

## **Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time***

### **Jesus' Humble Coronation, Part 2**

Scripture: Luke 19:28-44

Code: 42-242

Let's open our Bibles now to the study of the Word of God, to the nineteenth chapter of Luke, Luke chapter 19. And we are returning to the text of Scripture that describes what is commonly known as our Lord's triumphal entry, His entry into Jerusalem for the last time where He is hailed by the crowds as the Messiah. It begins in verse 28, let me read this text again to you. This is part 2 of what we began last week.

"After He had said these things, He was going on ahead ascending to Jerusalem. And it came about that when He approached Bethphage and Bethany near the Mount that is called Olivet, He sent two of the disciples saying, 'Go into the village opposite you in which as you enter you will find a colt tied on which no one yet has ever sat. Untie it and bring it here. And if anyone asks you why are you untying it, thus shall you speak, The Lord has need of it.' And those who were sent went away and found it just as He had told them. And as they were untying the colt, its owners said to them, 'Why are you untying the colt?' And they said, 'The Lord has need of it.' And they brought it to Jesus and they threw their garments on the colt and put Jesus on it. And as He was going, they were spreading their garments in the road. And as He was now approaching near the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice for all the miracles which they had seen, saying, 'Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord. Peace in heaven and glory in the highest.' And some of the Pharisees and the multitudes said to Him, 'Teacher, rebuke Your disciples.' And He answered and said, 'I tell you, if these become silent, the stones will cry out.' And when He approached, He saw the city and wept over it, saying, 'If you had known in this day, even you, the things which make for peace, but now they have been hidden from your eyes, for the days shall come upon you when your enemies will throw up a bank before you and surround you and hem you in on every side and will level you to the ground and your children within you. They will not leave in you one stone upon another because you did not recognize the time of your visitation.'"

This has to be the most unique, the most unparalleled coronation ever. First of all, as we noted last week, it is humble in all its aspects and that is unique for a coronation. But beyond that, it is also unique because there is such irony in it, such stunning contrast between the commendation of Jesus by the people and the condemnation of the people by Jesus.

On the one hand, it is large and enthusiastic acclamation and adoration. On the other hand, it is shallow and hypocritical.

On the one hand, it is generated by the people's joyful hope of a immediate victory over their enemies. On the other hand, it is met by the King's sorrowful pronouncement of disaster and doom in the coming defeat by their enemies.

On the one hand it is the people's eager desire to enjoy the glories of total triumph and the arrival of the Kingdom of God. On the other hand, our Lord pronounces on them the agonies of total conquest in the arrival, not of the Kingdom of God, but the judgment of God.

The contrast between what the people expect and what they will receive is vast. The contrast between the attitude of the people, one of joy; and the attitude of Jesus, one of sorrow, couldn't be more distinct. The words of the people are words of celebration. The words of Jesus are words of condemnation. The people expect the best. He pronounces the worst. They want exaltation. He promises devastation. They expect a conquering hero. They get a condemning judge. Surely there has never been a coronation like this where at the very event itself, the King being offered the throne, refuses it and turns on His people to bring destruction...there's never been a coronation like this.

As we return to the event, a little bit of background history. A few weeks before this, Jesus had performed one of His most notable miracles, the raising of Lazarus from the dead. It occurred in Bethany, that little village two miles east of Jerusalem on the road to Jericho. Enough time had gone by that Lazarus had well circulated in the world and everybody essentially knew of this remarkable resurrection.

After raising Lazarus from the dead, a few weeks earlier Jesus then left Judea and the surroundings of Bethany and Jerusalem to head north into Galilee. He had spent a few weeks in Galilee and now has begun moving south. He comes across the Jordan to the east, down through Peraea east of the Jordan, a little north of Jericho, crosses the Jordan to come back on to the side of Judea, enters the city of Jericho. By now He is surrounded by a large crowd. There's a steady flow of pilgrims coming that way anyway to the Passover, it could have as many as two million Jews in and around Jerusalem at that time, a steady flow and the crowd around Him larger than most, of course, because of who He was and the miracles He had performed. And the crowds would grow and grow as more pilgrims joined the stream. Spent two days in Jericho, that city down by the Dead Sea at the foot of the great mountain that ascends to Jerusalem. There He had healed two blind beggars and saved them from their sins, they were now His disciples and joined the crowd to follow with Him. He also brought salvation to the home of the chief tax collector there, a man named Zacchaeus who in a demonstration of his transformed heart acted with generosity toward everyone he had stolen from.

