

Matthew 22-03-06b

Let's resume our study now in Luke chapter 11, which is a parallel to our passage in Matthew chapter 23 content wise. It's a different occasion, but it's just fascinating how consistent the Lord Jesus is in delivering this message. It would have been difficult for anyone in Israel to have not gotten the essentials of Jesus preaching, having delivered these truths time and time again in the North, in the South, in Jerusalem, in Galilee, in the Transjordan, even up in the area of Tyre and Sidon to, and in Samaria, these truths were communicated and the issue of believing and responding to these words was made by the Lord Jesus for over three years.

But picking up now in verse 49 of Luke 11, Jesus says, therefore the wisdom of God also said, I will send them prophets and apostles, some of them they will kill and persecute that the blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world may be required of this generation from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zachariah who perished between the altar and the temple. Yes, I say to you, it shall be required of this generation. Woe to you lawyers, for you have taken away the key of knowledge.

You did not enter in yourselves and these who are entering in you hindered. Those who are entering in you hindered. And that of course was what Jesus led with on the occasion that we're studying in Matthew chapter 23.

But this is a very important point that Jesus made and this makes that all the blood of the prophets that was shed from the foundation of the world is gonna be required of this generation. The blood of Abel to the blood of Zachariah, I say to you, it shall be required of this generation. Why is the murder of prophets hundreds of years in the past? Abel is thousands of years in the past.

Why would their blood be required of this generation? Well, this is a fascinating statement by the Lord Jesus and worth investigating. You'll also note if you have your finger in Luke 11 and look at Matthew 23, that Jesus says, I will send you prophets, wise men, and scribes. Some of them you will kill and crucify.

Some of them you will scourge in your synagogues. That's verse 34 of Matthew 23. It's parallel in Luke is verse 49.

Therefore the wisdom of God also said. So the wisdom of God says it on the earlier occasion at the Pharisees house in Luke, Jesus puts it in the first person. I say, I will send you prophets, wise men, and scribes.

Some of them you will kill and crucify. Some of them you will scourge in your synagogues and persecute from city to city that on you may come all the righteous blood shed that on you may come. Well, what's going on here? In addition to just make things even more interesting, we have a textual issue here in Matthew 23, verse 35, that

on you may come all the righteous blood shed on the earth from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zachariah, son of Berechiah.

We are studying in our Wednesday night study, the book of Zachariah, the son of Berechiah. You go to the very first verse in that prophecy. You find that Berechiah is the prophet Zachariah's father, but there is no record that our prophet, the one sandwiched between Haggai and Malachi was martyred, that he was slain.

There's no record of that. There's no Talmudic reference to it of any kind, but there is a reference to Zachariah who was martyred. And it's interesting because we're gonna find out about the wisdom of God when we solve this little puzzle.

You remember in the parallel in Luke, the earlier occasion where Jesus mentions the blood of Abel and the blood of Zachariah, he doesn't give Zachariah's father in Luke 11, but it is included in our passage in Matthew 23, verse 35. Well, what is going on here? What we're going to do in sort of a domino fashion is first of all, figure out who is Zachariah? Why does Jesus reference Abel and Zachariah? It's cool in English because Abel starts with A and Zachariah starts with Z and it's all of the blood from A to Z. And this is in fact the idea in this reference. But to clarify Jesus' allusion here, turn back to 2 Chronicles chapter 24.

2 Chronicles chapter 24. This is a great sort of area of investigation. I don't like to use the phrase Bible trivia because I don't think anything is trivial, but some of the lesser known episodes in scripture are often quite important.

And Jesus is referencing one here. 2 Chronicles chapter 24. You remember baby Joash and his preservation in the days of Athaliah in chapter 23.

And then in chapter 24, there is a great revival under Joash. Joash was seven years old when he became king. He reigned 40 years in Jerusalem.

His mother's name was Zibiah of Beersheba. Joash did what was right in the sight of the Lord all the days of Jehoiada the priest. If you remember our study in Kings and Prophets, this may start to ring a bell.

Joash has a godfather in, almost literally a godfather in Jehoiada the priest. And Jehoiada took two wives for him and he had sons and daughters. Happened after this, Joash set his heart on repairing the house of the Lord.

Big overt refurbishing of the temple. Very interesting because that is the issue in the days of Haggai and Zechariah is getting the new temple after the destruction of this one built. And there is a lack of fire in the belly from the people who are tasked with doing so.

That's why Haggai, part of the reason Haggai and Zechariah deliver their messages. Now look at verse 15 of 2 Chronicles 24. But Jehoiada grew old and was full of days.

