



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

The Suffering Savior

"The Servant of Jehovah and the Suffering Messiah - II"

TRANSCRIPT

[Prayer] Father, we again turn to Thee with anticipation as we consider the study of the Scriptures. We thank Thee for the part that they have played in our spiritual life, and we thank Thee for the part that they played in our Lord's spiritual life as he, in his human nature, grew to maturity and was pleasing to Thee and to men. And we pray that the illustration of his study of the Scriptures and meditation in them may motivate us as we seek too to do Thy will. We rejoice in the provision Thou hast made for us in the Holy Spirit who leads and directs and teaches us from the Scriptures. May our study tonight glorify him who loved us and loosed us from our sins in his own precious blood. We pray in his name and for his sake. Amen.

[Message] Tonight we continue our series of a few studies on the Suffering Servant of Jehovah within our general theme for this spring and summer of the Suffering Servant of Jehovah, the Old Testament and the Doctrine of the Atonement. Last week we began this brief series within a series of the Suffering Servant of Jehovah or the Servant of Jehovah and the Suffering Messiah, a study in the nature of the atonement. And again a few words of introduction, just to review what we set forth last time in our introduction.

I began by saying that atonement may be the most important word in Christian theology. Atonement is a term derived from the English word, "at" and the old Middle English word, "onement," so that atonement means to be "at one." And, of course, when we talk about atonement, we are talking about atonement with reference to man and God, and so atonement is at onement with God, to be brought again in to union with him. Atonement refers to that which Jesus Christ did when he died upon the cross. He restored the shattered relationship that exists between man and God. The Old Testament, we said, was the story of development of the history of redemption, and therefore, it is the story of the preparation for atonement. And as you study the Old Testament, there emerge two dominate figures in Old Testament prophecy which our Lord applied to himself. And these two dominate figures, which Jesus Christ applied to himself, are the figures of the Servant of Jehovah and the Son of man. These terms were terms that our Lord, in the study of the Scriptures, saw applied to him, and so he used the passages that had to do with the Servant of Jehovah and the Son of man and applied those passages to himself. For as he studied the Scriptures, he realized that in the Old Testament there had been written through the prophets a prehistory of our Lord's work here upon the earth.

Now, it is evident from Luke chapter 22 and verse 37 that the "Suffering Servant of Jehovah" is a term that he understood to apply to himself, for in Luke chapter 22 and verse 37 we read these words, "For I say unto you, that this that is written must yet be accomplished in me, And he was reckoned among the transgressors." Now that passage, "among the transgressors," we shall see tonight, comes from Isaiah chapter 53 and verse 12. And our Lord sees that that passage refers to himself. So he says, "For I say unto you, that this that is written must yet be accomplished in me, And he was reckoned among the transgressors: for the things concerning me have an fulfillment." It is evident then from this passage that he understood that he was the servant of Jehovah.

Now the second term is the term the "Son of man", and in Daniel chapter 7, verses 13 and 14, we have the key passage concerning the Son of man. In that prophetic passage, we read these words,

"I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed."

Then, in the New Testament in our studies this fall in our series in the Suffering Servant of Jehovah, we have seen in the trial of our Lord Jesus that he turned to these passages in the Old Testament and specifically this one, and in his conversation with the chief priests, he referred this specific passage to himself indicating by that that he again saw his life's history prewritten in the Old Testament as the history of the Son of man. I mentioned last time that the term the Son of man is the term most frequently referred to himself. So when he spoke of himself, more frequently than any other term, he spoke of himself as the Son of man. And that term is derived from this passage here.

Now, putting these two things together it is evident that in the case of the Servant of Jehovah since the theme of suffering is prominent in the passages having to do with the servant of Jehovah, and since the theme of reigning is prominent in the passage dealing with the Son of man, it is evident that these two passages put together stress that the zenith of our Lord's earthly career is suffering, but the issue of his suffering is reigning. But these two things together speak of the suffering of the Messiah and the glories that should follow, so that by seeing himself as the Suffering Servant of Jehovah and the Son of man, we have a kind of epitome of our Lord's attitude to the teaching of the Old Testament. That's why I pointed out last time when he said to the disciples on the

Emmaus Road when they were evidently unacquainted with the combination of these two great sections of Scripture, "Old fools and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have written ought not Messiah to have suffered these things and to enter into his glory." So the sufferings on the one hand and the glories that should follow, as Peter puts it in the 1st chapter of his first epistle, these things are the summary of our Lord's earthly ministry. So to put the two terms together then we have a blueprint of the destiny of the Messiah.

