

The King Who comes in Peace

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Preacher: William Philip

[0 : 00] So we're going to turn now to our Bible reading this morning and we're restarting our studies in Luke's Gospel, chapter 19. You'll find that on page 878 in our Bibles.

And let me just make some introductory remarks as we return to our study. We're embarking now on the last movement of Luke's Gospel, the last part of the second half of the Gospel, which, as you remember, has been so dominated by the journey of Jesus with his disciples through Jerusalem to glory.

Remember, right back at the very beginning of Luke's Gospel, in chapter 1, Luke tells us he's written a carefully ordered account. And we've seen that very clearly, haven't we, as we've gone through his Gospel.

Before the summer, we were looking at chapters 13 to 17. Jesus is laying out there the perfection of his glory that is to come. And then to halfway through chapter 19, Jesus is teaching how to be prepared as his followers for that coming glory.

But now we come to the end of the Gospel and to the climax of Jesus' journey. And we're going to see exactly how Jesus enters his glory. That is, through his coming passion, through the cross.

[1 : 20] Remember back to chapter 9, verse 51. That was the halfway point, the turning point, when Jesus set his eye to go to Jerusalem because the time was near for him to be taken up.

That is, taken up to glory. And because Jesus is the king who has come to reign on David's throne, then he must go to Jerusalem, the capital of David's kingdom.

Because he's the savior come to save his people from their sins. He must come to his temple, the place of sacrifice, the very heart of the devotional life of his people.

And so we'll see that as we come to this last section of Luke's Gospel, all the focus is on Jerusalem and on the temple. If you look just at chapter 19, verses 28 and 29, you'll see there that Jesus moves from Bethany to Jerusalem.

And if you look to the very, very end of Luke's Gospel, at the very end of chapter 24, you'll see that what we find is Jesus leading his people from Jerusalem back out to Bethany.

[2 : 24] From where he ascends into the glory of heaven and from where he tells his people to remain in Jerusalem until power from on high comes to them.

So that they will receive the spirit of the risen Jesus and begin their mission to the whole world, beginning at Jerusalem. So all of this is focused on Jerusalem and on the temple and on the coming of the Lord to his temple and the coming of the king to his city.

But Jesus will enter his glory only through his passion. Only through being rejected as the king when he comes to his own people.

And that's a story that we begin to read off here in Luke 19. So let's read Luke 19, verse 27 through to the end of the chapter. When Jesus had said these things, he went on ahead and going up to Jerusalem.

When he drew near to Bethphage and Bethany at the mount that is called Olivet, he sent two of the disciples saying, go into the village in front of you where on encountering, on entering, you'll find a colt tied on which no one has ever sat.

[3 : 39] Untie it and bring it here. And if anyone asks you, why are you untying it? You shall say this. The Lord has need of it. So those who were sent went away and notice, found it just as he had told them.

As they were untying the colt, its owners did indeed say to them, why are you untying the colt? And they said, the Lord has need of it. And they brought it to Jesus and throwing their cloaks on the colt, they sat Jesus on it.

And as he rode along, they spread their cloaks on the road. As he was drawing near, already on the way down the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of his disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen, saying, blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord.

Peace in heaven and glory in the highest. And some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, teacher, rebuke your disciples. But he answered, I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out.

And when he drew near and saw the city, he wept over it, saying, would that you, even you, had known on this day the things that make for peace.

[4 : 56] But now they are hidden from your eyes. For the days will come upon you when your enemies will set up a barricade around you and surround you and hem you in on every side and tear you down to the ground, you and your children within you.

They will not leave one stone upon another in you, because you did not know the time of your visitation. And he entered the temple and began to drive out those who sold, saying to them, it is written, my house shall be a house of prayer, but you have made it a den of robbers.

And he was teaching daily in the temple. The chief priests and the scribes and the principal men of the people were seeking to destroy him, but they did not find anything they could do, for all the people were hanging on his words.

Amen. May God bless to us this is his word. I'll do turn with me, please, to Luke chapter 19, page 878, if you have one of the church visitors' Bibles.

Now, the great paradox that we've seen all through Luke's story is that Jesus announces his kingship. He tells of his coming kingdom of power and glory, the day when the Son of Man will be revealed to the world.

[6 : 25] You remember he talks about that at the end of chapter 17. And yet, at the same time, he tells people that already his kingdom is there.

