



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Isaiah 52:13 -53:12

“The Degradation and Exaltation of the Servant of Jehovah” TRANSCRIPT

[Prayer]...look to the Lord now in a word of prayer. Father, we thank Thee for the great prophecy of Isaiah and we thank Thee for the section that we are to look at tonight. We thank Thee for the way in which our Lord Jesus Christ is revealed in it. And we grasp that as we look at it again. The Holy Spirit may teach us truths that will build us up in our faith and enable us to represent him who is the servant of the Lord in the way that Thou wouldst have us to represent him. So we commit the hour to Thee and we commit each one present to Thee in Jesus name. Amen.

[Message] Tonight our subject is “The Degradation and Exaltation of the Servant of Jehovah.” And we have come to the great section in this prophecy in which messianic prophecy reaches probably its high water mark. Now those of you who are in Believers Chapel will remember I hope that back in June, I gave five messages on Isaiah 52:13 through 53:12 and it is very difficult to say anything new for you although I am making an honest effort to say something new within of course the general requirement that we stick to the truth. So tonight, “The Degradation and Exaltation of the Servant of Jehovah.”

Kyle Yates, well-known Southern Baptist professor and preacher has referred to this section in Isaiah 53 as the Mount Everest of Messianic prophecy. And I think if we

were to read the New Testament through and count all of the references in which New Testament authors refer to this passage, we would find it very difficult to refuse this title to the section, the Mount Everest of Messianic prophecy.

For it seems that here in the Old Testament, the revelation concerning Jesus Christ reaches its highest and clearest point. And from Isaiah 53, we are able to see farthest than from any other place in the Old Testament. When you look in the New Testament as I did again last night, thinking about the message tonight, I noticed again how many times this passage is referred to. Don’t put these passages down, but let me just read them all:

Romans chapter 15 verse 21, John chapter 12 verses 37 through 38, Romans chapter 10 verse 16, Matthew chapter 8 verse 17, I Peter chapter 2 verse 24, Revelation chapter 5 verse 6 and verse 12, Revelation chapter 13 verse 8, Acts chapter 8 verse 32 and verse 33, I Peter chapter 2 verse 22, Revelation chapter 14 verse 5, Luke chapter 22 verse 37, Romans chapter 4 verse 25, and Hebrews chapter 9 verse 28. In every one of these passages in the New Testament, there is a reference back to Isaiah chapter 52 verse 13 through chapter 53 verse 12.

So you can see that this passage is one of the passages that the authors of the New Testament studied about as much as they did any of the passage and some of them made this passage a very important part in the word that they have given us. John in his gospel, remember, says in the twentieth chapter that he has constructed his gospel on this basis. He has taken our Lord Jesus Christ’s ministry and from his ministry, he has selected seven signs. He does not say seven, he just says signs.

And out of these signs, he has given us a picture of the life and ministry of Jesus of Nazareth. He has said many other signs truly to Jesus which are not written in this book but these are written that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God and that in believing, you might have life through his name.

Now in the twelfth chapter of the Gospel of John, after he has taken the seven signs and expounded them in the words of Isaiah chapter 53, he sums up the message of

his book by saying, “But though he had done so many signs before them, yet they believed not on him: That the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?” In other words, he takes this first verse of Isaiah chapter 53 and says it is all fulfilled in response that men have given to the ministry of Jesus of Nazareth.

Then, you remember the story in Acts chapter 8 of the Ethiopian eunuch. A man who was a religious man, a man actually who was a proselyte apparently to the Hebrew faith. He had been attracted by Judaism and its monotheism. And he had gone up to Jerusalem to celebrate a feast and he had gone up with religion but he did not have Jesus Christ. He went into the city of Jerusalem and he apparently sat in the synagogues of the Hellenists and there he heard debates between a man by the name of Stephen and a man by the name of Paul.

This is apparent from the way in which the construction of the Book of Acts has given us and there he must have heard the Apostle Paul try to defend Judaism against this young man Stephen. But Luke says that they were unable to resist the wisdom and the authority by which Stephen spoke. He was actually able to handle the word of God better than they were.

Now Paul, you remember in Galatian, says he was a man who had advanced in Judaism beyond his contemporaries. And since he too was a Hellenistic Jew, in the sense that he had grown up in Tarsus though he was an Hebrew of the Hebrews in that he had studied in Jerusalem, apparently Paul from certain statements made in the Book of Acts was one who had been present and had debated with Stephen and had been defeated in the arguments. And if I may be allowed to reconstruct the story for just a moment, it seems to me that what happened must have been this.

