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I should begin by saying, I always study partly by listening to what my mentor and former pastor John MacArthur has taught on the same passage. John spent 6 Sundays in these verses.

I don't know if we'll finish this section in a single session but I do know we won't spend 6 weeks here. Would that I had that kind of depth. Sadly, I know I do not.

But for those of you who are hungering to go deeper into this text, those messages are available at no charge, the same way I listened to them at Grace to You dot org gty.org along with the rest of the New Testament, verse by verse. I could wish I had the depth and I also long for you to have the hunger for more of God's word. There is a banquet feast set out for us and we're mostly eating marshmallows.

Jesus has been making His final appeals to Israel in chapters 12 and 13, calling Israel to come to Him, to follow Him, at any and all cost. Leave family and friends and culture and possessions and anything else that might stand between putting all else that this world has and offers in far second place in order to have Him.

What is Israel's response? Israel at large, so to speak. The multitude that has followed and listened and watched the miracles, and the rulers of Israel, the

Chief priests and scribes, the experts, the elders, the respected leaders have not believed. How can that be with the miracles that no one before or after Jesus has ever done.

The rulers of Israel have answered that question for the multitude. He does all of the miracles by powers given to Him by Beelzebul, a name they used for Satan. Jesus heals and does all things well by Satanic power. He isn't the Son of God, he's the son of Satan.

The miracles are so overwhelming and they are so many, they had to come up with something. There's simply no denying the miracles. The sheer volume of the miracles has not been seen since this same Jesus spoke the worlds into existence at creation.

And since Jesus died at their hands and rose again from the dead, there has not been miracles on earth like He did in volume and scope. Never before and never since.

The rulers never denied the miracles. They couldn't. It took 19 centuries for men to be removed enough from the reality of the miracles to begin to deny them. The rulers at that time claimed the power source for the un-deniable was Satanic, and it worked. The multitude ultimately rejected Jesus.

This passage this morning is the beginning of the end. The heartbreak of Israel's rejection. The threat of murderous intent towards Jesus. The first mention that soon Jesus in the flesh will be gone, and Israel will be responsible for missed opportunity, and the punishment that will haunt them for centuries after this time.

*31 Just at that time some Pharisees came up, saying to Him, "Go away and depart from here, for Herod wants to kill You."*

First of all the inevitable question that we don't have answered. Why would a self respecting pharisee offer any assistance to Jesus? And the speculations are replete but speculation is all we have.

Perhaps we lump groups together too tightly. If you're a pharisee you have to be this and this, no if's and's or but's about it. But Nicodemus was a pharisee, and came asking good questions. We make assumptions and put people in boxes. This could be genuine. We just don't know, and it really doesn't matter. Luke uses this incident that doesn't occur in any of the other gospels to launch us into the subject of Jesus death.

Some speculate that their intention is evil. They're trying to move Him to Jerusalem, out of Herod Antipas' umbrella of authority and into the chief priests realm because they want to kill Him.

The only clue is that Jesus says 32 *“Go and tell that fox,* which may indicate that He was in the locality of Herod, near the palace where John the Baptist was murdered. It could also indicate that these men had a familiar audience with Herod. Direct messengers.

The greek indicates that the message is that Herod has a desire to destroy Jesus. It's a warning of a direct threat. Get out of this region because Herod wants you eliminated. Herod will kill you.

But Jesus answer is most interesting. 32 *And He said to them, “Go and tell that fox,* Fox is a curious choice. We don't call thugs fox. A fox and indeed this word in the greek means someone who is cunning. Crafty. Which starts up the speculation engine again.

Did Herod really want another prophet's murder added to his crimes? Or was this a rather cunning ploy to move Jesus along to someone else's district because Herod was uncomfortable with Jesus being anywhere in his district. Go be a nuisance in Pilate's district, would you. Go tell that guy if He doesn't move along he may end up like His friend John. Again, it's just speculation, but that term, fox gives us at least the possibility.

And Jesus answer is just loaded with colorful truth. His answer uses irony and sarcasm to show the impossibility of the threat.

