

NT 19: Messianic Signs: Blind man, Lepers, Lazarus
Monte F. Shelley, 29 May 2011

Quotes

- My thoughts *are* not your thoughts, neither *are* your ways my ways, saith the LORD. (Isa 55:8)
- For some people, grace is amazing ... and infuriating.

1. Parable: Lazarus and the rich man (Lk 16:14–31)

¹³ Ye cannot serve God and mammon <or Money>. ¹⁴ And the Pharisees also, who were covetous [GR lovers of money], heard all these things: and they [GR ridiculed] him. ... ◇ = NIV

¹⁵ And he said ... ¹⁹ There was a ... rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fed [or feasted] sumptuously every day: ²⁰ And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus [=God is my help], which was laid at his gate, full of sores,

Was laid → too sick to walk but respected by neighbors who carried him daily to gate or rich man (MEE 219)

Purple, an expensive dye; was the color of royalty and wealth. His fine linen underclothing was much different from the coarse clothing worn by many. To fare sumptuously indicates rich and abundant meals, and he <“lived in luxury every day”> (P-UP)

²¹ And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man’s table: moreover [or *but*] the dogs came and licked his sores.

²² ... The beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham’s bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried;

The rich man was buried with honor. The beggar would have been buried without ceremony in the paupers’ field. (P-UP)

“To sit on someone’s right side during dinner was to recline in their ‘bosom,’ ... a position of close friendship. John the Beloved sat next to Jesus at the last Supper.” (BTW 195–6)

²³ And in hell [GR Hades] he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. ²⁴ And he ... said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip ... his finger in water, and cool my tongue. ...

He assumes his lineage will save him. He knew Lazarus by name and expected him to act as his servant.

²⁵ But Abraham said, ... between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot. ...

²⁷ Then he said, ... send him to my ... ²⁸ five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. ²⁹

Abraham saith ..., They have Moses and the prophets. ... ³⁰ He said, ... if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. ³¹ And [Abraham] said ..., If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.

Scriptures teach our duty to help the poor and testify of Jesus.

2. Jesus heals 10 lepers (Lk 17:11–19)

¹¹ As he went to Jerusalem, that he passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee. ¹² And as he entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off:

As outcasts, they lived outside the camp or city and were required to stand afar off. Since they could not produce and sell unclean things, they were dependent on charity.

¹³ And they ... said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us. ¹⁴ And when he saw *them*, he said unto them, Go [show] yourselves unto the priests. ... As they went, they were cleansed.

When Pharisees asked for a sign, he said an evil generation seeks a sign. Now Jesus sent 10 ‘signs’ to the priests. The priests would spend a week with these 10 cleansed lepers and find out Jesus healed them like Moses and Elisha had done.

¹⁵ And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God, ¹⁶ And fell down on his face at his feet, giving him thanks: and he was a Samaritan.

¹⁷ And Jesus ... said, Were there not ten cleansed? but where *are* the nine? ... ¹⁹ And he said unto him, Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole.

3. Parable: The Good Employer (Mt 20:1–16)

Why: Peter had asked, “We have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore? (Mt 19:27)

¹ The kingdom of heaven is like unto ... <a landowner>, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard. ² And when he had agreed with the labourers for a penny [GR *denarius*] a day, he sent them into his vineyard.

In the village market unemployed men would gather hoping for any job, even for a day. Those selected agreed to the daily wage and go to work, hoping he will hire them again. (MEE 357+)

³ And he went out about the third hour [9:00 am], and saw others standing idle in the marketplace, ⁴ And said ... Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right I will give you. ...

They agree to a just or right wage and trust their employer.

Why was the owner there?

Because of his compassion for the unemployed. He saw many eager, unemployed men at the beginning of the day and selected some hoping, for their sakes, that the others would soon be engaged by someone else. Three hours later he checked back, found many still waiting, and hired some more. (MEE)

⁵ Again he went out about the sixth [noon] and ninth hour [3:00 pm], [and the eleventh hour (5:00 pm)] and did likewise. ...

