

Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

The Sovereign Servant, Part 1

Scripture: Isaiah 53:10-12

Code: 90-443

Again, this morning, we have the incredible privilege of looking at the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah. This would be message number nine in our study, and I believe that next Sunday morning we'll finish the series with the tenth message. And I have to confess to you that is not one-hundredth of what I have learned about this chapter. And it doesn't even begin to come close to the limitless depths and heights and breadth and length of this amazing portion of Scripture. It is an inexhaustible portion of Scripture, both as to its depth and its extent. One could literally preach a message on every line in this incredible portion of Scripture.

I would also say it is perhaps the single greatest evidence of the inspiration and divine authorship of Holy Scripture, of any portion of Scripture, because 700 years before the arrival of Jesus Christ, it records the details that were played out in His incarnation, His humiliation, and His exaltation. It is an amazing portion of Scripture. And though we have spent ten weeks on it, that is but a taste of this chapter, and I would commend to you that you would in diligence and faithfulness give yourself to this chapter far beyond the conclusion of this series, which is likely to come next Sunday.

The theme of this portion of Scripture that we're looking at, beginning in chapter 52, verse 13, and running through chapter 53, verse 12, is the Servant of Jehovah, the Servant. It is a song of the Servant, the Messiah, who is promised by God to come to bring salvation to His people and to the world. It is the fourth Servant song in this section of Isaiah. There's one in chapter 42, another in 49, another in chapter 50 and then this one, and it is the most powerful and complete of those Servant songs. It is also the most complete and comprehensive prophecy of the Lord Jesus Christ anywhere on the pages of the Old Testament. And because we have launched a study titled, "Finding Jesus in the Old Testament," we have first gone here because this is where He is most comprehensively and completely to be found, in Isaiah 53. And though that will be our theme this morning, I don't want to begin there.

I want to begin in the twenty-fourth chapter of Luke. So, if you will, turn in your Bible to Luke chapter 24, Luke chapter 24. In the twenty-fourth chapter of Luke we find our Lord Jesus on the road to Emmaus. He has been crucified but it is now Sunday and He is alive. He has died and risen again. He is walking on the road to Emmaus with a couple of His disciples who are bemoaning the fact that He has died and have no knowledge of His resurrection.

He speaks to them, and we'll pick it up in verse 25. And He says to them, "O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken. Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory? Then beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures."

The career of the Messiah, says our Lord, falls into two categories. Two great epochs, suffering and glory, humiliation and exaltation. They should have known that because the prophets have spoken that. The Old Testament prophets have revealed that the Messiah would have a career that could be described as suffering and a career that could be described as glory.

Later that same day, Jesus meets with the rest of the disciples. And if you go to verse 44, He says to them, "These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled." Those were the three sections of the Old Testament familiar to the Jews. "He opened their minds to understand the Old Testament Scripture." And here it comes again, "Thus He said to them, 'It is written that Christ would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day.' "

That was the part that was absent from their messianic theology. They had a theology of glory for the Messiah; they had no theology of suffering. Our Lord has to identify for them that He must suffer; He will suffer. And when He says this, He has suffered. They have no place in their theology for a suffering Messiah. As I have told you, with a thorough inspection of all Jewish literature from the past, there is no evidence that they ever believed the Messiah would come and suffer, let alone as a sacrifice for their sins.

And so again I say, they had a theology of messianic glory that the Messiah would be a king and a great ruler, but no theology of suffering. But Jesus reminds them that the prophets said He would suffer, He would die, He would rise, and He would be glorified. That's the full career of the Messiah. There are those two great realities in His work. He suffers and dies; He rises and reigns. Peter understood this. In 1 Peter chapter 1 in verse 10, he says, "As to this salvation, the prophets who prophesied of the grace that would come to you made careful searches and inquiries seeking to know what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating as He predicted, the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow."