*32 And He said to them, "Go and tell that fox, 'Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I reach My goal.'*

To begin with, Jesus is unmoved by Herod's threat. Why? Because Jesus is living and moving under the sovereign plan and control of His Father in heaven. Herod has about as much chance to cause Jesus harm as he does to shout commands at the wind and waves and have them obey.

Herod is powerless over Jesus. Totally powerless. Laughably powerless, and Jesus answer is sort of condescending really. It would be funny if it weren't so tragic. Go tell that guy I'll be doing my Father's business on my Father's schedule at my Father's speed.

The tragedy is in the realities. There was only one person EVER, who could say the words Jesus said. In the history of the world, one person could make the statement Jesus makes to Herod. Only ONE. *Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I reach My goal.'*

Thanks for the tip about Herod killing me and everything, but here's what I'll be doing. I'll be casting out demons and healing people today and tomorrow while I move at my Father's speed IN HIS HOLY WILL.

For the single person ever to walk on earth who could in fact cast out demons and heal people in ways that required the same level of power as creation itself, it's comical that some puny pusillanimous ruler on some puny throne that Rome supplied would expect that a threat from him could make Jesus change His course.

The tragic comedy is that Jesus is walking around doing what clearly only the creator of the universe could do and Israel has missed the whole thing. In the history of all the miracles of the Bible from beginning to end, there's like a dozen miracles spread over 4000 years until Jesus and then He does miracles pretty much non stop for 3 years.

When Jesus heals, He creates new cells, new tissue, new flesh, new muscles, new eyes complete with nerve and brain function. He creates new bone mass and muscles for a man who hasn't walked in years, and the man jumps up and walks at Jesus command. Every miracle Jesus does is something that only the God of creation could do.

In John 14:11 Jesus appeals to the miracles. *"Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me; otherwise believe because of the works themselves."*

You can hear the pathos in His voice. The great irony of the situation as He mentions, by the way, while Herod's plotting my murder which he can never do unless my Father enables it, I'll be doing what only God can do. It's just confounding.

When Pilate interviewed and questioned Jesus before His death, listen as he claims the same thing Herod is claiming; 10 *So Pilate said to Him, "You do not speak to me? Do You not know that I have authority to release You, and I have authority to crucify You?"* 11 *Jesus answered, "You would have no authority over Me, unless it had been given you from above; for this reason he who delivered Me to you has the greater sin."* Jn. 19:10,11

Jesus says; You are powerless over me unless My Father allows you to do what you're going to do. Nothing is possible without Sovereign God's OK.

Peter taught this truth at pentecost. Acts 2:22,23

22 *"Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know—* 23 *this Man, delivered up by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death.*

The death of Jesus was only possible according to God's predetermined plan which God foreknew. Never-the-less, Peter informs Israel and it's leaders, you did this. You are responsible for Jesus death, accomplished by godless men.

The Romans and the Jews, both responsible for the death of Jesus, but only according to the foreknowledge and plan of God.

So hate to break it to you Herod, you won't be murdering the One who casts out demons and performs healings with the same creative power that designed the worlds.

For centuries, we have accounts of christians who are being charged and threatened, who inform their accusers of exactly what Jesus tells both Herod and Pilate. You have no power over me unless it is granted by heaven. We are owned by a Sovereign God and no human will overrule His will.

There is tragic humor in the sarcasm of Jesus answer to Herod.

*32 And He said to them, "Go and tell that fox, 'Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I reach My goal.' 33 "Nevertheless I must journey on today and tomorrow and the next day; for it cannot be that a prophet should perish outside of Jerusalem.*

He says, you're right about one thing though. Murder is not out of the question. But I have to march to Jerusalem, because prophets don't die out at the Jordan or the Dead Sea. Prophets have to die in Jerusalem. So I'm going to Jerusalem so they can kill me.

*Luke 9:51 And it came about, when the days were approaching for His ascension, that He resolutely set His face to go to Jerusalem*

All of this time since that verse Jesus has resolutely been marching to His death. Marching to Jerusalem. Herod, you're a pip squeak. A non starter. If you want to be in the club with the big boys, the Jesus killers are in Jerusalem.

The three days thing was a Jewish idiom. You do this, and this on the first and second day and on the third day you finish. I don't know if we're actually 3 days away from Jerusalem at this point, or if Jesus uses that idiom in His sarcasm to Herod because that was how the jews spoke.

