The Substituted Servant, Part 1
Isaiah 53:4-6
90-439

We are in a study of Isaiah 53 and I would invite you to turn to Isaiah 53 at this time. This great chapter is in many ways the heart of the Old Testament. The name Isaiah means salvation of the Lord. Isaiah's prophecy of 66 chapters, interestingly enough, is divided the same way the Bible is divided. The Bible has 39 books in the Old Testament, 27 books in the New, and Isaiah has 39 books in the first half and 27 in the second half. Isaiah is the highest form and quality of Hebrew poetry in existence.

The prophecy of Isaiah is the greatest of the Major Prophets and contains more content than all the Minor Prophets combined. It should be said that if the New Testament had been lost and all we had was an account of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, there would be enough explanation and theology in Isaiah 53 to lead a sinner to full salvation. It explains the death and resurrection and exaltation of Christ. This fifty-third chapter is the Holy of Holies of the book of Isaiah. It is amazing, it is inexhaustible, and we have been saying that all along. It is a prophecy. It is a vision into the future given to Isaiah 700 years before Jesus came.

There are some remarkable visions given to the writers of Scripture and the people that we're familiar with in the Bible. For example, Moses was allowed a vision from Mount Nebo, looking over the land of Israel. And he, in a sense, was able to see that land before Israel actually took possession of it. And then Abraham, it is said of Abraham that he actually looked forward by divine revelation and saw Christ's day and rejoiced. Jacob looked into the very face of God at Bethel in that wrestling experience and saw the preincarnate Christ.

The apostle Paul was lifted up to the third heaven and saw things unlawful to speak and got a preview of what it would be like when one day after his martyrdom he entered that very heaven he saw. And, of course, the apostle John was transported into visions again and again, visions in the book of Revelation recorded of the future of the earth and the future in heaven as well. Ezekiel saw the glory of God in anticipation of judgment yet to come. Peter, James, and John stood on the Mount of Transfiguration and saw a preview of the Second Coming glory of Jesus Christ and were stunned by it, as we well know.

But of all of these amazing visions of things yet to come, none exceeds this amazing vision of Isaiah. And while, in a technical sense, it wasn't a vision, as we would define a biblical vision, it was a direct revelation. Nonetheless, contained in that direct revelation was a clear description of the significance of the cross. Isaiah, more than anyone else, was given the privilege of seeing more profoundly into the meaning of Calvary and the death of Jesus Christ than anyone else before that event took place. In that sense, Isaiah becomes the gospel prophet, the prophet of the cross. And while there are things that happened at the cross that are prophesied elsewhere in the New Testament, nowhere does it all come together the way it does here. So that, as I said, if all you had was the historical

record of the crucifixion and resurrection, you would understand the theology of it from this chapter alone.

Isaiah 53 then becomes a summary of the gospel in the sense that it is a summary of what is necessary to believe for a sinner to be saved from judgment and forgiven for sin. But it's more than that. It is the most profound of all revelations given to a prophet. But at the same time, it is more than just a prophecy of Calvary, more than just a prophecy of the cross of Christ. It goes beyond that and it is set in the context of the end of human history, long after the cross, beyond our day today, to that time in the future at the end of human history when Israel, as a nation, will turn to Jesus Christ. They will believe in Him, they will be saved. Christ will return, destroy the ungodly on the face of the earth, launch into His Kingdom, inaugurate the Kingdom, take believing Israel, as well as redeemed Gentiles, into that Kingdom, and fulfill all kingdom prophecies from the Old Testament.

So, in a sense, we're going ahead beyond Calvary to the end of the age, and we're hearing in this chapter a confession of the Jews at the end of human history as they look back on the cross and realize how wrong they were about Jesus Christ and how they misjudged that most monumental of all events. It's time travel, but it's not back to the future, it's ahead to the past, if you can process that. What Isaiah does is he goes ahead to the far future, when Israel looks back on the one they pierced and mourns for Him as an only Son, and a fountain of cleansing is opened to them to cleanse them from sin and iniquity. And those are the words of Zechariah 12:10 and 13:1. He goes all the way to the end, at the time when Israel recognizes they crucified the Messiah, the Lord of glory.

