

Matthew 22-03-20a

Good morning, welcome to the Sunday morning services at Grace and Truth Bible Church. This is the 20th day of March 2022. We're continuing our study in the gospel of Matthew, picking up in chapter 24, although we're going to finish the very end of chapter 23.

Let's take a moment to ask God's blessing on our fellowship and on our study and we'll begin. Father, what a blessing it is for us to spend this time together in fellowship, believers of like mind united in faith, in hope, and in love. We thank you for each of those who are a part of our fellowship, who contribute with their prayers, their gifts, their encouragement, and their example of faithfulness and enthusiasm for your Word.

We pray that as we look at this portion of the career of the Lord Jesus, His words shortly before His work on the cross, that the Holy Spirit will minister them to our hearts, help us to understand the important message that He communicates, the perspective that He provides, and the fortification for our souls to look forward with eagerness to the unfolding of your plan and its ultimate consummation in the return of the Lord Jesus Christ for us and ultimately to sit on the throne of His kingdom. We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

We pick up as I said this morning in Matthew chapter 23, at the end of the woes to the Pharisees, which we have seen in some detail, picking up in verse 35, upon you will 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. You can just line out the son of Berechiah. Somebody stuck that in and it doesn't belong.

Jesus knew which Zechariah He was talking about. There is a biblical Zechariah who was slain between the temple and the altar. We saw that last time.

Last time we were in Matthew, which was two weeks ago. Truly I tell you, all these things will come upon this generation. This generation is representative of all generations, all generations upon whom the blood of the prophets and those that God has sent has fallen are going to be held accountable.

There is righteousness and justice with God. Unrighteousness and criminal action and persecution and ill treatment is recorded in heaven by God and will be dealt with at the pertinent judgment. We do not always see justice in this life, but God will allow no unrighteous acts to go unaccountable.

They either have to be covered and paid for by the work of the Lord Jesus Christ, and that work has to be claimed, or judgment from God will inevitably occur. Why do the wicked prosper? Why are the righteous oppressed? There is a period of time where God will allow history to unfold. He will allow human volition, human will to function, but

inevitably and inescapably, justice will come.

Absolute, perfect, righteous justice. Do not be troubled at the actions of those who perpetrate evil, those who sin, those who wrong others. God is perfect.

His justice is perfect. His timing for that justice is perfect. All these things will come upon this generation.

If they do not happen, if Pharisees who are happy-go-lucky in the face of the needy, hypocrisy, self-indulgence, self-righteousness, oppression, and discrimination against those they deemed to be sinners, they may have gone to their grave as rich, happy Pharisees, but they will arise from that grave in the judgment for Israel to be held to account. And much as the rich man in the parable of Lazarus, they are going to wish they had done things differently. Now we pick up in verse 37 this morning of Matthew 23, O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those sent to her, how often I have longed to gather your children together as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were unwilling.

This is a very fascinating statement by the Lord Jesus. It is repeated in the other synoptic gospels. We have it both in Mark and in Luke, and it is virtually identical in all of them.

It begins with this doubling of the name Jerusalem. There is a formula, or I should say a way of spelling Jerusalem in Matthew. All of its earlier appearances have been I-E-R-O-S-O-L-U-M-A.

If you want that again, the I functions as a J, but in Greek it is I-E-R-O-S-O-L-U-M-A. This is how it was spelled in chapter 2, verse 1, chapter 3, verse 5, chapter 4, verse 25, chapter 5, verse 35, and chapter 21, verse 1, 2, 1, 3, 5, 4, 25, 5, 35, and 21, 1. Each time, whether it is chapter 2, verse 1, now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Eros-Soluma. That is chapter 2, verse 1. Chapter 3, verse 5, then Eros-Soluma, all Judea and all the region around the Jordan went out to him.

Chapter 4, verse 25, great multitudes followed him from Galilee, from Decapolis, Eros-Soluma, Judea, and beyond the Jordan. Chapter 5, verse 35, do not swear by heaven, do not swear by the earth, for it is his footstool, nor by Eros-Soluma, for it is the city of the great king. Let your yea be yea, and your nay be nay.

You remember that. And then in chapter 21, verse 1, when they drew near Eros-Soluma and came to Bethphage at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, got the donkey, and launched the parade that results in the tragic entry into Jerusalem, Eros-Soluma. So all the way through the Gospel of Matthew it has been this way.

But when we come here to verse 37 of chapter 23, it is spelled differently. This is the Hebraic form, and this is I-E-R-O-U-S-A-L-E-M. I-E-R-O-U-S-A-L-E-M.

