



Luke 13

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Tape #8057
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Let's turn now in our Bibles to Luke's gospel chapter thirteen.

There were present at that season some that told Jesus about some Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. And Jesus answering said unto them, You suppose that these Galileans were sinners above all of the Galileans, because they suffered such things (13:1,2)?

It's an interesting thing that so often when tragedy strikes, we are prone to think that immediately it is God's judgment upon us. And that when tragedy strikes a group of people, we sort of look at it as God's judging them. Surely they must have done something evil, something wrong. They're being judged of God. This issue was sort of addressed in the book of Job in the Old Testament where Job went through such great affliction and the friends of Job came to comfort him. And their basic assumption was that Job was a sinner, had done something horrible, done it secretly but now God is punishing him because no man can suffer the things that Job has suffered except it be punishment from God.

Now the book of Job should, once and for all, settle that issue. Fortunately in the case of Job, God gives us an insight to the spiritual background of the whole situation so that we recognize that it isn't a judgment of God against Job that has created the problems and the suffering that he is going through. Now with the people who came to Jesus, and it would seem that there were certain Galileans who came down to the feast in Jerusalem and the Galileans were known as hot heads, revolutionaries. And perhaps they had started some kind of an insurrection against Rome there at the feast. And so Pilate had them slain and their blood was mingled with the blood of the sacrifices that they were offering.

But Jesus said, Because of this you think that they were greater sinners than the rest of the Galileans? He said,

I tell you, No (13:3):

This wasn't because they were sinners,

but, except you repent [Jesus said], you will likewise perish (13:3).

And then because the Judaeans, those who lived in Judah, those who lived in Jerusalem looked at those in Galilee, they sort of looked down upon them. They would call them the Galilee of the Gentiles. They sort of looked down on the Galileans as less spiritual. And thus, they bring up to Jesus the Galileans but Jesus brings up a tragedy that took place in Jerusalem.

Now at the lower end of the city of Jerusalem was the pool of Siloam. And the pool was fed by waters from the spring of Gihon through a tunnel that Hezekiah had dug through the rock in order to bring the water into the city. Now evidently, and we don't know anything historically about it, there was a tower there at the pool of Siloam that collapsed and when it did, eighteen people were killed as the tower collapsed. And so, Jesus makes mention of that.

Those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and killed them, you think that they were sinners above all of those that dwelt in Jerusalem (13:4)?

Were they the worse sinners? Was this judgment of God singled upon them because they were the worst sinners?

No, Jesus said: and, except you repent, you will likewise perish. And then He spoke a parable; There was a certain man that had a fig tree that was planted in his vineyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none. So he said to the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I've come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and I've found none: cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground? And the dresser, the gardener answered and said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it [or cultivate around it], and fertilize it: And if it bears fruit, well: and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down (13:5-9).

The plea for one more chance. One more opportunity for it to bear fruit. Surely God is gracious and He

gives us chance after chance to bear fruit, to be fruitful for Him. The interesting thing in this parable, of course, the fig tree is symbolic of the nation of Israel as is the vineyard. And we do know that there are other instances where the fig tree was used to symbolize the nation of Israel and its not bearing fruit is a symbol of the fact that the nation of Israel was not bringing forth the fruit that God desired.

You remember when Jesus was coming into Jerusalem. He saw a fig tree and He went over it to pick some fruit and seeing that it had leaves but no fruit, He cursed it and immediately it withered and died. And the disciples were amazed that it so quickly withered. But again, it was a symbol of the nation of Israel that had failed to bring forth the fruit that God was desiring.

Now Jesus tells us that God desires fruit from our lives. Jesus said, "I am the vine, my Father is the husbandman. And every branch in me that bringeth forth fruit he purges it, that it might bring forth more fruit. Now you are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you." (John 15:1-3). "Abide in me, let my word abide in you that you might bring forth much fruit. Herein is your Father glorified" (John 15:7,8). God desires fruit from our lives.

The fig tree had leaves but no fruit. It looked good but it didn't bear fruit. Some of you may look good but God wants your life to bring forth fruit. Of course, the fruit of the Spirit is love. Someone has had that God loves to walk in His garden and just enjoy the fruit which is love. He just wants your love, wants you to love Him. And wants you to receive His love. Wants this loving relationship with you. And so, the final opportunity, give it one more chance. Let me have one more year. Interceding for the tree.

