Text: Luke 13:31-35
Title: Lament over Jerusalem
Truth: Threats did not stop Jesus, and He still desires to save you.
Date/Location: Sunday October 13, 2024 at FBC

Introduction

This is a new narrative that started on the same day (13:31).

I. Jesus Responds to Herod and the Pharisees, v. 31-33

A. Although Pharisees were not big fans of Herod, it is doubtful that they were "looking out" for Jesus when they told him that Herod was seeking to assassinate Him. *Perhaps*, but likely they just wanted to get rid of Jesus (get him out of their hair, so to speak) or get Him to move to another jurisdiction like Judea where they could more easily harass Him.

Herod ruled in Galilee and Perea, which was across the Jordan. Recall that at the end of Luke 9 we mentioned the Trans-Jordan.

B. Jesus replied with a unique expression: "Go, tell that fox…" His response seems colloquial or familiar or even disrespectful. Some have even suggested it was wrong, like cursing a ruler or speaking evil of a king (Exodus 22:28, Eccl. 10:20, Acts 23:5). Two points in response:

1. The term *fox* is not entirely negative. Used today of a woman or even a man sometimes, it is a positive expression, though inappropriate depending on the context. It can also refer to someone who is clever or crafty. Probably Herod had a reputation as a shrewd politician who was able to cleverly manipulate his way into power or use his power.

2. As God and a prophet, Jesus could then and can today criticize any world leader and not be guilty of sin. The Old Testament prophets did so. Even Nathan rebuked King David.

C. About Herod's desire to kill Jesus, I am not certain as to what his plan was, because later in Luke 23:8, Luke reports that Herod had wanted to see Jesus for a long time. Herod had killed John the Baptist but that was for a more direct reason, that John had

criticized him about his marriage (Matt 14:3). But the rest of Jesus's answer seems to assume that indeed Herod had a murderous design against Him. But Jesus was not afraid. His time had not come (John 7:30), and He knew that Herod would not be the one to kill Him, although he would become involved in the trials and drama on the first Good Friday.

D. Jesus told the Pharisees to report to Herod that He would cast out demons and heal people and then be perfected. One point we can get out of his statement is that He is going to continue doing what He is doing. He will not be sidetracked by a report that someone is trying to murder Him. And what was He doing? Going from village to village, teaching and preaching the kingdom of God, calling people to repent and believe in God, and Himself, and giving witness to His power and authority by doing miracles.

E. The word "perfected" or "finish my course" refers to the completion of His saving work at the cross and resurrection.

F. The timing part of His answer is interesting: today and tomorrow, and the third day. It could sound like He is saying the crucifixion would be in just a couple of days. We know this is not the case from a simple perusal of the timeline of the rest of Luke. It was far more than just a couple of 24-hour periods until the crucifixion.

Jesus was using these time words in a non-literal fashion, an idiomatic kind of expression indicating He was doing His thing on His time, and finally at the end of that, He would finish His course. We see a similar non-technical use of three days surrounding the cross and burial of Christ. It was not technically 72 hours that Jesus was in the tomb. But for parts of 3 days and nights He was deep into the whole ordeal—from Thursday night until Sunday morning. If you went into the hospital on Friday and came out on Sunday, you would not be faulted for later the next week summarizing by saying, "I had a bad week. I was in the hospital for three days." And that is true, even though perhaps technically you were in the hospital for 52 hours. That trip to the hospital dominated three to four days of your life, because before you went you had some problem, and then you were there, and then when you got back

you probably had to get medicine from the pharmacy and go home and rest and start some new routines.

G. After repeating the today and tomorrow language, Jesus indicates that He must make it to Jerusalem. That was His plan from Luke 9:51, and it was going to happen. The reason that it would happen is that He said, "it cannot be that a prophet should perish outside of Jerusalem." Herod will not get first dibs. Jerusalem does instead.

It was not always the case that God's prophets died in Jerusalem (John the Baptist, for example). But generally, since Jerusalem was the capital and center of Jewish power, and since the people of Israel often rebelled against God, that is where persecution for the prophets arose. Sadly, God's messengers should be celebrated and promoted in Jerusalem. Instead, they were killed there.

In the case of Jesus, this was all the more important, to tie His work to the nation at its historic capital. This would make clear His association with the entire nation. It also sets up His future reign in the city—the city that killed Him will be the city that welcomes Him back when that future generation realizes the Messiah is the one they (historically) pierced (Zech. 12:10).

H. Jesus is foreshadowing His own coming death. He is also saying that He is a prophet. And that He is—more than a prophet, no less!

II. Jesus Expresses Lamentation over Jerusalem, v. 34-35

A. The mention of Jerusalem's hatred for its own prophets sends Jesus into an expression of lamentation and woe. This statement is full of emotion for the people of Israel. They have historically chosen a very unwise course.

B. From the divine perspective, Jerusalem is a city not only of idolatry and immorality, but also one that kills the prophets and abuses those God sends to her.

C. Jesus shows His divine and caring side in expressing His desire over the ages to gather them together as a family, like a mother hen her chicks. This is a picture of care, of protection, of tenderness, of love, of togetherness.

But they refused, like rebellious children instead of children who have a closeness with their parents. Jesus was willing, but they were unwilling! They crossed their arms against God and His Christ. They thumbed their nose at God and desired to go their own way, and thought they were sufficient to do it.

This was self-destructive. Who would *not* want to get near to God in this evil world? Do you *not* want God watching out over you? Do you refuse His protection? Do you *not* want to be close to God? And to know that God wished to draw them near is a wonderful and touching truth. God has a similar "feeling" for humanity today. Question is, are you willing? He wants to save. Do you want to be?

D. God ruled over Jerusalem whether they liked it or not. Since they did not willingly receive His rule, God's power would be displayed toward them in a different way. Because of their rebellion, they would receive natural consequences. Their "house" would be left desolate. They left God, and God would "leave" them. Messiah will go away and take His glory with Him. Their city would be destroyed (70 AD). They would be without king and prophet and sacrifice for centuries. Their hope would be dried up. That is a feeling of some religious Jewish people today.

E. Jesus left after the ascension and the city will not see Him again until His second coming. At that time, they will welcome Him back as Savior and King with the words of Psalm 118:25-26. He will come as a King, though not riding a donkey next time (John 12:15). He will come out of Zion and save Jacob (Rom. 11:26).

F. Verse 35 is a prophecy of things to come. What Jesus predicts has indeed happened and is *still* being fulfilled today.

Conclusion

In chapter 13, Jesus has been calling for repentance in view of coming judgment, but Jerusalem has refused to respond. They were like a barren fig tree, they needed to be loosed from bondage, and to enter the narrow way so they would not find themselves on the outside of the kingdom looking in. But their hard hearts would prevent success. You and I need to really look inside and see if we have hard hearts too. MAP