How would you like to be able to open a book and read the history of your life before it comes to pass? Well I'm sure there would be a lot of things we would want to avoid, try to stay away from. Reminds me of the country fellow who said, "If I knew where I was going to die, I'd never go near the place. But in our Lord's case, he was able to look into the Old Testament, recognize, by the teaching of the spirit, the things that had to do with him and guided by the Old Testament Scriptures and the guidance of the Holy Spirit together was able to fulfill the plan and purpose that God had for him.

Now, we are studying the Old Testament passages which set in forth as the servant. If he saw himself as the servant then they should reveal to us significant insights into his ministry. Last time I pointed out that there are four of these servant passages, Isaiah chapter 42, Isaiah chapter 49, Isaiah chapter 50, and Isaiah chapter 52, 13 through 53, 12. That is one prophesy, but unfortunately, part of it is in the 52nd chapter and the other part in the 53rd. If I had been dividing the chapters in the Book of Isaiah, I would have begun chapter 53 with chapter 52, verse 13, and then everything would have been alright, but we have four of these servant songs. And last time we looked at the first of them. And tonight I want to take a brief look at the 49th chapter, the 50th chapter and the last of the songs. Now, this is a lot of material to cover, and I hope you understand that all that I am going to do is to give you a kind of overview of these chapters. Each one of them deserves not just one message but more than one. And some of you, who are old, may remember that some years ago I gave a series of messages on Isaiah chapter

53, five of them to be exact. So all we'll do tonight is just summarize some of the things I said in that particular series of messages.

But we want to turn first now to Isaiah chapter 49 because I think last time, we stopped with chapter 42. Isaiah chapter 49, the Babylonian background of the last part of the Book of Isaiah, and Cyrus the king, who is going to be responsible for the return of Israel to the land, fade into the mists in chapter 49, and the Servant of Jehovah looms before us. If in chapter 42 the program of the servant is stressed, here the purpose of his ministry is stressed. And I'm going to read along and make a few comments as we go along and summarize it in that way. Isaiah begins the 49th chapter by writing, "Listen, O isles, unto me; and hearken, ye people, from far; The LORD hath called me from the womb."

Now let's stop here for just a moment, and I want to point out one or two things in connection with this clause, "The LORD hath called me from the womb." We have to, in interpreting the Servant of Jehovah passages, ask ourselves the question, "Who is the servant?" Now, of course, from what we have read in the New Testament, you already know that the answer to this is our Lord Jesus Christ. But there has been a great deal of debate over the identity of the Servant of Jehovah and next Monday night in our study then I want to deal with that in more detail. But in each one of these servant passages, we have this question, "Who is the servant?" because it's evident from reading these passages that the term Israel, for example, and the term servant, have some different forces in these chapters.

Now, it has been said by some that the Servant of Jehovah is Israel, Israel the nation. Now, of course, if this were true, then we do not have a vicarious substitutionary sacrifice of one man, God man, on behalf of men. But rather, we have reference to the ministry of the nation as a whole, which has been something of a sacrifice in order that God's revelation may be spread abroad in the world, quite a different kind of theology, not Christian at all, as a matter of fact. But is the servant Israel? Well, I want you to

notice the 5th verse, "And now, saith the LORD that formed me from the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob again to him, Though Israel be not gathered." Now, the very fact that he speaks as if Jacob and Israel are separate entities from himself would indicate then that Israel is not the servant. The 6th verse, I think, settles it, "And he said, It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel." It is evident then that the servant is someone whom God has appointed to restore Jacob and to restore Israel. And so it is not Israel herself who is the servant, but someone other than Israel.