You'll recognize the last part of that, Salem, Shalem, Shalom, Peace, and there's a U in there, Yerushalem, and it is repeated twice. Anytime something is repeated twice, it's important. And this unique spelling and the doubling tells us a couple of different things, in my opinion.

One is there is great passion behind what Jesus is saying. Do you remember in David's later years when his son Absalom drives him out of Jerusalem, takes over the palace and the concubines, and ultimately there is a war, and Joab eventually chases down Absalom, and he's trapped in the tree by his hair and is slain. And what does David say when he hears of the death of this son? Oh, Absalom, Absalom, would God I had died for thee.

Absalom, Absalom, would God I had died in your place. Here you have Yerushalem, Yerushalem. And Jesus expresses a desire that is unfulfilled, but he is, in fact, going to die for these who have not received him.

You who slay the prophets and stone those who are sent to you. Yerushalem, if you remember in its Hebraic form, means city of peace, city of peace. And this juxtaposition by putting the Hebraic form here, there is an emphasis on the contrast.

While it should be a city of love and joy and peace, it is instead a city where those who are sent are slain. The similarity here, you think about the parable of the wicked tenants that we saw back in chapter 21, and in verse 35, the vine dressers, he leased out his vineyard and says, work this for me. But the vine dressers, when he sent his servants back, took his servants, beat one, killed one, and stoned another.

That's 21.35. You can put that in the margin beside this. Jesus has already pictured this behavior, killing and stoning. In chapter 21, verse 35, the parable of the wicked vine dressers.

You also remember that just above, when he talked about from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar, how was Zechariah slain? He was stoned. They stoned him in the temple courtyard. They twisted and invoked the law of God for execution by stoning in the most inappropriate place possible, which was in the temple courtyard between the altar and the temple itself.

Oh, city of peace, city of peace, you who kill the prophets and stone those who are sent to you. Kill and stone are in the present tense. They go on doing this, and they're going to continue doing this.

You'll not have trouble remembering that in Acts chapter 7, verse 52, which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? They killed those who foretold the coming of the just one of whom you now have become betrayers and murderers. Acts chapter 7.

What is going to happen to the man delivering that message, Stephen? In the very act of delivering this, which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? They killed those who foretold the coming of the righteous one, the just one. Of whom you now have become betrayers and murderers.

You remember back in the Beatitudes in Matthew chapter 5, verse 12, when men revile you and persecute you for my name's sake? 512, rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven. For so they persecuted the prophets who were before you. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad when you are persecuted, because your reward in heaven is great.

It's not a lot of fun now. Just remember, you are not the first. You remember up in verse 34 of this same chapter, Therefore, indeed, I 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. Just in the immediately preceding context, there is widespread persecution of Christians in particular and Christianity in general all around the world.

It is being suppressed. It is being oppressed. Christians are dying for their faith and we have to search for the information.

You have to go look on the websites that keep track of how many Christians are dying for their faith in Muslim countries, in Africa, and in other parts of the world. This has been ongoing. We have been spared much of that.

Our persecution here is largely social, but we have not suffered to the point of blood as so many have in the present day. If that day should come in this country, I wonder how faithful our shallow marshmallow version of Christianity would survive. But this is fascinating now.

Watch very closely. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you singular, who kill the prophets and stone those who are sent to her. The actual text here does not say you.

It says her. When you look at the NET Bible and some others, they change it to you, but you kill the prophets sent to her. It is always significant if the Word of God changes the number in a pronoun or changes the reference.

Why would Jesus not say the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to you? He does not say you. He says her. Why do you think that is? Why would God send to Jerusalem, pictured as a woman, as a lady, as a female human being, why would it be expressed in those terms? As socially inappropriate as it is to say, we have reviewed this in recent weeks, God's program for marriage is initiation on the part of the man.

For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother and attach himself to his wife so

that they too are one flesh. It does not say for this cause shall a woman leave her father and mother and go find herself a man. It is the man who is going to identify and marry the woman.

Israel is pictured in the prophets more than once as the wife of God, the unfaithful wife who has committed adultery with the gods of the nations and God calls her back to himself. God sends to Jerusalem, which is put for the entire nation of Israel as its capital, why is he sending prophets? Why is he sending to Jerusalem? Because there is a call. There is an opportunity that is offered and the proper response, the expected response, the right response should be positive, should be to affirm and to enter into a relationship with God.

