

Isaiah (Part 5) - Sin-Offering

by Ron Bailey

The sermon explores God's disappointment with Israel, the sin of Judah, and the servant songs of Isaiah, highlighting the Lord Jesus Christ as the faithful servant of Jehovah who bore our griefs and carried our sorrows.

Duration: 1:21:47

Scripture: Psalm 22:21, Psalm 22:24, Isaiah 42:1, Jeremiah 17:9, Matthew 6:33, 1 Peter 2:21-22

Topics: "Isaiah"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses two stories written by C.S. Lewis, 'Out of the Silent Planet' and 'Perelandra,' which depict the creation of new worlds and the threat of evil. The speaker highlights the role of a man named Ransom who is sent from Earth to Venus to help deliver the new creation from the consequences of evil. The sermon then transitions to a discussion of Isaiah 53, focusing on the suffering servant who bears the griefs and sorrows of humanity. The speaker emphasizes the switch of pronouns in the passage, indicating that each individual must make the suffering servant their trespass offering to receive God's provision.

Transcript

I'd like to read some other parts of the book of Isaiah, but before we do, I want to turn to a reference in the letter of Paul to the Ephesians. I've been saying quite a lot, I have anyway, in the last few days about God's disappointment with the people of Israel and with his purposes that were never fulfilled in the way that he had longed that they should be fulfilled. And I want to read a verse or two here from Ephesians just to make it absolutely plain that we're not singling out Israel as some particular rogue amongst the nations.

In fact, although Israel had many more privileges than many others, essentially it was no difference in heart, and that was really what was the matter with things. In chapter 2 of Ephesians, he says this. Quite often in Paul's letters, in what are known as the prison epistles, he refers to we, and when he says we, quite often he's really referring to people of the same Jewish background that he had and contrasts that with you, which is usually people from a Gentile background.

This is what he's saying here in this chapter. He's showing how God has brought everything together as one in Christ, but it's also showing that at the beginning there was no difference anyway. This is what he says.

And you has he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins, wherein in time past you walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience, among whom also we all had our way of life in time past, in the lust of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. The Bible says that in many different ways. It says it in the letter to the Romans, there is no difference.

All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. So, anything that I might say tonight, although I may apply it to the nation of Israel, I'm not really thinking exclusively of Israel. It's just that Israel is a picture book for us of what is true in all of our hearts.

Let me turn to Ezekiel. Please turn with me. I mentioned this morning a verse from Ezekiel chapter 6. And for those who weren't here this morning, I was just commenting that God has never inured himself to the pain.

He has never become calloused and hard and used to the pain of rejection by those who turn their back upon him. He hasn't grown hard in order to defend himself. He has stayed open and vulnerable with all the love of his great heart and consequently has been hurt again and again and again.

And what I said this morning was that if you love someone, you do put into that person's hand a terrible power to hurt you. If you love someone, they can hurt you very, very deeply. And the measure of God's love for this human race is the hurt that God received at Calvary.

That's the measure of it. That's the measure of his love. That's the measure of his hurt.

And although he had often been disappointed with the people of Israel, he never became hard and used to that. He never settled into any kind of cynicism or unbelief. He always reached out to them again and again.

The prophecy of Ezekiel came when Ezekiel was one of those captives in the land of Babylon. And God was expressing to them the consequences of their sin and the things that had happened. And it's here in chapter 6 that God is speaking about a remnant and verse 8 he says this, Yet will I leave a remnant, that ye may have some that shall escape the sword among the nations, when ye shall be scattered through the countries.

And they that escape of you shall remember me among the nations, whither they shall be carried captives, because I am broken with their whorish heart which hath departed from me, and with their eyes which go a-whoring after their idols. And they shall loathe themselves for the evils which they have committed in all their abominations. And they shall know that I am the Lord, and that I have not said in vain that I would do this evil unto them.

But in the midst of this righteous anger of God, and in the midst of this chastisement that he must bring upon his people, you get this glimpse into the heart of God when he says, I'm broken, I'm broken. You have broken me, he says, with your whorish heart, with this spirit of harlotry, with this constant flirtation with other things, with this thing in you that always goes out after other things, always wants some immediate satisfaction, some sensual gratification. I'm not talking about the body, I'm talking about things in spirit, always wanting something, I'm broken with it, God says.

This is my body which is broken, said the Lord Jesus. What happened on the cross was really the physical outworking of things that had been taking place in the heart of God from before the beginning of the ages. That's why it can speak of the Lord Jesus as being the lamb slain from the foundation of the earth.

This pain has been in his heart, this brokenness was in his heart before anything else was, before a star was in its place, or an angel in the courts of heaven, before Adam and Eve walked in the glory of Eden, before any of these things, this pain was in his heart. From before the foundation of the world, he was the broken one because he knew all the implications that would follow. Please turn with me to Jeremiah, who was another prophet of the exile.

That's to say, he was also a man who was prophesying round about the same time. Jeremiah didn't really go into Babylonian exile, he stayed in Jerusalem for a time and then was taken hostage down into Egypt. But if you come to Jeremiah chapter 17, you'll see that in different words, God brings this same accusation against his people.

And here, he expresses it in this way. Jeremiah chapter 17, please remember, I'm not just talking about Israel, I'm not just talking about Judah, this is true of the whole human race. They are just the visual aid.