And as he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the sabbath. Behold, there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity for eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself (13:10,11).

Her body bent at the waist and so, folded over and a person at this position, their head is up but it's very weird to look at because their body is sort of folded in the middle, their head down near their feet but turned back as they walk bent over. There are some cases like this, even in the Orient today, the Middle East, where people's bodies are sort of bent double and they hold their head up to see. Tragic condition and here it is ascribed to a demonic spirit. "A spirit of infirmity for eighteen years."

And when Jesus saw her, he called her to him, and said unto her, Woman, you are loosed from your infirmity. And then he laid his hands on her: and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God (13:12,13).

Eighteen years in this bent over condition. Misery. And then with the touch of Jesus, able to stand up straight, and she glorified God.

But the ruler of the synagogue (13:14)

Jesus was teaching, we are told, in the synagogue. It was the sabbath day, "the ruler of the synagogue," answered with indignation, because Jesus had healed on the sabbath day (13:14),

He was angry. But it's interesting that he didn't express his anger toward Jesus but he expressed it towards the people.

and he said to them, There are six days in which men ought to work: in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the sabbath day (13:14).

You have six days to come and be healed. Six days that you can work. And they looked at healing as a work and thus, the violation of the sabbath day injunction that you're not to do any work on the sabbath day.

The Lord then answered him, and said, You hypocrite, doth not each one of you on the sabbath loose his ox or his donkey from the stall, and lead him away to watering (13:15)?

Do you water your donkey and your ox, do you lead them over to the watering trough on the sabbath day?

And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the sabbath day? And when he had said these things, all his adversaries were ashamed: and all the people rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by him (13:16,17).

Jesus was constantly in trouble with the Pharisees and those who taught the law because He violated their interpretation of the law. But it's quite obvious that their interpretation of the law was wrong. They interpreted the law totally in an outward way.

In Matthew the fifth chapter as Jesus taught concerning the law, He gave several illustrations how they were teaching the law and how it was in conflict with what God intended the law to be. Paul said the law is good if you use it lawfully. But their law was not intended to make a person righteous. Keeping the law will not make you righteous.

Paul, in writing to the Romans said, "What shall we say? That the Gentiles have attained the righteousness through faith. But the Jews, attempting by the works of the law to be righteous, have not attained it" (Romans 9:30,31). So by the works of the law, by keeping the law does not make you righteous before God. In fact, that is not the purpose of the law. The purpose of the law was to make you guilty before God. It was to cause you to come to God for His grace, His mercy, His forgiveness. It wasn't to make you feel righteous like, I don't need God's help.

You remember the two that came and prayed. The Pharisee who said, Father, I thank You, I'm not as other men, I pay my tithes, I've never committed adultery. And he goes on to list the works of the law. Or the other one, being a publican just beat on his breast and said, O God, be merciful to me a sinner. Jesus said, The second one went away justified (Luke 18:11-14). Why? Because he cast himself on the mercy of God. And the law is intended to make the whole world guilty before God because the law in its original intent was dealing with the attitudes that are in the heart, more than the actions of the individual.

So as Jesus was giving the contrast between the law, as it was being taught by the Pharisees and as it was intended by God, said, "You have heard that it hath been said, [the Pharisees are telling you this] Thou shalt not kill.; and whoever kills will be in danger of the council: But I say unto you, That if you hate your brother without a cause, you're in danger of the council: and if you say to your brother, Raca [you vain fellow], you're in danger of judgment: and if you say, You fool, you're in danger of hell fire" (Matthew 5:21,22).

The attitude of disrespect for your brother. You vain empty fellow or You fool. Or that hatred. That is the thing that breeds murder. So that Jesus is saying that you can violate the law without ever clubbing your neighbor or your brother. Just by hating him in your heart.

"You've heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt not commit adultery. But I say unto you, If you look at a woman lustfully [desiring her in your heart], you've committed adultery already" (Matthew 5:27,28). It's something that's gone on in your mind and in your heart. And thus, you're guilty. But you see, if you've never given in to those impulses, if you just go around lusting but never giving in to it, you feel very righteous. I've never committed adultery. I've never committed fornication. But in your heart, in your mind, you have. And thus, the law was intended to make you guilty. To say, O God, I have impure thoughts. God, I'm an unclean man. Help me, God. And you cast yourself on the mercy of God and in so doing, you attain to the righteousness by God's imputing the righteousness of Jesus Christ to you by your faith in Him.

