



The Gospel of Luke - Chapter Thirteen

V. [Luke 9:51-19:27 - The Journey to Jerusalem \(continues\)](#)

V.a [Luke 9:51-13:21 - The first mention of the journey to Jerusalem \(continues/concludes\)](#)

Summary of Chapter Thirteen

The need for people to turn to God has been stressed many times. When bad things happen to people it was supposed that they were worse sinners than others who had not suffered in the same way. Jesus teaches the disciples that this is not the case. Things can happen to people irrespective of their sins. The one thing that people need to be reminded of is that everyone will die. God allows us to live in the hope of eternal salvation but the message is clear, that it is only for those who choose to believe in and follow Jesus in this life.

Jesus again heals on the Sabbath. The priest complains saying this lady could have been healed on any of the other six days and that she should have come to be healed then. Jesus pointed out that they would untie their animals to take them to water and to feed them on a Sabbath; surely it was right to release a daughter of God from the bonds of Satan on a Sabbath too! The religious leaders were humiliated and upset at this.

Jesus compares the Kingdom of God with a number of well known examples, such as a mustard seed, which is very small and yet produces a large tree for birds to rest in, and yeast, where a small amount can make dough rise for bread. He also pointed out that, for a non-believer trying to get into heaven after death, was like trying to get into a house after the door was locked. You can knock but the door will not be opened to those who are unknown.

V.a.ix.10 [Luke 13:1-5 - Repent or perish](#)

Jesus instructs his disciples that misfortune is not linked to personal sin but that all will die and face judgement. Therefore, they must know of the need to repent in this life.

¹ Now there were some present at that time who told Jesus about the Galilæans whose blood Pilate had mixed with their sacrifices. ² Jesus answered, Do you think that these Galilæans were worse sinners than all the other Galilæans because they suffered this way? ³ I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish. ⁴ Or those eighteen who died when the tower in

Siloam fell on them – do you think they were more guilty than all the others living in Jerusalem? ⁵ I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish.

Luke 13:1-5

The incidents concerning Pilate killing the Galilæans and the fall of the tower in Siloam are not recorded elsewhere in scripture.

The reference to these Galilæans is not clear, as even Josephus does not appear to record this incident. Some commentators suggest they were supporters of Judas of Galilee, who was an insurrectionist that opposed the taxation of Rome at the time of a census in AD6. This was referred to by Gamaliel in Acts 5:37 <<After him, Judas the Galilean appeared in the days of the census and led a band of people in revolt. He too was killed, and all his followers were scattered>>.

Whose blood Pilate had mixed is an incident about which nothing more is known but Pilate had apparently put people to death when they were trying to offer sacrifices. Jewish sources consider Pilate's reign (AD26-36), to have been quite harsh charging him with greed and cruelty.

Do you think worse sinners? Jesus' rhetorical question reflects a popular view that tragedies and physical ailments were due to personal sin but his answer no denies any such connection in this case.

The question reflects the assumption, customary in ancient Judaism, that suffering could be traced to sin. The underlying concern, well-intentioned but misguided, was not to charge God with perpetrating evil on innocent people. Yet the NT makes clear that suffering is not usually a direct result of a person's sin.

Unless you repent, you too will or all likewise will perish. Although Jesus regularly has compassion on those who suffer, here he draws a broader lesson: this tragic event is a warning that final judgment is coming to the entire world.

The tower in Siloam was probably part of the wall of Jerusalem near the pool of Siloam.

As with all of us, we never know when providence will take us: <<Moreover, no man knows when his hour will come: As fish are caught in a cruel net, or birds are taken in a snare, so men are trapped by evil times that fall unexpectedly upon them>> (Ecclesiastes 9:12). As sinners, all of us deserve death, but God is gracious and merciful to suffer some to live.

V.a.ix.11 Luke 13:6-9 - Parable of a fig tree in a vineyard

In this parable we learn that people are being judged by their fruit. Those that are not fruitful, that is, have not come to God, will be cut down or find themselves in eternal separation. Jesus has come to extend the time before judgement comes but it is not an infinite time.

⁶ Then he told this parable: A man had a fig-tree, planted in his vineyard, and he went to look for fruit on it, but did not find any. ⁷ So he said to the man who took care of the vineyard, 'For three years now I've been coming to look for fruit on this fig-tree and haven't found any. Cut it down! Why should it use up the soil?'

