

I. Read Luke 13:31-35

- A. Why do you suppose the Pharisees tried to warn Jesus?

It may be that these were Pharisees that were friendly to Jesus and His ministry. (See John 3:1-2.) It could also be that these men were merely trying to manipulate Jesus to return to Judea where they thought they had more power to control and oppose Him. In either case, whether well-meaning or malevolent, their warning indicates that they did not know the power and authority Jesus had as the Son of God.

Read John 10:18; 19:11. Could anyone have really threatened Jesus' life if He had not allowed it? **Jesus voluntarily gave His life for sinners. Even as He submitted to torture and crucifixion, He retained His power and authority, though some make the point that He appeared to *lay it aside* temporarily. Yet, it is important to note that He never ceased to be God, even in His obedience and humility.**

- B. In verse 32, Jesus refers to Herod as "that fox." During most of Jesus' public ministry, He appears to be *apolitical*. However, His description of Herod is political in that He makes a statement about Herod's immoral and wicked ways (fox is a pejorative term). Should this have any impact on our approach to living out our Christian faith?

It demonstrates that Jesus was aware of what was going on in the political realm, even to the point of judging Herod's character. It also points to the fact that judging character in our leaders is quite appropriate. That is what Jesus was doing when He called Herod a "fox." Further, He was rejecting the notion that political truth and spiritual truth were unrelated. He instructed the Pharisees to "go, tell that fox" (a political leader) about spiritual things. The pietism of many evangelicals militates against appropriate involvement in politics.

(Read John 18:36-37.) In view of Jesus' response to Pilate in John 18, is it appropriate to separate one's spiritual life completely from one's life in this world?

No. Jesus was speaking of a higher truth when He spoke of an *otherworldly* kingdom. Actually, all of creation belonged to Him, yet He would delay His claim to the kingdoms of this earth until His ascension and especially His Second Coming. He is alluding to the purpose and mission for which He came to earth (Mark 10:45) during His incarnation, and should not be understood to be establishing an artificial wall separating the physical from the spiritual world. In other words, the purpose of Jesus' earthly incarnation was to redeem His people, not to redeem political systems. It is inappropriate for Christians to draw false dichotomies between the temporal and the spiritual.

- C. In Luke 13:32, Jesus speaks of His "goal" (NAS). What was His "goal?"
The fulfillment of the gospel promised immediately after the Fall — His death, burial and resurrection. This took precedence over any other work (even good works) that He might have pursued.
- D. Why did Jesus speak of Jerusalem as the place that He must go to fulfill His "goal?"
It is in Jerusalem that God had promised through the prophets that Christ, the Messiah, would redeem His people.
- E. In what other way might Jerusalem be viewed as significant in considering verse 34?
In God's plan, Jerusalem, as the focal point of Israel, would reject the true Messiah (Jesus) and, as a consequence, the gospel would be taken to the Gentile nations. Thus, Jesus is making an eschatological reference to God's plan of redemption and Israel's stubborn refusal to believe.

- F. How did Jesus feel about the Jews' rejection of Him?
It broke His heart to have His own people reject Him.

Was Israel's rejection of Christ a surprise to God? (Read Romans 9:30-32; Galatians 3:6-9.)
No, of course not. God is omniscient and sovereign.

Did God ever change His plan concerning Israel or the way of salvation?
No, God is immutable — unchanging. Any Scriptures which refer to God *repenting or changing His mind* are either references to His changed *response* (which would have been foreseen by Him) to man's disobedience or repentance, or reflect what is called *anthropomorphism* — projecting human characteristics upon God in order to explain something about God.

Comment on the following statements:

- * When Obama was elected President, the kingdom of God was doomed!
This is absurd. God's kingdom does not depend on who occupies the White House, no matter how confused and wicked he might be!
- * Christians should stay out of politics!
It has been said that "All that is necessary for evil men to thrive is for good men to do nothing!" Christians must promote the truth and be good citizens — both of heaven and our earthly kingdom.
- * God has changed His plan of salvation each time man fails the tests He presents him. These changes are called dispensations.
"Great is Thy faithfulness, O God My Father! There is no shadow of turning with Thee; Thou changest not, Thy compassions they fail not: As Thou hast been, Thou forever wilt be." (From the hymn "Great Is Thy Faithfulness") (Numbers 23:19; Malachi 3:6; 1 Samuel 15:29.)
- * It is the Jews that are God's chosen people, and they are saved in a different way than Gentiles. Gentiles are saved by the gospel.
There is but one way of salvation for all men (John 14:6). This was true in the Old Testament and it is true in the New Testament. In the Old Testament, Jews were saved by faith in the Messiah who *would come* — in the New Testament, all are saved by the Messiah who *has come* (Galatians 3:27-29).
- * The highest calling from God is to serve Him full-time as a preacher or missionary!
All callings are from God and are high callings, whether one is working as a carpenter, teacher, doctor or housewife. The important thing is to view our work and life as a divine calling and to seek to fully utilize our gifts and abilities. Further, each believer should do the very best he or she can with what God has given him/her. Finally, each believer should live one's life to God's glory. The notion of "full-time ministry" is sub-biblical since all Christians are called to serve full-time. That wrong notion comes from an arbitrary separation of life into compartments, such as the physical, involving work, business, politics, etc., and the spiritual, involving prayer, church, witnessing, etc. *Whatsoever you do, do to the glory of God!*