It has also been suggested, and suggested by some well known Jewish commentators, as well as Gentile commentators, that the servant is not Israel, nor is it a single man, such as Jesus Christ the Messiah of the Christians, but rather the prophet Isaiah himself. Again verses 6 and 8 give the lie to that. "It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the nations, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth." And I think it does not take a great deal of theological insight to realize that Isaiah the Prophet has not become the salvation of God to the end of the earth, nor was it ever intended that Isaiah the Prophet should be. A German commentator once said, "If the church has Christ at all, it's impossible that she should fail to find him here." And I agree with that. The servant is a reference to an individual. We shall deal further with that, and more deeply with it, later on.

Another interesting thing I want you to notice about this expression is that the servant says, "The LORD hath called me from the womb." Have you ever noticed in reading the Old Testament that Messianic prophecy says nothing of the human father of the Messiah? That's one of the most amazing things, I think in all of the Old Testament. It says, more than once, that the Messiah has a mother, and this is one of the passages. Never in the Old Testament in any Messianic prophesy do we have any reference to a human father of the Messiah. In Isaiah chapter 7, verse 14, this very prophesy that we are

reading, we have the famous prophesy of the virgin birth, "Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." And so the explanation of this is obviously that the Messiah is born of a virgin and does not have a human father in the natural sense, only in the legal sense. This is something that is more than once referred to in Messianic prophesy, as you know. I'm going to read a couple of other passages. You don't have to look them up. I'll look them up for you because one of them is in the minor prophets and we always have to declare an intermission when we ask to look at a book or a chapter in the minor prophets. But we read in Micah chapter 5, verse 2,

"But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah," (in case you really want to turn up it's page nine hundred and forty-seven) "though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting. Therefore will he give them up, until the time that she which travaileth hath brought forth: then the remnant of his brethren shall return unto the children of Israel."

Here in harmony with Isaiah, the mother of the Messiah is referred to, but no human father referred to. Then in Psalm 22, verses 9 and 10, I know you can find the Psalms, we read in this great Messianic Psalm, remember it begins, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken me? Verse 9, "But thou art he that took me out of the womb: thou didst make me hope when I was upon my mother's breasts. I was cast upon thee from the womb: thou art my God from my mother's body." And so again, we have reference to the fact that the Messiah has a mother, no reference to a natural human father. All of this of course goes back to Genesis chapter 3 verse 15 where we read about the seed of the woman and it finds its culmination in the New Testament in the historical account of the virgin birth of the Lord Jesus. And so in Isaiah chapter 49, verse 1, "The

LORD hath called me from the womb" is reference again to the relationship of the Messiah to a mother, a human mother, but not to a human father. The remainder of the verse reads, "From the body of my mother hath he made mention of my name."

Now notice that particular prophecy. Remember we are reading in Isaiah, and in Isaiah we have at least two indications of the name of the Messiah. We read one of them just a minute ago in Isaiah chapter 7 verse 14, "A virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel," or God with us. Then also in the 9th chapter, reference is made to the name of the Messiah in the famous, and well known prophecy, verses 6 and 7, "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." "From the body of my mother hath he made mention of my name."

Now I want to ask you a question. If Jesus Christ is the Messiah why is not his name mentioned in the Old Testament? Why do not we have a reference to Jesus Christ of Nazareth? Who do not we have such a thing? Jewish people often ask that question of Christians. They frequently say, "You find Jesus Christ in the Old Testament? Where is his name?" Where is his name? And arguing on that basis, they say, "Therefore since you cannot even find his name in the Old Testament how can we believe you when you say that Jesus Christ is in the Old Testament? Well I think if one were to ask me that, I would say, "The fact that Jesus Christ's name is not in the Old Testament is really a proof of the accuracy of the Old Testament. For in the Old Testament, it is said that he would not be given a name until he was born because it says, "And Thou shall call his name Immanuel" at the time of the virgin conception, and, of course, that is exactly what we find for in the New Testament when our Lord was born, it was then that the name was given of Jesus. And so the fact that while you might expect his name to be in the Old Testament, the fact that it is not there contrary to human expectation, but reserved for the time of his birth is

itself an evidence of the inspiration of the Old Testament Scriptures and of the harmony of the New Testament historical facts with them.