And so, after His experience in Jericho and the salvation of those three, it is time to ascend the hill to Jerusalem. It's almost four thousand feet up, about seventeen miles to Jerusalem. He walked that path. It was a road, really. It has always been a road, but it now was a Roman road and the Romans

had paved it and turned it into a military road and it was carefully guarded. Up that road came Jesus, not alone by any means, but surrounded by His disciples, His Apostles, those who truly believed in Him, those who were curious about who He was and an accumulating crowd of pilgrims.

In John chapter 12 and verse 1, we are told that He arrived at Bethany six days before the Passover...six days before the Passover. That would put it on Saturday, since the Passover was on Friday. On that Saturday when He arrived in Bethany, a supper was given in His honor. And John tells us the story of that supper in chapter 12. That night, that Saturday, He had only six days left before His crucifixion, six days before the hard, cruel walk carrying the cross up to Golgotha, six days before the spitting and the mocking and the hating and the beating and the nails and the thorns and the sin bearing and the God-forsaken experience of being crucified as God's chosen lamb fit for sacrifice, only six days left. He seeks the fellowship, the love, the affection, the encouragement, the comfort of familiar friends, the disciples and His dear friends, Mary, Martha and Lazarus who lived in Bethany. But even there the fellowship is marred because Judas is there, ever present with stinging, stabs of betrayal, a constant reminder of what was to come.

On the next day, the Sunday of that week, the word by then had circulated all around the area, including into the city of Jerusalem, that Jesus was there at the house of Lazarus. And so John, chapter 12 verses 9 to 11, tell us the crowd came flowing out of the eastern gate of Jerusalem, the two miles down from Bethany to see both Jesus and this resurrected Lazarus. So Sunday was spent with His disciples, with His friends and surrounded by the crowds who were so curious to see the man who was dead and the one who had raised Him.

Monday, the next day, He enters Jerusalem, that is the day described here in this text. The entry of Jesus into Jerusalem is triggered by His own words in verse 30. He says to two of His disciples, perhaps Peter and John since He commissions those two in chapter 22 verse 8 on another task, perhaps it was them, but anyway to two of them He says, "Go into the village opposite you, you'll find a colt tied, untie it, bring it here. If they question you, say, 'The Lord has need of it.'" That command launched His entry. He is in total control of every detail in His life and ministries. On a divine timetable He's doing things precisely when God wants them done and as God determines they are to be done. He follows perfectly the will of His Father. He knows that He is about to start a massive demonstration. The city is filled with these hundreds of thousands of pilgrims who have come there. Everybody knows about Him first hand, second hand, third hand because of the three years of extensive miracles throughout the land of Israel. He knows that when this begins, it will escalate rapidly. Some have estimated that the crowd surrounding Him as He comes into the city could have been well over two hundred thousand people.

Now Jesus never allowed such a massive demonstration in His entire ministry because He knew it would precipitate escalated fury and anger on the part of the religious leaders who had wanted Him dead for a long, long time. A display like this would speed up everything toward them completing

their mission of His execution. Up until now, He didn't want it to happen. But now He did. Now was the time. This was the city. This was the week. In fact, Friday would be the day. And He sets this demonstration in motion to move everything toward His own crucifixion on Friday because that's the day when the Passover lambs were slain and that's the day when He would be slain as the true and only lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. His timing is impeccable. It is also the day, Monday, when the families took the lamb they were to have slain on the Passover into the house, the lamb that would become a pet of the family, endearing itself to the family to be then slaughtered as a symbol of sacrifice for the sins of the family. And so He offers Himself, as it were, to the family of Israel on the very day when they were taking in their lambs and He would die on the very day when the lambs would be slain.

