

Juxtaposition of Aggression (v31-33) of Jesus and the Lament (v33-35) that He feels over the rejection of Him by those whom He had implored for life over and over again. These were the people for whom He had called Abraham out of Ur, the people whom He carried out of slavery by His own mighty hand, and the people whom He had given the Law and the prophets, the wisdom and the oracles, the blessings of the priesthood and the foreshadows of the Temple worship and sacrificial system.

Jerusalem had been, throughout its history, a case study for God's patience. In fact, Jesus' epitaph for the city is, frankly, not a kind one: "prophet-killer" and "apostle executer". He had just given a parable where the prophets and patriarchs of this people were dining inside the kingdom while the nation to whom Jesus addressed was looking in from the outside because they would not come to Him. It was the prophets who spoke of Jesus (Luke 24) and to whom all the Scriptures from Genesis to Revelation proclaim. Therefore, Jesus is aggressive toward its shepherds who don't lead these people toward the merciful God, and is amazingly sorrowful at the nation's unwillingness to come to Him for rescue and for mercy.

There is a major word in this passage that is used three times: "want" or "will" (qelw). Herod "wants" to kill Jesus. Jesus "wants" to gather Jerusalem under His wings. Jerusalem does not "want" Him. It is this competing and opposing sets of "wants" that sets the stage for the crucifixion of Jesus. Our Lord's mercy drives Him to endure the cross and despise its shame. Herod's cowardice and fear drives him to hand Jesus over for execution. And, the resistance of the people whom should have rejoiced at Jesus' rule, did not want Him as their king and asking for Caesar.

1. People *Want* to Get Rid of Jesus

- a. Usually the Pharisees are trying to get rid of Jesus
 - i. They are using a thinly veiled threat to get Jesus to go away
 1. If you stay doing what you're doing, Jesus, you will get killed
 2. What they're really trying to do is get Jesus to oppose Herod, to commit treason so that he would get killed
 - ii. What's interesting is that usually the Pharisees and Herod are opposed to each other with great disdain.
 1. The Pharisees were separatists who hated Rome and its rule.
 2. Herod was a half-Jewish king who was put in power by Rome and ruled with questionable allegiance to Israel.
 - iii. Jesus senses a bit of collusion between them and Herod, and he isn't falling for it
- b. How do people try and "get rid" of Jesus?
 - i. They think they can trick Him? They think they can outwit Him?
 - ii. They think they can convince Him to move on in a manner that they can justify.
 - iii. They will not submit to Him.
- c. It's a mercy of Jesus that he even speaks with the Pharisees!
 - i. Wouldn't you have just cast them aside? Been done with them?
 - ii. But Jesus is better than you: he is always pursuing the Joseph of Armitheas, the Nicodemuses, and the like.
 - iii. He has nothing to prove and nothing to protect: his reputation, his comfort, his life. He truly lives for the sake of God and for the sake of man, even though He is the most worthy man who has ever lived

2. Jesus Does What He Wants

- a. Jesus responds to Herod aggressively
- b. "Herod wants you dead"
 - i. Herod is willing to kill:
 1. John the Baptist called Antipas out for this sin of divorcing his wife and marrying his brother Philip's wife

