

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

## **Defending the Jesus of the Bible**

Scripture: Selected Scriptures

Code: GTY115

Well I was asked to speak on the subject, "Who is Jesus?" That is very basic but it's certainly a question that a lot of people are struggling to answer. Some of you have been reading recently, probably about the pseudo religion called Scientology. You know about Scientology? You probably came in to Scientology through the back door...the back door is labeled Tom Cruise.

Scientology is a demonically informed pseudo religion basically invented by a combination Science Fiction writer and medium by the name of L. Ron Hubbard. And L. Ron Hubbard wants to answer the question, Who is Jesus? This is what he said.

"Jesus never existed as a person but rather he is an electronic idea, implanted by the true powers of the universe into the mind of someone between incarnations about 600 B.C. This implant is labeled R6 and occurred while this person between incarnations was watching a mad man, or something. Jesus is nothing more than an electronic, mystical, biological implant... says Hubbard... and the implant has all the characteristics of a pedophile."

Frankly I can't think of anything more bizarre or anything more blasphemous than that. It's just stunning, And yet, if you reject the true Christ, you can concoct any Christ you want and you're going to end up in the same place. The effect of missing the truth about Jesus Christ is the same. You can pick your poison, you can pick your religion, but any other than believing in the true Christ is damning belief. The right understanding of Jesus Christ is essential to the gospel and to salvation. If anybody preaches another Christ, let him be... what... accursed... accursed.

The right answer alone can lead to salvation. And you can be very close to the right answer and miss it and the results are disastrous forever. And that leads me to confront this question by looking at a monumental moment in the life of our Lord Jesus.

Open your Bible to Luke chapter 20...Luke chapter 20. I want to take you into the life of Jesus and capture your interest by the compelling scene that you're going to find yourself hopefully in the middle of. It is the twentieth chapter of Luke and it is verse 41. Follow as I read.

"And He said to them, how is it that they say the Christ is David's son? For David himself says in the book of Psalms, 'The Lord said to My Lord, sit at My right hand until I make Thine enemies a footstool for Thy feet. David, therefore, calls Him Lord and how is He his son?' And while all the people were

listening, He said to the disciples, 'Beware of the scribes that like to walk around in long robes and love respectful greetings in the marketplaces and chief seats in the synagogues and places of honor at banquets who devour widows' houses and for appearances sake offer long prayers. These will receive greater condemnation.' And He looked up and saw the rich putting their gifts into the treasury. And He saw a certain poor widow putting in two small copper coins, and He said 'Truly I say to you, this poor widow put in more than all of them for they all out of their surplus put into the offering but she out of her poverty put in all that she had to live on.' And while some were talking about the temple, that it was adorned with beautiful stones and votive gifts, He said, 'As for these things which you are looking at, the days will come in which there will not be left one stone upon another which will not be torn down.'"

Now you would think today that if you just get a lot of things right, and maybe miss the Jesus part, you're going to go to heaven. That's the new breath of tolerance that defines much of contemporary evangelicalism. You don't really have to believe in the gospel of Christ. You don't have to believe in Christ. If you're a monotheist, if you believe in the one true God, and O my, especially if you believe in the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. If you are a monotheist and particularly like the Jews you believe in the true God of the Old Testament, you may not be informed about Jesus, you may miss a little on Jesus but you're going to be fine.

And that is absolutely diametrically opposed to what I just read you. Jesus says to thee Jews who have made the wrong conclusions about Him that you will not have a lesser condemnation. Not only will you not have salvation, not only will you not be excused, not only will you not have a lesser condemnation, you will have a greater condemnation. In fact, this entire Judaistic system is coming down in an imminent holocaust in which the symbol of this religious system, namely the temple, is going to be leveled to the ground.

This would be a pretty frightening message for people today to think about who are trying to extend and expand the gospel to include just about anybody and everybody who believes in God, any God as long as it's a one-God system. This is an indication from the Lord Jesus Himself that divine condemnation is coming on a apostate form of Judaism. They believed in the one true and living God, the God who was the Creator, the God who spoke in the Old Testament, the God who revealed Himself through the prophets and His righteous character through the Law, and the God who established that He would uphold His righteous character by means of judgment. All the things that are true about the true God in the Old Testament the Jews believed, it was not enough. Jesus never sat down and said, "You know, we've got so much common ground, let's find a connection and have a conversation. I really don't want to condemn you, let's have a conversation."