It's in the midst of them, in his presence. And that, for now, it's not going to be seen with great signs that can be observed by all, but no, it requires the perception of real faith.

And it's for those who will receive his words, not reject his words. And in chapter 18, he goes on and talks very plainly to the twelve and tells them that before his kingdom comes in power and glory to be seen by all, he must first be rejected and killed.

And only after that will he himself enter the glory of his own kingdom. And so Jesus has a focus on teaching these two very distinct aspects of the coming of his saving glory into the world.

On the one hand, there will be a coming with power which will be visible to all one day and which he is announcing in his ministry very clearly beforehand. There is the coming of the Lion of Judah as promised by the prophets.

[7 : 41] There is the coming of the sovereign come to earth to announce his glorious reign. But on the other hand, there is also a coming in apparent weakness.

Unseen, except by the eye of faith, via a hidden stable, via the cruel cross. And yet, nevertheless, to establish in the new covenant in his blood, a kingdom of peace for lost sinners that Jesus has come to save.

There is, as well as the coming of the Lion of Judah, the coming of the Lamb of God, the coming of the Savior, to achieve his gracious redemption. And as David Gooding, I think, very helpfully points out in his book of Luke's gospel, this dual focus seems to determine the way that Luke structures the last section of his gospel.

Because in it, he very clearly portrays two distinct comings of Jesus to Jerusalem. And each one begins and ends the same way. I wonder if you'll just look with me. Chapter 19, verse 28, to the end of chapter 21, is the first one.

And it begins, as we read, with Jesus sending two disciples on ahead of him to find a colt to borrow for his use. And in verse 32, as we read, they found it just as Jesus had told them.

[9 : 01] And then that section ends at the end of chapter 21 with Jesus coming and being in the temple. And there's a sort of summary statement about Jesus teaching in the temple. But then, if you look at the beginning of chapter 22, right through to the end of the gospel, we'll find that again, Jesus enters Jerusalem.

He sends two disciples ahead of him, this time to borrow a room in which to have the Passover. And what do the disciples find? Chapter 22, verse 13, they find it just as Jesus had told them.

And the gospel, of course, ends with all the disciples waiting in the temple with joy upon the Lord. You see, it's very deliberate and obvious, isn't it? Beginning and ending the same way, using the same language.

We're meant to notice that. It's Luke's big, bold heading, if you like, if he had a big, bold heading and a typewriter to write it with. And in that first movement, Jesus enters the city and publicly is proclaimed as king.

But he is rejected and refused by his people. In the second movement, he enters the city privately and quietly. And he speaks to his disciples in the upper room about his coming death and resurrection and vindication.

[10 : 16] And about how he will enter glory. Just as he has been telling them all the way along. And remember at the end, the angels say that to the women at the tomb. Don't you remember? He's been telling you this.

Happens just as he said. So what Luke is telling us is that the crown of glory is certain for Jesus the king and indeed for his people.

But it comes only through the cross for the Lord Jesus. And the promise of his gospel for those who are his, that they will share that glorious reign, is certain.

But that also will come only through the gracious redemption of Jesus. Only through rescuing his people from the plight of their sin. That must happen if they're to share his glory.

So to inherit the glory of Christ's coming kingdom, you must perceive and you must receive the grace of the Savior.

[11 : 14] The grace of the servant king who comes to bring cleansing from sin. You must rejoice in the coming of the Savior who offers his peace.

Not reject him. And that's what the prophets had long promised. I read at the beginning of the service from the prophet Zechariah chapter 9. Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion.

Behold, your king is coming to you, righteous and having salvation is he. Humble and mounted on a colt, the fall of a donkey. He shall speak peace to the nations.

As for you, because of the blood of my covenant with you, I will set your prisoners free. On that day, the Lord will save them.

On that day, there shall be a fountain open from the house of David. For the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. To cleanse them from sin and uncleanness.

[12 : 11] That's the gospel of God that he's promised to his people. The king coming, offering peace through cleansing and forgiveness.

But here's the thing, you see. We human beings, we love the idea of achieving the heights of glory. But we're none too keen on being humbled by grace in order to do so.

We love the idea of reigning over the world. But we hate the idea of having to humble ourselves to be ruled over by someone else. By one who claims sovereign control over our lives.