You cannot understand the person and work of Jesus Christ apart from those two categories: the suffering and the glory. Those are the elements of the career and work of the Messiah, and those two summarize the entire Old Testament presentation of Messiah. They are a summary of Old Testament messianic prophecy. You will find in the Old Testament here and there in the Law, the Prophets, and the Holy Writings, statements about the Messiah's suffering, about His humiliation. They're scattered throughout the Old Testament. You will also find scattered throughout the Old Testament statements about His glory, His exaltation. But nowhere in the Old Testament do the two come together so

clearly with so much detail as they do in the passage before us, Isaiah 52:13 through 53:12.

Here is the most complete messianic prophecy in the Old Testament, details concerning the career of the Messiah 700 years before He arrives, and those details verified in absolute accuracy by history. This is the most complete place to find Jesus in the Old Testament. What we know from this is that there will be two comings of the Messiah. The First Coming, suffering, death, and resurrection; the Second Coming, exaltation and glory. He comes the first time as a sacrifice for sin, the second time as a reigning King of kings and Lord of lords. Both of these are presented by the prophecies of the Old Testament. They are brought together in Isaiah 53 in a way that is almost New Testament, where both of these are clearly laid out from Matthew to Revelation.

Now for our study of Isaiah 53...and you can return to that section...we come to the final stanza, the final of five stanzas in this Servant's song, verses 10 through 12. And here we meet the Servant again, the one identified throughout this section of Isaiah as the Servant of Yahweh, the Servant of Jehovah, the Servant of the Lord, none other than the Messiah. In stanza one, He was a startling, astonishing Servant; in stanza number two, a scorned Servant; in stanza number three, a substituted Servant; in stanza number four, a silent and slaughtered Servant. And now as we come into the final section, we see Him as the sovereign Servant, the sovereign Servant.

To understand the final section, verses 10 through 12, we need to go back to the opening section, verses 13 to 15 of chapter 52. So let me read those two in sequence. Isaiah 52, verse 13, "Behold – " this is God speaking, the Lord Yahweh, Jehovah Himself – "My Servant will prosper, He will succeed, He will be high and lifted up and greatly exalted. Just as many were astonished at you, My people, so His appearance was marred more than any man and His form more than the sons of men. Thus He will startle many nations. Kings will shut their mouths on account of Him for what had not been told them, they will see and what they had not heard, they will understand."

Now that presents a messianic enigma, a messianic enigma to the Jew, to the reader. Here we meet the Messiah, My Servant, the *ebed* Yahweh, the Slave of God, called a slave of God because of perfect obedience. Here we meet Him and we find that He is divine, He is God, because in verse 13 it says, "He will be high and lifted up and greatly exalted." All three verbs there used to describe Him are used to describe God Himself in Isaiah 6. And John says in John 12 that the vision in Isaiah 6 of God high and lifted up and sitting on a throne and holy, holy, holy, was a vision of Jesus Christ. So we learned that the Messiah here will be as God is, the very essence of God.

We learned that He will be lifted up, exalted. They had that in their theology of the Messiah. He will startle many nations. He will literally shut the mouths of monarchs and rulers and kings, who will be stunned at the majesty and glory of His presence. They will see in Him things they had never seen and hear from Him things they have never heard. This all fits the Jewish messianic glory theology. He is God. That maybe they didn't see clearly, but it's here. He is exalted. He succeeds. He prospers.

That's what that verb means in verse 13. He conquers the world. He subdues the nations. He says things and does things that have never been said and never been done as He exercises His majesty and His rule.

But there is an enigma in this opening declaration that comes from God and it is verse 14. He is going to be astonished...astonishing for His glory, but He is also astonishing for this most strange reason. His appearance is marred more than any man and His form more than the sons of men. Twice it identifies Him as a man. He is God in verse 13, and He is man in verse 14. As God, He is highly exalted, as God should be. And as man, He is disfigured; He is scarred. He is marred so severely that it is beyond any other man, beyond any of the sons of men.