Verse 1, chapter 17, the sin of Judah is written with a pen of iron and with the point of a diamond. It is graven upon the table of their heart and upon the horns of your altars. That's a very graphic way of saying that the sin of Judah and the sin of the whole human race is not just skin deep.

It's not just something which lies on the outward appearance of things. It's not just that man has failed to keep up to some outward standards of God's laws. It's much, much deeper than that.

The sin of Judah, the sin of the whole race, is engraved with a pen of iron. A pen of iron is a stonemason's chisel. That's what it is.

It's a pen of iron. What he's saying is this sin is engraved into this people. It's not just something which lies on the surface that can be painted over.

It's engraved. It doesn't matter what you do with it, it remains there. It's fixed.

It's with the point of a diamond. It's graven upon the table of your heart and upon the horns of your altars. Now, what is this sin again that God is referring to? Well, here it is.

While their children remember their altars and their groves by the green trees upon the high hills. It's this idolatry, going out after other things, this spirit of whoredom or holatry, going out after other things. God isn't a romantic in his reminiscence, but there are times when God speaks of the first movings of Israel to himself in very, very tender terms.

He refers right at the beginning here of the book of Jeremiah in chapter 2. Look how he expresses this. He is remembering and he is reminding them of their first movements towards him. Jeremiah chapter 2. Moreover, the word of the Lord came to me, saying, Go and cry in the ears of Jerusalem, saying, Thus saith the Lord, I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown.

I emphasize it in that particular way to make a contrast. There was a point in their life when they made a choice to go after God. They went into the wilderness after him, and God refers to it as days of their

espousal.

If you want a New Testament equivalent, days of first love. Days when they first began to respond to him. When they went out after him into a wilderness that was not sown.

When they weren't just thinking about promises of lands that flowed with milk and honey, and all the good things, but when they just were content to go out after God into the wilderness. It didn't last very long, but God remembered it and he reminded them of it. But by the time you get to chapter 17, he is reminding them again that there is something written in my heart that has constantly taken them in other directions, after other gods.

If we go on a little bit farther into Jeremiah chapter 17, we come to a verse very well known by evangelicals, and in its right place, very important for us to understand. Remember where it is, it's here in the Old Testament. Verse 9. The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.

Who can know it? I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings. The heart is deceitful. That really means it's crooked, it's thick, it's crooked, it's bent above all things, and he goes on to say it's desperately wicked, which really means it's incurable.

There is an incurable condition that God has diagnosed in the people of Judah, and Israel, and England, and Ireland, and Scotland, and wherever you happen to have come from. There is an incurable condition in the hearts of man that causes them to go away after other things, and it's written into them with a pen of iron, and the point of a diamond. The heart is crooked, and it is incurable.

Now, what is God going to do with this? Well, let's go now into Isaiah. Those of us who've been able to be together in the mornings have been looking at some parts of the second half of Isaiah, some parts that are sometimes called the servant songs, and this is one of them that we're going to turn to now. In chapter 52 of Isaiah, verse 13, it begins in exactly the same way that Isaiah chapter 42 begins.

Behold my servant. These are the servant songs. They are unique prophecies that speak of the Lord Jesus Christ as the faithful servant of Jehovah, the one who has come to do all his will and to finish it.

Let's just turn to Isaiah 42, just so that you can see where the first one was of these. Isaiah 42. Behold my servant whom I uphold, mine elect in whom my soul delights.

I have put my spirit upon him. I want us to just keep in our minds, if we can, this testimony of God concerning his son, concerning his servant, that he was a delight to him. We mentioned this morning that in the book of Proverbs, it speaks of the Lord Jesus under the word of wisdom, and says that in that eternity before time was, he was with God and he was daily his delight.

This wonderful enjoyment that has existed from before time within the Godhead, perfect peace, perfect enjoyment. And now in Isaiah 42, it's speaking of the time when he comes to begin his mission, to be the servant of God, to reveal the will of God for Israel. And he says, behold my servant, mine elect in whom my soul delights.

Now let's go to Isaiah 52. I wanted to read that because I want us to have it as the back cloth against which we can read Isaiah 53, to understand who it is who is now described in Isaiah 53. The one who's going to be described in Isaiah 53 is the one who was daily his father's delight, the one that he cherished

and loved, the one who's referred to in Psalm 22, in our old English version here, as his darling.

It really means his only one. It's exactly the same word that was used in Genesis chapter 22, when God said of Abraham, take now your son, your only one. All right, let's read.

Verse 13 of chapter 52. Behold my servant, my servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted and extolled and be very high. And then suddenly it says this, as many were astonished at thee, his face was mawed more than the face of a man, and his form more than the sons of men.

You know that in the book of the Song of Solomon, for example, there are wonderful poetic descriptions of the Lord Jesus Christ that speak of all his glory, of his form, of his head black and bushy, of everything in perfect comeliness. The one in whom his father delighted, the one in whom his bride would delight. And suddenly here, in Isaiah 52, you've got this.

Verse 14. As many were astonished at thee, his face was mawed more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men. So shall he sprinkle many nations.

The kings shall shut their mouths at him, for that which hath not been told them shall they see, and that which they had not seen shall they consider. Who has 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 has no form nor comeliness.

And when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. Then what has happened to him? What has happened to him? This one who was daily the father's delight. This one who is the fairest of ten thousand, according to the Song of Solomon.

This one who is perfect in all his ways. What has happened to him? He hath no form nor comeliness, and there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.

And we hid as it were our faces from him. That's a powerful picture too. There's a picture here of someone who is so undesirable that the instinct of people is to turn away from him.