This prophecy then presents that great eschatological event, the national repentance of the Jews. Zechariah tells us two thirds of them will not believe. They'll be judged, purged out. But one third of that nation will believe. If that were to happen soon, that would be a number something around four to five million Jews, the salvation of the chosen nation. This is the only way that anyone can be saved and it is the only way that Israel will be saved. There is no salvation for anyone unless they believe the truth about Jesus Christ and the truth about the gospel of the cross and unless they repent and embrace Jesus as Lord and Savior. And that is exactly what a future generation of Jews will do, they will embrace Him, they will see His death as a vicarious, substitutionary, sacrificial death for them, followed by resurrection and exaltation.

This chapter, Isaiah 53, is the confession they will make at that future time. But it is also the confession that every saved sinner has to make. We are here because we've made this confession. These are words that, in some way, have been in our minds and in our mouths, these marvelous words. The tone of the chapter is very sad, very somber, heart breaking, sorrowful. Why? Because that future generation of Jews is going to look back and realize that coming to faith in Jesus Christ has taken so very long and they have loved their Messiah so, so very late. When that day comes, this is what they will say. Let me read it to you again.

"Who has believed the message given to us, to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? For He grew up before Him like a tender shoot and like a root out of parched ground He has no stately form or majesty that we should look upon Him, nor appearance that we should be attracted to Him. He was despised and forsaken of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. And like one from whom men hide their face, He was despised and we did not esteem Him. Surely our griefs He Himself bore. And our sorrows He carried.

"Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, smitten of God and afflicted. But He was pierced through

for our transgressions. He was crushed for our iniquities. The chastening for our well-being fell upon Him and by His scourging we are healed. All of us like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way, but the Lord has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Him. He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He did not open His mouth. Like a lamb that is led to slaughter, and like a sheep that is silent before its shearers, so He did not open His mouth. By oppression and judgment He was taken away. And as for His generation, who considered that He was cut off out of the land of the living for the transgression of My people to whom the stroke was due.

His grave was assigned with wicked men, yet He was with a rich man in His death because He had done no violence, nor was there any deceit in His mouth. But the Lord was pleased to crush Him, putting Him to grief. If He would render Himself as a guilt offering He will see His offspring, He will prolong His days, and the good pleasure of the Lord will prosper in His hand. As a result of the anguish of His soul, He will see and be satisfied. By His knowledge the Righteous One, My servant, will justify the many as He will bear their iniquities. Therefore, I will allot Him a portion with the great and He will divide the booty with the strong because He poured out Himself to death and was numbered with the transgressors, yet He Himself bore the sin of many and interceded for the transgressors."

If, as some suggest, Isaiah is the greatest book in the Old Testament, chapter 53 is the greatest chapter. Five times in that chapter the word "many" appeared, five times. Many, in this chapter, refers to the beneficiaries of the Servant's astonishing atonement. They are the many; He is the one. Down in verse 11, He is the Righteous One. There are many who are sinners. There is One who is righteous. There are many who are guilty, there is one who provides a satisfactory atonement for them.

Many is a word picked up by the New Testament writers, as well. Both Matthew and Mark refer to Christ as having given His life a ransom for many. Paul in Romans 5:15 speaks of the sacrifice of Christ for many. The writer of Hebrews in Hebrews 9:28 refers again to the fact that Christ gave His life for many. And the idea there is many in contrast to one. And all those writers, Matthew, Mark, Paul, and the writer of Hebrews are reaching back to Isaiah 53, without necessarily quoting it, where you have the contrast between the One in verse 11 who is righteous and the many who are sinners. And many are guilty, but only One is righteous.

This is a genuine confession and I want to show you why we know that. It's characteristic of any confession that is saving. Let me say that again. It is characteristic of any confession that is saving. It is a true and honest confession for salvation. Listen carefully, because here the sinner takes full responsibility for his sin. The sinner takes full responsibility for his sin. That will be true of the national confession of Israel in the future, but it is true now today in every individual that comes to true saving faith in Jesus Christ. There is a genuine and honest confession of sin in which the sinner takes complete responsibility for his or her sin. In other words, blaming no one else. Blaming someone else is as old as Adam and Eve, isn't it? "The woman You gave me."