If you look in your Bibles at the rest of Luke's book it's all teaching, mostly by parables after this timeframe. But Luke definitely uses the story of the would be threat by Herod to introduce to us that Jesus is indeed marching towards His death. Death is a topic. His death.

It's a triple tragedy. First that Israel will murder their Messiah. Second that it must happen in Jerusalem, God's Holy city. And third that it will happen with all of the evidence of all of the miracles in place by a people who are blinded by the judgement of God. It's heartbreaking. And Jesus is heartbroken.

*34 "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, just as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not have it!"*

We might begin with the tension of Jerusalem itself. Why, when God has chosen Jerusalem above all other cities on this earth, to be His dwelling place, why is it that Jerusalem rises up and kills anything that is from God?

And the answer is in the same tension of this ancient war between Satan, who rules this world and God who has purposed to reclaim it by and for and through His Messiah.

Jerusalem is ground zero for the plan of God, and thus, Jerusalem is also ground zero for Satan to execute wickedness. In Revelation 11, when the 2 witnesses are murdered in the streets of Jerusalem, the angel refers to Jerusalem as Sodom and Egypt.

Jerusalem under the reign and control of Satan, even though God holds ultimate title, under the rule of Satan, Jerusalem has the moral equivalence of Sodom, and the murderous false religion and false worship of Egypt.

When Jesus cries out O! Jerusalem, Jerusalem it is the brokenhearted wail of the sorrow over what Jerusalem *is* under the rule and ownership of Satan. God's chosen people, blinded and duped by Satan, who love it so.

They love their wickedness. They love their false religion. They kill anyone who speaks truth from God. They have stoned and murdered the prophets God sent them. They are days away from killing their Messiah. Oh! Jerusalem, Jerusalem. Jerusalem is Sodom. Jerusalem is Egypt.

Bible Scholars and theologians, argue back and forth and have done so for centuries about man's free will. Because the Bible clearly teaches that God intervenes in salvation. Man is depraved and would never choose God. Is spiritually dead and cannot choose God. God chooses men. We argue about the doctrine of election. The Bible is clear that we are the called out ones. God has quickened us and called us out of this world according to His choice by grace.

But on the other side of that coin, the Bible is always clear about one part of free will. Men are free to choose evil. God doesn't force men into His kingdom against their will. And we see that dichotomy in what Jesus says next;

*How often I wanted to gather your children together, just as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not have it!*

God's heart desire is to gather His children to safety. What comfort for little chicks to be gathered against the warm body of their mother hen, hidden under her wings when the fox comes into the chicken yard.

Jesus says, my hearts desire was to gather you to love and safety and warmth but you will not. *you would not have it!*

Now, I want you to see a digression here that is exactly the same as what Paul describes in God's dealing with mankind in Romans chapter 1.

*How often I wanted to gather your children together, just as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not have it! 35 "Behold, your house is left to you desolate;*

Last week I said the scariest words in the Bible were "I Never Knew You" I won't revise that, but these words here are at least their equal. What words are those? 3 scary words you don't want to hear; See them there in vs. 35. Left To You. *"Behold, your house is left to you desolate*

In Genesis 6:3 God says; *"My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, because he also is flesh; nevertheless his days shall be one hundred and twenty years."*

God says there's a limit that I will set to strive with men and their sin. Listen to 2 Chronicles 36. It's exactly the same situation. Israel had already been here before. This time will be much worse.

*15 The LORD, the God of their fathers, sent word to them again and again by His messengers, because He had compassion on His people and on His dwelling place; 16 but they continually mocked the messengers of God, despised His words and scoffed at His prophets, until the wrath of the LORD arose against His people, until there was no remedy.*

We hate God and love evil until the day comes when God says: Enough. For the jews who have rejected Jesus, this is that day. 35 *"Behold, your house is left to you desolate;*

This idea of God reaching a point where He washes His hands of evil people and leaves them to suffer from their own evil they generate is described perfectly by the apostle Paul in Romans chapter 1.

There we have a digression, a downward spiral and as the spiral away from God expands and gets worse each phase, these words which are so similar to what Jesus has just said here, and mean exactly the same thing; God gave them over. God gave them over. God gave them over.