Also, if the name of our Lord Jesus were really in the Old Testament, think of all the imposters from the time of the announcement of the name to the present time. We are plagued in nineteen hundred and seventy-four with imposters who are going around saying they are Jesus Christ. You don't have to do any kind of research at all to discover that on every hand people make monstrous claims of identity with Jesus Christ. And from the time of Bar-Cochabas, one of the earliest of the imposters of the Christian era, now he was not a Christian imposter, but he was an imposter. Bar-Cochabas means "son of the star," and he identified himself as being the one of whom prophesy in Numbers had been speaking, "A star shall arise out of Jacob." And he spoke of himself, Bar-Cochabas means son of a star, as being that, and he aroused enough people to gather a following and created quite a name for himself in the earliest years of the Christian era. So think of all the people down through the Old Testament period who would have said, "I'm Messiah."

We're warned against this very fact in the tribulation period that people are going to rise up saying I'm Christ, I'm Christ and we are warned to give them no attention. So I'm very happy that in the Old Testament there is no text that says the Messiah is going to be born in Bethlehem and his name is will be Jesus of Nazareth, and he will be called by Christians and by Jews, who are believers, the Messiah because we would have had a terrible time separating him from the many claimants down through the years.

Now then we read on, "And he hath made my mouth like a sharp sword; in the shadow of his hand hath he hidden me, and made me a polished shaft; in his quiver hath he hidden me; And he said unto me, Thou art my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified." Now, "My servant, O Israel," this, of course, is a rather startling thing because here we have the Servant of Jehovah called Israel. What does Israel mean? Does anyone know? Surely someone knows. "A prince of God," right. Now you should expect that the elder's wife to know that. And here, "O Israel," is the term applied to the servant.

"And he said unto me, Thou art my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified." Now he is the prince of God. The reason for this is that our Lord Jesus in himself contains all of those whom God is going to bless. If we are converted, if we are believers, if we are saved, we are in Christ.

In fact, you can construct the theology of the Bible around the figure of the pyramid which I have here in outline form. We have, at the heart of the Divine Revelation, Christ, who is the seed of Abraham. Then, we also have the remnant, the true believers Israel, who are related to him, and finally, Israel as a whole, the whole believing nation of the future. We can turn it over and look at it as a series of concentric circles, as I have on the other side here, for we have Christ at the center. And then we can even have, I inserted this because there is a sense in which our Lord is not only the true Israelite, but he is also the true son of David, so that he is the one in the Davidic family who is to rule. He is also the true Israelite, and he is also the true seed of the saved of the Gentiles. And so God deals really with one person, Jesus the Messiah.

And related to him is the royal family, the remnant in Israel, the Gentiles who shall be saved, and, of course, the saved of all of Israel, so that all of the saved regardless, of whom they may be, they are in Christ. And therefore his name, "O Israel," is very proper because he is the prince with God. And Israel only becomes true Israel when they are in him. He's their representative, and he stands for them. Then I said, "And Israel speaks, I have labored in vein, I have spent my strength for nothing and in vein, yet surely the justice due to me is with the Lord and my work with my God." We'll say a little more about this in the 50th chapter, and so I'm going to leave this statement in which he commits his life to the Father at this point.

"And now, saith the LORD that formed me from the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob again to him, Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the LORD, and my God shall be my strength. And he said, It is a light thing that thou

shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel,"

This is part of his mission. It is to be the means for the restoration of the nation Israel to the center of the will of God, but more, "I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth." And so the Father speaks here, ratifying the promises to the despised servant while now subject to man's ordinances and man's hates, that shall all change in the future because he shall be the means of worldwide blessing.

And in the 8th verse we read, "Thus saith the LORD, In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee: and I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages;" In other words, he shall raise up the land and restore the people to the land and also be the means of blessing to the Gentiles to the four corners of the earth. The chapter closes with a picture of the future remnant led back and led into the land by the great shepherd.