But this marvelous chapter is not only full of verbs in the past tense, which tells us this is a future generation looking back at the cross, but it is full of another linguistic feature that needs to be identified, and that is it is loaded with first-person plural pronouns. As you listen to me read, can you hear the echo of "we, we, we, our, our, our, us, us, us"? The problem is us. That is acknowledged in any true act of repentance.

Yes, it is true that the Holy Spirit has to give life sovereignly for the sinner to be saved. Yes, the Spirit of grace and supplication, as Zechariah says, must come upon the sinners in Israel and then they can turn and believe. Yes, the power of the Holy Spirit is a requirement in regeneration to awaken the dead sinner. And, yes, it is true that Scripture says that God has hardened the heart of unbelievers and, in particular, hardened Israel against Him because of their unbelief.

One could assume then that a sinner would rise up and say, “It’s not my fault. The Holy Spirit has not given me life. And on the other hand, God has hardened me. There is a negative that causes me to be in the unbelieving condition I’m in. That is the Spirit has not given me life. There is a positive that causes me to be in the condition I’m in and that is that I have been hardened by God, I can’t be blamed for this.”

But there’s none of that here. However the working of the Holy Spirit and the sovereign purposes of God come together with saving faith and repentance; however God does that in His own vast infinite mind, the solution to resolving those things is not for the sinner to push responsibility away from himself. In fact, it was Jesus who wept over the city of Jerusalem and Jesus said, “I often would have gathered you but you would not.” He said, “You will not believe.”

In Romans 10:21 Paul quotes the Old Testament, “All day long have I reached out My hands to an obstinate and disobedient people.” They don’t blame the Holy Spirit. They don’t blame the judgment of God. They take full responsibility for their unbelief and the condition their unbelief has placed them. They take full responsibility for the sins that they have committed, the transgressions and the iniquities. They take full responsibility for the effects and the consequences of those sins, that meaning the griefs and the sorrows that fill up their lives. “It’s all about us,” they say. And in every true and saving confession, there is no blame on anyone else. The sinner accepts full responsibility. Every penitent must.

This is not just them then, this is you now and this is me. So here we have a genuine model for true repentance. They recognize they are the many, and they are sinful, and it’s all about them, and it’s their responsibility. And they also recognize there is the One against many who can provide the only salvation and that one is the Righteous Servant who died in their place. That’s the heart of this confession here.

Now as we come to verses 4 through 6, we come to the middle stanza in this song. There are five stanzas; we’ve done two. This is the middle. We'll do two more. It’s the most important truth. These three verses may be the most magnificent verses in the entire Old Testament. I will confess it’s a little daunting to stand before you and try to represent these verses. I feel inadequate and inept in doing this because they are so incomprehensible and unfathomable as to be beyond the reach of any mind. I will do my best to set you on a course and to set you in a direction to grasp the greatness of this portion of Scripture.

The many who are sinners, who are honestly willing to confess their sin and are consequently genuinely saved are the ones who believe verses 4, 5 and 6. This is saving truth. And here we have, just to follow our little outline, in stanza one, we had the startling servant, the Messiah is called the Servant of Jehovah. We saw the startling Servant in verses 13 to 15 at the end of chapter 52. Then last time we saw the scorned Servant, verses 1 through 3, and now we come to the substituted Servant. Looking continually at the Servant of Jehovah, we now see Him in His role as a substitute.

In the opening three verses, you will remember they looked at His life. The Jews will confess, “We looked at His life and we were unimpressed, we didn’t believe the message about Him, we didn’t believe in the arm of the Lord, that is the power of God that came in Christ so that Christ is literally the arm of the Lord personified. How many of us actually believe? Very few. To how many of this did this revelation come and be received with faith? Very few.” Why? “Because we looked at His origin and He was like a sucker branch and He was like a…He was like a piece of root in a parched ground, insignificant, utterly unimportant, unnecessary. His beginning was that way, came out of nowhere town from nowhere family, had no influences around Him that were religious in terms of elite people in leadership. He’s just a very common man from a very common family in a very common town, who surrounded Himself with more common people. He was nobody from nowhere. That was His beginning.