- ii. Herod Antipas was not given the title “king” by his father (or Emperor Augustus), but rather the lesser title “tetrarch” while his father wanted his brother, Archelaus, to receive the title “king of Judea” (which Augustus rejected, giving Arch the title “ethnarch” instead)
 - iii. However, it is clear that Antipas was not a pathological paranoid murderer like his father
 - 1. He didn’t want to kill John the Baptist, but feared shame more than righteousness, so to had John killed to save face
 - 2. He didn’t want to kill Jesus, either, but was disappointed when Jesus wouldn’t perform miracles for him
 - iv. So, most likely, the Pharisees are lying here, trying to get Jesus to upset Herod and flee to Jerusalem where the Sanhedrin had more power to condemn him to death for his claims of deity and Messianic authority
 - c. Jesus calls Herod a fox
 - i. A word of contempt, the only word of contempt for an individual person uttered by Jesus
 - 1. Herod Antipas was a great builder, building Tiberias, the capital city of Galilee (named after his patron, Tiberius the Roman Emperor)
 - 2. It had a stadium, ritual baths, place of prayer, built upon the cliffs of Galilee
 - 3. It was also built upon a graveyard, so pious Jews wouldn’t go there at first and Antipas had to fill the city with foreigners, slaves, and by giving land to the impoverished
 - 4. His “foxness” may have been due to this cliff-building deception and conniving political efforts
 - ii. When Herod questions Jesus at his trial, Jesus refuses to answer him
 - 1. When Jesus is silent, giving no words of exhortation, correction, or encouragement, that person is in serious trouble
 - 2. He was condemned by Jesus now, and he was condemned by Jesus in his silence
 - iii. He calls Herod, “that” fox
 - 1. There are other foxes, who want to be entertained by Jesus, but are deceitful destroyers, users of God and God’s people for their own advantages in the world
 - 2. Whenever a person uses Jesus, but does not submit to Him, he is a fox
 - Wearing a cross, but singing about himself
 - Claiming to love God, but refusing to obey his Word
 - Seeking Jesus’ power, but getting angry at Him when suffering comes
 - d. Matches Herod’s claimed authority with an authority of his own, “I will reach my goal”
 - i. Jesus knows where he’s going and knows what he has to complete
 - 1. Literally, “on the third day I am finished”
 - 2. Jesus is foretelling the finishing of His work and it beckons the words which John records Jesus as crying out from the cross as he breathed his last, “It has been finished!”
 - ii. Tells Herod his plans and where he’ll be
 - 1. He will keep doing what he’s doing (healing and casting out demons, kingdom signs) until he reaches the end
 - This is not good strategy if you want to fight a war
 - But Jesus is not at war with Herod and he doesn’t fear being killed outside of Jerusalem
 - iii. He’s going to do whatever he wants to do, because he has the authority to do whatever he wants to do, and nobody will keep Him from completing his course
 - 1. Jesus lays down his life of his own accord, and nobody takes it from him
 - John 10:18
 - e. Jesus responds to the Pharisees aggressively
 - i. You are foxes, too!

- ii. They are deceiving, or attempting to, trying to hurry him through Galilee to Jerusalem where they can trump up some charges and get the Sanhedrin to condemn him of blasphemy
 - iii. Jesus knows every heart and the character of every man!
 - f. No prophet can die outside Jerusalem!
 - i. Scathing condemnation of Jerusalem as a prophet-killer
 - ii. Jesus is showing the Pharisees that he won't die up north where Herod ruled, but rather where every prophet has been killed: Jerusalem
 - 1. Jerusalem is the part standing for the whole
 - 2. Not all prophets died in the city of Jerusalem, but Jerusalem stands for the entire nation as its capital place, the center of its religious power (like D.C. is used today)
 - g. Nobody was going to make him leave his path, his cursed call, to go to Jerusalem and be killed at the hands of men so that by His death He might atone for the sins of all people
 - i. He was going to continue doing what He wanted to do, to proclaim the coming of the Kingdom and proving its arrival by signs of restoration
 - 1. He would be in Jerusalem soon (three days, metaphorical, and known by Luke's readers to be significant)
 - 2. He knew that He would die there as a prophet

3. Jesus Wants to Rescue These People

- a. Jerusalem, Jerusalem
 - i. Two-time repetition indicates intimacy and longing
 - 1. "Martha, Martha" (Luke 10:41)
 - 2. "Simon, Simon, Satan has desires to sift you as wheat, but I have prayed for you" (Luke 22:31)
 - ii. Indicates compassion and mercy
 - 1. Hosea 11:8 "How can I give you up, O Ephraim...my heart recoils within me and my compassion grows tender"
- b. Killer of prophets and the executer of the ones sent by God
 - i. Jesus laments the attitude of the people who had the promises and knew the oracles of God
 - ii. They had seen God's gracious deliverance from slavery and establishment of a people, a kingdom, and a land
 - iii. Yet, rather than receive the work and word of God with joy, they violently opposed it
 - 1. This is true of everyone who rejects the Son of God!
 - 2. Every rejection of the gospel is not merely a passive resistance to the God who gives it, but a mutinous intolerance of His rule and His salvation by force
 - 3. "Whoever hates me hates my Father also. ²⁴ If I had not done among them the works that no one else did, they would not be guilty of sin, but now they have seen and hated both me and my Father. (Joh 15:23-24)
 - 4. They answered him, "Abraham is our father." Jesus said to them, "If you were Abraham's children, you would be doing the works Abraham did, ⁴⁰ but now you seek to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God. This is not what Abraham did. ⁴¹ You are doing the works your father did." They said to him, "We were not born of sexual immorality. We have one Father-- even God." ⁴² Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and I am here. I came not of my own accord, but he sent me. ⁴³ Why do you not understand what I say? It is because you cannot bear to hear my word. ⁴⁴ You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies. ⁴⁵ But because I tell the truth, you do not believe me. (Joh 8:39-45)
- c. *How often* I would have gathered you
 - i. God's persistent call to come to Him with utter dependence and need

