

## **“Jesus’ Last Words”**

*November 5, 2023*

Matthew 23:37-39

### **I. Introduction**

Tuesday of Passion week was coming to a close. In less than 72 hours, Jesus will be arrested, tried, and crucified by those gathered around Him. Since He knew this, it wouldn’t have been surprising if Jesus had ended His last sermon with a promise of judgment on those who were going to kill Him—that’s what we would most likely have done. But in Jesus’ final words in His last public sermon before His crucifixion, we don’t see this kind of response. We see love and concern for God’s chosen people. The people God had chosen to be His people thousands of years earlier—turn to Genesis 12:1-3. In Deuteronomy 7:6 Moses summarized this when he wrote, “For you are a people holy to the LORD your God. The LORD your God has chosen you out of all the peoples on the face of the earth to be his people, his treasured possession.” Instead of wrath and judgment, Jesus concluded His sermon with compassion and a promise for His chosen people.

### **II. Compassion**

When Jesus entered Jerusalem on Monday morning, the day before this sermon, Jesus’ compassion was also seen; Luke wrote in Luke 19:41-42, “As he approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it and said, ‘If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace-- but now it is hidden from your eyes.’” John 3:16 says, “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.” Jesus’ compassion for His people wasn’t a one-day thing—it was continual, even as His death approached.

“*Jerusalem*” means “*city of peace*.” Jerusalem was to be a holy city—a place to meet God and have His peace. But over time it became a city of violence and unholiness. The nation’s leaders, for that matter all of Israel, had rebelled against God. They had killed and would continue to kill the prophets and stone and kill other messengers from God, including men like Stephen and many of Jesus’ disciples including some of the Apostles. Jesus said earlier in Matthew 23:34-35, “I am sending you prophets and

wise men and teachers. Some of them you will kill and crucify; others you will flog in your synagogues and pursue from town to town.” And as Jesus foretold in the Parable of the Tenants in [Matthew 21](#), in their hard-heartedness, they would even kill the Son and Heir when He came to them.

But, in spite of their stiff necks and hard hearts, Jesus came to gather the people to Himself and to save them. God’s plan and desire for His people was for them to return to Him in faithfulness and devotion. Jesus said, “How often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings.” In His compassion and love, Jesus longed to draw Israel to Himself and protect her just as a mother “hen gathers her chicks under her wings” to protect them from a storm that would batter them or a hawk that would devour them. The tenderness and love and even hurt in Jesus’ voice can’t be missed. Many times throughout His ministry Jesus had said, “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.” ([Matthew 11:28](#)). Filled with agape love, He truly cared for this people that was going to crucify Him.

Instead of turning to their Messiah, Jesus said “you were not willing.” [Turn to John 1:10-11.](#) Jesus came to His people in truth and light and love and offered them the kingdom that God had promised them, but they rejected Him and, in the end, forfeited the kingdom. God is sovereign over all things—He is omnipotent; all powerful, but God would not and could not force His salvation on people; neither can He change the consequences of their stubborn rejection. Jesus said in [John 5:40](#), “yet you refuse to come to me to have life.” Because of their unwillingness, they refused to accept Him as the Christ. When a person rejects Jesus Christ, it is never God’s desire or God’s fault, it is each person’s own responsibility.

A special privilege was given to Israel. It happened only one time in the history of mankind and with that privilege came great opportunity and responsibility. The Son of God came to Israel as the Son of David, their Messiah, their Lord, and their Savior. He lived with them; He taught them; He healed them. He called them to repent. He so perfectly demonstrated the love and mercy of God that in [John 14:9](#) He was able to say that “Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father.” But with hard hearts Israel rejected the message and the Messenger and brought upon herself God’s wrath and judgment.

Earlier in [Matthew 12:4](#) Jesus had referred to the Temple as God's House, but it had been so misused and defiled that He now called it "your house." "Your house" meant more than just the temple, it also meant the city and even the nation as a whole, all of which would be destroyed in AD 70 by the Romans. When the sons of Eli lost the Ark of the Covenant to the Philistines, the nation of Israel was called Ichabod because "The glory has departed from Israel" ([1 Samuel 4:21](#)). When Jesus left the temple and the city and went out to the Mount of Olives, God's glory departed with Him. Soon all of Israel would be called Ichabod—no glory—once again. Because Israel abandoned God's commandments and even killed His own Son, she would be left desolate—God would remove His protective hand. We see the results of that as we consider the last 2000 years of Jewish history as Satan has continually attempted to wipe out all Jews; including the war going on right now between Israel and Hamas and Hezbollah.

Although Israel as a people has suffered because God withdrew His blessing from them, many individual Jews have come and continue to come to Christ in saving faith. As Paul, quoting from Isaiah, wrote in [Romans 9:27](#), "Though the number of the Israelites be like the sand by the sea, only the remnant will be saved." God may have removed Himself from the nation as a whole, but He has never been without a chosen remnant of His chosen people.