There's something which is so loathsome here that the instinct is not to want to get anywhere near it. People turn their faces away from it. When Isaiah begins his prophecy in the first chapter, he begins by expressing the way that God regarded Israel.

Let's go back, we're really dodging about, but I hope in some ways these studies that we've been doing may provide a kind of a skeleton for parts of the Old Testament upon which you, at your leisure, can hang other parts and see the pattern of them. This is the beginning of Isaiah. I'll read from verse one.

The vision of Isaiah, the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah. Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth, for the Lord hath spoken. I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me.

The ox knows his owner, and the ass his master's crib, but Israel doth not know. My people doth not consider our sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers. They, children that are corruptors, they have forsaken the Lord.

They have provoked the Holy One of Israel to anger. They are gone away backward. Why should ye be stricken any more? Ye will revolt more and more.

The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot, even to the head, there's no soundness in it, but wounds and bruises and putrefying sores. They have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment.

There are some that think that perhaps Isaiah is describing a leper. There is no soundness in him. From the sole of his foot to the crown of his head, it's all rottenness.

There's not just the whiteness of flesh, but there is the putrefaction, there is the stench of flesh rotting away. How would you respond to that? Well, the way that God responds is, he says, come now and let us reason together. But it isn't the way that most others would respond.

Most others would avert our eyes, we wouldn't want to see it. It would be revolting, it would be literally nauseating. You'd see the putrefaction, you'd smell the stench upon this thing, and you wouldn't want to get anywhere near it.

But God says, come now and let us reason together. But by the time you come to Isaiah 53, it's God's servant who is unapproachable. It's God's servant who has no form or comeliness, who has no beauty that they should desire him.

It's God's servant who, according to verse 3, we hid, as it were, our faces from him. He was despised, and we esteemed him not. And then you begin to come to the explanation, to the answer to my question, what has happened to him? This is what has happened.

Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows. Yet we did esteem him smitten of God and afflicted. He was wounded for our transgressions.

He was bruised for our iniquities. The chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his scars we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray.

We have turned every one to his own way. And the Lord has gathered together unto him. That's what it says, really.

The Lord has gathered together unto him. The iniquity was all. Ah, that's what's happened.

He has stepped into the shoes of the person we read of in Isaiah chapter 21. In chapter 1, there's no comeliness in him. There's nothing in his form.

There's nothing that any man should see in him, anything which they would desire. He is the offscouring. He's that that the world wants to cast out to have nothing at all to do with.

He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows. Yet we did esteem him stricken and smitten of God and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions.

He was bruised for our iniquities. The chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray.

We've turned every one to his own way. That is the essential nature of sin. We have turned each one to our own way.

Not God's way, another way. Each one turned to our own way. Some in grosser forms have turned to gods and goddesses, idols and vile sacrifices, and others have just turned away to more sophisticated things.

But it's exactly the same. It is rejection. They have turned every one to his own way.

And the Lord has gathered together unto him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted. In the margin of Thomas Newbery's Bible, it expresses that in a different way, if I can recall it.

It says something like, It was exacted, and he was answerable. Something like that. It was exacted, and he was answerable.

What does this mean? The time came when God's full and righteous demands against all the sin of the whole world demanded payment. The time came when God said, This is the hour that payment must be made. The Lord Jesus had spoken of it throughout his life.

He kept on saying, My hour is coming. My hour is not yet. My hour is coming.

And finally it came, and he said, My hour is come. This is it. This is the time that in Luke's gospel he calls your hour, and the hour of darkness.

What happens on the cross is an amazing synchronization of God in all his love, in a manifestation of all he is, and man in all his wickedness. I don't know about the battle of Britain, but this was mankind's worst hour. This was the hour in which everything that was latent in man, this seed that would bruise the heel of the seed of the woman, this thing rose up.

It was its hour. God had restrained it, but this was its hour in which he gave its full expression, and it rose up, and it manifested itself in all its awful reality. However it had expressed itself in time past, now it expressed itself as what it was.

It was the Christ murderer. That's what it was. It was the God murderer.

We will not have this man to reign over us, and when you're talking about a man like the Lord Jesus, or when you're talking about God, there's no alternative. You can't leave someone like that just on one side. The only way you can be sure that someone like that does not have the ultimate reign is to destroy him.

There's no alternative. There cannot be some kind of mutual coexistence. You can't say, well, I'll sit here on this throne, and you can sit here on that throne.

That's what Satan pretended. I'll put my throne alongside the throne of God. You can't do it.

You can't put anything alongside God's throne. In the end, you either say, this man will reign over me, or you say crucify him. There are no other alternatives.

There's no middle ground. I know that in most of our lives, and in most of the things you may say, well, this is terrible. This kind of wickedness is not in me.

This isn't. I've never done anything like this. Maybe you haven't had the opportunity.

On a couple of occasions, three occasions in all, two occasions I've been to Auschwitz, and once to Majdanek, I feel drawn to those places, not because of their sadness, but because I think I ought to be a witness. I ought to be a witness of man's inhumanity to men. But I'll tell you this, and it might surprise you, but I know that Hitler did nothing that I was not capable of doing.

Now, I'm not exaggerating. I know my family. I know what I came from.

I know what was in me. I know the sadism that was in me. I know the cruelty that was in me.