At noon, 3:00, and 5:00, he checked back hoping the rest had been hired, but found sad unemployed men who did not want to return empty handed to anxious wives and hungry children. He does not humiliate them by giving them money for nothing. He offers them a hand up, not a handout. (MEE)

⁸ So when even was come, the lord of the vineyard saith unto his steward, Call the labourers, and give them *their* hire, beginning from the last unto the first.

Why didn’t the steward hire the men instead of the master?

Why does the master pay each “the wage” for a full day?

Why does he pay the last group first?

If he first paid those who worked the longest, they would have been delighted and left. Each group would have been surprised and delighted to receive the same as the previous groups. By paying the last group first, those who worked the longest see the master’s compassion for others. (MEE)

⁹ And when they came that *were hired* about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny. ¹⁰ But when the first came, they supposed that they should have received more; and they likewise received every man a penny.

Although some are overpaid, no one is underpaid.

The landowner knew that one denarius was sufficient payment to care for the daily needs of his workers and their families. He also knew that a fraction of a denarius would not be sufficient—they would go hungry if he paid them less than a full day’s wage, regardless of how long they worked. (P-UP)

¹¹ And when they had received *it*, they murmured against the goodman of the house, ¹² Saying, These last have <worked> *but* one hour, and thou hast made them equal unto us, which have borne the burden and heat of the day.

For some people, grace is amazing ... and infuriating!

¹³ But he answered one of them, and said, Friend, I do thee no wrong: didst not thou agree with me for a penny? ¹⁴ Take *that* thine *is*, and go thy way: I will give unto this last, even as unto thee. ¹⁵ Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? <Are you envious because I am generous?>

Friend in the Greek is a polite title for a stranger.

The master says, “I can do what I want with what is mine! I chose to pay them a living wage so that all of you can go home to your families with a full day’s pay. I am not only just—I am also merciful and compassionate. Instead of sending my steward, I personally went to the market five times today to see if anyone still needed work. By murmuring, you are showing your lack of concern for the others and their families. (MEE)

Those who murmur represent those who not only *obey* the will of God, but also seek to dictate God’s will for others.

¹⁶ So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen.

The story is unfinished. Did the complainers accept their wage and stop complaining? (MEE 355–364)

4. Parable: Unjust judge and the widow (Lk 18:1–8)

When: Jesus had told Pharisees that the millennial kingdom of God would come unexpectedly and many years later.

¹ And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint; ² Saying, There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man:

Middle Eastern culture is often called a shame/pride culture, in which social behavior is guided by a community sense of honor and shame, not a sense of loyalty to right and wrong. People cannot appeal to this judge saying, ‘for the sake of God,’ because he does not fear God. Nor can one plead, ‘for my sake,’ because he does not care what anyone thinks. He possesses no inner sense of honor to which supplicants can appeal using these two standard approaches to ask for help. (MEE 264)

³ And there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary.

Women do not go the courts; men go for them. Therefore, she is alone with no spouse or male relative to speak for her. The widow plays her only card: loud persistent pleading. A man however would have been thrown out at once. (MEE 265)

⁴ And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man; ⁵ Yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.

He helps her for selfish reasons: to avoid political damage and so she would leave him alone.

⁶ And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith. ⁷ And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? ⁸ I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?

The Church is referred to as the bride of Christ. In Christ’s absence, the Church would be a widow.

⁸¹ Unto what shall I liken the children of Zion? I will liken them unto the parable of the woman and the unjust judge, for men ought always to pray and not to faint, ... ⁸⁶ Let them importune at the feet of the judge; ... the governor; ... the president; ⁸⁹ And if the president heed them not, then will the Lord ... come forth out of his hiding place, and ... vex the nation; (D&C 101:81–89)

Only prayers that are just and right (as were the widow’s) will be granted, though delayed.

5. Parable: Pharisee and the publican (Lk 18:9–14)

⁹ And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: ¹⁰ Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican.

The only daily service in the temple area was the atonement offerings at dawn and 3:00 pm that began at the great altar with the sacrifice of a lamb. When a priest took the blood into the temple, worshipers could offer private prayers. (MEE 346)

¹¹ The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. ¹² I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.

[The Pharisee, standing by himself, was praying NRSV]

“Because he stands by himself ... he may well be praying aloud, as was common Jewish custom. Such a voiced prayer would provide a golden opportunity to offer some unsolicited ethical advice to the ‘unrighteous’ around him.” Prayer then was for: (a) confession of sin, (b) thanks for bounty received, and (c) petitions for oneself and for others. (MEE 347–348)

He does more than required and goes the 2nd mile.