That an Ethiopian eunuch who apparently was a rather wealthy man, because he had a chariot and that was the equivalent of having a Lincoln Continental. And I know, I must be careful now. I said this two or three times, and we have a Cadillac salesman in

our congregation and finally one day about two months ago, when I made reference to this, he said I am going to have to request the equal time. And so from now on, I am going to try to say that at one point, they are in a Lincoln Continental and another in a Cadillac and you will understand what is going on. I am just trying to give my good friend [name redacted] equal time. [Laughter]

But anyway, this man was a very wealthy man and we read that he was making his way back home reading from the Old Testament and from the study of the Book of Acts and the text of Acts, it is evident that he was reading the Greek translation of the Old Testament. And a man by the name of Philip the Evangelist, had been instructed by the Holy Spirit to leave the revival in the city of Samaria and to go down into the desert and there he met the man from Ethiopia. And by the Holy Spirit, he was lead to race toward the chariot. He ran, I think someone I had forgotten whether it was Augustine or Chrysostom or one of the early expositives, who said if he had not run, he would have been out of chapter 53 and into chapter 54 by the time he got there.

But anyway, he arrived by the side of that chariot and he heard the eunuch reading Isaiah chapter 53. In those days, they read out loud because the letters of the Greek manuscripts and of ancient manuscripts followed one right after the other with no space and punctuation between them and it was a help in reading to be able to read out loud or to read out loud, and so they did. And he heard him read. And he came up and he said, “understandest thou, what thou readest?”

And the man who was the rich eunuch said, “How can I, except some man should guide me?” And he said Philip come up in the chariot and tell me something about this. And “The place of the Scripture which he read was this, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth: In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth. And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? Of himself, or of some other man?”

“The Degradation and Exaltation of the Servant of Jehovah” by S. Lewis Johnson
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And some of you will remember that I commented on this when we were expounding this text because this question that the eunuch asked of Philip, the evangelist is a question that men ask in theological seminaries in 1969. If you were to attend a theological seminary today and hear a man speak on Old Testament prophecy and Old Testament introduction, they would deal with the question of the Book of Isaiah and they would try to answer the question about the servant of Jehovah, “Of whom speaketh the prophet this? Of himself, or of some other man?”

And today men speculate and some say, yes, he was speaking of Isaiah. Some say, no, it was not Isaiah; he was speaking of Jeremiah or some other prophets. And so the question that the eunuch asked Philip is just as contemporary as the game with the New York Giants.

Now then we read in this text and “Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same Scripture, and preached unto him Jesus.” Right at this text, Jesus. So in other words according to Luke, according to Philip, and I am sure now according to the eunuch who responded, the text in Isaiah chapter 53 has to do with the Lord Jesus Christ. Spurgeon said if a man of Nazareth, the Son of God be not right visible in these three verses, they are as dark as midnight itself. He is speaking of chapter 52 verse 13 through verse 15 of that fifty second chapter.

This week, I get a little magazine called *The Chosen People* and sometimes I don’t have time to look at it. At other times I do. It’s the publication of a Jewish missionary society. Sometimes I will let them stack on my desk for three or four months, but the other night, I got two or three of them out to catch out and I just was thumbing through them looking for things that interested me and I noticed two testimonies. By workers who work among the Jews. One of them is the account of one of the missionaries of this society that attempts to reach Jews and a conversation that she had with a Jewish woman.

And she tells about how she visited and how she got to know her and what the rabbi said and then she says that as she had an opportunity, she sat down and began to

read Isaiah 53 with her friend. She writes, as we read of the sacrifices, Isaiah chapter 53 in the one perfect sacrifice, the Messiah, she said Judaism is so empty and seems to be a family affair but this is a person, not a religion and she was able, out of this conversation, to preach Jesus unto her friend.

In the same issue, there was another account of the interview of one of the workers of this mission with another Jewish man and again, they sat down together and they began to read various portions from the Old Testament and finally they read Isaiah 53 and then we read after reading Isaiah 53 in its entirety, all three who were present were amazed when shown that the reading was from the Old Testament and not the New as the Jews who were listening had first suspected. It is almost as if we are reading the New Testament when we read this great prophecy Isaiah chapter 52 verse 13 through chapter 53 verse 12.

