

## ***“The Servant’s Mission”***

### **The Suffering Servant**

Isaiah 49:1-12

The Rev. Jeff Stivason, Ph.D.

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**Jeff:** Our heavenly Father, we thank You for this day and for the time You’ve given us to be together. And we thank You most of all for the Lord Jesus and for the blessing of life that we have in Him, and the abundance of grace that He brought to us, a grace greater than our sin. And we’re thankful to be clothed in His gospel, His gospel righteousness which enables us to stand before You as sons and daughters forgiven and adopted. Father, as we come before You we pray and praise You, and ask that You will continue to bless our gathering. Father, we ask that You’ll bless our gathering, not because and not only because it is a time of warmth where we can gather together and pray for one another, where we can hear about others’ needs, but also where we can come together and hear Your word. And Father, we pray that this Word will have an impact upon us; we need it. And Lord, we ask that You will provide what we need, and do that through Your Spirit and Your word.

Father, as we gather we pray that we would even be different than when we came this morning. And we ask, Lord, that You’ll take up those concerns of our hearts. Lord, we pray that You will comfort Bob Forney’s entire family. Father, we certainly pray for Gregg. And we ask that You’ll be with him and Karen. And we’re thankful for their view of Your providential activity in the midst of all this. But Lord, we do pray for Gregg’s healing. We pray for his recovery in all of this and ask that Your hand would be upon him for good. Lord, we certainly pray for Don in the midst of this as he frets for his brother. We pray that You will help him to cast his anxieties upon You, knowing that You care for him and his brother.

Father, we certainly pray for our brother Bruce and are thankful for him, for his life and for his energy. We ask, Lord, that You will continue to bless him as You see fit. And Lord, we pray that You’ll bless not only him but his wife as well.

Father, we ask that You would bless Ted as he represents not only the Brave Men, but as he opens Your word at Dick’s memorial service. Father, we are thankful for Dick’s life and for the blessing that You made him to so many of us, for the positive way in which he impacted us. And Lord, we pray that You’ll bless Ted as he speaks on behalf of us, and as he speaks about our friend. And Lord, we just pray that You’ll give him the words to speak.

Father, we ask now that You’ll bless us as we study Your word. We ask it in Jesus precious and blessed name. Amen.

**Brave Men:** Amen.

**Jeff:** Let’s turn to Isaiah 49 today. You’ll notice that we’ve batted out of order in this series and we’re going backwards. This will be the last Servant song, but it is the second Servant song in the book of Isaiah. And so today I want us to look at verses 1-13 of Isaiah 49. Don, do you have it?

**Don Maurer:** Yes.

**Jeff:** Why don’t you read the 13 verses there?

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**Don:** Okay.

*“Listen, O coastlands, to Me,  
And take heed, you peoples from afar!  
The LORD has called Me from the womb;  
From the matrix of My mother He has made mention of My name.  
And He has made My mouth like a sharp sword;  
In the shadow of His hand He has hidden Me,  
And made Me a polished shaft;  
In His quiver He has hidden Me.’  
And He said to me,  
‘You are My servant, O Israel,  
In whom I will be glorified.’  
Then I said, ‘I have labored in vain,  
I have spent my strength for nothing and in vain;  
Yet surely my just reward is with the LORD,  
And my work with my God.’  
And now the LORD says,  
Who formed Me from the womb to be His Servant,  
To bring Jacob back to Him,  
So that Israel is gathered to Him  
(For I shall be glorious in the eyes of the LORD,  
And My God shall be My strength),  
Indeed He says,  
‘It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant  
To raise up the tribes of Jacob,  
And to restore the preserved ones of Israel;  
I will also give You as a light to the Gentiles,  
That You should be My salvation to the ends of the earth.’  
Thus says the LORD,  
The Redeemer of Israel, their Holy One,  
To Him whom man despises,  
To Him whom the nation abhors,  
To the Servant of rulers:  
‘Kings shall see and arise,  
Princes also shall worship,  
Because of the LORD who is faithful,  
The Holy One of Israel;  
And He has chosen You.’  
Thus says the LORD:  
‘In an acceptable time I have heard You,  
And in the day of salvation I have helped You;  
I will preserve You and give You  
As a covenant to the people,  
To restore the earth,*