He did nothing that I was not capable of. And if there are any here tonight who have any lingering thoughts about how man came to be what he is, some ideas that maybe man is some progression from the animals, and really he's still on the way up, and he hasn't yet reached his perfection, and the development or the evolution is still going on, I'll say this one simple thing. Whatever your theory is, you have got to have an explanation for this almost unbelievable wickedness in the hearts of men.

Animals don't behave like this. Animals don't behave like this. There's something else in man.

When Paul expresses these things in Romans chapter 5, he expresses it like this. He says, let me read it so that I read it exactly. Romans chapter 5, and verse 12.

So, in the first half of the verse, I need to make the point. Wherefore, as by one man, sin entered into the world. There was a point at time in which sin entered into the world.

Sin did not come into existence at that point. Sin was a lot older than that. Sin is a lot older than the human race.

But there was a time when sin entered the human race, and a spirit passed into humanity that is a God killer, that in the end says, I will have my way, I will do my own thing, I will go in my own direction, no matter what it costs. And if it costs the death of a loving God upon the cross, so be it, I will have my own way, I will do my own thing. It's not natural, and it's because it's not natural that there are no natural solutions to it.

Education can't cure it, and religion can't cure it, and self-discipline can't cure it, and there's nothing that can cure it, because the heart is crooked above all things and incurable. It is beyond cure. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted.

It is exacted, and he is answerable. This is like a debtor, a creditor, coming to the person who owes him some money, and saying, all right, the time has come, now I insist that the debt is paid. That's what exacting something is.

It's when you come to a certain point in time, and you say, there's no more time, now the bill has to be paid. And what happened on the cross was, that time came, and the one who picked up the tab, the one who was answerable, was the one upon whom God had gathered together all sin, the servant who had no comeliness, the one who had stepped into our place. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted.

Who will pay this price? I remember hearing a story many years ago. I don't know whether it's a myth. I sometimes suspect that lots of these stories are, but this was a story that was supposed to take place in Russia during the time of one of the tsars named Nicholas.

And this was a story concerning a young man who came from a good family, and had a commission in the Russian army, but squandered his money on gambling, and got himself into such terrible debt that there was no possible way out of it. And one day, on a piece of paper, he sat in the barracks, and he added up all the debts to all the different people that he owned, and it was an impossible debt. There was no possible way that he could ever discharge the debt.

And realizing the shame that would come upon his family, he took out a loaded revolver and pulled back the hammer, intending to end his life. And having added up this great sum, he wrote at the bottom of it, and who can pay? And then, as sometimes happens in the extremity of his emotion, he fell asleep. And as he slept, Tsar Nicholas came into the barracks, and saw the young man with the loaded pistol on the desk, and the piece of paper with all the great list of debts upon it, and the impossibility of it all, and under it the question, who can pay? And he stooped, and he wrote something, and walked out.

When the young man woke up, it said, I, Nicholas, I will pay. Your debt was far greater than his. A debt that there was no possibility of ever paying.

And if you ask the question, who will be answerable for this? When God comes to exact the price, when he comes to demand that the debt will be paid, who, who will go? I, says our Lord Jesus, I will go. I will pay. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth.

He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is done, so he opened not his mouth. He was taken from prison, and from judgment, and who shall declare his generation? For he was cut off out of the land of the living, for the transgression of my people was he stricken. And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.

Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him. This one of whom the father said as he stood by the river Jordan, this is my son, in whom I am well pleased. It pleased the father to bruise him.

He has put him to grief. When you turn with me to one of the Psalms, Psalm 22, in many ways the veil over what happened upon the cross is lifted more in the Old Testament than in the New Testament. That's an interesting thing.

In the New Testament, we hear a lot about the results of his death, and the effect, and the power of it. But several times in the Old Testament, you just get like the corner of a curtain lifted, and you see something of the depth of things that were taking place. And here in Psalm 22, you get one of such occasions.

My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? And why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring? O my God, I cry in the daytime, but thou hearest not. And in the night season, and am not silent, but thou art holy. O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel, our fathers trusted in thee.

They trusted, and thou didst deliver them. They cried unto thee, and were delivered. They trusted in thee, and were not confounded.

But I am a worm, and no man. What has happened to him? What has happened? This, this is the only man that has ever lived. This is the only true man who has ever lived.

If you take God's definition of man from Genesis chapter 1, let us make man in our likeness and in our image. This is the only man who ever lived. This is the only one who has perfectly expressed the nature

and the character of God.

And yet here there's this point in time, and outside it's like a point of time and eternity, where he becomes a worm, and no man. A reproach of men, and despised of the people. There's an interesting occasion in the New Testament, in 1 Corinthians chapter 15, when the Apostle Paul speaks of the Lord Jesus and refers to him as the second man.

He refers to Adam as the first man, and then says that the second man is the Lord from heaven. It's the Bible's way of telling us that have only ever been two men who fulfilled God's definition of man. What's your definition of man? What is man? That's a Bible question.

Psalm 8. What is man? That thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that thou visitest him. For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and crowned him with glory and honour. Adam was crowned with glory and honour.

Adam had clothing. He was made in the image of likeness of God, and God clothes himself with light as a garment. That's what the scripture says, where he clothes himself.

I forget how it expresses it, but it's something like that. And Adam was glory crowned, and glory clothed. But he sinned, and all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.

And man is no longer what God intended him to be. There's a story, I think I may have mentioned this here before, it's a story that's in my mind. C.S. Lewis wrote amongst his, as well as his Narnia stories, he wrote three books of science fiction books.