Now when I wrote the book, *The Truth War*, I knew it was going to get some flack from the people in the Emerging Church. Here was the flack. "All MacArthur wants to do is condemn. He's not willing to enter the conversation. He's not willing to find the common ground and celebrate the common

ground.”

And so, I'm going to respond to that by writing a second book. And the second book is going to be, *Did Jesus Engage His Enemies in a Conversation or Level a Condemnation*. Did Jesus look for common ground and find places to agree, or did He point out the damning nature of rejecting Him. Pretty easy question to answer. I've got to figure out how to take 200 pages to say that. That's my big problem.

All right, let me set the scene. Go back to where we began. Let me set the scene. Three years of ministry is over in the life of our Lord. The ministry in Judea for the first year, the ministry in Galilee for the second year, back to Judea for the third year of His ministry, He has traversed Judea, the southern part of Israel, and He has gone from town to village to city proclaiming the gospel of the Kingdom. And He has been banishing illness from Palestine and demonstrating divine power and again and again saying that He is the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy.

He has been declaring His messiahship. He has been declaring His deity. And then He's been proving it by His power over disease, His power over demons and His powerful presentation of the truth, as well as His power over death. Three years are finished now and we find Him here and it is Wednesday of Passion Week, Wednesday.

It was Saturday when He first came through Jericho, ascended to Jerusalem from the lowlands of Jericho and arrived at Bethany. On that Saturday, found His place of rest with His friends, Mary, Martha and the recently resurrected Lazarus who had stirred up no small amount of conversation in Jerusalem. In fact, was largely the resurrection of Lazarus that drew the crowds to the triumphal entry.

On Sunday, I think the accurate chronology is, on Sunday Jesus stayed in Bethany and many people came to Him, to see Him, to talk with Him, to hear from Him on Sunday. Actually it is on Monday that He entered Jerusalem, triumphantly indeed. In one sense He rides on the colt, the foal of an ass, because that's what Zachariah 9:9 said He would, and that's exactly what He did. He came in fulfilling prophecy on Monday.

The crowds were massive. Some would estimate a quarter of a million. There was a real possibility in their minds that He might be the Messiah. I mean, how else could you explain His power over disease, demons, death and His power for proclamation of the truth. He had spoke like no other man had spoken. And there was this fever pitch because Lazarus was alive. He came back into town early on Tuesday, after having left that night to go to the Mount of Olives.

Each night He stayed at the Mount of Olives. Took His disciples out the eastern gate of Jerusalem, down the little slope, across the Kidron Brook, back up the Mount of Olives directly east of Jerusalem

and disappeared into the massive grove of Olive Trees. Why? Because He knew His enemies wanted Him dead, He knew they didn't want to arrest Him in the daylight or in full view of the crowd and needed a clandestine place where He could hide at night in the darkness with His disciples. That's where He went every night.

In the morning on Tuesday, He came back. He had one thing in mind. He went directly to the temple and you know what He did, He cleaned the place out for the second time in His ministry. Did it once at the beginning and once at the end, bracketed His ministry by identifying the whole Judaistic system as apostate. He declared the apostasy of that system and divine judgment falling on that system at the beginning of His ministry, as recorded in John 2, and He punctuated it at the end with the same act. It was corrupt to the core. It was corrupt to the core.

The Pharisees were hypocrites. Scribes were Pharisees who were also hypocrites. The scribes were the law experts who informed the religion of the Pharisees. The Pharisees were the purveyor of that religion throughout the synagogue system which made it the most populous of all the forms of Judaism. The Sadducees, another sect of Jews, ran the temple enterprises and it was as corrupt as corrupt can be, extorted money out of people by discrediting their sacrifices which they brought, and making them buy sacrifices that they sold, cheated them on the exchange of money, created all kinds of means by which the people could buy divine blessing by putting money in the thirteen trumpet-shaped receptacles that filled the Court of the Women. People would parade by and put their money in those things. The rabbis had taught with alms one purchases his redemption. It was a corrupt system. It was a system of works/righteousness, self-righteousness and blatant hypocrisy, as you heard me read.

So on Tuesday, Jesus declares, "You have taken My Father's house, intended to be a house of prayer, communion with the true and living God by the means that He's established and you have turned it into a cave of thieves." They were stealing people blind to become wealthy themselves. It was religion at its worse possible form.