This is an enigma, the enigma of the opening words of this section of Scripture. Who is this? And this is from God Himself. Jehovah God is speaking. Here is mystery; here is the mystery that is impossible at first perhaps to be unraveled, how this glorious person, this startling, stunning, commanding, dominating person can at the same time be marred and scarred, more disfigured than any human being, and ultimately come out of that, in verse 15, and be glorified. Who is this and what does all this mean? Well, we know what it means. The Messiah will both be exalted and humbled. This is Philippians 2. He humbled Himself and God highly exalted Him.

The suffering Servant fits into the purpose of God. And God's purpose is that He would come in humiliation and He would also come in exaltation. Both His humiliation and His exaltation are here promised by God. Yahweh is the speaker; this is God's plan; this is God's promise; these are God's words. The suffering Servant of Jehovah, the disfigured Messiah, is no victim, but rather the victorious Son of God chosen by the Father, empowered by the Spirit for suffering and for glory. How does that happen? Well the answer to the enigma of verses 13 to 15 is chapter 53. This explains both His suffering and its purpose, and His glory and its purpose.

This chapter then, chapter 53, contains the most important truth ever given. The good news of salvation for sinners by the death of the Servant of Yahweh, the only acceptable sacrifice to take away the sins of the world. The amazing revelation contained here begins with God speaking in verses 13 to 15 and it ends with God speaking again, starting in the middle of verse 11 through verse 12. God begins and ends this great prophecy. God promises the plan in 13 to 15, and at the end, in verses 11 and 12, He affirms its fulfillment. And so it is God who has planned both the exaltation and the humiliation of His Servant, the Messiah. What happened to Jesus Christ when He came was in the plan of God, not outside the plan of God. It was the plan of God; it was the purpose of God.

In between the declaration of God's purpose and the affirmation of that purpose, the beginning and the end of this portion of Scripture, comes the section with which we are so familiar, verse 1 through the first part of verse 11. Here is an epoch, penitent confession of the rejection and the hatred of the Servant by a future generation of Jews. We have been establishing that week after week. Starting in

verse 1, all the verbs are in the past tense, and they continue in the past tense. What does that mean? That means this is not a prediction of something in the future; this is a prediction of something in the past.

But it clearly describes the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, which is in the future. Yes, but the Jews who are making the confession are looking back to it and realizing that they were so wrong. Verses 1 to 11 is basically the content of the confession of the nation Israel in the future when they do what Zechariah says they will do, "Look on Him whom they've pierced and mourn for Him and a fountain of cleansing is open to them and the nation is saved."

This will be their confession. The promise of Israel's future salvation is laid out in Jeremiah 31, and we've looked at that, the new covenant. It's repeated in Ezekiel 36, verses 22 to 29, and we've looked at that where He saves them and gives them a new heart and gives them the Spirit and forgives their sins and puts the knowledge of Himself in them. That's the promise of the future salvation of Israel. It's reiterated in Zechariah 12:13. And all of that is affirmed by Paul in Romans 11:25 to 27, "So all Israel will be saved." Unmistakable promise of the future, national salvation of Israel.

And when that moment comes and the Spirit of grace and supplication comes upon them, as Zechariah describes it, and they all of a sudden are given life and sight and they realize that they had rejected and killed and continued to hate their only Savior, they will turn, reverse their considerations, and the confession will be the very words of Isaiah 53. It is then that they will say He was pierced for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities, chastened, punished for our well-being, scourged for our healing. The Lord caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Him. He was led as a lamb to slaughter. He was cut off out of the land of the living for the transgression of My people to whom the stroke was due. There is a future salvation for national Israel that is promised in the Old Testament and reiterated in the New Testament.

Now just as an aside, some people think that this is perhaps some kind of novel premillennial approach and that many theologians, historically, and certainly amillennial theologians, wouldn't believe this. Look, there is no way possible to escape what the Bible says about the future salvation of Israel. You would have to undo Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Isaiah, Zechariah. You would have to undo the preaching of Jesus, the preaching of the apostles, and the book of Romans.

