

Series: “The Danger of Being Religious: Jesus and the Pharisees in Matthew 23”

Main Idea: In the final words of Jesus' sermon recorded in Matthew 23:37-39, after pronouncing seven woes, the King laments. The One who pronounced woe now begins to weep. And Jesus' tears communicate volumes. As we look at the lamenting Savior, we learn about four vital realities.

- I. We see the *patience* of God (37a).
 - A. Jerusalem was the city of peace.
 - B. Jerusalem also rejected God's messengers.
 1. God sent the prophets.
 2. Ultimately, He sent His Son.
- II. We see the *passion* of the Savior (37b).
 - A. Jesus wants His people to be near Him.
 - B. Sadly, His people want something else.
- III. We see the *penalty* of sin (38).
 - A. God left His house.
 - B. Your house will soon be desolate.
- IV. We see the *plan* of the Sovereign (39).
 - A. It involves the Jews.
 1. There will be a time of darkness.
 2. There's a light at the end of the tunnel.
 - B. It involves us.

Make It Personal: Jesus is speaking to us through His tears.

1. He is the King of kings.
2. Is He the King of my life?

There was weeping when He came. There was weeping just before He left. There will be weeping when He comes the second time too, but that's beyond the scope of our focus. These are the bookends in Matthew's presentation of the King who came from heaven. There's weeping associated with the person and work of the Messiah.

Think about it. In ten days we'll celebrate Christmas, a joyful day for sure. Yet there's a part of Matthew's Christmas story we tend to neglect. Remember what King Herod did? Instead of accepting and worshipping the One sent from heaven as had the shepherds and wise men, Herod rejected Him and sought to eliminate Him by killing all the male children in Bethlehem that were two years of age or younger.

“Then what was said through the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled: ‘A voice is heard in Ramah, weeping and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted, because they are no more (Matthew 2:17–18 NIV84).’”

That's how His story began, friends. Indeed there was weeping at the beginning. And there was weeping at the end, as we'll see today. Who weeps this time? People? No. This time the King Himself is the One who weeps.

We're returning to Matthew 23 this morning, and we'll finish our series “The Danger of Being Religious” by looking carefully at the final words of Jesus' sermon recorded in Matthew 23:37-39. After pronouncing seven woes, the King laments. The One who pronounced *woe* now begins to *weep*. And His tears communicate volumes for those who have ears to hear.

Scripture Reading: Matthew 23:37-39

Today is Sunday, the Lord's Day. As is often the case on this special day, we've gathered to hear a message from God's Word, a *sermon*. Have you ever wondered what it

^{**}Note: This is an unedited manuscript of a message preached at Wheelersburg Baptist Church. It is provided to prompt your continued reflection on the practical truths of the Word of God.

¹ For a previous look at Matthew 23, see the messages preached at WBC in 1999.

would be like to hear a sermon preached by Jesus? Suppose Jesus Himself entered this room, approached the pulpit, and began to speak to us. What would He say? We might be surprised.

One audience certainly was. It happened on a Tuesday (or possibly Wednesday), just a couple of days after the Palm Sunday crowd applauded His entry into Jerusalem. The Savior entered the House of God. There was tension in the air. The common people had high hopes for this miracle worker from Galilee. But the religious leaders were skeptical. No, that's not the right word. They were *caustic* in their insistence that He must go.

They had tried to trap Him with trick questions (see Matthew 22), but failed. And they'd already set in motion a search for a wicked plot to eliminate Him. Quite an atmosphere in which to preach a sermon, wouldn't you say?

We've been examining this very message for the past five weeks, and now this morning we come to Jesus' final words. For the first thirty-six verses of Matthew 23, Jesus uses strong language to warn the people of the danger of merely being religious. The Scribes and Pharisees prided themselves in their serious-minded, faultless efforts to please God. Yet King Jesus is not pleased. Instead of complimenting them as everyone else did, Jesus utters a sobering, shocking pronouncement upon them.

"Woe to you!" He says it not once, not twice, but seven times (in verses 13, 15, 16, 23, 25, 27, 29). With the most potent of terms, Jesus uses the scalpel of His word to peel away the shining veneer of an impressive religious system. And by the time He finishes, He has exposed something quite ugly and repulsive, something that He alone sees.