“And then we looked at His life and there was nothing about Him. Nothing majestic about Him, no stately form. His appearance was nothing to attract us. There was nothing about Him that said ‘Messiah.’ And then His end was the worst. He was despised, forsaken by the rulers. He became a man of sorrows and grief and He was so malformed, misformed, disfigured that we hide our faces, that we hid our faces from Him, wouldn’t even look at Him. He was a horror in His end. An inauspicious beginning, an inconsequential life, and a horrendous death, and so we despised Him. We considered Him nothing, nobody.”

That’s the scorned Servant in verses 1 to 3 and that’s where the confession of the sinner begins. “I was so wrong about Jesus Christ.” That’s what Israel was saying. “Were we ever wrong.” And the transition comes in verse 4 with the first word, “Surely or truly, or verily.” This is an exclamation. This is a sudden recognition of something unexpected, a dramatic change from the previous perception. This is a reversal; this is spinning on their heels fast. Surely, as if to say, “Whoa, stop in our tracks, and turn and go the other way.” Now we see our griefs He Himself bore, our sorrows He carried. He was pierced for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities, chastened for our well-being, scourged for our healing.

We have a whole new view of this. Our consideration was that He was nobody. We will not have this man to reign over us, we said. And when we had the option of Barabbas or Jesus, we said kill Jesus, crucify Him. And now we know. Surely, He didn’t die for His own sin. He didn’t die for His own iniquities. He didn’t die for His own transgressions. He didn’t die because He was a blasphemer like we thought He was. He didn’t die because God killed Him for claiming deity. He didn’t die because God killed Him because He claimed to be the Messiah when He wasn’t. He didn’t die because He claimed equality with God.

That’s what they thought. They thought that God killed Him for His blasphemies. He was a blasphemer, they said that, and that God killed Him as a blasphemer for His own sins and His own iniquities, and His own transgressions, which in their mind were supreme blasphemies. Claiming to be the Messiah, claiming to be alive before Abraham, claiming to be equal with God, claiming to be able to raise Himself from the dead, claiming to be the Creator.

This blasphemer died by the hand of God for those horrendous, horrific sins. That’s what we thought. Now we know. It was our griefs He bore. It was our sorrows He carried. He was pierced, crushed, chastened, scourged for us. That is the complete reversal of how they viewed the cross. He took our place, died in our stead, gave His life for us. Technically, we would call this vicarious penal

substitution.

Finally as a nation they're going to see it and believe it. And they're going to be saved in that hour. These three verses, by the way, verses 4, 5 and 6, are so connected that they're like concentric circles. They kind of weave around and around each other. And each of them mentions the wrongs and the provision of the Servant to provide atonement for those wrongs, and they do cycle around the same theme. But they are so profoundly rich that we can't even work our way through them this morning, so we'll have to finish next time. They understand how wrong they were.

They had a wrong attitude, manifest in wrong behavior…listen…coming from their nature. Repentance grasps all three. True repentance takes the recognition that we think wrong, we act wrong, because we are profoundly corrupt in nature. Verse 4 is about their wrong attitudes, verse 5 is about their wrong behavior and verse 6 is about their wrong nature. They go all the way down deep. Our attitude was wrong, terribly wrong. We esteemed Him, stricken, smitten of God and afflicted. That's wrong. We thought He was being punished for His own iniquity. Our behaviors were wrong, transgressions, iniquities. But mostly because our nature is wrong. Verse 6 is about nature. We're like sheep who have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way.

You say, "In what sense is that speaking of nature?" Sheep do what sheep do. That's the analogy. They wander off into danger. That was us. Our nature was wrong and we went our own way. So they have come to a place, this future generation of Jews, that every sinner must come to, to be saved, in which you understand that you have to change your mind about Christ, how you think about Christ. You have to recognize the transgressions and iniquities that mark your behavior and the subsequent alienation from God and soul sickness that you possess. And then you must recognize that there's a problem deep down, profoundly embedded in your humanity. You're a sinner. And that's what you have here. The awakening is stunning. They get it. *Our* griefs He Himself bore, *our* sorrows He carried. We *ourselves*, we are the issue here. Our griefs.