You can't do that. The future salvation of Israel is so clear that if you go back...let's just take, for example...to the time of the Reformers in the seventeenth century and subsequent centuries of Puritans and Reformers, you will find they believed fully in the future salvation of national Israel. No less than John Calvin, who dies in 1564, 16th, says this, "When the Gentiles shall come in, the Jews also shall return from their defection to the obedience of faith and thus shall be completed the salvation of the whole Israel of God, in such a way that the Jews shall obtain the first place according to His eternal purpose. He loved that nation and this He confirms by the remarkable declaration and

the grace of divine calling cannot be made void.”

And Calvin and his friends, working on the Geneva Bible, placed in the notes of Romans 11 this paragraph, “The blindness of the Jews is neither so universal that the Lord has no elect in that nation, neither will it be continual for there will be a time in which they also as the prophets have foretold will effectually embrace that which they now so stubbornly for the most part reject and refuse.” The whole committee of the translators and scholars and theologians that worked on the Geneva Bible affirmed the future salvation of Israel, and so did a long list of Puritan writers that I could quote you for the next 20 or 30 minutes.

This found its way into the thinking of some of the names that you’re familiar with, theologians like Charles Hodge and Robert Haldane, people like Martyn Lloyd-Jones, and even before him, Charles Haddon Spurgeon. It was no less than John Owen...1616 to 1683...Owen said this, “Days of prayer and humiliation are kept in Scotland. One particular object being that the promised conversion of God’s ancient people of the Jews may be hastened.” It’s inescapable that this is the truth. All of those who were faithful interpreters of Scripture affirm it. One of my favorite Puritans, Thomas Boston, wrote, “There is a day coming when there shall be a national conversion of the Jews. The now blinded and rejected Jews shall at length be converted into the faith of Christ.”

That’s wonderful news, isn’t it, for us living in the world and seeing what we see in Israel today? According to our dear friend Iain Murray, the same belief concerning the future of the Jews is to be found widely in 17th-century Puritan literature. And I could go on...I won’t...simply to say it’s everywhere. Jonathan Edwards, 18th century in America, affirms the salvation of national Israel. All who are faithful students of Scripture find it impossible to escape that. So, when that happens, as I’ve been telling you, this is what they’re going to say. The very words or words very like them from Isaiah chapter 53.

When that day comes, when that day arrives, they will look again on the One they’ve pierced and they will reverse their opinion. And out of their mouths will come these words of open, penitent confession, the heart of which is this: they will say, “We thought – ” verse 4 – “He was stricken, smitten by God and afflicted for His blasphemies.” Now we know He was stricken, smitten of God and afflicted for our transgressions and our iniquities and our well-being, and our healing spiritually. “And our sins were laid on Him and He was cut off for our transgressions to whom the stroke was due.”

They go through this confession, all the way down to the midpoint of verse 11, and then the final word is left for God. And from the middle of verse 11 through verse 12, God affirms their confession. God affirms that this confession is the true confession. And it is God Himself who says in the middle of verse 11, “Yes, My Servant will justify the many, He will bear their iniquities – ” verse 12 – “He poured out Himself to death, was numbered with the transgressors, bore the sin of many, interceded for the transgressors.” That is God’s final affirmation that the confession that the Jews have made is indeed

an accurate confession.

God Himself then answers the enigma, How can He be exalted and humiliated? God says, “He will be humiliated to bear their iniquities, to bear the sin of many, but – ” in verse 12 – “I will allot Him a portion with the great and divide the booty with the strong,” and that’s His exaltation. So that gives you the big picture of what we’re looking at here. The Jews in a future generation will say what you’ve said, and what I’ve already said. That Jesus Christ is the only Savior, that His death is a vicarious, substitutionary sacrifice made for me, made for sinners. And He dies as God’s chosen Lamb to take away the sin of the world; that there is no salvation in any other name than the name of Jesus Christ.