⁸ 'Sir', the man replied, 'leave it alone for one more year, and I'll dig round it and fertilise it. ⁹ If it bears fruit next year, fine! If not, then cut it down'.

Luke 13:6-9

This parable, which extends Matthew 3:10, symbolises Israel's last opportunity to repent before experiencing God's judgment.

Three years signifies that Israel has had enough time to repent.

Sir leave it alone for one more year. The period of grace and opportunity is extended but only for a limited time.

Dig round it implies loosening the soil so that water can flow easily to the roots. If the fig tree does not respond it will be cut down. The Greek construction suggests that this last attempt will also result in failure. God's graciousness and patience should not be presumed upon.

Fertilise it. This indicates the preaching of the Gospel so that people may hear and receive the word of God and be saved if they choose to accept the message it contains.

In summary, God is the man who owns the fig tree, Jesus is the dresser and the fig tree is Israel. The Father has seen no fruit from calling his people to repentance for an extended period of time and has decided to cast them aside but the intercession of Christ offers the extension of a further period of time. If they were to repent they would inherit eternal salvation.

Normally, fig trees grow by the wayside: <<Seeing a fig-tree by the road>> (Matthew 21:19). But Israel has had the benefit of being planted in good soil, i.e. within a vineyard with all the other benefits that go with it: <<I will sing for the one I love a song about his vineyard: My loved one had a vineyard on a fertile hillside. He dug it up and cleared it of stones and planted it with the choicest vines. He built a watchtower in it and cut out a winepress as well. Then he looked for a crop of good grapes, but it yielded only bad fruit>> (Isaiah 5:1-2). The same can be said of the church, as we are planted in the word of God; the soil doesn't get much better than that.

Our baptism plants us in Christ's vineyard, where he dresses us, feeds us, waters us and prunes us. In return, he expects us to bear good fruit, not just leaves or blossom. It is a disappointment to God for all those who have the advantages of the Gospel but fail to live by it, despite free grace and the Spirit's power within them.

In the parable, three years could be the ministry of Jesus or the three periods of grace given to Israel: pre-Babylon in the Promised Land; the return after exile; and then the preaching of John the Baptist, followed immediately by the coming of the Messiah making the third and final offering.

The fate of the vineyard, whether Israel or backsliding followers, could be found in these words: <<Now I will tell you what I am going to do to my vineyard: I will take away its hedge, and it will be destroyed; I will break down its wall, and it will be trampled. I will make it a wasteland, neither pruned nor cultivated, and briers and thorns will grow there. I will command the clouds not to rain on it>> (Isaiah 5:5-6), and: <<If anyone does not remain in me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned>> (John 15:6).

In modern times, the parable still has relevance. Although Christ is still primarily the dresser of the vine, much of the work is passed on to his disciples. The prayer he gives in the parable is for an extension of time but not for an indefinite period, so time is of the essence for us. The parable shows that it is not just prayer that is required but also work, or rather action, as the dresser must dig round the tree and add manure, which is the same as proclaiming and living by the word of God. Sometimes, the actions that God takes seem drastic but they will produce more fruit in us and in others in the end: <<He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful>> (John 15:2).

V.a.x [Luke 13:10-17 - A crippled woman healed on the Sabbath](#)

Whereas the incidents recorded in Luke 6:1-5, the disciples picking heads of grain; and Luke 6:6-11, healing a shrivelled hand; involve Jesus' Lordship over the Sabbath, this account involves the meaning of the Sabbath.

¹⁰ On a Sabbath Jesus was teaching in one of the synagogues, ¹¹ and a woman was there who had been crippled by a spirit for eighteen years. She was bent over and could not straighten up at all.

[Luke 13:10-11](#)

[Crippled by a spirit](#) is just one example of demons being associated with physical ailments; for another we have Luke 11:14 <<Jesus was driving out a demon that was mute. When the demon left, the man who had been mute spoke, and the crowd was amazed>>. However, Luke clearly and consistently distinguishes between the casting out of demons and healing, showing that not all diseases are due to demonic power, although some diseases do have a demonic origin.

¹² When Jesus saw her, he called her forward and said to her, Woman, you are set free from your infirmity. ¹³ Then he put his hands on her, and immediately she straightened up and praised God.