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*To cause them to inherit the desolate heritages;  
That You may say to the prisoners, ‘Go forth,’  
To those who are in darkness, ‘Show yourselves.’  
They shall feed along the roads,  
And their pastures shall be on all desolate heights.  
They shall neither hunger nor thirst,  
Neither heat nor sun shall strike them;  
For He who has mercy on them will lead them,  
Even by the springs of water He will guide them.  
I will make each of My mountains a road,  
And My highways shall be elevated.  
Surely these shall come from afar;  
Look! Those from the north and the west,  
And these from the land of Sinim.’”*

This is the word of the Lord.

**Brave Men:** Thanks be to God.

**Jeff:** Okay. Today I want us to think about this last Servant song. And the reason I want us to think about it in terms of looking at it out of order is because it sort of captures everything that we’ve been thinking about. And I think that it wraps things up in such a way that not only does it cause us to look forward, but it also causes us to look backward, and to see other Servant songs from Isaiah. And it causes us to think a little bit about the work of Christ and how it’s presented here. So let’s do that today.

I want us to think about a few introductory points. It’s a way of getting us situated in terms of our thoughtfulness about this song. I want us to think about the Servant as a vessel of glory, as a discarded vessel, and as a rewarded vessel.

So what I want us to do is to start by asking a basic question—something that I think we have a tendency to all know—and yet when we have to answer the question, what is it?, we’re not sure exactly what it is.

It’s sort of like time. When Augustine was asked “What is time?”, he said that it’s something that everybody knows what it is. But when they’re asked to describe or define it or give it any kind of dimensional thought, no one seems to be able to answer. And that question that I want to ask you is, what is glory?

What is glory? It’s a word that we have a tendency to all think we know because we’re familiar with it, but try to define it. Try to give it some sort of shape in terms of how you would describe it.

And you might say something like this because you’ve heard people talk about it at different times. You’ve heard that glory is *kabod*—the old Hebrew, right? And it means “heaviness” or “weighty.” And so when you’re asked what glory is, you say, “Man, it’s heavy!” (*Laughter*) All right? And it is.

But what exactly is it? When you say it’s heavy, that gives you the sense that there’s something material about glory. But is it material? Is it something substantial?

It’s always helpful, I think, to go back to the Bible itself and to think about how the Bible describes a concept like this. So let’s do that for just a minute and think about what the Bible says about it. And the Bible actually says that there is some concreteness to it.

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What do I mean by that? Well, look at Romans chapter 3 verse 23. And you can jot it down; I’ll read it to you. You can go there if you would like. It says this. It says, *“All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.”*

Now think about that. Here we have the Bible saying that glory is something of a standard—a standard that we can fall short of. Now that’s an interesting way to think about glory. Yes, it’s heavy. But now all of a sudden it’s a standard; it’s a measuring tool. And we fall short of it.

Or how about this in Romans 1:22?—same book, different chapter. *“They exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images.”* Now all of a sudden glory is something that can be exchanged for something else. Glory can be exchanged for an idol.

Now that’s interesting. Now we have several different ideas about glory. One is that it’s weighty or that it’s heavy. It has magnitude to it. The other one is that it’s measurable; it’s a measuring rod. The other one is that it can be exchanged for something else. These are all Biblical concepts. So the question that we’re bombarded with as we think about it is, what is glory? What is it? How would you describe it?

Well, it has these various meanings to it. And since we’re in Isaiah I want us to ask the question. How does Isaiah define or describe glory? And that’s a good place to think, because when you’re interpreting a book one of the things that you have a tendency to do, or at least you should do, is you should ask, how does this author describe or define the word that we’re considering? It’s good to go outside of that and look into other parts of Scripture. And that’s legitimate because the Scriptures have one Author. In one sense they are not written primarily by multiple authors; they’re written secondarily by multiple authors. But primarily they’re written by the Holy Spirit. So it’s legitimate for us to go to Paul or Ephesians, and so on and so forth, and to ask what those texts say about glory.

But typically when one starts with a word study one goes to the book itself and says, “Where does this author use this word?” Well, I want us to think about that. And if you go back to chapter 48 and verse 11 you’ll see something really interesting. You’ll see the use of glory there in 48:11.

