Except…Ye Shall All Likewise Perish

DON'T Interpret Scripture Using ONLY the Text
LOOK at the Context & the Overall Subject Matter
ALLOW Scripture to Interpret Scripture

> "There were present at that season some that told him of the Galilaeans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices.
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> And Jesus answering said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galilaeans were sinners above all the Galilaeans, because they suffered such things?
>
> I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.
>
> Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem?
>
> I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13:1-5).

Luke 13:1-5 is a good passage to illustrate proper Biblical interpretation — studying Scripture both leading into the passage and continuing out of the passage, allowing Scripture to interpret itself.

The whole of Luke chapters twelve and thirteen provide the overall subject matter at hand, completely in line with the message seen throughout the four gospels.

And, remaining with this overall subject matter, the eight verses continuing from the text (vv. 6-13), which deal more directly with the preceding five verses, provide the necessary information to open this text to one's understanding.

The Overall Subject Matter at Hand

The overall subject matter at hand throughout the four gospels has to do with *the proclamation of the kingdom of the heavens to the nation of Israel.* The proclamation of this message — *an offer of the kingdom to Israel, contingent on national repentance* — began with John the Baptist and continued with Jesus, the Twelve, and the Seventy.

This is the central subject matter seen throughout the four gospels, with Israel, after some three and one-half years, continuing to reject the message and ultimately crucifying the Messenger.

Then, following Christ's crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension, there was a re-offer of the kingdom to Israel, by the disciples and others, which lasted for about the next thirty years (33 A.D. to about 62 A.D.). But the re-offer of the kingdom, seen throughout the Book of Acts (2:1-28:28), as the original offer, was rejected as well.

And, in conjunction with the re-offer of the kingdom to Israel, the Church was called into existence at the beginning of this re-offer (Acts 2:1ff) *to be the recipient of that which Israel had rejected in the gospels and would again reject in Acts.*

During the Acts period, the Church, as Israel, is also seen being offered the kingdom (after all, *the kingdom, or things related to the kingdom, is at the center of the reason for the existence of the Church*). But *the Jewish people held priority. The proclamation of the message throughout this time was ALWAYS "to the Jew first," but, at the same time, it was "also to the Greek [Gentile]"* (Rom. 1:16; 2:9, 10).

In the gospels, the offer of the kingdom was *to the Jew ONLY* (Matt. 10:1ff; 15:24). In Acts, this offer was *to BOTH the Jew and Greek (saved Gentiles, forming the Church), with the Jew holding priority.* Then, beyond the Acts period, with Israel completely set aside (*cf.* Gen. 23, 24; Matt. 21:43), *the Church is seen as the SOLE recipient of this offer.*

(The preceding has been stated in a very succinct manner, providing sufficient information to show the central subject matter seen throughout the gospels, leading into Acts — a necessity to properly understand Luke 13:1-5, or about anything else in the gospels.

Also note in this respect that a proper understanding of the gospels is foundational to a proper understanding of Acts; and a proper understanding of Acts is foundational to a proper understanding of the epistles, for the subject matter seen in one sets the stage for and flows in a natural manner into the other.

And, back behind all of this is the whole of the O.T., providing a proper foundation and background necessary for a proper understanding of the New, beginning with Genesis in the Old and the gospels in the New.

Thus, viewing the whole of the matter, *ONE central message with MANY different facets pervades ALL Scripture.*

For more specific information on this complete, overall subject that has been succinctly covered, refer to the author's book, *Message in the Gospels, Acts, Epistles.*)

The Immediate Context, a Parable

The parable of "a certain Man" Who had "a fig tree planted in His vineyard" immediately follows the account in Luke 13:1-5:

"He spake also this parable; A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none.

Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none: cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?

And he answering said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it:

And if it bear fruit, well: and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down" (Luke 13:6-9).

Parables appear sparingly in the Old Testament but are seen being used extensively by Christ during His earthly ministry, particularly the latter part of His ministry. And parables, in one respect, are much like signs, which also appear sparingly in the Old Testament but appear extensively during Christ's earthly ministry (also in Acts, though parables do not continue into Acts).

Both parables and signs in the gospels have to do with the same central subject matter pervading all four gospels — *the offer*

of the kingdom to the Jewish people by John, Jesus, the Twelve, and the Seventy. And signs continuing into Acts have to do with *a re-offer of the kingdom to Israel by the disciples and others.*

Thus, any time you see a parable or a sign in the gospels — with signs continuing into Acts — you can know *ONE thing for certain.* You can know that the subject, after some fashion, has to do with *Israel and the kingdom*; and interpretation, if done from a proper Scriptural base, *MUST* ALWAYS *be done with this thought as foundational.*

(Note that *parables,* by their very name, are given *to provide additional information to help explain previous revelation.*

The word, "parable," is an Anglicized form of the Greek word *parabole* [a compound word: *para,* meaning "alongside," and *bole,* meaning "to cast"]. Thus, a parable is simply *one truth cast or placed alongside of a previous truth to help explain the previous truth.)*

Now, note the provided contextual help on both sides of the text in Luke 13:1-5.

