



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Isaiah 53:1-3, John 12:37-38, Romans 10:14-17-27

"The Misunderstood Messiah"

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] One of the things that we learn in the study of the Bible is to read the entire context, and I would just to add a footnote to that comment that Mr. Prier made about that hymn coming from the Bohemian Brethren. If you'll look at the top of the page it says that it came from the Bohemian Brethren's Songbook, and I am sure that the reason that we did not sing it so well this morning is because we are all used to singing it in German, Mr. Prier, and the English words confused us. The tape ministry is now going into eight foreign countries, Canada, Mexico, Sweden, Scotland, Guatemala, El Salvador, Japan, and Uruguay, and into at least twenty-five states. For those of you who are interested in the tape ministry and have been following it in prayer as well, I am sure you will be gratified to know this, and also to know that due to the fact that Mr. Wheeler and others who are associated with him in the tape ministry have been overburdened with work.

We have ordered a new machine which is going to cost us a little over \$4000 according to present reckoning, to enable us to make tapes in a fraction of the time that it takes now, and so we would appreciate your continued prayer for the tape ministry. It has an amazing outreach, and I think that any of you who read the letters that we get from people who listen to and use the tapes, not only for themselves, but for classes, you

would be thrilled to see what God is doing through the preaching of the Word in that way, and we would certainly appreciate your prayers for this ministry. I am sure that the time will come, if it has not already come, at which we discover that far more people are listening to the tapes than are listening the ministry here in Believer's Chapel.

Now, they may well already have occurred some time ago because quite a few people are using these for tape classes in their homes, and then quite a few preachers are using them for preparation for messages, and also Bible school teachers are using them for their adult and young people's Bible classes, so there is quite a ministry in that way too.

Today in our Scripture reading, for the second in our series of messages on Isaiah, chapter 52:13 through chapter 53 verse 12, we are turning to Isaiah, 53 reading the first three verses, and then a few verses from two passages in the New Testament which make reference to our section that we are reading today from Isaiah. So Isaiah, chapter 53, and we are going to read the first three verses. Remember last week in our first study of this great prophecy of the Suffering Servant of Jehovah, we pointed out that there are five strophes, in the fifteen verses.

Now, a strophe is a poetic measure, and these five strophes, constitute the structure of this section, and each one of the structures contains three verses, and so we finished one last week. We shall take up another one this Sunday, and each of the Sundays in June. We are going to take up one of them. A strophe is a poetic measure. Sunday morning, last Sunday morning, we had two professional golfers in the audience, and they were interested in the Word. One was Mr. Kermit Zarley, and another was Mr. Dave Hisky, and afterwards they met me out at the door there and they said, "What is a strophe?" And so I had the opportunity to explain to the professionals what a strophe was. I don't know what effect that will have on the tour, but they were very much interested, by the way in the tapes, and want to have a tape class among the professional golfers. There are about twenty-five of them that are genuine Christians, and so they

hope through the tapes to carry on a weekly Bible study, as they travel around the country playing in the golf tournaments.

Now, have you found chapter 53 of the Book of Isaiah. We are reading the first verse,

"Who hath believed our report? And to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed? For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we shall desire him"

Now, I think I would like to go over this section, and retranslate this in accordance with the Hebrew text because in the Hebrew the verbs in verse 2 on through verse 9 are almost all in the past tenses, so let's render it that way.

"For he grew up before him like a tender plant, and like a root out of a dry ground. He had no form no comeliness, and when we saw him there was no beauty that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected of man. A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, and we hid as it were our faces from him. He was despised, and we esteemed him not"

Now, turn with me to the gospel of John the 12th chapter the 37th and the 38th verses. John chapter 12, verse 37 and verse 38. You will notice from the reading of the gospel of John that these two verses are something of a climax of the first part of the gospel, for it represents the point in John's gospel at which he has completed his presentation of the miracles, which Jesus did, and he writes in the 37th verse, "But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him: That the saying of Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? And to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?" And you

can see that John quotes Isaiah chapter 53 in verse 1 to substantiate the fact that the Jewish people did not respond to the ministry of the Lord Jesus at his first coming. We could of course add, though John does not stress that, that the Gentiles did not respond as well.

