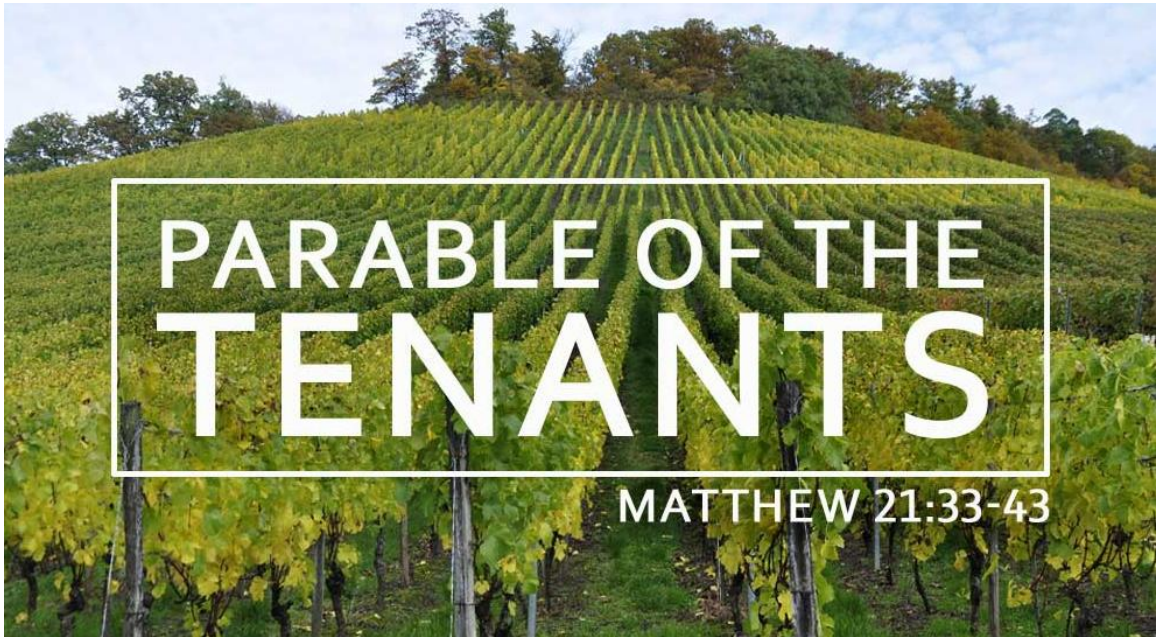


Nineteenth Sunday After Pentecost



October 4, 2026 10:30 AM

Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church



4536 Hickory Lincolnton Highway, Newton, North Carolina 28658

Church Office: (704) 462-1035 email: gracenalcnewton@aol.com

www.gracelutheran-newton.org

Rev. Doug Hefner cell: (980) 234-8848 email: pastorhefner@aol.com

Sandi Tallant – Organist Todd Childers – Administrative Assistant

Office Hours: Monday - Thursday 8am to 12pm

WELCOME TO ALL WHO WORSHIP at Grace Church this morning as we gather to worship the Father, + Son and Holy Spirit in truth. As you entered the sanctuary today, you received this bulletin containing the order for worship and announcements. Please also notice the Prayer List where you will find a listing of all the known prayer concerns. You are invited to use this as a guide for your personal prayers throughout the coming week. If you need information about our congregation or if you'd like to update your information, make sure to fill out the yellow Worship Today Form and place it in the offering plate at the time of the offering. If you have a prayer concern, indicate that on your Worship Today Form at the bottom or on the reverse side. If you are seeking a Church Home or would like more information about Grace, please contact Pastor Doug (980) 234-8848.

**Stand* *Hymnals in Pew Rack:* *LBW = Green* *WOV = Blue* *TCH = Burgundy*

PRELUDE *Please observe silence for meditation and prayer.*

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

*** BRIEF ORDER OF CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

The sign of the cross may be made by all in remembrance of their Baptism.