The rest of the day, after doing that, He taught, interacted with the people, addressed the issues of the Kingdom... a long weary day. Went back to the Mount of Olives, found the place in the Garden of Gethsemane, laid on the ground and slept. Wednesday He came back again. This is the last day that Jesus ever taught publicly. This is a very important day. This is the last day He ever taught. So we hear the last things He ever said.

At the end of Wednesday, He walked out of the temple ground on the east side, down that same little slope and went up the Mount of Olives and stopped and sat there with His disciples, long enough to tell them He would never be back in that place again. He would someday return in glory. That was His last time in a public ministry. The rest of Wednesday and Thursday, He was with His disciples. They celebrated the Passover Thursday night. He taught them all the things contained in John 13, 14, 15

and 16 and then prayed The Great High Priestly Prayer of John 17 in front of their full view and in their full hearing and then walked to the Mount of Olives, this time knowing He would be betrayed. It is after midnight. By three o'clock He is dead because He has to die at the very hour the Passover lambs are being killed. He has to be in the grave before the sun goes down so that He can be in the grave Friday, Saturday and Sunday. He's in control of every detail.

This is Wednesday... this is Wednesday, the last day of public ministry. He preaches the Kingdom, it's an exhausting long day. He confronts the religious leaders who hate Him with an uncontrollable passion. This hate has been going on for a long time. It's safe to say this hatred has been going on for years, since the very beginning when He first came and did the very same thing, cleansed the temple, struck a blow at their religious system, which not only disrupted its operation but discredited its integrity, validity.

They hated Him because He assaulted His apostasy. They hated Him because He assaulted their theology, their seats of power, their fragile truce with Rome. He assaulted their false righteousness. And He didn't do it in subtle ways, He publicly denounced them. He openly exposed their corruption and their hypocrisy and it drove them feverishly to seek His murder. And above all, of course, they hated Him for blasphemy because He claimed to be equal with God. That's the ultimate blasphemy.

So here at the last occasion of Jesus speaking publicly on the final day, it's very important to hear what He says. His final words... the last message. And what is it? It's about His identity, who is He? He had been telling them for three years. He had been telling them day after day, after day, after day, after day, after day. He had made the claims again and again and again and again and verified them and given vast evidence to support them. But He goes back to that issue again.

Now just backing up a little bit. Who did the Jews expect their Messiah to be? Who did they think Messiah would be? Bottom line, they were sure He would be a man. They were sure He's be a man. Not an angel and not God, but a man and not just a man, but a Son of David, a Son of David, they thought because that's what the Old Testament promised, that the greater Son of David, promised in 2 Samuel chapter 7, you can read it for yourself, the greater Son of David would come and establish the everlasting Kingdom. They expected that when the Messiah came, He would be a man, He would be a man in the line of David with a royal right to the throne. He would be a man of immense power and influence who would sweep into power, who would overthrow the Romans and all the enemies of Israel and fulfill instantaneously all Kingdom promises to Abraham, and to David, and all the Kingdom promises reiterated through the prophets as well as bring full salvation to Israel.

Even the disciples thought that. Luke tells us that they thought He would bring a Kingdom. But the people thought He would be just a man and a Son of David. And so that brings Jesus to the ultimate question. Is He merely a man? And I want you to look at verses 41 to 44 and we'll call it the final invitation...the final invitation.

Even after all the hatred of the leaders, even after all the fickle interest by the uncommitted crowds who were so exuberant on Monday, but by Friday they're screaming, "Crucify Him, Crucify Him," in spite of the hatred from the leaders, in spite of the fickle interest by the uncommitted crowds, He is still the compassionate evangel. One last time He will clarify who He is so that unbelieving sinners can believe.

Matthew 22:41 really begins this for us. In that text we read, Jesus said this, "What do you think about the Christ? Whose Son is He?" That was the question that He asked. "What do you think about the Christ, whose Son is He?" And He is saying this to the Pharisees and the scribes, in the hearing of all the people. And Matthew 22:42 says, "They replied, "David's... David's."

Everybody understood that. And by the way, there's a definite article in the Matthew text when the question is posed, what do you think about THE Christ? He's distancing Himself from that at that moment. He's simply asking, "What is your view of the Messiah? Whose Son is He?" And they reply, "David's." And that gets us to verse 41. "He said to them, 'How is it that they say the Christ is David's son? How have you come to that conclusion?'"

