



## World Christian Fellowship

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### Jesus last words to Israel!

#### Matthew 23:34-36

**Matthew 23:34-36**, *Therefore, indeed, I send you prophets, wise men, and scribes: some of them you will kill and crucify, and some of them you will scourge in your synagogues and persecute from city to city,<sup>35</sup> that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar.<sup>36</sup> Assuredly, I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation.*

One of the very saddest of all scenes because it is the pronouncement of doom on the nation of Israel.

They stand in imminent judgment.

They are condemned in this chapter because they have rejected the Lord Jesus Christ.

By rejecting Christ, they have rejected God Himself and His Word.

The ones who led the nation in their rejection were false spiritual leaders called scribes and Pharisees. So, this chapter

comes forth predominantly as a vengeful attack and cursing of the false spiritual leaders of Israel.

For centuries, the Jews had waited for the arrival of their Messiah. The hope and the heart of the Jew was that the day would come when the Messiah would arrive and establish His Kingdom, and blessedness for every Jew would come with that Kingdom.

As the centuries went on, every Jewish mother would have wished herself to be the mother of that Messiah.

Every Jewish man would have wished himself to rise in that Kingdom of Messiah to a place of prominence and honour and service.

It was the great and abiding hope and anticipation in the heart of every Jew.

Yet when the Messiah came, instead of believing and receiving Him they rejected, hated, despised, and ultimately, they had Him executed.

Along with Him, they sought to kill all those who represented Him.

It is a sad and tragic twist in the history of Israel called out by God's love, God's grace, given promises, covenants, and hope.

Yet when all of that is to come to fruition in the arrival of the Messiah, they have gone so far the other direction. Rather than believe, they execute their own Messiah.

This chapter pronounces judgment.

This is the climax of the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ to Israel.

- ✓ He has come to them.
- ✓ He has preached to them.
- ✓ He has articulated the gospel to them.
- ✓ He has given them the opportunity to repent and to believe in Him.

But they did not!

Their rejection now is final.

This is a confirmation that Israel has finally rejected Jesus Christ.

That rejection is led by the scribes and the Pharisees, the false spiritual leaders who had captured the hearts and minds of the people and turned them away from Jesus Christ.

It is also the last sermon Jesus ever preached publicly.

**It is His final public statement.**

This is not a warm, inviting, and loving statement. It is just the opposite. It is a statement of damnation and cursing against these false spiritual leaders who have led the people astray.

**Matthew 23:1-12** is a warning to the people to stay away from these leaders.

There is some hope in that because when Jesus is crucified and rises from the dead and ascends back into heaven, there will be preachers of the gospel who will go through Jerusalem and the land of Israel. The message of salvation will still be preached, and if the people will listen to those preachers and not the scribes and the Pharisees, there is still hope for individuals, if not for the whole nation.

While this is a damnation of the nation, there is still hope for individual Jews if they will turn their ears away from these false spiritual leaders and listen to the true apostles of the Messiah.

**Matthew 23:13-33**, the warning turns to a curse.

Jesus has been talking to the great mob gathered in the temple court at the Passover on Monday of Passion Week. He has been talking to this great crowd and warning them then turns to the Pharisees and the scribes who are standing with the crowd and curses them eight times.

This is a very bold, confrontive, and dramatic act. Jesus confronts them and curses them in front of the whole crowd.

Jesus holds back nothing.

These self-righteous, legalistic, hypocritical haters of the righteous thirsted not for righteousness but for the blood of the righteous, and Jesus condemns them.

The sad fact is that they were the spiritual leaders of Israel whom the people followed and had great guilt for having led those people astray.

Climaxing this section, to these false leaders our Lord Jesus says in **V 32**, *“Fill up, then, the measure of your fathers.”*

Fill up is a term used often in Scripture in connection with sin and judgment and wrath.

Very frequently in the Scripture, the image of a cup being filled to the brim is used in connection with God’s divine wrath.

The book of Revelation talks about the cup of God’s wrath or the cup of His fury.

- Isaiah talked about it.
- Jeremiah talked about it.
- Hosea talks about it.

In **Matthew** Jesus in the garden, says “*Let this cup pass from me,*” and sees it as the cup of divine judgment, the cup of fury.

The picture is that judgment and wrath and sin are like that which fills up a cup.

- Sometimes in Scripture, it is the cup of sin.
- Sometimes it's the cup of wrath.
- Sometimes it's the cup of judgment.