With that kind of a review, let’s go to the final stanza. Up to this point, the provisions and the benefits of the Servant’s death have been viewed from the perspective of the people, as I said. And that will be true all the way down to the midpoint of verse 11. The final lines from midpoint, verse 11 to 12, will shift, and we’re not going to hear the Jews’ perspective, or the sinners’ perspective; we’re going to hear God’s perspective that I just read to you. So it ends in a powerful way as God affirms the truthfulness of their confession. That gets us to verse 10, so let’s look at it.

This is what the Lord has done to His Servant. They have a full soteriological understanding of the cross of Christ. These Jews in the future generation who make this confession, they get the whole picture. There’s nothing missing in their soteriology. Their gospel is a complete gospel. This is amazing because remember now, this is 700 years before Christ even comes, and this is words coming from Jews thousands of years after that and indicating a complete understanding of the cross. They know now what the reality is. Verse 10, they know the Lord was pleased to crush Him, putting Him to grief if He would render Himself as a guilt offering. They get it.

They understand the vicarious, substitutionary, sacrificial atonement of Christ in the place of sinners. They understand that, that great core doctrine. They understand that He was made sin for us who knew no sin. They understand that He bore in His body our sins on the cross. They get it. They understand what the New Testament epistles explain in detail. And by the way, in the Hebrew the term Lord, Yahweh...the tetragrammaton...the name for the Lord Himself is emphatic. “The Lord was pleased to crush Him. Even though – ” It says “but.” It could be “yet.” “Even though – ” as verse 9 says – “there’s no violence, no deceit in His mouth.” In other words, He’s perfectly holy, perfectly righteous, perfectly sinless. In spite of His sinlessness, the Lord is pleased to crush Him, putting Him to grief. Not just crush Him but a kind of crushing that is described with a modifying phrase, “Putting Him to grief.”

In other words, the Lord is doing something to Him that is horrific. Men, of course, are unjustly crushing Him. We saw that, didn’t we, in the earlier verses. Men are doing the worst that they can do with an unjust trial and brutality and abuse and harassment and punching and slapping and hitting with sticks and crowning with thorns and nailing and piercing. Men are doing the worst that they can

do, the worst that sinners can do, and they're pleased to do that. But here, God is pleased and God is delighted to crush Him. While men are doing the worst that they can do, at the very same time God is doing the best that He can do.

Men are doing the worst that they can do for the sinless One, and God is doing the best that He can do for sinners. His death is God's work. He is God's Lamb, chosen by God, Acts 2, Acts 4, chosen by the determinate counsel of God; the purpose and counsel of God has determined that He will die. It is God who laid on Him the iniquity of us all. It is God who crushes Him. It is God who cuts Him off out of the land of the living. God, who finds no pleasure in the death of the wicked, as Ezekiel 18 says, finds full pleasure in the death of the Righteous One. He calls Him that in verse 11, the Righteous One. God, who finds no pleasure in the death of sinners, finds full pleasure in the death of the sinless One.

Now listen carefully. God's delight and God's pleasure in the death of Christ, God's pleasure in crushing Him, God's pleasure in putting Him to grief. And let me say a word about that phrase "putting Him to grief." It's a very powerful phrase, "putting Him to grief," because it has the idea of making Him sick...not sick with an illness or sick with a disease...but, literally, such an excruciating experience as to completely debilitate His entire being. God not only crushes Him in the sense that kills Him, but He makes it as excruciating and painful as conceivable or inconceivable. He is crushed agonizingly, painfully, excruciatingly. And God is doing the crushing.

Now this is not the death, as some have suggested, of a martyr; this is not the death of a martyr. Martyrs don't die like this. I mean physical difficulties are present, whether they are burned at a stake, killed another way; but if you study the history of martyrs, you find something quite interesting. You can go all the way back to the *Fox's Book of Martyrs* and read the thousands of accounts of martyrs there. You can study martyrs through the history of the church. And you will find that martyrs die with songs on their lips. Martyrs die singing. Martyrs die testifying to faith in the Lord. Martyrs die with hope in their hearts. Martyrs die, amazing, over the measure of joy because martyrs die...listen...under the sweet comforts of grace. Martyrs die under the sweet comforts of grace. Martyrs die with the Holy Spirit coming around. Martyrs die with God's presence palpable. Martyrs die under the sweet comforts of grace. Martyrs die, and in dying begin to taste heaven because that's grace.

