

TODAY

A Catholic Journey Through the Gospel of Luke

SESSION 12

The Stones Would Cry Out

Luke 19:28-21:38

The King at the gates, tears over the city, fire in the temple, and two copper coins

Leader Preparation Guide

SESSION OVERVIEW

Discovery Aim: Participants hear the crowd shout the very verse Session 8 planted (blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, the Gospels' rendering of Ps 118:26), watch Jesus weep over the city that missed its visitation, and discover inside the temple cleansing that Jesus has fused two prophets in one sentence: Isaiah's house of prayer and Jeremiah's den of robbers, the second carrying Jeremiah's whole warning of the temple's destruction.

Catholic Touchstone: The kingship of Christ entering in meekness (Zech 9:9); the time of our own visitation (CCC 558 grieves with tonight's lament); the God of the living from the burning bush; the widow's two coins as the Gospel's economics; and an honest, careful answer to the sharpest skeptical attack on Jesus' credibility: this generation will not pass away.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

The entry (19:28-40) is deliberate prophecy theater. Jesus, who has walked ten chapters, now commandeers a colt on which no one has ever sat and rides the last two miles, because Zechariah 9:9 says the king comes to Zion humble and riding on a colt, and he intends to be seen fulfilling it. The multitude of disciples spreads garments on the road (the gesture made for Jehu's coronation, 2 Kgs 9:13) and shouts the pilgrim psalm with one loaded addition: blessed is the KING who comes in the name of the Lord. That is Psalm 118:26, and your group heard Jesus quote it at the end of Session 8: you will not see me until you say, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Let them make that connection themselves; it is the night's first payoff. When Pharisees demand he silence the acclamation, his answer gives tonight its title: if these were silent, the very stones would cry out. Creation itself is pregnant with this announcement; Habakkuk 2:11, the stone crying from the wall, is the nearest Old Testament echo of the image, though Luke does not name it.

Then Luke alone gives us the King in tears (19:41-44). Cresting the ridge where the city spreads out golden across the valley, Jesus wept over it: would that even today you knew the things that make for peace. He sees forty years ahead with terrible precision, a bank thrown up, encirclement, children dashed within the walls, not one stone upon another, because you did not know the time of your visitation. The word is *episkopē*, God's own coming-to-look-after, and the Catechism grieves with this scene: Jerusalem did not recognize the time of her visitation (CCC 558 territory). Keep the word visitation glowing; it is the tragic inverse of everything Zechariah sang in Session 1 (he has visited and redeemed his people, 1:68) and the hinge of tonight's application: every soul has its hour of visitation, and it can be missed.

The cleansing (19:45-46) is brief in Luke and surgical: he drove out the sellers, and his one-sentence homily is tonight's live discovery. My house shall be a house of prayer is Isaiah 56:7, from an oracle promising that foreigners and eunuchs, the excluded, will one day pray in God's house, for all peoples. But you have made it a den of robbers is Jeremiah 7:11, and the group must read Jeremiah 7 in context to feel the blade: it is the temple sermon, where Jeremiah stands at the gate and warns that trusting the temple of the Lord as a talisman while practicing injustice will end with the house destroyed like Shiloh.

A den of robbers is not where robbery happens; it is where robbers run to feel safe. By splicing these two texts, Jesus both indicts the temple's present and prophesies its future in seven words, which is why the authorities immediately seek to destroy him and why the Olivet discourse two chapters later is the same sentence expanded. The controversies that follow (20:1-47) are a gauntlet of traps he reverses one by one: the question of authority answered with a question about John; the wicked tenants ending in Psalm 118:22, the very stone which the builders rejected has become the head of the corner (the entry psalm again, now aimed at his rejecters); the tribute coin, whose image and inscription has this? render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's, the unasked question being whose image is on you; and the Sadducees' resurrection riddle answered from the books of Moses, an authority they could not evade, at the burning bush: God said I AM the God of Abraham, present tense, of dead men, therefore he is not God of the dead, but of the living; for all live to him. He closes by putting his own riddle from Psalm 110 (David's Lord) and warning against the scribes who devour widows' houses, which cues Luke's cut to an actual widow.

The widow's mite (21:1-4) is two verses and an abyss: rich gifts poured in out of abundance, and two lepta, the smallest coins in circulation in Judea, out of her poverty; she put in all the living that she had. Jesus does not romanticize her poverty; he re-prices the treasury: heaven audits gifts by what remains after, not by what was given, and by that arithmetic she out-gave everyone. St. Bede's comment carries the tradition: her two coins have been read as love of God and love of neighbor, the whole Law dropped into the box by the person the scribes were devouring. Then Olivet (21:5-36), and prepare carefully, because tonight's steelman is the sharpest skeptical attack on Jesus in print: this generation will not pass away till all has taken place (21:32), which Bertrand Russell and many since have read as a failed end-of-the-world prediction. Give the objection full strength, then work the text: the disciples' question was about the temple (when will this be, 21:7), and the discourse's core prophecy, Jerusalem surrounded by armies, its desolation, the days of vengeance, not one stone upon another, was fulfilled to the letter in AD 70, almost exactly forty years, one biblical generation, after the words were spoken. Luke's Jesus even separates the horizons explicitly: Jerusalem trodden down until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled (21:24) opens an unmeasured age between the temple's fall and the Son of man's coming. The honest answer, then: the this-generation prophecy attached to the temple was kept, spectacularly and datably; the cosmic consummation is given no date at all, indeed but of that day nothing is scheduled, and the Church reads the fall of Jerusalem as itself a sign and type of the end (prophetic foreshortening, near and far horizons in one vista), while the Magisterium has defined no timetable, and neither should we. The discourse ends where Session 8's Passover posture pointed: watch at all times, praying for strength, and the chapter closes with Jesus teaching daily in the temple, the people rising early to hear him, the calm before chapter 22.

OLD TESTAMENT ROOTS AND FULFILLMENT

Zech 9:9 Your king comes to you, humble and riding on a colt — **Lk 19:28-38**

Ps 118:26 The blessing on the one who comes in the name of the Lord, quoted in its Gospel wording (planted Session 8) — **Lk 19:38**

2 Kgs 9:13 Garments spread for a king's acclamation — **Lk 19:36**

Hab 2:11 The stone will cry out from the wall (a likely echo) — **Lk 19:40**

Isa 56:7 My house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples — **Lk 19:46**

Jer 7:1-15 The den of robbers and the temple's Shiloh warning — **Lk 19:46**

Ps 118:22 The stone the builders rejected has become the head of the corner — **Lk 20:17**

Ex 3:6 I AM the God of Abraham: the bush and the living — **Lk 20:37-38**

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

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St. Ambrose of Milan (*Exposition of the Gospel According to Luke, Book IX*)

Ambrose lingers where Luke lingers, on the tears: the Lord weeps over Jerusalem because Jerusalem would not weep for herself, and his tears, Ambrose says, are the tears of the whole Christ, grieving for every soul that fortifies itself against its own peace. He wept for the city that stoned the prophets; he weeps still, Ambrose insists, wherever the day of visitation passes a barred gate, for what he foresaw in her he forewarns in us.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

St. Bede the Venerable (*Commentary on Luke, on the widow's two coins*)

Bede weighs the treasury as heaven does: the rich cast in from their overflow, but the widow's two small coins were her whole substance, and therefore the greater gift, since God measures the hand by the heart and the offering by what it leaves behind. In her two coins the tradition Bede carries sees the two loves, of God and of neighbor, the whole Law given at once; whoever offers God his entire living, however small it rings in the box, has out-given the wealthy.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

St. Cyril of Alexandria (*Commentary on Luke, on the entry and the discourse*)

Cyril hears in the colt never ridden the untamed nations now bearing the King in meekness, and in the crowd's psalm the Church's own unending acclamation. Of the discourse he counsels the balance the Lord himself struck: the doom of the temple was spoken plainly and history performed it, but of the final day the Master gave watchfulness instead of a calendar, for he would have his servants found working, not calculating.

CATECHISM CONNECTION

CCC 557-560 The ascent to Jerusalem and the messianic entry: the King received by children and the humble, the time of visitation.

CCC 583-586 Jesus and the Temple: honored, cleansed, identified with his own body, its ruin foretold.

CCC 671-675 The time of the Church between Ascension and return: the times of the Gentiles, the final trial, no date given.

CCC 992-996 The resurrection of the dead: God of the living, revealed to Moses at the bush and confirmed by Christ.

CCC 2612 Watch and pray: vigilance as the discourse's abiding command.

THREAD WATCH

Blessed is he who comes (RESOLVES TONIGHT): Ps 118:26 shouted at the gates fulfills 13:35 exactly. Let the group find it; if no one does, read 13:35 aloud and wait.

Temple bookends (develops, resolves Session 14): The Gospel that opened at the altar of incense now fills the temple courts with its Lord teaching daily. One temple scene remains, at 24:53.

The stone (develops tonight): Stones that would cry out (19:40), the rejected cornerstone (20:17), not one stone upon another (21:6). Luke is building in stone; name the motif.

Visitation (tonight's ache): Episkopē at 19:44 is Zechariah's Benedictus verb (1:68) in tragic reverse. Connect them if the group has energy; it is the study's saddest rhyme.

Passover posture and the master who serves (dormant, resolve NEXT session): Session 13 is the upper room. Remind them to reread 12:35-37 before coming.

SESSION GOALS

1. Stage the entry as fulfilled prophecy: Zechariah's colt, Jehu's garments, and the Session 8 payoff of Psalm 118:26.
2. Sit with the weeping King and the word visitation until its personal edge is felt.
3. Run the Isaiah 56 / Jeremiah 7 discovery and let the group find the destruction warning hidden in den of robbers.
4. Work the burning bush argument and the widow's arithmetic as two miniatures of Luke's God: of the living, and of the poor.
5. Give the this-generation steelman its full force and answer it with dates, texts, and honest hedging where the Church herself gives no timetable.

Time Note (75-90 minutes)

Three chapters tonight; the controversies must be triaged. If pressed, take the authority question and the tenants (20:1-19) in leader framing with Ps 118:22 read aloud, and give the tribute coin one exchange rather than a full question. Never cut Q1-Q2 (entry and tears), Q3 (the temple discovery), or Q6 (the steelman); and keep five minutes for the widow, who must not be squeezed out by the apocalypse, since that would repeat the scribes' crime by scheduling.

Discussion Guide

OPENING PRAYER

Leader: *Lord Jesus, King who comes in the name of the Lord, ride into every gate we have barred against you. Give us eyes for the time of our visitation, hearts that make your house a house of prayer, and hands like the widow's, that hold nothing back. Blessed are you, now and at the hour of your coming. Amen.*

WIN: OPENING QUESTIONS (10 MIN)

W1. Have you ever recognized only afterward that a moment was once-in-a-lifetime while it was happening? What did missing it, or catching it, teach you?

W2. What is the smallest gift you have ever received that turned out to be the largest? What made its size deceptive?

BUILD: INTO THE TEXT (50-60 MIN)

HOW TO LEAD THIS SECTION

Tonight opens with a payoff (let them find Ps 118:26 themselves) and closes with the study's most delicate steelman. Keep the middle brisk; the controversies reward summary better than any other section of Luke. And do not let the evening end on AD 70: end on the widow and on watch and pray.

1. Read Luke 19:28-40. Everything here is staged: the colt no one has ridden, the garments on the road, the psalm. Find Zechariah 9:9 and 2 Kings 9:13 for the props. Then the shout itself, verse 38: where has this study heard blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord before, and from whose mouth?

Leader: *Zechariah's meek king on a colt; Jehu's coronation garments. Then let them dig: Lk 13:35, Session 8's closing verse, you will not see me until you say... The crowd is saying it. If no one remembers, read 13:35 and watch the room.*

ANSWER: SHARE AFTER THE DISCUSSION

Jesus choreographs his own arrival: the untamed colt is Zechariah 9:9's mount for the humble king, the garments on the road are Jehu's coronation carpet, and the pilgrim crowd sings Psalm 118:26 with an addition Luke alone records: blessed is the **King** who comes in the name of the Lord. And the study has been waiting for this sentence since Session 8: you will not see me, he said over the city, until you say, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord (13:35). The condition is being fulfilled at the gates, out loud, by the disciples if not yet by the city's rulers, which is exactly the tension of the scene. When the Pharisees demand silence, the answer is tonight's title: if these were silent, the very stones would cry out. The announcement is not optional; creation itself is loaded with it, as Habakkuk heard the stone cry out from the wall. Kingship this humble can be refused, but it cannot be hushed.

2. Read Luke 19:41-44 slowly; only Luke records it. The King, mid-parade, weeps. What does he see coming, with what detail, and what reason does he give in verse 44? Then set the word visitation beside Zechariah's song in 1:68. What has Jerusalem missed?

Leader: The siege foreseen: bank, encirclement, children, no stone on stone. Because you did not know the time of your visitation, episkopē. Benedictus: he has visited and redeemed his people. The visitation came in person and was not recognized.

ANSWER: SHARE AFTER THE DISCUSSION

At the summit of his own triumphal entry, Jesus breaks down over the city: would that even today you knew the things that make for peace. He describes the future with a war correspondent's detail, a bank thrown up, encirclement on every side, children dashed within the walls, not one stone upon another, the siege of AD 70 four decades early, and gives the reason in one clause: because you did not know the time of your **visitation**, *episkopē*, God's own coming-to-look-after. The study's saddest rhyme sounds here: Zechariah opened this Gospel singing blessed be the Lord, for he has **visited** and redeemed his people (1:68), and now the Visitation rides through the gate in person, weeping, unrecognized by the city built to receive him. St. Ambrose would not let his hearers stand safely outside the scene: the Lord weeps wherever the day of visitation passes a barred gate. Every life gets its Palm Sunday; the only question the tears ask is whether we will know ours when it crests the hill.

3. **Live discovery:** Read Luke 19:45-46. Jesus' one-sentence homily splices two prophets. Find Isaiah 56:6-7 and read who that house of prayer was promised to. Then find Jeremiah 7:1-15, the temple sermon, and read what den of robbers meant in its own context, and what Jeremiah said would happen to the house. What has Jesus said in seven words?

Leader: Isaiah: the excluded, foreigners and eunuchs, welcomed to a house of prayer for all peoples. Jeremiah: robbers' den = the hideout where the unjust feel safe; the warning: I will do to this house as I did to Shiloh, destruction. Jesus has indicted the present and prophesied the end in one sentence.

ANSWER: SHARE AFTER THE DISCUSSION

The splice is the sermon. My house shall be a house of prayer is Isaiah 56:7, and its context is an open door: foreigners and eunuchs, the categorically excluded, promised joy in God's house, for all peoples, and by the usual reconstruction of the temple courts (compare Mark 11:17, a house of prayer for all the nations), the commerce Jesus overturns had set up in the court of the Gentiles, the one space the nations had. But you have made it a den of robbers detonates Jeremiah 7: in the temple sermon, a den of robbers is not where crime occurs but where criminals **retreat to feel safe**, and Jeremiah's verdict on a temple used as a talisman over an unjust life was Shiloh: I will destroy this house. So in seven words Jesus has done two things at once: indicted the temple's present (exclusion and false security where Isaiah promised welcome and prayer) and invoked the sentence hanging over its future, the same sentence his tears just pronounced on the ridge, and the same one the Olivet discourse will expand: not one stone upon another. The authorities heard both perfectly, which is why 19:47 says they sought to destroy him. Prophets who quote Jeremiah 7 inside the temple do not die of old age.

4. Read Luke 20:27-40. The Sadducees, who deny resurrection and give the books of Moses pride of place, bring their seven-husbands riddle. Watch how Jesus answers: first about the age to come, then from Moses, the authority they could not evade. What does he draw out of the burning bush, and what does for all live to him mean?

Leader: He corrects their premise (resurrection life is not marriage resumed) and then argues from Ex 3:6's present tense: I AM the God of Abraham, spoken centuries after Abraham died. God is not God of the dead. Even the scribes applaud.

ANSWER: SHARE AFTER THE DISCUSSION

The riddle assumes the resurrection is this life extended, so Jesus corrects the premise first: those accounted worthy of that age neither marry nor die, being sons of God, sons of the resurrection; marriage, ordered to an age where death makes new generations necessary, is fulfilled rather than resumed. Then he meets the Sadducees inside their own canon, at the bush: God said to Moses, I AM the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob, present tense, spoken centuries after their funerals. Now he is not God of the dead, but of the living; for all live to him. If the covenant God still introduces himself by the patriarchs' names, the patriarchs are not gone; they are his, and what is his, lives. The Catechism carries the argument forward into our creed (CCC 992-996): resurrection faith rests not on speculation about souls but on who God is, the living God who does not sign his name to corpses. Even the scribes said teacher, you have spoken well, the gauntlet's only applause.

5. Read Luke 20:45-21:4 as one scene: the scribes who devour widows' houses, then the widow at the treasury. What is Luke doing with that cut? Do the arithmetic of verse 4: how does heaven price the two lepta above the large gifts, and what did the gift cost her?

Leader: The juxtaposition is the point: the devoured widow out-gives the devourers' patrons. Heaven audits by remainder: they gave out of abundance; she, out of poverty, gave all the living she had. Bede's two loves in the Voices box.

ANSWER: SHARE AFTER THE DISCUSSION

Luke's editing preaches: one verse after Jesus condemns scribes who devour widows' houses, a widow appears with two lepta, the smallest coins in circulation, and Luke's placement invites us to see in her the very kind of house the devourers empty. The rich give out of their abundance, gifts that change the treasury and cost the giver nothing; she, out of her poverty, put in all the living that she had, and Jesus re-prices the whole box: this poor widow has put in more than all of them. Heaven audits by remainder, not by amount: the question at the ledger is never how much went in but how much was held back, by which arithmetic the smallest gift in the temple's history was also the largest. St. Bede hands on the tradition's tenderness: her two coins are the two loves, of God and of neighbor, the entire Law dropped into the box by the person the establishment was consuming. She is the Magnificat's last cameo before the Passion, and something more: within days, Someone else will put in all the living that he has.

6. **Steelman chain:** Read Luke 21:5-9, 20-24, and 32-33. The skeptic's strongest attack, made famous by Bertrand Russell: Jesus said this generation will not pass away till all has taken place, the world did not

end, therefore he was a failed apocalyptic prophet and Christianity rests on an error. Give the objection its full weight. Then interrogate the discourse: what question was actually asked in 21:7, what did Jesus predict about Jerusalem in 21:20-24, when was it fulfilled, and what does 21:24's until the times of the Gentiles do to the timeline?

***Leader:** Full strength first; this objection has shipwrecked real faith. Then: the question was about the temple; the core prophecy (armies, desolation, no stone on stone) was fulfilled in AD 70, one generation later, datably; acknowledge that the scope of all in 21:32 is debated and present this as the argued Catholic reading; 21:24 explicitly opens an unmeasured age before the cosmic signs; the fall of Jerusalem is itself a type of the end. Hedge honestly: no date is given for the consummation, and the Church has defined no timetable.*

ANSWER: SHARE AFTER THE DISCUSSION

Let the steelman stand at full height: if Jesus scheduled the end of the world within his hearers' lifetime, he was wrong, and everything built on his authority shakes. Now read what was asked and what was answered. The disciples' question (21:7) is about the temple: teacher, when will *this* be, these stones just admired, just sentenced. And the discourse's datable core answers exactly that: when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, know that its desolation has come near... they will fall by the edge of the sword and be led captive among all nations. In AD 70, forty years, one biblical generation, after the words were spoken, Titus's legions did precisely this, and the temple has never been rebuilt: this generation will not pass away was kept, publicly, datably, to the stone. Luke's Jesus then explicitly uncouples the horizons: Jerusalem will be trodden down *until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled* (21:24), an unmeasured age, the age we live in, standing between the temple's fall and the Son of man's coming on the clouds. One knot must be named honestly: verses 25-28 set cosmic signs and the Son of man before verse 32, so interpreters dispute how much all has taken place covers. The reading offered here, that this generation answers the temple question of 21:7 while the cosmic verses telescope the far horizon into the near one, is a longstanding and well-argued Catholic reading, not a knockdown proof; grant the skeptic that, and the reading's strength grows, because it takes every verse seriously instead of explaining any away. For that final day he gives no date whatsoever, only watch at all times; the prophets' near and far horizons stand in one vista, the judgment on Jerusalem serving as sign and type of the last judgment, which is how the Church has long read it (CCC 671-675), while defining no timetable, and neither may we. So the honest verdict, on this reading, runs opposite to Russell's: the prediction that could be checked came true on schedule; the consummation was left undated on purpose; and the only failed prophets in the story are the ones, ancient and modern, who keep printing calendars the Master refused to issue. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away, and the temple's rubble is their receipt.

DIG DEEPER: WHOSE IMAGE? THE TRIBUTE COIN'S HIDDEN QUESTION

Show me a coin. Whose likeness and inscription has it? Caesar's coin bears Caesar's image; let Caesar have his metal. But the answer's second clause, render to God the things that are God's, carries an unasked question every Jewish hearer could finish: and what bears God's image? Genesis 1:27 answers. Caesar may tax the coin; he may not own the man. The saying founds the Christian limits of the state in eleven words: give the emperor his currency, never your soul, which bears another Sovereign's likeness and inscription.

SEND: TAKING IT OUT (10 MIN)

S1. The city missed the time of its visitation. Where might God be visiting your life right now, in an opportunity, a person, a nagging pull, that busyness or fear is keeping you from recognizing? What would knowing the time look like this week?

S2. The widow's gift was priced by what it left behind. Where in your giving, of money, time, or self, are you offering abundance's leftovers, and what would two-lepta generosity cost you?

LIVE IT THIS WEEK

- Make one widow's-mite gift this week: sized by what remains after, not by what goes in. Tell no one its amount.
- Pray Psalm 118 once through, and stop at verses 22 and 26: the rejected stone and the blessed King, both fulfilled inside one week of his life.
- Before next session, read Luke 22:1-38 and reread Exodus 12:1-14 and Luke 12:35-37. Come hungry; Session 13 is the upper room.

Scripture memory: **Luke 21:33**, *Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.* (RSV2CE)

CLOSING PRAYER

Leader: *Lord Jesus, you wept over the city that would not know you; do not let us miss the day of our visitation. Make your Church a house of prayer for all peoples, teach us the widow's arithmetic, and keep us watching, not calculating, until you come. Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord. Amen.*

Leader Reference Card: Session 12

Every passage used tonight, in order of appearance. Isaiah 56 and Jeremiah 7 must be flagged together; Psalm 118 works twice.

Passage Used for

Luke 19:28-40 Q1: the entry; stones would cry out

Zechariah 9:9; 2 Kings 9:13 Q1: the colt and the garments

Psalm 118:26 with Luke 13:35 Q1: the Session 8 payoff

Luke 19:41-44 Q2: the tears; visitation

Luke 1:68 Q2: the Benedictus rhyme

Luke 19:45-48 Q3: the cleansing

Isaiah 56:6-7; Jeremiah 7:1-15 Q3 live discovery: the spliced sermon

Luke 20:9-19 Framing: the tenants; Ps 118:22

Luke 20:20-26 Dig Deeper: the tribute coin

Luke 20:27-40 Q4: the burning bush; Ex 3:6

Luke 20:45-21:4 Q5: the scribes and the widow

Luke 21:5-36 Q6 steelman: Olivet; this generation; times of the Gentiles

CCC 557-560, 583-586, 671-675, 992-996, 2612 Catechism Connection

Next week: Luke 22:1-38, the upper room. Every banked thread comes due: the Passover posture, the master who serves, the four verbs, the opportune time. Have Exodus 12 flagged, and prepare the steelman on do this in remembrance with special care; it is the study's most important.