[Luke 13:12-13](#)

[Immediately](#) is in contrast with the 18 years of disability and magnifies Jesus' miracle-working power and is confirmed in Luke 18:43 by: <<Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus, praising God. When all the people saw it, they also praised God>>.

[She straightened up](#) fulfils scripture: <<I am bowed down and brought very low; all day long I go about mourning>> (Psalm 38:6), and: <<the LORD gives sight to the blind, the LORD lifts up those who are bowed down, the LORD loves the righteous>> (Psalm 146:8), and answers the question posed by Solomon: <<Consider what God has done: Who can straighten what he has made crooked?>> (Ecclesiastes 7:13). God can make straight what man makes spiritually crooked!

¹⁴ Indignant because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath, the synagogue ruler said to the people, There are six days for work. So come and be healed on those days, not on the Sabbath.

Luke 13:14

A synagogue ruler is often a board member of the synagogue or more likely a layman who presided over the affairs of the synagogue, including organising and teaching in synagogue services. Many of them were Pharisees.

Because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath the ruler's indignation was aroused, completely ignoring the woman's being freed from 18 years of suffering. Jesus was not violating any OT commandment, but later Jewish traditions had added many more commandments and prohibitions that God had never given in his Word.

¹⁵ The Lord answered him, You hypocrites! Doesn't each of you on the Sabbath untie his ox or donkey from the stall and lead it out to give it water? ¹⁶ Then should not this woman, a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has kept bound for eighteen long years, be set free on the Sabbath day from what bound her?

Luke 13:15-16

The charge you hypocrites is found again in Luke 6:42 <<How can you say to your brother, 'Brother, let me take the speck out of your eye', when you yourself fail to see the plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye>>, and in Luke 12:56 <<Hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance of the earth and the sky. How is it that you don't know how to interpret this present time?>>.

Doesn't each of you introduces a lesser to greater argument which we have encountered in Luke Chapters 11 & 12 in which the generally accepted practice of caring for animals on the Sabbath underscores the greater need to show such concern for a daughter of Abraham.

¹⁷ When he said this, all his opponents were humiliated, but the people were delighted with all the wonderful things he was doing.

Luke 13:17

Although humiliated Jesus opponents will not see the error of their ways and turn to him. That people were delighted does not necessarily indicate that all turned to Jesus in faith.

V.a.xi Luke 13:18-21 - The Parables of the mustard seed and the yeast

Luke concludes his first section on Jesus' journey to Jerusalem, Luke 9:51-13:21, with two parables emphasising the arrival of the kingdom. They contrast the kingdom's modest beginning and its glorious final state. This passage can be confirmed by reading Matthew 13:31-33.

¹⁸ Then Jesus asked, What is the kingdom of God like? What shall I compare it to? ¹⁹ It is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his garden. It grew and became a tree, and the birds of the air perched in its branches.

Luke 13:18-19



The mustard seed would have been the smallest known seed to Jesus' audience. The remarkable contrast between the small beginnings of the mustard seed and its final large mustard plant has earned it proverbial status in Judaism. It was the smallest of all agricultural seeds in Palestine. This parable of the kingdom points out that the messianic rule of God begins in a small and unnoticed way, which was different from what was generally expected.

The metaphor emphasises small beginnings and gradual but remarkable growth.

The seed became a tree refers to a large herbal plant that grows to the height of 8 to 12 feet or 2.4 to 3.7m.

The birds perched emphasises the surprising supernatural result, i.e. the enormous size of the final plant in comparison to the very small seed from which it grew. The Jews expected the kingdom to come with apocalyptic power, bringing God's judgment on all evil and hence Jesus' teaching that it would arrive in such an insignificant way was surprising. The nesting of the birds in the shadow of the grown bush points to divine blessing. This is reminiscent of Nebuchadnezzar's tree: <<with beautiful leaves and abundant fruit, providing food for all, giving shelter to the beasts of the field, and having nesting places in its branches for the birds of the air>> (Daniel 4:21).

The Pharisees frequently desired to know the cosmic signs that would precede the coming of the kingdom so that they can be sure not to miss it. Jesus replied that the kingdom will not come in ways that can be observed. Jesus apparently means that the arrival of the Kingdom of God will not be accompanied by spectacular signs in the heavens, but rather that the kingdom will come quietly, evident only in the change in people's hearts and lives. However, for those like the shepherds in Luke 2:8-20, his coming was accompanied by a heavenly display with a host of angelic beings, singing his praises.