So here we have the case of the violation of the law according to their interpretation. Sabbath day, Jesus healed this woman. But He justifies the action. It's interesting that He speaks about the ox and the donkey here being loosed by them on the sabbath day to go over to the watering trough. And so this woman being loosed from Satan's power.

In the next chapter, again we find that it was a sabbath day and He had gone to the house of a Pharisee to eat bread with him and there was a certain man which had the dropsy and Jesus asked the lawyers first of all, and the Pharisees, Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath day? And they didn't answer Him. And so He took the man and He healed him and let him go. And then He said to them, Which of you having a donkey or an ox that falls in the pit on the sabbath day won't pull him out of the pit on the sabbath day? In other words, you show mercy to your animals, shall we not show mercy to man? We'll get to that next week.

Verse eighteen.

Then said Jesus, Unto what is the kingdom of God like? and whereunto shall I resemble it? It is like a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and cast into his garden; and it grew, and waxed into a great tree; and the fowls of the air lodged in the branches of it (13:18,19).

In Matthew chapter thirteen, we have a series of kingdom parables. And in these series of kingdom parables, Jesus shows that the kingdom of God is going to attract a lot of people and will even bring or allow evil to come within its midst. You remember Jesus said the kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed

wheat in his field. But then an enemy came and sowed tares in the field. And so when they saw the tares growing up, they said, Lord, shall we go out and pull out the tares. And he said, No, let them grow together and when harvest comes, then go in and first of all root out the tares and then gather the wheat. So they were allowed to grow together, the good with the evil.

Now, first of all, mustard does not grow into a tree. The mustard is a plant and it doesn't grow into a tree. So growing into a tree you have abnormal growth. And the birds of the air coming into the branches, lodging into the branches of the tree. In the Bible, the birds are representative of evil.

In biblical interpretation, they have what they call the law of expositional constancy. Big words, but isn't it interesting theologians use such big words. But what they are saying is there is a constancy in the symbols that are used. If brass is a symbol of judgment, each time brass is mentioned in a symbolic form, it's symbolic of judgment. Silver is symbolic of redemption. And thus, in this expositional constancy, if birds are interpreted in one parable as an evil force, then in all of the parables where birds are used, they are used in an evil sense, never in a good sense. We do have the parable that was explained by Jesus of how that the seed was sown and it fell on various types of soil. And some of the seed fell on the wayside and the birds of the air came and ate it before it had a chance to root. And so Jesus said, the birds are the enemy, Satan, who comes and plucks the word that it doesn't have a chance to bear fruit in a person's life. It doesn't have a chance to root and to grow. So birds in a symbolic sense are evil.

What Jesus is then saying is that there will be an abnormal growth of the church. But it will also tolerate and there will be evil allowed in it. On the way to church tonight, I was listening to a news broadcast and there was a church in Los Angeles today that had AIDS Sunday. They were talking about how we as the church need to reach out to those people with AIDS and I agree with that. But one of the pastors was interviewed and he said that we cannot adequately deal with the issue of AIDS until we learn to recognize the gift of sexuality, how that God has given us this gift and it really doesn't matter how or who we exercise the gift with. Well that's a bird that lodges in the branches.

And so they say, We are the church. We have a Reverend in front of our names. There are a lot of people with Reverends in front of their names that really deny the faith. And thus we look at the church and we say, There's eighty percent of the people in the United States say they're born again and all. Not so. Among those are a lot of birds that are just lodging in the branches but really do not belong to or are a part of the real body of Christ.

Throughout the world, you have the church. Much of it is really not the church of Jesus Christ. Much of it is just man's organization, man's system. Not bringing the truth of the Gospel to the people. Much of it is just social reform. Much of it is just powerful organizational structure but not the real church of Jesus Christ. So in the same token,

Again he said, Whereunto shall I liken the kingdom of God? It is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened (13:20,21).

