

JESUS WEEPS OVER JERUSALEM

Scripture: Luke 13:31-35 Text 35b *"You shall not see Me until the time comes when you say, 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!'"*

Our lesson today has threats from powerful leaders. Sorrow over an unrepentant city. And the unwavering commitment of Jesus to fulfill His mission. It's a lesson full of tension with words that will comfort you by the love and determination of Jesus. We begin with a warning. Some Pharisees approached Jesus as He was about to enter Jerusalem and told Him, *"Herod wants to kill You!"* Now, Herod Antipas governed a territory known as Galilee and Perea between the Sea of Galilee to the north and the Dead Sea to the south. It was along major trade routes which made it important, and the area was referred to as *"beyond the Jordan."* Jesus had done some teaching and performed miracles there, so when the Pharisees told Jesus of Herod's intention to kill Him, His response was: *"Go tell that fox, 'I will keep on driving out demons and healing people today and tomorrow, and on the third day I will reach my goal.'"*

That showed Jesus had no fear when He called Herod a *"fox"* — a symbol of cunning. And it's significant! Because Jesus knew His mission. He knew His days were numbered. They had been perfectly planned by God. So, Jesus had no fear! Nothing—not even the threat of a king could keep Jesus from healing, teaching, and ultimately sacrificing Himself for the sins of the world. But how often does fear keep you from doing what you ought to do? Jesus' courage should remind you, when you're under God's guidance, move forward with confidence knowing *nothing* can stop you.

Then, next in our lesson we learn of Jesus *weeping* over Jerusalem. *"Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you. How often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were not willing."* That shows the heart of a loving Savior—longing to protect, to encourage, to gather His people close to Him. Yet, the people of Jerusalem rejected Him. Despite their resistance, the very One who came to save them was reaching out to them. And they rejected Him!

Now think about that! Are there areas in your own life when you have resisted God's love and guidance? And do you reject those who want to help you? Do you resist even the message of the Gospel? If you do, then this lesson is for you, because it goes on to when Jesus spoke of the coming judgment. His future recognition. He said, *"Look, your house is left to you desolate. I tell you; you will not see me again until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.'"* What does that mean?

Despite rejection, Jesus was going to a cross that awaited Him. Yet, He remained committed to God's plan for redemption. He had expressed His sorrow over Jerusalem's rejecting prophets and messengers. He foresaw Jerusalem's unwillingness to accept His message and not recognize Him until they acknowledged Him in the words of Psalm 118:26. *"Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord."* By quoting that Psalm, Jesus connected Himself to Messianic hopes and indicated that *He is* Messiah! It was heard during His Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem on what we now call Palm Sunday. Crowds welcomed Him with the phrase that He was the awaited Messiah. The crowds joyfully welcomed Him, waving palm branches and laying their cloaks on the road — a sign of honor and celebration. They shouted words of praise and messianic hope: *"Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest heaven!"* All which shows, recognizing Jesus as Messiah is necessary for Jewish spiritual restoration. And with Jerusalem's current state of affairs, a prophetic hope is, they *will* eventually acknowledge Him. The prophet Ezekiel said in Chapter 12 *"there will be great repentance."*

It seems fantastic Israel, as a whole nation, will turn to Jesus and repent of their sin of rejecting Jesus as their Savior. It's so amazing! We wouldn't believe it, unless the Bible teaches it so clearly. God said, *the Jews will be restored to their own land. They shall inherit the good country which the Lord gave to their fathers.* That happened in 1948 when the British Mandate ended that gave Britain administrative control over the territory of Palestine after the defeat of the Ottoman Empire in World War I. That played a huge role in shaping the modern Middle East. Especially, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict we have today. And the UN Partition Plan to divide Palestine into two separate states — one Jewish and one Arab — with Jerusalem as an international city under UN administration is the problem today. David Ben-Gurion, Israel's first prime minister, declared the founding of Israel — which produced immediate regional conflict. But it also solidified the Jews returning to their ancestral homeland by a covenant of salt was made thousands of years ago. Salt in ancient times was a symbol of preservation, purity, and loyalty. It kept food from spoiling. It was often connected with lasting commitments. The idea behind a covenant of salt was that it reflects something enduring. And in the Bible. Numbers 18:19 (ESV) says: *"All the holy contributions that the people of Israel present to the LORD I give to you, and to your sons and daughters with you, as a perpetual due. It is a covenant of salt forever before the LORD for you and for your offspring with you."*