²⁰ Again he asked, What shall I compare the kingdom of God to? ²¹ It is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into a large amount of flour until it worked all through the dough.

Luke 13:20-21

Similar to the mustard seed in v.19, a minute quantity of yeast, most probably leaven, can permeate a large amount of dough to produce a large amount of bread. In these words: <<Your boasting is not good. Don't you know that a little yeast works through the whole batch of dough? Get rid of the old yeast that you may be a new batch without yeast — as you really are. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed>> (1 Corinthians 5:6-7), Paul, by analogy, states that when publicly known sin in the church is not subjected to church discipline it will silently spread its destructive consequences throughout the whole fellowship.

Some translations say 'Three measures' for a large amount and this would have produced enough bread to feed 100 people. Some think these parables teach only the contrast between the small beginning and large end result, and not the gradual growth process of the kingdom between start and finish. Some argue that the growth process is also in view. Both sides agree that the parables contrast the apparently small and unnoticed arrival of the kingdom, i.e. the

'already now', with its extensive and glorious consummation when the Son of Man returns, i.e. the 'not yet'.

The example of yeast or leaven helps to describe how knowledge of the word of God reaches all parts of the world through the endeavours of disciples and the preparatory work of the Holy Spirit who precedes them: <<But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumphal procession in Christ and through us spreads everywhere the fragrance of the knowledge of him>> (2 Corinthians 2:4).

The Already and Not Yet of the Last Days

The OT prophets, writing from the vantage point of their present age (the time of promise), spoke of "the last days" as being the time of fulfillment in the distant future (e.g., Jer. 23:20; 49:39; Ezek. 38:16; Hos. 3:5; Mic. 4:1).

The Structure of the OT Expectation of the Last Days



The NT (the time of fulfillment), however, locates "the last days" in the present age. The "last days" *already* began with the death and resurrection of Jesus and the outpouring of the Spirit, but they are *not yet* fully realized, which will happen only after Christ returns.

The NT Restructuring of the OT Expectation of the Last Days



The diagram depicts the structure of the Last Days

V.b [Luke 13:22-17:10 - The second mention of the journey to Jerusalem](#)

This next section begins with a second mention of Jesus' intention to go to Jerusalem, where he will die for the sins of his people.

V.b.i [Luke 13:22-30 - The narrow door](#)

This account from Jesus' ministry opens with a summary (v.22), a question (v.23), followed by a series of warnings (v.24, vv.25-27 and vv.28-29), and a concluding summary (v.30).

²² Then Jesus went through the towns and villages, teaching as he made his way to Jerusalem.

[Luke 13:22](#)

[Jesus went teaching](#), as confirmed in Luke 4:15, 4:31-32 and 4:43-44, and [made his way to Jerusalem](#). As confirmed in Luke 9:51-53 <<As the time approached for him to be taken up to heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem. And he sent messengers on ahead, who

went into a Samaritan village to get things ready for him; but the people there did not welcome him, because he was heading for Jerusalem>>.

²³ Someone asked him, Lord, are only a few people going to be saved? He said to them,

Luke 13:23

Jesus' response to the question are only a few people going to be saved? does not speculate on God's plans and actions, but states what individuals should do to be saved. There was a similar question asked following a discourse with a rich man who wanted to know how to enter the kingdom: <<Those who heard this asked, "Who then can be saved?" >> (Luke 18:26).

We do not know the origin or the intention of this question. It could have been posed in the hope of trapping Jesus. If he confirmed that only a few would be saved, he could be accused of being harsh and rigid; turning people away from him. If the answer was 'no, many will be saved', he could be accused of proclaiming 'cheap' salvation. The Jewish leaders erroneously taught that all Israel had a part in the world to come. Would Jesus dare to contradict them publically?

It is interesting that, throughout church history many have debated 'who' is to be saved, as opposed to considering 'how' it is to be achieved. Jesus again gives no direct answer to the question posed as he had come to guide our consciences not to gratify our curiosity!

²⁴ Make every effort to enter through the narrow door, because many, I tell you, will try to enter and will not be able to.

Luke 13:24

To be saved one should make every effort to enter through the narrow door. This involves repentance (v.3 and v.5), and faith: <<Those along the path are the ones who hear, and then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, so that they may not believe and be saved>> (Luke 8:12).