And the first one was called Out to the Silent Planet, and the second one was called Voyage to Venus, and the third was called That Hideous Strength. And what he does in these three science fiction books, if you could ever get an opportunity to read them, read them. They're not Bible, they're not revelation, but there are points in those story where he does what poets can always do.

Poets can always get to the heart of a thing. It doesn't matter whether their words are accurate, they get to the feeling of a thing so often. And in the second of those things, the voyage to Venus, he is inventing a story of a time when Venus was enjoying its Eden, its very beginnings.

A time when God was making a new creation, and on Venus you have a new Adam and a new Eve. And you also have a threat, as you had on the old earth, and the threat is Satan himself. And God's means of delivering Venus from a similar destiny to the earth is that a man from the earth, named Ransom, goes from the earth to Venus and is part of God's answer in delivering this new creation from the consequences which would have befallen it.

Please do read the book, don't just listen to this kind of 10-second resume. At the end of the story, Ransom, who has been part of God's answer to all this thing, is in a scene where the new Adam, the new Eve, or the King and the Queen, or as it's called, I think, the Lord and the Lady of this new creation, are gathered with all the animals who gather around them. And there's a time of great celebration and joy.

I think he calls it a celestial dance or something like that. And Ransom, the man from earth, is there and he's lying on his face. And the Lord of this new creation speaks to him and wants him to join in the celebrations, wants him to come up to where the throne is, because he has been part of the answer of all this.

And the man from earth says this, he says, don't lift me up. I've never seen a real man or a real woman. I've lived all my life under shadows and broken images.

Now, that's not theology, but he's got to the heart of it. You and I have never seen a real man. We have never seen a real man.

We've never seen what God meant when he said, we'll make man in our image. We've never seen it. Eve saw it briefly, the animal creation saw it briefly, and then it fell.

He sinned and fell from the glory and the destiny that God had intended for him. And then you have generation upon generation in the image and likeness, not of God, but of Adam, the one who's no longer in the image and likeness of God. And the generations that we have been part of have just been shadows and broken images.

I remember some time ago, quite a time ago now, being in Turkey and visiting Ephesus, where Paul had been. Ephesus was a very beautiful Greek city. And like lots of Greek cities, everything was done in just the perfect way.

There were lots of beautiful statues, all with perfect form and shape, because the Greeks believed in perfection. The people didn't have middle-aged spreads and bald heads in Greek. Everything was perfect.

That's the way they did it. And their statues were all like that. And if you walk down the main street of Ephesus, it's white marble.

It must have been a beautiful city. And you see there on one side, there's the public library, and outside there are these beautiful statues, larger than man's eyes. And then there are the public baths and these beautiful statues.

And around all the buildings, there are friezes. And on the friezes, there are these beautiful, perfect statues in their perfect form and symmetry, except that none of them have faces. Because Ephesus has been under Muslim rule for many years, and they're not allowed to have images of men.

So they have been stoned by little Muslim boys for generation upon generation. And all you have is these faceless things. And you just have to imagine what might have been.

And all we can do when we read about Adam and Eve is just imagine what might have been. Because we have been defaced. We have been spoiled by a cosmic vandal who wants to destroy and remove that image of God from the whole universe.

He doesn't want to see it anywhere. He doesn't want to see it in God. He doesn't want to see it in humanity.

He doesn't want to see it anywhere. He will try to remove it. It's the murderous seed that says away with him.

Hates to be reminded of him. But then God brought into this earth someone who wasn't in the image and likeness of Adam, but who again was in the image and likeness of God. Speaks of him in the letters of the Hebrews.

He is the express image of his person. He is exactly what God is like. He is the second man.

And this second man of whom God could say and proclaim to all who wanted to hear, this is my beloved son in whom I walk. This is him. Look at him.

And there was an occasion when Peter and others of the disciples were on a mountain and the Lord Jesus at that time was transfigured and spoke with people who had left this earth and were already in, if you like, a heavenly glory. And they came, Moses and Elijah, and they spoke with him. And Peter, who always had some suggestion to offer, said let's make three tabernacles, three shrines.

We'll make one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah. And the voice spoke from heaven and said, this is my son. There's no one else to be considered.

There's nothing else to say. This is my beloved son. Listen to him.

Behold him. But this one who is daily the Father's delight, this one who is the express image of God here, it says of him, I am a worm and no man, a reproach of men and despise of the people. All they that see me laugh me to scorn.

They shoot out the lip. They shake the head saying he trusted on the Lord that he would deliver him. Let him deliver him seeing he delighted in him.

Can you hear that delighted? Let him deliver him seeing he delighted in him. But thou art he that took me out of the womb. Thou didst make me hope when I was upon my mother's breasts.

I was cast upon thee from the womb. Thou art my God from my mother's belly. Be not far from me for trouble is near for that is not to help.

Many balls have compassed me. Strong balls of bastion have beset me round. They gaped upon me with their mouths as a ravening and a roaring lion.

I don't mean to say do I, for the Bible often pictures as a ravening and a roaring lion. They gaped upon me with their mouths as a ravening and a roaring lion. I am poured out like water and all my bones are out of joint.

My heart is like wax. It is melted in the midst of my bowels. My strength is dried up like a pot shard.

My tongue cleaves to my jaws. Thou hast brought me into the dust of death. For dogs have compassed me.

The assembly of the wicked have enclosed me. They pierced my hands and my feet. I may count all my bones.

