

The Good News About Jesus as Luke Wrote It

Chapter 17:1-37

HoneyBee base version for oral translation

September 2023 Draft¹

Background

- The Romans used to execute criminals by drowning them, either in a cloth bag or tied to a heavy weight.
- Jewish law experts doubted the sincerity of repentance by repeat offenders.
- Mustard seeds were proverbially very small.
- The Black Mulberry tree has a wide root system.
- Masters never ate with their slaves, not even after freeing them.
- Those who had an incurable skin disease were social outcasts.
- Those cured of such a skin disease were to show themselves to a priest and perform a prescribed sacrifice.
- Jews generally regarded Samaritans as irreligious.
- Jews believed that God is already Ruler over everything, yet were looking for a time when his rule would no longer be challenged, following a great war, or led by a messianic figure.
- Jewish literature considered Noah's time and Sodom as typical of evil.
- Flat rooftop stairways descended outside a house.
- Two women usually ground grain together, sometimes a Pharisee with a non-tither.
- The image of vultures devouring carcasses was widespread.

History

- Jesus was approaching Jerusalem where crowds would tentatively proclaim him to be the Messiah bringing his awaited kingdom.
- If the 'vultures' to which Jesus referred were eagles on Roman standards, then he may have been alluding to A.D. 70 when Romans offered sacrifices to their standards, on the temple site after they had destroyed it.

Themes

- Forgive each other unconditionally.
- Small faith is enough to accomplish great work.
- Consider yourselves without merit before God.
- Messiah came quietly the first time, but he will come in great glory a second time.

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Jesus teaches his disciples about sin, forgiveness, faith and gratitude

¹ One day Jesus said to his disciples,

“Things that tempt people to sin are certain to happen *among you*^(pl),² but it will be terrible for anyone who causes such things to happen!³ It would be a terrible death if people tied a heavy stone around your^(sg) neck and threw you into water to drown. But if you cause my disciples⁴ to sin, then God will punish you more severely *than drowning*.⁵ ³ So, be careful how you^(pl) act *towards each other*.

If another believer⁶ sins *against you*,⁷ then you^(sg) should correct him/her. And if he admits that he did wrong, then forgive him/her. ⁴ Even if that person sins against you^(sg) seven times in one day, and says, ‘What I did to you was wrong’, then you must forgive *him* each time.”

⁵ One day, the 12 apostles said to the Lord, “Please give to us more faith *in God!*”⁸ ⁶ The Lord replied, “A tiny mustard seed grows to become a big bush. Similarly, the little faith that you have *in me*⁹ is enough. So, if you said to this mulberry tree, ‘Pull yourself out with your roots and go plant yourself in the sea!’ it would obey you!”

⁷ Jesus also said,

“Suppose that someone among you had a slave¹⁰ who was plowing your fields or herding your sheep. After he comes into the house from the field, you^(sg) would not say, ‘Sit down immediately and eat!’ ⁸ Instead, you would say to him, ‘Put on your apron and prepare a meal for me! Then serve it to me so that I may eat and drink! Afterwards, you^(sg) may eat and drink.’ ⁹ You will not thank your slave¹¹ for doing the work that you had ordered him to do!

¹⁰ Similarly,¹² when you^(pl) have done everything that God has commanded you to do, you should say, “We^(inc) are as worthless as slaves,¹³ because we have only done the things that God commanded us to do.”

¹¹ As Jesus and his disciples were walking along the road to Jerusalem, they left the Galilee district and traveled into the Samaria district. ¹² As they entered a village, they saw ten lepers standing some distance from the road. Because lepers were not allowed to come near other people, ¹³ they called out, “Jesus, Master! Please pity us *and heal us!*”

² OR It is certain that people will tempt/lure other people *to disobey/deny God*,

³ but *God* will bring terrible punishment to anyone who tempts/lures others *to reject God’s way*.

⁴ OR my childlike ones. OR any from among these little ones. OR my little ones.

⁵ OR punish you much much.

⁶ OR your brother or sister. OR your sibling. (Although “brother” is used in the original, the meaning is any sibling (brother or sister). Also, it is likely referring to God’s family, not merely siblings in your biological family.)

⁷ OR wrongs you. See Matt. 18:15.

⁸ OR help us to trust God/you more strongly/completely. OR increase / strengthen our faith.

⁹ OR you have in God. OR faith. (It seems that Jesus is saying that you do not need more faith, but simply to exercise/use the faith you have.)

¹⁰ OR servant.

¹¹ OR servant.

¹² OR It is the same with you^(pl).

¹³ OR worthless / ordinary servants.

¹⁴ When Jesus saw them, he said to them, “Go and show yourselves to a priest *in Jerusalem*, so that he can see that you are healed.”