That's as far as they wanted to go. That's as far as they could go. That's as far as they understood. They have a fundamentally flawed conception of the Messiah. It's not wrong, it's incomplete. And incomplete equals wrong.

The question is basic. The disciples knew better than that. Peter said on behalf of all of them, "By divine revelation, You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Son of David...yes. Son of God...yes. For the Jews, the answer was strictly David's son, a man with a right to the throne of Israel. That's the Messiah. Any Jew would have answered the question that way. They all knew that. That is what the Old Testament taught. You can read it in 2 Samuel 7. You can read it in Psalm 89. You can read it in Ezekiel 37. You can read it in a lot of places. And if you just go through, for example, Matthew is probably the best one to follow, and just hear what the people say, what the populace says. For example, Matthew 9:27, "As people passed on from there, two blind followed Him, crying out and saying, "Have mercy on us, Son of David." Luke records in Luke 18 that later on in His ministry, when He was coming through Jericho, Luke 18. He ran into two more blind men and blind beggars tended to hang out with each other so it's not surprising on a couple of occasions He ran into a couple of them.

Same thing, they cried out to Him, "Son of David, have mercy on us." Matthew 12, "There was brought to Him a demon-possessed man who was blind and dumb. He healed them so that the dumb man spoke and saw and all the multitudes were amazed and began to say, 'This man cannot be the Son of David, can He?'" That's what everybody understood, that the Messiah was a Son of David.

By the way, as a footnote, that's why it's so important to have a Matthew genealogy and a Luke genealogy. Matthew, the genealogy of Joseph, Luke the genealogy of Mary, in both cases through both families, Jesus is from the line of David. From His mother He gets the royal blood, if you will. From His father He gets the right to rule. Nobody would deny that the Messiah was the Son of David. The Old Testament is crystal clear about that.

In fact, Zachariah is a good illustration. Zachariah, the father of John the Baptist, back in Luke chapter 1, when Zacharias knew that the Messiah was going to come because God was going to give he and his barren wife, Elizabeth, the child who would be the forerunner of the Messiah. He was filled with the Holy Spirit, Luke 1:67. He prophesied, "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, He has visited us, accomplished redemption for His people. He has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of David, His servant." Everybody knew the Messiah was to be the Son of David... everybody.

Frankly, there could not have been a more successful attack on the deity of Jesus, on the messiahship of Jesus, than if the temple records showed that He was not a Son of David. And you could be certain that the Pharisees and the scribes checked it out. And by the way, Messiah had to come before the temple was destroyed because all the records were gone after that.

Their answer is accurate, He is David's Son. Their answer is true, it is just inadequate. And for the rest of the answer, the Lord does a brief exposition of Scripture. Verse 42, "How is it... verse 41... that they say the Christ is David's Son only implied, for David himself says in the book of Psalms, 'The Lord said to My Lord, Sit at My right hand until I make Thine enemies a footstool for Thy feet. David, therefore, calls Him Lord and how is He His Son?'" This is absolutely stunning, brilliant. No self-respecting Middle Eastern father would ever call his son Lord. Why is David calling His Son Lord, *Adonay* in Psalm 110. David calls Messiah Lord and God, "The Lord said to My Lord, 'Sit at My right hand until I make Thine enemies a footstool for Thy feet.'" That sounds like Psalm 2, doesn't it? Another Messianic Psalm that says when Messiah comes, He will rule and all enemies will be brought under His feet. That kind of depiction is from ancient thrones where the throne was elevated above everybody and everybody was under the feet of the ruler.

Verse 44 He asked the question, "David therefore calls Him Lord, how is He His Son?" Some Jewish commentators have decided that David made a mistake. Oops, David shouldn't have said that, he made a mistake. But Matthew 22:43 says, "He spoke in the Spirit." And some critics have suggested, "Well in His own human spirit, so Mark 12:36 says, "He spoke in the Holy Spirit."

When David called the Messiah His Lord, it was by Holy Spirit inspiration. The Lord said to My Lord, You're the one who is going to reign and rule. Always Psalm 110 was messianic. Always it was interpreted by the Jews as messianic until the early church. The Jews had always acknowledged that this was a messianic Psalm. By the way, it's the Psalm most often quoted by New Testament writers.

