

# The Israel of God - Part 1

by T. Austin-Sparks

---

*The principle of travail is a universal law in creation and grace that is necessary for reproduction and multiplication, and is a test of heart relationship to God's things.*

**Duration:** 48:40

**Scripture:** Isaiah 53:10-11, John 16:20, Romans 8:22, Galatians 6:16

**Topics:** "Israel"

---

## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of having a genuine heart relationship with God. He uses the analogy of a tree that appears to be real but is hollow on the inside, illustrating the danger of superficial faith. The speaker also mentions the necessity of going through trials and suffering to reveal the true treasure within. He references a message from a brother in China about the breaking of the devil to uncover the preciousness of the treasure within. The sermon concludes with a discussion of the phrase 'the Israel of God' in the letter to the Galatians and references Isaiah 53:10-11.

---

## Transcript

The seed plot of our consideration and meditation at this time is a little fragment at the end of the Letter to the Galatians. The Letter to the Galatians, chapter six, in verse sixteen, it is the last clause. And I read the whole verse.

And as many as shall walk by this rule, peace be upon them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God. That last clause, the Israel of God. I want to bring alongside of that some other fragments, going back to the prophecies of Isaiah, chapter fifty-three, verses ten and eleven.

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 hands. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied. In chapter sixty-six of the same prophecies, at verse eight, who hath heard such a thing? Who hath seen such things? Shall a land be born in one day? Shall a nation be brought forth at once? For as soon as Zion travails, she brought forth her children.

The prophecies of Micah, chapter five, verse three. Therefore will he give them up until the time that she who travails hath brought forth. Then the residue of his brethren shall return unto the children of Israel.

The letter to the Romans, chapter eight, verse twenty-two. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now, waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our bodies. In the gospel by John, chapter sixteen, at verse twenty, Verily, verily, I say unto you, ye shall weep and lament, the world shall rejoice.

Ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy. The woman, when she is in travail, hath sorrow, because her hour is come. When she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, but the joy the man is born into the world.

And then again to the letter to the Galatians, chapter four, verse nineteen. My little children, of whom I am again in travail, until Christ be born in you. Now let us bring together particularly the fragment from Galatians 6.16, the Israel of God, and the fragment in Isaiah 53.10 and 11.

He shall see his seed, he shall see the travail of his soul, and to abbreviate that, his seed, the travail of his. It's a very full, deep and far-reaching matter the Lord is bringing before us at this time. This whole matter of producing, securing, training, using a spiritual seed, a new spiritual Israel.

This afternoon we begin this whole matter with a brief consideration of this particular principle which is found in the word which has been in every passage that we have read, excepting one. This principle of travail. We go back to remind ourselves that this is a law which God established in the creation.

There is an established law of travail. You will recall what the Lord said first to the woman and then to the man as we have it in Genesis 3.16-19. To the woman he said, and then to the man he said. And he there linked this law in two realms with production and reproduction.

One connection with children and the other connection with the elf. And in these two connections of the law of travail we find three things. First of all, the matter of the justification of life.

The very justification of life is in reproduction, in a seed, in multiplication. Never intended to be an end in itself. The only justification for life according to God's law and principle is that it reproduces.

And so the law of travail is linked with reproduction. That runs through the whole realm of nature and of grace. The natural and the spiritual.

There is no reproduction anywhere without travail. That's God's law. But there is no reproduction without travail.

And the travail becomes the basis of the justification of existence. That is something much deeper than perhaps appears. And one might say like this quite bluntly, if we are without travail there is no justification for our existence.

To put that round the other way, travail is God's way and ground of justifying our existence. We come back to that stated as we go on. That is to what he said to the woman.

Then he turned to the man, and spoke about the travail of his labor, the ground, the ring, form, form, and breath, and that it would be by the sweat of his brow that the ground produced. And this was the preservation and sustentation of life. The justification of life, the preservation and sustentation of life on the principle of travail.

And then of course in both cases the issue is a triumph. It's made perfectly clear in both connections. Paul puts his finger upon that, you remember in his letter to Timothy.

Yes, travail is a triumph. God will see you through in spite of it. It's the triumph of life in both connections, children and the earth.

That which issues as a testimony to something having been overcome. It's a testimony to a victory over forces at work which would prevent, which would make it infinitely difficult. It's a testimony of triumph.

And travail, you see, is God's law by which he is not defeated. That is where the test comes, always for us. He is not defeated, but out of the adversity, out of the difficulty, out of the suffering, something stands as a great testimony to triumph, to victory.

I'm only just touching on something or on some things that run all the way through the word of God and are so true to the spiritual life. We shall speak more about those very things. Now note, the implication of this principle of travail.

Travail in every connection, remember. And when I say that, I mean more than the two connections of which I've spoken. You go through the Bible and you see the great number of connections where this principle, this law of struggle and conflict and pain and anguish is the law of some tremendous new thing of God, the emergence of something of God.

We'll leave that for the moment, but note the implication of such a law. What did God mean by this? Well, I think simply this, perhaps much more about this, that nothing was going to be easy and cheap. To put that another way, that God was really establishing the tremendous value of everything.