As those ten lepers were going there, they were healed. ¹⁵ Then one man, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God loudly. ¹⁶ This man, who was a Samaritan, *came back to Jesus*, bowed down at his feet, and thanked him. ¹⁷ When Jesus heard this, he said to his disciples, “I healed ten lepers, but the other nine did not come back to thank me! ¹⁸ This non-Jewish man is the only one who returned to me to thank God!”

¹⁹ Then he said to the man, “Get up now, and go home to your family. God has healed you^(sg), because you trusted in me.”

Jesus says Messiah has already come and will come again¹⁴

²⁰ One day, some Pharisees asked¹⁵ Jesus, “Is God’s Messiah coming to rule now?”¹⁶ Jesus replied, “(Yes.) God’s Messiah is not ruling in secret, requiring you to go looking for it/him. ²¹ And no one will be able to say that Messiah is ruling here *in secret!* Or that He is ruling over there! Because God’s Messiah is ruling right here in your midst.”¹⁷

²² Then Jesus said to his disciples,

“Someday,¹⁸ you^(pl) will strongly desire to see me, the Divine Human Son, *come back from heaven to rule* for even one day. But you will not yet see that happen. ²³ So, when people say to you, ‘Messiah is ruling here *in secret!* Or ‘He is ruling over there!’ do not believe them. Do not follow them *to go looking for me.*¹⁹

²⁴ When lightning flashes and lights up the sky from one side to the other, everyone can see it. Similarly,²⁰ the day when I, the Divine Human Son, come back from heaven, everyone will see me. ²⁵ But before that happens, I must suffer in many ways. And the Jewish leaders²¹ who are alive today, will reject me, *saying that I lied about being their Messiah.*

²⁶ But when I, the Divine Human Son, come again, people’s daily activities will be as they were during Noah’s lifetime. ²⁷ At that time people ate and drank as usual, and they got married as usual, up until the day when Noah and his family entered their big boat. But then the flood came and drowned²² all those who were not in the boat.

²⁸ Similarly, when Lot lived in Sodom city, people there ate and drank as usual. They bought things and they sold things as usual. They planted crops and they built houses as usual. ²⁹ But on the day that Lot and his family left Sodom city, fire and burning sulfur came down from the sky,

¹⁴ OR Jesus explains that he has come quietly as Messiah, but will come back one day with great glory.

¹⁵ πότε ἔρχεται = “now (at last) is coming”. This is a strongly present tense query. Jesus’ reply is equally present tense.

¹⁶ OR “Is God’s Messiah coming to be King now?” OR “When will God’s Kingdom arrive / begin?”

¹⁷ ἐντὸς ὑμῶν ἐστίν = “in your midst (already) is”. Not “in your heart” mysticism.

¹⁸ OR There will be a time when.

¹⁹ OR for Messiah.

²⁰ OR In the same way, OR Like that,

²¹ OR people.

²² OR took away. OR destroyed.

and destroyed all those who stayed in the city. ³⁰ Similarly, when I, the Divine Human Son, return to earth, most people will be living as usual.

³¹ On that day *when I return*, you^(pl) who are outside your houses, *while your things are inside your houses*, must not go back into your houses to take anything. Similarly, you^(pl) who are working in a field must not return home to take anything *with you*. ³² Remember Lot's wife! *Because she turned to go back home to Sodom, she died immediately*. ³³ Anyone who wants to hold onto his *earth* life and his possessions will lose everything. But anyone who dies *because he obeys me* will live again forever.

³⁴ Listen to me: On the night *when I return*, there will be two people sleeping in one bed. I will take one away *to destruction*²³ and/but the one *who believes in me* will remain *to be/rule with me*.²⁴ ³⁵⁻³⁶ Two women will be grinding grain²⁵ together. I will take one away *to destruction*²⁶ and/but the one *who believes in me* will remain *to be/rule with me*.²⁷ [Two men will be *working together* in their field/garden. I will take one away and I will leave one to remain.²⁸]

³⁷ Jesus' disciples asked him, "Lord, where will this happen?" He replied to them, "*It will be obvious*, just as you know where an animal carcass is by the vultures that²⁹ gather³⁰ to eat it."

²³ OR I will take/send one away.

²⁴ OR I will leave one to remain with me.

²⁵ OR preparing food. See Matthew 24:41. If grinding grain is not a known activity in your culture, you may translate this more generally.

²⁶ OR I will take/send one away.

²⁷ OR I will leave one *to remain with me*.

²⁸ OR [omit]. See Matthew 24:40. There is a textual issue here: most Greek copies of Luke do not have this verse. (It is included in Matthew's gospel.) If your major language Bible does not include this final illustration, then do not include it in your translation here.

²⁹ OR because buzzards.

³⁰ OR fly around in the sky. OR fly around/down.