



**Luke 13:31-33**  
***God is in Control***

31 On that very day some Pharisees came, saying to Him, "Get out and depart from here, for Herod wants to kill You."

32 And He said to them, "Go, tell that fox, 'Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I shall be perfected.'

33 "Nevertheless I must journey today, tomorrow, and the day following; for it cannot be that a prophet should perish outside of Jerusalem.

Isn't it odd how members of the very group that had for so long been opposing Christ and His ministry would all of a sudden become concerned about his welfare? Two chapters ago in Luke 11:54, we read that the Pharisees were ***"lying in wait for Him, and seeking to catch Him in something He might say, that they might accuse Him"*** and now they are warning Jesus to flee so that Herod would not kill him.

You would think that having Herod kill Jesus would be exactly the kind of neat solution the Pharisees might look for. It would save them the trouble of having to trump up a blasphemy charge against Jesus, and if the hated Tetrarch Herod Antipas killed Jesus, just as he had earlier killed John the Baptist then they could say to the people, ***"Look we didn't kill this good teacher, it was that awful fellow Herod."*** They could even possibly have used the execution of Jesus by Rome's puppet ruler to advance the end of Jewish nationalism.

So why would they save the life of a man whom they viewed as nothing but a thorn in their side? Well I suspect that their warning was like Iago telling Othello about Desdemona's supposed infidelity, or if you want a more modern example, Al Qaeda terrorists advising Americans on how they might be safest. There is no way to be absolutely certain, but it seems very likely that they were only warning Jesus because they had an ulterior motive for doing so. Regardless they wanted Jesus to leave the lands controlled by Herod – Galilee and Perea.

**Why might they want that?** Well, if you rule out the statistically tiny possibility that they really did suddenly love this fellow who had called them Hypocrites full of greed and wickedness stronger reasons immediately present themselves:

Galilee was the center of Jesus' popularity. It was around the sea of Galilee that Jesus had been teaching and healing for the longest. It was far from the seat of the Pharisees power, Jerusalem, where all their schools and most notable teachers were located. They had little ability to get a Jesus directly in Galilee and were probably afraid of what the people might do if they tried.

***But if they could get Jesus to leave Galilee, where else could Jesus go but south to Judea?*** They must have figured, no Jewish Rabbi would go North or East into the Gentile lands or South West into Samaria. Jesus had to either flee Palestine entirely – which would have made them happy as well – or go to the South East to Judea. And in Judea the Pharisees had powerful friends and allies, and in the capital Jerusalem – even better – they had men on the Sanhedrin, the ruling counsel of the Jews. Get him there and they probably felt certain they could trap him, and all of His troublemaking would stop.

So they were probably only too eager to relay this warning. Now, it is possible that Herod did want to arrest Jesus. You remember we read in Luke 9:7-9: **7 Now Herod the tetrarch heard of all that was done by Him; and he was perplexed, because it was said by some that John had risen from the dead, 8 and by some that Elijah had appeared, and by others that one of the old prophets had risen again. 9 Herod said, "John I have beheaded, but who is this of whom I hear such things?" So he sought to see Him.**

But it is also possible that Herod just didn't want the potential leader of a popular revolt in his territory, And not wanting to have the blood of another popular prophet on his hands, Herod decided he would send the warning himself to get Jesus out of his land.

{Possible example}

But neither the Pharisees, nor Herod probably expected the answer Jesus gave to the warning. Rather than gathering his belonging together and sprinting for the border, Jesus says to them **"Go, tell that fox, 'Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I shall be perfected.' 'Nevertheless I must journey today, tomorrow, and the day following; for it cannot be that a prophet should perish outside of Jerusalem."**

**Why did Jesus call Herod a "Fox?"** Well to indicate that he knew he was a low and cunning man. A great king is sometimes compared with a Lion; for instance Jesus, the greatest King, the King of Kings, is the **Lion of the Tribe of Judah**. Herod is no great ruler. He is servile and base, a hireling of the Romans, despised and feared by those he ruled. Herod is not a lion only a fox ruling by trickery and deceit.

Jesus knew saw through their plans immediately and instead of being scared, Christ makes 3 simple but powerful declarations.

1) Far from being a threat to Herod's power he reminds the Tetrarch that He is doing good to Herod's subjects, healing and casting out demons. But why didn't Jesus also tell Herod he was saving souls by preaching the good news? I mean, he told his Apostles in Luke 4:43 that it was for the purpose of preaching that he had been sent. Reminding a reprobate like Herod that he was preaching the good news would have fallen on entirely deaf ears, he might as well have tried telling oysters about quantum physics.