Saving man from regarding things as being of little concern or value. Forcing him and forcing her to recognize that this thing is costly because it is valuable. Now you see, it's the opposite to the whole tendency of man's nature to get things easily, to get them cheaply, not to pay a price for them, to escape suffering, to escape labor, to get it all without any cost or price.

And God has written in the whole universe, this law, that anything that is of Him in creation or in grace has a price attached to it. It's a costly thing. It is infinitely precious and valuable and worth suffering for.

Note, it is intended to bring the soul in, travail of His soul. My soul is exceeding even unto death. To bring the soul into relation with things.

And when we say that, we mean love, what we get cheaply and easily, we don't really love. But that which costs, binds our heart to become a matter of the heart of love. And so by traveling, you see, the soul is saved from lightness, carelessness, frivolity, cheapness.

I'm brought to recognize something here that is infinitely precious. How far-reaching is that truth and that law? What a lot of ground it covers, doesn't it? God is not going to let the creation off in this matter. This is the explanation of so much.

A nation and people that give themselves up to frivolity, to cheapness, to escapism, and all that sort of thing, that nation or people is on the high road to a bad time in its history. Won't be too long before it passes through some fiery ordeal to bring back the preciousness and the seriousness of things. And if this is true in the realm of nature and the world, what a lot it explains in the realm of God's spiritual things.

Oh, the tragedy, the infinite tragedy of trying to make things of God cheap and easy, even salvation, the Christian life cheap and easy, appealing always to the pleasure side of things, trying to eliminate the cost. Lord Jesus never did that. He never did.

Salvation is something of infinite cost, and everything to do with salvation is infinitely precious. And there is not one fragment of all that is of God which is not of surpassing and transcendent value. Not just going to be had willy-nilly through much tribulation, and that's only another English word for travail.

We must enter the kingdom. Suffering is attached to anything of any value, and that is particularly true of spiritual things. At that very point, you and I, dear friends, do need to have our minds converted.

That's where we need a tremendous change of mind. You cannot understand some things in the Bible unless you recognize that. And unless that has become true, they sound flippant, garrulous, they sound as though they're just words, words, words.

Listen, our life affliction which is but for a passing moment. He's talking about Paul. I like it.

Well, listen to his catalog of suffering. Listen to him. He tells us of all that he had to go through for the gospel, and read the much more that Luke tells us that Paul never mentioned personally.

For that beloved servant of God went through for the gospel. He talks like this, our life affliction which is for a passing moment. Can't talk like that in the presence of suffering.

Unless you have seen the infinite preciousness of that toward which God is working and bringing you. Though now for a season we are in heaviness through many old trials, yet though we see him not, we rejoice with joy unspeakable, full of glory. Now look at the context of it.

Fiery trials, fiery trials. Can't just go through understanding. Endure the travail unless, unless you have some sense of the value of things.

Now this law is carried through from nature to the purpose of God, to the divine purpose. And it's seen in the scriptures to be the principle or law of all divine realization. If you look again, you will see that in all new beginnings, the initiation of God, this law, is ever present.

Everything of God emerges from some agony, from some convulsion, from some death struggle. Put your Bible again like that all the way through. Without or within some tremendous having marks every new beginning of God.

Can you, can you put your finger in the Bible upon any instance where God began again and there was no association with the principle of travail? You'll have difficulty. The law of birth, you see, and it relates to the spiritual world, the purpose of God just as matters to any other realm. And what is true of God's beginnings and initiations is true of every enlargement.

Whenever God sets himself for increase or enlargement, to get something more in that which he has already got, it seems that he plunges that thing anew into travail. Yes. In nature, every springtime, which is to see nature enlarge, growing beyond what it was before, every springtime in its increase is a new travel, a new travel.

You can almost hear the trees traveling at certain times, you walk in the woods. Only if our ears were more attuned to that realm, there are sounds to which our ears are not attuned and they're sounds, real sounds,

which you hear the groaning in the creation. And Paul just says this to us, the whole creation groaneth and travails.

Before, it is pent up, it is held back, it is under arrest, it is groaning for its expansion, its enlargement, its liberation. Liberation. That's a law and spiritual thing, dear friends.

Every fresh measure of Christ every bit of spiritual increase is brought with a fresh baptism into his passion. Well, we should recognize that so often we don't understand why, dear friends, when we ask for spiritual increase and enlargement, we immediately are plunged into a bad time. It comes that way, some of us have learned that so much that we say these things to the Lord with our tongue in our cheek.

We are very, very careful what we say to the Lord. Learn that the way of enlargement is at cost through fresh travel. It's true, you can't get away from it.

Yes, there are successive baptisms into the passion of Christ. The law, the law of his universality is the law of his passion. I came to scatter fire in the earth.

How am I to read them until it be accomplished? But I have a baptism to be baptized with. By the travail of his foes, the passion of his cross, the straightening was removed, the fire was scattered, and the enlargement took place. But that is equally true of the church as of himself.