So again, leaven is always a symbol of evil. Jesus said to His disciples, "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy" (Luke 12:1). In the Old Testament, at the feast of the Passover, they were to offer unleavened bread. In fact before the feast they were to go through the house and rid the house of all of the leaven. Leaven was used in the bread as an agent for causing the bread to rise. How does it do it? By rotting and as it rots, there are little air bubbles that form and it puffs the bread up with the leaven which rots and forms these little air bubbles and so it makes a lighter loaf of bread. And thus, a rotten influence that has the tendency to permeate on through until the whole thing becomes leaven.

There is another interpretation of these two analogies or parables here. One which I reject but I will present it to you and if you want, you can accept it.

It is the way it is interpreted by the liberal theologians and by those who ascribe to the Dominion Theology and that is, that the mustard seed being a very small seed planted in the earth will ultimately grow into a great tree which will provide shelter for all. In other words, they look at that as the growth of the kingdom of God or the church. And they say that the church will ultimately bring its influence into all the world so that the church will establish the kingdom of God here on the earth.

And the same with leaven, we have this gradual, slow influence throughout the world until we will

ultimately bring the whole world to the knowledge of Jesus Christ and we will bring the kingdom of God to the earth through the efforts of the church. If I believed that, I would be extremely disappointed and discouraged at this point. Because I do not see the church having this kind of gradual, slow, increasing influence until the whole world is influenced and permeated by the church of Jesus Christ. The influence of the church, I don't see it.

I see a world that is being permeated more and more by evil, rather than by good. And thus, I accept the first of the interpretations of these two parables over the second.

As Jesus was going through the cities and the villages (13:22),

Remember He is journeying to Jerusalem, He is going to Jerusalem to be crucified. He's on His way coming through Samaria and the area of Galilee and Samaria, sort of just meandering in a sense on through the area as He is slowly making His way to Jerusalem that He might be in Jerusalem for the feast of the passover where He will be offered as the passover lamb, the sacrifice of God for man's sin.

He's journeying toward Jerusalem. And one asked Him the question, Lord, are there few that be saved? And he said unto them, Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able. When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and you begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence you are: Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and You have taught in our streets. But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence you are; depart from me, all you workers of iniquity (13:22-27).

Jesus definitely taught that there were many people who thought they were saved who were not. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said something very similar to this. As He told us that "straight is the gate, and narrow is the way, that leads to eternal life, and few there be that find it. But broad is the gate and broad is the way, that leads to destruction, and there are many that go in thereat" (Matthew 7:13,14). And then He tells us that in that day, there will be many who will come saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us. But He said, Not all who say, Lord, Lord, are going to enter the kingdom of heaven but he who does the will of the Father.

And in that context between the warning of the straight gate and the narrow way, He says there will be false prophets and beware of these false prophets. False prophets who will seek to broaden the way. False prophets who will declare that we got to learn to respect this gift of human sexuality that God has given to us. And they will seek to broaden the way. They'll seek to make men feel comfortable in their sin.

By the grace of God and by the help of God, I never want to make a person feel comfortable in sin, nor do I want to give anybody a false assurance of their salvation. I don't want to try to broaden the way. I declare unto you the words of Jesus that "straight is the gate and narrow is the way and few there be that go in."

The Bible warns us over and over against the works of the flesh. Living after the flesh. Warning us that they which do these things will not inherit the kingdom of God. Straight is the gate, narrow is the way. So strive, the word in the Greek is agonizomai. That is, agonize, strive. It's a struggle to enter in at the straight gate. For "many will seek to enter in and shall not be able," Jesus said. So it isn't that I just kick back and say, Well, it really doesn't matter. I believe in Jesus and everything is alright. Doesn't matter that I do these things. Fornicate a little bit. Really doesn't matter because Jesus, I'm trusting in Him. And think you're going to just cruise on in.

Jesus said, "Strive to enter in at the straight gate." For when once the door is shut, and you are standing outside. Let me tell you something. When the door is shut, you don't want to be on the outside. When the door is shut, you want to be on the inside. Once the door is shut, and you begin to stand on the outside and knock on the door saying, Lord, Lord, open to us, He will answer and say, I don't know from whence you are.

Very much like, "Not all who say, Lord, Lord, are going to enter the kingdom of heaven; but he who does the will of the Father." For I will say unto you, "there will be many who come in that day saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us. Have we not prophesied in Thy name? Have we not cast out devils in Thy name? Have we not done great works in Thy name? And He will say, Depart from Me, I never knew you" (Matthew

7:21-23).