We shouldn't be distressed by that because they are all related. Sin brings the wrath of God, which brings His divine judgment. So, you fill up a cup of sin, you could be said to be filling up a cup of wrath.

It is as if God allows only so much and then the cup is filled up and judgment strikes.

God has reached His limit.

Sin has reached its limit.

The cup is poured out in judgment.

Our Lord, in a command, amazingly says to them fill it up, finish it off, do the rest of the evil that has to be done.

The Lord Jesus Christ pure and holy as He is as God, could command anyone to do evil. But He does!

**John 13:27**, *Now after the piece of bread, Satan entered him. Then Jesus said to him, "What you do, do quickly."*

Go do it.

It isn't that Jesus desired that evil be done, it is only that since evil was to be done, Jesus said get it over with. Get it over with.

Get it over with. Finish it off. You are going to top off the accumulated cup of sin of the nation Israel, of the people whom God revealed His truth to.

Get it done that judgment may come.

Jesus calls this cup.

He calls it the measure of your fathers.

Fill it up, the same cup your fathers were filling.

The history of Israel has been a history of filling up a cup with sin. Filling up a cup of sin is filling up a cup of wrath is filling up a cup of inevitable judgment, and they have been doing that.

Successive generations of Israel have been sinning and sinning just filling and filling the cup until finally judgment comes.

A cumulative thing that Jesus speaks of.

The wickedness of each succeeding generation contributes, then, to the result, and the Lord is saying the limit of Israel's evil is almost reached.

God's tolerance has its limits.

**Genesis 6:3**, *And the Lord said, "My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, for he is indeed flesh; yet his days shall be one hundred and twenty years."*

### **What does God do?**

God destroys the whole world in a flood, leaving only eight souls.

What God was saying is it's full. The cup of man's wickedness is filled up. That's it. There's no more room for anything else. He comes in judgment.

In the book of **Revelation** in the great terrors of the tribulation and the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ in final judgment when He destroys the wicked of all the earth and the final judgment is held and souls are sent into hell forever, that too is called the filling up of the cup of wrath.

God takes no more sin in the cup. That's it. There is a limit to what God will allow. There is only so much wickedness before judgment comes. That is true in this case in the nation Israel.

Jesus says to these scribes and Pharisees finish off the cup that judgment may come. They are working with the same murderous sins of their fathers.

**V 30-31**, and say, *'If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets.'* <sup>31</sup> *"Therefore you are witnesses against yourselves that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets.*

We wouldn't have killed the prophets like our fathers did.  
We wouldn't have slaughtered the righteous like our fathers did.

Jesus says that you are witnesses against yourselves.

### **Why?**

Because He looked into their hearts, and they were plotting His death.

They would have given anything to kill Him on the spot.  
You are the sons of your fathers who killed the prophets for you yourself would kill this Prophet who is the supreme of all prophets, the Messiah.

You are not fooling anybody.

You may claim that you are better than your fathers, but you are not. You are doing nothing more than filling up the same cup full of murderous sins which your fathers filled up.

Terrible climax to the history of Israel.

Ever since there have been righteous men, there have been killers of righteous men. This is the history of Israel.

Righteous men act as a rebuke to any society, and when that society is given the position to do it, it will kill righteous men.

Because a righteous man is a rebuke to a society, and if that society has latitude for the execution of righteous men, that society will do it unless that society has turned to God.

Jesus says to them that you are simply filling up what began a long time ago with your fathers.

Jesus characterizes them.

**V 33**, *Serpents, brood of vipers! How can you escape the condemnation of hell?*

In Greek ***Ophis***, is the general word for snakes.

In Greek ***Echidna***, is the word for small poisonous snake.

Jesus says to them “*You brood of poisonous snakes.*” They are a very small little snake that live down in the desert area of Israel and looked like a stick.

They would be sitting somewhere still. They would look like a small twig or a broken branch or a small stick, and maybe in gathering sticks for a fire.

They would collect one in their hands, and those teeth would plunge their way into your arm, or your hand and they would not be able to be torn loose.

Such as happened to the apostle Paul in the book of Acts, and God spared him miraculously.

This is a poison snake that is impossible to detect in some situations, deceitful and deadly.

We shouldn't be surprised that He called them that because that's exactly what John the Baptist called them.