Leading into the text (ch. 12), one finds numerous things concerning the message being proclaimed to Israel — *an offer of the kingdom* (*e.g.*, note particularly vv. 31-48).

Then, moving forward from the text, *the same subject* previously seen leading into this text is continued, but, as seen, in the form of *a parable.*

In other words, after the discourse in chapter 12, Christ, to drive home things previously stated, provides succinct details surrounding two short accounts, which include the death of individuals in both (vv. 1-5). Then, after relating things surrounding these two brief accounts, He provides a parable to help explain matters (vv. 6-9).

The parable has to do with *"a certain Man"* (God), *"a fig tree planted in His vineyard"* (Israel), and *the complete offer of the kingdom to Israel* (both *the offer* [as seen in the gospels; vv. 6, 7] and *the re-offer* [as seen in Acts; vv. 8, 9]).

And, expanding on the subject of the parable, note the same thing seen and dealt with after different fashions in Matt. 21:18-22:14.

In the preceding respect, Luke 13:1-5 could only be fully understood in the light of both the offer and the re-offer of the kingdom to Israel (extending from about 30 A.D. [Matt. 3:1ff] to about 62 A.D. [Acts 28:28]). That's the subject of the context surrounding the text. And if Scripture is allowed to interpret Scripture, *the text can ONLY be seen having to do with the SAME subject as the context.*

Thus, the end of that seen in Luke 13:1-5 — actual accounts of the slaying of individuals, used to reflect upon Israel's refusal to repent and the consequential results — *could ONLY have to do with ONE thing.*

The way that these accounts end could *ONLY have to do with that which occurred at the end of the re-offer of the kingdom to Israel, with the nation still refusing to repent.* These verses could *ONLY have to do with the complete setting aside of the nation, with the nation now looked upon as dead* (*cf.* Gen. 23, 24; John 11:1ff).

Since literal death and shed blood are involved in the textual account, some expositors look almost four decades ahead to the events of 70 A.D. — the destruction of Jerusalem and the slaying of thousands of Jews by Titus and his Roman army — and see literal death and shed blood involved in fulfilling the two warnings from the text ("…except ye repent, ye shall all *likewise* perish"), seeing "likewise" as somewhat of a key word in this respect.

However, that's not what the context on either side of the text would show. Events of 70 A.D. were the final outcome of that seen in the text, but *NOT* the fulfillment, for that seen in the text would have already been fulfilled some eight years earlier.

Again, Scripture is to be interpreted in the light of Scripture. Looking to events of 70 A.D. as fulfilling Christ's warnings in Luke 13:1-5 is a textual interpretation, apart from considering the context. Thus, it is an interpretation apart from allowing Scripture to interpret itself through comparing Scripture with Scripture, which is far from sound Biblical interpretation.

Immediately Following the Parable, the Revealed Goal

Then, to carry the preceding to completion, note the revealed goal seen through a sign which Christ performed immediately after he gave the parable explaining the text:

"And he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the sabbath.

And, behold, there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself.

And when Jesus saw her, he called her to him, and said unto her, Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity.

And he laid his hands on her: and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God" (Luke 13:10-13).

This sign — a lady being healed, who then glorified God — was performed on the Sabbath. This sign was completely in line with all the signs which Christ had performed or would perform — showing what Israel could have had and would have then done had the nation repented (supernatural healing and provision, with the nation then glorifying God).

And this sign was performed on the Sabbath, pointing to the seventh and last of a septenary structure of days introduced in the opening verses of Genesis — seven days foreshadowing seven thousand years — *pointing to that future time following Israel's repentance (the earth's coming Sabbath [Heb. 4:9], lasting 1,000 years), with the nation then glorifying God.*

This is what Israel could have had 2,000 years ago, but rejected.

As well, this is what Israel one day will have when God, through the judgments of the coming Tribulation, takes the nation to the place — the brink of almost total destruction — where they will be left without a choice other than to repent and call upon the God of their fathers (Lev. 26:40-42; II Chron. 7:12-14).

And this will occur at the end of six days, 6,000 years, with a view to the seventh day, the seventh 1,000-year period.

Scripture, referring to that future time uses the expression, "in that day," clearly distinguishing events of "that day" from those of the present day (*e.g.*, Isa. 11:10ff; Ezek. 38:18-23; 39:11-29; Amos 9:11-15) — *that seventh day, the day toward which everything in Scripture moves.*