The sinful heart. Jesus calls the religious leaders "hypocrites" (13, 15, 23, 25, 27, 29). He says that everything they do is done for men to see (4). He calls them "blind guides" (16, 24). He accuses them of straining out a gnat but swallowing a camel (24). He likens them to a whitewashed tomb, decorative on the outside but full of deadness underneath it all (27). He calls them snakes and vipers, and asks them the question that matters most, "How will you escape being condemned to hell (33)?"

This is what we've been hearing from Jesus for five weeks now. Jesus has piled warning on top of warning, using the most forceful language to indict the spiritual leadership of Israel, religious men who were convinced they were right with God.

But then something happens in verse 37. Jesus' tone changes. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem!" says the King as He begins to lament over those He had just indicted.

It reminds me of a story Jesus had once told about a father who had *two* prodigal sons (in Luke 15). The first son spurned his father's care and demanded his share of his dad's inheritance. In essence, saying, "Old man, your money means more to me than you do, and I want it." And his father gave it to him, and he left. He then wasted his life through sinful living, but in the end came home, and was restored by the shocking, unconditional love of his father.

You say, "But you said there were *two* prodigal sons." There were. The story doesn't end with the return of the younger son, does it? Remember the older son's reaction? When the father forgave and restored the younger son, the big brother was filled with resentment and anger. His father's lavish love incensed him, and he told him so. And the older son, the one who had always seemed so good and upright *on the outside*, refused to come home and be near his father and brother. Why? For he too was a prodigal, not in action, but in his heart.

And in Jesus' story, the father loves *both* lost sons. Jesus *is* the father in the story.

How do you help a "religious" prodigal, someone who claims to be okay with God, but it's all based on his or her own goodness? How do you help the person who refuses

to admit his or her desperate need for God's salvation? In Matthew 23, Jesus speaks to such a person.

But this is not merely personal matter. In this sermon, Jesus is speaking to the representatives of the Jewish nation, the religious leaders who had rejected Him. Matthew 23 is addressing this corporate problem, too. The Messiah had come unto His own, but His own had not received Him (as the apostle John summarized the problem in John 1:11). What was the result of this corporate rejection of the Messiah by Israel?

Did the King call for fire from heaven? No. He began to lament. And what He said in this lamentation puts on display four important realities He wanted His first hearers and us both to consider and feel deeply.

Yes, *feel*. That's the effect of a lament. You feel it. Logic goes for the intellect. Lament goes for the affections. For thirty-plus verses Jesus has confronted. Now He weeps.

I. We see the patience of God (37a).

Jesus concludes his final public statement by saying, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it!" Why the repetition, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem"?

We've heard this kind of repetition before. It's like "Martha, Martha", as Jesus expressed in Luke 10:41, and "Saul, Saul" as He will later say in Acts 9, and "Abraham, Abraham" as the angel of the Lord expressed long ago in Genesis 22:11. The repetition makes what follows quite personal and relational. It reveals the heart of the person speaking, and His intense desire for a different response than He's presently receiving.

This is actually a display of Jesus' intense love for this city and the people associated with it. In a sermon so full of judgment, these parting words are a reminder of the incredible, merciful, gracious love of God for undeserving sinners.

Bruner suggests that the doubling of the name gives a "tonality of sadness to the prophetic wrath."² Think of it, my friend. Is God sovereign? Yes, indeed. Did He know these men, this *nation*, was going to reject Him? Yes. But does His heart grieve when it happens? Oh, yes. Yes, He does.

But why Jerusalem? Why does Jesus begin to speak to a *city*? If I said, "O Wheelersburg, Wheelersburg," you know I'm not talking about buildings and roads. Neither is Jesus. He's addressing the people, past, present, and future that call this place home. We need to keep in mind a couple of things about Jerusalem.

A. Jerusalem was the city of peace. That's what the name means, from the term *uru*, meaning "city," and *salim*, meaning "peace." Jerusalem is the city of shalom, the city of wholeness, the city of peace.³

Jerusalem, of course, had been the capital city of Israel for centuries, back to the days of King David. As such, it represents the entire nation for which Jesus now mourns on this fateful day.

And what a city it was! Jerusalem! David claimed it for Israel in the tenth century B.C. Solomon beautified it with grandiose building projects. Hezekiah watched God protect it by slaying 180,000 Assyrian aggressors. Jeremiah watched the Babylonians raze it in the sixth century, and then Nehemiah rebuilt its walls after the exile. On and on goes the list of amazing events associated with this city.