His timing is also perfect because Daniel 9 verses 24 to 27 said in the prophecy that there would be 69 times seven years, weeks of years, 69 times 7 until Messiah would come and be cut off. Sixty-nine times seven is 483 years, they calculated years at 360 days a year 483 years at 360 days totals one hundred and seventy-three thousand, eight-hundred and 80 days. So from the beginning until the Messiah comes to be cut off, you have this duration of 483 years of 360 days. That's prophesied in Daniel 9:24 to 27. When does it start? It started with a decree to rebuild Jerusalem. When was that? Four-forty-five B.C., declared by Artaxerxes and precisely from then until this week and this day is the 483 years. He comes in perfect fulfillment of Daniel's prophecy. Everything is in line. And so He triggers the event Himself by sending the disciples to get the animal which He will ride into the city.

Though His coronation is humble, He comes riding on the colt, the foal of an ass, the foal of a donkey, as the prophet said, and though there are no crowns for Him, and though there are no dignitaries and there is not the usual regalia that occurs at a coronation, and though the people are fickle and though they are shallow and superficial and though they are hypocritical, and though they only cry "Hosanna" to Him this day and soon after are screaming for His blood, in spite of the shallowness and superficiality of this event, He is nonetheless God's true King. He is God's true King. And it manifests itself in this coronation in three ways...preparation, adoration, and condemnation.

Last time we looked at preparation in verses 28 to 35, the very fact that He sent them to get that animal and to bring the animal and He rode in on the animal, as I pointed out to you, is a fulfillment of Zechariah 9:9, very specific prophecy. Matthew's account of the triumphal entry refers to that prophecy, Matthew 21, John's account refers to that prophecy in John 12. He comes vindicating that He is the Messiah by the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy. Also, He demonstrates His omniscience. He knew about the animal, though He couldn't see the animal. He knew where it was. He knew it was tied there. He knew what the conversation with the owners would be like. He demonstrates again His deity and His messiahship in those elements of the preparation for His entry.

Secondly, we saw last time adoration which also points to His deity and messiahship, and we saw that in verses 36 to 38. He receives the worship and the adoration that the people give Him. It comes from Psalm 118, part of the Hallel, this is a coronation Psalm, they are celebrating Him as God's great, glorious King. They say, "Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord." Matthew adds that they said, "Hosanna to the Son of David." Mark adds, they said, "Blessed is the coming Kingdom of David, hosanna in the highest." All of those things were being said. Obviously from the text, the disciples initiated all of that. They were the ones, according to verse 37, who began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice, thinking surely this is the moment when He is going to come as the conquering hero, the conquering Messiah, set up the Kingdom, defeat our enemies. They start the celebration. The crowd catches the fever and they all begin to cry out the same things, pointing to Jesus as the Messiah. He receives it. He takes it because He deserves it. So we see that He is who He is by way of preparation, omniscience. Fulfilling prophecy He is who He is demonstrated by adoration. He receives worship willingly because He deserves it.

Now the leaders see it as blasphemy. They don't think He deserves to be worshiped and adored in this way, and they let it be known in verse 39. "Some of the Pharisees," and by the way, this is the last time we'll see that word, or see them specifically in Luke's gospel. This is their final comment. "Some of the Pharisees and the multitude said to Him, 'Teacher, rebuke Your disciples.'" They saw this adoration, this acclamation coming to Jesus as blasphemy, as do all Christ rejecters. They're outraged at this messianic honor being given to Jesus and being received by Him as if He is worthy of it. They know they can't control the crowd, it's too huge. And it's exuberant, and in a sense, out of control.. There's only one who could do that, they know who that is, they go to Him and they say, "Teacher," at least showing Him some respect, "Rebuke Your disciples, they sure should be rebuked because they are ascribing to You that which You are not due." They ask Jesus to silence His disciples who are instigating this celebration and leading the adoration.