One who dares to say that actually our lives are dirty. That we need cleansing. Who dares to say that we're ignorant. And we need instruction.

Or that we're lost. And that we need to be found. Or that we're living in rebellion. And we need to repent. Something in us very deep down really does not like to hear those things.

[13 : 15] And that's why the message of Jesus Christ has always been met. Not with great rejoicing, but with grim rejection by so many people. And friends, so little has changed between first century Jerusalem and 21st century Glasgow.

And that's why we need Luke's message here in our passage today. A message of warning not to reject the king who comes in peace. So I want us to look at this passage in a little bit of detail.

And you'll see if you look at verses 28 to 40. How Jesus coming into people's lives to announce his reign is so often met with rebuke instead of praise.

We see a people blind and deaf to the proclamation of his coming. Now these verses show us the very public nature of the self-revelation of Jesus Christ to his people Israel as both their king and as the promised savior of the whole world.

The king come at last to bring in his messianic kingdom. And it's very public. And that is something that is so characteristic of the true God.

[14 : 27] Let me say this. The true God reveals himself publicly to all. He doesn't hide himself in hidden mysteries that are things that can only be fathomed by an elite few.

Beware of anyone who claims special knowledge of God. Who wants to initiate you into something that's not open to all people. Be very wary of that. Especially if they want you to give them something in order that they do it.

Or charge you for it. Or get something out of you. No. When the God of heaven makes himself known, he does it openly and publicly.

His revelation is accessible to everybody. That's what Paul says later on to King Agrippa. Do you remember? This thing was not done in a corner, O king. The true God reveals himself to this world publicly.

And therefore, man is responsible to respond to what God makes known of himself. Obviously.

[15 : 28] And here Jesus reveals himself unmistakably to a people who should understand every single detail of what is going on here. Because they are Israelites.

They are people prepared through centuries of having the scriptures, the prophetic words and writings. And this message that Jesus gives them here is both clearly pictured.

It's acted out. And it's also announced in clear proclamation. And it is unmistakably saying, Behold, your king at last is coming to you. See, in verses 28 to 36, you'll see first, Jesus is pictured clearly as the coming king.

It's a vivid fulfillment of that prophecy of Zechariah chapter 9. Now, Luke doesn't quote the words from Zechariah as Matthew does in his version in Matthew 21. But he doesn't need to because it's so blindingly obvious to these Israelites.

Jesus knows exactly what he is doing here. Look how deliberate it is. Verse 30. He sends two disciples ahead. He tells them exactly what to expect and what they'll find and what to do and say when somebody asks what they're doing.

[16 : 35] And then verse 32, they find it just as he told them. See, his regal authority and his control is underlined.

And it's repeated for us in verses 33 to 34. No need for just telling us what happened, but Luke tells us again just to emphasize. God's purpose is unfolding exactly according to plan under the authority of Christ the king.

Just as it was told them. Remember, that's exactly what the shepherds found in chapter 2 when they went to the stable, didn't they? They found it just as the angels had told them. And then, you see, Jesus is set in honor on their cloaks, on their colt, and they lead him in procession into Jerusalem.

Just exactly as King David had done with his son Solomon in 1 Kings chapter 1 when he led him in procession into Jerusalem. And anointed him as king after him. And all the people said, may his throne be even greater than David's throne.

And you see, these people who are watching Jesus here, they're people who knew these scriptures by heart from their earliest days. They'd been longing all their lives for Zechariah's words to come true in the coming of the king.

[17 : 49] They just could not possibly miss the statement that Jesus is making here. But just in case the picture wasn't enough, look at verses 37 and 38.

He adds clear proclamation that leaves them in absolutely no doubt whatsoever. And they're echoing here, the disciples, another well-known scripture from Psalm 118.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. And you notice that they even add in the word king here instead of he, just to make it even more explicit. This is the king who comes in the name of the Lord that Zechariah was speaking about.

It's absolutely plain that that's being fulfilled before their eyes. Behold, your king comes to you on a colt, the foal of a donkey, and he shall speak peace to the nations.

And the disciples clearly got it. Look at verse 39. That's what they're saying. Peace in heaven and glory in the highest, singing just like the angels sang to the shepherds, you remember. Here is God's king bringing peace from heaven to earth.