P: In the name of the Father, and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

P: Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

C: Amen.

P: If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. But if we confess our sins, God who is faithful and just will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (*1John1:9*) In the presence of God, who sees our hearts and our minds, who forgives all our sins, whose mercy endures forever, let us confess our sin.

Silence is kept for reflection and confession of our sins before God and one another.

P: Most merciful God,

C: we confess that we are in bondage to sin and cannot free ourselves.

We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name. Amen

P: In the mercy of almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for us, and for his sake God forgives us all our sins. As a called and ordained minister of the Church of Christ, and by his authority, I therefore declare to you the entire forgiveness of all your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

* **GATHERING HYMN** “God, Who Stretched The Spangled Heavens” **LBW 463**

* **GREETING**

P: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **C: And also with you.**

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P: Heavenly Father, in Holy Baptism you have grafted us onto the vine that is Christ and given us a share of his inheritance that we might know the power of his resurrection. Guide us by your Holy Spirit that we might live in newness of life; through Jesus Christ, our Lord.**C: Amen.**

The congregation may be seated.

FIRST READING: Isaiah 5: 1-7

¹Let me sing for my beloved my love song concerning his vineyard: My beloved had a vineyard on a very fertile hill. ²He dug it and cleared it of stones, and planted it with choice vines; he built a watchtower in the midst of it, and hewed out a wine vat in it; and he looked for it to yield grapes, but it yielded wild grapes. ³And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah, judge between me and my vineyard. ⁴What more was there to do for my vineyard, that I have not done in it? When I looked for it to yield grapes, why did it yield wild grapes? ⁵And now I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard. I will remove its hedge, and it shall be devoured; I will break down its wall, and it shall be trampled down. ⁶I will make it a waste; it shall not be pruned or hoed, and briers and thorns shall grow up; I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it. ⁷For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah are his pleasant planting; and he looked for justice, but behold, bloodshed; for righteousness, but behold, an outcry!

L: The Word of the Lord. **C: Thanks be to God**

PSALM 80: 7-19

⁷Restore us, O God of hosts; let your face shine, that we may be saved!

⁸**You brought a vine out of Egypt; you drove out the nations and planted it.**

⁹You cleared the ground for it; it took deep root and filled the land.

¹⁰The mountains were covered with its shade, the mighty cedars with its branches.

¹¹It sent out its branches to the sea and its shoots to the River.

¹²Why then have you broken down its walls, so that all who pass along the way pluck its fruit?

¹³The boar from the forest ravages it, and all that move in the field feed on it.

¹⁴Turn again, O God of hosts! Look down from heaven, and see; have regard for this vine,

¹⁵the stock that your right hand planted, and for the son whom you made strong for yourself.

¹⁶They have burned it with fire; they have cut it down; may they perish at the rebuke of your face!

¹⁷But let your hand be on the man of your right hand, the son of man whom you have made strong for yourself!

¹⁸Then we shall not turn back from you; give us life, and we will call upon your name!

¹⁹Restore us, O Lord God of hosts! Let your face shine, that we may be saved!

SECOND READING: Philippians 3: 4b-14

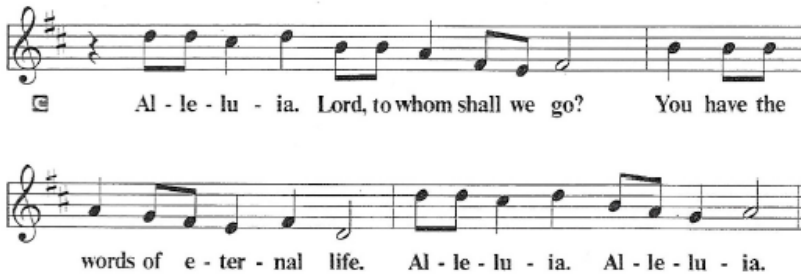
^{4b}If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more: ⁵circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; ⁶as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless. ⁷But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. ⁸Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ ⁹and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith — ¹⁰that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, ¹¹that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead. ¹²Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. ¹³Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, ¹⁴I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

L: The Word of the Lord. C: Thanks be to God

The congregation is invited to stand.

*** GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

“Alleluia, Lord to Whom Shall We Go”



***GOSPEL: Matthew 21: 33-46**

P: The holy gospel according to St. Matthew. C: **Glory to you, O Lord.**

³³{Jesus said to the chief priests and elders of the people,} “Hear another parable. There was a master of a house who planted a vineyard and put a fence around it and dug a winepress in it and built a tower and leased it to tenants, and went into another country. ³⁴When the season for fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the tenants to get his fruit. ³⁵And the tenants took his servants and beat one, killed another, and stoned another. ³⁶Again he sent other servants, more than the first. And they did the same to them. ³⁷Finally he sent his son to them, saying, ‘They will respect my son.’ ³⁸But when the tenants saw the son, they said to themselves, ‘This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and have his inheritance.’ ³⁹And they took him and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. ⁴⁰When therefore the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?” ⁴¹They said to him, “He will put those wretches to a miserable death and let out the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the fruits in their seasons.” ⁴²Jesus said to them, “Have you never read in the Scriptures: ‘The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; this was the Lord’s doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes’? ⁴³Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people producing its fruits. ⁴⁴And the one who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; and when it falls on anyone, it will crush him.” ⁴⁵When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his parables, they perceived that he was speaking about them. ⁴⁶And although they were seeking to arrest him, they feared the crowds, because they held him to be a prophet.

L: The Gospel of the Lord. C: **Praise to You O Christ!**
The congregation may be seated.

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

SERMON

JOY & GRATITUDE

Today, Your Church is Hosting a Food For The Poor Clergy Speaker

We are thrilled and grateful your church has chosen a clergy speaker to share the gospel with you today. We hope the clergy speaker you hear today will inspire you and help you in your faith journey.

Founded in 1982, Food For The Poor works to end the suffering of impoverished children and families in the Caribbean and Latin America.



FOOD FOR
THE POOR

www.FoodForThePoor.org/churchalliances



*"Whatever you did
for one of the least
of these brothers
and sisters of Mine,
you did for Me."
(Matthew 25:40, NIV)*

"What We Do Matters!"

Pastor Robert Lee Berger

***HYMN OF THE DAY**

"We Give Thee But Thine Own"

LBW 410

***THE APOSTLES' CREED**

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.

He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary.

He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried.

He descended into hell.

On the third day he rose again.

He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

***PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

Response at the end of each petition. P: Lord in your mercy, C: Hear our prayer.

***SHARING THE PEACE OF CHRIST**

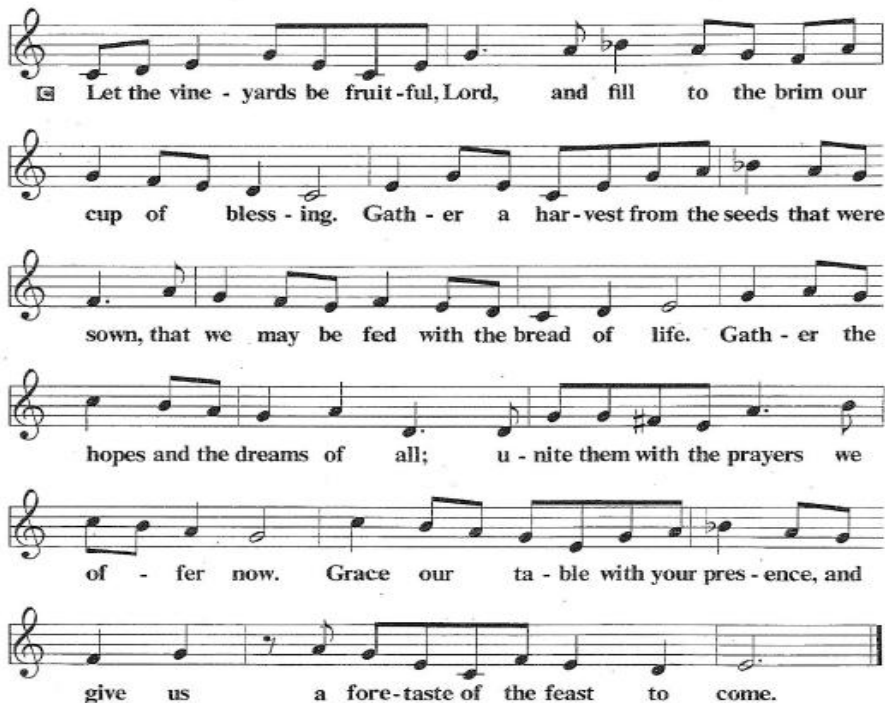
P: The peace of Christ be with you always. C: And also with you.