Now we want to turn to the next of the servant songs, the third of them. The remainder of the outline we will look at next week, the Lord willing. The third song, Isaiah chapter 50 verses 4 through 11, let's turn over there now and again, let me just introduce it with a word of introduction. In this particular servant song, the stress rests upon the preparation of the servant for the ministry which he is going to be carrying out.

The historical situation is this. Israel is in Babylonian captivity due to unbelief. Isaiah analyses the causes of Israel's unbelief and presents God's solution in the work of the servant. The passage is somewhat typical for the captivity of the past reflects the dispersion of the future, the dispersion to which Israel of the present has been sent. And the deliverance offered in the past was fulfilled at the first advent of our Lord, but since Israel did not respond then at the Second Advent, God's provision by the grace of God

shall be received. Therefore the servant's work is the Lord's first advent ministry which is the basis of the future blessing and that is what we are looking at now, the work of the servant. And particularly now emphasis upon his preparation for the ministry that he is to be carrying out.

This by the way is one of the most interesting of the Old Testament prophecies to me, because it gives us some insight into the psychology, if I may use that term in a good sense, into the psychology of the Messiah, something of an insight into his inner life as he developed as a man when he was here because we are given a prophesy of some of the things that he himself would experience in preparation for his ministry. And I think it's rather startling to realize the things that our Lord had to do as a man.

First of all notice his private instruction, verse 4, that's where servant song begins, "The Lord GOD hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary: he awakeneth morning by morning, he awakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned. The Lord GOD hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned backward."

Now here we have this deep insight into the prophet life of the Lord Jesus and the school of instruction in which he was a pupil. Its motive is given first, "The Lord GOD hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary." Nothing indicates a tongue befitting the disciples of God as much as the gift of administering consolation. And our Lord Jesus had the gift of administering consolation more than any other person has ever had. No other person could ever minister consolation like our Lord Jesus Christ. That is why when you read the Scriptures you gain such consolation and comfort from the words and ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ because he was prepared for that particular task by the Father.

And you can see it particularly in the way in which he dealt with men and women. Take, as an example, Luke chapter 7 and verse 36-50, our Lord's dealing with the woman who was a sinner. We don't know a great deal about this woman. It's evident that she must have been a prostitute. How she came into contact with the Lord Jesus Christ we shall never know. It's possible she had a friend who pointed her to him. It's possible she was on the streets and heard him speak in one of his messages. At any rate, something that our Lord Jesus said in the ministry, in the word of God, so touched her heart that she was converted. She turned from her prostitution, her sin, her wickedness, her evil, and became not only a follower of our Lord Jesus, but a true spiritual lover of him, to an extent that few of the saints of the New Testament were. It's evident that she was given, by the Holy Spirit, a deep insight into how much she had been forgiven. For it's in the account that our Lord gives here that he stresses the fact that love toward him is the evidence of how much we have been forgiven, how much we understand that we have been forgiven. The more we understand of how much we have been forgiven, the more we love him. And he reasons backward, he says, "See the love that this woman has shown me?" Well the fact that she has shown me unusual love is a reflection of the fact that she loves me unusually.

Now Simon the Pharisee, of course, is the foil because when Jesus came into his house, it seems evident that Simon wanted to humiliate our Lord. He did not even extend to him the common courtesies. He did not greet him at the door with a handshake. He did not say, "Welcome." He did not usher him in the room and offer him one of the choice seats. He did not wash his feet. He didn't give him any water for that. He didn't give him any anointing with oil. He did not kiss his cheek, as he did for everyone. He consciously attempted to humiliate our Lord Jesus. In contrast, this woman, who found her way into the house of Simon, how she did we don't know, she must have seen him go in. She came in. She went up to him. She took an alabaster box of ointment, which was very costly, very precious, apparently she had bought this with the money that she

had made from her elicited activities. She broke it. She poured it over our Lord Jesus Christ, and then she washed his feet with her tears. It was obvious that she had great love for him, and that Simon had none.