*“For My own sake, for My own sake, I do it,  
For how should My name be profaned?  
My glory I will not give to another.”*

Now here’s God saying, asking as it were, “How can My glory be given to another? I will not give My glory to another.” Now we have another addition to our understanding of glory. It’s something that God will not give to another.

Now you can certainly come in your mind to the person of Moses himself. And remember how Moses had to cover his face when he came down from the mountain because his face shone with the glory of God? But that was a derived glory. Remember, it was a glory that was fading. It wasn’t a glory that lasted. Can we say it like this? It was not original to Moses; it was derived.

And so in that sense, of course, obviously the glory of God is shared, but not in the sense of God’s essence as to who He is. He will not share that with another.

And so what is His glory here in this text, in 48:11? Well, it’s His name; it’s His reputation. And when you think about it, that’s tangible to us, isn’t it? I mean, all you

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have to do is think about a job reference. That’s how practical this is; that’s how tangible it is.

For instance I once talked to somebody about giving a reference to someone else. And the person told me, “The only way that I’ll give this person a reference is if this person, if he gets the job, he commits to being there two to three years.”

And I said, “Now I think I know the answer to this. But why would you require that?”

And he said, “Because I’m putting my name on the line.”

And I said, “Ah, that’s exactly why I thought you were saying that!”, right? It’s because he is saying, “I’m putting my reputation on the line for this person. And so I’m going to expect something from this person.” What is he going to expect? He’s going to expect his name—that is, the referencer—not to be tarnished by the referencee.

And so if glory is tied to God’s name, then the question is how does it affect me? Or better, how does it affect Him:? And I think the answer to that is easy. You can go back to Isaiah chapter 43, verses 1 and 7. Go back to Isaiah 43, verses 1 and 7 for a minute. Look at verse 1.

*“But now thus says the LORD,  
He who created you, O Jacob,  
He who formed you, O Israel:  
‘Fear not, for I have redeemed you;  
I have called you by My name; you are Mine.’”*

Look at verse 7.

*“Everyone who is called by My name,  
Whom I created for My glory,  
Whom I formed and made.”*

Now I want you to think about this in terms of what God is saying. God is saying that those who are His family bear His name and bear His reputation. In other words, can we say it like this? They bear His glory in that sense. And all of a sudden we get the idea that the people of God do share in the glory of God by virtue of having His name upon them.

Now we’ve talked about that in the job reference sense. But you know what this is in terms of the family sense. You know, you’ve said it to your kids, or you will say it to your kids. And if we have adult children we’ve said it to our kids. And that is that when they go somewhere we always tell them what? We always say, “Remember who you are,” right? “Remember whose name you represent when you go out. Don’t bring a tarnish to the name,” right?—that sort of thing.

And that’s important. Solomon says, *“A good name is better than fine perfume.”* And so we want to protect the good name of the family. And so we encourage the family members to be careful of that. And that’s the idea.

But here’s the problem. The problem is that having explained all of this, the problem is we know that we won’t protect the name. We know that we’ve fallen short of the glory of God, says Romans 3:23. And having fallen short of the glory of God we have fallen short of our ability to uphold the integrity of the Name. And so we are in something of a quandary. God has called us as His people, especially if we’re thinking about this in the eighth century. God has called the Israelites to be His people. They’ve fallen short of His glory; they’ve tarnished His name.

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And the question is, what were they to do? And the same question by extrapolation is what are we to do?, because we know that we certainly do not always uphold the Name. And so we don’t always glorify Him; we don’t always uphold His reputation.

And it’s at this point that the Servant enters into this whole discussion. It’s at this point that we see the suffering Servant manifest in this passage. And I just want us to walk through this and think about this suffering Servant in light of what we just said.

So the first thing that I want us to do is that I want us to think about Him as a vessel of glory. And you see that in verses 1-3. Remember, God entrusted His glory to Israel. And remember what Israel is supposed to do. Israel as a people, the descendants of Abraham, was to do three things. They were to populate—that’s an easy one! They were to inhabit a land. There’s another easy one; as long as God provides the land for them—and He did. And then thirdly they were to carry the glory of God, the name of God, the reputation of God, to all the other nations. They were to be a blessing to the other nations. How so? Again, by taking the glory of God to the other nations, by spreading over the face of the whole earth the truth of God in His message. That’s what they were supposed to do.