Our Lord's death was not like that. No hymns were sung after they left the Passover. No Scriptures were cited, no comfort, no Holy Spirit, no Father, no source of comfort. Why? Because Jesus didn't die under the sweet comforts of grace. Jesus died under the relentless and unrelieved terrors of Law. Jesus died under divine wrath unmitigated. No comfort, only divine fury. Jesus died tasting hell. "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" No believer ever died like that. And every unbeliever dies like that. Every believer dies tasting heaven. Every unbeliever dies tasting hell. Jesus died tasting hell. He died the death of an unbeliever with no comforts and no grace and no mercy.

The Jews get it. They have a very rich understanding of the death of Messiah. But why was God pleased? Why? What was it that pleased God? How could God be pleased? How could He possibly be pleased with such agonies? Listen. God's delight and God's pleasure in crushing His Son in this way was not in His pain, but in His purpose. It was not in His agony; it was in His accomplishment. It was not in His suffering; it was in His salvation. And that's what it says. Why was the Lord pleased? Why pleased to crush Him, putting Him to that grief? Literally in Hebrew, "Because He would render Himself as a guilt offering. Because He would give His life to save sinners." It was the outcome that pleased God, not the pain. But the pain and the agony was necessary. He had to die under the full, unmitigated, unrelieved, comfortless realities of divine law and wrath.

The Jews understand it. He was the guilt offering. He was the guilt offering. Why would they say that? Why would the Holy Spirit put those words down for Isaiah to write? It's a guilt offering? I'll tell you why. There were five offerings the Jews gave, according to Leviticus, when they had their sacrificial system laid out by God. There was the burnt offering, and then there was the grain offering and the peace offering and the sin offering and the guilt offering. Three of those were sacrifices. The first one, the burnt offering, and the fourth and fifth the sin offering and the guilt offering, were animal sacrifices. The other two, grain and peace, were not.

Without going into too much detail about it, three of them were animal sacrifices. Those three that were animal sacrifices were pictures of the deadly results of sin, that sin produces death. But also they were hopeful in that God would allow a substitute to die in the sinner's place. And the sacrifice of an animal pictured the fact that God would allow a substitute. It was just that none of those animals were that substitute; they only pointed to the reality that there would be a substitute. But of those three offerings where you have animals involved, the burnt offering, the sin offering and the guilt offering, that final one is the most comprehensive offering, that fifth one, the guilt offering. It adds a dimension that the others don't have.

And I don't want to go into all those details, but it adds a dimension the others don't have. And most all commentators would agree that the characteristic of the guilt offering, or sometimes called the trespass offering...it's the same one...it was the offering that added the dimension of restitution, or satisfaction or propitiation, which is a verb that means to be satisfied. It is the last of the offerings in Leviticus in the first seven chapters. It is an advance from the others. By the way, it was the sin offering and the guilt offering that were the offerings offered every day in the morning and evening sacrifices. So they had these offerings going all the time. It advanced the notions and ideas in the sin offering. In the sin offering you had repentance communicated.

In the sin offering you had the recognition of sin bringing death and the hope of a substitute. But in the guilt offering, because the whole animal was put on the altar, there was the picture of completion or complete satisfaction, complete satisfaction. And the Jews will see that, that the offering of Christ

was the guilt offering in the sense that it was the most complete offering. It provided full satisfaction, full restitution, full propitiation. The satisfaction of God's justice is demonstrated in the wholeness of that sacrifice. The debt is fully paid and the sinner free.