When I was preaching on this before I commented upon the fact that there are five strophes in this fifteen verse section. Now a strophe means the same thing as stanza. Strophe. We had two professional golfers who were on the tour the morning that I spoke on the subject here one of the mornings and the morning in which I said this section contains five strophes and these two professional golfers who were well known golfers met me outside in the hall there. They are both genuine Christians and they make the tour every year with the pros.

And they said to me this, Lewis, what in the world is a strophe? I have never heard of that. And I learned a lesson, don’t use strophe with profession golfers. [Laughter] And I am afraid that I shouldn’t use it with you. Strophe is just another word for stanza. There are five stanzas in this prophecy. Each one contains three verses. So that means that the first strophe or stanza is Isaiah chapter 52 verse 13 through verse 15.

Notice the three verses. Then there are twelve verses in chapter 53 and if you divide these twelve verses by three, your answer is by the new mathematics four. Now four plus one by the new mathematics equals five. So we have five sections of three

verses each and if you are careful in reading, you will notice that these verses seem to get longer and longer as we go along. Did you notice that? And look at that last verse.

There are so many lines on one page that you have to go over on the next page in my Bible one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine lines in this one verse, verse 12 in my edition of the King James Version. It is almost as if the thought sweeps forward with fuller and more resistless volume as the exposition of the person in work of the servant is set forth.

Now then, there is another thing I want you to notice about this. The section, the servant of Jehovah passage is very carefully constructed. Not only is it given to us in five clearly poetical sections or stanzas but it is constructed in such a way that the first words of each one of the stanzas is the theme of the three verses that follow. For example, the words in verse 13 “Behold, my servant shall deal prosperously,” that not only begins the stanza but that is the theme of the stanza.

Then in verse 1 of chapter 53, “Who hath believed our report?” The unbelief of the nation is the theme of the first three verses of chapter 53. In verse 4, “Surely he hath borne our griefs,” and the theme is the substitutionary work of the Lord Jesus and so that opening stanza or that opening clause in verse 4 is the theme of verses 4, 5, and 6.

And likewise, the opening words of verse 7, “He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth.” This is the theme of the next section and the theme of the final section has given us in the tenth verse of chapter 53, “Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him.” So, to outline it, I would outline it this way. Five points. Put them in your notes if you are taking notes. I will say them slowly enough for you to get them. And rest my hand and not write them on the board.

First of all, Isaiah chapter 52 verse 13 through verse 15. The Suffering Messiah, successful. “Behold, my servant shall deal prosperously.” The Suffering Messiah, successful. By the way, if you ever want to give a devotional to some group, when I take

the five points and expound them, they are great message. You can improve on the one tonight.

Second, The Suffering Messiah, misunderstood. Misunderstood. Chapter 53, verses 1 through 3. Third, The Suffering Messiah, substitutionary. If you don’t want to use that adjective, you can just say The Suffering Messiah, a substitute. Verses 4 through 6. Four, The Suffering Messiah, submissive. Verses 7 through 9. “He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth.” And finally, the fifth and final point. The Suffering Messiah, foreordained. “Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him.” If you are little unhappy with foreordained, just use the word purposed. Purposed or planned by God. The Suffering Messiah, planned or purposed.

Now tonight, we are going to try to ring the changes on the principle messianic stresses and upon a few practical points as we move through these five strophes or stanzas. Stanza 1, The Suffering Messiah, successful. Nietzsche, the German philosopher said success has always been a great liar. I rather like that statement because I think that there is truth contained within it.

Success has always been a great liar. To be a success is not necessarily to be a success in the eyes of God. To be a success is not necessarily to be a success in the eyes of men. Many of us know people who have been extremely successful in business. And yet we know they have been successful in dishonest ways. And they are not successful even in the eyes of men. Success is a liar.

Some men are successes because they happen to be by the chance of history at the right place at the right time. How many people do we know like that? They really did not deserve to be successful in the sense that they worked hard, used their intelligence. They just happened to be at the right place at the right time. Very difficult to explain. The only thing we can do is just covet.

Success is a great liar. But in the case of our Lord’s life, success was a liar and success was also a truth teller too. It is true that if you had looked at our Lord’s life, you

would have said, he was not a success. He grew up a carpenter. He was nothing unusual. As a matter of fact, he was just an ordinary person. He was just a tender plant out of dry ground, root out of dry ground, he had no form nor comeliness, so our prophet says. And he lived a life in which he struggled with the forces of the little kingdom of Judea and with the religious leaders and apparently he lost because he was put to death.