1. God's mercy is abundantly patient and He persistently offers opportunity and opportunity
 - Even more, He pursue to offer, continually calls, sends prophets and teachers and preachers
 - Over and over and over and over!
 - OFTEN!!!
- ii. This is Jesus' mission and God is always confronting people with this choice to come to Him for rescue
 1. 2 Peter 3:9 – God is patient toward you, not slow to keep his promise
 2. This calling of God is also the mission of the Church: "Be reconciled to God! Fly to Christ Jesus for rescue!"
- iii. Literally, "I desired to gather you"
 1. Juxtaposed, "but you did not desire it"
 2. Same word used of Jesus' willingness and Jerusalem's (and all others by inference) unwillingness to come to Him for rescue
- d. Gather you under my wings
 - i. Psalm 17:8; Psalm 36:7; Psalm 57:1; Psalm 61:4; Psalm 63:7; Psalm 91:4
 - ii. Juxtaposition of two kings: Herod and the Messiah (Jesus)
 1. If Herod is a fox, Jesus is a hen
 - The killing will be done by the fox
 - The protection will be accomplished by the hen
 - The salvation will come through the hen's death
 2. One is willing to kill to maintain his own power and reputation
 - See John the Baptist's execution – Herod didn't necessarily want to kill John, but he loved his reputation (he made a promise and couldn't lose face) more than righteousness
 - He hands Jesus over to execution to appease the crowd, not because he found fault
 3. The other is willing to lay down His life to protect and secure His people
 - iii. Wings recall the Mercy Seat
 1. Ark of the Covenant
 2. Mercy Seat instructions – Exodus 25:17-22
 - "Place of propitiation" (Lev 16)
 - Sat on the Ark of the Covenant
 - Two cherubim stretched their wings out on the top
 - The LORD met with the Priest there at the place of propitiation
 3. Note the relationship between cherubim and the presence of the LORD
 - Num 7:89; 2 Kings 19:15; Ezekiel's vision in 10-11
 - iv. This is the willingness of Christ Jesus
 1. He is willing to save, to protect, to rescue us from all threats which we have, by sin and self-deception, exposed ourselves to
 - We have exposed ourselves to the wrath of the holy God, the curse of sin, the righteousness destruction of mutinous violent sinners from the holy righteous God
 - Yet, even though we have exposed ourselves to such danger, Jesus is willing and even longing to answer for our every sin, to be exposed to that fiery baptism for us that we might never have to answer for it.
 2. The mercy of God in Christ Jesus is beyond understanding!
 - What kind of mercy is this?!
 - i. The Father's mercy toward you enough to give His only-begotten Son

- ii. The Son's mercy toward you enough to redeem you at the expense of His own immense suffering
- iii. The Spirit's mercy to bind you to Christ Jesus to receive all the benefits befitting His glorious worth
- The kind of love that weeps in the garden knowing the horrors of the fire to come!
 - i. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem!
- The kind of faithfulness that bears up the greatest explosion of power that the Universe has ever seen against Himself will not let anything come between him and his people
 - i. Romans 8:32