Here they are saying, Lord, we have eaten and we have drank in Your presence. That is, we've taken holy communion. We've received the holy communion. And Lord, You have taught in our streets. We know Your word. But James says, "Be ye doers of the word and not hearers only" (James 1:22). Jesus said this is what I will liken a man who hears and doesn't do. He's like a man who built a house upon the sand. And when the storm came, the house fell. Great was the fall thereof. That's the man who hears the word but doesn't do anything. Doesn't live by it. Isn't affected by it. You may be able to quote it. You may be able to give me the Hebrew and the Greek. But if you don't do it, if you don't live by it, if you don't follow it, you're only deceiving yourself.

And here they are saying, But Lord, You've taught in the streets. We know Your word. And again He says, Depart from Me. I don't know you. I don't you whence you are. And He calls them workers of iniquity. That is, they are living after the flesh and the things of the flesh which are listed for us in Romans chapter one and Ephesians chapter five and Galatians chapter five, First Corinthians, I think it's chapter six. And Jesus said,

There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when you shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out (13:28).

He's talking, of course, basically to the Jews at this point, who were trusting in their works. And they will be thrust out. But then He said,

They will come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God (13:29).

The Gentile nations will be brought in.

And, behold, there are last which shall be first, and there are first which shall be last (13:30).

In Romans chapter nine, verse thirty, Paul speaks here of "What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith. But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Why? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone; As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed" (Romans 9:30-33).

We, through faith in Jesus Christ, have attained a righteous standing before God. They are trying to by their works attain a righteous standing before God. It is interesting that God established the covenant with the nation of Israel and in that covenant, there were the sacrifices that were to be offered for the sin offering. The bringing of an animal as a substitute. Since the destruction of the temple, there have been no sacrifices. The Bible says, "Without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness of sins" (Hebrews 9:22). So that what they have done is substituted their works rather than a sacrifice. They are offering their works to God.

Yom Kippur, the great day of atonement, that day when the priest made the sacrifice for the sins of the nation. And the goat was slain and its blood taken in and placed upon the mercy seat. And a covering was made for their sins.

Today, Yom Kippur is a day that is spent in meditation as they look over the past year, their good works and their evil things. And the whole idea is that my good works sort of overshadow my evil, or greater. Put them on the balance. Here the crooked things I've done, here the good things I've done. And hopefully the balance is always with the good things outweighing the bad things. But because they've sought by their works to attain righteousness, they haven't attained it. So they'll see the Gentiles there in the kingdom of God, with Abraham, and Isaac, and the fathers while they themselves are thrust out.

Now when Jesus said these things,

There were certain Pharisees, said, You better get out of here: because Herod's going to kill you (13:31).

Herod, of course, had killed John the Baptist. And now they're trying to threaten Jesus. But Jesus knows, according to the plan of God, that His death will be in Jerusalem. And Herod will not be the instrument. Herod's jurisdiction was in the Galilee region. Jerusalem was under the jurisdiction of Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor. And so Jesus, knowing that His death was to be in Jerusalem, wasn't threatened by Herod.

You better get out of here, Herod's going to kill you.

And he said, You go, tell that fox (13:32),

Jesus had nothing but disdain for Herod. Herod's action of killing John the Baptist in such a horrible way in response to the dance of Herodias, his wife's daughter, granting her her request of John's head. It just, it's interesting, Jesus had nothing to say to him. It's really very tragic when Jesus has nothing to say to a person.

Herod was curious about Jesus. He had heard about Jesus. He wanted to meet Him. He wanted to see Jesus work some miracle. He was interested in phenomena, unexplainable phenomena. And when Jesus was in Jerusalem for the passover, the time to be crucified, when He stood before Pilate; Pilate trying to escape being the instrument of condemning Him and putting Him to death on the cross, he had heard that Herod was in town so he sent Jesus to Herod because Jesus was from Galilee which was Herod's territory. And so when Jesus was brought to Herod, Herod was excited because he wanted to see Jesus work some miracle. But Jesus had nothing to say to him. Probably just looked on him, piercing him with that gaze. And so Herod sent Him back to Pilate.

Jesus said, "You go tell that fox,"

that I have work to do today and to morrow, [I'm on my journey] I have cures, and the third day I shall be perfected. Nevertheless I'm going to walk to day, and to morrow, and the day following: because it cannot be that a prophet would perish out of Jerusalem (13:32,33).