They look and stare upon me. They part my garments among them and cast lots upon my vesture. But be not thou far from me, O Lord, O my strength.

Haste thee to help me. Deliver my soul from the sword, my darling, my only one. From the power of the dog save me from the lion's mouth.

This is the cry, the prayer of the Lord Jesus. It says in Hebrews that he was heard in that he feared and that God answered his prayer to deliver him out of death. Our AV says from death, but you know he wasn't saved from death.

He went straight into death, but he was saved out of death and that's really what the preposition means. It's ek. He was saved out of death.

He was delivered from the death into which he voluntarily went. So great a death, not just the death of the body, but this separation from God, which is expressed in this cry of dereliction. My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me, a worm and no men? These are terrible things, aren't they? It's just as well that God only speaks to us of them in pictures.

These are just pictures. I don't believe we could bear the reality of all this. These are pictures and the pictures evoke reactions.

They evoke feelings within us. They evoke, but they're just pictures. This is just a superficial way of expressing what was taking place.

The reality is beyond our imagination. The Lord Jesus spoke of it as a baptism. He said, I have a baptism to be baptized with and I'm straightened until that's accomplished.

He had to be baptized and all baptism is into death. All baptism is into death and he was baptized into death. He was baptized into our death, our spiritual death, our separation from God.

Galatians says he became a curse for us. 2nd Corinthians says he was made to be sin. He who knew no sin that we might be the righteousness of God in him.

In Peter's letter, when he speaks about these prophets and the way that they express things, he says that it was the Spirit of Christ in them signifying and testifying of the sufferings and the glories that would follow. And in each of these passages of scripture that we've begun to look at in Isaiah chapter 53 and here in Psalm 22, you've got that. You've got the sufferings and the glories that would follow.

In Psalm 22, you've got a kind of a fulcrum, a point of balance, a watershed. Everything on one side of this particular verse goes in one direction. It's the sufferings that he would suffer.

And everything on the other side of it is the glories that should follow. And our AV doesn't make the point where this change takes place absolutely clear. If you are reading something like a New King James Version, you'll see it's done it.

If you've got a New King James Version and you look at Psalm 22 and verse 22, you'll see that it's separated out the little phrase, he was heard. He was heard. It's taken it out of the middle of verse 22.

You know, don't you, that there were no commas or false stops or any kind of punctuation in the original Hebrew. In fact, there weren't even any vowels or any spaces between the words. So, these commas and false stops are really things that we have added, and sometimes it can be very, very helpful to take out those that are here and put in some of your own and see what it says.

Let me take out something and put something in. Psalm 22 and verse 21. Here's this last cry, save me from the lion's mouth.

This next verse really ought to be a new verse, this next line. It ought to say something like this, because thou hast heard me from the horns of the unicorn, I will declare thy name unto my brethren. In the midst of the congregation will I praise thee.

Can you see how the atmosphere has changed in a moment? The whole atmosphere has changed dramatically halfway through this verse. From the horns of the unicorn thou hast heard me. I will declare thy name unto my brethren.

In the midst of the congregation will I praise thee. Ye that fear the Lord, praise him. All ye seed of Jacob, glorify him, and fear him, all ye the seed of Israel.

For he hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted. Neither hath he hid his face from him, but when he cried unto him, he heard. My praise shall be of thee in the great congregation.

I will pay my vows before them that fear him. And he goes on to say several other things, but there's one verse here in verse 30 that I just want to draw attention to, where it simply says this, and these are parts of the glories that follow the suffering. A seed shall serve him.

A seed shall serve him. If you look at Isaiah 52, Isaiah 52 and verse 10, you've got the same kind of point beyond which the atmosphere changes. Verse 9, he made his grave with the wicked and with the rich in his death, because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.

Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him. He hath put him to grief. When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed.

He shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the clover of his soul and be satisfied. By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many, for he shall bear their iniquities.

This reference to the seed, this change that takes place. When it speaks of his death in the Acts of the Apostles, when Peter spoke to the people who were in Jerusalem, Acts chapter 2, he spoke of Jesus and it says, it wasn't possible for the pangs of death to hold him. And the word that he uses for pangs is birth pangs.

It was not possible for the birth pangs of death to hold him. What kind of language is this? How can you talk about the birth pangs of death? Something has to come through all this in order to produce a seed which carries within it all its historical characteristics. Now that may sound a bit kind of complicated.

Some years ago I was doing a study on regeneration. Some of you may have heard me say this. I was doing a study on regeneration and I was looking up the Greek word for regeneration and it's palingenesis.

Two words put together, palingenesis. You can hear the word genesis, that really means beginnings. And I was thinking of some way in which it might be possible to illustrate, if I was talking about this, exactly what palingenesis meant.

And I thought, well, genesis, that's obviously, so that's generating, making something. It's easy to explain what that means. Now, is there any English word that has anything at all to do with palen? So, I just got an ordinary concise Oxford dictionary and I looked it up and there was palindrome, which means something which is the same backwards as it is forwards.

And then, to my amazement, because I never studied biology or anything, there in my English dictionary was the word palingenesis, the Greek word for regeneration. And I looked at the dictionary definition and it said, an exact reproduction of ancestral characteristics. And I thought, this is the best definition of

regeneration I've ever seen in my life.

An exact reproduction of ancestral characteristics. Now, I know the way the biologists use it and I don't agree with the way they use it, but the definition is wonderful. You see, what was going to happen is this life, this life which is in seed, which God can put into us, is a life which has ancestral characteristics.