Now, Romans chapter 10, and we are going to read verses 14 through 17. Romans chapter 10, verses 14 through 17, and again you will notice that the Apostle Paul refers to this section from Isaiah chapter 53 in his epistle to the Roman Church. Verse 14 of Romans chapter 10 says,

"How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? As it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!" (That comes from the 52 chapter of Isaiah, so Paul is thinking about Isaiah 52 and 53, but he continues.) "But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."

May God bless this reading of his word. Let's bow together in prayer.

[Prayer] Our gracious God and Heavenly Father, we thank Thee for this privilege and opportunity. We thank Thee for the fact that we have an open Bible and that we are able to read it, that we are able to ponder it and reflect upon it freely. We thank Thee for the freedom in the United States of America to worship Thee the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. We thank Thee for this great country, and we thank Thee for the blessings that are ours because we do live there, and we pray, oh God, that though we may not believe that everything is perfect in this country. We thank Thee that Thou hast used it bring blessing to us, and we pray that we may be grateful and thankful that we do live here and not some of the countries of this earth in which there is no freedom, in which violence and disorder and disobedience to the word of God prevails.

We pray, oh God, that Thou wilt cause us to remember that the freedoms that we do have, have been purchased often with the blood of faithful men, who thought enough of us to suffer for the things in which they believed, but most of all, Lord, we pray that we may be grateful for Jesus Christ, who thought enough of us to come from heaven's glory to live in our midst, to suffer from the hands of men, to suffer despite and rejection, to suffer sorrow and pain, and who willingly went to the cross, and there suffered the greatest suffering of all, the suffering of the pain of the broken law, which we the human beings, are responsible for, and we thank Thee for the fact that he suffered to the end of the suffering, and then by the power of God was brought forth from the dead in resurrection because he had paid the price, the price for our sin, and we thank Thee that he lives and reigns as the right hand of the Throne of God from henceforth waiting until his enemies be made the footstool of his feet.

And we know Lord that that crowning is soon to come and sure to come, and we pray that in the interval, we who have by the grace of God, been brought to know him, may faithfully represent him, and have something of the same mind and disposition that moved our Lord Jesus to give himself for others. We remember his words, "Other sheep I have which are not of this fold, them also I must bring."

And, O God, we pray for Believer's Chapel, for it's elders, and for it's deacons, and for it's friend's and members, and we ask, oh God, that Thy hand may be upon us to the fulfillment of the plans and purposes which Thou hast for us, in this age in which we are living, and may, oh God, the spell of Jesus Christ so fall upon us that loyalty and devotion to him may grip us, and that in devotion to God we may do Thy will. O Father, help us to remember the important things are the spiritual and eternal things.

Now, we thank Thee for the opportunity of this hour, and we pray thy blessing upon each one present, for those who are troubled, O God, give them peace. For those who are perplexed, we pray that Thou wilt point them off to the cross and the solution that is offered there. For those who do not know which way to turn, may, oh

God, the ministry of the Holy Spirit become theirs who shall guide them and direct them in a fruitful path. We commit this assembly to Thee. We commit the ministry of the word to be for this hour and the hours of this week. May Thy name be honored in our midst, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

[Message] The subject for today, as we continue our exposition of this great section of the Prophecy of Isaiah is The Misunderstood Messiah. I should like to begin today by repeating something that I said at the beginning of the message last week. The most critical problem of life is not the universe prevalence of war. It is not the increasing violence of the age. It is not the rampant immorality and license of our sex mad 20th century. It is not the generation gap. It is not division in the churches nor even the Communist menace. We are all, I am sure, aware of the fact that each of these is problems that each of these is a problem, but the crucial and critical problem is not one of these. The critical problem and the most crucial problem of the 20th century is the age-old moral problem. How can a just God declare just unjust men? As Job expressed it in his great book, in the 9th chapter in the 2nd verse, "I know it is so of a truth, but how should man be just with God?" And then in the 20th verse, Job writes, "If I justify myself, mine own mouth shall condemn me. If I say I am perfect, he shall also prove me perverse." In the 30th verse he writes,

