thought that they were seeing a spirit. 38 And he said to them, “Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? 39 See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself; touch me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.” 40 And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. 41 While they still could not believe it because of their joy and amazement, he said to them, “Have you anything here to eat?” 42 They gave him a piece of a broiled fish; 43 and he took it and ate it before them. 44 Now he said to them, “These are my words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.” 45 Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, 46 and he said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Christ would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day, 47 and that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in his name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. 48 You are witnesses of these things. 49 And behold, I am sending forth the promise of my Father upon you; but you are to stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.” 50 And he led them out as far as Bethany, and he lifted up his hands and blessed them. 51 And it came about that while he was blessing them, he parted from them. 52 And they returned to Jerusalem with great joy, 53 and were continually in the temple, praising God.

Questions

1. Where does Jesus appear to the disciples?
2. What does he declare to them? In v.36, peace.
3. Does that echo any OT passages we've read?
4. What does Jesus send them out with?
5. What is their message?
6. Why were the disciples startled?
7. What did they think Jesus was?
8. Why is it important that Jesus is a resurrected, bodily person who eats as opposed to a disembodied spirit? Jesus was the first person and part of the new creation. He is the guarantee that the entire creation will one day be made new.
9. When the disciples were in the temple, what do we know comes next for them?

Comment: Jesus was claiming Jerusalem as his own, using it as the staging grounds for his mission to the world, restoring it for its greatest purpose, to serve as the location of his teaching and the launching pad for Jesus' ministry to go out to the world. Jerusalem is the pivotal location: “Out of Zion will go forth His Torah,” from Pentecost onward. This fulfills Isaiah's and Micah's prophecies.

Comment: At the same time, because Jesus displaced Jerusalem and its temple as the living temple of the living God, Jerusalem was no longer necessary. It actually competed with Jesus, and thus was drawn into hostility towards Jesus. Jerusalem had to lose because a new order had come into being. We have a new intimacy with God. Jesus now replaces the Temple as the place for meeting God, and the church replaces the Temple as well because the Spirit of Christ lives in us.

Summary Reflections for Ministry

1. When we share the gospel, where do we give the impression it originated from? Europe? Africa? Our own culture? Our own organization? From where does it in fact originate?
2. In what ways can we make our ministry organization more world- and mission-focused? For example,
 - a. How can we form more witnessing communities of Christians in the wider community?
 - b. Are we always stretching our comfort zone by ministering to new people?
 - c. Do we allow different cultures and peoples to impact how things are done at home? Or is our own way of doing things inviolate?
 - d. Do we allow the struggles of disenfranchised people to affect our world view and programs?

- e. Do preachers promote being influential (not the same thing as powerful) in the community as important?
3. In what ways does our ministry culture emphasize an unhealthy separateness from the world? For instance, do you tend to view the marketplace as a dirty place? Do you tend to see formal ministry positions (i.e. Jerusalem positions) as more holy? Or do you see the world as a place of engagement and influence?