Our Lord uses this Psalm to verify its messianic character, its Davidic authorship and His own deity. And this Psalm became so strongly used in the early church to prove the messiahship of Jesus that for hundreds of years the Jews abandoned the historic interpretation, they applied it to Abraham, Melchizedek and even Judas Maccabees. It has been restlessly attacked by rabbis and critics who want to reject its prophetic element, its Davidic authorship and certainly want to reject the deity of Jesus Christ.

Jesus said David wrote it. Jesus said David wrote it by the Holy Spirit. Jesus said David was prophesying concerning Him, the Messiah, and the Messiah is David's Lord.

And what did God say to David's Lord? "Sit at My right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for Your feet." Putting Him at His right hand is putting Him in a position of equality. The right hand expresses power. Old Testament calls God's power His right hand. He invests into His Son, the Messiah, all power and all authority. And we hear that repeated in the New Testament. Messiah then will not only be David's Son humanly, He will be David's Lord divinely. He is Son of David and Son of God, David's Son and David's Lord.

"And we beheld His glory... John writes... the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." This is the only explanation for Jesus, the only one. He showed the ability to create divinely. He shared omnipotence with God the Father. He commanded the elements. He commanded all creatures. He created food. He created whole, healthy bodies. He raised the dead. He forgave sin, and He pronounced judgment. All elements of divine omnipotence. He had the attribute of omnipresence and was able to be everywhere at all times if He desired to be, He said. He was omniscient, He knew everything that was in the heart of man so that no one needed to tell Him anything about a man. Therefore He shared the very infinite knowledge of God. He was immutable. He's the same today, yesterday, and forever, always holy, true, wise, sovereign, loving, eternal, glorious, unchanging. He accepted worship. He is to be sought in prayer. In every sense He is God. He even shares some of the same titles with God, rock, stumbling stones, Savior, Redeemer, Holy One, Lord of Hosts, King, First and Last, etc., etc.

We're not surprised when you look at the life of Jesus Christ to see manifestly that He is God. So the classical approach to this, if God became a man, we would expect His human life to be sinless and His was. If God, the Holy true God, were a man, we would expect Him to live perfectly righteous. He did. If God were a man, we would expect His words to be the greatest words ever spoken. They were. If God were a man, we would expect Him to exert a profound, unequalled power over humanity. He did. If God were a man, we would expect supernatural demonstrations. There were many of them. If God were a man, we would expect Him to manifest the love of God. And He did. Even His entire ministry was a ministry of compassion, delivering people from the ravages of demon possession, death and disease.



Well there's no other possible conclusion that this is David's Son who is also David's Lord. They got it. Matthew adds a footnote. Matthew 22:46, "No one was able to answer Him a word or ask Him another question." Sadly it doesn't say they believed. They just ramped up the hatred. That was the final invitation. That's the last invitation He ever gave. One more opportunity to acknowledge that I am God as well as man, David's Son, and David's Lord. That is the Lord God, *Yahweh* speaking to My Lord... David says... *Adonay*, the one who is indued with all My power and the one I will make ruler. This is Messiah, the God/Man.

It is at that moment the final invitation ended for Israel. And what follows is tragic. Here comes our Lord's very last words. And while all the people were listening, this is the last thing He ever said publicly, and it wasn't *How To Have Your Best Life Now*, just thought I'd throw that in to wake you up. The last thing He ever said publicly, "Beware." Wow! "Beware of the scribes who like to walk around in long robes and like respectful greetings in the market places and chief seats in the synagogues and places of honor at banquets, who devour widows' houses and for appearances's sake offer long prayers; these will receive greater condemnation." And He pronounces severer damnation on apostate Judaism.

There's one thing, of course, that Christ is intolerant of, and that's false religion. And the final words are a warning, His last words. By the way, Luke gives us two verses. Matthew gives us the whole speech, Matthew 23, read it. Matthew 23 is a blistering malediction, a scathing rebuke of the false leaders of Israel. That was Jesus' parting shot because of the damning power of false religion that denies the reality of a biblical Christology. Luke just gives us two verses. Matthew stretches it to nearly 40. He describes them as hypocrites. Matthew gives us the full text, hypocrites, hypocrites, hypocrites, hypocrites, hypocrites, he repeats it again and again and again, woe, woe, woe, curse, curse, curse. Jesus walked out of that temple after having cursed the religious leaders of Israel and warned the people, "You're going down with them if you don't get away from them."

There's only one action in the description here in Luke and it's fascinating. Only one action. He talks about their hypocritical attitude, they like to walk around in long robes, love greetings, etc., etc., cheap seats. Very proud, self-serving, self-righteous.