Church has never expanded and been released without some compulsion. That's history, isn't it? And it's spiritual truth. And again, what is true of God's beginnings and God's continuations and enlargements is true of the final, in the finality of things, one great, tremendous, you like to change the word, travail.

Not sure that the church has not entered upon that already. It's spreading, it's coming, it will be at the end, it's the explanation. You look again at the word, it's quite true to the word.

Here it is. God is going to bring out that ultimate and final, intrinsic thing of glory and precious. It comes out of fiery ordeal.

At the end, fiery ordeal. Yes, the travail of the church at the end will issue in the final emergence of the church in glory and in the consummation of the divine purpose. Bible sees a great travail in the church and in the creation out of which the kingdom will finally come in fullness.

When you see these things, lift up your head, know that your way out draws nigh, your escape, your exit, your redemption. Now this principle of course is comprehensively, fully gathered up in Christ himself and in his cross. Christ's passion, Christ's cross is central to the whole universe and central in this particular respect.

It's travail through which the universe is redeemed. Yes, the heavens and the earth the cross of the Lord Jesus affects the whole range of things in the earth and beyond the earth. His travail is of universal significance.

It's such a far-reaching thing. And into every experience of true spiritual travail, there is something that is of far-reaching significance and account. Here is this one little man, Paul, thought very little of by the world in his day, to size and through centuries.

A great man in his own eyes calls him the insignificant little Jew. All the time. Well, that's the world's estimate of him.

Here he is saying, I feel up. Well, that's the world's estimate of him. Here he is saying, I feel up in my body, that which is lacking in the suffering of Christ, for his body's sake which is the truth.

In other words, I touched his cup, and in so doing, I touched the whole body of Christ. Tremendous thing, isn't it? But was it true? Was it true? Has history proved that it was true? I would like to stop here with a parenthesis on that historic side of things. You know, 50 years ago, whole realm of biblical scholarship, as it was called, hinged Paul.

They hinged him. They wrote him off. They decided that Paul was not Christ.

It was another realm of teaching altogether. It wasn't Christian. So they wrote him off.

That's Paul finished, as they thought. My brother, he had a mighty resurrection. And the remarkable thing is that the whole realm of scholarship, biblical scholarship, is now anew, giving Paul his place.

Seeing the immense significance of this matter, it's one of the most fascinating things to follow the course of biblical interpretation, and to be able to see today exactly what has happened, exactly what has happened, the tremendous comeback by Paul. We know, and they are all going to be made to know, that this man, because he shared the sufferings of Christ, had a universal significance for the whole body of Christ. And it is true.

Now, in saying that, while it's interesting, I could add so much more to it. The point is this. Here's the principle.

If you and I really do, do share the spiritual travail of Christ, we are lifted out of anything that is local, and small, and placed right in the universal. It's a value secured for the body of Christ, beyond anything merely earthly and parochial. That is the principle of this travail, placed at the center of the universe, and to share that does mean such enlargement, enlargement, such release.

We come back to it again. Enlargement, release, expansion, fullness, reproduction. Use what words you will.

The law of it all is the law of travail. The Lord allows travail. Indeed, he not only allows it, but appoints it to find out, to find out whether really there is a heart relationship to his things.

You walk across the road outside of this hall this afternoon, you will find a tree lying at the side of the road. It's a poor girl. It was upright and growing, and it looked like all the other trees.

It had all the leaves of propassion, all the proximity of association with the other trees, and outwardly it could pass off as being the real thing. The storm came. The storm came.

It's lying there. You look at it, and you'll find it has no heart. It is a completely hollow thing with only a framework.

Don't look at it. That's what happens. What is going to happen, what God will cause to happen everywhere, the travail will come, the suffering, the persecution, the trial, whatever it may be, and whatever may be its form, whether it be within or without, it's going to come to discover whether there's a heart there for God, or whether after all it's hollow.

It's propassion. It's simply association on the outside, but it's not real on the inside. It must be.

God must expose what is not real, and God must test everything to prove it. Look at the others. What has happened to them? Well, they survived the storm, and they're standing.

Is that all? No, that's it. The next storm that comes, you'll probably find that it's got a little more hard work than the last time to move this one. Ah, yes, you know that those roots have felt the strain, and they've reached down and taken a tighter hold, got a grip on things.

They realize that storms are realities, and that it's a matter of life and death whether they stand. So easy, dear friends, when things get difficult, they're difficult to walk out, isn't it? You know, so easy. Oh, how we pray the Lord will protect, protect from difficulty and trouble, but the Lord never answers a prayer like that.

Comes to us personally. It comes to us in our little company. Storms, shaking storms, things calculated to devastate and scatter, destroy and finish.

What is there? The Lord doesn't protect, but what is he doing? On one side, he is finding out whether there is a heart, and whether that thing is real in every member, but whether it's on the outward following side. On the other side, he is seeking to bring out the expression of preciousness, but this thing is too precious to let go easily. This thing means far too much for us to abandon at the first onset of adversity and trial.

That's the meaning of it. Very true. