

Lessons from Luke 13 – 24

Chapter 13

- **Tragedies and Repentance (Luke 13:1-5):** When discussing the Galileans killed by Pilate and the tower in Siloam that fell, Jesus refutes the idea that sudden disasters happen only to the worst sinners. Instead of speculating about others' guilt, we must recognize that all are sinners in need of salvation, and repentance is an urgent, personal matter.
- **The Barren Fig Tree (Luke 13:6-9):** This parable illustrates God's infinite patience. The fig tree represents an unfruitful life, while the vineyard keeper (Jesus) advocates for one more season of grace to nurture it. It highlights the Seventh-day Adventist emphasis on a loving, long-suffering God who grants probationary time to produce the "fruits of the Spirit".
- **True Sabbath Keeping (Luke 13:10-17):** Healing the woman "bowed together" by Satan on the Sabbath demonstrates that the day is designed for liberation, physical healing, and mercy. Jesus rebukes the synagogue ruler's rigid legalism, teaching that relieving human suffering and bringing spiritual freedom honors the Sabbath.
- **The Narrow Gate (Luke 13:22-30):** Jesus urges followers to "strive to enter in", warning against a complacent, intellectual belief. The "shut door" highlights the sobering reality that probation and opportunities for salvation will eventually close.
- **Lament Over Jerusalem (Luke 13:34-35):** Jesus weeps over Jerusalem, revealing the heart of God—longing to gather and protect His people like a hen gathers her brood. It highlights the tragedy of resisting the Holy Spirit and rejecting God's prophets.

Chapter 14

1. The True Meaning of the Sabbath (Luke 14:1–6)

- **The KJV Context:** Jesus heals a man with dropsy on the Sabbath while dining at a Pharisee's house. He asks if it is lawful to heal on the Sabbath, and upon their silence, He heals the man and silences their hypocrisy by referencing saving an animal from a pit.
- **SDA Explanation:** The Pharisees had buried the Sabbath under rigid, man-made traditions, making it a burden rather than a delight. Jesus demonstrates that the Sabbath is a day for **mercy, healing, and restoring humanity**. For Adventists, this underscores that true Sabbath keeping should be active in doing good and relieving suffering, not merely a day of idle restriction.

2. The Exaltation of Humility (Luke 14:7–11)

- **The KJV Context:** Jesus watches guests scramble for the "chief rooms" (seats of honor) and advises taking the lowest seat so the host may later promote you. He concludes, *"For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted"* (v. 11, KJV).
- **SDA Explanation:** This is not a strategic etiquette trick to get a better seat, but a spiritual warning against pride and self-seeking. Adventists emphasize that in God's kingdom, true greatness is measured by a **spirit of self-forgetfulness and**

service. Seeking positions of prominence or self-exaltation grieves the Holy Spirit, whereas a humble reliance on God allows Him to lift us up in due time.

3. The Great Banquet and Making Excuses (Luke 14:15–24)

- **The KJV Context:** Jesus tells the parable of a great supper. When the invitations are sent, the guests make trivial excuses (buying land, testing oxen, getting married). The angry master then sends his servants to the highways and hedges to invite the poor, maimed, halt, and blind.
- **SDA Explanation:** The "supper" represents the **Gospel invitation** and the blessings of salvation. The excuses represent how people today allow worldly pursuits, material possessions, and personal comforts to take precedence over their spiritual lives. SDA teaching warns against letting the cares of this life cause us to reject or delay accepting God's gracious invitation. The inclusion of the "outcasts" reveals God's heart for the marginalized and His desire that "all things are now ready" (v. 17) for everyone.

4. Counting the Cost of Discipleship (Luke 14:25–35)

- **The KJV Context:** Addressing the multitudes, Jesus states that to be His disciple, a person must "hate" father, mother, and their own life, bear their cross, forsake all possessions, and count the cost like a builder or a king going to war. He ends with the warning about salt losing its savor.
- **SDA Explanation:**
 - **Priorities:** Jesus is using Eastern hyperbole to teach that our love for Him must be so supreme that our earthly attachments seem like "hate" by comparison. No family member or worldly tie can be allowed to stand between a believer and obedience to God.
 - **Bearing the Cross:** This signifies absolute **self-renunciation** and a willingness to suffer for Christ's sake.
 - **Salt:** To lose one's savor means to profess Christ without possessing genuine, life-transforming faith, making the believer useless to God's mission. Adventists believe discipleship is not a casual commitment, but a lifetime of wholehearted, sacrificial surrender.

Chapter 15

1. God's Active Pursuit (The Lost Sheep and Coin)

- **The Lost Sheep:** Represents those who know they are spiritually lost but feel helpless to find their way back to God. The Shepherd (Christ) leaves the ninety-nine to actively search for the one that is lost.
- **The Lost Coin:** Symbolizes sinners who are completely unaware of their lost condition. Just as the woman lit a lamp and swept her house, God actively and continuously seeks out those who are spiritually estranged but indifferent.
- **Lesson:** God does not wait passively for the lost to fix themselves; He aggressively seeks them. Every individual possesses eternal value to the Creator.

2. Freewill and Rebellious Choices (The Prodigal Son)

- **The "Far Country":** The younger son's demand for his inheritance illustrates God's respect for human free will. God does not force obedience; He allows individuals to follow their chosen path, even when He knows it will lead to hardship and spiritual bankruptcy.
- **Lesson:** Attempting to live independently of God leads to a wasted life. Selfishness and sin ultimately separate us from the peace and protection of the Father's house.

3. Genuine Repentance (Coming to One's Senses)

- The turning point of the parable occurs when the son "came to himself" (Luke 15:17). He realized his wretched condition, took full responsibility for his choices, and decided to return home with a contrite heart.
- **Lesson:** True repentance is more than just feeling sorry for the consequences of sin; it is an active turning away from self and the world, relying solely on the Father's mercy.

4. The Father's Extravagant Grace

- In Ellen G. White's commentary (often studied in Christ's Object Lessons), the father represents God. When the father sees his son returning from a long way off, he runs to meet him, embraces him, and restores him to full sonship before the son can even finish his rehearsed apology.
- **Lesson:** God does not greet returning sinners with condemnation or a lecture; He showers them with robes of righteousness and unconditional love.

5. The Danger of Self-Righteousness (The Older Brother)

- The older brother's anger at the celebration mirrors the attitude of the Pharisees. Though he remained physically at home, his heart was far from his father. He harbored bitterness, lacked mercy, and was unable to rejoice over the salvation of the lost.
- **Lesson:** It is possible to be outwardly obedient yet spiritually lost through pride, self-righteousness, and a lack of compassion for others.

Chapter 16

The Parable of the Shrewd Manager (Luke 16:1-13)

- **The Principle of Stewardship:** Everything belongs to God, and humans are merely managers (stewards) of His blessings.
- **Foresight vs. Dishonesty:** Jesus does not condone the manager's cheating. Instead, He highlights the man's *foresight*. If worldly people plan so carefully for their earthly future, believers should be even more intentional about investing in their eternal future.
- **True Riches:** Faithfulness in handling material wealth ("mammon") proves a person can be trusted with spiritual responsibilities.
- **No Compromise:** You cannot serve both God and money.

The Rich Man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31)

- **Status vs. Character:** The rich man's sin was not his wealth, but his self-centered indifference to the suffering man at his gate.
- **The State of the Dead:** SDA theology emphasizes that this passage uses the popular cultural imagery of its day. It is interpreted as a parable demonstrating that the dead sleep until the resurrection, rather than a literal, immediate torment in conscious hell.
- **The Finality of Choices:** The "great gulf fixed" teaches that a person's eternal destiny is decided in this life, and no second chances exist after death.
- **Authority of the Scriptures:** Jesus concludes that if people do not listen to the teachings of Moses and the Prophets (the Word of God), they will not be persuaded even by a miraculous return from the dead.

Chapter 17

1. Guarding Influence and Unlimited Forgiveness (Verses 1–4)

- **The Warning:** Jesus warns that offenses (temptations to sin) will come, but pronounces a severe woe on those who cause vulnerable or young believers to stumble.
- **The SDA Application:** Adventist scholars stress that believers are to exercise deep responsibility over how their actions, words, or lifestyle choices impact others.
- **Forgiveness:** Jesus commands His followers to forgive a repentant brother as many as "seven times in a day". This indicates that our capacity to forgive should mirror the boundless, continual grace we have received from God.

2. Faith and Humility in Service (Verses 5–10)

- **The Lesson:** When the disciples asked Jesus to increase their faith, He answered that even faith as small as a mustard seed can uproot a tree. He then illustrates the attitude of a servant: after completing expected duties, a servant doesn't demand praise or a special reward, but simply says, "We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do" (KJV).
- **The SDA Application:** This directly undercuts the idea of "salvation by works". In the Adventist perspective, this passage teaches that our obedience and service are the natural outflow of gratitude for a salvation already freely given, rather than a way to earn favor or secure a higher standing before God.

3. The Power of Gratitude (Verses 11–19)

- **The Story:** Jesus heals ten lepers, but only one—a Samaritan—returns to express gratitude and give glory to God. Jesus notes, "Where are the nine?" and tells the Samaritan, "Thy faith hath made thee whole" (KJV).
- **The SDA Application:** Adventists often point out the difference between being merely "healed" (physical restoration) and being "made whole" (spiritual salvation and relationship with God). The nine Jewish lepers represent those who accept

God's blessings and move on without acknowledging Him, while the one Samaritan exemplifies true faith through intentional worship, humility, and thanksgiving.

4. Preparation for the Second Coming (Verses 20–37)

- **The Kingdom of God:** When the Pharisees asked when the kingdom of God would come, Jesus stated that it "is within you" (or "in your midst").
- **The SDA Application:** SDA theology emphasizes that the Kingdom of God begins spiritually in the heart through the Holy Spirit today, and will be followed by the literal, glorious return of Jesus.
- **Readiness:** Jesus compares His return to the suddenness of the days of Noah and Lot, warning believers against being consumed by worldly pursuits or looking back. This is a prominent focus for Adventists, who interpret the warning to "Remember Lot's wife" as a caution against holding onto worldly ties and possessions when cataclysmic judgment falls upon the earth.

Chapter 18

1. Persistence in Prayer (Verses 1-8)

- **The Story:** The parable of the unjust judge and the persistent widow who refuses to give up until she receives justice.
- **The SDA Lesson:** This is not about pestering a reluctant God until He finally gives in. Rather, it reveals that God is a loving, just Father who wants to answer. Consistent, unceasing prayer transforms our own hearts, builds our faith, and aligns our will with His while we await Christ's return.

2. Humility over Self-Righteousness (Verses 9-14)

- **The Story:** The contrasting prayers of the self-righteous Pharisee and the repentant tax collector.
- **The SDA Lesson:** SDA theology (often drawing from Ellen G. White's writings in *Christ's Object Lessons*) views the Pharisee's prayer as a representation of legalism—trusting in one's own good works for salvation. True justification comes only when we recognize our spiritual bankruptcy and cry out for God's unmerited mercy and grace.

3. Childlike Faith (Verses 15-17)

- **The Story:** Jesus rebukes the disciples for turning away children, stating that the kingdom of God belongs to those who receive it as a little child.
- **The SDA Lesson:** The lesson underscores simplicity and total trust. Just as a child depends entirely on their parents for everything, believers must surrender their intellectual pride and self-sufficiency, relying fully on Jesus for salvation.

4. The Danger of Materialism (Verses 18-30)

- **The Story:** The encounter with the rich young ruler who walks away sad because his wealth is an obstacle to following Jesus.

- **The SDA Lesson:** Wealth and self-reliance can become an idol. The SDA view on this text is that we must hold all earthly possessions loosely. Anything that holds a higher priority than God is a barrier to discipleship.

Chapter 19

1. Zacchaeus: Divine Grace and Restitution (Luke 19:1-10)

- **God Initiates the Search:** Just as Jesus sought out Zacchaeus in the sycamore tree, Christ actively pursues those who are marginalized or seen as "unreachable" by society.
- **Grace Transforms:** True conversion results in changed actions. Unlike the Rich Young Ruler (Luke 18), Zacchaeus's encounter with Jesus made him willing to let go of his greed.
- **True Repentance Requires Restitution:** The SDA fundamental belief regarding repentance dictates that making wrongs right is the fruit of true salvation. Zacchaeus demonstrated his sincerity by pledging to give half his goods to the poor and repaying those he defrauded fourfold.

2. The Parable of the Ten Minas (Luke 19:11-27)

- **Faithful Stewardship:** Jesus shared this parable to correct the disciples' misconception that the earthly kingdom would immediately appear. He likened Himself to a nobleman leaving to receive a kingdom, entrusting His followers with resources ("minas") to manage until He returns.
- **No Room for Sloth:** Believers are expected to actively use their God-given gifts, time, and resources for the advancement of His kingdom. The lazy servant represents those who bury their talents out of a faulty, fearful view of God's character.
- **Reward for Service:** Faithful stewardship is rewarded with greater spiritual responsibility in God's kingdom.

3. The Triumphal Entry (Luke 19:28-40)

- **The King of Humility:** Jesus entered Jerusalem riding on a donkey rather than a conquering war-horse, publicly accepting the title of Messiah. This act highlights the triumph of meekness over the militaristic, political kingdom the crowds were hoping for.
- **Stones Crying Out:** When Pharisees demanded Jesus rebuke His praising disciples, He noted that if they remained silent, the very stones would declare His majesty. Worship and the proclamation of the Gospel are inevitable when the heart recognizes God.

4. Jesus Weeps Over Jerusalem & Cleanses the Temple (Luke 19:41-48)

- **The Sorrow of God:** Jesus wept over Jerusalem, mourning the spiritual blindness and inevitable destruction of a nation that rejected its Savior. It reveals God's deep anguish over willful, unrepentant rebellion.

- **Purity of Worship:** By casting out the money changers, Jesus underscored the sacredness of the sanctuary and the importance of reverent worship, condemning those who use religion for personal, financial gain.

Chapter 20

1. The Conflict Over Authority (vv. 1-8)

- **The Context:** Chief priests and scribes questioned Jesus' right to teach and to cleanse the temple, demanding to know His source of power. [1]
- **The Lesson:** Instead of directly answering them, Jesus countered with a question about John the Baptist's baptism. He exposed their willful ignorance and hypocrisy. They cared more about their reputations and fear of the crowd than about the truth.

2. The Parable of the Wicked Tenants (vv. 9-19)

- **The Context:** Jesus tells a parable of a man who planted a vineyard, let it out to tenants, and sent servants to collect the fruit. The tenants beat the servants and ultimately killed the owner's son.
- **The Lesson:** Seventh-day Adventists (SDA) view this as a prophetic summary of redemptive history. The vineyard represents God's people (Israel); the servants are the Old Testament prophets, and the Son is Christ. The religious leaders recognized this parable targeted their intended rejection and murder of Jesus. It serves as a stern warning against spiritual privilege: God expects spiritual fruit, and rejection of His Son results in the loss of kingdom privileges.

3. Taxes to Caesar (vv. 20-26)

- **The Context:** Spies tried to trap Jesus into committing a political offense by asking if it was lawful to pay taxes to Caesar.
- **The Lesson:** Jesus famously responded: "*Render therefore unto Caesar the things which be Caesar's, and unto God the things which be God's*". According to Ellen G. White's teachings in *The Desire of Ages*, Jesus taught that followers of God can peaceably obey the laws of the land and support civil government, provided it does not conflict with a higher, divine duty. Our supreme allegiance always belongs to God.

4. The Resurrection and the Afterlife (vv. 27-38)

- **The Context:** The Sadducees, who did not believe in a bodily resurrection, attempted to mock the concept by presenting a complex scenario of a woman who married seven brothers.
- **The Lesson:** Jesus corrected their misunderstanding of Scripture and God's power. He revealed that in the resurrection, there will be no marriage, as there will be no more death. The resurrected ones will be "like the angels". Furthermore, by referencing the "God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob," Jesus validated the present reality of the patriarchs resting in hope until the resurrection, aligning with the SDA foundational belief that the dead are asleep ("unconscious") until the return of Christ.

5. The Scribes Exposed (vv. 39-47)

- **The Context:** Jesus warned His disciples to beware of the scribes, who loved to wear long robes, demand prominent greetings, and "devour widows' houses" while offering long prayers for a show.
- **The Lesson:** True religion is about humility and a sincere heart, not outward display. Jesus condemned religious exploitation and warned that insincere, boastful prayer—done merely for show or prestige—is an abomination to God.

Chapter 21

1. Radical, Sacrificial Stewardship

- **The Principle:** By praising the poor widow's "two mites," Jesus teaches that the value of an offering is measured not by its size, but by the sacrifice it requires.
- **SDA Context:** In Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) theology, this applies to both financial tithes/offerings and the giving of one's time and life. It is a warning against giving out of mere abundance or "leftovers" while ignoring the needs of the church and the poor.

2. Steadfast Endurance Through Trials

- **The Principle:** Jesus warns that His followers will face intense persecution, betrayal by family, and global turmoil before the end.
- **SDA Context:** This aligns closely with the prophetic writings of Ellen G. White (e.g., *The Great Controversy*), which anticipate a future "time of trouble" just before Christ's return. Jesus' promise in Luke 21:15 to provide "a mouth and wisdom" reassures believers that they will have supernatural Holy Spirit guidance during these crises.

3. Spiritual Vigilance and Readiness

- **The Principle:** Jesus commands believers to "watch" and "pray always," warning against hearts being "overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life" (Luke 21:34, KJV).
- **SDA Context:** Adventists place high priority on this call for spiritual sobriety. "Surfeiting" and "drunkenness" represent spiritual apathy and being overly engrossed in worldly pursuits. This is a call to guard the mind and body so the Second Coming does not catch the believer unprepared like a trap.

4. Hope in Prophetic Fulfillment

- **The Principle:** Jesus uses the budding fig tree to show that just as nature's signs point to summer, the fulfillment of prophecy guarantees His kingdom is near.
- **SDA Context:** Adventists hold strongly to the imminent, literal Second Coming of Jesus. Luke 21 encourages the believer to "look up, and lift up your heads" (Luke 21:28, KJV) rather than yielding to fear when global disasters and signs occur.

Chapter 22

1. The Lord's Supper and Humility

- **The Lesson:** During the Passover meal, Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper and the New Testament. SDA tradition views the bread and wine as symbols of Christ's broken body and shed blood, pointing forward to His second coming.
- **Self-Examination:** In this same hour, the disciples argued over who was the greatest. This highlights the danger of human pride even in the most holy settings. It is a call to self-examination, where partakers should approach the Lord's Table with humility, recognizing their absolute dependence on His grace.

2. The Danger of Self-Sufficiency (Peter's Denial)

- **The Lesson:** Jesus warned Peter that Satan desired to "sift [them] as wheat". Peter's confident reply, "Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death" (Luke 22:33 KJV), shows the danger of relying on human strength.
- **Victory over Self:** Peter's subsequent denial of Christ demonstrates how quickly we can fall when trusting our own resolve. The lesson is a sobering warning to avoid spiritual pride and to realize that without Christ, we are vulnerable.

3. The Power of Surrendered Prayer (Gethsemane)

- **The Lesson:** In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus modeled ultimate surrender with His prayer: "Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done" (Luke 22:42 KJV).
- **Aligning with God's Will:** Jesus did not rely on His immediate emotions or desire to avoid the cross. Instead, He overcame through fervent, agonizing prayer. SDA teachings—such as those in Ellen G. White's *The Desire of Ages*—emphasize that the Christian life must be anchored in daily, intentional surrender to the Father's will.

4. Satanic Influence vs. God's Sovereignty

- **The Lesson:** The chapter begins with Satan entering Judas Iscariot, leading to the betrayal of Jesus for thirty pieces of silver.
- **Victory Over Evil:** Even during his darkest hour and amid the cruelty of the Sanhedrin, God is shown to be in complete control of the broader picture of redemption. It teaches believers that while spiritual warfare is real, God's divine plan of salvation cannot be thwarted.

Chapter 23

1. The Power of Forgiveness and Love

- **"Father, forgive them" (Luke 23:34):** Even amidst the agony of the cross, Jesus's first recorded words were a plea for the forgiveness of His tormentors. SDA teachings highlight this as the ultimate demonstration of God's unconditional love, proving that Christ came to reconcile humanity to God, not to exact vengeance.
- **Ellen G. White's perspective:** In the SDA Bible Commentary and writings such as *The Desire of Ages*, Ellen G. White emphasizes that Christ's sacrificial death is the center of the Christian faith and the only security against apostasy for both human beings and unfallen angels in heaven.

2. The Penitent Thief and the State of the Dead

- **"Today you will be with me in Paradise" (Luke 23:43):** This passage is vital in Adventist theology regarding what happens after death. Because SDA doctrine teaches that the dead sleep unconsciously until the resurrection, they interpret the comma placement differently to avoid contradicting other scriptures (e.g., Jesus telling Mary Magdalene in John 20:17 that He had not yet ascended to His Father).
- **The interpretation:** The phrase is read as, *"Truly, I say to you today, you will be with me in Paradise."* This means Jesus gave the thief the assurance of salvation on that day, securing his place in the future heavenly kingdom rather than teaching that the thief entered heaven immediately upon dying.

3. The Sabbath Connection

- **"And that day was the preparation, and the sabbath drew on" (Luke 23:54):** Jesus rested in the tomb on the seventh-day Sabbath, just as He had rested on the seventh day of Creation.
- **The lesson:** SDA teachings emphasize that Jesus honored the Sabbath even in His death. The resting of the Creator in the tomb on Sabbath serves to highlight the sacredness and perpetual importance of the fourth commandment.

4. The Danger of Compromise (Pontius Pilate)

- Pilate repeatedly recognized Jesus's innocence yet ultimately yielded to the pressure of the crowd to maintain his own political standing. This teaches a stern lesson about the dangers of compromising one's conscience to avoid social or political consequences.

Chapter 24

1. The Authority of All Scripture

When walking the road to Emmaus, Jesus rebuked the disciples for not believing the prophets. He then gave a comprehensive Bible study, "beginning at Moses and all the Prophets".

- **The Lesson:** SDAs emphasize that the entire Bible—both Old and New Testaments—is intrinsically linked. Prophecies from the Old Testament are reliable, accurate, and point directly to the ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus.

2. Guarding Against Doubt

Despite hearing reports and prophecies, even Jesus's closest followers doubted the resurrection, initially treating the women's accounts as "idle tales".

- **The Lesson:** SDA theology highlights that doubt is a natural human struggle, but one that Satan seeks to exploit. The remedy for doubt, as demonstrated in Luke 24, is immersing oneself in God's Word. Jesus had to literally "open their understanding" that they might comprehend the scriptures.

3. The Centrality of the Sanctuary

In verse 46, Jesus explains that "it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day."

- **The Lesson:** The sequence of the cross, the resurrection, and Christ's subsequent work as our High Priest in the heavenly sanctuary forms the absolute core of the SDA message of salvation and redemption.

4. The Power and Mission of the Holy Spirit

Before ascending into heaven, Jesus instructed the disciples to wait in Jerusalem until they were "endued with power from on high" (Luke 24:49, KJV).

- **The Lesson:** In the SDA church, this is a direct promise of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. It teaches that human effort alone is insufficient to share the gospel. Believers require the guidance, enlightenment, and empowering of the Holy Spirit to be effective witnesses to all nations.

5. The Living Sanctuary of the Sabbath and Daily Faith

Jesus met the disciples right where they were in their grief and confusion, walking alongside them before revealing Himself in the "breaking of bread".

- **The Lesson:** The resurrection confirms that Jesus is alive and active in the lives of believers. For SDAs, this living presence enhances the Sabbath experience, which is a weekly memorial of God's creative and redemptive power—a "little Easter" that points to the ultimate rest in Christ.