Worshippers may greet one another with "the Peace of Christ."

The assembly may be seated.

*** OFFERING In response to God's blessings, we offer our tithes to the Lord** **HOLY COMMUNION – MEAL OF GRACE**

*** OFFERTORY Let the Vineyards**



Let the vine - yards be fruit - ful, Lord, and fill to the brim our
cup of bless - ing. Gath - er a har - vest from the seeds that were
sown, that we may be fed with the bread of life. Gath - er the
hopes and the dreams of all; u - nite them with the prayers we
of - fer now. Grace our ta - ble with your pres - ence, and
give us a fore - taste of the feast to come.

*** OFFERTORY PRAYER**

P: Gracious God, in Your great love you invite us to be stewards of the vineyard of your love and blessing in Christ! Today we bring you our gifts — not only our time, talents, and treasures, but also our commitment to be faithful tenants of your kingdom. Use us and our gifts to extend your love, heal the hurting, provide food for the hungry, and to proclaim the

good news; we pray in the powerful and precious name of Jesus, who is the Bread of Life, given, broken and poured out for the world. **C: Amen.**

***DIALOGUE AND PREFACE**

P: The Lord be with you. **C: And also with you.**

P: Lift up your hearts. **C: We lift them to the Lord.**

P: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. **C: It is right to give him thanks and praise.**

*** WORDS OF INSTITUTION**

*** LORD'S PRAYER**

*** INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

P: The Gifts of God for the People of God. **C: Thanks be to God!**

The assembly may be seated.

All are invited to receive Holy Communion.

COMMUNION SONG Lamb of God



*** COMMUNION BLESSING AND PRAYER**

P: God of grace and mercy, in this meal of grace you have nourished us once again with the love of Christ's presence. Fed and forgiven, bless us to be faithful stewards of your grace and fruitful servants in your kingdom as we give you our thanks and praise; we pray in the name of Christ, our cornerstone and sure foundation. **C: Amen.**

*** BLESSING**

The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord's face shine upon you and be gracious to you. The Lord look upon you with favor and + give you peace. Amen.

***SENDING HYMN**

“On Our Way Rejoicing ”

LBW 260

***DISMISSAL**

P: As faithful and fruitful stewards of the grace and gifts of God, let us go in peace and joy to love God, our neighbors near and far, and ourselves! **C: Thanks be to God!**

PASTOR BERGER

Today we welcome Pastor Robert Lee Berger who will speak with us in Sunday School (9:30am) and preach in worship about praying for and providing direct relief to the poor throughout Latin America and the Caribbean through Food for the Poor.

Pastor Berger will share a personal witness about Food For The Poor's mission to care for the destitute as a means of living out the Gospel mandate to love one another.

The Reverend Robert Lee Berger was ordained June 15, 1969 in St. Paul Lutheran Church, Reading, Ohio. Since August 2011, after more than 40 years serving in ELCA parishes in Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Florida, he has been privileged to be a speaker for Food For The Poor.