God doesn't just wait in heaven for people to observe the stars and creation and decide that there's a God and he approaches, he initiates, he sends and there is a willful response or there is a willful reaction. God initiates, man responds. That picture is explicit in Israel.

God sends to Israel, God calls to Israel, God enters into covenant relationship with Israel on his own initiative and expects response. Jesus is going to make this explicit in the next few sentences. You who kill the prophets and stone those who are sent to her, she should not reject, she should not persecute and react against those who are sent.

The next thing Jesus says is, how often I have longed, how often I have longed. This is the word fellow, T-H-E-L-O, T-H-E-L-O. This means to will, it means to choose, it means to decide.

Fellow is to make a thinking decision and it often is then expressed as a desire, but literally this is not to want as it says in your New King James or to long as it says in the NET. It is I have willed to gather your children together. How often I have willed to gather, this is from the same root as synagogue.

Synagogue is to gather together, sun-agogos, and this is actually got a prefix on it, epi. So he's going to sun-agog, he's going to gather together upon, epi is upon. And it intensifies it.

I have longed to gather your children and the epi means he is near, he is at hand. This reminds you of the book of Ecclesiastes, which we saw is the book of the one gathering. He is preaching, he is gathering the people together for a purpose.

So gathered for a purpose, gathered with presence, epi connotes all of those things. They should be gathered in the synagogue with the presence and the leadership of God himself in the person of Jesus Christ. How often I have willed to synagogue with, gather together your children.

It's interesting to me that he doesn't say I have longed to gather you. Jerusalem and

Israel have already been established, but he says I have willed to gather your children together. And this is still singular, Jerusalem, the one who kills and stones those who are sent to her, the prophets.

How often I willed to gather your singular children together. Then it says as a hen gathers her chicks. This could be a hen and it could be chicks, but the word here is ornīs, O-R-N-I-S.

It's from that from which we get ornithology. And ornithology is not the study of chickens. It's the study of all birds.

And this is just a mother bird. As a bird gathers her brood, her hatched egg offspring under her wings. This is any bird.

This could be a dove. This could be any bird. Much has been made that it's a chicken and the chicks, and maybe there's a hawk coming and so on.

But this is more general than that. And it doesn't mention chickens. Chickens.

It's translated hen a couple of places, but you can't really read that into it. There's a different word for a hen that's an actual chicken in the same way that the rooster or the cock that crows with Peter is a word for a chicken, not just any old male bird. I willed to gather your children together as a bird gathers her young under her wings.

This is a wonderful picture, and it harks back to a number of scriptures. The most significant of which that I'm going to look at is Psalm 17, verse eight. And you might just note that in the margin if it not sure which study Bible you have, but the close parallel here is Psalm 17, verse eight.

Psalm 17 is a prayer of David, and it is something I'm going to show you here, if I can. So let's look at Psalm 17, verse eight, and then we'll look at Psalm 17, verse nine. But look it up in your Bible.

Hear, O Lord, my righteous plea. Listen to my cry. Give ear to my prayer.

It comes from lips free of deceit. May my vindication come from your presence. May your eyes see what is right.

You have tried my heart. You have visited me in the night. You have tested me and found no evil.

I have resolved not to sin with my mouth. As for the deeds of men, by the word of your lips, I have avoided the ways of the violent. My steps have held to your paths.

My feet have not slipped. Remember, this is very similar to a verse we had in Job. I call on you, O God, for you will answer me.

Incline your ear to me. Hear my words. Show the wonders of your loving devotion.

You who save by your right hand those who seek refuge from their foes. Keep me as the apple of your eye. Hide me in the shadow of your wings.

From the wicked who assail me. From my mortal enemies who surround me. Verse eight, keep me as the apple of your eye.

Hide me in the shadow of your wings. This is particularly interesting when you look at what the apple of the eye is. We've talked about this before, but if you look at the actual Hebrew here, it is, and I can show it to you now, here is our verse.

Keep me as the apple of your eye. Hide me in the shadow of your wings. If you look at the Hebrew, keep me is shamar.

It's the standard word, which means to keep or preserve. And then you can see here, kaishon. Kaishon.

And you see right in the middle of that, if you've got any familiarity with Hebrew, you start at the right and you see that backward C with the dot in it. That's ka, which is like, and then it's got the two little dots underneath. Like, then you see the aleph.

You recognize that. And then it's got a dot below it and a yod to the left of that. That's E. And then you've got the sheen there.

The little, looks like a W with a dot on the right-hand side. That's the SH sound. Then you've got a, you've got a waw.