If you had looked at his life, you would have said he was an auto success. And yet at the same time on the third day, Jesus rose from the dead and no one has ever been the success that Jesus Christ was. He was a true success. Success has always been a great liar but not in the case of our Lord ultimately.

Our text begins, “Behold, my servant shall deal prosperously.” Now of course he is speaking about the fact that his success is related to the work that he did. You will notice that God calls him my servant. That is because he is carrying out the will of God. My servant. I think that word is also a representative word, that is, he is to carry out a work and he carries it out for God and he carries it out for God for other people. He is the servant. As a matter of fact, he is my servant because he carries out God’s work for me as my representative.

But our author says in verse 13, “Behold, my servant shall deal prosperously, he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high.” Now I don’t have time to go into detail here but those words exalted, extolled and be very high are referred to three phases of our Lord’s ministry. One is the Greek word that means to rise. He shall be, our text says, “exalted.” But the Hebrew word says rise. He shall rise. The next word translated “extolled” is a word that means to be lifted up. And the third word which is translated here “and be very high” is a word that means really to just be high exceedingly.

Now I think you can see that implicit in these words is a reference to the three stages of our Lord’s ministry after his death. He shall rise, resurrection. He shall be lifted up, ascension. And he shall be very high or high exceedingly is the session at the right

hand of the father. So the success of Jesus is related to these three aspects of his ministry. And you will notice that after he says that, he shall rise, he shall be lifted up, he shall be high exceedingly, he then says that this work of the servant which he is doing is unfolded in humiliation and exaltation.

Listen, “As many were astonished at thee; his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men: So shall he startle many nations.” Just as many were astonished at him in his first coming, so at his second coming shall he startle many nations. In other words then, the suffering Messiah is successful because of his resurrection, because of his ascension, and because of his session which is unfolded in the historical progression of humiliation leading to exaltation.

He was humiliated, and humiliation here in his first coming and out of his death, he rose, ascended, he is at the right hand of the Father, he has been exalted and the time is coming when he shall startle many nations. That word sprinkle as you can tell from the way I am rendering it may well be rendered startled and here I think it has that force because of the contrast with verse 14 just as many were astonished at Thee, the way that Thou didst look at Thy first coming, so shalt Thou startle them at Thy second coming.

You know there is a remarkable parallel between the five strophes or stanzas of Isaiah 53 and the five offerings of Leviticus. Are you acquainted with the five offerings of Leviticus. In the first chapter of Leviticus, Moses describes the burnt offering. In the next chapter, he describes the meal offering. In the next chapter, he describes the peace offering. In the fourth chapter, he describes the sin offering. And in the fifth and sixth chapters, he describes the trespass offering.

Now the bird offering is an offering which presents the ministry of our Lord typically as one who gives himself whole heartedly to do the will of God, to serve God in a completely obedient life. Now that is surely set before us here. My servant shall deal prosperously. He shall really carry out the will of God and the will of God is the work of his death, resurrection, ascension, and session. And through this, he shall be successful.

Last night as I was sitting at the Lord’s Table, I was meditating upon I Thessalonians chapter 1 verses 1 through 10. As I was thinking about the third verse, Paul writing the Thessalonians and he was speaking there, you remember, about their work of faith, their labor of love, and their patience of hope. These are the three things that really characterize or summarize the Christian life. He said “Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope.”

And then in the ninth verse when he describes the Thessalonians conversion, he says “For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols.” That is the work of faith to turn to God from idols. A work of faith. You will notice by the way it is to turn to God from idols for if a man’s heart is really positively upon God, the negatives fall away. Just like the tree, the leaves of the red oak in the spring, when the sap begins to flow, they manage to stay on all winter and amidst all of the wind that blows around in the Dallas area, you will see those red oak trees with those dead leaves hanging on them but when spring comes and the sap begins to rise, the dead leaves fall off.

And so when we turn to God, the idols fall away. That is really the secret of Christian sanctification too. Just as simple as that. The more that we are occupied with Jesus Christ, the less we are occupied with other things. And then he says “to serve the living and true God.” That’s the description of what we are doing now or should be. We are serving the living God and he says, by the way that’s the labor of love, it is a labor that arises out of love.