² Bruner, p. 832.

³ *I.S.B.E.* article, "Jerusalem."

Jerusalem, the city that housed the temple of God. Jerusalem, the place where God-ordained sacrifices had been offered by the tens of thousands for the remission of sins. Jerusalem, the city of peace.

But things weren't very peaceful in Jerusalem, not on this day, and not on many days in its past. Jesus Himself brings attention to this point in His lament.

B. Jerusalem also rejected God's messengers. Jesus said, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you." It's ironic when you consider the kind of welcome the city of peace gave to God's messengers. Far too often, the reception was hardly peaceful. Here Jesus reminds His hearers that Jerusalem had developed quite a reputation.

1. *God sent the prophets.* Time and time again God sent His messengers to Jerusalem to urge the people to repent and turn back to God. And time after time, instead of rolling out the red-carpet, the only red the prophets saw was their own blood.

Hebrews 11:36-38 describes their fate, "Some faced jeers and flogging, while still others were chained and put in prison. They were stoned; they were sawed in two; they were put to death by the sword. They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, persecuted, and mistreated--the world was not worthy of them. They wandered in deserts and mountains, and in caves and holes in the ground."

Did all of that mistreatment happen in Jerusalem? But some of it did. And according to Jesus, it wasn't just a past-tense problem. Yes, they *had* killed godly men like Isaiah and Zechariah. But Jesus says (NIV), "You who *kill* the prophets and *stone* those sent to you." That's present tense, for they *did* it and were still *doing* it. Think of John the Baptist, and soon there would be Stephen, and James, and countless others.

Do you hear the patience of God in these words? "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who stone the prophets and stone those sent to you." Again and again, God sent the prophets to Jerusalem, and they were rejected.

2. *Ultimately, He sent His Son.* There's a startling track record in all of this. The Lord wanted to restore Israel to Himself. Even when He sent the Assyrians to devastate the land, it was to get their attention. And when He sent the Babylonians, it was a wakeup call. He sent the prophets to confront their waywardness, and to urge them to repent, because He loved them.

But time and time again the people, the very nation God Himself had chosen, resisted God and rejected His messengers, to their own shame and harm.

And then God sent His own Son, not to whip them into shape (though He could have), nor to scold them into submission, but to win them with the kind of love the world had never seen. He came as a lowly servant. He healed their sick, fed them when they were hungry, taught them life-giving words, and offered them forgiveness of sin and eternal life. Indeed, He offered them *Himself*.

And they spurned His offer. They shut their hearts to His love. They actually rejected *Him*. To borrow the words from the parable Jesus told in Luke 19:14, "We don't want this man to be our king."

Ultimately, of course, this is not merely a Jewish problem. It's a human problem. It's *our* problem. The Lord gives us life, health, jobs, families, everything we have, and what do we do? We ignore Him. We pour our lives into the things He gives us, and forget Him. And what does He do? He keeps causing the sun to shine on us, and sends the rain and everything else we need for life. And then, He sends us wakeup calls to get our attention. A health crisis. A job loss. And how do we respond? We criticize Him for not caring.

This is the human condition. It is universal. And apart from His saving, gracious, eye-opening, heart-changing intervention, there are no exceptions. Beloved, all of us have reason this morning to thank the Lord for His amazing and loving patience.

II. We see the passion of the Savior (37b).

Before going any further, there's a pressing question we must address. Did Jesus actually weep as He concluded His message in Matthew 23? I've called this a lament. Many Bible translations and commentators use the word "lament" in their heading over this passage. But is it actually a lament? Is Jesus shedding tears as He speaks? To be honest, I don't know for sure. This text doesn't say that He wept.

But let me ask the question a different way. Did Jesus weep over Jerusalem? The answer to that question is most certainly yes. Go with me to Luke 19:41, where we read, "And when he drew near and saw the city, he wept over it."

When did that happen? Luke is describing what happened on what we call Palm Sunday. Jesus is riding on a colt, and as He approaches the city of Jerusalem He *saw the city*. This was no casual glance. He *saw* Jerusalem with His all knowing gaze. *And He wept over it*.