[18 : 56] And all through Luke's gospel, we've seen Jesus declaring that personally to people, hasn't he? Your sins are forgiven. Go in peace.

That's what he said to the woman in chapter 7. That's what he said in chapter 8 to the woman with the issue of blood. Go in peace. And now here he comes offering peace to all.

A public proclamation from the king of heaven of peace, even for the sinful people of this world. Even for people with whom God has been at war because of their rebellion and their rejection of him.

Peace in heaven at last. That's the message. Well, given the context here in Israel, you would expect, wouldn't you, an abundant outburst of joyful praise, led by the leaders of the people, led by the religious leaders, the people who are charged with teaching the scriptures and charged with the spiritual health of the nation.

But look at verse 39. What do we see? His revelation of God's mercy and his offer of peace is meant not with praise, but with rebuke and total resistance, led by the spiritual leaders of the day.

[20 : 20] And Jesus answers them in verse 40 and says, in effect, Look, even the very stones on this road are more spiritually attuned than you are. The whole creation, even inanimate objects, shout for joy at the coming of the world's king.

And yet you, you reject. So perverse and so twisted are their hearts that their eyes are blind to what God has placarded in front of them.

And their ears are deaf to what he is shouting to them at the top of his voice. It's astonishing, isn't it? Here is the most privileged nation on earth. Here is the most privileged generation of that nation in history.

And yet they will not see and will not hear the king coming to them offering peace. There is no praise, just resistance and open rebuke to those who do perceive and want to receive him.

But sadly, that is the history of Israel. From beginning to end, as you read the Old Testament and as you read the New Testament story unfolding.

[21 : 35] But it's not just the history of Israel, is it? It's the history of man. How foolish the talk is in our modern world about God.

We get clever boffins on radio shows having discussions about whether there's any evidence that might suggest God's existence. How utterly absurd that is. God has not hidden himself from man.

It's man who has hidden himself from God and from the God who placards his presence before man all the time and shouts at him. I'm here. It's man.

He always shut his eyes and closed his ears and closed his heart and said, stop that. We don't want to hear. And that's the way it's been right from the very beginning. Go back to Genesis chapter 3 and what do you find?

God gives man the most beautiful environment in which to live under God's peace and under his protective rule. But instead of praise, what does man do?

[22 : 36] Rebukes and rejects God and says, no, we'll do it our way. That's been so ever since, hasn't it? That's what Paul's speaking about in Romans chapter 1. All men everywhere. God's presence has been clearly revealed to all, he says, since the creation of the world.

And so man is without excuse. But although they knew God, he says they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but became futile in their thinking and their foolish hearts were darkened.

They exchanged the truth of God for a lie and worshipped and served the creature rather than the creator, mainly serving ourselves.

human beings, even faced with an unequivocal revelation of God in their own eyes and ears, would rather believe a lie.

Would rather blind themselves and deafen themselves to the proclamation of his coming into their lives to offer peace and forgiveness for their arrogant and ignorant rejection of him.

[23 : 46] Isn't that astonishing? Imagine you swore at a friend and you spat in their face and had a dreadful argument with them and they went off really bruised and shocked, deeply hurt.

And then some days later, that friend phoned you up and said, I'd like to meet you for a coffee. I want to tell you that I don't hold it against you what happened. I want to forgive you. I want to put it in the past and never mention it again.

Will you meet me? And you meet them and they come and what you do is you swear at them and you spit at them in the face again and this time, for good measure, you lay them flat on the ground with a punch.

That's what people do to God, you see. Here's the king offering peace and restoration publicly to those who have rebelled against them and the response is tell them to shut up.

We don't want any more of that. No praise for God's grace. Just rebuke and rejection. Here's a people with more privileged revelation of the person and presence of God than any other people in the history of this world.

[25 : 00] Is God at fault? Is God deficient in some way in his revelation to them? No, it's man's heart, isn't it, that's defiant and deviant and dark.

Then and now. It's a salutary thought, isn't it? Think about this. 21st century Scotland has had more centuries of divine light even than first century Israel.

2,000 years of Christian heritage. 500 years of at least of the scriptures in our own language. Plenty of revelation.

Clear and plain and public. The gospel of Jesus Christ has not been in a corner in the history of our land, has it? Has it? But are our eyes and ears as a people open to the king who comes in peace?