**Matthew 3:7**, *But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, "Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?"*

They came out to get baptized by him and he said the same thing.

After three years later, and they are no different.

- The ministry of **John the Baptist** had no effect on them.
- The ministry of **Jesus Christ** had no positive effect on them.

Rather it only hardened them more, and they are the same poisonous, deadly, deceitful snakes they were when He first arrived.

The word ***Echidna*** has to do with this poisonous snake, and the word became such a connotation for evil, for subtle wickedness.

***Echidna*** in classic Greek mythology became the name of a monster that was half snake and half woman.

So, the echidna was known as a wicked, subtle, poisonous, deadly, and deceitful creature. It was no compliment to be called an echidna, and when Jesus called them that, everyone knew what He was saying.

**Matthew 23 chapter** begins with a warning, followed with a cursing. The cursing is climaxed as He says to them, "Fill it up."

Fill the cup that your fathers started filling with their murderous acts against the righteous.

**V 33**, *"How can you escape the damnation of Gehenna?"*

Gehenna is the word that is the symbol of hell, the constantly burning trash pile and dump in the Valley of Hinnom out of the city of Jerusalem. Became the identifying symbol for eternal hell.

**How can you escape it?**

The answer is they can't.

No way.

This fits the imagery. Hell is seen as fire.

Field in those days that was cut to stubble, the farmer would go back to that field and burn the stubble off. Also, in that period of time, in that place, they were used to brush fires.

When a brush fire would come across the land or when a farmer would burn the stubble in his field, these little snakes, these echidna would come up out of their holes. They would wiggle as fast as they could, racing ahead of the first to escape it. But they were never fast enough to escape the fire.

John meant this when he said to them the first time they came.

**Do you think you can outrun the fire of God?**

Not a chance!

This is a severe condemnation.

Absolutely sad and tragic.

This people called by God, that these leaders given responsibility to take God's holy Word, covenant, truth, and dispense it to the people. Instead of doing that and being blessed in time to eternity. But they perverted themselves and the people to the point where even holding in their hands the true Word of God. They were nothing more than snakes who

deceived and poisoned a nation of people and could never themselves escape the damnation of hell.

- ✓ He is not talking about criminals here.
- ✓ He is not talking about the worst of men in society.
- ✓ He is talking about their spiritual leaders.

This is how Jesus climaxes the curses against them.

## **Imminent condemnation.**

This is the climax of His sermon.

- His first point was a warning to the crowd against these leaders.
- His second was a cursing of the leaders themselves.
- Now comes a word of condemnation.

The condemnation is imminent.

Having given all these curses and all these warnings Jesus says there is a judgment coming and it's coming fast.

**V 34**, *Therefore, indeed, I send you prophets, wise men, and scribes: some of them you will kill and crucify, and some of them you will scourge in your synagogues and persecute from city to city,*

- Because of whom you are, a brood of poisonous deceivers, hypocrites, blind fools, blind guides, sons of hell,
- Because of what you have done,
- Because you have rejected the truth of God,
- Because you have rejected the righteous spokesman of God,
- Because you have rejected even the Son of God.
- Because of this because you fill up the cup of iniquity.

Christ is the One who is sending “I am sending you”

This is the consequence I am sending you.

We would think that Jesus would say I am sending you judgment, wrath, and vengeance.

But Jesus says that *I send you prophets, wise men, and scribes:*

- Prophets,
- Wise men and
- Scribes.

These are all Jewish terms.

These are titles that would be consistent with Jewish vocabulary.

Prophets, wise men, and scribes.

## Why is He sending more messengers?

- Prophets would be preachers.
- Wise men would be teachers.
- Scribes would be writers.

I am sending you preachers, teachers, and writers.

Jesus is saying I am not through.

You may have made a final rejection, but I am not through with you.

The Lord says, I am sending you these people, not so that you might have another chance to believe, but that you might have continued chances to reject so that you will pile upon yourself a greater weight of guilt, which deserves a severer judgment.

Very fearful thought!

But that's what Jesus is saying.

*Because when, I send you prophets, wise men, and scribes: some of them you will kill and crucify, and some of them you will scourge in your synagogues and persecute from city to city,*

I want you who are so guilty to be more guilty yet and to bear the full weight of your sin.

The reason Jesus talks about prophets, wise men, and scribes is because of the unique Jewishness of Matthew's gospel.

