**Matthew 23:37-39**

<https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/matt/matt-23/matthew-2337-39/>

Jesus’s final public teaching before His arrest was a lament and acknowledgment of His people’s rejection of Him as the Messiah. It was coupled with a prophetic promise that He would be received by His people upon His return to earth at His second coming.

The parallel account of this remark is found in Luke 13:34-35.

Jesus concluded His public remarks in and around the temple with a lament:

Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her!

The repeated calling out of Jerusalem by name drew attention to the city and added gravity to the statement. Jerusalem was supposed to be the center of the Messiah’s kingdom. It was to be its capital. Instead of embracing this happy destiny, Jerusalem had spurned God again. And again, she would suffer desolate consequences for rejecting His protection and glory. Within a generation Rome would topple and scatter the city (70 A.D.) as Babylon had done centuries before (586 B.C.).

Jesus described the city as she who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! This has been her legacy in the past. This would be her present and her near future. God sent prophets to warn Judah to turn and repent in order to avoid the Babylonian invasion, but they rejected them (Jeremiah 38:1-4). In the same way, the leaders are now rejecting Jesus, the greatest prophet (Deuteronomy 18:17-18). In doing so, they are condemning Jerusalem to destruction once again, although God apparently gives them another generation to repent (Acts 3:19).

Jesus lamented, How often I wanted to gather your children together. His spirit groaned for Jerusalem to come to its senses and embrace Him as the Messiah the way a tender parent longs to gather their children into their arms, to embrace and protect them. Jesus compared this gathering as the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings. The analogy is a tender one. A hen protects her chicks under her wings from the cold, the rain, the eyes of predators. There is safety and security for the chicks beneath their mother hen’s wings. It is an image of love and protection.

But sadly, you [Jerusalem] were unwilling to receive my protection and blessing.

In foretelling what was soon to come, Jesus said, Behold, your house is being left to you desolate! Instead of celebrating the new King and enjoying the security and prosperity of His everlasting reign, Jerusalem’s house was about to become desolate. She would suffer anguishing trials and difficulties. Jesus describes these tribulations in Matthew 24:15-22.

This last public teaching Jesus gave before His betrayal was a tragic lament punctuated by a bright hope. And it was backed by His own personal divine authority: For I say to you, from now on you will not see Me until you say, “Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!”

The statement From now on you will not see Me until was Jesus’s way of publicly acknowledging His people’s rejection of Him as their Messiah and king (John 1:11). He would not publicly offer Himself to lead Israel to glory until His second coming. At that time, He will be unmistakable (Matthew 24:27). Everyone will recognize Him for Who He Is. At that time Jerusalem (and the world) will say Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!

This expression comes from the Messianic Psalm 118. It describes the triumphant scene when Jerusalem receives her King. Jesus referenced this psalm the day after His triumphal entry when He asked the Pharisees,

“Did you never read in the Scriptures,
‘The stone which the builders rejected,
This became the chief corner stone;
This came about from the Lord,
And it is marvelous in our eyes’?”
(Matthew 21:42)

On that day, when Christ returns there will be much rejoicing. Psalm 118:24 captures this excitement with the exclamation: “This is the day which the LORD has made; Let us rejoice and be glad in it.” But until that day there would be much sorrow still to come.

Finally, what was lamentable for Jesus and what the Jews would come to lament (Zechariah 12:10), would be used by God to bless the world. The Jews rejection of Jesus as the Christ resulted in an astounding opportunity for the Gentiles (Romans 11:11-12, 32). Gentiles were eligible to be grafted into the root of the olive tree that is Israel, and enter His kingdom. And Jesus said many Gentiles will “recline at the table with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven” as a reward for their faith (Matthew 8:11). To take advantage of this opportunity to inherit the kingdom, Gentiles must first believe in Jesus as God’s Son (John 3:14-16) and be born into His family. This is a spiritual birth, and places us into God’s family once and for all. Then, in order to fully gain the rewards available for His children, we must endure with Him through earthly trials as they are encountered (2 Timothy 2:12). Once again, God is able to take something broken and remake it into something far greater.

**Biblical Text**

**37 Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling. 38 Behold, your house is being left to you desolate! 39 For I say to you, from now on you will not see Me until you say, “Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!”**