Are they? I wonder where you stand with that this morning. When Jesus came to the nation of the book, he was met not with praise but rebuke.

[26 : 14] But lest any of us think, well, we're in church this morning, we're not like that. We better look down quickly, hadn't we, to verse 45 to 48 when Jesus came to the temple, the very heart of piety and devotion in Israel.

Because what we find there is absolutely no different. You see verse 46, what did Jesus find? Robbery instead of prayer. A people who had destroyed the very purpose of his church.

You see, even in a building, even in an institution dedicated to the glory of God, religion can so easily become twisted and perverted and corrupted.

Even, even when it has evangelical orthodox truth as its very foundation. That was the temple. Now, there's plenty of critics aren't there today of religion.

But here's the thing, Jesus was a huge critic of all the religion of man. Even when it had the right scriptures and the right beliefs and not the wrong ones.

[27 : 18] And that should make us think, shouldn't it? Some people think in the institution of the Christian church today that real closeness to God and the key to all of that is perfection in doctrine and practice and polity and liturgy and training and all that sort of thing.

Well, let me tell you, they had all of that in the temple. All of it. Written by God himself. But still, they had turned what was meant to be a living relationship with a living God into dead and deadly religion of man.

Nothing more than self-seeking. Robbery from God, that's what Jesus called it. They turned the true revelation of God's grace into the false religion of man's greed. See, true biblical faith is all about the God who comes down from heaven to us in grace and mercy to love us and to elicit a response of love from our hearts.

That's what prayer is, isn't it? It's the response of loving hearts to God our Savior, to his grace. It's all about God's grace shaping us for his glory. That's true biblical faith.

But you see, man's religion in every form is all about us reaching up to heaven, grasping for a deity who will serve our purposes. It's using God, isn't it?

[28 : 44] It's like God was the genie of Aladdin's lamp. It's not about his glory, it's all about our gain. It's not about praise and prayer to him, it's about profit for us. Not prayer, but robbery.

It's what Jesus says. And in their specific case here, of course, it was starkly manifest by those who were making commercial enterprise out of the temple courts, money changers and selling things for sacrifice and so on and making a tidy profit.

But you see, all through the ages, in all religions, it's always been that. Are we going to Delhi again in November?

I'll never forget, often it's Diwali when I'm there. I remember once in a shop and the Brahmin priest was coming around offering his special Diwali services for people while they pulled out huge wadges of cash to give to him.

These people are stinking rich out of their religion. But it's been just the same all through the history of so-called Christendom, hasn't it? Think of the massive accumulated wealth of the prince bishops of the Church of Rome and so on.

[29 : 56] Think of the private jets of the prosperity gospelers today. But we need to be careful ourselves, don't we? Because having good evangelical credentials doesn't mean that we can't be corrupted in just the same way at heart.

It doesn't mean that we can't turn prayer into robbery. There's so many ways that people can twist the grace of God into the greed of man.

we can come to church really deep down to serve ourselves and our pride, not Christ and his people. And that manifests itself in so many ways, doesn't it? Might be something as simple as the T-router that I run, but it's my domain and I will assert my authority over it and don't you dare try and change the way we do it.

Hmm? Or the group I'm in. Well, it must be the way that I like it, because if it's not, I'll be in the huff and I'm going to go somewhere else.

Or the pulpit that I preach from, here to serve my ambition and buff my sense of worth, not to serve Christ alone, not to bless his people, not to cherish their worth.

[31 : 09] You see, it could go on and on and on, couldn't you? Robbery instead of prayer. It's so easy with our sinful hearts to turn the living revelation of God's grace into the dead religion of man's greed.

Not a grateful response of heart for his grace, but a greedy robbing of God for my gain. And you see, where the true voice of God is not being heard, where men are deaf to his proclamation, there will be no real heart response to God in prayer.

And the whole purpose of God's church is then destroyed, isn't it? Instead of the temple of the living God, it becomes a place of deadness and death. Last weekend, I was up in Aberdeen.

I was at a reunion for my medical school graduation 25 years ago. Took us back to the halls of residence where 30, I couldn't believe, 30 years ago I was being dropped off there to go and live in Hillhead halls.

It's just as people being dropped off probably next week there and no doubt in Glasgow. Nostalgia. But one thing struck me with great sadness as we went around Aberdeen.