Matthew uses Jewish terms and titles, and it gives us that solidarity with the Old Testament murderers and persecutors of the righteous.

I am going to send you these people and I know what you are going to do.

You are not going to believe them as a nation, you leaders. You are not going to believe there would be a few who would, yes.

There would be some who would be converted. There were 3,000 on the day of Pentecost. Many thousand more after that. But you leaders and as a whole nation will not receive them.

But rather they will kill them and persecute them. Therefore, you will pile more guilt upon your head and be worthy of greater judgment.

Here God is talking in the person of Jesus Christ. God is a God of judgment and vengeance. We must not forget that. ***The purpose of sending the preachers is not for grace but for judgment.***

When you hear the message of Jesus Christ and you hear the gospel of Jesus Christ, it is a message unto salvation, or it is a message unto judgment.

- The more you hear it, the more it comes to you as a message of grace.
- The more you reject it, the more it piles upon you the guilt of judgment.

For the more you have, the more you are responsible for. To whom much is given much is required.

Better off only to have heard once than to have heard a multiplicity of times and continue to reject, you just pile on greater guilt.

**2 Corinthians 2:14-15**, *Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place. <sup>15</sup>For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing.*

Every time a preacher preaches the gospel, he is victorious. Every time the Word goes forth it accomplishes the purpose to which it was sent.

The purpose is not always salvation.

The purpose sometimes is compounded guilt.

### **Do you understand that?**

The purpose sometimes is to bring the grace of salvation to the heart, and God is glorified through His grace.

The purpose other times is to compound guilt, to bring judgment, and God is equally glorified through His judgment because God is as much a God of judgment.

God of grace and judgement.

**2 Corinthians 2:16**, *To the one we are the aroma of death leading to death, and to the other the aroma of life leading to life. And who is sufficient for these things?*

God is as much revealed in His glory in the devastation of judgment as He is in the expression of grace and salvation.

- ✓ God is not all love, grace, kindness, and mercy.
- ✓ God of holiness,
- ✓ God of justice,
- ✓ God of judgment,
- ✓ God of wrath,
- ✓ God of vengeance against evil.

If men choose that, God will be glorified in their condemnation as much as He is glorified in the conversion of those who believe. God will be glorified either way.

To the ones who are saved, it is a smell of life unto life. To the ones who perish, it is a smell of death unto death.

**2 Corinthians 2:17**, *For we are not, as so many, peddling the word of God; but as of sincerity, but as from God, we speak in the sight of God in Christ.*

We don't alter the message.

We give it as straight as it can be given.

We know that we triumph every time we give it because God is glorified.

- When some believe, God is glorified in His great grace.
- When some reject, God is glorified in His holy judgment against their rejection and their sin.

God must be glorified as much in this end as He is in this end, else He is not revealing Himself fully as God.

**Revelation 22:11**, *He who is unjust, let him be unjust still; he who is filthy, let him be filthy still; he who is righteous, let him <sup>be</sup> righteous still; he who is holy, let him be holy still."*

- If you are unjust and filthy, then let it be so forever. God will be glorified even in that act of judgment against your ungodliness.
- If you are righteous and godly, let it be forever. God will be glorified through that as well.

**Romans 9:21-23**, *Does not the potter have power over the clay, from the same lump to make one vessel for honour and another for dishonour? <sup>22</sup>What if God, wanting to show His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, <sup>23</sup>and that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had prepared beforehand for glory,*

The potter can do that. He can make one vessel to honour and another unto dishonour, that's the potter's choice.

If God wants to display His wrath and His power against sin on vessels of wrath fitted for destruction, so what?

**Doesn't God have a right to do that?**

He is God.

On the other hand, God will show the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy as well.

God must be seen in His wholeness.

God is as much glorified in His wrath against ungodliness as He is in His grace towards those who believe.

- ✓ God will send preachers,
- ✓ God will send teachers, and
- ✓ God's going to send writers.

Jesus says you are going to have them all.

But it isn't that you may be saved, it is that you will kill them, you will scourge them, and you will persecute them.

As a result of that, you will bring on yourselves the filling up of the cup of wrath and the blood of all the righteous.

Then God will judge you with severity. This way, the religious leaders would fill up the accumulated guilt from the history of the death of the righteous.

**V 34**, *some of them you will kill and crucify, and some of them you will scourge in your synagogues and persecute from city to city,*

Crucifixion Roman method.

Kill and stone refers to the Jewish method.