No kidding, he was 130 years old when he died. They buried him in the city of David among the kings. I have a little pencil square around this verse.

They buried Jehoiada the priest in the midst of the kings in the city of David because he had done good in Israel, both toward God and his house. His love for God influenced the king and influenced the people to get these contributions and get it made. What's his name? Jehoiada.

After the death of Jehoiada, the leaders of Judah came and bowed down to the king and the king listened to them. They left the house of the Lord God of their fathers and served wooden images. Notice the leaders of Judah came.

These are the elders. This is the sort of the civil government and they had government concerns. They had tribal concerns.

They had clan concerns. They had international concerns. The king, he did them.

You get the idea that Joash was influenced by those around him. And when those around him were good, then he was good. When those around him were misguided, then he was misguided.

So they left the house of the Lord God of their fathers and served wooden images in verse 18 and idols. Wrath came upon Judah and Jerusalem because of their trespass. Yet he, God sent prophets to them to bring them back to the Lord and they testified against them, but they would not listen.

God sent Joash and the elders prophets to call them back to God and they would not listen. The spirit of God came upon Zechariah, the son of Jehoi to the priest who stood above the people and said to them, thus says God, why do you transgress the commandments of the Lord so that you cannot prosper? Because you have forsaken the Lord, he also has forsaken you. Calvinists take note, because you have forsaken the Lord, he has forsaken you.

And all of these who think that it is blasphemous to believe that God responds to the decisions of men, sorry, but the Bible is full of it. We're gonna see another one before we're finished here. So they conspired against him, that is they conspired against Zechariah and at the command of the king, they stoned him with stones in the court of the house of the Lord.

They stoned him, they executed him, they murdered him in the temple court between the altar and the door of the temple. They killed the prophet of God, son of the priest. Notice he was a prophet and a priest.

And because he pronounced judgment on them, called out their sin, their forsaking of God, they slew him. Thus Joash the king did not remember the kindness which Jehoiada

his father had done to him, but killed his son. And as Zechariah died, he said, the Lord look on it and repay.

The Lord look on it and repay. Soon Joash is going to die. And if you skip down to verse 25, they left him severely wounded.

His servants conspired against him because of the blood of the son of Jehoiada. Your Bible says sons cross out the S, it is son. The Septuagint and the Vulgate have this correct.

It is the son of Jehoiada because it's talking about Zechariah. They killed him on his bed and he died and they buried him in the city of David, but they did not bury him in the tombs of the kings. Where was Jehoiada entombed? With the kings.

Where is Joash entombed? Not with the kings. He's in the city of David, but not with the kings. Here we have the slaying of prophets.

We have the mention of tombs and we have the charge of forsaking God and going after other idols, other gods. Much the same thematic element, but I wanna draw your attention to verse 19. In my Bible, I have a marginal note that I wrote my own self that says Luke 11 49.

He, God sent prophets to them to bring them back to the Lord and they testified against them, but they would not listen. Luke 11 49 says, "The wisdom of God said, "I will send them prophets and apostles. "Some of them they will kill and persecute." The wisdom of God that Jesus alludes to here is 2 Chronicles 24 19.

Jesus is gonna go on to talk about the blood of all the prophets shed from the foundation of the world. And in both Luke, in the occasion at the Pharisee's house and in Matthew two days before his own crucifixion, Jesus mentions blood three times. In Matthew 23, our passage, he says, "That on you may come all the righteous blood "shed on the earth from the blood of righteous Abel "to the blood of Zechariah, "whom you murdered between the temple and the altar." Once again, it's all gonna be required of this generation.

And it sounds as though they are being charged with the murder of Abel and they are being charged with this murder of Zechariah that took place in the days of Joash. Hundreds of years earlier, right? How can they be held accountable? Well, you remember what Jesus said earlier in our passage, you testify from your own mouths that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets up in verse 31. You are their sons.

So what about this? I'm interested in this idea that the blood that was shed all the way from Abel to Zechariah comes upon the generation that Jesus is talking to. And he says, you murdered Zechariah between the door and the altar, the temple and the altar, right? What is going on here? Well, we just read 2 Chronicles and saw the death of Zechariah,

the son of Jehoiada. There is no Berechiah mentioned here.

Berechiah is in verse one of the prophet Zechariah, the book of Zechariah that we're studying midweek, right? It's a mistake. So what about this? Is there a mistake in my Bible? You know, from long experience, our Bible is full of textual issues. What is our constant understanding, our constant reminder when we find a text problem in the Bible? Where the text has not been perfectly preserved, what does God do? He gives us the evidence to reconstruct it.