You ever notice that whenever the world wants to say something nice about the church, they always frame it in terms of charity or service. They never compliment the church for doing what it was commissioned to do – preach the word! To the worldling the gospel is either gobbledygook or just plain nasty – foolishness or a stumblingblock as Paul put it. Bible thumping, that's evil, but handing out food, that's good. The sad thing of course is that only preaching the gospel does anyone any eternal good. What good is it if all you are doing is sending men to judgment and damnation with a full stomach?

2) Jesus states simply that he will continue his ministry today and tomorrow. Now he didn't mean for only two more days, but rather that he will continue his ministry for a little while yet and that there is nothing men can do, be they religious authorities like the Pharisees, or civil authorities like Herod to stop Him. Until the time that God had appointed for Christ to go up to Jerusalem to die come to pass, they could not take Him and kill Him. We see that point beautifully illustrated in Luke 4:28-30 where

after Jesus preached in the synagogue in Nazareth the people were so angry they grabbed him and tried to throw him over a cliff. But we read:

***Luke 4:30 Then passing through the midst of them, He went His way.***

No man could take the life of the Lord of Glory – which brings us to his next point.

3) Jesus tells them that in the fullness of time He will indeed go where they want Him to, He will go to Jerusalem, and there He will die. They will not take His life, He will lay it down because that is the will of the father. ***Turn in your bibles to John 10:14***

***John 10:14 "I am the good shepherd; and I know My sheep, and am known by My own.***

***15 "As the Father knows Me, even so I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep.***

***16 "And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd.***

***17 "Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again.***

***18 "No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father."***

***Jesus is actually preaching the gospel when he answers the Pharisees.*** This is all going to happen not according to the wicked plans of the Pharisees or the Herodians but according to the design and purpose of the Lord. The work of Jesus will be perfected. The Greek word the NKJV translates "be perfected" in verse 32 is actually *teleiow*. It means to finish, to bring to an end, to perfect. That word is intimately related to the last word Jesus uttered on the cross: *τετέλεστα* – it is finished – it is completed.

Jesus is traveling to Jerusalem to complete the work that the Father gave him, to redeem all his sheep. To lay down his life a ransom for many, and on the third day, to take it up again.

Everything that the Pharisees and Herodians and Saducees are doing will ultimately be used to bring about that end. The things they mean for evil, to kill Jesus, the Messiah, the son of man, God means for good. God is in control now and always, He will overrule all of their sinful plans, and use the greatest of all evils, to bring about the greatest of all good – the redemption of sinners. Which is Peter can preach in his Pentecost Sermon in Acts 2:22 -

***Acts 2:22 " Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know --***

***23 "Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death;***

***24 "whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it.***

So let me turn to application:

**1) *How is it that Christians can read these words of Jesus and still be afraid of men and their plans?***

As we get nearer to the election, I've seen Christians getting almost hysterical. "If the wrong man is elected it's the end of everything, the kingdom will grind to a halt, the barbarians will sack the church and the gospel will somehow fail" but "if the right man is elected the kingdom will advance, righteousness will flourish, the gospel will triumph." These two possible futures are hanging in the balance *and it all depends on your vote!*

You know there were Christians who believed that the success of the gospel depended on the continued survival and flourishing of their nation and that if the barbarians of their age triumphed, all would be lost. Those Christians were called *Romans*. Well you know what? The Barbarians got the upper hand, Rome fell. And yet the gospel continued to advance. None of God's redemptive purposes were thwarted.

You know what Pelagianism is? It's a false theology that teaches that men save themselves and that God is powerless to determine whether or not you will end up in heaven or hell. The way we act sometimes, you'd think *we* were Pelagians.

***DO YOU REALLY THINK THAT THE GOD*** who ordered over 3000 years of biblical history to make sure that at exactly the right time in history, Jesus was born in Bethlehem and that he would go to Jerusalem and die on a Cross, and Rise Again and that there would be a common language invented by Alexander the Great for his gospel to be written in so it could be read by all the Mediterranean world and roads provided by Rome so that His disciples could spread that gospel and so on, would somehow become powerless to make sure that the events in your life wouldn't all work for your good?

God is in heaven and regardless of what happens on Tuesday, or in America, or a hundred years from now when we are all dead and gone on to our final judgement, He will still be in control. Jesus has promised that when the last martyred has been gathered in He will return, and there is not one single promise that Jesus has made that He will not make good.

So even though the Devil may hatch plans to torment God's servants and hopes to send God's ministers scurrying for the hills. He will never triumph, in fact his plans will ultimately work against to achieve God's ends. Have faith and do not fear little flock. Put your trust in the Christ who is working all things out for good.

It is precisely because we know that to be true, that we can know our salvation is sure:

*Romans 8:28 And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.*

*29 For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.*

*30 Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.*

*31 What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?*

*32 He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?*

*33 Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies.*

*34 Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.*

*35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?*

*36 As it is written: "For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter."*

*37 Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.*

*38 For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come,*

*39 nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*