Crucifixion the Roman method of nailing them to a cross.

They crucified Jesus using the Romans as the executioners.

They stoned Stephen, and many others.

We don't know how we could count them all. History doesn't reveal all of them to us.

They brought very near to death by Scourging. They did that to Paul.

How many times was he beaten with rods and whips by the Jews.

The ones they didn't scourge, they pursued from city to city. The apostle Paul was pursued and chased everywhere.

They pursued Christians to punish them, to persecute them at

- Antioch,
- Pisidia,
- Iconium,
- Lystra,
- Thessalonica,
- Berea,
- Corinth,
- Jerusalem, and
- Caesarea.

It was a way of life for the early church, always running from the persecution of these false spiritual leaders of Israel who sought to stamp out the gospel of Christ.

The final answer of the religious leaders of Israel, which represents the mass of people, is we reject Jesus Christ, and we refuse His message.

Jesus says to them fill it up. Just to be sure you do, I am going to send more preachers, teachers, and writers.

You are going to fill it up by killing them.

The ones you can't kill, you are going to persecute.

Then you are going to fill that cup up so much that upon you.

**V 35**, *that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar.*

The whole thing is going to come apart. The dam is going to take only so much and it's going to break on you. The cup of wrath will be filled.

For the purpose that upon you may come the righteous bloodshed.

God's purpose is to let this generation fill up the final act of atrocity against the righteous by massacring the Saviour Himself and His followers. Then God's judgment will pour itself out.

It isn't that God wills those men be lost.

God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

However, that when men reject the Lord Jesus Christ and refuse to come to Him, it is when they do that, they bring upon themselves an outpouring of God's wrath.

The longer they have rejected and the more information they have that they have rejected, and the more lessons given to them from which they have not learned, the greater the guilt.

The people in Jesus' time have greater guilt than anyone that ever lived before them.

Their forefathers had the law of God, but they had the law of God and the Messiah. They had the teaching of the Old Testament prophets, John the Baptist, Jesus, and His apostles.

Not only that, but they should also have learned of God's judgment on past apostates and past murderers of the righteous. They should have learned from them not to do that.

They had accumulated revelation and lessons from history, all of which they rejected.

Therefore, their accumulative guilt surpasses that of any generation prior to them.

It all breaks on their heads.

**How can one generation be held responsible for all the righteous blood?**

Because of its constant rejection of full light, constant rejection of all the lessons of history.

We can see it as clearly in our own nation because we are in the very process right now of filling up the cup of God's wrath.

We have been doing it steadily. This generation alive today is more guilty of doing it than any in the past because we have the accumulated testimony of God's truth in this culture, and we also have the accumulated lessons of why we should not act against a holy God.

The more we accumulate that data, the more guilty we become. When it breaks, it will break on the generation that finally fills the cup to the brim.

One generation which duplicates the sins of past generations and rejects the lessons of past history and rejects the revelation of God that it has brings upon itself a more profound judgment.

Judgment is cumulative.

**V 35**, *that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar.*

When they persecuted righteous people and took their life, which, of course, is the greatest indicator of the rejection of God's truth.

All the worst of your evil manifest in the killing of righteous people, shedding their blood, it's all going to come to fill the cup and break on you.

They are going to be suffering the just punishment of all that blood from righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, son of Berechiah.

From A to Z, from the beginning of the Old Testament and end. **Genesis chapter 4**, the first murder of a righteous man.

**Who killed who?**

Cain killed Abel.

**Why did he kill Abel?**

Because he couldn't stand a righteous man.

If a society has the latitude to kill righteous people, it will do it because it can't tolerate that.

Cain could not tolerate the purity of Abel, so he murdered him. That was the first murder of a righteous man. He sweeps them all the way through their history because they were out of the loins of the Adamic family.

All the way through to the conclusion of the Old Testament era and the last Old Testament martyr, Zechariah, son of Berechiah, and they murdered him between the temple and the altar.

We don't have any problem with Abel. We know who he was. But they say Zechariah, son of Berechiah seems to be a mistake.