"If I wash my self with snow, and make my hands never so clean, yet Thou, God, shall plunge me in the ditch and mine own clothes shall abhor me, for he is not a man as I am that I should answer him and we should come together in judgment, neither is there any day's man between us that might lay his hand upon us both"

The great problem is how can a just God declare just unjust men. That is the problem, and that had always been the problem of human history. Isaiah, who has

been called the fifth evangelist, who stood with his head in the clouds and his feet on the solid earth, who stood with his heart and the things of eternity, and with his hands on the things of time, has found this solution in the Suffering Servant of Jehovah. As he expresses it in the 11th verse of this 53rd chapter, "My righteous servant shall justify many, for he shall bear their iniquities." It is in the atonement that Isaiah found the solution to the problem and the suffering servant of Jehovah is he who shall justify many.

Now, in the Old Testament, we do not have an identification of the suffering servant of Jehovah. We are told through many passages that he shall be born in the city of Bethlehem that he should come into this human earth at a certain time. Daniel tells us that. We are told that he shall come from a certain division of mankind. We are told that he shall belong to a certain family, a certain tribe. He shall be of the tribe of Judah, and he shall come from the family of David, for he is a stem out of the root of Jesse, but we are not told in the Old Testament that the suffering servant of Jehovah is Jesus of Nazareth. God in the providence of the unfolding of his revelation, as the years pass by has told him various things about him, but it is not until the time that the servant appears that we come to really know who he is.

Nowhere in the Old Testament do we find a statement the suffering servant of Jehovah is Jesus of Nazareth, but when we come to the New Testament, and the climax of the unfolding of God's message comes to us, it is then that the suffering servant of Jehovah is identified as Jesus of Nazareth, and strikingly enough, it is God himself, who makes the identification first of all. Lest there be any question about it, for Jesus was baptized and when he went down into the water and came out of the water, the spirit of God came down as a dove upon him, and the heavens were rent with a voice which came from God himself, which said, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased."

Now, our Lord Jesus was a student of Scripture. He knew immediately that that voice that came from heaven was simply a collocation of texts from the Old

Testament. In the Psalms, David had said, concerning Messiah, that he should be called God's Son. "This is my Son." God said, and David had said, "Thou art my Son," and so God was identifying the one who had just been baptized by John the Baptist as his Son, but then he added, "This is my beloved Son, my chosen Son." For that is the meaning of that term beloved. "In whom is my delight." And our Lord with the unerring knowledge of Scripture, which he had obtained from the study of it, as a man, knew immediately that it was the divine identification of the work that he would do. For Isaiah the prophet, in the 42 chapter in his prophecy in the first of the great servant passages had written many hundreds of years ago, "Behold my servant, of whom I uphold, mine elect, my beloved one, in whom is my delight, in whom I am well pleased." And so when the voice from heaven said, "This is my Son." He knew that he was the king, and when the voice from heaven added, "My chosen one in whom is my delight." He knew that he as the king would suffer would tread the path of the suffering servant of Jehovah. It was God who said the suffering servant of Jehovah is Jesus of Nazareth.

Now, it was God who said that first, and he said it lest there should be any question about it. When we say that Jesus is Isaiah's suffering servant of Jehovah, we say it on divine authority, but not only did God identify our Lord Jesus as the suffering servant of Jehovah, the apostles as well identified the suffering servant of Jehovah as Jesus of Nazareth. They said, by the way in which they use this passage that he was that servant. We have seen as we have read the Gospel of John that John quotes from this very chapter in order to explain the ministry of our Lord Jesus, and while he did not write specifically on the subject of identification, it underlay everything that he wrote. He could not say, "Who hath believed our report in support of the fact that they did not believe in Jesus." Were it not for the fact that the believed that Jesus was the suffering servant of Jehovah, and Paul also, and the other writers of the New Testament, who in the course of our Lord's ministry make identification between certain events in his life and the things that Isaiah wrote in this great chapter, so we can say that it is God who has identified the

suffering servant of Jehovah as Jesus of Nazareth, and that the apostles followed this interpretation, but not only do the apostles do this, others as well.

We have, for example, the evangelist Phillip, identifying the Lord Jesus as the suffering servant of Jehovah. One day, Philip the Evangelist was ministering the Word in Samaria. There came to him word from God, "Phillip arise. Go toward the South country. Go down to the road that passes from Jerusalem to Gaza." It's a desert road, remember. And Philip arose from the midst of successful ministry in Samaria, and made his way down to that place. He arrived and on that road, there was a man from Ethiopia, a man who was a eunuch of great authority under Candis, Queen of the Ethiopians. He had charge of all her treasure. He was a man of authority. He was a man of wealth. He had his own chariot. That's the equivalent of saying he had his own Lincoln Continental, for that was what that corresponded to in those days. He was an intelligent man. He was able to read the Greek Old Testament, and furthermore, he was a religious man. He had been attracted to Judaism by the monotheism, perhaps of Judaism, and by the monotheism he had been one, so that he had become a proselyte to the Jewish faith, and like any true Proselyte, who really believed in what he believed, he longed for the day when he could go to Jerusalem in order to worship God there at the fountainhead of the religion of which he was a member. And the time came, and he left Ethiopia, and he traveled to Jerusalem, and he traveled, and came to Jerusalem at a very turbulent time.

A man by the name of Jesus of Nazareth has appeared on the scene and for three years had carried on a public ministry. And this public ministry had turned Palestine upside down, and finally he had been crucified, and the people were deeply disturbed over the things that had happened, especially over the fact that there was a report that he had been raised from the dead, and Jews were going all over the city of Jerusalem saying that they had seen him, whom the Jewish leaders had put to death. This man went to the city, and as Proselytes to the Jewish faith would normally do, he went to one of the Synagogues of the Proselytes, and there he sat down, and while the text of

Scripture does not say this in so many words, there is a very strong indication of the fact that when he was there, he heard the debates that raged in the synagogue.

There was a man you see, by the name of Stephen, who was preaching that Jesus was the Messiah. And Stephen was a man who went into the synagogues of the Proselytes of those who went into the synagogues of the Jews who came from other lands, and there would be the Ethiopian eunuch, and we know apparently that Stephen and Paul or Saul had engaged in some debates, and the eunuch was positively amazed as he listen to the debates over Jesus of Nazareth. He discovered that the case for Judaism was not so strong as he had thought. As a matter of fact, this man Stephen, who at times looked like an angel managed to confute and rebuke the Apostle Paul himself, who was a man at that time who had advanced beyond his contemporaries is Judaism. The great champion of the Hebrews was defeated by Stephen, the deacon.

The Ethiopian eunuch was a man in whom the Spirit of God was working, and he was disturbed over what he heard, and as he heard the exposition of the prophecies of the Old Testament and the attempts to identify them with Jesus of Nazareth, he determined within his heart that he would get some of those Scriptures, and he would read them. And so when he left the synagogue one day, he looked in his pocketbook, and he had enough money to buy a scroll and he went down to the Jerusalem Scroll Company where you bought passages from the Bible, and walked in and he said, "I would like to buy a scroll of some book of the Bible." The man behind the counter said, "What book?" He said, "I don't know just give me what you've got. What have you got?" He said, "Well, I've got the prophecy of Isaiah in Greek." "Good, I'll take that. I can read Greek." And so he put his sheckles down on the counter, and he walked out with his precious scroll of the prophecy of Isaiah, and he began to read.

He got in his chariot, and he was making his way home, and he had reached that place, and he was now in the 53rd chapter of the Prophecy of Isaiah when Phillip appears on the scene. He was just reading, "He was lead as sheep to slaughter,

and like a lamb dumb before his Shearer so open up he not his mouth. In his humiliation, his judgment was taken away, and who shall declare his generation for his life is taken from the earth." And at this point, Phillip appears on the screen, and the Spirit says to Phillip, "Go, join yourself to that chariot." And so Phillip ran, and it was Bishop John Taylor Smith, who said, "If he hadn't run, the eunuch would have been out of the 53rd chapter and into the 54 chapter." But it was the providence of God, and he ran, and he arrived when he was at verse 7 and verse 8. And there he heard him read, because you see in those days they read audibly. They did not read as we read. In fact in the early days, you can find some men marveling that men can read without pronouncing the words out loud.