And out of this, our Lord spoke to Simon and gave him the lesson of the fact that the faith that this woman had was responsible for the love, and the deep love that she showed him was evidence of the fact that she had come to understand how much she had been forgiven. Rossetti pictures the prostitute going into the house where Jesus was with her lover holding her hand trying to keep her from going in, but she went in. And I think that when this woman came to our Lord and poured out that ointment over him, the angels in heaven must have been singing over the joy of another sinner who had repented. You know this is one of the greatest passages in the Bible, in my opinion, for motivation in Christian living because you see it stresses so pointedly, and so properly, the fact that it is in our love for Jesus Christ that we show how much we understand that we have been forgiven. It is the inevitable test of our understanding of that depth from which we have been saved that we respond in love for him and service to him.

So our Lord was given the tongue of the learned that he should know how to speak a word in season to him who is weary. If you take our Lord's ministry as a whole, it's a beautiful picture of God who comforts and consoles. You know John says in his gospel, "No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." He hath revealed him. He has led him forth into full revelation. If we want to know what God is like, we should look at Jesus Christ. Well, what kind of person is Jesus Christ? Well we can think of all the things that our Lord was and all of the things that he did, and together they give us a picture of God. And so I would have some picture of God like this, God with a child on his lap. That's what God is like, or God with a tear in his eye, or God groaning over the death of Lazarus. And we must not forget the other side of God with anger in his eyes, for our

Lord had anger in his eyes on occasion. All these things picture God. And it's beautifully pictured in the life of our Lord.

Now did you notice here in the 50th chapter, it says, the 4th verse, "he awakeneth morning by morning, he awakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned." Now here we have evidences that our Lord studied the Scriptures, was instructed in divine things by his Father, morning after morning he was in God's school. Now he doesn't say Sabbath by Sabbath. He doesn't say Sunday morning by Sunday morning, and Wednesday night perhaps, or Tuesday night as the case may be. But the instruction that our Lord received was a constant instruction in the Scriptures. I'm not going to set down any legalistic pattern of Bible study. I think the force of this should grip you that a great part of our Lord's life and ministry was spent in reflection on the Scriptures. They were truly his food, his life, his meditation, his thoughts. Well we must read on.

Now we read of his public persecution, "I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting. For the Lord GOD will help me." I'll stop at that just to say one word about the public persecution. Truth is objectionable to those who desire their own case at any cost, and, of course, thus giving his back to the smiters and his cheeks to them that plucked off the hair reached its climax in the trial of the Lord Jesus when he was scourged and finally brought out by Pilot with the crown of thorns upon his head. Now we've already talked about that and so I'm going to pass by, but I think when you read this and you realize that it is humanity that is attacking our Lord Jesus Christ the servant of Jehovah. Well Alfred Edersheim's words are not too strong. He says, "Humanity itself seems to reel and stagger under this blow that is given our Lord Jesus Christ." When you think that men struck our Lord Jesus, scourged our Lord Jesus, crammed down upon his head a crown of thorns. That gives you some insight into the nature of humanity, and not other humanity, but your humanity and my humanity.

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Now his private convictions are set forth in verses 7 through 9, "For the Lord GOD will help me." You wonder how our Lord could stand up to the things that he stood up to when he was here in his flesh. Why he studied these Scriptures. These were the things that were told him before hand that he should do.

"For the Lord GOD will help me; therefore shall I not be confounded: therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed. He is near that justifieth me; who will contend with me? let us stand together: who is mine adversary? let him come near to me."

You can see also that the Apostle Paul drew on this in the construction of Romans chapter 8. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died and so on. It's God that justifieth.

"He is near that justifieth me; who will contend with me? let us stand together: who is mine adversary? let him come near to me. Behold, the Lord GOD will help me; who is he that shall condemn me? lo, they all shall grow old as a garment; the moth shall eat them up."

There is some of the anger, and some of the holiness, and some of the righteousness of the nature of God. Well his private convictions are set forth here. His trust is steadfast, and God is going to vindicate him. W.E. Sangster was a great preacher of a generation ago in Brittan. He has given us some very interesting titles of sermons. Someone said, "Sermon," what's the definition of a sermon? Soul food. One of the titles of W.E. Sangster's sermon was based on Luke chapter 9 and verse 51, where we read; I guess I should have read that before I give you the title of the sermon, but in Luke chapter 9, verse 51 we have the passage in which the Lord Jesus expresses his desire to go to Jerusalem. And we read, "He steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem," and W.E.