How rich is this understanding that He's not the burnt offering and He's not the sin offering. He's the guilt offering, which covers everything the other two cover and adds the marvelous dimension of complete, divine satisfaction, the sacrifice of the Servant as the full, compensatory payment given to God to satisfy His holy justice and to pay in full the penalty for all the sins of all who would ever believe. Those then whose sins are paid will be forgiven forever. And John says, "He's the propitiation for our sins – " the guilt offering, the trespass offering – "that satisfies God and not for ours only but for the sins of the whole world.

This is understanding the gospel that Christ is the complete satisfaction, the complete sacrifice to which nothing can be added; God is satisfied. That's why God is pleased. Pleased to crush Him, not because He delighted in the agony, but He delighted in the atonement. Pleased because He was the guilt offering for all believers from Adam to the end, who paid in full divine justice. They have a full understanding of the cross. But they don't stop there. Here's more of their confession. The middle of verse 10, "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."

Wait a minute. He's dead. What's going on here? How could He see His offspring? Prolong His days? Do the work of God in His hand? See and be satisfied? He would have to be alive, wouldn't He?...have to be alive. This is a confession of the resurrection, and it's in the image of childbirth. It's just magnificent. "He will see His offspring, He will see His posterity." That is future tense. Now they shift, these Jews, into future tense the results of what He has done. He will see His offspring. This is such an obvious analogy. And we would all like to see the generations ahead, right?

That's why we're so preoccupied with the ones behind. There are whole websites where you can go and check out all the dead people that are in your family. That's sort of a bad substitute for the fact that you're not going to see the ones in the future. But, you know, we all say, "I'd love to see my children, I'd love to see my children get married, I'd love to see my children's children, my grandchildren. I'd love to see my grandchildren's grandchildren. I'd love to see where this thing goes.

I'd love to see down the path a few generations to see if the faithfulness to the Lord in this generation is sustained. And I'd love to see where the Kingdom goes and how the people that have come out of my family fit into the purposes of God in the future. But I'll never see that." You know I'm blessed. In ancient times you'd be blessed if you lived after the Flood to see a generation or two; I'd be blessed to see my children, my grandchildren. I don't know if I'll see great grandchildren. Certainly won't see beyond that because I'll be dead.

So if He sees His offspring, if He sees His posterity, He's got to be alive a long time, and He will. He will prolong His days. That's a Hebraism for long, enduring life. He's alive now. So here is Romans 10:9 and 10; they not only believe in the death of Christ, but they acknowledge that God raised Him from the dead. Here's the resurrection. He will see His posterity; He will see the generations in the future; He will see all of them because He's alive, He's alive.

And He would have to be alive, wouldn't He? To reign, to be exalted? I love this. In Hebrews 2:9, "He was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death but we see Him crowned with glory and honor." And then verse 10, "it was fitting for Him for whom are all things and through whom are all things in bringing many sons to glory." Just stop right there.

He will see them all. All the ones He brings to glory He will see. John 6, He says, "All that the Father gives to Me will come to Me, I'll lose none of them and raise them at the last day." He will live to see His posterity. He ever lives to see His children. He will see His bride complete. He will see His flock gathered into glory. He will see His children. Amazing reality.

Yes, He prospers. That's what it said in verse 13 of 52, "My Servant will prosper." And here His prosperity is indicated in the final phrase of verse 10, "The good pleasure of the Lord will prosper in His hand." And what is the good pleasure of the Lord? That through crushing Him He saves the elect. He will see it. Not only will He see it, He will do it. The good pleasure of the Lord will succeed in His hand. All that the Father gives to Me will come to Me; I will lose none of them. I will raise Him up. The work of Christ will be complete.

God's pleasure is in saving sinners. And to satisfy His pleasure in saving sinners, He had to slaughter His Son. But He delights in crushing His Son so that He can delight in saving sinners who will forever and ever praise and glorify Him. All, this whole salvation, as Ephesians 1 says, is to the praise of His glory. And they have a final word in their confession, verse 11. "As the result of the anguish of His soul, He will see and be satisfied." What will He see? He'll see the plan to its completion. He will see the good pleasure of the Lord succeed. He will see His spiritual offspring. He will see the redeemed gathered in.