Now, if you've ever tried to read an ancient document, like an ancient Greek or Latin document, and you see those documents in which the words follow one right after another without space, you can understand why they had to sound them out, but here is a man who was reading out loud, and Philip comes right on the scene and immediately he recognizes the passage that he's reading from, and he shouts out to him. "Do you understand what you are reading?" And the man replied, "How can I, except some man should guide me."

And Phillip appeared to be the kind of man who could guide him, and so he urged him to come up and sit up in his chariot, and expound to him the Scriptures, and so Phillip got up in the chariot and as he got up and sat down the Ethiopian eunuch was so interested in what this meant to him that he said to him, "Of whom speaketh the prophet of himself or of some other man?" And by the way in our theological colleges of the 20th century they are still trying to answer that question. "Of whom speaketh the prophet this of himself or of some other man?" And by the way in our theology colleges in the 20th century they are still trying to answer that question, "Of whom speaketh the prophet of himself or of some other man?" And Phillip the text of Scripture said, opened his mouth, and began at the same Scripture, and preached unto him Jesus. In other

words, Jesus is the suffering servant of Jehovah. He made the identification, and when he made the identification, and answered all the questions that the eunuch had, the Holy Spirit had brought him to the place of faith, and having been brought to the place of faith, Phillip called him forward to the front of the church in order that he might answer the alter call.

No, he didn't do that did he? Phillip didn't say, "Now if you've made a decision, would you raise your hand." He didn't say that. He said, "If you really decided for Jesus will you now join the church?" Didn't say that. As a matter of fact whether Phillip told him, or whether the Ethiopian eunuch already knew this, he knew that the proper response to the gospel message, when a man has believed in Jesus Christ is to be baptized. Faith saves. Baptism is the expression of our faith. It is the divinely ordained expression of our faith. It is not the alter call, a modern phenomena, unheard of before the 19th century. It is not the putting of the name upon a church role, also unknown from the standpoint of the Holy Scriptures. The response of the believing heart, that has trusted in Christ and that has salvation, is what doth hinder me to be baptized. Baptism is God's way of expressing the faith that the Holy Spirit brings. That's why we baptize. This is God's way of expressing the great transformation that has come in our hearts. It does not save. It is just the divinely chosen method of expressing the change that has come in our hearts, and so the Ethiopian eunuch was baptized by a man so far as we know was not ordained, who was not an elder, who was not a preacher in the sense that he was recognized by a denomination. Not even in the midst of the church, but out in the desert when he expressed his faith and trust in Jesus Christ.

Phillip said, "If thou believeth with thine heart, thou mayest be baptized." Those words are not genuine, but they probably represent the experience of the early church and the practice of the early church. And he replied, and said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." And he commanded the chariot to stand still, and they both went down into the water, both Phillip and the eunuch, and he baptized him, and when they

were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Phillip that the eunuch saw him no more, and he went away rejoicing because now he had the servant of Jehovah in his heart.

Last, Sunday we looked at the opening strophe of this great prophecy and we saw that Isaiah said that the history of the servant of Jehovah is a successful history, but it has two stages. It has the stage of suffering, and it has the stage of glory. This is precisely what Jesus said when he was here upon the earth. When he, on the Emmaus road, discussed the truth with the Emmaus disciples, he said, "All fools and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have written ought not the Messiah to have suffered these things." As he says, his visage was so marred more than any man and is for more than the sons of men. Ought not the Messiah to have suffered these things, and then to have entered into this glory. Or as Isaiah puts it, "So shall he startle many nations." Kings shall shut their mouths at him, sufferings first, and then the glories. That is the divinely given order. Not glory and then suffering, this is why the apostles were so confused. They thought of the glories, but they failed to understand that the sufferings precede the glory, for there can be no redemption apart from suffering. There is no offer of a kingdom apart from a cross. There is not offer of a cross without a kingdom. There is the offer of the kingdom through a cross, through sufferings, and this Isaiah has set forth.

Now, in the second strophe he is going to expatiate upon Jewish unbelief, and as we said, the opening words of each strophe in a sense give us the theme of the strophes, just as in verse 13 of chapter 52, "Behold my servant shall prosper." Is the theme of that first message, so the theme of the second strophe or the second message is, "Who hath believed our report?" The unbelief of those to whom Jesus Christ first came.