But you know as well as I do that they failed in that endeavor; they failed. Now what happens? God sends a Redeemer, a Substitute. And that’s what we see here in this text. He sends Someone in their stead. And this Someone is the right Person.

Notice; look at verse 1. This is the Substitute talking.

*“He called Me from the womb;*

*From the body of My mother He named Me.”*

**Transcriber’s Note:** From now on Jeff’s quotations are from the ESV.

**Jeff:** The question is, what is His name? Now you’ve got to be thinking in terms of the synagogue at this point. Just think about this. Here are the people of Israel. They’re sitting there listening. And the rabbi or the prophet—at this point it’s Isaiah the prophet—is reading that God has a solution to their problem. He’s going to send a Substitute. And He has called this Person by name. He knows them from the womb. He’s going to be their solution. And everybody is ready and waiting and they’re saying this: “I wonder what the name of this Person is. What’s the name?”

And look at verse 3. This is still the Servant talking from the womb.

*“”He said, ‘You are My servant Israel.’”*

And the people say, “Wait a minute! That’s us! We’re Israel! What’s God doing?” You see, the question is this. You can imagine it because it’s happened to them before.

God says to Moses, “I’m going to wipe this people out and start fresh with you.” And these people in the eighth century hear this coming from the mouth of the prophet. They have to be asking themselves, “Is God going to wipe us out and start fresh with another Israel, a substitute? Is that what’s happening here? That’s our name. Is God willing to cast us off?”

Or is God doing something else? And He’s doing something else. But you see, what they didn’t understand is something they should have understood. And that is that He’s sending a Substitute to stand in their place.

And why should they have known this? How should they have understood this? Well, think about it. Think about the sacrificial system. The sacrificial system was that you take a lamb and you offer it to the priest to be slaughtered *in your stead*; on your behalf! And

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in that sense the people of Israel should have understood that God had provided a Substitute for them. And that Substitute was to be viewed through the sacrifices. He was promised all the way back in Genesis chapter 3, verses 15 and 16.

**Transcriber’s Note:** Genesis 3:14-15, ESV.

*“The LORD God said to the serpent,  
‘Because you have done this,  
Cursed are you above all livestock,  
And above all beasts of the field.  
On your belly you shall go,  
And dust you shall eat all the days of your life.  
I will put enmity between you and the woman,  
And between your offspring and her Offspring.  
He shall bruise your head,  
And you shall bruise His heel.”*

Now I want you to think about this. You say to me, “How would they have gotten that?” I’ll tell you how they would have gotten it: the same way that the posterity of Adam would have gotten that.

What do I mean by that? Go back to Genesis chapter 5 and remember what Lamech does. He names his son Noah. Why does he name his son Noah? He names his son Noah because Noah means “rest.” And Lamech says, “Maybe this is the one God will use to provide us rest from the curse.”

Now I want you to know something. If Lamech understood that his son might be the redeemer, then certainly these Israelites in the eighth century B.C. would have had an even more developed sense of this Redeemer who was to come and stand in their stead. And certainly anyone with ears to hear would have understood that.

And so when we think about the New Testament, when we drive forward into the New Testament what do we find? We find that in Matthew 2:15 what is Jesus called? He’s called the true Israel.

**Transcriber’s Note:** Matthew 2:14-15, NKJV. *“When he arose, he took the young Child and His mother by night and departed for Egypt, and was there until the death of Herod, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the LORD through the prophet, saying, ‘Out of Egypt I called My Son.’”*

**Jeff:** He is the One who fulfills Hosea 11:1. He is the One that God calls out of Egypt and calls His Son. So here we have this progression from Genesis 3 all the way up through the Gospels. This unfolding Substitute is coming through different types and images, through different promises, emerging from different shadows, and stands as Jesus. This is the Servant.

Now here we are in the eighth century. And we know that the people of Israel weren’t all that soft of heart. They didn’t always understand what they should have understood. So here they are in the eighth century. They’re wondering who in the world this could be. “Is He going to disband us? Is He going to start again? Is this a Substitute or is this a replacement?” That’s the idea.