Sangster preaching on that called his sermon, "His Destination is on his face." And it's derived from this passage here in Isaiah chapter 50, verse 7, where we read in 7, "Therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed." Our Lord Jesus, knowing the end of his earthly ministry, steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem, setting his face like a flint because he knew that it was there that he must die for the sins of the world.

Now, I commented upon the fact that Romans chapter 8 is built on this because when Paul reaches the climax of his argument in the 8th chapter and the 30th verse by saying that we shall be glorified, then he stops, and it's a time for silence because Paul has reached climax of the presentation of the work of Jesus Christ and salvation. And that's always a time for silence. It's also a time for amazement too, when you contemplate the whole of it, from Romans 1 to Romans 8 is a magnificent journey from condemnation all the way through to glorification. And then of course when you see the breadth of the work of the Son of God, it's like seeing the ocean for the first time in your life.

You're just suddenly caught, and you cannot say anything. Your breath is almost taken away. And that's the place that Paul reaches in Romans chapter 8. And so verse 31 begins, "What shall we then say to these things?" Well, there's nothing much that you can say, and it's interesting that in the commentators on the Book of Romans, you'll notice that when they get to Romans chapter 8 and verse 31, their comments become very meager because we have reached the place where human language fails to do justice to the glory of God in salvation. And that is derived from this section right here. "Who is he that condemneth me?" It's God that justifieth. Now our Lord says the moth shall eat them up. That's a very expressive and terrible comment because they shall fall apart, his enemies, like moths that they already carry within them, slowly, imperceptibly, but certainly his enemies shall perish.

Now we turn over to Isaiah chapter 52, verse 13 for the fourth and final song of Jehovah. Some have said that Isaiah chapter 61 should be one of the servant songs, but

the servant term is not used there, and so we'll let it rest with that. When we come to Isaiah 52:13 and 53:12, we come to what someone has called the Mount Everest of Messiah prophesy. And here the expanded plan of his ministry is emphasized. There are five strophes, five stanzas, and each one of them contains 3 verses, so there are 15 verses in this great Messianic song. And each of the sections contains more words than the preceding one. It's almost as if the thought sweeps forward with fuller more resistless volume. And strikingly too the first words of each of the three verses summarize and entitle each of the strophes. Now we begin in verse 13 with the suffering Messiah successful,

"Behold, my servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high. 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 sprinkle many nations; the kings shall shut their mouths at him: for that which had not been told them shall they see; and that which they had not heard shall they consider."

Nietzsche said, "Success has always been a great liar." I would imagine that Richard Nixon would feel some sympathy or empathy with that comment at the present time. A President who was elected to office with the greatest majority of any other President in history, you would think success had finally reached Richard Nixon. "Success has always been a great liar." For often the men who are successful are not really successful, and those who are not successful are the ones who are successful. I think that is true and false of our Lord Jesus.

There is a sense in which you could say he was not successful at all, if you're just a man, if you have no belief in our Lord's resurrection. He was a man with the greatest teaching that any man has ever had. All seem to agree with that, but because of his fanaticism, because of his unwillingness to compromise in any way, he got himself crucified, and so he has not been a success. But of course for a Christian, that's exactly

what he should have done and that's the reason he is the success that he is. My servant shall deal successfully. This success is unfolded in stages of humiliation at his first advent and exaltation at his Second Advent. And right here in these three verses we have again the sufferings of the Messiah and the glories that shall follow. Those who stumbled at his first coming are astonished at his second. And nations shall ultimately cry with Julian the Apostate, "Thou hast conquered O Galilean."

Now, the second stanza begins with verse 1 of chapter 53. Here the suffering Messiah is misunderstood. Emerson said, "To be great is to be misunderstood." And that is a measure of greatness, then our Lord was great and Paul was almost as great, and all of the servants of God and the disciples of Jesus Christ have a measure of greatness about them. In fact, I guess that's one of the few reasons that I have to have any claim to greatness, I am so misunderstood. [Laughter] Now the prophet writes, "Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?" Notice the first words of each stanza kind of summarize the stanza of three verses. "Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?"