Now, I want to say something as we begin this chapter, chapter 53, which is very important for your understanding of what the prophet is trying to say. In verse 1 through verse 9, as you read these verses in the original text, you will discover that almost all of these verbs are in the past tenses. In other words, the author is transporting himself into

the future, and he has become a mouth of a group of people who in the future look back over the past and describe their reaction to the suffering servant when he appeared many hundreds of years ago.

Now, I would presume since they now know what has happened that they are then believers, and so what we have is a future redeemed group of people, who lament for the whole of the people, their unbelief at the servant's first coming, so they say, "Who believed what we heard? To whom was the arm of the Lord revealed? So few, for he grew up before him like a tender plant, and like a root out of dry ground, and so on." In other words what we have then is Isaiah is, by the Holy Spirit, taken into the future, and by the standpoint of the future, he is given words by the Spirit, which belong to that group of the future, and he writes of how they feel then over what they did hundreds of years before to the servant when he first appeared.

You know in Zechariah, chapter 12 in verse 10, and following it states, "I will pour" the prophet speaking of the future. "I will pour upon them, upon Israel, the spirit of grace and supplication and they shall look unto me whom they have pierced and they shall mourn for him as one mourns for an only son." In other words, Zechariah, as he looks into the future, sees the time coming when the nation Israel shall recognize that it did reject Jesus of Nazareth, their Messiah, at his first coming, and they shall mourn over the knowledge of the fact that they have been the instrumentality for the crucifixion of the Messiah, himself.

Now, what shall they say when they mourn? What shall be their words? Well, Isaiah 53 gives us the words that they shall utter. This is the vocalization of the mourning of redeemed Israel in the future. This is what they shall say. This is Israel's penitential confession, which they shall make at the second coming of Jesus Christ to the earth when they realize what they have done. By the way, if I may interject at this point, a practical word. It is obvious from this that the plainest teaching of the word of God given most earnestly will not come home to the unregenerate mind, which dwells in

darkness. No message could be clearer than the first coming of Jesus of Nazareth. God spoke in his Son in the clearest way possible. There he was before their eyes, performing the miracles that attested him as the Son of God without question. And it was done earnestly.

No man ever did it with more earnestness and love than our Lord himself, but men did not respond. For you see, it's not enough to have clear teaching earnestly given. There is another dimension to spiritual things, human and divine. Human, if a man is not willing to receive the word, if he dwells in darkness the brightest of sunlight appears to be darkness. That is why you can sit in an audience like this, and hear a message in which I am unfolding to you the tremendous story of the suffering servant of Jehovah, and you can leave just as dark spiritually as one of the caves of the earth because in the human heart, there must be response, and from the divine side, there must be the ministry of the Holy Spirit in enlightenment.

Let's notice the complaint of unbelief in verse 1. "Who hath believed what we have heard, and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?" The arm of the Lord is the work of Jehovah in humiliation, and exaltation of his suffering servant. That's his arm. He has displayed his mighty arm in the work of his Son. "To whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?" Our prophet says. In the midst of this great manifestation of the power of God, men did not respond. Oh, the darkness of the human mind, spiritually.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning, in her Aurora Leigh, has written a stanza that has always impressed me. "Earth's crammed with heaven, and every common bush a fire with God, and only he who sees takes off his shoes. The rest sit round and pick blackberries." That's what the world's been doing, and when Jesus of Nazareth, the suffering servant of Jehovah was here, earth was crammed with heaven, but men picked blackberries. That's what they're doing in the 20th Century, and oftentimes Christians are misled too by the blackberry pickers. Earth's crammed with heaven. Everywhere there is testimony to the fact the Jesus is the suffering servant of Jehovah, and it is through him that life comes,

everywhere, but we are blind, and also did you notice, unto whom is the arm of the Lord revealed, revealed. Ah, that's a work of God to reveal. Belief is the work of man. Reveal is the work of God, and the work of God precedes the work of man. It is God who reveals. It is we who believe. God doesn't believe. Men believe, but men do not reveal. God reveals.