His reply is the turning point in this event. It is a stunning reply and it takes us to the third point. He demonstrates His messiahship in the preparation, the adoration, and the condemnation, verse 40, "He answered and said, 'I tell you, if these become silent, the stones will cry out.'" And then He goes on to pronounce judgment. He vindicates Himself as the Messiah in preparation, omniscience and the fulfillment of prophecy; in adoration, receiving worship; and in condemnation He possesses the authority to pronounce judgment, and He knows the future. You see His deity here in knowing about an animal that He cannot see, not visible to His eyes, being in a place, a precise place. He knows what only supernatural can know, only God can know about the present, where that animal is. He also knows what only God could know about the future, the very judgment that is to come. He is then the Messiah, the omniscient one who fulfills Old Testament prophecy, who knows things in the present that no one can know, and who determines the future and has a right to judge.

In John chapter 5, a most notable and important text. Jesus declares these words, and they are specifically related to judgment. Verse 20, "The Father loves the Son," John 5:20, "shows Him all

things that He Himself is doing, greater works than these will He show you that you may marvel for just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so the Son also gives life to whom He wishes. For not even the Father judges anyone but He has given all judgment to the Son.” The Son gives life, the Son takes life, the Son judges. He is the sovereign one who knows the future. He is the sovereign one who brings judgment. From this point on, the scene moves from joy to horror, from the highest to the lowest. They are crying peace, He speaks of destruction. They pronounce on Him glory, He pronounces on them doom. The whole ending is stunning, it is shocking, it is tragic. For the first time He allows this kind of event to take place and at its apex, He turns it in the direction opposite what the people expect. They’re adoring Him for what they want Him to be. He tells them He will be something very different than that.

Now notice verse 40, “I tell you,” for emphasis, “I tell you, if these become silent...” Stop there, these people if they become silent, if their praise stops all this praise, all this shouting, all this exaltation will end.

It did. In fact, you don’t hear any of it after Monday. You don’t hear it on Tuesday. You don’t hear it on Wednesday. The next time you hear the crowd is on Friday and on Friday they are saying a very different thing. If you look over to the twenty-third chapter of Luke, you get a little glance...you could also look at Matthew 27 and get the same, but in verse 18, start there, they all cried out together, this is the mass of people gathered before Pilate, they all cried out together, saying, “Away with this man, release for us Barabbas.” Who is Barabbas? One who had been thrown into prison for a certain insurrection made in the city and for murder. They wanted a murderer to be released, rather than Jesus. And Pilate wanting to release Jesus, verse 20, addressed them, saying...addressed them again, “They kept on calling out, saying, ‘Crucify, crucify Him.’” The same kind of mob hysteria. He said to them a third time, “Why? What evil has this man done? I found in Him no guilt demanding death. I will therefore punish Him and release Him. But they were insistent with loud voices, asking that He be crucified and their voices began to prevail and Pilate pronounced sentence.”

If these become silent, and they will....when these become silent...since these will become silent, the stones will cry out. It needs to be noted that the silence of Israel has not yet been broken. The Tuesday of that week when the crowd fell silent, launched millennia of a refusal on the part of Israel to acknowledge Jesus as their Messiah. How fickle they were. A few days later they’re saying, “Crucify Him, crucify Him. Give us a criminal. Give us a murderer. We don’t want Jesus.” They’re still saying it these two thousand years later. When that crowd fell silent, that nation fell silent...and they’re still silent.

The opposition to Jesus was so strong that even after the resurrection from the dead, the praise of Jesus was never raised in the city of Jerusalem, or in the land of Israel, except among the few thousand who were saved. When Jerusalem grew silent, Jesus said, “The stones will cry out.” Cry

out, *krazo*, scream..future tense...when in the future these people become silent, in the future the stones will scream. Screaming stones? What is that? What is that? It's more than just the expression of praise from some inanimate object, as if God is to be praised by His creation...far more than that. In fact, in the little prophecy of Habakkuk, chapter 2, we have a very good parallel. In the prophecy of Habakkuk we have a statement of judgment on the Chaldeans...the Chaldeans, the wicked, pagan Chaldeans. And the Chaldeans had basically prospered as a society, but they had prospered at the expense of other nations, they had prospered by extortion, they had prospered by usury, charging exorbitant interest rate, they had prospered by murder and bloodshed. They had literally built their towns and cities by the sacrifice and the slaughter and the abuse of other people. So Habakkuk, the prophet, is given a message from God of judgment against them. I just want to pick out one verse, that is in verse 11. "Surely the stone will cry out from the wall and the rafter will answer it from the framework." Then verse 12, "Woe to him who builds a city with bloodshed and founds a town with violence." The stones in the houses and the buildings that they built were symbols of their wickedness. The walls of their houses and the timbers of their roofs plundered from others gained by bloodshed and usury, scream of their wickedness, scream of their guilt. And Jesus is saying the same thing here.