The word for "griefs" is sickness. It's diseases, infirmities, calamities, pretty broad word. And here sins are viewed from the perspective of their effects. Sins are viewed from the perspective of what they produce, the conditions that come from sin. Life becomes full of sickness, disease, infirmity, calamity. These are the griefs. And it's a word that looks mostly at the objective, the outside, the agonies and struggles and issues that we deal with in life. Our griefs He Himself bore. The word "bore" means to lift up, pick up and place on oneself. He picked up all of that that sin produced and put it on Himself.

And then they say it another way. Our sorrows, that's the word for pains, that talks more about the subjective or the inward. Griefs is a word that refers to the outward effects of sin, and sorrows is a word that refers mostly to the inward effect of sin. But sin is viewed here not as a moral entity, which the word "sin" would convey, but rather from the distress and horrors and issues of life that flow out of sin. He picked up sin with all that it produces and carried it, put it on Himself, carried it. Well, we know He carried it to the cross and He bore the full punishment of God. The Lord was pleased to crush Him, verse 10 says. He took the punishment for our sin and thus carried the full weight of sin and all its effects away.

All through the Old Testament there are warnings to the Jewish people, and to all people for that matter, that to violate God's Law will make you guilty. In fact, there's a little phrase, "Bear their guilt, bear their guilt," and you find that little phrase throughout the book of Leviticus. You find it in Ezekiel

chapter 4, that people who violate the Law of God will bear their guilt and thus be punished. So here the Servant, the Messiah takes on the full burden of the sinner's guilt and takes on the full effects of sin, places them all upon Himself and pays in full the penalty for those sins and thus carries them away.

You remember in Leviticus 16 that when atonement was made, one animal was killed and one animal was kept alive. And the priests would lay their hands on that one animal, the scapegoat, as if to place all the sins of the people on the scapegoat and he would be sent out into the wilderness, never to return again, never. Jesus is the scapegoat. He picks up all our sin, pays the penalty in full. He's the sacrificial animal as well, and He's the scapegoat and carries them all away.

This is not saying Jesus sympathetically feels our pain. It's not saying that. It is that He takes our sin and its full punishment, pays for it in full, and thus brings to an end the reign of sin in our lives with all of its effects, and all of its manifestations, all of its griefs, and all of its sorrows. And one day we'll enter into the fullness of that, won't we? One day when we enter into heaven, no more sin and no more effects. We should have suffered for our sins, but He did. He took away from us all that belonged to us, all that we should have felt by way of judgment, pain, devastation, even eternal punishment and put it on Himself. And thus He shifted the load completely away from us.

He takes our sin and removes it, having paid for it in full. Now that's the prophecy of Isaiah about this one who will come. And you're going to see that same truth reiterated in the remaining sections of this great chapter because it is the cardinal truth. Verse 8, for example, "He was cut off out of the land of the living for the transgression of My people to whom the stroke was due." The question then is, "Who is this person? Who is this person? Who is this person who gathers up sin and all its manifestation and all its effects and pays in full the punishment that satisfies the judgment and the wrath of God, and then takes all of it and carries it away, never to see it again? Who is this person who does that?"

Peter, no doubt, having this passage in mind, tells us in 1Peter 2, speaking of Christ, he says of Christ, "He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross. And by His wounds you were healed." That's a direct allusion to Isaiah 53. It can be no one but Christ. No one but Jesus Christ can fulfill this. Israel will come to that knowledge; come to that awareness, weeping and wailing in repentance, having seen the truth about the Servant, Messiah, Yeshua, Jesus. And they will testify to the massive error that they have made. Generations have made it; for thousands of years they have made this error. And here they declare how wrong they were. It wasn't for His sin that He suffered. It was for their sin.

And then comes this confession, "Yet…reaching back…we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, smitten of God and afflicted." And there's the confession, that we thought God was punishing Him for His own sins. We considered or reckoned Him stricken, smitten, afflicted by God for blasphemy. The word "God" is Elohim and all those verbs connect with Elohim. Stricken by God, smitten by God, afflicted by God, we thought God was punishing Him for His sins.

And the language here is very strong. The word "stricken" is to strike violently, a very violent word used in Exodus 11:1 of the plagues. The word "smitten" means basically to beat someone even to death. And the word "afflicted" a general word, to be humiliated, to be degraded, to be destroyed. So we thought that when He was being smashed and beaten and degraded and humiliated, that this was God doing it because He was a blasphemer. And by the way, that is still the Jewish assessment

today. The Jewish assessment is just that today. That's their view. But there are Jews who see the truth, aren't there? Some of you. And you say that's what we thought but now we know different.