Why do you serve? Do you serve in your local church because you think you ought to or because you love to because you love him? Now may I say just a word to those of you that fellowship with us in Believer’s Chapel specially, I hope that all servants is always and forever out of a motivation of Jesus Christ’s love for us. And a response in love. It is not because some elder said I think you ought to do this. Or I wish you would and you don’t want to disappoint the elder or disappoint someone else or because you

think you ought to. You have some obligation to that it is because its a labor of love and finally Paul says to wait for his son from heaven. That’s the patience of hope.

The Thessalonians were disturbed by persecutions and so to wait meant to wait through difficulties for the Lord from heaven. Are you waiting for him? Is that your attitude? Wouldn’t it be a wonderful thing if Jesus Christ were to come while you are on your knees waiting for him? Wouldn’t it be wonderful that he should come and not really interrupt you at all?

You know, I travel a good bit and I am frequently out at nights. And when I come home a little late, and the house is all dark, I feel a little left down. I like for my wife to wait up for me. When I see the house with the lights on and I realize she is waiting up just for me, that kind of gives me a warm feeling down inside. Do you know that’s what that word means? To wait up for his son from heaven. And I think it gives God the same kind of feeling when we are really waiting for the coming of Jesus Christ. Well, “Behold my servant,” that’s the first strophe.

Look at the next. Stanza 2. The Suffering Messiah, misunderstood. Emerson said to be great is to be misunderstood. Now Emerson was not a Christian and that’s not necessarily a Christian sentiment. To be great is to be misunderstood. Now we cannot turn that around and say to be misunderstood is to be great. But it is probably true that to be great is to be misunderstood. Almost all who had been really great had been misunderstood. Emerson’s entire quote was this. “Is it so then to be misunderstood? Pythagorus was misunderstood and Socrates and Jesus and Luther and Copernicus and Galileo and Newton and every pure and wise spirit that ever took flesh. To be great is to be misunderstood.”

Well, it was certainly true of our Lord. He was misunderstood. Listen, here in chapter 53 verse 1, the future remnant that shall believe on Jesus Christ. The future remnant of Jews. As they look back, expressed how they treated him at his first advent. Now I went through this in great detail when we were preaching on it. Let me just say

this that the tenses of the first six verses, in fact about the first eight or nine verses, in the original text are almost all in the past. Not in the present.

And so the prophet is throwing himself forward by the Holy Spirit into the future in the midst of the company that at the second advent of the Lord Jesus shall come to faith in him in Israel and he is describing what they are going to say then about how they treated him at his first coming. You remember in Zechariah it says, “And they shall look upon him whom they have pierced and they shall mourn for him.” Have you ever wondered what they were going to say? What are the Jews going to say as a nation when they realize that Jesus is the Messiah? Well, I know what they are going to say. Not because I am a prophet but because Isaiah was a prophet. This is the vocalization of Zechariah chapter 12 verse 10 through verse 14.

This is what they are going to mournfully say. “Who believed our report or the report that was brought to us? To whom was the arm of the Lord revealed?” So few responded. “He grew up before him as a tender plant and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we saw him, there was no beauty that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not” and so on.

So here, they confess what they are going to say. Now I just want single out one practical thing before we move on. Did you notice that first verse? “Who hath believed our report? And to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?” And you know what that tells us. That tells us in the plainest way that the clearest possible teaching concerning Jesus Christ does not come home if the Holy Spirit does not reveal it to us. To whom was the arm of the Lord revealed? In other words, I can stand up before you as a group of people and preach the gospel as it has never been preached before in plainness and accuracy and truthfulness and you could sit in that pew that you are sitting and get absolutely

nothing out of it except the Holy Spirit work in your heart. Do you know why that’s absolutely true? Jesus himself got that response.

No man ever gave truth more accurately and plainly than Jesus. No man ever was under the influence of the Holy Spirit more than he. But at the conclusion of his ministry as John said, to sum it all up, you can sum it up in Isaiah 53:1. “Who believed the report that came to us? To whom was the arm of the Lord revealed.” So few responded. That it was difficultly even find them. When you say he was a success, well of course, he was a success. But the Holy Spirit did now work in the hearts of that generation and the reasons are given in the Gospel accounts. They were hardened.

Did you notice too that it is stated “to whom was the arm of the Lord revealed?” One of the great evangelists was a man by the name of Talmadge. Talmadge used to like to say turning to Psalm 8, when God speaks through the psalmist of the heavens, “the heavens are the works of Thy fingers,” you remember the psalmist says. And he used to like to say when God created the heavens and the earth, all he did was used his little finger. But when he did the great work of salvation it took his whole arm in the work of Jesus Christ. “To whom was the arm of the Lord revealed?”