There are going to be some stones who will cry out against you as the stones in the past cried out of the guilt of the Chaldeans. All you had to do was look at their houses and when you saw them, all their prosperity, all their edifices were testimonies to their corruption and bloodshed. The stones cried out of their guilt and the judgment of God upon them, and some stones are going to do the same in your case. That's explained in the next section, verse 41. "When He approached He saw the city and wept over it."

There are a number of words for weeping. One of them, one of the Greek words is used in John 11:35 over Lazarus, "Jesus wept." That is a simple word for weeping. This is a much stronger word, in fact this is the strongest word in the Greek language, it would be equal to our word "sobbing...heaving." Very strong, THE strongest, a heaving, sobbing, agonizing, wrenching expression of sorrow, no stronger word exists. Jesus sees Jerusalem and He's racked with agony. He begins to heave and sob. This is part of the tears and strong crying, I think, that Hebrews 5:7 encompasses. He is agonized over their superficiality. You would think He would be happy with all this attention at that moment, right? It all looked good. But He could see through it. He wept in the face of their hypocrisy and their shallowness and their rejection in a few days which He was well aware was coming. And He wept because He knew what would come after that. And He wept because He knew their damnation was coming.

Listen to what He said. "Saying," and this is sorrowful, heart-breaking, "If you had known in this day, even you, the things which make for peace..." Not talking about peace with Rome, not talking about political peace, not talking about internal social peace, He's talking about peace with God. "If you had only known, if you had only known the things that make for peace." What makes for peace?

Repentance, faith in Christ, believing the message of the Kingdom. He had preached it from the very beginning, He preached repentance and the Kingdom. How to come into the Kingdom through faith in Him, repentance from sin. He had preached it all along. I'm not going to take you back through the gospel of Luke, but you can go all the way back to chapter 4, chapter 5, chapter 6, chapter 7, chapter 8, all the way through and see Jesus offering them again and again and again and again, the good news of peace with God.

If you had known...if you had understood...if you had embraced and believed this day...what day is He talking about? He's not talking about Monday, that day...this day, the time of My presence in your nation, if you had only understood and believed in this incredible hour in which I have moved among you, if you had only believed the things that make for peace, the salvation message...that's salvation language, peace with God, reconciliation, the gospel. But unbelief had blinded them all the way along. They chose to be unbelieving, hard-hearted, self-righteous rejecters of Christ. He gave invitation after invitation after invitation, they rejected them all and therefore they rejected peace...peace with God.

He had already pronounced doom on them at the end of chapter 13. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets, stones those sent to her, how often I wanted to gather your children together just as a hen gathers her brood under her wings...you wouldn't have it. Behold, your house is left to you desolate." Then He added, "You'll not see Me until the time comes when you say, 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.'" You're never going to see Me until you finally turn and believe. That hasn't happened yet. The judgment pronounced here is still in place. Israel today currently is under divine judgment. Are they God's chosen people for a future salvation? Yes. Will He preserve them as a people unto that salvation? Yes. But currently they are under the same judgment that launched against them by God in the pronouncement of Jesus here and began in its powerful expression in 70 A.D., forty years later with the destruction of Jerusalem. Since that time, Jerusalem has been trodden underfoot to one degree or another by the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles ends. And we'll learn about that in Luke chapter 21.