[32 : 27] So many buildings that when I was a student 30 years ago were church buildings and are no longer churches. They're silent. Some being made into shops, some into offices, some into posh flats, and some into all sorts of other things.

Why? Because they became dead, devoid of prayer, devoid of the life of God, because they refused the word of God.

And God must challenge a temple like that as Jesus did here. And Jesus is giving them another acted prophecy before their eyes here from Malachi chapter 3.

That's what he's doing. In verse 46, he's actually quoting from the prophet Jeremiah in Jeremiah chapter 7 where the people exalted in their temple and they thought their temple and their possession of it would make them invincible.

But Jeremiah said to them from God, think again. This temple and this land will be laid waste unless you repent and change your ways. And that's exactly what happened.

[33 : 38] They were exiled. And Jesus' arrival in the temple here echoes Malachi's words in chapter 3 where he says that the Lord whom you seek will come suddenly to your temple, but who will be able to stand when he does?

Because he will come like a refiner's fire to purge, to purify as the only hope for you if you're not to be destroyed. And when the real Jesus, you see, confronts his church like that, it becomes a fight to the very death.

It can't be any other. When the real gospel, when the implications of the gospel are pressed upon any church, there is always going to be rumpus. There's always going to be division. Look at verses 47 and 48.

Some were hanging on his words, yes, but others wanted to destroy him. That is the impact of the real Jesus in a church. He divides. Some will fight him to retain their status and their power and their position and their authority and their territory and their ministry.

But in amongst that, there will be those who respond in faith and love and real prayer is reborn and real life is fanned into flame by the Spirit of God.

[34 : 55] But it's a fight to the death. Always in any church, in any person's life. between Christ's word and his rule and our willfulness and our rebellion.

Which side are we going to be on? That's the question. Are we going to be those who hang on Jesus' words or those who want to silence and destroy him?

That's an important question, isn't it? We need to keep asking that question to ourselves every time we come to church every Sunday. Because if we claim to be Christian, the Apostle Paul tells us, doesn't he, in 1 Corinthians 6, that our body is a temple of God's Holy Spirit where he dwells by right, where he exerts his right to rule over our lives.

Very easy, isn't it, on a Sunday to look splendid on the outside just like that temple. But that temple was rotten on the inside. What's going on inside this morning?

What does Jesus see that the rest of us don't see? Does he see in the temple of my life a throne room for him to reign supreme?

[36 : 11] Where his word is cherished? Where we live truly to him and for him? Or have we been robbing him of that throne?

As the old hymn puts it, have I, poor sinner, cast it all away, lived for the work and pleasure of each day, as if no Christ had shed his precious blood, as if I owed no homage to our God.

Does the Lord need to come and cleanse the temple of your heart and my heart afresh and purge away some of those deadly things? Hmm? And what about our fellowship as a church?

Because Paul in 1 Corinthians 3 again says that we together as God's people, we are the temple of the Lord, we are his building. What does Jesus see in the building that is our church?

Are people devoted to prayer? Or a den of robbers? Hmm? Are people building for him with our brightest and best, as Paul talks about, with gold and silver and precious stones?

[37 : 21] Or just building with wood and hay and stubble? Things that cost us the least, things that really don't take much effort at all. Looks fine today, but one day we'll just utterly collapse and there'll be nothing left of any value for eternity.

Malachi's words and Paul's words and Jesus' own words here, they're all saying the same thing, aren't they? He comes as a cleansing fire to judge, to purify, and every temple where he seeks to dwell must accept that cleansing, must receive the peace that comes only through that merciful purging that Jesus brings, or face the reality of a coming ruin that that Jesus says is as terrible as it is tragic.

Look at verses 41 to 44, that's what Jesus is speaking about plainly, isn't it? Do you see? It's a devastating warning of judgment that'll mean ruin instead of peace.

It speaks of a people, doesn't it, blinded to the presence of Christ and therefore ultimately banished from the presence of Christ. The ruin that Jesus predicts here for Jerusalem recalls the words of the prophets of old predicting Israel's exile into Babylon.

As I said, verse 46 quotes from Jeremiah 7 and here too in verse 43, days will come upon you. That echoes Jeremiah's phrase, doesn't it? Days are coming when the land shall be a waste.