Pastor Bob lives in Orange City, Florida, with his wife Connie. They have two grown and married daughters, one who lives in Florida and the other, Brynn, lives in Spartanburg, SC, with her husband, Martin Richter, who is the head basketball coach at Upstate South Carolina. They also have seven marvelous grandchildren (ages 5 to 26).

Please join me in welcoming Pastor Berger.

ALTAR FLOWERS are given to the Glory of God and in memory of Pate and Bobbie Brendle by David and Belinda Wilfong.



In the Grace Church Family:

Jeffrey Bivens, Rick & Cindy Bivens, Pat Dietz, Allen and Kay Hatchett, Lorene Heavner, Larry & Brenda Jarrett, Martha Johnson, Faye Lane, Phil & Malinda Leatherman, Betty Matheson, Joe Momier, Jane Moss, Christine Norman, Michael Norman, Tricia and Dan Panek, Mike, Debi & Stephen Pisko, Alice Parris, Todd Setzer, Ethan Starnes, Sandi Tallant, Libby Travis, Shirley Warlick, Ken Welch, Scott & Carolyn Whisnant, Jack Wilfong, and Nancy Willis.

Nursing Home: Juanita Haas (Trinity Village), Ted Whisnant (Trinity Village), Helen Smith is at Frye Hospital and will be returning Trinity Ridge.

Friends and Relatives in our Prayers: Pray for Peace in Israel and the World, New Covenant Lutheran Mission Church, Ashlee Bumgardner, Danelle Bumgardner, Travis Bumgardner, Jessica Cassels, Clinton Childers, Evelyn Childers, Marilyn Childers, Tucker Duncan, Alan Fulbright, Charlene Kistler, family of James McDaniel, Ryan McMullen & family & shift, Randy & Rita Neill, Anita Sabino, and Scott Speagle. Prayers for world peace and for our church, the United States of America, and especially the families of those who have given their lives in the service of our country and those who continue to protect our freedoms and for all members of our Armed Forces.

COMING UP AT GRACE THIS WEEK

Today: Nineteenth Sunday After Pentecost

9:30am – Sunday School 10:30am - Worship Celebration

3:00pm - Catawba County Hunger Walk - Downtown Newton

Wednesday

12:00pm - Fred T. Foard Seniors Luncheon at Sardis Lutheran Church

6:30pm – Evening Vespers Service

Saturday 9:00pm - Grace Prayer Breakfast at Four Peas in a Pod in Conover

HAPPY OCTOBER BIRTHDAY TO:

10/1	Pastor Doug Hefner	10/3	Juanita Haas	10/7	Debra Hefner
10/9	Don Jarrett	10/9	Jason Yoder	10/10	Joy Heavner
10/13	Todd Childers	10/25	Matt Speagle	10/28	Todd Setzer

UPCOMING EVENTS

+Sun., Oct. 11: The Four Walls Bluegrass Band Concert 5:00 pm, BBQ dinner to follow.

+Sat., Oct. 17: Carolinas Lutheran Women 16th Annual Convocation at Faith Lutheran Church - Salisbury. Registration at 8:30am. Program from 9:00am to 2:00pm.

+Wed., Oct. 21: Grace Senior Luncheon – 12:00pm

+Sun., Oct. 25: Reformation Sunday Service at 10:30am

+Sat., Oct. 31: Grace Fall Festival and Trunk or Treat 5pm:7pm

GIVING AND ATTENDANCE FOR LAST SUNDAY

	Offering		Attendance	
Date	Total Receipts	General Fund	Worship	Sunday School
10/27/2026	\$1,458	\$1,440	30	10

KNOW YOUR CHURCH SURVEY

Know Your Church Survey Link <https://churchhealthreport.com/survey/?s=YQ3U7AB>

GRACE HOSTS BLUEGRASS BAND



Grace will be hosting "The Four Walls Bluegrass Gospel Band" on Sunday, Oct 11 at 5pm. If weather permits, the concert will be in the outdoor shelter. We will have a BBQ Dinner afterwards. Please bring a side dish to share or a dessert. BBQ, Buns, Sauce, Slaw, Cups, Plates, Drinks and Ice will be provided. Please invite your friends and family!