**2 Chronicles 24:20-22**, *Then the Spirit of God came upon Zechariah the son of Jehoiada the priest, who stood above the people, and said to them, "Thus says God: 'Why do you transgress the commandments of the Lord, so that you cannot prosper? Because you have forsaken the Lord, He also has forsaken you.' "* <sup>21</sup>*So they conspired against him, and at the command of the king they stoned him with stones in the court of the house of the Lord.* <sup>22</sup>*Thus Joash the king did not remember the kindness which Jehoiada his father had done to him, but killed his son; and as he died, he said, "The Lord look on it, and repay!"*

We find a man named Zechariah, the son of Jehoiada. Zechariah, the son of Jehoiada, was alive during the time of King Joash, which is about **800 B.C.** That's a long time before the end of the Old Testament era.

Zechariah, son of Jehoiada, was stoned to death in the temple court. He was stoned to death by his countrymen, the Jews, in the temple court.

The reason was because Joash, the king, told them to stone him to death because he didn't like the fact that he was rebuking idolatry.

This is another illustration. Zechariah, son of Jehoiada, around 800 B.C. spoke against the idolatry of Israel. The king didn't like it, so he told the people to stone him to death. They stoned him to death in the temple.

Many people say that Jesus had in mind, Zechariah, son of Berechiah, only Jesus muffed up his father's name, and it's really Zechariah, son of Jehoiada.

Critics want to use this passage to indicate to us that not only can we not always trust the Bible, but we can't even always trust Jesus who may be prone to err from time to time.

### **Who is Zechariah, son of Berechiah?**

If this was a name pulled out of the air, if we didn't know a Zechariah, son of Berechiah. Maybe would say or a little more prone to say that He made a mistake.

But there is in the Bible a Zechariah, son of Berechiah.

The Zechariah that wrote the prophecy Zechariah.

**Zechariah 1:1**, *In the eighth month of the second year of Darius, the word of the Lord came to Zechariah the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo the prophet, saying,*

There are **27 Zechariahs** in the Bible.

If there were 27 Zechariahs named in the Bible, God only knows how many thousands of Zechariahs there must have been.

It shouldn't be too startling to us that in **800 B.C.**, a Zechariah, son of Jehoiada, was murdered for being righteous, and later, another man who happened to have the same name, Zechariah, son of Berechiah, was also murdered for righteousness when Jesus says in this passage that all through history, they have been killing the righteous.

If Zechariah is a common name, why does that bother us?  
They continually killed the messengers of God.

Jesus pointed that out in the parable about the man who sent back his servants to the vineyard and they kept killing his servants.

**Matthew 21:34-38**, *Now when vintage-time drew near, he sent his servants to the vinedressers, that they might receive its fruit. <sup>35</sup>And the vinedressers took his servants, beat one, killed one, and stoned another. <sup>36</sup>Again he sent other servants, more*

*than the first, and they did likewise to them. <sup>37</sup>Then last of all he sent his son to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.'<sup>38</sup> But when the vinedressers saw the son, they said among themselves, 'This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and seize his inheritance.'<sup>39</sup> So they took him and cast him out of the vineyard and killed him.*

They probably killed a lot of Zechariahs. So, we aren't startled by that.

Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, none other than the prophet, Zechariah, who lived way down to the end of the Old Testament era in **480 B.C.**, right at the end of the era.

- What Jesus is saying the first martyr of righteousness in that Old Testament era is Abel.
- The last martyr of righteousness in that Old Testament era was Zechariah, son of Berechiah.

We didn't know this until Jesus said it, but they killed him between the temple and the altar. It seemed to be that in the temple was a familiar place for them to murder people.

Don't be shocked, they tried to kill Paul there. Read **Acts 21**.

That may have been a place where they killed a lot of righteous people because that's where the focus came clear.

We have unrighteous people running the place, and a righteous person who confronts them, that would be the place where they might kill.

Think of the life of Christ.

**How many times did He go into the temple when they would have wanted to kill Him if they could have?**

We are not surprised by that.

Jesus did not make a mistake.

From Abel to Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, and Jesus is telling us that He, too, died a martyr like so many others because He spoke the truth of God.

Would you notice that when He says “whom you slew,” some of them would have said, “Wait a minute, we weren’t there. We didn’t do that.”

But He sees the nation as one guilty nation, cumulatively filling up the cup through many generations, and the guilt of rejection and rebellion is increased by that accumulation of previous warnings. The accumulation of previous messages and preachings from the prophets and writings from the scribes. They had so much information, they had so much knowledge, they were filling up the same cup to its brim.

The bloody flow of murdered martyrs from Abel to Zechariah, He says you are guilty of it all. I see you as one with your whole nation.