[39 : 00] And those words of Jesus were fulfilled just as they were in Jeremiah's day in AD 70 when the Roman invasion destroyed the city and pulled down the temple. And Jerusalem was, as Jesus says later, trampled underfoot by the Gentiles and is to this day.

The temple mount in Israel today has two mosques sitting on top of it. Utter ruin. And the reason Jesus clearly gives, you see in the last line of verse 44, because you did not know, you did not perceive and recognize the time of your visitation.

It wasn't ignorance. It was culpable rejection of a revelation so plain and so privileged that even inanimate stones would recognize it and recognize the presence of the creator of the world.

Their hearts, you see, were hard in the face of the most compelling evidence possible. The presence of God himself in the flesh, in front of them, speaking words of peace right into their very ears, wooing their hearts with patience, with great love.

Some of them saw, verse 48 is clear, they were hanging on his words. But others had hearts full of hatred and would not see.

[40 : 29] Look at what Jesus says, just as in chapter 13, when he wooed them. Do you remember there he said, how often I would have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, but you would not.

Look at verse 42, would that you had perceived and grasped hold of the peace that's held out to you. But they would not.

And so in the end, Jesus says they could not. Now these things are hidden from your eyes. How patient, how merciful God is. Do you remember that story about the fig tree in chapter 13?

Give it more time. Give it another chance. Do everything to make it bear fruit. But in the end, there must come a time when God says, well, you've made up your mind.

You see, friends, if you persistently and repeatedly say to God, leave me alone, I don't want you. Stop speaking to me. Leave me in peace. God will, in the end, answer your request.

[41 : 37] He will depart from you if you keep telling him to. But it won't be peace you discover, according to Jesus, but ruin.

Utter ruin. Everlasting ruin. They would not see and eventually they could not see. It's the reverse of the faith of the blind man. Back in chapter 18, his faith saved him and Jesus opened his eyes.

But you see, unbelief and refusal to see Jesus for who he is, refusal to accept his peace, must lead in the end to a closing of your eyes and of your heart.

And Jesus withdraws. That's what he's doing here. With tears, verse 41, and amid wooing words of peace, both words of scripture from the prophets and the words of the Son of God himself in person, his wooing is real and his weeping is real.

But so also is his wrath real. Can't but be real, can it? Because mercy and peace and cleansing and forgiveness has been refused and resisted and utterly rejected.

[42 : 52] And there can't be any peace for those who will not receive peace. Only ruin. Only the weeping wrath of the king who came to offer peace but was rejected because you did not know the time of your visitation, the day of the things that make for your peace.

peace. It's very salutary, isn't it? That generation of high privilege had a visitation in person in the Son of God.

Remember, Zechariah sung of it. God has visited his people. The day spring from on high has visited us to give forgiveness of sins and to guide our feet into the way of peace.

That's what they had. Zechariah saw it and rejoiced at the coming of Jesus as did many others. They hung on his words. But most, most of that privileged people did not.

They would not see. And in the end they could not see. And if we believe Jesus, that's why their end was not peace but ruin.

[44 : 00] God is merciful. He is patient. He's like the gardener tending that tree, wooing it, willing it to produce fruit. And that's why this world is still here.

That's why this whole earth has not yet been destroyed by the folly and the wickedness of man because God is merciful. Because he's patient. So the apostle Peter says, not wishing that any should perish.

And so he still comes offering peace. He comes to you. He comes to me. He's the king who offers peace. He came, said Paul, to those pagan Ephesians.

He came and preached peace to you. When Paul came and preached the gospel of salvation to them. And many in that place, pagan enemies, found peace, became members of his temple, members of the household of God.

And he still comes whenever his gospel is heard. He comes today. He comes right now to us who are listening to him.

[45 : 05] Today is the day of salvation, says Paul. Today is the day of our visitation from the king of peace. He's wooing you today in mercy and love.

Don't make him weep over you. Know the time of your visitation. That's what Jesus is saying. Don't choose ruin. When he's offering you his peace.

Amen. Let's pray. Our gracious God and Father, King of kings and Lord of lords and prince of peace, grant us, we pray, open hearts to receive your word and open hands to grasp your peace for the glory of your Son and for the grace and the mercy of his beloved cross.

Amen. You may if you don't here, let's pray.

Bow here. Those are the truth. Please come. fera less Infant words and miracles with you. Listen.