The second offering was the meal offering. Did you notice what Jesus is called here? A man of sorrows. Now in the meal offering presented in Leviticus, the second offering. That offering is designed to represent in the offering of the fine flower, the perfect humanity of our Lord. The meal offering. Fine flour. What a beautiful picture of the character of Jesus Christ. Have you ever taken flour in your hands, men? Rarely have I ever. But have you have ever sifted flower and if you noticed how fine and how perfect it seems to be, well that was actually offered in Israel as the meal offering and that offering was designed to represent the perfect balanced character of Jesus of Nazareth. Fine flour.

The greatest Christian is not like fine flour. Luther was a great Christian but every now and then there was a grain of coarseness in him. He was not sifted. Calvin had his

Servetus. Only one man has ever been like that. You know, my character is not like fine flour.

Yesterday afternoon my wife came in. It’s a good thing she is not here tonight. She came in about quarter to six and we were watching the Rams in the 49ers and there were just about three minutes in the game left. And I was anxious to see that finished before I left for church. And she likes to arrive early because she has a special seat that she likes to sit in near the door, so she can escape in a hurry afterwards. And so she kept speaking about how she wanted to go and she was all dressed, even had her coat on, and finally I uttered a few words about the impatience of women and their eccentricities.

[Laughter]

And so when we came home last night, I came in the din and I sat down and she went into the kitchen to fix something to eat. I realized I had said something I should not have said. So I offered to take her out to eat, but it was raining and she didn’t want to go and so finally she fixed something and she came in, and I don’t really think it was quite as good as she usually fixed it. And she sat down before me and she said there’s your supper and I hope you choke on it. [Loud, sustained laughter]

Now presume that it is perfectly all right to say after this that women are not always fine flour either I might say. But it was really my fault. Now I know this is exactly what [name redacted] said. She said I would like to have been there to see the other thing or she could picture it exactly. But you know the Lord Jesus was fine flour. He never said anything. He never did anything that was just not the precisely proper thing to do. The fine flour. The perfect man and the man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.

Misunderstood. Stanza 3. The Suffering Messiah, substitutionary. This section is very famous for its stress on substitution. You will notice as you go through these verses that our, we, us, occurs about ten times. Notice, “Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of

our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.”

Over and over again, it is stated that Jesus died as our substitute. There is really not any place in all of the Bible in which the substitutionary atonement of Jesus Christ is not set forth more clearly than right here. It is almost as if the Holy Spirit went out of his way to make that perfectly plain that he died for us.

Now the sixth verse says here, “and the Lord hath caused to smite on him,” that “laid on him” is a word that was used of the smiting of a man to death. “The Lord hath caused to smite upon him, the iniquity of us all.” That’s not a mild figure. That’s a violent figure. It is as if all the dark clouds, all of the lightening flashes, all of the thunder claps are brought together in one great concentrated tempest of judgment and it fell upon Jesus of Nazareth. God made him cry out. “My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?”

The third offering, was the peace offering. It was the offering that the priests brought which was designed to represent an atonement that issues in peace. Isn’t it interesting that right here in this section that chastisement that brought our peace was laid upon him. And so from the saving work of Jesus Christ, we have peace. That is peace with God.

Paul says therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God. And so having believed in Jesus Christ, my sins are removed and I stand before God absolutely at peace and harmony with him. That means no matter what happens to me, I get down on my knees at any time and know that my father responds that I have an entrance, an entree into his presence. The peace offering. The Suffering Messiah who is my substitute.

Now the fourth stanza. The Suffering Messiah, submissive. This is called in the pulpit commentary, the triumph of silence. Silence was a strange thing in the Old

Testament. Men didn’t ordinarily keep silent in the Old Testament, under God’s discipline. They either blamed others or they confessed their guilt.

Isn’t it striking that Jesus in the midst of all of the things that came to him and finally his death, never once blamed it on others. Nor did he ever confess any guilt. He didn’t say oh father, I am sorry that I have done this and I am sorry that I have said that. That might be a very laudable thing for you and me to do. But he never uttered one word of confession and yet he is the one who points out more than anyone else the sins of men. But he does not confess any sin himself. He was completely submissive under the judgment of God.

The sufferings of Jesus came from three sources. They came from God, they came from men, and then they came from his own voluntary suffering or desire to suffer in obedience to the will of God. If we had time, we could look at all of those places in which these three themes are set forth.