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Well, He’s the right Person. And He’s the right Person because He’s the Substitute. But there’s something else about Him that we learn from this text. He’s the right weapon; He has the right weapon.

Look at verse 2. He has a sharp sword. Look at this. Verse 2 says: *“He made My mouth like a sharp sword.”*

Now I want you to think about that. When we think about a sharp sword, you know we think about warfare, and we think about carnage and blood and all those sorts of things. But I want you to think about what we’ve already learned. I think it’s something else. I want you to go ahead. This is why we did these out of order. I want you to go ahead to Isaiah 50 for a minute. And Isaiah 50 is the third Servant song. And I want you to notice what it says in verse 4. It says: *“The LORD has given Me the tongue of those who are taught.”* Why? Here it is: *“That I may know how to sustain with a word him who is weary.”*

In other words, when we think about this sharp sword that comes forth from the mouth of the Servant we shouldn’t think of carnage and warfare, although Revelation is going to have us think in that way. But in the Servant songs there’s another side to it. And that side to it is that the Servant hears as a disciple so that He can speak into the lives of other people. And we talked about this when we talked about Isaiah 50, and so it’s very prominent and important; it’s worthy of emulation. Go ahead.

**Bryan Whittington:** Does this have anything to do with the full armor of God, the sword as the Word?

**Jeff:** Well, when we think about the full armor of God one of the things that we think about is that when you go into Isaiah 59 this matches up with Ephesians chapter 6. *“Put on the full armor of God.”* Notice verse 17:

*“He put on righteousness as a breastplate  
And a helmet of salvation on His head.  
He put on garments of vengeance for clothing,  
And wrapped Himself in zeal as a cloak,”*  
And so on.

Who is this “He?” Well, go back and look at verse 14 and you’ll see that *“justice is turned back, and truth is lacking.”*

Now just hold your hand in that place and go ahead to Jeremiah for just a minute—Jeremiah chapter 5. In Jeremiah chapter 5 the prophet is told to look for a person. Jeremiah 5:1; this is just the next prophet.

*“Run to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem,  
And look and take note.  
Search her squares to see if you can find a man,  
One who does justice and seeks truth.”*

Now go back to Isaiah 59. Notice what it says there in verse 15:  
*“Justice is turned back; truth is lacking.”*

Go through the cities and find a man who upholds justice and truth. You won’t find him. And here we’re told that the prophet says, *“Justice is turned back; truth is lacking.”* In other words, Isaiah is not finding it. Jeremiah doesn’t find this kind of man. Neither does God find him through His prophet Isaiah.



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Then notice this; this is still verse 15.  
*“The LORD saw it and was displeased;  
He saw there was no man,  
And wondered that there was no one to intercede.  
Then His own arm brought Him salvation,  
And His righteousness upheld Him.  
He put on righteousness as a breastplate,”*

And so on. In other words, notice that it’s God who dons armor to go forth to save.

So when we think about the armor of Ephesians 6, what’s the armor? Well, the armor is God’s armor. It means that we stand in union with this Man who comes to redeem. Who is this Man?

Let me just go to one more text; it’s in 1 John. And I can’t help but think that John is thinking about Jeremiah and Isaiah when he writes this. He says this in 1 John 1 verse 9; just listen to this. *“If we confess our sins He is faithful and just.”* There are the two words, because “truth” can be translated “faithful” in the Hebrew. *“He is faithful”*—He is true—*“and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”* This Man is, and who is this Man? This Man is Jesus Christ.

So if you stand in Christ, who donned the armor of God in order to save us, then to don the armor of God is to stand in Jesus Christ. And the interesting thing is that if you look at Ephesians, he takes each of those pieces of the armor. And he goes back and he shows how they are connected to being in union with Christ back in Ephesians. Does that help, Bryan? Or are you asking something else?

**Bryan:** No; that helps. I’m just trying to track it down.

**Jeff:** Okay. Don?

**Don:** I’m a little confused, Jeff. It could be because of my particular translation. Are we talking in verses 1-3 about both Christ and Israel? In the first two verses of chapter 49 of Isaiah in my translation the pronouns are capitalized, and in verse 3 they are not. And so the translators make a distinction. They interpret verses 1 and 2 as talking about Christ, and 3 and 4 talking about Israel.