There's only one sinful act here. They devour widows' houses. This is the only specific sin of action, *katesthio*, consume, plunder, eat up. How bad was this religion? It had descended to the place where the people in charge were getting rich at the expense of the most defenseless people. That's how corrupt Judaism was... so far from the heart of God. The heart of God throughout the whole Old Testament was to care for the poor, right? What does James say? "Pure religion undefiled is to care for the widows' orphans." This is the heart of God, tender, compassionate.

This looks at the apostasy of Judaism not theologically, but practically. This is where their theology led them, to become fat, isolated, self-serving, spiritual hypocrites who were getting fatter and building their religious empire on the backs of the most beleaguered, defeated and defenseless. In their system, if you were a widow, it was because there was sin in your life and you were being punished by God. That was the system. And if you're a woman, on top of that, you were also a second-class citizen to start with. So they looked on widows as the lowest, treated them with disdain. They devour widows' houses and at the same time, make these long prayers for appearance sake, spiritual frauds. These will receive greater condemnation.

And then the next passage just shakes us. He looked up... I'll give you a first lesson in Bible exegesis, what does that tell you? He looked up? It tells you that He had been looking down. Good, class, you're on your way. If you put the whole picture together from the synoptic gospels, He's weary. It's been a hard week, a long week. He is just spewed out this diatribe recorded fully in Matthew 23, pulled at and pushed by the crowd all day, teaching relentlessly. He's weary. His heart is grieved. When He first came into the city, you remember, on Monday, what did He do? He wept... He wept. He's broken hearted, cleaned the temple the day before. Has come to the end of the day, He knows they're not going to accept Him. It's over, He knows that. He knows the fickle crowd will follow their leaders. He told them beware, they won't. When the leaders stir them up they'll say, "Crucify Him, crucify Him, crucify Him." And they'll all go to hell with their leader.

And so, He finds a place to sit, Matthew tells us, in the area of the temple treasury, which is the Court of the Women, a large court where He would be teaching because that's where men and women and even strangers could be. And He sits down, And He's weary. And He looks up. And this is where the thirteen trumpet-shaped receptacles were where people came and put their money in. Of course the Pharisees did that, Matthew 6 said, they had somebody blow a trumpet to announce their arrival, put their philanthropy on display. And He watched the rich putting their gifts into the treasury. And Mark says, Mark 12:41, they put in large amounts. This is what the system demanded, that's what it demanded. You purchase your redemption by your alms and the purveyors of that religion were getting rich.

And then He saw a certain poor widow putting in two small copper coins, *lepta*, one-hundred and thirty-second of a denarius, smallest coin the Jews used. They didn't like to use Roman coins cause they saw them as idols, it had Caesar's face on them. But they had Jewish coins, two little pennies, two small copper coins. And He said, He's talking to His disciples now, they've left the city, they went out the gate. They're just walking away from the temple, magnificent, gold everywhere, overlaying this magnificent Herodian temple that had been under construction 50 years, the symbol of this rich religion. And they walk out.

But before they walk out, Jesus notices this and He says to them, "I say to you, this poor widow put in more than all of them, for they all out of their surplus put in their offering but she out of her poverty put

in all that she had to live on.”

Now how many sermons have you heard on this story and then somebody takes the offering? Right? “O Lord, may we learn from the widow.”

Let me tell you. What’s going on here? What...you say, “Well this is the principle of sacrifice.” Oh yeah...yeah...yeah. If you’re going to say this is a giving principle, here’s the principle, give a hundred percent of what you have and go home and die. That’s the principle. That’s what she did. Well it says she put in all she had to live on. The Greek says she put in all her life. That was it. And went home to die. And He’s basically saying, “You know, the people who have more, they give out of their surplus. When she’s done giving, she’s got nothing.” So if this is a lesson on giving, the only lesson that I can see here that’s obvious is give everything and go home and hope somebody comes to your door with more, or die.

I don’t think that’s biblical. You say, “No, no, the lesson here is she had a really good attitude.” Really? Where’s that, in the white space? Where’s that? Where does it say anything about her attitude, it doesn’t say a word about her attitude. What do you mean it says... it doesn’t say anything about her attitude, poor widow put in more than everybody else relatively because she put in everything she had... a hundred percent. It doesn’t say a word about her attitude.