And they will, some day in the future, know that this is the Lamb of God chosen by Him to be the vicarious substitute bearing their sins. They get it, and so in verse 5 they will say He was pierced for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities, chastened for our well-being, scourged for our healing. This is such marvelous language here, very graphic. The words pierced, crushed, chastened, or punished, scourged, very strong words. Let's talk about those for a moment.

The prophet has no knowledge of the cross; He doesn't know what's going to happen 700 years hence. The Spirit of God leads Him to pick these words and we could say that these are metaphoric words in some way, or these are sort of general words that saying pierced, crushed, punished, scourged, simply trying to pick words that are graphic and dramatic and sort of repulsive to think about someone being treated this way, that they're intended to be somewhat general. And you would be right about that.

There are Hebrew scholars that suggest that the word pierced, for example, is the strongest Hebrew expression for violent death. So that if you look at it in a general sense, you could say, "Well, whoever this is, He's going to have a violent death," and you would be right. And you could look at the word "crushed," and that word can refer to anything from being trampled to death, literally trampled, crushed under foot, such as Lamentations 3:34, all the way to being battered and bruised. That would be a lesser of it. It could be simply a broad word for somebody's life being crushed out. But it can be anything, as I said, from being trampled to death to being severely bruised.

And then the word chastisement, very interesting word. It is the only Hebrew word to express punishment, and punishment is a technical term. It's a legal term in some sense. And you could say, "Well, this definitely was a punishment, generally speaking," and you would be correct about that. And the word "scourged" could also be viewed in somewhat of a general sense. Scourging meaning lashing someone, slashing someone, inflicting wounds on someone. They could be general words and perhaps when Isaiah wrote that, that's what he thought. Well this is…this is just picking all the worst possible descriptions of a horrific, horrendous death.

But, the truth of the matter is, they're not just general terms because every one of them specifically happened to Jesus. He was pierced five times, both feet, both hands and His side. Psalm 22 is a Psalm that looks forward to the cross. Psalm 22 begins, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" The very words Jesus said on the cross. But in Psalm 22:16 the psalmist writes, "They pierced My hands and feet." Zechariah 12:10, Zechariah says, "They'll look on Him whom they've pierced." And they actually pierced Jesus on the cross. That actually happened. In John 19 there are a couple of verses that are tied to this. Verse 34, John 19, "One of the soldiers pierced His side with a sphere and immediately blood and water came out." Verse 37 says, "And another Scripture is fulfilled, they shall look on Him whom they pierced." Yes, He was pierced. How specific a prophecy is that?

What about the word crushed? It can refer, as I said, to anything from a sort of severe bruising to being trampled to death. Listen, we know what happened to Jesus. We know that He was slapped. We know that He was punched in the face, John 19:3. And we also know, according to Matthew 27 verse 30, that the Romans took sticks and beat Him in the face with sticks. Punching Him in the face, slapping Him in the face, and beating His head and His face with sticks would raise bruises and welts that would be within the framework of that word "crushed."

What about the next one, chastening, as I said the Hebrew word for punishment. Was His execution a form of punishment? Absolutely it was. There was an indictment of Him. You remember the Jews called Him together and brought in false witnesses to tell lies against Him. The indictment went from place to place in the house of Annas and Caiaphas, they passed Him over to Herod, they passed Him back, mock series of trials in which they tried to bring that indictment to an actual crime. And then they wanted an execution so they put Him before Pilate. And Pilate was intimidated and blackmailed into sentencing Jesus to death, and His execution was an official punishment by the government of Rome. It was a punishment…result of an indictment, a trial, a verdict, a sentence; a formal punishment was carried out.

And what about the word "scourging"? Is that just a generic term? Well according to Mark 15:15, it says He was scourged. We all know the story of that. Heavy stick with leather thongs extending from it, embedded with bone and rock and glass, lacerating His body over and over and over again.