But, better still, "Israel will be converted to the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ. Israel shall see in Him the house of David, restored to the throne of Israel in the restored Temple in Jerusalem." (Spurgeon) The First Temple, Solomon's Temple, was destroyed by the Babylonians in 586 BC. The Second Temple was destroyed by the Romans in 70 AD during the Jewish-Roman War, a major turning point in Jewish history. That led to the widespread scattering of the Jews. But the Temple has *not* been rebuilt. The Western Wall remains a remnant of the Second Temple as a sacred site for Jewish prayer. It's where people from around the world write personal prayers, requests, and hopes — often for healing, peace, guidance,

or blessings — and tuck them into the crevices of the wall. No active reconstruction of the Temple in Jerusalem has taken place yet, because on The Temple Mount, the site of the First and Second Temples, two important Islamic structures are standing. The Al-Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock. They make it impossible for any reconstruction efforts.

But several organizations are preparing for the future Third Temple. Research of the sacred relics and garments, including the High Priest's breastplate and crown required for temple rituals, have successfully been re-constructed. And five perfect red heifers without blemish or defect, that never having been yoked, met the qualifications of rabbinical inspection and have been taken to Israel from the U.S. The red heifer is connected to the Temple Mount and Jewish history. In Jewish tradition and biblical law, the ashes of the red heifer were used in ancient purification rituals, especially to cleanse people and objects that had come into contact with the dead. The red heifer's ashes are believed to be necessary for restoring ritual purity.

So, while there presently are no official plans to reconstruct the Temple in Jerusalem, various groups are doing things related to the Temple Mount's potential future. But when will Jesus return? The prophet Ezekiel tells us! When all of Israel's neighbors, Iran and Lebanon to the north, Syria to the northeast, Jordan to the east, and Egypt to the southwest are defeated in a war called Armageddon. And Israel, as a whole, turns to Jesus and repents of their sin of rejecting Jesus as their Savior, *then* Jesus will return! He will sit on His throne in Jerusalem. And the way things are looking in that area right now, that war could happen very soon!

If you look at current events — wars, natural disasters, political instability — some people feel they line up perfectly with prophecy. So, when Jesus said, *"See! Your house is left to you desolate; and assuredly, I say to you, you shall not see Me until the time comes when you say, 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!'"* Jesus was speaking to the people of Jerusalem. Mourning their rejection of Him as the Messiah, He knew the city — and its leaders — had turned away from God's call. He said, *"Your house is left to you desolate,"* referring to the coming destruction of the Temple which happened in 70 AD. And the spiritual emptiness that would follow their rejection of Him. Now, on a personal level.

This verse *"You shall not see Me until the time comes when you say, 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!'"* is a call to faith and repentance. It's a reminder that truly *"seeing"* Jesus requires Jews acknowledge who He really is and welcome Him into their lives. What does your own obedience look like? When the road is hard, are you willing to trust God's timing and plan even when you face opposition or heartbreak? In our lesson today you see the heart of Christ— courageous, compassionate, and committed. And as you follow Him, walking in His footsteps, boldly face fear. Extend your love to those who resist. Stay faithful to the calling God has placed on you. And live a life of faith until He comes again. Let us pray.

As you step into this new week, let hope fill your heart with courage, strengthen your steps, and speak your words in kindness. Go in peace. Serve in love. And walk in faith. Amen.