Now, what we have here, of course, is the future redeemed of Israel looking back. Isaiah prophesying this, he's speaking of the future remnant as they have finally come to understand the error of their crucifixion of Jesus Christ for they've looked upon him whom they've pierced and now they're mourning for him. And as Zechariah says, "They are going to mourn for him as one mourns for an only son," and I just have a hunch, I cannot prove this, that the vocalization of the lament of Zechariah in the future is Isaiah chapter 53 verse 1 through about verse 7 or 8. It is these verses that they shall say. So the prophet has thrown us, and himself, into the future, and he gives now the lament of the true believing remnant when they discover that the one whom they crucified thinking he was a blasphemer is really the Messiah. And so now they say, "Who hath believed our report? and to whom," these are in the past tense in the Hebrew text,

"To whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? For he shall grew up before him like a tender plant, and like a root out of a dry ground: he had no form nor comeliness; and when we saw him, there was no beauty that we should desire him. He was despised," (all this in the past tense, by the way, if you've got a more recent version, most of them have corrected these tenses and you will find them in the past tense) "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 Israel in the future having now come to the place of repentance and conversion, laments and confesses their sin.

Now, I don't want to pass by something here that's, I think, important. Notice chapter 53 and verse 1, "Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?" One of the greatest truths of the Bible is revealed here, and it is this, the plainest teaching, earnestly delivered in the spirit, as our Lord did, is darkness for the unregenerate mind. It is often thought by Christians that the only thing necessary to bring the gospel home in conviction and conversion to the hearts of men is to preach it plainly. But that is not biblical. Did anyone ever preach the Gospel more plainly and more accurately than Jesus Christ? Well if you're not willing to grant that, if you want to say, "Well, he preached from the stand point of the old covenant." I'll put it this way. Did anyone ever preach the New Testament Gospel as plainly and clearly as Paul? Now you have to say, "No!" You have to say that. Now as confident as I am that I preach a pure Gospel, I know Paul preached a purer, and our Lord purer than that, but it is universal in the preaching of the apostles and our Lord that only a remnant responded. Why, because response is not dependent upon clarity of presentation.

Now, you're going to say, "Well then you can just preach anything you want." No, you do have to have a clear gospel. God saves only through the word. In fact, you do not have to have an absolutely pure gospel because there are some Arminians that get

people saved too. That's one of the evidences of the sovereign mercy of God. You see the vital thing is not only the word, but the vital second element is the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the application of the word. So to get a man converted, we need not only to preach a pure gospel, or at least the gospel. Even an Arminian, if he can just get in the facts of the gospel, can be used. And then we need the application of the Holy Spirit in which he takes the word and, in irresistible grace, makes the unwilling willing so that they respond. "To whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" That little word tells us the whole story of gospel preaching that we need the word, and we need the spirit. And my dear Christian friend, the Holy Spirit applies the word efficaciously. And he applies the word efficaciously and irresistibly and infallibly to whom? Tell me. Come on, tell me, the elect. Thank you. There are some Calvinists in the audience. I can tell.

Now the suffering servant submissive, our time is almost up, verses 7 through 9. Oh, I guess I should read verses 4 through 6 substitutionary.

"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 everyone to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all."

This is one of the famous substitutionary passages, and we'll deal with that later when we talk about the Christological soteriological character of the servants work. And so I won't say much at this point, simply to point out that we have our, we, as mentioned about ten times in this passage so that this is one of the great passages on the substitutionary atonement of our Lord Jesus. And those last words in verse 6, "to cause to fall upon, to meet upon him." There is one of the violent figures expressive of the fact that our Lord died as a penal substitute for sins.

“The Servant of Jehovah and the Suffering Messiah, part II” by S. Lewis Johnson
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Now unfortunately, I have to stop for the sake of time, but we will pick it up here and next time I want to deal with the identity of the servant and, if possible, get through something of the nature of...

[RECORDING ENDS ABRUPTLY]