And then having said that and the thought of Jerusalem, Jesus cried out of His spirit,

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and you stone those that are sent unto you; how often would I have gathered your children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, but you would not (13:34)!

Though the prophets who had been sent by God to warn the people had been slain, had been stoned, had been mistreated, had been placed in bonds and in prisons, yet Jesus loved Jerusalem. And as He was going, He was just lamenting Jerusalem, Jerusalem, You killed the prophets. You stoned those that God has sent. But yet, how often, My desire would be to just gather you together that you might know the comfort and the protection, the warmth of My love. But you would not. They exercised their will against His. How often I would have, but you would not.

I wonder how many times Jesus looks upon us and more or less laments, how often I would have helped you, how often I would have strengthened you, how often I would have protected you, how often I long to just be close to you. But you would not. The failure is not on God's part. The failure's on our part. "God's hand is not shortened, that He cannot save; His ear is not heavy, that He cannot hear" (Isaiah 59:1). But you are the one that won't respond. You are the one that won't come. But you would not.

And thus, the final call of God, the final opportunity to Jerusalem is going to be given. Here's now the prophet that is going to come. The prophet that Moses prophesied concerning Him. And there shall rise a prophet like unto me, unto Him you shall give heed. The very One of whom all of the prophets spoke. The One they said was going to come. The Holy One, the just. He is coming now and Jerusalem will have one final chance. And they're going to fail. He will be despised and rejected.

And even as He came to Jerusalem, according to the prophecies, riding on the donkey, as He came in view of the city He began to weep. Again, Jerusalem, Jerusalem. If you'd only known the things that belong to your peace in this thy day but they are hid from your eyes. And then He began to predict the invasion by the Roman troops. The carnage in the streets. The little children who will be destroyed. And He wept when He saw the consequences of their rejection of God's innovation of love to them. And so because you've rejected,

Behold, your house is left unto you desolate (13:35):

This great temple is going to be destroyed. Not one stone will be left standing on another.

and verily He said, You're not going to see me, until you say, Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord (13:35).

The Jewish people were dispersed in 70 A.D., those who survived. They were taken captive by Titus, many of them taken back to Rome to spend the rest of their lives as slaves. The nation of Israel ceased to

exist as a nation. Their house was left desolate. As Moses predicted in Deuteronomy, they were scattered among the nations. And they became a curse and a byword. They were hated. And to the present day, the Jews are still experiencing hatred from the world. Bitter animosity from the world.

As Christians, we should never be guilty of anti-Semitism. That's a sin. They are God's people and God will judge them. It's not up to us to be condemning of them. It's up to us to be loving and to have pity concerning care for the Jew and to pray for them. As a people they have experienced horrible tragedies through the years. Unfortunately, much of the suffering that has been brought upon the Jews has been brought by the church or again, that big mustard tree and the birds that were in it.

It was the church that killed so many in the bloody Inquisition. The Jews looked upon Hitler as a Christian, one of the birds in the branches of the mustard tree. And thus, they blamed the Christians for the holocaust. No wonder it is so difficult for us to reach the Jew because of so much that has been done to them by the so-called church of Jesus Christ.

But what they have experienced in the past is nothing to be compared with what they're going to experience in the future. And they're not going to see Jesus again until they pray, "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord." They'll come to the place of desperation under the reign of the antichrist and the persecution that will be brought by the antichrist. They will be brought ultimately to the place where they'll say, "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord." And then shall the Lord of glory appear and "they shall see Him whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him, as one mourns for his only son" (Zechariah 12:10).

So Jerusalem failed in the final opportunity that God gave to it, the last call and as a result, the desolation. Until that day comes when they will say, "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord."

Father, we thank You again for Your word, a lamp unto our feet, a light unto our path. May we walk in its light. Lord, help us that we might indeed strive to enter in at the straight gate. May we examine ourselves to see if we are in the faith. May we prove, Lord, may we make our calling and election sure. For in that day, Lord, we surely do not want to be on the outside, knocking at the door. But we want to be inside, Lord, in the enclosure of Your love, in Your kingdom. Help us, Lord, guide us, Lord, into all truth. In Jesus' name, we pray, Amen.