The fourth offering was the sin offering. That was an offering in which the transgression of Israel was covered and when a man sinned, he brought a sin offering. Part of that offering was taken and burnt on the mercy seat and it brought up a sweet savor to God. And then the great majority of the animal was taken outside the camp and there it was burned. A token of judgment.

And you will remember that Jesus when he died, did not die in Jerusalem. Do you remember what happened to him? He went outside the gate, outside the camp. It was as if they were typically saying to everybody we do not think that Jesus of Nazareth even belongs in the fellowship of Israel. And so they slew him outside at the Calvary. Now in these verses, there is reference to the sin offering.

Notice the eighth verse. “He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? For he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken.” Jesus Christ was the sin offering, the offering for Israel.

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Finally stanza 5. The Suffering Servant, purposed, foreordained. “Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him.” What might you have said if you had known that Jesus was the servant of Jehovah? If you had known that somehow or other he belonged to God and then if you had Jesus Christ die upon that cross at Calvary, what might you have said? Well, think for a moment what happened to the disciplines. They all forsook him and fled. They were like wounded animals that went off to lick their wounds.

And when the two disciples on the Emmaus road were making their way toward home and Jesus came up along side them. Remember they were speaking about him and they said, and we hoped that it had been he who should redeem Israel. All hope seems to be gone when the one who is responsible for all our blessings was standing right at their side by the way. You would have thought and you would have thought it possible to say God has abandoned his own servant.

And as you read these verses here and you realize this is my servant and you read verse 8, “He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? For he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken. And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.”

The thing you want to say immediately is God has finally forsaken his own. And that’s why the tenth verse reads, “It pleased the Lord to bruise him.” He did not abandon. He was carrying out his purpose in the crushing of our Lord. That word by the way means crush and you remember in Genesis chapter 3 in verse 15, it is stated that the seed of the woman shall crush the serpent’s head and the seed of Satan shall crush his heel. One a mortal wound, one not a mortal wound.

And Jesus was crushed but it was not only Satan, not only man, not only did he voluntarily give himself but the Father himself, it pleased the Father to bruise him. Why because he does not like his son? No, because he loves us, and because the means to the

expression of his love to us, the redeemed, is the death of his son. Oh, amazing miracle shall we ever understand it?

The final offering was the trespass offering. We don’t have time to expound all of it but let me point out this to you. That in verse 10 when we read, “When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin,” the word is *asham*, an offering for sin and that’s the very word that is used of the trespass offering, the fifth of the offerings. So he was the trespass offering and he did all that the trespass offering was designed to represent for us. Isn’t it striking, five stanzas, five offerings. The five offerings are designed of course to represent five different facets of the saving work of Jesus Christ.

I used to be an insurance man. Frequently I had to inspect a building that we had insurance on. One of the first things that I used to do as an inspector was to take a look at that risk from every angle outside. I wanted to examine all of its exposures, everything else that had to do with that building. I looked at it from the front of the building, from the back of the building, from each side of the building and sometimes went up on top of the building before I ever went in the building. All the facets of that building had to be analyzed if I was going to do a fair job of inspecting it.

Now the ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ is set forth in the Bible under the guise of many different offerings. Not just the five. Each one of them expresses some different emphasis of the once and for all offering at Calvary’s cross. Five of them give the five major stresses. He offered himself holy to God, the bird offering. He was the perfect man. The meal offering. He provides peace through his sacrifice. The peace offering. He dies for sin. The trespass offering, the sin offering. And the trespass offering, not only does he die for sin but even the effects of sin and the way it touches others. That is covered by the saving ministry of the Lord Jesus.

So here in Isaiah 53, the climax of Messianic prophecy, it says, if we have the capstone to all of it and all the aspects are presented. Who is he that haunts this chapter?

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We hear of him but he does not speak. We see faces that he startles at his second coming but himself we see not. Who was he? What is his name? Isaiah does not tell us.

It is not until the New Testament and until we read these words that we know who he is. But it is Philip who says we have found him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write and Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph, he is the servant. He fulfills all the offerings. He is the climax of all of messianic prophecy and above all else, he is our redeemer. Do you know him? Is he your Redeemer? Your Savior?

Let’s bow in prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we thank Thee for this great section, exhaustless and the great truths that it contains. And we worship Thee who hast given such a servant to serve us. May our service of him be the service of love. For Jesus’ sake. Amen.