There are certain things which have already happened to this seed before it gets to you. Before it's planted in you, it has ancestral characteristics. I'll tell you what's happened to the seed before it got to you.

It died to sin. The life that's put into you is a life which has already died to sin. It has been crucified.

The life that he puts in you by this seed is a life that has already been crucified. All these things are already in the seed. It was only possible by this means to bring this seed into existence.

This life had to go through experiences, and these experiences are caught in the seed. Do you follow what I'm trying to say? Well, you're honest, anyway, I'll give you that. How can I illustrate it? What I'm trying to say is this.

You don't have to die to sin. You just have to receive a life that has already died to sin. You don't have to be crucified.

You just have to receive a life that has already been crucified. This seed has a history. It has a testimony, this seed.

If this seed was able to speak, this seed would say, I was crucified. I went through death. I died to sin.

This is what the seed would say. This would be the testimony of the seed. Now, put the seed into a man, and listen to the testimony of the man.

I have been crucified with Christ. Now, whose testimony is this? Is this Paul's testimony, or is it the seed's testimony? Can you see what I'm saying? All right, well, maybe it's very mysterious. But you don't need to set your attention or concentrate upon a checklist of experiences that you have got to go through.

You haven't got to go through a death to sin and tick it off. You haven't got to go through a crucifixion and tick it off. You haven't got to go through a resurrection and tick it off.

All you've got to do is receive a life that has already gone through those things. This is the seed that will serve him. Oh, this is the seed.

The other, that other seed would never serve him. But this is the seed that did serve him. These are very primitive things, aren't they, when we talk about seed? And we try to speak of them as discreetly as we can, but characteristics are passed down, physical characteristics are passed down through seed.

I remember, it's not quite so much the truth now, but I can remember when one of my sons was about seven or eight, someone coming to me and said, I've just seen your son. And I said, how did you know it was my son? They said, well, he's a cardboard cutout of you, they said. It's, there are characteristics that pass down, you can see them.

If you go to one of the stately homes of England, or something like that, and you go to Warwick Castle, and you look at some of the families, you'll see down the generation, you'll see this nose coming down the

centuries. All the way down, it comes down, it's, there it is. Because it's in the seed, it was in the seed, it's.

Now, I don't know anything at all about biology, so if the doctors here, and I'm saying this wrong, please forgive me, because this is just my very crude understanding of it, but it's in the genes. And there was something in our spiritual genes that was always going in a wrong direction, always going after something else. And that's why you need to be regenerated.

That's the same word, it's the same word, it's the same word. You need to receive new spiritual genes. It has to happen.

There's no other way. But the spiritual genes that you receive, all right, let's go back to the Bible word, seed. The seed that you receive has in it a certain kind of life.

It's a life which is coming from heaven. That's why you have to be born from heaven. That's why we are seated in heavenly places in Christ.

Occasionally, we sing that chorus, I've found a new place in the heavenlies, and I sing it, but I'm not really very thrilled with it, because it sounds as though it's a new experience. There are so many experiences that people become experience-orientated, and they want this, and they want this. Reminds me, you've heard the old story, are there any Americans here? All right, I can tell this story safely.

It's the old story of someone, I think, who was supposed to be standing by Lake Windermere, when an enormous American car pulled up, and some people got out of this car, and they stood looking at Lake Windermere, and they had in front of them a big piece of paper, and they said, where is, I'm not going to attempt the accent, they said, where is this place? And they said, it's Windermere, and they said, oh good, and they ticked it and got back in the car and drove off. Now, there are some people who go through Christian life like that. They're trying to find these things to tick them off.

It's in Christ. It's all in Christ. All he has to do is get this life into you, and it's all yours in Christ.

It's the seed that will serve him. It's the only seed that will serve him, but look what it cost to bring forth this seed. Turn with me, please, to Peter's letter, Peter's first letter.

And chapter two, it's speaking of the Lord Jesus in verse 21, and in verse 22 it says, who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth. Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again. When he suffered, he threatened not, but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously.

Who, his own self, bear our sins in his body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, should live to righteousness. By whose scarves you were healed. For you used to be a sheep going astray, but are now returned unto the shepherd and the bishop of your souls.

All we like sheep have gone astray, everyone going his own way. There are other powerful pictures in the Old Testament of this spirit that was ever taking people away from God. This backsliding thing of which God said on one occasion, I'll heal your backsliding.

This thing that was always going in the wrong direction. Who, his own self, bear our sins in his body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness. By whose scars you were healed.

The death of Christ upon the cross is the cure to the incurable condition of men's hearts. What he does is to give you a new one. Doesn't try to mend that one or adapt it in any way, but he takes out that heart of

stone upon which another law was written, engraven with a pen of iron and with the point of a diamond.

He takes that out and he puts in a new one in which is written his name and his character. A new seed, a new glorious possibility of life. He puts it on the inside and transforms the nature.

That's really what regeneration means. It means a change of nature. He puts into us a seed which is different to the seed that was there previously.

A seed which seeks him, a seed which delights to do his will. I'm not saying now that there aren't difficulties. I'm not saying that there aren't temptations.

I'm just saying that there's something happens in regeneration which alters a man's desires. It alters the direction of his life. It alters the basic instincts of spirit.

So that instead of having a basic instinct of spirit that's always going off, there's another basic instinct which is always returning to the shepherd and bishop of your souls. Healing. All right, now I don't want to get into controversy, but this healing I do believe is in the atonement.