To try to make a perfect Bible is to border on the charge that is sometimes made, especially amongst Bible church types or Bible Baptists or whatever, that we worship the Bible. And the Bible has to be perfect or we all go into shock. This is an English translation of Greek manuscripts that allude in many cases to Old Testament Hebrew manuscripts.

And we are not wedded to every word that is printed in a King James Bible or a New King James Bible or any other reference. And sometimes whether early or late, mistakes due to human error have crept in. We've seen them in almost every book we've studied.

In fact, I would say probably every single book we've had to make some corrections to the text. I've had you line things out as we've gone along this morning, the words that are just simply not there and were added later from marginal notes and such. So do we go into shock and say, there's a mistake in my Bible? What rule did I just quote? What's the thing we constantly remind ourselves when we find a text problem in our English Bible here? Where a problem has crept into the text, what has God done? He has provided us the evidence to spot it and fix it.

How do I know this is a mistake? Because I have Luke chapter 11 to tell me that Jesus alluded to Zachariah who was slain between the temple and the altar. This is not the Zachariah that wrote the book right before Malachi. This is the Zachariah of Joash's day who in scripture was slain in the court of the temple.

That's the Zachariah we're talking about and he is the son of Jehoiada. Archer says, well, maybe Jehoiada was his grandpa and his dad was Berechiah and Berechiah is just not mentioned, but Oral, sorry, no. Don't go into shock.

Somebody stuck Berechiah into Matthew 23, 35 and they goofed. It's a human mistake. Matthew didn't make it because Matthew wrote under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus didn't make it because Jesus saw this. He saw it happen from glory. He knows his Zachariahs.

There's, I don't know, 23 different Zachariahs in the Bible and Jesus knows every single one of them and all the details of their lives. It is simply an error in the text and we know it's an error because God has given us the evidence in two other places to keep us

straight, Luke 11 and 2 Chronicles chapter 24. So with that, two witnesses, a thing is established.

Berekiah is wrong. Jehoiada, if you're gonna talk about the father, is right. I don't think Jesus alluded to the father on either of these occasions.

He doesn't say Abel, the son of Adam. Why would he say Zachariah, the son of Jehoiada or son of Berekiah or any other son? There's only one Zachariah that was famously slain in the temple courts and it is the Zachariah of 2 Chronicles 24. Why is this important? Why am I belaboring all of this? If you get deflected, why would a textual error creep in? This is the kind of thing that deflects people and they miss the message.

Line out son of Berekiah, which is what I've done in my Bible and focus on the point. What is the point? All of the blood of those who were wrongly slain, slain out of jealousy, slain out of zeal. Why was Abel slain by Cain? Jealousy in the realm of worship.

Abel's sacrifice was accepted and Cain's was not. And he got angry with his brother and slew him. The occasion was worship of God.

In the interest of worship of God, Cain gets so angry that he kills his brother. Why was Zachariah slain in 2 Chronicles 24 in the days of Joash? Because the elders didn't want to hear about their errors and their departure from the God of Israel. And here is a man who is telling them the truth.

Why is the Lord Jesus about to be slain by these scribes, Pharisees, these lawyers, these hypocrites? Because he's doing the very same thing. He is pointing to the proper worship of God like Abel did in his practice, his sacrifice, like Zachariah did when he stood up and prophesied against these who were being disobedient and defiling the temple courts with images and idols. And he was slain for his trouble.

So what does Jesus say in both Luke 11 and Matthew 23? That on you may come. In Luke 11, he says that on this generation may come. The blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world will be required of this generation.

From the blood of Abel to the blood of Zachariah who perished between the altar and the temple. Yes, I say to you, it shall be required of this generation. And Jesus says in Matthew, it will be required of you.

So then our question becomes, well, is he talking about 70 AD? Is he talking about the destruction of Jerusalem and it's gonna come upon them because they crucified the Lord? He says, the blood of Zachariah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar. They wouldn't be born for centuries. And yet Jesus says, you murdered him.

You are this generation. So every generation that has had this murderous intent. Remember earlier on when Jesus said, hating your brother is all the same as taking his

life.

Every generation. Why is this so important? A, we want to look at ourselves and ensure that our dogma and our understanding doesn't blind us to our spiritual need. Do you not know that you're blind? Because you say we see, your sin remains.

You remember in the letters to the seven churches, when Jesus says to the church at Ephesus, turn over to Revelation chapter three. I say Ephesus, it's Laodiceans because Ephesians is Laodiceans in my view. But in verse 14 of chapter three, to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write, these things says the amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God.

I know your works, you're neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot because you're lukewarm, neither cold nor hot. I will vomit you out of my mouth because you say I am rich.