That's the little shepherd's crook with the dot over it. That's your O. And then that longer version that looks like a longer waw, that's an N at the end of a Hebrew word. Instead of having a little left pointing part, it just goes straight down because it's at the end.

It's kind of like sigma in Greek. When it's at the end of a word, it just trails down instead of looking like a regular S in Greek. Anyway, this is kaishon.

What I'm interested in, the reason I'm showing you this, what's right in the middle? If you leave off the ka, which is like, and you leave off the O-N, you have ish. Do you recognize that word? Ish. Genesis, chapter two, chapter three, Adam is ish, he is man, and Eve is ishah.

You put the A-H on it, it feminizes it. Ish and ishah. So what this literally says is, keep me as the little man in your eye.

When you look, when you're close enough to someone that you can see your reflection in the dark pupil of their eye, that's what this means. It's got nothing to do with apples. It's that little reflection.

You're looking at someone so closely and so intently that you can see your reflection in their pupil. It's the little man of the eye. Keep me as the little man of your eye.

That close, that intimate, that much attention. It's a wonderful turn of phrase. Keep me as the of your eye.

And down here you have ayin. It starts with the letter ayin. We saw this when we did our acrostic psalms.

But ayin, you can see it here where it says your eye, it's actually just the eye. The possessive is not on there, but it's implied in the context. But you can see the word ayin there, and that is the letter, alef, beit, gimel, dalet, hei, vau, ayin.

And it means eye, and it's that little, it looks like a V with a little tail going to the left. Your eye, under the shadow of your wings. And this is the word kanaf.

You can see your wings there. You've got that same little kaf, the backward C with the dot in the middle. And then there's the noon right next to it, kanaf.

Then you've got the little, looks like an upside down G beside that. That's PH, that's kanaf. And then you've got ka on the end, your wings, hide me.

Under the shadow of your wings, hide me. Why? Because there is danger from the wicked who assail me. Keep me as the little man of your eye, hide me in the shadow of your wings.

This is what Jesus is talking about. How often I would have gathered your children like a bird shelters its young under its wings from the wicked who would assail them, from mortal enemies who would surround them. They have closed their callous hearts.

Their mouths speak with arrogance. They have tracked us down and now surround us. Their eyes are set to cast us to the ground like a lion greedy for prey, like a young lion lurking in ambush.

Arise, O Lord, confront them. Bring them to their knees. Deliver me from the wicked by your sword, from such men, O Lord, by your hand.

You think about Jesus knowing this psalm, thinking of this psalm, this prayer of David as he is speaking to Jerusalem about how often he would have protected them from this kind of danger as he stands there two days before the crucifixion about to suffer this very fate. And he is praying this prayer for himself to his father. Show the wonders of your loving devotion.

You who save by your right hand, those who seek refuge from their foes. Keep me as the little man of your eye. Hide me in the shadow of your wings from the wicked who assail me, my mortal enemies who surround me.

Those that Jesus was just talking to, the Pharisees who are plotting his death and will achieve it in less than three days. They have closed their callous hearts. Their mouths speak with arrogance.

Notice, they have closed their hardened hearts. It's on them. They track us down.

They now surround us. Their eyes are set to cast us to the ground like a lion greedy for prey, a young lion lurking in ambush. Arise, O Lord, and confront them.

Now, Jesus knows that this is going to happen. But this is not the time when he is going to be delivered from the wicked by a sword. What's going to happen when Peter pulls that sword? Jesus is going to tell him, put it back in its place.

This is not the time. God has the power to do so. We have the right to pray for deliverance from the wicked, by God's sword, from such men, by your hand, but it's God's sword.

It's God's hand in God's time and in God's way. And the timing of God is perfect. And we are not always delivered out of those who are evil.

Sometimes we are delivered through it. Well, when we come back, we're going to see why Jesus makes such a point of this illustration, why he calls out to Jerusalem, why he is going to shift his pronouns into the plural and make this pronouncement just two days before his arrest and trial. It's profound and it speaks a wonderful word of comfort and encouragement to us.

The example of the Lord Jesus is unsurpassed in inspiring us, encouraging us, stabilizing us, giving us objectivity, giving us confidence in looking to God for everything in our lives, whether it is prosperity and blessing, whether it is for endurance and patience, all of our strength comes from the Lord. And our confidence is in his plan and his purpose, his timing and his love for us that transcends every evil that we may confront. Let's pause here and take our break.

When we come back, we're going to continue in this fascinating closing section of Matthew chapter 23.