**Jeff:** Yeah.

*“And He said to me,  
‘You are My servant Israel,  
In whom I will be glorified.’”*

So that’s an interpretive move on their part. I think the Servant is still talking.

**Don:** Okay.

**Jeff:** And He—the LORD—said to Me—the Servant, “You are Israel.”

**Don:** Ah; okay.

**Jeff:** Let me read it and see. *(Laughter)*

**Transcriber’s Note:** The translation is in Braille.

**Don:** I’ll give you a crash course, Jeff.

**Jeff:** Okay. *(Laughter)* So the third thing is, it’s the right time. He has the right weapon and it’s the right time. Look at verse 2.

*“He made My mouth like a sharp sword;  
In the shadow of His hand He hid Me.*

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*He made Me a polished arrow;  
In His quiver He hid Me away.”*

He hid Him until the proper time. That’s what we see in Galatians, for instance. In the fullness of time the Son came forth. The idea is at the right moment. You know, when you think about a *kyros* moment. A *kyros* moment is in *chronos*; it’s in time. But it’s a moment that defines time. For instance, if I were to say to you, “9/11,” that would be a *kyros* moment. It was in time—*chronos*—but it defines time—*kyros*. It’s a life-defining moment.

It’s sort of like the difference between *historical* and *historic*. Everything is historical, right? Right now is a historical moment. And then there are those historic moments, those moments that define history. And here we find that He is kept hidden in the plumb of the Father’s hand until something like Galatians 4:4. “*In the fullness of time God sent forth His Son, born of a woman,*” and so on.

And so here’s this vessel of glory that is the Substitute. But what we find in this text is also that this is a discarded vessel. Look in verse 4 for a minute. In verse 4 it says:

*“But I have said, ‘I have toiled in vain;  
I have spent My strength for nothing and vanity.’”*

Now that’s interesting. Why? Because it looks as if the Servant is saying, “I’ve spent My time in fruitless endeavor here.”

But go back to the Servant song in chapter 42 for a minute; look at 42. In 42:4 notice what it says. Again this is talking about the Servant.

*“He will not grow faint or be discouraged,”  
“or “be bruised,”  
“Till He has established justice in the earth,  
And the coastlands wait for His law.”*

Now here it says that He wasn’t disheartened or crushed. But here in 49 it seems like He is.

*“I have labored in vain;  
I have spent My strength for nothing and vanity.  
Yet surely My right is the LORD.”*

What’s He saying there? Well I would say this to you. How do we understand the difference? I would say we understand the difference in terms of the Servant’s attitude and Israel’s response.

So what’s Israel’s response? Vanity. In other words, there is a sense in which the Servant labors in vain on behalf of those who will treat His labor as if it were worthless. Remember what happens. They would sell the Lord Himself for thirty shekels of silver—the cost of a slave that’s gored by a bull. That’s how much He’s worth to them—not much.

And so in terms of thinking about His labor on behalf of Israel, He’s not worth much according to them. However, what’s the Servant’s mindset? The Servant’s mindset is also here. The Servant’s mindset, His attitude, is that He leaves it with the Lord. Look at 49:4b.

*“Yet surely My right is with the LORD,  
And My recompense with My God.”*

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In other words there’s a sense in which His labors on behalf of Israel are fruitless. And yet His response is “I’m going to leave this with the LORD; My recompense is with God.”

And notice this. The Lord’s commendation is His as a result. Look at verse 5.

*“I am honored in the eyes of the LORD,  
And My God has become My strength.”*

And that’s the idea, right? The idea is that it may be the case that Israel discards the Servant. However the Servant is doing the Lord’s work. And the Lord is commending His Servant; that’s the idea that’s there in the text.

And then the third thing that I want us to just look at briefly is the rewarded vessel. And this has some broader application to it. Here we find that the Servant is faithful, but He’s rejected. And Israel rejected the Messiah. We see that in the Gospels in John 1:12. *“He came to His own, but His own did not receive Him.”* They cast Him off.

