



*"We proclaim Him, warning every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, so that we may present every man mature in Christ." Col 1:28*

## Luke 13:1-9

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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?

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7 "And he said to the vineyard-keeper, 'Behold, for three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree, without finding any. Cut it down! Why does it even use up the ground?'

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9 and if it bears fruit next year, fine; but if not, cut it down.'"

## So the line of reasoning for the Jew goes -

- 1) Suffering is proportional to sinfulness.
- 2) Tragedy is a sure sign of God's judgment.
- 3) Bad things happen only to bad people.
- 4) We have the right to make such judgments.

## Job 4:7

7 "Remember now, who ever perished being innocent?

## John 9:1-3

1 As He passed by, He saw a man blind from birth.

2 And His disciples asked Him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he would be born blind?"

3 Jesus answered, "It was neither that this man sinned, nor his parents; but it was so that the works of God might be displayed in him.

- To be clear, God does punish and judge sinful, evil, wicked people – the Flood, Sodom and Gomorrah, the household of Ahab.
- God also brings calamity to the righteous – Job.

## "The Reason for Human Tragedy"

### Luke 13:1-9

June 4, 2023

**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.**

- This is an important passage.

- It will give us insight into the nature of man.
- It will explain what is not behind human tragedy.
- It will show us the nature of God's grace and mercy.

### Here is the scene:

- Some people from Galilee are in Jerusalem worshipping in the Temple during Passover.
- They are offering animal sacrifices (sheep, pigeons, doves) on the altar.
- Pilate, the Roman governor, has some Galileans murdered. The reason is not given. Knowing Pilate, probably felt threatened in some way.
- The Galilean's blood and the blood from the sacrifices were mixed together around the altar.
- Like terrorists bursting into a church service today where communion is being served. They kill people and pour their blood into the communion cups.
- The Galileans were doing a good thing. No indication of sin here.
- However the Jews, who looked down on Galileans, thought they got what they deserved. Jews looked at people who go through suffering, tragedy, and calamity, as those who were getting what they deserved.

- On April 19, 1995 Timothy McVeigh and Terry Nichols bombed the federal building in Oklahoma City, OK, indiscriminately murdering 168 people. Were those people who were murdered more evil than the rest of the population in the city?

- On April 20, 1999, two teenage boys walked into Columbine High School in Littleton, CO and murdered twelve other students and a teacher. Were those murdered worse than other students in the school or CO or US?

- On September 11, 2001, our nation suffered the mass murder of almost 3,000 people. Were those who died more sinful than those who escaped?

- In 2010 an earthquake hit Haiti and 222,570 died. 800,000 survived. Were those who died more wicked than those who lived?

- In August 2005 hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans resulting in 1,800 deaths and displacing 1,000,000 people. Were the 1,800 who died deserving of death more than the 1,000,000?

- On June 26, 2012 Ninzel Banks, 5 years old, was killed by a stray bullet in north Minneapolis. Was Ninzel more sinful than other children?

- Yesterday, June 1, an Arkansas pastor and his son were critically injured and his 2 daughters died in a car/train collision. Were they worse than other families that are alive today?

- Plane crashes happen with believers and nonbelievers in them.

- Christians die in Africa, slaughtered by enemy tribes.

- Believers and unbelievers die in war. There are young men who love Christ that are being blown up just like young men who hate Christ being blown up.

**Don't judge human tragedy.**

"It is true, the wicked man sometimes falls dead in the street; but has not the minister fallen dead in the pulpit? It is true that a pleasure-boat, in which men were seeking their own pleasure on the Sunday, has suddenly gone down; but is it not equally true that a ship which contained none but godly men, who were bound upon an excursion to preach the gospel, has gone down too?"

- Spurgeon

**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."

- The crowd expects Jesus to affirm what they are thinking.
- But boy does He shock them.
- Galileans are all sinners, all deserving of death. But not greater sinners.
- The point that Jesus makes here, is that all of us are sinners. All of us are deserving to die the same way.

#### **Rom 3:10-12**

- 10 "THERE IS NONE RIGHTEOUS, NOT EVEN ONE;  
11 THERE IS NONE WHO UNDERSTANDS;  
THERE IS NONE WHO SEEKS FOR GOD;  
12 ALL HAVE TURNED ASIDE, TOGETHER THEY HAVE BECOME USELESS;  
THERE IS NONE WHO DOES GOOD,  
THERE IS NOT EVEN ONE."
- God doesn't look at mankind as being "innocent" or "neutral."
  - We come into this world fallen, our hearts are wicked and evil.
  - We all arrive in the world DOA (dead on arrival).
  - We are all deserving of instant judgment. Instant death. Instant hell.
  - Why doesn't that happen? God's grace, mercy and patience.

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**3** "I tell you, no, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish."

- Jesus tells them in verse 3 what they should do — REPENT NOW!