Other people say, “Well, you know, the principle of giving here, it’s not how much you give but how much you have left when you’ve given.” It doesn’t say that. It doesn’t say that at all.

Can I encourage you a little bit? There is no principle here. There’s no principle for giving here at all, none... none. So take that out of your sermon repertoire and your offering talk. This is not a principle of giving. Is this the context? All of a sudden Jesus is talking about... I’m bringing judgment on you, beware of the scribes and Pharisees. And Oh, by the way, this nice little lady rolls through and drops in a few coins. Now some words on giving. Come on.

I mean, that would be where Baptist offerings were born. You know, you could be preaching damnation, but you always stop and a few words about giving, right? Well Jesus is no Baptist evangelist here, trying to take His own love offering. And there’s no... there’s no principle for giving here. Nor do the disciples say, “Well what are You trying to tell us, Lord? What are You trying to tell us? Take all our money and go run over there? We’ll follow her, Lord, here we go. Hey, who’s got the money? Judas used to have the money, but he’s gone. No, he still had the money, he was still there. Hey Judas, go take all our money over there and dump it. Is that what we’re supposed to do, Lord? And then just, you know, die or hope somebody shows up and gives us more money? Or shall we make ourselves burdens for other people?”

There's no principle. They don't ask any questions. They get it. Jesus didn't commend her. He didn't say He was proud of her. He didn't say she had a good heart. He didn't say she had a bad heart. He didn't say she had a good attitude or a bad attitude. Didn't say anything about it.

What He said was this. "Judaism is so corrupt, it devours widows' houses and here's an illustration. Here's an illustration." This poor woman, destitute, is so desperate that she'll give her last cents trying to purchase favor from God. This is the birth of the prosperity preachers. And Jesus pronounced damnation on them, "Woe to you who build your personal fortune on the backs of the destitute and the desperate with promises of success, prosperity, health, wealth if they send you their money."

This is tragic. And so they start to talk as they leave. Verse 5, they're talking about the temple and it was adorned with beautiful stones and votive gifts, gifts that were given in connection with a vow. And those vows were illegitimate. Remember the guy who wouldn't give money to his parents when they had a need cause they made a vow to God? Matthew 15.

So, they're walking out. Jesus turns around. Looks at it glistening, gold in the late afternoon in Jerusalem, this is what He says. "As for these things what you're looking at, the days will come in which there will not be left one stone upon another which will not be torn down." Here is an apostate religious system that abuses people. That is the opposite of what God, the gracious, compassionate, saving God desires to do. Forty years later, Jerusalem and the temple was flattened. All the genealogical records were destroyed. The sacrificial system came to an end. The judgment was true. The final invitation led to the final condemnation.

I think I have enough time just to mention a third point. But for that, you need to look at chapter 22 and verse 37. Is this a bad ending? Is this a nightmare for Jesus because now they're so angry. What are His final words? He gives the whole Matthew 23 speech to the leaders in front of the whole crowd. He discredits them, blisters them with judgment. Their fury reaches the out-of-control level. They're going to get Him. And they got an insider to help them. They got Judas who knows where He'll be on the Mount of Olives and will lead them directly there and they'll get Him on the cross.

Is this a bad ending to a guy who had some nice ideas about morality and religion? No. Verse 37 of Luke 22, now you go to Thursday night. They're in the Upper Room and they've come together to have the last official legitimate Passover and to institute the first Lord's Supper and Jesus warns them. "Look, it's not going to be easy for you guys in the future." Tells them all about persecution, being hated. All of that in John 15 and 16 is included. And then He says this, "It's okay," verse 37, "for I tell you that this which is written must be fulfilled in Me and He was numbered with transgressors for that which refers to Me has its fulfillment."

Let's call this the final realization. The final invitation, rejected. The final condemnation, pronounced. But even in the condemnation that came on the nation that rejected Him, God accomplished the final

realization of His saving purpose. At that moment, Jesus makes the staggering claim that He is the one prophesied in Isaiah 53. He quotes Isaiah 53:12, not to isolate Isaiah 53:12, but to kick the door wide open on Isaiah 53, the whole chapter. He throws the doors open to that chapter. Twice He says it. "That which is written must be fulfilled in Me," at the beginning of the verse. "That which refers to Me has its fulfillment," at the end of the verse. Twice in one verse He says, "I am the fulfillment, I am the fulfillment of...and He was numbered with the transgressors," Isaiah 53.