Many will try to enter and will not be able to. There will eventually be a time when the opportunity to trust in Christ will be taken away. Jesus' underlying promise is to receive everyone who comes to him, earnestly follows him and trusts him for their salvation. He also states the paradoxical and corresponding truth that once people come to Jesus, they will realise that, behind their willing decision to come and believe, lies the mysterious, invisible work of the Father, who all along was drawing them to Christ, but the emphasis is on our willingness to enter.

Entering by the narrow door, or straight gate as some would have it, requires us to undergo a strict transformation. We need to be born again: <<Jesus answered, I tell you the truth, no-one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit>> (John 3:5). To enter the kingdom is not about working but about striving: with God, wrestling with him in prayer; and against sin and Satan. Striving goes beyond seeking; it requires endeavour and resolve.

In a similar account in Matthew Chapter 7, Jesus speaks of the narrow and wide gates. It seems to indicate that the crowds, following their own way of life and understanding, just followed the crowd through the wide gate. In terms of the Jews, they thought that just by being Jews they had a guarantee of salvation and could just go with the flow. When Jesus came up with this new teaching he was telling them that this was not about their

Jewishness, it was about them as an individual and how their own heart was set before God. Paul also recognises this by saying: <<It is not as though God's word had failed. For not all who are descended from Israel are Israel>> (Romans 9:6), where he will not only show that not all Jews will come to salvation but that Gentiles who do accept the Gospel will enter through this narrow door or gate.

The door of mercy and grace is the only entrance to the kingdom yet many people try to enter by other means, such as their work, their ethnicity, by belonging to a church, or through self-righteousness. Unfortunately, this includes many good church people who believe they are saved, but could find themselves in deep trouble when the day comes. And that day will come when God will shut the door, just as he closed the door on the ark before the flood (Genesis 7:16).

²⁵ Once the owner of the house gets up and closes the door, you will stand outside knocking and pleading, 'Sir, open the door for us'. But he will answer, 'I don't know you or where you come from'.

²⁶ Then you will say, 'We ate and drank with you, and you taught in our streets'.

Luke 13:25-26

The second warning and analogy has to do with entering the house, i.e. the Kingdom of God v.28, and warns that people may be shut out by the Sir, i.e. Jesus, in whose presence they ate and drank and whose teaching they heard. Listening to Jesus' teachings and sharing fellowship with his people, i.e. going to church on a Sunday, are not by themselves any guarantee of eternal life, for that comes only through personal faith in and service to Christ.

²⁷ But he will reply, 'I don't know you or where you come from. Away from me, all you evildoers!

Luke 13:27

I don't know you, away from me. Jesus is not only the Saviour but also the final Judge of all mankind.

We have to remember that in the coming age, Jesus will judge as God the Father's representative, ruling the kingdom the Father has given him, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done, whether good or evil. This underscores the principle that present-day actions have eternal consequences. All Christians will appear before the eternal judgment seat of Christ to receive 'what is due' to them for the deeds that they have done in their earthly life.

It is debated, however:

1. Whether the aim of this judgment is to determine the measure of reward that the Christian will receive in the age to come.
2. Whether the aim is to provide demonstrative evidence regarding who is lost and who is saved.

Because the context of Paul's statement in 2 Corinthians 5:10 <<For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each of us may receive what is due us for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad>>, refers back to both the believer's

hope for the resurrection and to the reward of 'glory beyond all comparison', thus it would seem that both aims are in view.

Thus, with regard to the first case, many interpreters hold that the believer's deeds will provide public evidence to indicate the measure of rewards that the believer will receive corresponding to the believer's 'obedience of faith' or acts of service, love and righteousness.

In the second case, some interpreters hold that the believer's deeds will also provide public evidence, brought forth before the judgment seat of Christ, to demonstrate that one's faith is real. That is, public evidence not as the basis for salvation but as a demonstration of the genuineness of one's faith.

Paul therefore makes it his aim to please Christ because the extent to which one does this corresponds to the measure of rewards that one will receive, likewise giving evidence for the genuineness of one's faith.

Paul is confident that genuine believers will pass Christ's judgment, since the new covenant ministry of reconciliation has brought them under the life-transforming power of the Spirit based on the forgiveness of their sins through faith in Christ alone, all of which is the result of God's grace.

²⁸ There will be weeping there, and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, but you yourselves thrown out.