God is satisfied by the atoning sacrifice of Christ, and Christ is equally satisfied by seeing all His children gathered around His throne forever. The spiritual offspring, the redeemed of all the ages, forever His love, forever His bride, forever His sons and daughters, loving, worshiping, honoring, serving Him in His presence in the glories of eternal heaven. And especially, oh especially, will He delight in the salvation of that adulterous wife, Israel.

Listen to Isaiah 62, "For Zion's sake, I will not keep silent. And for Jerusalem's sake I will not keep quiet, until her righteousness goes forth like brightness, and her salvation like a torch that is burning.

And the nations will see your righteousness, and all kings your glory; and you will be called by a new name which the mouth of the Lord will designate. You will also be a crown of beauty in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of your God.

“It will no longer be said to you, ‘Forsaken,’ nor to your land will it any longer be said, “Desolate”; but you will be called ‘My delight is in her,’ and your land, ‘Married’; for the Lord delights in you, and to Him your land will be married. For as a young man marries a virgin, so your sons will marry you; and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so your God will rejoice over you.”

God will rejoice over the salvation of Israel that we’re talking about in the future. And so will Christ. And as the result of the anguish of His soul, literally, He will see His spiritual offspring, including Israel, and be fully satisfied. Or another way to translate that; He will enjoy it to the max. The Servant’s full joy and satisfaction comes from providing righteousness, redemption, forgiveness and eternal heaven for His children. What a day that will be. What a day that will be.

The final words are from God, the middle of verse 11, and we’ll wait to hear from Him next week. Before we go, we have something very special to do this morning. We have been so blessed for many years to have Don Green and Nancy and their family as part of our church. He is departing now to become the pastor of a church in the Cincinnati area, a really remarkable group of people. Some of the leaders are with us, this morning, and we welcome them and enjoyed having them in our elders’ prayer time.

But we don’t want to send Don away without a proper affirmation that we are behind this and that we love him, trust him, believe in him and affirm that this is the call of God on his life. As we did in the first service, we’ll do again for those elders who are here. Don, if you would come and we’ll have the elders gather around if there are any in this service. Most of them were in the early hour.

Don has been a faithful part of our ministry. Many of you know and love him and his family very much, and we rejoice in the steps that the Lord causes His faithful servants to take. We hold all these precious people that God gives us very lightly in our hands, understanding they belong to Him and not to us. But we’re going to miss Don and his ministry among us, and yet we believe with all our hearts this is God’s purpose for him, and we want to affirm that this morning. Pray with me.

Father, we thank You as we come to the conclusion of this whole worship experience this morning, that You are sovereign and we have sung it, and we have seen it, and we have said it, and we have read it, and we have declared it, and heard the prophet declare it, and heard You declare it from Your own words, and, Lord, we affirm that, and that You call men, and You call them to salvation, first of all, then You call them to Your church.

And many men are lifted up to shepherd and oversee and lead Your church, and we know this is Your calling. We're so grateful and so thankful to have been a small part of shared ministry with Don through the years. And now we believe that this is Your hand in his life and the life of his family to take him to that next step where his ministry will flourish.

We pray for the group of people to receive him well and grow to love the family as well as Don. And we pray that You'll do exceeding, abundantly, above all we can ask or think according to that power that works in us, that raised Christ from the dead.

We pray that the testimony raised up in that part of our country may spread not only in the immediate area but around the world. Empower Don and use him in a mighty, mighty way. Again, we thank You, Lord, for giving us the privilege of investing in the lives of very choice servants that can be therefore more useful to you.

We thank You for this congregation, this church and the many in this church who have invested into the Greens' life as a family and as individuals. And we pray that all that You've allowed us to do will be but the beginning of what lies ahead. So we commend him to the Word of Your grace, which is able to build him up and give him an inheritance with the saints, and may You do what brings honor to Your name through him in the area that he's being sent to. We rejoice in that opportunity and look forward to reports of blessing. We thank You in Christ's name. Amen.

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