*18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, 19 because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made*

*it evident to them. 20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.*

*24 Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity,*

*26 For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions;*

*28 And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper,*

That's the abbreviated version since I get feedback all the time that I'm not to mention sodomy so often from the pulpit. You can go and read Romans 1 yourself to get the full version.

The idea is not to preach on Romans 1, but to show that God is consistent. He will strive with His people for a time, but there is that point where there is no remedy and God backs off. Your house is left to you; desolate.

Israel has had 3 years of Jesus loving them, teaching them, healing them, calling them into the Kingdom of God. And rather than falling on their faces repentant towards a loving and merciful God, they have doubled down in their rejection of the Messiah.

Time is up. The day of "no remedy" is upon Israel. Three years of non-stop miracles that only God could generate, and the best you can do is He gets His powers from the magot god. Beelzebub was the dung god. The lord of the flies. That's how He does His miracles.

That's the point of no return. You take more evidence than anybody anywhere else has ever gotten at the mighty hand of God and you assign it all to Satan? What else could God have done.

Me, I just read about all the miracles, 2nd and 3rd hand, reliable witnesses, but I never got to see Jesus first hand, doing them. And I'm all in. I believe it all. The reliable witnesses are good enough for any courtroom and they're good enough for me.

And God takes that small amount of faith that I offer Him and He just pours on grace after grace after grace. It's like the opposite of the spiral down. He takes my meager faith and He just pours out His grace on top of it. Over and over again.

Jesus approached this threat against His life with confidence. He was fearless in the face of this threat, in fact He almost makes light of it. Herod wants me dead. Oh, let's see, should I change my schedule. No, I'll be doing exactly what I had planned to do on my way to Jerusalem where they actually will kill me.

There is a lesson here for us. If we have relinquished our lives to fall under the full control and plan of our Sovereign Father in heaven, all of the forces of heaven are working together on our behalf.

Christians for centuries have approached this world and all of it's threats with the same confidence that Jesus had in this situation because the His Father who controlled all things is our Father and He still sovereignly rules over every force and power this world can conjure up.

Think about Jesus answer to these Pharisee's in accordance with Romans 8:28.

*28 And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are (the) called according to His purpose.*

Those who are the called out ones, those who love God and belong to Him fall under the same loving care and purposes of God that His Son did. Nothing can happen to us without it being the purpose and plan of our Sovereign King. Nothing.

You say, How'd that work out for Jesus? This world killed Him. On schedule. His final breath and words were under the total control of His Sovereign Father in heaven.

But, there's a whole lot more going on here than this world. Jesus rose up

from the dead on the third day and ascended back into heaven.

This world looks helplessly at death as the final curtain, lights out, that's it. We have the confidence that God who brought Jesus out of the tomb on the third day will also give us new life, in heaven, with Jesus, for eternity.

We possess the same confidence against any threat this world can make that Jesus had. Our Father and Sovereign King is in control of every breath I take here, and ultimately His plan for me will be completed here, some day, for His glory, and beyond this place, I have something much better waiting for me.

Well, we didn't quite finish our verses. I'm a little short this morning, but you don't mind. Next week we will finish this section and this 13th chapter and it's going to be all about fulfilled prophecy.

One of the proofs of Jesus as God incarnate was the limitless miracles. So many that John says if we wrote all of them down the earth would be filled with the books and couldn't contain it all. We believe in Jesus because only God could do on earth what He did.

But another infallible proof that gives us faith that Jesus is who He said He is, are the prophecies. Everything He said would come to pass; comes to pass!

And there is a sense that while we don't get to see the miracles first hand, we have to rely on the many many credible witnesses who wrote down what happened . . . we do get to see what those folks didn't get to see firsthand, and that is fulfilled prophecy.

Jesus makes an astonishing forecast for Israel in these verses, and next week we want to baptize ourselves in looking at the fulfilment of what He said. I hope you'll find that as fascinating as I do.

They had miracles. We have prophecy. The truths regarding Jesus are overwhelming. We have 20 centuries of hindsight now to reflect on the prophetic nature of what Jesus says here. No one has an excuse to not believe.