The Jews knew all that. They know it now. They know it today. They know about this man Jesus who was pierced and bruised and punished and scourged. They know that very well. It's in the record. But on the day of national salvation, they're going to look back and realize that God did not do that to Him because it was God who crushed Him. It was God but God did not do that to Him because of His own sins, but He did it to Him because of their sins. That's the difference. They will confess…I love this…for our transgressions, for our iniquities, for our well-being, for our healing.

That's what's going to happen someday. They're going to confess that. In the meantime, folks, the only way you can ever be saved is to confess it now. Now. I can't go any further because I'm out of time, so I want you to turn to 2 Corinthians chapter 6. In 2 Corinthians chapter 6, Paul borrows from the forty-ninth chapter of Isaiah in the second verse. And in Isaiah 49 we read, "At the acceptable time, I listened to you. On the day of salvation I helped you." Isaiah said that to…a word from the Lord to the people, "This is a day when I will listen; this is a day of salvation when I will help." And then Paul pulls it into the present, and says, "But now is the acceptable time. Behold, now is the day of salvation."

Israel's national salvation, that's future…at the end of a time called the Tribulation. But now is the day of salvation. Now is the acceptable time for you, Jew or Gentile. The sad reality is that between the death of Christ and the salvation of Israel in the future, generation after generation of unbelieving Jews have gone into eternal punishment for which there is no remedy. And generation after generation and nation after nation of Gentile unbelievers have gone into eternal punishment for which there is no remedy.

In the end, there will be a revival in Israel. In the end, in that same period of time, there will be a massive revival, a massive expanse of the gospel, angels in the heavens, according to the book of Revelation, will preach the gospel, two witnesses who die and rise again will preach the gospel, 144,000 Jews will preach the gospel, 12,000 from every tribe. Israel will come to faith, that people will come to faith from every tongue and tribe and people and nation. There will be a great gospel outpouring.

People will be saved in the end. But between now and then, people continue to die and perish without remedy forever. And now is the acceptable time for you. Now is the day of salvation. This is

available if you will receive the gift. Maybe this is that “surely” moment. We were wrong about Him. It was for us that He died. He took our griefs, our sorrows, our sickness, our calamities, our disasters, and our sin, paid for all the sin and carried away all its effects forever. This is your day to put your trust in the Savior. I trust that you will do that. Let’s bow in prayer.

Lord, we are so deeply moved by the amazing realities of this chapter. The details known and revealed hundreds of years before they came to pass that unmistakably point to Christ and no other. And we know that there is salvation in no other name than Christ. It was He who said, “I am the Way, the Truth and the Life, no one comes to the Father but by Me.” “Faith comes by hearing, and believing the truth concerning Christ.”

I pray, Lord, that today would be the day of salvation, the acceptable time for some here to have that surely event when they look back at what they know to be true about Christ and it all becomes crystal clear and compelling, so that they would turn to Him in genuine repentance, taking full responsibility for their sins and transgressions and asking for the forgiveness that only comes through Christ and that eternal life which is the promise to all who believe. Do Your work, Lord, in our hearts. Fill us with joy in the truths that we have celebrated this morning. And bring those who have not yet embraced Christ to Him even now.

Before I close in final prayer, a reminder that the prayer room is open to my right in the front, double doors with an exit sign over them, right up here in front. If you want to talk with someone or pray with someone about your salvation, about your eternity, about your repentance, you want some help, we’re here to serve you, to love you, to share with you. But you need to talk to the Lord and pour out your heart to Him.

You’ve heard the truth; you know why He came, why He died. And that’s just the start. We’re going to get to the resurrection as well. But if you desire to embrace Him as Savior and Lord, you need to do that today, don’t put that off, don’t push that into some unknown future. And we’re here to serve you and the prayer room will be open right here in front after the prayer’s finished.

Our Father, we do now ask that You would help us to understand the urgency of the times in which we live, the urgency of evangelism in bringing the gospel to people who need so much to hear this, and how will they hear if there’s no one to preach? Help us to proclaim this glorious gospel and tell sinners that this is the acceptable time. This is the hour of grace. This is the day of salvation if they will come. Do that work in all our hearts that motivates us to the high ground in life, to the things that matter. And nothing matters more than proclaiming Christ. By our lives and by our testimony may we call people to Him. And would You be gracious and save sinners even today we pray, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

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