May I read a passage? It might help you to read it too. From 2 Thessalonians chapter 2, verse 13 and verse 14. Listen to these words from the apostle Paul. 2 Thessalonians 2, verse 13. "But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth:" There are the two sides. The setting apart ministry of the Holy Spirit and the belief of the truth, one is the work of God. One is the work of man. It is the work of the Holy Spirit to work in man's hearts, so that they respond to the message. It is the work of men to respond to the work that God has done. He prepares, and we respond.

"Who hath believed our report? To whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?" This refutes the ignorance of those who think faith is in the power of every person. The Spirit's work is necessary and always in necessary, always shall be necessary. It is God who gives us to believe in Jesus name, as Paul says in Philippians chapter 1, in verse 29. "Unto you it is given." Given, given in the behalf of Christ. Not only to believe on his name, given to believe, but to suffer for his sins.

Now, the prophet writes of the course of Messiah life, in the second verse. This is one of the greatest prophecies of the future conversion of the nation Israel. "For he grew up before him like a tender plant."

Now, if you're a horticulturalist, you know exactly what he means by this little word, yowneq which means a sucker, a shoot, and so you've set out your nice new tree or plant, and you come out a few weeks later, and you notice there's shoot coming out of the ground where you don't want it, where it will disfigure the bush. Sap it's

energy, and what do you do? You reach down and you snap it off. Cut it off. Clip it off. Pull it off. That's the way I'd do it, the latter. Sometimes pull part of the bark too, but it's a worthless shoot. That's what Isaiah means. He grew up before him as a little sucker, unnecessary in the eyes of the world. Jesus, the great arm of Jehovah did not manifest himself as a prince royal or as a mighty philosopher. He did not come as a Kant or as Hegel [ph46:04]. He came as a carpenter from Nazareth, and that's the way they regarded him. Harrod has his soldiers dress him up as a mock king. The Pharisees said, "This man casts out demons by Beelzebub. He is demonic." The scribe said, "He saved others. Himself he cannot save. Let's see him come down from the cross now if he's the Messiah." The people said, "Away with him. Let him be crucified." And even his friends said, "Isn't this the carpenter's son? Isn't his mother Mary? And aren't his brothers and sisters here with us?" And they were offended in him, Mark says.

And we read he was a root out of dry ground. This root derives nothing from its soil. It's like a plant that grows in West Texas. I'm rubbing it in on West Texas these days, a root out of dry soil. That's right Jesus did not derive anything from his natural decent. That was not what made him what he was? David's tabernacle had fallen. Joseph was a legal heir, but he was just a carpenter. Mary did not look like a queen. Jesus did not come as a Caesar, but he came out of the tabernacle of David, which had fallen. Things were in a sad way. He derived nothing from his nationality. If there was one thing the Romans hated, it was the Jew, and he came as the hated Jew. He did not come playing David's harp. Those were the great old days. He did not come singing like Isaiah the prophet. Those were the wonderful old days, when God spoke through the great men of Israel, but now in Jerusalem there were nothing but the scribes and Pharisees, dribbling forth the traditions of the elders, which had become dry and dead and practically meaningless, corrupted from the purity of the word of God.

He surely came out of dry ground. He derived nothing from his followers. When he came and when he sat up his work, he did not immediately rush off to the

Areopogus in Athens, and single out some of the wise men of his day, and appoint them as his followers. He did not proceed to Rome and select some of the great political leaders. He did not go down into the forum and get the great men of that day as his followers. He did not look around for Professor so and so, and Doctor such and such, but he went over to the Sea of Galilee and laid his hand upon a few sailormen. A few fishermen, and he made them his followers, and Peter is what he is because of what Jesus made him. And Jesus is not what he is because of what Peter may have contributed. He's a root out of dry ground, and his means of spreading the truth were also as contemptible to the world as this. He did not go out like Mohammad, who made followers very easily. He simply said this, "You are either with us or you have a sword in your belly."

Now, you can make a lot of converts if you use that methodology, but they are not the kind of converts that Jesus likes, and consequently he did not follow that means. He did not set up a great state church with giant buildings and liturgy and worship that might appeal to men's senses because then people would say, "Ah, I see why Christianity is so successful. Look at those beautiful buildings they have. Look at that wonderful liturgy they have. Look at the great wise men who are Christians. I'll be a Christian too. No wonder Christianity succeeds, it has money, power, influence, intellect, and it appeals to the aesthetic. Look at its great choirs." Mr. Spurgeon said when God kicked Satan out of heaven he fell into the church choir. [Laughter] Jesus did not appoint great choirs. He asked for no choir at all because you see, when you have a choir, and they sing beautifully, and people are attracted then someone goes out praising Saint Cecelia, instead of Jesus of Nazareth.