I have become wealthy. I have need of nothing. And you do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked.

I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire that you may be rich. The only thing that makes us rich is the gold that comes from the Lord Jesus Christ. Buy from me, purchase from me.

Notice this isn't just receive from me, let me give you for nothing. He says, buy from me. There is a price to be paid for this gold.

Buy from me gold refined in the fire. This is our faith like precious metal refined in the fire. This is righteousness by faith.

And there is a sacrifice involved. Buy from me white garments that you may be clothed. Another picture.

The gold represents actions, represents works. The garment represents character. This characterizes us.

We are clothed with righteousness. It defines us. It is a reflection in our character.

That the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed and anoint your eyes with eye salve that you may see. There's a wonderful hymn. Open my eyes that I may see visions of truth.

Thou hast for me. Place in my hand the wonderful key that will unlock, unclasp and set me free. Anoint your eyes with eye salve that you may see.

Anoint your eyes. This is something we have to do for ourselves. It's akin to getting the lumber out so that we can see clearly before we start discerning the moats that other

people might have in theirs.

We have to do this for ourselves. This is what is missing. There is no sense of need.

If we ever reach the place where we don't feel like we need instruction and correction and rebuke and doctrine from God's word, that we've got it figured out, we have the key, we've got the philosophy, we've got the big idea and we lose our sense of need, we lose our humility, we lose our teachability and we lose the ability to be purified, to be sanctified, to be cleansed, to be washed, to be clothed, to be given the gold that Jesus speaks of here. Because you say we see, your sin remains. So when the spirit of God came upon Zachariah, the son of Jehoiada, the priest in 2 Chronicles 24 20, he stood above the people and said to them, thus says God, why do you transgress the commandments of the Lord so that you cannot prosper? Jesus says in Matthew chapter 23 and in Luke 11, you murdered the prophet Zachariah.

On you comes the blood of Abel. Why? It is a common spirit. It is a common attitude.

It is a, the judgment is the same because the sin is the same. In whatever generation, the judgment that came on Cain is gonna come on you. The judgment that came on the elders of Israel in the days of Joash is gonna come on you.

The judgment that came on Joash himself is gonna come on you. The judgment that came on all of those who murdered the prophets and you can't escape by decorating their tombs, that judgment is coming on you and on every subsequent generation that rejects the word of God and shoots the messenger, whether it is just through hatred and bitterness and in our day cancel culture in denying the authority of the word of God and those who communicate it, not their authority but trashing those who try to communicate the word of God with its authority. Judgment is going to come.

Rejecting the word of God, rejecting the wisdom of God who says, I'm sending you messengers and you shoot those messengers, you slay those messengers, whether you do it in literal blood or you do it by utterly denying and rejecting their message, rendering them completely ineffectual, judgment is coming. This as an application, when you go back again to the book of Revelation and flip over to the 17th chapter and the Scarlet Harlot and she carries that cup that is full of the blood of the saints and when we did Revelation 17 and we talked about and I think we've done this in a special since then, this gal draped in red, white and blue and we say, well, but is America guilty of the blood of the saints? Remember Dr. Pentecost's very wise hermeneutical principle that when something begins as a metaphor, it is all metaphorical. You don't have a mixture of the woman being a metaphor for Babylon and Babylon being a metaphor.

It's almost a double metaphor because the woman is mystery Babylon, but mystery Babylon is itself a metaphor and so in this doubly metaphorical picture of this woman riding the beast and she has this cup and she is in verse four, the woman is arrayed in

blue and red adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the filthiness of her fornication. On her forehead is written mystery Babylon, the mother of harlots. I saw the woman in verse six, drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus and when I saw her, I marveled with great amazement.

Jesus is talking about the judgment that is gonna come on those who martyr, those who are sent with the word of God. We have not yet resisted to the point of blood in this nation, but the message has been rejected just as thoroughly as those elders in the days of Joash, just as thoroughly as the scribes and Pharisees in the days of the Lord Jesus, just as thoroughly as it was by Cain in the day that he murdered his brother and in every generation since, the judgment is the same. Do not think that you will escape the curse.

Do not think you will escape the destruction, the loss, the permanent judgment that comes on those who reject the word sent in the power of the Holy Spirit in the mouth of the proclaimer, when it is rejected, when it is set aside in favor of something else, self-interest, greed, self-importance, self-satisfaction, self-gratification, an abstraction, an idol, something other than the true God, when it is replaced, when God is replaced with these things and those who call out that replacement and call out that rejection are themselves rejected even to the point of death. Notice Jesus gives as our closing point here, turn back to Matthew 23 very quickly and look at verse 34. I will send you prophets, wise men, and scribes.