Do you understand what I'm saying? This healing is in the atonement. This healing that restores a man's nature and renews him in the image of Jesus Christ and puts a new seed in him. Oh, well, how can these things be true for me? Just let's take just a minute or two back in Isaiah.

Isaiah 53 and verse 10 when it speaks of the Lord being pleased to bruise him. Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him. He has put him to grief.

And now I'm going to read literally what it says in the AV because the AV has got the order here absolutely right. And notice the switch of pronouns. It's been talking about him.

It's been talking about the Lord. It's been talking about we throughout this chapter. And suddenly without any warning at all it suddenly says thou.

Suddenly says thou. I'll read verse 10 again. Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him.

He had put him to grief. When thou shalt make his soul a trespass offering he shall see his seed. Is there something that I have to do as part of my receiving of God's provision which makes this thing possible? Apparently there is.

Apparently the fulcrum, the point of balance, the place of the watershed is when I make his soul my trespass offering. Now what's all that talking about? In ancient Israel God gave them many different sacrifices for many different purposes. And the trespass offering was a kind of a variant of the sin offering.

It doesn't give us as many details about the trespass offering as it gives about the sin offering. But from time to time it just simply says there's one law for both. The sin offering and the trespass offering, there's one law for both.

In other words, the way that the trespass offering worked and the way that the sin offering worked were very similar. The trespass offering seems to have in its view the breach that is caused by sin, the separation, the damage to fellowship. But the way that things happened with a sin offering was this.

It depended on who you were, whether you were a king or a prince or whether you were a high priest or just one of the ordinary people. But depending on who you were, you had to bring an animal. And you had to bring this animal and you had to put your hands upon the head of this animal.

And this simple action was the way in which you identified yourself with this creature. It was a way that God had ordained of saying, from now on this is my substitute. What happens to this, it is as though it happened to me.

That was the trespass offering in ancient Israel. And now if you've not done it before, and I would guess that most of us have here tonight, maybe you've not heard this kind of way of expressing it in quite this way, but what you need to do is you need to put your hands upon the trespass offering. You need to consciously, personally, identify yourself with the offering that God has made available to you.

To put your hand upon his head and say, this for me. Whatever happens to him, it is as though he has happened to me. If this sacrifice is accepted, I am accepted.

If this goes to death and ends it all, then that's me gone to death and ended it all. It's all in him. And it's all in our personal receiving of him and our personal commitment to him.

God expressed these things to his ancient people in picture language, in symbols and tokens and shadows and types. I'm not talking about the shadows and the types and the pictures and the tokens. I'm talking about things of the heart.

It is absolutely essential for this thing to work. Excuse me expressing it like this. For this transaction to be effected, it is essential that you make this connection.

You personally have to make this connection with God's provision for you. Nobody else can do it for you. It has to be thou.

Not we and not you. It has to be thou. That's very rude in English, but I ought to come and point at every single one and say, I mean you personally, thou.

You have to make this connection. No one can make this connection for you. No one can do it.

But the moment you make his soul an offering for your sin, the moment you identify yourself with him, the moment you make the connection, what does it say here? When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed. He shall prolong his days and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul and shall be satisfied.

He went through all that. If you want the language altered, he went through all that in order to bring forth sons. He went through all that in order to open the womb of God so that men and women could be born of God and born from heaven so that they could receive a seed which was not a natural seed, but the seed that comes from heaven to make all things new.

And it's available for those who make his soul an offering for their sin. God says, behold my servant. Again and again he attracts our attention to him and he says, this is where it's all at.

This is where it must happen. It's in your personal transaction with the risen, glorified Jesus Christ. It's not because people are praying over you.

It's not because you're coming to the front. It's not because you're signing decisions. It's none of that.

Those may help, but none of those are essentials. What is essential is that there is a personal meeting between you and your sin offering. Behold my servant.

Let's pray. I'm really tucking in and saying what our brother was saying just the other night. Which seed is this now? Which seed are you of? Which life? Which have you received? There's no way you can make yourself born again.

Regeneration is God's act. You have to be born from heaven and you can't get yourself born from heaven. But there is something you can do if you've not done it and that is to put your hands upon God's provision and say, yes Lord, this is for me.

This is my offering. This is my provision made for me. I saw in someone's home today a lovely little quotation that Amy Carmichael used to quote.

It's something like this. Upon a life I did not live. Upon a death I did not die.

Upon another's life, another's death. I stake my whole eternity. That's faith and God meets that in the gift of his spirit.

Let's come to him. Let's come to him personally. You just speak to him.

Put your hands upon his head. Oh Lord. This has nothing to do with me or anybody else.

It's between you and him. Oh Lord. Oh Lord.

Oh Lord. Lord. Our hands remain upon his head, Father.

He remains our only sacrifice for sin. We have no other contribution to make. There's nothing in us, Lord, that's of any worth that we could bring.

But he whom you have provided we bring. And in him we have acceptance. And we bless you.

We bless you for perfect provision for a gospel and a salvation that's free and finished and to which all men may enter. Oh Lord, we bless you. We bless you.

Be satisfied, Lord. That's much more important now than that we should be satisfied. See of the travail of your soul and be satisfied.

Bring many sons into the glory from which they fell. You who sit upon the throne make all things new and by your spirit speak the living Christ into every heart. Amen.

Amen. We can have a little time loving.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/2/SID2759.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/ron-bailey/isaiah-part-5-sin-offering/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net