¹³ And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as *his* eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.

The accepted posture for prayer in the temple was to look down and keep one’s arms crossed over the chest, like a servant before his master. But the tax collector is so distraught over his sins that he beats his chest where his heart is. Generally women would beat their chests, not men. At the cross, the crowd beat their chests (Lk 23:48). The Greek for ‘be merciful to me’ can be translated as ‘make an atonement for me.’ The tax collector is standing before the great altar where a lamb has just been sacrificed to atone for the sins of Israel. (MEE 348–349)

¹⁴ I tell you, this man went down to his house justified *rather* than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

“Sin for Jesus is not primarily a broken law but a broken relationship” (MEE 350) or covenant.

6. Jesus at Feast of Dedication (Jn 10:22–39)

²² And it was at Jerusalem the feast of the dedication [Hanukkah], and it was winter.

In December the weather can still be mild, just before the heavy winter rains begin (normally in January).

²³ And Jesus walked in the temple in Solomon’s porch. ²⁴ Then came the Jews ... and said unto him, ... If thou be the Christ [= Messiah], tell us plainly. ²⁵ Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father’s name ... bear witness of me. ... ²⁶ But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep. ... ²⁹ My Father ... is greater than all. ... ³⁰ I and my Father are one. ³¹ Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him.

One: GR *hen*=neuter (attributes, purpose) not masc (one person)

³² Jesus ... [said,], Many good works have I [showed] you from my Father; for which of those works do ye stone me? ³³ The Jews ..., [said,] For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God. ³⁴ Jesus answered them, ... ³⁷ If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. ³⁸ But if I do, ... believe the works: ... and believe, that

the Father *is* in me, and I in him.³⁹ Therefore they sought again to take him: but he escaped ...⁴⁰ And went away again beyond Jordan into the place where John at first baptized; and there he abode. ...⁴² Many [of John's followers] believed on him there.



7. Jesus summoned to Lazarus (Jn 11:1-7)

¹ Now a certain *man* was sick, *named* Lazarus, of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha. ...⁴ When Jesus heard *that*, he said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.⁵ Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus.⁶ ... He abode two days still in the same place where he was.⁷ Then after that saith he to *his* disciples, Let us go into Judæa again.

8. Jesus prophecies of his death (Lk 18:31-34)

³¹ Then he ... [said to] the twelve ... we go up to Jerusalem, and all things ... written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished.³² For he shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, ... mocked, ... spitefully entreated, and spitted on:³³ And they shall scourge him, and put him to death: and the third day he shall rise again.³⁴ And they understood none of these things.

9. Jesus heals a blind man (Near Jericho; Lk 18:35-43)

³⁵ As he was come nigh unto Jericho, a certain blind man [Bartimæus (Mk 10:46)] sat by the way side begging:³⁶ And hearing the multitude pass by, he asked what it meant.

In the Middle East, village people honor an important guest by walking some distance out of town to greet and escort the guest into the village for a banquet and to stay the night. (MEE 172)

³⁷ And they told him, that Jesus of Nazareth passeth by.³⁸ And he cried, saying, Jesus, *thou* Son of David, have mercy on me.³⁹ And they ... rebuked him, <and told him to be quiet>: but he cried so much the more, *Thou* Son of David, have mercy on me.

The crowd was hostile to the beggar.

⁴⁰ Jesus ... commanded him to be brought unto him: and ... he asked him,⁴¹ Saying, <“What do you want me to do for you?” And he said, Lord, “Lord, I want to see.”>

Jesus tells those who insulted the blind man to escort him.

A beggar provided an opportunity for pious people to fulfill their duty to give to the poor. He sits in a public place and says, ‘give to God’ implying they can fulfill a duty to God and that giving publically will increase their reputation as an honorable, compassionate, and righteous person. When a beggar receives money, he stands and loudly says the giver is a most noble person and invokes God’s blessings on the giver, his friends and his family. Such public praise is worth the amount given.