TRUNK OR TREAT ON OCTOBER 31, 5-7pm



This is a Church-wide event; in other words, we need you to be a part of this. We need as many people as possible to open their car trunk or truck bed to decorate and hand out candy. Some decorate their trunks or have little games for the kids to play to get candy. After Trunk or Treat, we will have hot dogs, chips, and drinks. We may also have the fire pit ready to do smores. We will see if we can get an inflatable to have fun with as well. If you would like to help with this event, please see the Youth and Family Ministry Team. We will have flyers made so that you can invite the community.

CHRISTMAS SHOEBOXES - DEADLINE NOVEMBER 15TH



The deadline for Operation Christmas Child is fast approaching. Filled shoeboxes must be turned in by Sunday, November 15th. Shoeboxes are now available in the choir pews on the right. A label is inside each shoebox. Thanks for helping with this important ministry. Also, special offering envelopes are now available in the Narthex for your gifts for this important ministry.

Ministers of Grace – All the People of Grace

Pastor – Reverend Doug Hefner Board President – Tim Eckard

Lector – Todd Childers Youth Leader – Stormy Shull

Altar Preparation – Cindy Bivens

Communion Assistants – Tim Eckard & Nicky Jarrett

Ushers – Chris Jarrett & Gary Leatherman

Offering Counters – Todd Childers & Alan Shull

Listening for the Promise

WEEKLY DEVOTIONAL

Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost (Proper 22) – October 4, 2026

⁴³Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people producing its fruits. ⁴⁴And the one who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; and when it falls on anyone, it will crush him."⁴⁵When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his parables, they perceived that he was speaking about them.

- Matthew 21:43-45 -

These verses conclude the parable of the tenants with a warning of pending judgment. In the preceding verses, the master of a house leased his vineyard to tenants and went away to another country. At the time of the harvest, he sent servants to collect the produce from the tenants. However, the tenants beat and/or killed these servants. The master then sent even more servants, but the tenants treated them the same way. Finally, the master sent his son, thinking that the tenants would surely respect his son. Instead, the tenants killed the son in order to get his inheritance and thereby claim the vineyard for themselves. In response, the master decides to kill the tenants and rent the vineyard to others.

This parable describes the rebellious history of, and the consequent judgment upon national Israel. Israel had abused and killed the prophets whom God had sent to them, and they would soon kill God's Son. As a result of this treachery, God would take the kingdom away from them and give it to others producing its fruits. Thus, when the chief priests and the Pharisees heard this parable, they knew that Jesus was pronouncing judgment upon them.

Yet, in God's providence, this judgment upon national Israel would open the way for the salvation of all people, Jews and Gentiles alike. In the Old Testament economy, Israel was both a chosen people and a chosen nation. They were supposed to be an example to the other nations. And since God's presence dwelled in the Temple, Jerusalem was the spiritual center of the world. There was thus an inward orientation toward this spiritual center, even though spiritual blessings were supposed to flow outward from national Israel to the broader world.

However, when Jesus died, the curtain separating the Holy of Holies from the rest of the Temple was torn from top to bottom in two. Thus, through the shedding of Christ's blood, the barrier separating God from sinful humanity was removed. As a result, there was no longer a geographic spiritual center on earth. Rather, there was an outward movement from Israel to the ends of the earth, resulting in a polycentric economy where God's Spirit would dwell in every believer's heart. So, by killing God's Son, national Israel brought God's judgment upon itself, yet in a way that universalized God's salvation and calling for all people, Jews and Gentiles alike.

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