They made their choice. The celebration was superficial and He knew it. In fact, He even says, "But now they have been hidden from your eyes." Whatever this celebration means, whatever is going on here, however you may be emotionally caught up in this thing, the truth is, you have rejected Me, you continue to reject Me, and it is hidden from your eyes, the truth is hidden from your eyes. The gospel of peace, the only way of reconciliation with God. This is not just a statement of divine judgment, though it is an affirmation, it is a statement of their own self-imposed blindness. In fact, now they have been hidden from your eyes. Right now here and now, you're in the dark. In the future, they will not believe. For what was a chosen blindness becomes a judicial blindness. They never believe. Read the record of Acts 2 through 7, Jerusalem never believers. They don't believe now, they never have. They will not until the end time when they look on Him whom they pierced, as Zechariah said, mourn for Him as an only Son, a fountain of cleansing is open, then they receive their

Kingdom...that's in the future.

And Jesus then describes the judgment that is coming, verse 43, "For the days shall come upon you when your enemies will throw up a bank before you, surround you, hem you in on every side, level you to the ground and your children within you, and they will not leave in you one stone upon another."

Let me just break that down quickly for you. "The days will come upon you," that's an Old Testament expression used many times in the Old Testament, Isaiah 39:6; Hosea 9:7; Amos 4:2; etc., etc., etc. The days will come upon you...often used as an Old Testament expression of coming judgment...coming judgment. It's just another time when Jesus refers to coming judgment.

Five aspects, look at them. Number one, five aspects to this judgment. Number one, verse 43, "Your enemies will throw up a bank before you," or better, "a barricade." When in ancient times you wanted to conquer a city, you surrounded the city and built a barricade and keep everybody in and you starved them to death. No one could get out. No one could get in. So you cut off the food supply, and if possible, the water supply as well. They built a palisade, if you will, or a barricade, a high barrier to seal off the city so that no one could go in and no one could go out. The Jews...they built it out of wood. Josephus, the historian, tells us they built it out of wood and the Jews burned it down. So they built a wall around the city of Jerusalem. This is what Titus Vespasian did, according to Josephus, the historian, in his writing, The Jewish War. That's the first feature. An enemy will come and build a barricade. That's exactly what the Romans did in 70 A.D.

Second, verse 43, surround you. The enemy then surrounds you at the point of the wall. No one can go in and no one can go out. The city is sealed off from all supplies. Anyone who tries to escape is killed and thousands on the inside eventually begin, and it doesn't take long, to starve and die. This all started in 66 A.D. The Jews revolted against Rome in 66. That brought the Romans. That led to the Roman siege in 70 A.D. The Romans built this great palisade. The Jews burned it down. They put up a big wall. They then put their troops there, completely surrounding the city fully cutting it off. That led to the third element, consequentially, hem you in on every side, *sunecho*, to press, to crowd from all sides, just escalating the pressure, the pressure from all sides. Number four, they will level you to the ground. It literally means to shatter against the ground, to smash against the ground. That is to say, the city will then be sacked and flattened and not just the city but your children within you. It's not talking only about infants, or little children, *tekna*, your sons, your inhabitants.

So what's going to happen? They're going to build a barricade. They're going to then surround them with their soldiers. They're going to press. Eventually they're going to break through when the people are so weak they can't fight, and they're going to smash and shatter the population against the ground. And then smash the city and its wall to the ground so that it cannot be rebuilt. This exactly occurred in 70 A.D., forty years after Jesus gave this prophecy.

Notice please verse 44, the middle of the verse, "They will not leave in you one stone upon another." Those are the stones, friends, that cry out. When you go silent, the stones will cry out. Forty years later, the stones that made up that glorious city will lie on the ground as rubble, mute, screaming of the judgment on Israel's unbelief.

Five months the siege took. And the Romans overpowered the weakened Jews, starving Jews. Roman soldiers rampaged through Jerusalem basically slaughtering everybody, children, women, adults...except the strongest young men which they kept for gladiatorial games. They destroyed the city. Everything except the western Wailing Wall, some of you have seen it there, a few other sections, massacring everybody, the hundreds of thousands of people, literally were slaughtered. Josephus writes this, "While the sanctuary was burning, the temple, neither pity for age, nor request for rank was shown. On the contrary. Children and old people, laity and priests alike were massacred. The emperor ordered the entire city and temple to be razed to the ground, leaving only the highest towers and the portion of the wall on the west, all the rest of the wall was so completely razed as to leave future visitors to the spot, no reason to believe that the city had ever been inhabited. And the stones cried out, screamed out of judgment, total destruction.