You are guilty, as guilty as Cain.

You are guilty, as guilty as those who slew Zechariah.

Everybody in between those two.

You have accumulated all that guilt.

### **What's going to happen?**

*V 36, Assuredly, I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation.*

All these guilt.

All this guilt for righteous blood is going to break on your heads.

In **Revelation 17** when John sees the vision of the final world false church, the harlot, Mystery Babylon, the great prostitute, the false religious system of the tribulation time.

John says she was drunk with the blood of all the martyrs. It's as if that false system, too, accumulates the guilt of all the slaying of the righteous there.

Jesus tells them that you are guilty of it all, and because the guilt is going to come down on top of you. It's all going to break on you. This generation.

## **What did Jesus mean?**

This generation.

This Jewish group of people.

This nation at this time and this place in history, you fill the cup up when you kill the Savior and His apostles.

You have filled it up, that's it.

God says, through Christ, it's going to break on you.

It did.

The Lord was crucified as we shall see a few days later. It wasn't but a few years after that in, **70 A.D.**, that the judgment of God came. That judgment physically that came in 70 A.D. against the nation Israel was only a symbol of the eternal damnation that came against those Christ rejecters.

Judgment that fell on them in 70 A.D. is still being met out against them and will be until the day comes when they turn and see the Messiah for who He is.

But the judgment came in 70 A.D., and it was a holocaust.

**Luke 21:22**, *For these are the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled.*

If Christ was crucified in **33 A.D.**, in **66 A.D.**, the revolution broke out against Rome. They took as much as they could take of Roman oppression.

The Zealots had been running around. Zealots were a political party that were aggressively anti-Roman. They went around with daggers in their cloaks, and they would stab Roman soldiers. They were the terrorists of the time.

They ran around assassinating, fomenting problems and came out of the hills in little raids. Finally, around 66 A.D., the thing flourished and broke into an open revolt.

**May 66 A.D.** Rome struck back, and they started a bloody battle in Galilee and started slaughtering the Jews in the north in Galilee.

Finally, Titus came down to the city of Jerusalem with an army in excess of **80,000** men.

**Josephus, the great Jewish historian,** was there and has written the full record of it, so we know what happened.

Josephus fills in all kinds of information for us. The 80,000 men came in, they got all around the city, the Jews laughed at them, mocked them, refused to surrender, and the siege broke out and the war broke out. It's beyond description.

The Romans, who were outside the city, had the Jews captive in the city. Any Jew outside was immediately killed. In fact, they put crosses up all around the city so Jews could look out

of the city and see crucified Jews everywhere. When they caught a Jew, they crucified him outside the city.

They built a mound outside the city so that the Jews could not escape, and that's a very common Roman technique.

The Roman mound that was put around that so that it would be a place the soldiers could entrench themselves and people could not escape in leaving the city. They deluded all the hillsides of the trees to make war machines. They had these create siege machines that would catapult 600-pound boulders over the walls and crush the buildings and the people inside.

They built battering rams.

They built weapons out of the woods and what the Jews did was set all that on fire.

Every time the Jews burned that up, they took more trees and built more weapons. For months, they were stripping the forest as they built machines, and the Jews burned them up because they were made of wood.

Inside the city, there were all kinds of problems going on. There was even an internal revolution among the Jews, and they were killing each other. The Romans sealed off the city eventually and starvation and famine began to work its terrible work.

An unbearable stench began to rise from within the city because of the death. They threw at least 100,000 bodies according to Josephus, out over the wall just to get rid of the decay and the stink, and so the outer part of Jerusalem was just covered with dead bodies decaying. It's an unbelievable thing.

Finally, the temple was destroyed by fire, and in **August of 70 A.D.**, the Roman soldiers went into the temple location and lifted their own banners in the very holy place and sacrificed to their false Gods.

**Caesar** then ordered that the whole city of Jerusalem be razed to the ground, and it was completely leveled.

All that was left was a small part of the Western Wall. There were, according to Josephus, **1,100,000 dead Jews, 100,000** Jews were taken as **prisoners**.

Out of one city gate, they hauled over **115,000 corpses** of Jews. They obliterated them.

God said the cup is full, that's it.

God's Spirit does not always strive with man.

So, the word of judgment was imminent condemnation, and it came, and it came fast.

This is how God feels about sin.

This is how God feels about the rejection of His truth and His Son.