**"repent"** — you turn your life around and go in a different direction.

- Instead of walking away from God, walk towards God. You embrace Christ.
- Instead of walking toward sin, you walk away from sin.
- Those Galileans didn't think this was going to happen. They are worshipping. They didn't think they would die soon. But they did.
- God could strike the entire unrepentant, unbelieving human race dead any second and send them all to hell. And He would be totally justice in doing so. But He doesn't.

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- 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."
- 6 And He began telling this parable: "A man had a fig tree which had been planted in his vineyard; and he came looking for fruit on it and did not find any.
- 7 "And he said to the vineyard-keeper, 'Behold, for three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree without finding any. Cut it down! Why does it even use up the ground?'"
- 8 "And he answered and said to him, 'Let it alone, sir, for this year too, until I dig around it and put in fertilizer;
- 9 and if it bears fruit next year, fine; but if not, cut it down.'"

#### **Rom 9:11-13**

11 for though the twins were not yet born and had not done anything good or bad, so that God's purpose according to His choice would stand, not because of works but because of Him who calls,  
12 it was said to her, "THE OLDER WILL SERVE THE YOUNGER."

13 Just as it is written, "JACOB I LOVED, BUT ESAU I HATED."

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- Jesus gives a 2<sup>nd</sup> example.
- 18 people killed by a tower falling on them.
- Siloam was located in the southern part of Jerusalem.
- Spring-fed pool of Siloam. Aqueduct system used to divert water.
- No indication of sin here either.
- Just in the wrong place at the wrong time. Like many human tragedies.
- Jews think – "If I am by the tower and it falls and doesn't hit me, I must be good and they must be bad."
- The fact that you are alive doesn't mean anything other than you have an opportunity to repent.
- The real disaster, tragedy, calamity is that you die without repenting.
- A million did in 70 A.D.
- You need to "settle out of court."
- Jesus repeats the same statement – "unless you repent . . ."

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- Jesus gives a parable to further explain the urgency to repent.

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A farmer was driving along the road with a load of fertilizer. A child playing in front of his house saw him and called, "What are you hauling?" "Fertilizer," the farmer replied. "What are you going to do with it?" asked the child. "Put it on strawberries," answered the farmer. "You ought to live here," the child advised him. "We put sugar and cream on ours!"





## Luke 3:8-9

8 "Therefore bear fruits in keeping with repentance, and do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham for our father,' for I say to you that from these stones God is able to raise up children to Abraham.

9 "Indeed the axe is already laid at the root of the trees; so every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire."

## Rom 9:4-5

4 who are Israelites, to whom belongs the adoption as sons, and the glory and the covenants and the giving of the Law and the temple service and the promises,

5 whose are the fathers, and from whom is the Christ according to the flesh, who is over all,

- Israel was not bearing fruit. What is fruit?

## Ex 34:6-7

6 Then the Lord passed by in front of him and proclaimed, "The Lord, the Lord God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth;

7 who keeps lovingkindness for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin; yet He will by no means leave the guilty unpunished,

## Rom 2:4-5

4 Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and tolerance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance?

5 But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God,

## Gen 6:3

3 Then the Lord said, "My Spirit shall not strive with man forever,"

## 1 Peter 3:20

20 who once were disobedient, when the patience of God kept waiting in the days of Noah, during the construction of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through the water.

## 2 Peter 3:9

9 The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.

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- What do you do with a fig tree that is bearing no fruit?
- Cutting it down would seem the expedient thing to do.
- However giving it more time is the patient and merciful thing to do.
- I believe God is both the man (land-owner) and the vineyard-keeper in the parable.
- What you see here is the different attributes of God operating at the same time.
- Justice, righteousness, holiness on one hand requires the tree to be cut down.
- Grace, mercy, and patience on the other hand is asking for more time.
- Justice, in time, will be served and grace and mercy will be displayed.
- This is a wonderful example of how God's attributes operate together to glorify Him in all that He does.
- Israel is the tree. It is about to get chopped down -

## 5 fruits mentioned in Scripture:

### 1. The fruit of the Spirit.

**Gal 5:22-23**

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control;

### 2. The fruit of righteousness.

**James 3:18**

18 And the seed whose fruit is righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.

### 3. The fruit of holiness

**Rom 6:22**

22 But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life.

### 4. The fruit of our labor.

**Phil 1:21-22**

21 For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.

22 But if I am to live on in the flesh, this will mean fruitful labor for me;

### 5. The fruit of our lips.

**Heb 13:15**

15 Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name

## Application

1. The reason for human tragedy is due to the sinfulness of the entire human race.
2. Everyone is deserving of judgment, now.
3. When the unbeliever sees tragedy and disaster, rather than judge, they should think, "It could have been me." God is showing them more mercy, more patience, giving them more opportunity, more time, to repent.
4. There are no "innocent" human beings.
5. It is not, "Why do bad things (tragedy, disasters, calamities) happen to good people, but why do good things (life, enjoyment, laughter, etc.) happen to bad people?" To bring them to repentance.
6. The greatest tragedy for every human being without Christ, is not dying a quick death from a disaster, but dying before repenting and then spending eternity in hell.