What does the blind man want? He has no education, training, or marketable skills. A visible handicap like blindness is necessary for him to be a successful beggar. If he is healed, people will give him little or nothing as a beggar. (MEE 173-4)

⁴² And Jesus said ... Receive thy sight: thy faith hath saved thee.

He has faith that (a) Jesus has the power of God to heal, (b) Jesus has compassion on the poor, and (c) Jesus is the Son of David and his Lord. (MEE 174)

⁴³ And immediately he received his sight, and followed him, glorifying God: and all the people ... gave praise unto God.

The crowd who had rebuked the blind man earlier now join the blind man in praising God. (MEE 174)

10. Jesus eats with a tax collector (at Jericho; Lk 19:1-10)

¹ And Jesus <entered Jericho and was passing through.>

Jesus was not intending to stay the night. (MEE 176)

² And ... *there was* a man named Zacchæus, which was < a chief tax collector and was wealthy.>

A tax collector was despised and considered unclean. Lying to one was condoned. (MEE 176-177)

³ And he sought to see Jesus who he was; and could not <because of the crowd>, because he was little of stature.

The crowd was hostile to the tax collector. If he were respected, they would have made way for him. It would have been dangerous for him to push his way through the crowd. (MEE)

⁴ And he ran before, and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him: for he was to pass that *way*.

Running and climbing a tree broke social norms. To avoid public shame, adults did not run in public. Rich men do not climb trees at public gatherings. Sycamore fig trees have large leaves and low branches. One can easily climb one and hide. Zacchæus climbed the tree some distance (75'+) from town to avoid being observed. (MEE 177-179)

⁵ And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, Zacchæus, make haste, and come down; for to day I must abide at thy house.

If Jesus can see him, the crowd could too. They would mock him for being a tax collector and in a tree. They expected Jesus to say, ‘Zacchæus, you are an oppressor of these good people. You have taken their money and given it to Rome. Their hatred toward you is justified. You have betrayed your country and your God. If you quit your job, repent, and keep the law, I will eat with you the next time I come.’ Such a speech would have been applauded. However, Jesus shifts the crowd’s hostility from Zacchæus to himself. He neither endorses the oppression, nor ostracizes the oppressor. Instead, Jesus breaks custom and invites himself to dinner with this man. (MEE 180)

People usually go with, not against the crowd (peer pressure).

⁶ And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully.⁷ And when they saw *it*, they all murmured, saying, That he was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner.

If Jesus enters the defiled house of this sinner, sits down, and sleeps on his bed, he will be defiled and need ritual cleansing. Would a messiah behave this way so close to Passover? No wonder the crowd murmurs. (MEE 180-181)

⁸ And Zacchæus stood, and said unto the Lord; ... <Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount.>

He stood all amazed at the love Jesus offered him!

In traditional Middle Eastern style, he exaggerates to demonstrate his sincerity and pledges to give 50% of his assets to the poor. No one expects him to do *that* much. (MEE 181)

⁹ And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as he also is a son of Abraham.¹⁰ For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.

Salvation came after only a pledge of restitution.

Play on words: *Yeshua* (Jesus) means salvation. Thus, Jesus/salvation had come to his house.

Like Prodigal's father, Jesus accepted a sinner and ate with him. Like the older brother, the people murmured and did not enter. Like the younger son, Zacchaeus feels unworthy of the love Jesus offers him and agrees not to oppress the people as he had been doing. The Good Shepherd found one more who was lost.

Jesus demonstrated compassion to both the oppressed (the blind man) and to the oppressor (Zacchaeus). (MEE 185)

11. Parable: Nobleman and the pounds (Lk 19:11–27)

¹¹ And as they heard these things, he ... spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear.

They were going to Jerusalem for Passover that celebrates political freedom from Egypt. If salvation has come for Zacchaeus, it surely has arrived for the nation! (MEE 397)

¹² He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return.

Herod and his sons went to Rome to receive their kingdoms. Jews also went to oppose them. Jesus would be crucified in 10 days, receive his kingdom, and return at the second coming.

¹³ And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, [GR Do business or trade] till I come.

Ten pounds = 100–200 days wages for a working man

¹⁴ But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us. ...

During the Civil War, many did not want Lincoln to rule over them. When the North lost a battle, many sold their stocks and bought gold and waited to see who would win. In this parable, the servants knew many citizens did not want the nobleman to rule. Anyone who dared to start a business as a known friend of the absent nobleman would try to stay out of the public eye. The smart money would be buried. When the nobleman returns with kingly power, it will be easy to publically be his loyal servants. He wants to know if his servants are willing to openly be his loyal servants during his absence in a world where many oppose him and his rule.' (MEE 400–401)

¹⁵ When he was returned, having received the kingdom, then he commanded these servants to be called ... that he might know how much every man had gained by trading.

How much each gained by trading (show me the money) or *how much business each transacted*. If account books show many transactions, the community knew the servant was the master's man. If empty, the servant feared showing public loyalty to his master. Is the focus on *profits* or on *faithfulness* to an unseen master in a hostile environment? (MEE 402–403)

¹⁶ Then came the first, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds. ¹⁷ And he said ..., good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities. ¹⁸ And the second came, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained five pounds. ¹⁹ And he said ..., Be thou also over five cities.

Thy pound hath gained not my hard work has achieved. He is commended for being *faithful* not successful. His reward is greater responsibility, not privileges. (MEE 408, 403)

²⁰ And another came, saying, Lord, behold, *here is thy pound*, which I have kept laid up in a napkin: ²¹ For I feared thee, because thou art an austere man: thou takest up that thou layedst not down, and reapest that thou didst not sow.

It is more likely that he was afraid of backing "the wrong horse." If the master in the parable is a Bedouin raider chieftain, it is a compliment to take the fruits of another's labors. If the master is a nobleman in a settled farming community, such language is an insult. (MEE 404–405)

²² And he saith ..., Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, *thou* wicked servant. Thou knewest that I was an austere man, taking up that I laid not down, and reaping that I did not sow:

"The way we live influences the way we see God." (MEE 406)

²³ Wherefore then gavest not thou my money into the bank, that at my coming I might have required mine own with usury?

Usury or interest was forbidden by Jewish law. However, if the servant believed his master was a robber baron who did not care about the law, he should have received interest. (MEE 406)

²⁴ And he said unto them that stood by, Take from him the pound, and give *it* to him that hath ten pounds. ²⁵ (And they said unto him, Lord, he hath ten pounds.) ²⁶ For I say unto you, That unto every one which hath shall be given; and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away from him.

The master *generously* gave the servants an unearned stewardship over his money to see if they would be loyal in a hostile situation. This unfaithful servant lost the stewardship, but was not otherwise fined, punished, or dismissed. (MEE 407)

²⁷ But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay *them* before me.

In the Middle East, the word *no* is not an answer, it is a pause in the negotiations. We know what the enemies deserved, but not what they received. This begins the negotiations. (MEE 406–407)

Mother Teresa was asked how she kept going, knowing she could not meet the needs of all who were dying. She said, 'I am not called to be successful; I'm called to be faithful.' (MEE 409)

12. Lazarus raised from the dead (Jn 11:8–53)

¹⁷ When Jesus came, { *to Bethany ... Lazarus had already been* } in the grave four days. { } = JST

Why did Jesus wait four days to come?

How did the people respond to this sign? (Jn 11:45–46)

How did the priests and Pharisees respond? (Jn 11:47–12:11)

Quotes

Jesus ... [said,] tell John ... the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the gospel is preached. (Lk 7:22)

"Atone means to cover or recover, repair a hole, cure a sickness, mend a rift, make good a torn or broken covering." (TT 69)

Richard G. Scoot: Where family or national traditions or customs conflict with the teachings of God, set them aside. ...

Is yours a culture where the husband exerts a domineering, authoritarian role, making all of the important decisions for the family? ... Both husband and wife [should] act as equal partners, making decisions in unity for themselves and their family. No family can long endure under fear or force; that leads to contention and rebellion. ... [Also set aside any tradition]

- That would violate the Word of Wisdom.
- That is based on forcing others to comply by the power of station often determined by heredity.
- That encourages the establishment of caste systems.
- That breeds conflict with other cultures. (*Ensign*, May 1998)

Brigham Young: I do not know of any, excepting the unpardonable sin, that is greater than the sin of ingratitude. (*DBY*, 228)