But notice this. The people of Israel also refuse to be a blessing to the nations. Now think about that. They refuse to be a blessing to the nations. But think about this. The Lord is going to have His servant bless the nations.

Look at verse 6; this is a striking thing. He says this; this is the Lord talking to His Servant.

*“It is too light a thing that You should be My Servant  
To raise up the tribes of Jacob,  
And to bring back the preserved of Israel.”*

In other words, “Israel does not appreciate You as the Servant. It is too small a thing for You to redeem Israel.”

So what is He going to do next?

*“I will make You as a light to the nations,  
That My salvation may reach the ends of the earth.”*

In other words, it’s too small a thing just to save Israel. “We’re going to do through You what Israel was supposed to do to all the nations. We’re going to bless the nations through You.”

I mean, think about that, right? All you have to do is think about how the Lord Jesus is a blessing to the nations. Here’s what I would say to you. What I would say to you is, this is not a new plan. This is not plan B.

I want you to think about this just for a minute. What does it say in Psalm 2? Go back to Psalm 2 for just a minute. Psalm 2 is considered a Messianic Psalm. And as a Messianic Psalm it says this; it’s about Jesus. And it says this.

It has different speakers at different times. So for instance, in verses 1-3 you have the Psalmist speaking to kings. But in 4-6 you have God speaking, and in 7-9 you have the Messiah speaking. And then in verse 10 you have the Psalmist speaking again. But notice what the Messiah says when He speaks. He says this in verse 7:

*“I will tell of the decree:  
The LORD said to Me,  
‘You are My Son;  
Today I have begotten You.”*

This is God to the Son, to the Mediator.

## ***“The Servant’s Mission”***

*“Ask of Me, and I will make the nations Your heritage,  
And the ends of the earth Your possession.”*

That’s back in Psalm 2!

Now think about Daniel chapter 7. Here is this text where we find the Servant coming to the Ancient of Days on the clouds. And what does the Ancient of Days give to this Son of Man? He gives Him *“the nations.”* Daniel 7!

And so what we find here in Isaiah is not something different than what we find in different parts of the Old Testament. What we find is that this is part of the warp and the woof of the plan itself. In other words, when Jesus comes, what? He says to His disciples in Matthew 28, *“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Go, therefore, and disciple the nations.”* That’s the idea. And so Christ is King and He’ll conquer. He is come not just to redeem the remnant of Israel but to retrieve the nations. And it’s the Servant who has redeemed us as our Substitute, and so we worship Him.

And you see this in the text. Look at verse 7.

*“Thus says the Lord, the Redeemer of Israel,  
And His Holy One,  
To one deeply despised and abhorred by the nations,  
The Servant of rulers:”*

(this is the Servant),

*“Kings shall see and arise;  
Princes shall prostrate themselves  
Because of the LORD who is faithful,  
The Holy One of Israel who has chosen You.”*

In other words, they’re going to bow before the Servant. And here’s the question that we have to ask ourselves. Go back to chapter 48 verse 11. In 48:11 what does He say? God says:

*“For My own sake, for My own sake I do it,  
For how should My name be profaned?  
My glory I will not give to another.”*

Okay, it’s one thing to share the name of God because He has made us His family. But here He’s sharing worship with His Servant Son.

How do we understand that? I’ll tell you how we understand that. We can only understand that by understanding that Jesus is very God of very God. He is the Son of God who in His very own essence has the glory of God, who is in fact the imprint, the exact imprint of the Father’s very nature—that is, He is a different Person.

And so what we find is, we find that God sends His own Son to be the Substitute not only for Israel, but for the Gentiles. And that means for us. And so it’s a remarkable song that just reminds us of the richness of Jesus Christ and His being a blessing to us in salvation.

I had to rush the last point a bit. But do you have any questions or thoughts that you want to struggle through? Yes?

**Jim Hamilton:** It’s hard to believe that Israel won’t recognize this at the time that they had all of the Old Testament available to them. How do they interpret these verses?