Now, I love choir music. I love it at home. And to tell you the truth, I love it in the church, but that's because I still have my own nature with me, and we must be ware of things that divert us from the glory that belongs to God alone. Now, I am not going to get mad at you if you have a choir in your church. That's perfectly all right. I

just point you to the Bible, and remember what the word of God says. He did not say that his men should wear vestments. He didn't say they should put on the alp or the chasuble, or any of the other things that the preachers of Judaism, and others have worn down through the years because you see, men might say, "Ah, no wonder they're successful. It's so nice to be there. It's so appealing of course." But he wants us to be sure that the glory all belongs to him. He's a root out of dry ground. Root out of dry ground, and so when Christianity has grown, and men have come to it, men like Paul, but men like Peter, men like Thomas, and when the word of God has worked, and men are gathered together in little companies, who praised the God who is responsible for it all, the great God of the suffering servant of Jehovah then he gets the glory, and we thank God for what he has done, and that's what as should be.

Now, he continues in the 3rd verse by saying as he describes Messiah's life, in the contempt of the nation for it, "He was despised and rejected of men." He has always been despised and rejected. The Hebrew word men, here is a word that suggests the rich and influential. It suggests that parable that Jesus himself told, when he said in the course of it, putting words into the mouth of the leaders, "We will not have this man to rule over us." And so he was rejected of the rulers in Judaism. And I wanted to get to this, and with this I'm going to close. A man of sorrows, a man of sorrows.

Now, notice he said a man. He did not say the Lord of sorrows. Mr. Spurgeon said, "This is one of those gospel church bells, which must be rung every Sabbath day." Man, man of sorrows. Why man of sorrows? Well, for this simple reason. Man has broken God's law, and it is by man that the breach is repaired, as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive, and I am so thankful that a man has come from heaven, who is also the Son of God, took to himself human nature. Took that human nature to the cross for me, for men, and there he died, and God meted out upon the man, the judgment that was due the men, and now because of the judgment that has been meted out upon the man for the men, those who believe may come and receive the

results of that work, the forgiveness of sins, the joy of everlasting life, justification, the unjust man may be declared just by a just God because Jesus Christ has born our injustice. And now I may have his justice by the grace and justice of God, for his law is satisfied in the punishment of the Son, and his love goes forth in freedom for those who believe.

Man of sorrows, what a name for the Son of God who came, my Savior my Lord. The text closed with, "we esteemed him at nothing." For him, they didn't even think he was worth paying anything for. Judas sold him for thirty pieces of silver. That was Judas' estimate of Jesus Christ. What's yours? Fifty pieces; Judas sold him for a pair of slacks. What price do you put on him? The price that you put on the suffering servant of Jehovah is that which prevents you from giving him unquestioned obedience and devotion. That's your price. Is it your business, men? Is it your family, mother? That's your price. May God help us to realize that we cannot estimate Jesus Christ at anything. "Were the whole realm of nature mine that were a present far too small, love so amazing so divine demands my soul, my life, my all. I cannot measure him." And he must have all. If you are here this morning, and you have not yet believed in Jesus Christ, may you not leave this auditorium until you bow before the cross in your heart and say, "I thank you Lord for dying for me, my suffering servant of Jehovah." And then if you've received him as Savior, come and ask to be baptized, like the Ethiopian eunuch in testimony to your faith. If you're a Christian, and you've really put a price on it, because he doesn't have one hundred percent, may God help you to kneel before the cross and confess your sin, and allow him to be what he is, the Lord of your life. Let's stand for the benediction.

[Prayer] Father, we thank Thee for the great gift of the suffering servant of Jehovah. How unworthy we are, and yet how humbled we are to realize that Thou hast revealed to us the arm of Jehovah, and oh, God, may the devotion that we so long to give him, by the Spirit become his in reality, and now may grace, mercy and peace go with us as we part, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