Luke tells us what He said as He wept in verses 42-44, "Would that you, even you, had known on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes.⁴³ 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 side⁴⁴ and tear you down to the ground, you and your children within you. And they will not leave one stone upon another in you, because you did not know the time of your visitation."

That happened on Sunday. It's now Tuesday, possibly Wednesday. Is He weeping at the end of Matthew 23? Brothers and sisters, I don't know for sure. But it seems quite likely (to me at least) that Sunday's tears are flowing once again on Tuesday.

*Man of sorrows, what a name, for the Son of God who came,
Ruined sinners to reclaim, Hallelujah! What a Savior!*

Tune in to the passion in Jesus' voice as I read again the end of verse 37, "How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing!"

What did Jesus say He desired? What was the passion of His heart?

A. Jesus wants His people to be near Him. Notice the eternality of the Lord Jesus in that sentence. "How often I have longed to gather your children," He says. How often, not just in the past thirty-three years, but throughout the nation's 1,400 year spiritual roller coaster ride.

Many years ago when I was in seminary, Sherry and I lived near a lake that was home to several ducks. There was also an aggressive swan that roamed the waters. In the Spring it was interesting to watch the mother ducks as they took their babies out for a swim. They moved through the water in single file formation, that is, *until* the swan approached. Then the mother duck called her offspring to come close to her. She wanted them near her, for their own good, where she sheltered them with her loving wings.

It would be sheer folly and certain death for one of her little ones to ignore her call. According to Jesus, that's what His people were doing to Him. He wanted them to be near Him.

B. Sadly, His people want something else. The last words of verse 37 are heart-breaking. "You were not willing." The contrast is stunning, indeed unthinkable. Jesus says, "I would have, but you would not."

Thus, the tragic fate of Israel is sealed. Life will be very different for Israel from this point forward, as Jesus will make clear in the next verse.

“There is no argument here about divine sovereignty and human responsibility, for both are included,” says Warren Wiersbe.⁴

There are different aspects to the will of God in the Bible. The Scriptures speak of God's *decreed* will, for instance, which is certain and unchanging. But there's also God's *revealed* will. For reasons known only to God, the Lord permits people to act contrary to and in defiance of His revealed will. But He never permits them to act contrary to His sovereign will (if you want to read more about this distinction, see Jerry Bridges' helpful book, *Trusting God*, p. 38).⁵

Which perspective does Jesus have in mind in Matthew 23? This is God's revealed will. Here we see Jesus express His desire for something that did not come to fruition, at least not yet. His desire for Israel was to make Himself known both *to* her and *through* her to the world. It was His will for Israel to be near Him. But Israel resisted. As Jesus said back in John 5:40, “You refuse to come to me to have life.”

Here we see the very essence of sin, the human will in opposition to God's will. And here we also see the very essence of love, the Lord desiring to have sinners near Him.

Just think of it. The Lord needs nothing, but He desires for sinners to have fellowship with Himself. And He takes the initiative to make this desire a reality.

That's what the cross is all about. That's what this very sermon is all about, which infuriates the religious leaders and brings about the cross. The One speaking has come to pay the ransom payment. He will give His own life, so that what He desires, intimacy and communion with His estranged image-bearers, becomes a reality.

May I speak candidly? This is what makes Christianity distinct from all religions. Christianity is all about a relationship that the Lord desires and that He alone makes possible. Religion is about people reaching God. Christianity is about God reaching people. The God of the Bible chooses people, gives His life for those people, and calls those people to Himself. Why? Because He wants them to be close to Him, to be near to Him, and to be under His eternal protection and care.

The question for those listening to this sermon in Matthew 23 (then as well as today) is this. Do we want what the Lord wants? Do we really want to be close to Him, to be with Him, in the way He provides? His heart is grieved when we say no.

And this is why He laments, saying, “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often I longed to gather your children near me, but you were not willing.”

Yet there's more. In addition to the patience of God and the passion of the Savior, we also see penalty of sin.

III. We see the penalty of sin (38).

Jesus continues in verse 38, “See, your house is left to you desolate.” The NIV says, “Look!” In other words, listen up! Pay attention! Behold! Why? Because something has happened to your house!

⁴ Warren Wiersbe, p. 86.