4. In The End, People Get What They Want

- a. Rejection of God and His goodness in favor of something or someone more controllable and appeasing to our lusts
 - i. We fly from desperation of our own strength and hew for ourselves cisterns of our own making which we erroneously and foolishly think will produce waters that bring life and joy
 - ii. We, in our sin, don't want to need God for *everything*, to hide under His wings from all alarm and all sustenance and all protection
- b. The rejection of Jesus goes far deeper than a mere mind or intellectual issue
 - i. There are those of great intellect and reasoning capacity that have believed the gospel and those of equal intellect that have rejected the gospel
 - ii. It's not a matter of proofs or intellectual assent, it is a matter of the heart
 - iii. "you did not desire it"
- c. The rejection of Jesus as Savior and Lord is an issue of the heart/affections
 - i. One rejects Jesus because one does not *want* to believe it
 - ii. "Men *loved* the darkness more than the light" (John 3:19)
 - iii. John 3:19-21 – those who love the light want their works to be exposed as having been wrought by God alone
 - 1. It is an issue of pride vs. humility, not intellect vs. stupidity
- d. It is not reasonable or unreasonable, but self-sufficiency and desperation
 - i. Jerusalem trusted in their "Abraham's children" position and saw no need for Jesus
 - ii. We, too, like them, don't see a need for salvation, at least not in our absolute and utter need
 - 1. We trust in our own righteousness (moral achievement and rejection of moral evils)
 - 2. We trust in our own wisdom (we know "in our hearts" what is right and good)
 - 3. We trust in our own holiness (I am different than the rest, not a sinner like...)
 - iii. Herein lies our greatest problem: we don't desire salvation because we don't see a need for it
 - 1. Jesus is offering what the world doesn't think it needs
 - We understood that the offer is for salvation from sin and judgment and wrath
 - We just don't think we need a Savior, at best we need a teacher to show us how to do it ourselves
 - We naturally think that our own performance will suffice for one of two reasons
 - i. God is not so holy as to condemn every sin
 - ii. I am not so sinful as to be worthy of eternal condemnation
 - iii. Therefore, I don't need a Substitute, a Savior, a Shadow of any Wings
- e. It is also true, in regards to God's sovereign election, that nobody who wants Jesus is rejected by God and nobody who does not want Jesus is saved by God

- i. We typically think that if God must regenerate a heart, then that means that He doesn't desire a reprobate unbelieving heart
- ii. However, within this assumption is the belief that an unbeliever wants God, but God has rejected him
 - 1. This is patently false!
 - 2. It is ALWAYS true, that whomever wants to come to Christ for the sake of Christ is saved! Always!
 - 3. It is also true that if you want to come to Christ for the sake of Christ it is because God has breathed life to your Spirit by His sovereign grace
 - 4. But it will never be the case that one who runs to Christ is rejected or one that rejects Christ is saved.
 - I believe that even in the final judgment, unbelievers would rather the rocks fall upon their heads than run to Jesus
 - They still won't want Him in that day, and God will give all men what they want in that final day: Jesus or Self
- f. It is this continued rejection ("how often") of the saving God that causes Jesus to cry out in sorrow and frustration
 - i. How merciful of God! How patient that He laments our arrogant stance as opposed to simply crushing us.
 - ii. How merciful of Jesus that He proclaims this sorrow and longing as He marches to His own doom *for us!*
- g. Your house is left desolate
 - i. Luke 20:9ff – the vineyard will be given to another when the Son is rejected
 - ii. Jerusalem would be destroyed and torn stone by stone in a few decades, but the real desolation is that in the rejection of the Messiah the presence of God is rejected as well
 - iii. Eventually God's patience runs out, the door closes, the opportunity is over, and when the fire rages those not huddled under His wings will find themselves left unprotected.

Conclusion: O broken sinner, burdened with guilt and with shame: See now your Savior before you, with such resolve and passionate surety to save you, *even when you fled from His wings of refuge!* He longs for you to come near to Him for salvation, near to his breast for comfort, under His wings for protection. He endured the fiery wrath of God that you might be spared, bore your shame that you might receive a place as sons and daughters of the Most High God, was smitten by your afflictions for your healing, crushed by the foxes that you might have life eternal. He is that compassionate. He is that gracious. He is that patient. He is that committed. He is that trustworthy. He is that merciful...for you...today.

"Those who are in trouble and distressing fear, if they come to Jesus Christ, have this to ease them of their fears, that Christ has promised them that he will protect them; that they come upon his invitation; that Christ has plighted his faith for their security if they will close to Him; and that He is engaged by covenant to God the Father that he will save those afflicted and distressed souls that come to Him...by his own act, he has engaged to be responsible for them; so that if they have exposed themselves to God's wrath, and to the stroke of justice, it is not their concern, but his, how to answer or satisfy for what they have done." ~Jonathan Edwards, *Knowing Christ*