Our Lord concludes by reminding them why this was going to happen. End of verse 44, "Because you didn't recognize the time of your visitation." Visitation, *episkope*, the visit of the incarnate God for the purpose of salvation. Zechariah said when he heard all this was going to happen back in chapter 1, "The Lord has visited His people for redemption." The day of visitation is an Old Testament phrase used by Isaiah and Jeremiah and other Old Testament writers referring to the coming of God, His drawing near to His people. Could be in blessing, could be in judgment. This visitation was in blessing and salvation. You didn't recognize that God was visiting you for salvation, for redemption. You didn't recognize it. Was Jesus the Messiah? Absolutely. Was it evident that He was the Messiah? Of course. Was He the Son of God? Of course, who else could do the miracles He did and say the things He said. Yes He is the rightful King, fulfilling prophecy, omniscient. Yes He has a right to receive worship. He's been given authority. He can predict the details of judgment and execute them. The visitation of God had come to Israel. John puts it this way, "He was in the world, the world was made by Him, the world knew Him not. He came unto His own, His own received Him not." In the twentieth chapter of Luke, starting in verse 13, the Lord is telling a parable and He tells about the owner of a vineyard who is God who sends His beloved Son back to his vineyard, after his people have killed all his messengers. He says, "Finally, I'll send My Son, perhaps they'll respect Him. When the vine growers saw Him, they reasoned with one another saying, 'This is the heir, let's kill him that the inheritance may be ours.' Threw Him out of the vineyard, killed Him. What therefore will the owner of the vineyard do to them? He will come and destroy those vine growers and give the vineyard to others." Yeah, end of Israel's special time of visitation, potential blessing. The comes the times of the Gentiles, development of the church until in the future Israel repents.

But people on that day who were celebrating, many of them were dead by 70 A.D., out of God's presence forever in eternal punishment. Some of the younger ones, no doubt, perished in the destruction of 70 A.D. The very walls of that city became the prison in which those Christ-rejecting people were slaughtered by the pagans. And the rubble, testimony from the stones, of their rejection of Christ. That's history and it's still going on.

But it's not just Israel's history. Can I make it very practical for you? Rejection of Jesus Christ as Lord is catastrophic for you, too. It's no less catastrophic for you than it was for them. What about your day of opportunity? What about the time when you've heard the gospel, when the gospel's been presented to you? The time when you've been told how you can be reconciled to God? What have you done with your visitation? Have you recognized the time of your spiritual opportunity or is the end going to be as catastrophic for you as it was for them? What are you doing about God's gracious visitation in your life with the truth of the gospel?

That's the question you have to answer. It's history but it's a monumental lesson to the catastrophe of rejecting Christ. Don't follow that path. Become one of Him, embrace Him as your Savior.

Father, again we thank You for Your Word, always having proclaimed it, my heart is filled with gratitude. The first thought is always "thank You, thank You," for this clarity, for this truth, for this warning, for this invitation because it comes from You with such grace. It is a visitation intended for peace. May it be so in every heart here, we pray...every heart received, embraced that sinners may be reconciled to You, making peace, making peace possible because of the sacrifice of Christ. May there be no one here who faces catastrophic and eternal judgment. May all respond to the visitation of the gospel of peace, embrace the Savior and receive the hope of heaven and eternal joy.

Now, Father, we say again it is good to be in Your house and dwell together with those who are brothers. It is good to celebrate the greatness of our salvation. We thank You that You have opened our eyes to see the glory of Christ, that we don't stand with unbelievers, but with those in faith. The death for us is no catastrophe at all, for there never will be any judgment. All our judgment was experienced by Christ who bore all the judgment for all our sin in His own body for all who believe. We thank You for the gift of life in Christ, and we pray that no one here will refuse that in the day of visitation when that opportunity is presented to them. Do Your work in every heart, use us, Lord, to carry this glorious message beyond the walls here to those who so desperately need it in our world. We thank You and we give You honor in Christ's name. Amen.

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