⁵In support of the certainty of God's decreed will, consider the following Scriptures: Proverbs 16:9, "In his heart a man plans his course, but the LORD determines his steps." Proverbs 19:21, "Many are the plans in a man's heart, but it is the LORD's purpose that prevails." Lamentations 3:37, "Who can speak and have it not happen if the LORD has not decreed it?" (Also: Prov 21:30; James 4:15; Rev 3:7)

What “house” does Jesus have in mind? “House” could refer to the nation of Israel as a whole. It could also refer to the temple, the house of God. This seems more likely considering the context.

Remember where Jesus is speaking. He’s in the temple. And the very next subject He’s going to address is the coming destruction of the temple.

Notice Matthew 24:1–2, “Jesus left the **temple** and was going away, when his disciples came to point out to him the buildings of the **temple**.² But he answered them, ‘You see all these, do you not? Truly, I say to you, there will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down.’”

Some hold to what’s called, replacement theology, which essentially says the church has replaced Israel. We hold to a modified form of dispensational theology, which says there is still a future for Israel, with promises given by the prophets yet to be fulfilled. Yet this we hold in common. There most certainly was a penalty for Israel’s rejection of the Messiah. Sin always brings a penalty.

In verse 38 Jesus spells out a twofold penalty.

A. God left His house. Look carefully at Jesus’ words in verse 38, “See, *your* house is left to you desolate.” So, it’s *your* house now, Jesus says. It used to be God’s, but no longer.

Specifically He says, “Your house is *left*.” As Matthew records this, he uses a verb which means “abandoned.” It’s translated “neglect” in verse 23. R. T. France observes that it speaks not so much of the physical condition of the temple as of the fact that *God has departed from it*.⁶

Again, Matthew emphasizes this in the striking first words of chapter 24. “Jesus left the temple.” The King has come, and now He’s leaving His house never to return. This is tragic. The Master of the house is gone. This is what makes the house desolate, which brings us to the second part of the penalty.

B. Your house will soon be desolate. God’s house became *your* house. As it turned out “*your* house” existed for another forty years. Then in AD 70, invading Roman armies decimated the city of peace, and Jerusalem (including the temple) lay in shambles. And to this day, the Jewish temple remains desolate.

The Jews certainly couldn’t plead ignorance. The Lord warned Solomon of this very consequence when he built the first “house of God.” At the temple dedication the Lord said this in 1 Kings 9:6-9, “But if you or your sons turn away from me and do not observe the commands and decrees I have given you and go off and serve other gods and worship them, then I will cut off Israel from the land I have given them and will reject this temple I have consecrated for my Name...And though this temple is now imposing, all who pass by will be appalled and will scoff and say, ‘Why has the LORD done such a thing to this land and to this temple?’ People will answer, ‘Because they have forsaken the LORD their God.’”

Six centuries before Christ, Jeremiah offered a similar warning in Jeremiah 22:4-5, “For if you are careful to carry out these commands, then kings who sit on David’s throne will come through the gates of this palace, riding in chariots and on horses, accompanied by their officials and their people. But if you do not obey these commands, declares the LORD, I swear by myself that this palace will become a ruin.”

Friends, there is always a penalty for sin. A nation that rejects the Messiah is doomed to disaster. So is a church. Consider this warning by Frederick Bruner, “Churches that

⁶ France, p. 332.

have the name of Christ but that are not in fact *centered in* and thrilled by Christ have Ichabod written over their doors.”⁷

Again, beware of the danger of being religious. It’s a terrible thing to trivialize the Savior, and if we do, the penalty of sin will follow.

This brings us to the fourth reality. In Jesus’ closing words we see the patience of God, the passion of the Savior, the penalty of sin, and the plan of the Sovereign.

IV. We see the plan of the Sovereign (39).

What about the plan? Notice first of the who.

A. It involves the Jews. To the Jewish leaders, and by extension those who follow them, Jesus says this in verse 39, “For I tell you, you will not see me again, until you say, ‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.’”

God is sovereign. He operates by a plan. Nothing takes Him by surprise. When He entered into a covenant relationship with Abraham, He made it clear that He had a special purpose for Abraham's descendants.

In His plan, He took one man and formed a family. And He took that family and formed a nation, later called Israel. And through that nation He ultimately sent the Messiah into the world.

But the nation as a whole rejected the Messiah. So now what? What is God's plan for Israel? Again, though Bible scholars differ on this subject, I believe the Bible indicates there is a future for Israel. Jesus here seems to indicate that God's future plan for Israel involves two phases.