Some of them you will kill and crucify. Jews did not have the power of crucifixion, did they? Who crucifies in Jesus' day? It's the Romans. Some of them you will kill and you will get them crucified.

This is almost like the *hyphel* in Hebrew, the causative stem. The Jews did not technically crucify Jesus, did they? But they're gonna be charged with it in the book of Acts by Peter. This Jesus whom you crucified, God has declared by the resurrection to be both Lord and Christ.

But it's crucifixion by proxy. It's killing by proxy. It is enabling and causing and supporting death.

This is how the blood of Stephen can be on Paul's hands. He didn't throw any stones, he just held the coats of those who did. But he implicates himself in that.

That on you may come all the righteous blood shed on the earth. And what Jesus is saying here is like mystery Babylon, that cup of the blood of the saints is a parallel to this. You can put Revelation 17 verse six right in the margin next to this.

And as any nation rejects the word of the Lord and silences those who communicate the truth of God's word and only supports those who substitute another gospel, an empty

gospel, an anti-Christ, stand by. As we close here, just turn to the next chapter here, Matthew chapter 24. And you find this in two different places in the chapter.

Take heed that no one deceives you. How many times did Jesus say this? Look at verse five, many will come in my name saying I am the Christ and will deceive many. They're gonna come in his name and they're gonna acknowledge that Jesus is the Christ, but they are gonna preach an instead of Christ, a different Christ, a substitute Christ.

The spirit of substitute Christ was already in the world in John's day when he wrote his epistles. And we think, well, there's gonna be an anti-Christ who's gonna be an embodied form of a substitute Christ. And that will happen in the tribulation.

But the spirit of anti-Christ is saying Jesus is the Christ and turning him into something that doesn't even resemble him. It is an anti-Christ, a false Christ, a substitute Christ. Even as you call Jesus the Christ, he's not the Christ.

He's not the Christ of the Bible. He's not the Jesus of truth. He's redefined, he's reimagined, he's repainted.

They'll say, I am the Christ and will deceive many. Your new King James has got single quotes around that. Like these individuals are gonna call themselves Christ.

That is not what it says. They're gonna acknowledge that Jesus is the Christ. And in the very act of doing so, they are going to distort him.

We'll see this when we get to chapter 24, but we're out of time for this morning. So let's conclude by saying the key to avoiding the condemnation that Jesus pronounces here, rather than looking around and trying to identify modern day Pharisees and modern day false Christ worshipers, is to tend to our own vineyard, to look to the talent that has been handed to us and ensure that we are investing the time and the opportunities that God gives us, that we are humble, that we are constantly aware of our need, that we never assume that we see and that we are rich and that we have everything we need. We need to remember that without the provision of God, without that which the Lord Jesus supplies to us through his work on the cross, we are indeed poor and miserable and blind and naked.

And we're never more than one step away from that. All it takes is subjectivity. All it takes is getting our eyes on people, our eyes on circumstances, our eyes on situations, being preoccupied with what the world is occupied with, instead of remembering who we are and why we're here.

We read Psalm 51 this morning for a reason. I encourage you to review it. I encourage you to remember the words of the Lord Jesus to these Pharisees.

How can we avoid this charge? It isn't by sharpshooting others. It's by doing Romans

chapter two. You, oh man, are you guilty of doing the very same thing? Are you by patient continuance and well-doing seeking for glory, honor, and immortality so that God can grant eternal life? Or are we treasuring up to ourselves wrath in the day of wrath and righteous judgment of God? And upon us is going to come all of the judgments that you see from Abel to Zechariah, from A to Z. By the way, my closing thought about 2 Chronicles 24, 2 Chronicles in the Hebrew Bible was the last book.

So you have Abel in the first book in the collection and you have Zechariah in the last. It's not only A to Z alphabetically, so to speak, in English, but Abel is in the early chapters of Genesis and Zechariah is in the closing chapters of 2 Chronicles. Samuel, Kings, Chronicles, that's how the Old Testament ends.

Well, let's close here in a word of prayer. Father, thank you for the harsh words that we find in scripture and on the lips of the Lord Jesus that warn us, that encourage us to look to ourselves, to examine ourselves, to see if we are in the faith and to concentrate on living our lives in these troubled times in a way that pleases you and glorifies the Lord Jesus. We pray that our study this morning will contribute to that goal.

We pray that in all things, the Lord Jesus will be glorified in our thoughts, in our words, in our actions. We ask these things in Jesus' name, amen.