### **III. The Promise**

As Jesus finished His sermon, He didn't close with even a hint of wrath but with a promise. He would return one day, and the nation would see Him and say, "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord." These words are from [Psalm 118:26](#), the same messianic psalm that was quoted so many times during Jesus' last week on earth. These are the same words the crowd shouted on Palm Sunday. Some day in the future, Jesus will return, and Israel will accept Him. They will be reunited with their God.

Jesus didn't say "unless," making the restoration of Israel only a possibility, but "until you say" making it a certainty. Even in a sermon of condemnation upon unbelieving Israel and her false teachers, Jesus offered hope. One day Israel will finally say in faith, "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord." On that day, as prophesied by so many prophets, Israel will be forever redeemed, restored, and

blessed. **Turn to Zechariah 12:8-10.** As Paul wrote in **Romans 11:25-27**, Israel hasn't permanently fallen away from God. At God's appointed time, they will return to Him—"They will look on me, the one they have pierced, and they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only child, and grieve bitterly for him as one grieves for a firstborn son" (**Zechariah 12:10**). In the last chapter of Revelation, Jesus said in **Revelation 22:12**, "Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done."

#### **IV. Conclusion**

These 3 verses don't just demonstrate Jesus' compassion and promise for Israel, they show four truths that are repeated throughout the Bible. They are important for all of us.

**A. They show the patience of God.** Jerusalem had killed the prophets and stoned the messengers of God; yet God didn't go back on His promise to Abraham—in the end, He even sent His Son. But God isn't just patient with Israel, He is patient with all mankind. In **2 Peter 3:9** Peter wrote that God "is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance." **Ezekiel 33:11** says, "As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign LORD, I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that they turn from their ways and live. Turn! Turn from your evil ways!" God is patient with all mankind—those He created "in his own image" (**Genesis 1:27**).

**B. They show the love of Jesus.** Jesus spoke out of love. He will not **force** anyone to follow Him; the only force He can use is the appeal of love—agape love, sacrificial love. In **Revelation 3:20** Jesus said, "Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me." As He did when He walked this earth, Jesus continues to stand with outstretched arms ready to shield and protect as He lovingly calls, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest." (**Matthew 11:28**). **John 1:12** adds, "Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God."

**C. They show the human responsibility in salvation.** Everyone must choose. The people of Jesus' day saw Him with all His power and authority. They heard His call to repent—they had a choice, and

many refused Him. In [John 5:43](#) Jesus said, “I have come in my Father’s name, and you do not accept me.” Like those of Jesus’ day, people have a choice; sadly, many still intentionally refuse to come to Christ. [Romans 1:21](#) says, “For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened.” Joshua’s call to the Israelites in [Joshua 24:15](#) is the same cry that is made today, “Choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve.”

**D. Finally, they show the consequences of rejecting Jesus.** Contrary to the American culture of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, there are consequences to one’s actions. Because of Israel’s rejection of Jesus, in less than 40 years, Jerusalem and much of Israel would be a heap of ruins. In [John 3:18](#) Jesus told Nicodemus, “Whoever believes in the Son of God is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son.” There is a consequence for not choosing to make Jesus one’s Lord and Savior ([Romans 10:9](#)) and not having one’s name written in the book of life; it is to be condemned to an eternity in hell. [Turn to Revelation 20:11-15.](#)

God is patient and through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, He has made a way for everyone to be reconciled with Him. [Acts 4:12](#) says, “Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.” Have you made Jesus your Lord and Savior? In [Romans 10:14](#) Paul wrote, “How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?” As Jesus’ return is imminent, are you sharing the way of salvation before it is too late?

**Communion - November 5, 2023**  
Matthew 26:17-20, 26-30

This morning we've talked about making choices. If your choice has been to make Jesus your Lord and Savior, we invite you to join us in this remembrance and celebration of Jesus' love for each one of us. But being a Christian is more than saying a few words, there are expectations. In **John 14:15** Jesus said, **"If you love me, you will obey what I command."** As your Lord, Jesus' commands are to be obeyed. This implies 2 things: 1) You must know what Jesus commands. Not what some preacher or elegant speaker or writer may say or write, but what does the Bible say. 2) Second, you need to obey; i.e., daily you need to ask yourself "What would Jesus have me do?" and then do it.

The Lord's Table is a time to stop and remember what Jesus did for you—He died in your place. If someone were to die so that you could live, how would you respond? As well as thanking God for His love and for our eternal life, the time that the elements are being passed is a time for one to examine himself—herself. How are you doing following God's commands? To be fair, we all fall short—we are all sinners saved by God's grace. So, comparing ourselves to each other would be futile. It would be the pot calling the kettle black. A better thing to do would be to compare yourself today to what you were last month or last week. Are you growing in your Christian walk? Are the fruit of the Spirit more obvious in your life now than ever before? With the help of the Holy Spirit, are you walking in Jesus' steps as best as you can?

As the organ is played and the elements are being passed, thank God for His love but also take time to evaluate your life—remember **"Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart"** (**1 Sam. 16:7**). Are you like the Pharisees—you look good on the outside but inside you are filled with decay? Jesus gave all He had for you—shouldn't you be willing to give your all for Him?