1. *There will be a time of darkness.* Listen to Jesus' prediction, “For I tell you, you will not see me again.” To the Jewish leaders and to the people who followed those leaders Jesus said, “You won't see Me again.”

He wasn't talking about physical sight. They would “see” Him for a few more days. But they wouldn't *see* Him again, not as a nation. While there would be a remnant of Jews who would accept and see Him in His beauty, the nation of Israel was now entering a time of darkness.

They had wasted opportunity after opportunity. First the prophets said, “He's coming!” And John the Baptist said, “He's here!” And Jesus said, “I am the way!” But they refused to receive Him. They refused to let go of their religious system. And so phase one began, the time of darkness.

Is there hope? I believe there is.

2. *There's a light at the end of the tunnel.* I see this hope in this little word *until*. “You will not see me again *until* you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.’” Jesus here is quoting Psalm 118:26. Psalm 118 is a great messianic psalm, one that was quoted many times during Jesus' last week of ministry. It's Psalm 118 that says:

Verse 22 “The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.”

Verse 23 “This is the LORD's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes.”

Verse 24 “This is the day that the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.”

Verse 26 “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD! We bless you from the house of the LORD.”

It's noteworthy that the crowds used these very words from Psalm 118:26 just two days before (see Matthew 21:9) when they shouted, “Hosanna to the Son of David! Baruch haba B'shem Adonai! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!”

⁷ Frederick Bruner, p. 834.

While the Jewish crowds spoke those very words, the religious leaders most certainly did not. In fact, according to Matthew 21:15 the Jewish leaders were *indignant*. And sadly, in just a few days the fickle masses will follow their leaders in crying, not *Hosanna*, but *Crucify him!*

Therefore, you will not see Me again, says Jesus. Until. Until you say.

But you will see Me again. When you say, *Baruch haba b'shem Adonai*.

The fact is, God is still revealing Himself through Israel. Even right now, according to Romans 9:22, through Israel's rebellion God is revealing His *wrath*. And during this time of Israel's hardening, God has extended His mercy to Gentiles (Rom. 9:23-24). And the day is coming when the Lord will gather Israel--His "chicks"--to Himself.

Paul explains in Romans 11. Verse 1--"Did God reject his people? By no means!" Verse 2--"God did not reject His people, whom he foreknew." Verse 5--"So too, at the present time there is a remnant chosen by grace." Verse 11--"Again I ask: Did they stumble so as to fall beyond recovery? Not at all! Rather, because of their transgression, salvation has come to the Gentiles to make Israel envious." Verses 23--"And if they do not persist in unbelief, they will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again."

Yes, this is now is a time of darkness for the Jews. But there's a light at the end of the tunnel. The Messiah will return. And when He does, by God's grace, He will receive a very different greeting from the seed of Abraham. Then they will say, *Baruch haba b'shem Adonai*.

With that prediction, Jesus finishes His sermon. These are the last words Jesus spoke to the Jewish multitudes in Matthew's gospel. From this point on He will focus on His disciples, speaking to them "privately" (24:3).

Know this, dear friend. There is a Sovereign in heaven who has a plan for this world. His plan involves the Jews. But let's not stop there. His plan also involves *us*.

B. It involves us. At the end of this age when Jesus returns, He will deliver Israel and defeat its enemies. Zechariah anticipated that day (Zech. 12). Paul spoke of it in Romans 11. We who are Gentiles ought to thank God for the Jews. Jesus was born a Jew. Jesus loved the Jews. God used the Jews to give us the Scriptures. We ought to learn from the Jews.

When the Messiah came the first time, the majority of Jews clung to their religious system and missed Him. What have you done with Jesus the Messiah?

Make It Personal: Jesus is speaking to us through His tears.

1. *He is the King of kings.* He's the Sovereign One who has a plan. Yes, He is the Lord. But the question of all questions is this.

2. *Is He the King of my life?* What He did on the cross and at the tomb wasn't just for the world. It was for individuals who would believe in Him and surrender their lives to Him. Have you done so? If not, I invite you to do so today.

Baruch haba b'shem Adonai. Blessed is He who comes.

Baruch haba b'shem Adonai, who comes in the name of the Lord.

Closing Song: #326 "Softly and Tenderly" (all four verses)

Closing charge: Let the redeemed of the Lord...SAY SO.