[Luke 13:28](#)

Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are also mentioned as 'risen people' in [Luke 20:37](#) <<But in the account of the burning bush, even Moses showed that the dead rise, for he calls the Lord 'the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'>>, in [Matthew 8:11](#) <<I say to you that many will come from the east and the west, and will take their places at the feast with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven>>, in [Acts 3:13](#) <<The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified his servant Jesus. You handed him over to be killed, and you disowned him before Pilate, though he had decided to let him go>>, and in [Acts 7:32](#) <<'I am the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob'. Moses trembled with fear and did not dare to look>>.

And all the prophets is a phrase used several times by the author, e.g. in [Luke 11:50](#) <<Therefore this generation will be held responsible for the blood of all the prophets that has been shed since the beginning of the world>>, in [Luke 24:27](#) <<And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself>>, in [Acts 3:18](#) <<But this is how God fulfilled what he had foretold through all the prophets, saying that his Messiah would suffer>>, in [Acts 3:24](#) <<Indeed, beginning with Samuel, all the prophets who have spoken have foretold these days>>, and in [Acts 10:43](#) <<All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name>>, represent believing Israel in the Kingdom of God. But those listening, who did not believe in Jesus, will be thrown out or excluded.

²⁹ People will come from east and west and north and south, and will take their places at the feast in the kingdom of God.

Luke 13:29

In addition to believing Israelites (v.28), believing Gentiles, i.e. people from the east and west and north and south, as confirmed in Psalm 107:3 <<those he gathered from the lands, from east and west, from north and south>>, will enter the kingdom as also recorded in Luke 24:47 <<and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem>>, and in Acts 1:8 <<But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth>>.

It has been stated many times in scripture that God will save a remnant of Israel for himself. They will be joined by Gentiles from all parts of the globe. Paul recognised this when he was given his ministry to be an apostle to the Gentiles and accepted the role to bring them to repentance, but his heart also had a place for his own people to return to God through Christ: <<I am talking to you Gentiles. In as much as I am the apostle to the Gentiles, I make much of my ministry in the hope that I may somehow arouse my own people to envy and save some of them>> (Romans 11:13-14).

³⁰ Indeed there are those who are last who will be first, and first who will be last.

Luke 13:30

Will be first, will be last. A disciple of Jesus should not measure his or her worth by comparing it with the accomplishments and sacrifices of others but should focus on serving from a heart of gratitude in response to God's grace. Jesus is not denying degrees of reward in heaven but is affirming that God's generosity is more abundant than anyone would expect. It is probably correct also to see here a warning that Jesus' early followers, such as the Twelve, should not despise those who would come later.

V.b.ii Luke 13:31-35 - Jesus' sorrow for Jerusalem

As he warns his disciples about Herod Antipas and laments over Jerusalem, Jesus again emphasises that many Israelites will be excluded from the kingdom as confirmed in v.24, vv.25-28 and v.30. It is not clear whether the Pharisees who warned him had genuine concern for Jesus' welfare or simply wanted to drive him out of Galilee, where Herod had jurisdiction. Of course, if they had succeeded in driving him to Judæa then he would have faced even more danger. Unknown to them, this was his ultimate purpose anyway but his response to them in v.32 shows that he fears neither Herod nor them nor anything in this world or any other realm!

³¹ At that time some Pharisees came to Jesus and said to him, Leave this place and go somewhere else. Herod wants to kill you.

Luke 13:31

At that time or very hour ties the present account closely with the preceding.

Herod is Herod Antipas the tetrarch of Galilee and Perea, where Jesus likely was teaching. Herod has been discussed in earlier passages.

³² He replied, Go tell that fox, 'I will drive out demons and heal people today and tomorrow, and on the third day I will reach my goal'.

Luke 13:32

I will drive out demons and heal: <<At sunset, the people brought to Jesus all who had various kinds of sickness, and laying his hands on each one, he healed them. Moreover, demons came out of many people, shouting, "You are the Son of God!" But he rebuked them and would not allow them to speak, because they knew he was the Messiah>> (Luke 4:40-41).

Reach my goal. The present tense emphasises Jesus' continuing ministry and his steady march towards the Cross.

The third day refers to the day of Jesus' resurrection: <<And he said, "The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life">> (Luke 9:22).

Jesus had work to do today, tomorrow and indeed beyond the glorious third day, and there is nothing that can prevent him from achieving that. This too should be our testimony.