It has to be this way. The worst that the Apostate system can do is going to fulfill the plan of God. He was killed by your wicked hands, but primarily by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God. Jesus is God's Lamb, He's God's Lamb. Satan didn't want to kill Jesus. Satan wanted to keep Him from the cross. Satan didn't want to kill Jesus, God did.

Why? Because someone had to take the place of sinners. He was numbered with the transgressors. That is staggering. That is the apex of Jesus' life and ministry. He is saying, "I am the fulfillment of Isaiah 53, I am the fulfillment." And He pulls one line, "Numbered with the transgressors." That line is only one of twenty in that chapter that speak of His substitutionary identification with sinners. Twenty times in that chapter it speaks of that, that's just one. That just opens the door. I am the fulfillment of Isaiah 53. Isaiah 53 has been called the torture chamber of rabbis.

I want to close by having you go to Isaiah 53. This is stunning. And I want you to just sort of break this up in to four little parts. Number one, the section starting in verse 12 of chapter 52...actually verse 14 of chapter 52 starts to talk about the suffering substitute. And verse 14 of 52 says, "Many were astonished at You so His appearance was marred more than any man and His form than the sons of men." And in verse 2 of 53, "He has no stately form or majesty that we should look upon Him, nor appearance that we should be attracted to Him. He is the scarred substitute. He is the scarred substitute. The suffering servant of Isaiah will come and He will be scarred and He will be disfigured."

And then the prophet says, "He will be the sufficient substitute... verse 4... Surely our grief He Himself bore, our sorrows He carried, yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, smitten of God and afflicted, He was pierced through for our transgressions. He was crushed for our iniquities. The chastening for our well-being fell on Him and by His scourgings we are healed. All of us like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned his own way. But the Lord has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Him." Do you see the sufficiency of that? He's taken care of our transgressions. He has taken care of our iniquities. He has brought us well being. We have been healed. He is the efficient substitute. He is the submissive substitute in verse 7. He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He didn't open His mouth like a lamb led to slaughter, like a sheep silent before its shearers. He didn't open His mouth. By oppression and judgment, He's taken away. As for His generation who considered that He was cut off out of the land of the living for the transgression of My people to whom the stroke was due. Yes His grave was assigned with wicked men, yet He was with a rich man in His death because He had done no violence, nor was there any deceit in His mouth. This is the

submissive substitute, the scarred substitute becomes the sufficient substitute and the submissive substitute and ends up the sovereign substitute in verse 10. You see how it flows. "The Lord will prolong His days, that's the resurrection. The good pleasure of the Lord will prosper in His hand as a result of the anguish of His soul, He will see it and be satisfied. By His knowledge, the righteous One, My servant will justify the many, bear their iniquities. I will allot Him a portion with the great. He will divide the booty with the strong. This is all triumph. Because He was numbered with the transgressors and Himself bore the sin of many."

You know what the most stunning thing about that whole chapter, it's in the past tense. Did you pick that up? Here's a prophet writing hundreds of years before the cross. He bore, He was smitten of God, He was pierced. He was scourged. He was oppressed. He was afflicted. Past tense.

What is that about? The entire chapter, it's just a magnificent thing, the entire chapter is from the perspective of a Jew in the future, after the cross, looking back at Christ and seeing the truth. What did Zechariah 12:10 say? "They will look upon Me and mourn for Me. They'll look upon Me whom they have... what... pierced.

What's going to come out of the rejection of Israel in the future is the salvation of Israel, and not just Israel, but Gentiles. Anybody who looks back on the cross and sees the truth, fountain of cleansing opens to them. And so, Jesus culminates His life, His public ministry by saying, "You reject Me, you're damned." And then pulls His disciples aside and says, "But it's okay, because I must fulfill Isaiah 53 and from this hour on, souls will look back and all who look back and see the reality of the cross in the light of Isaiah 53 and believe it and embrace it will be saved."

Our Father, we thank You for the glorious realities of our Christ like the numberless stars of heaven...each feature of His life shines with blazing brilliance and there are so many, they're almost incalculable. We've just picked out a little glimpse of His majesty and His glory. And we just want to affirm that we love our Christ, but we only can love Him because You first loved us. Forgive us for our cold and indifferent hearts. May we grow to love the Lord Jesus with all our heart and soul, mind and strength. What privilege that we should be among those who look back and get the story right. Thank You for this grace. We give You all the glory in Christ's dear name. Amen.

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