## ***“The Servant’s Mission”***

**Jeff:** Again, I think that they had blinders on their eyes. Think about John chapter 12 for a minute. John chapter 12 is good for this because this is a text about Isaiah. *“When Jesus had said these things, He departed and hid Himself from them.”* (Verse 37.) *“Though He had done so many signs before them, they still did not believe in Him, so that the word spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled: ‘LORD, who has believed what he heard from us? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?’”*

In other words, to whom have these things been shown? *“Therefore they could not believe. For again Isaiah said, ‘He has blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts, lest they see with their eyes and understand with their hearts, and turn, and I would heal them.’ Isaiah said these things because He saw His glory and spoke of Him.”*

So I think the ultimate answer has to be that God blinded their eyes so that they couldn’t recognize the Christ that was actually behind these words. There are all kinds of other reasons—their own disobedience, their own desires to save themselves, and so on. But at root, at heart, God did not reveal Himself to them in a way that they could understand.

**Ted Wood:** So that’s the unfortunate truth, quoting Al Gore. *(Laughter)* Blasphemy! *(Laughter)* God prevented people from believing. So the notion that all people have the opportunity to believe is simply not supported in Scripture.

**Jeff:** Yes, that’s correct. I mean, all people are offered Christ. But not everyone is able to receive Him. And the reason is—and let me put it this way—the reason they don’t receive Christ is because they don’t want Him. But they don’t want Him because they are fallen. Their sin affects them; the original sin of Adam affects them. And that original sin has to be dealt with through regeneration in order for them to want Him. And once that original sin is dealt with in and through regeneration, they want Him and so choose Him. Anything else? Okay, Don?

**Don:** I can’t help but think of the parallel between what you were saying at the end of chapter 49 about the vindication of the Lord and what we have in Psalm 50 also, where *“I did not hide My face from shame and spitting.”* Yet He goes on: *“The LORD will help Me.”* And He goes into this and He sort of talks about who will be My adversary, and all that kind of thing. So there’s that confident reassurance. Christ is saying, *“I’ve labored in vain.”* And yet, *“The LORD will help Me.”*

**Jeff:** Yeah.

**Don:** We see this in Gethsemane. *“If there is any way that this can pass from Me,”* *“yet not My will, but Yours be done.”* Hebrews 12:2 and all kinds of good stuff.

**Transcriber’s Note:** Hebrews 12:2, NKJV. *“looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”*

**Jeff:** Yes, absolutely. Okay. Yes?

**David Miller:** Our salvation itself is what we experience that comes from the mind of the infinite God from eternity past. He chose us in eternity before we even knew Him.

**Jeff:** Yes. We have a tendency to think about salvation as being very personal and our own, and it is. But when we think about what Jesus did in the wilderness, He came not only to save us but He came to turn the wilderness into a paradise, right? So there’s an enormity to redemption that you’re speaking of; that’s very true. Anybody else?

## ***“The Servant’s Mission”***

Okay. Thanks for bearing with me through the Isaiah series. It’s good to go through it with you. I’m not sure what we’ll start with you next time, but—

**Jordan Obaker:** Can I say one more thing?

**Jeff:** Sure.

**Jordan:** I’m sorry.

**Jeff:** No; that’s good.

**Jordan:** One of the things you were mentioning earlier about God reigning in glory and sharing in that, I’ve been reading for a while in the Larger Catechism. It talks about what is required in the Ten Commandments.

**Jeff:** Yeah.

**Jordan:** A lot of people nowadays, when they hear “Don’t take the name of the Lord your God in vain,” they say, “Oh, don’t say His name profanely.” But it’s much deeper than that.

**Jeff:** It is.

**Jordan:** We as Christians should live our lives in a way where our actions and attitudes aren’t taking His name in vain since we carry that.

**Jeff:** Yeah.

**Jordan:** That’s a hard thing to do, especially as we go on to Christian maturity. That was a really good word to speak of—going on to Christian maturity. You realize, hey, how I act every day reflects God’s word.

**Jeff:** God is good. Okay, let’s pray. Father, thank You for this day and the blessing that You are to us. We ask, Lord, that You’ll remind us daily of Isaiah 49 and other passages where we are commanded to live to Your glory. And Lord, that means bearing Your name and Your reputation before all men. We ask, Lord, that You’ll bless us in that endeavor. And we pray that You’ll enable us as You have in Christ to do so. And we rejoice in that and pray in Jesus’ name. Amen.

**Brave Men:** Amen. (*Applause*)