³³ In any case, I must keep going today and tomorrow and the next day – for surely no prophet can die outside Jerusalem!

Luke 13:33

I must keep going. Jesus was committed to finishing his course.

Today and tomorrow indicate a limited time as in Exodus 19:10a <<And the LORD said to Moses, Go to the people and consecrate them today and tomorrow>>.

For surely Herod Antipas' plotting (v.31) could not interfere with God's plan.

No prophet can die outside Jerusalem. Jesus did not mean that no prophet had ever died outside of Jerusalem for some had. For example: Ezekiel was martyred in the land of the Chaldeans, Micah was martyred by Jehoram in Ephraim, and Amos by Amaziah in Tekoa.

Rather he was employing irony. Jerusalem, the epicentre of Jewish religion and worship, was more dangerous to a true prophet of God than any threats from Herod in Galilee. From the time of David onward, Jerusalem was chosen by God to be the focus of worship for Israel and the renowned place of God's unique presence and redeeming work in the world, i.e. the city of the Great King: <<for by the earth, for it is his footstool; or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the Great King>> (Matthew 5:35), and: <<Great is the LORD, and most worthy of praise, in the city of our God, his holy mountain. Beautiful in its loftiness, the joy of the whole earth, like the heights of Zaphon is Mount Zion, the city of the Great King>> (Psalm 48:1-2).

Jerusalem boasted of its religious heritage as the former seat of the Davidic throne and the Solomonic temple. In the 1st Century AD, Herod the Great's monumental temple, along with the adjacent Antonia Fortress, served as the focal point of the city. Under Herod, and later at the pleasure of the Romans, the Jewish high priest and Sanhedrin retained key aspects of religious leadership in the city. Herod built himself a palace at the Jaffa gate to the west. Nonetheless, after the dethroning of Herod's son, Archelaus, in AD6, and except for a brief period under Agrippa I in AD41-44, Jerusalem was formally controlled by the Romans through their legate until the Jewish revolt of AD66-73.

Archelaus, during his barbarous 10 year reign, was considered a threat to the young Jesus and that is why Joseph settled in Galilee on their return from Egypt: <<But when he heard

that Archelaus was reigning in Judæa in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there>> (Matthew 2:22).

³⁴ O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing!

Luke 13:34

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem. Jesus bemoaned the fate of Jerusalem with its inhabitants at the time being around 25,000 to 30,000. His lament, however, also applied to all of Israel since Jerusalem was the religious and political centre of the nation.

As a hen gathers her chicks under her wings is a common metaphor for loving care and similar to Deuteronomy 32:11 <<like an eagle that stirs up its nest and hovers over its young, that spreads its wings to catch them and carries them aloft>>, or Ruth 2:12 <<May the LORD repay you for what you have done. May you be richly rewarded by the LORD, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge>>, in Psalm 17:8 <<Keep me as the apple of your eye; hide me in the shadow of your wings>>, and in Psalm 36:7 <<How priceless is your unfailing love, O God! People take refuge in the shadow of your wings>>.

Although the rejection of Jesus by many of the Jews was predicted in the OT, Jesus still feels great sorrow over their rejection, surely reflecting the heart of God as he contemplates the Jewish people rejecting his prophets and his Son.

We have this lamentation in Matthew 23:37-39. This almost certainly only occurred once and was later than portrayed here in Luke, who once again uses the facts for relevance rather than chronological purposes. The lament shows Jesus willingness to accept all sinners as the hen would protect its chicks; it is the sinners' unwillingness to accept free grace that will cause their eternal downfall.

³⁵ Look, your house is left to you desolate. I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord'.

Luke 13:35

You will not see me again until you say, 'Blessed' is the quoted blessing from Psalm 118:26. It was chanted to incoming pilgrims on feast days. This is not an allusion to Palm Sunday, as in Luke 19:38 <<"Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!" "Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!" >>, because in Matthew's account: <<For I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord'>> (Matthew 23:39), the saying occurs after Palm Sunday and, therefore, it must refer to a later event. Some interpreters understand this to refer in a negative way to a coerced, forced confession of Jesus as Lord at the time of the Second Coming, but the quotation from Psalm 118:26 is in a positive context of welcome and worship; the phrase 'Blessed is he' implies worship. Therefore other interpreters understand this to be a prediction that a large number of Jews will trust in Jesus before his Second Coming.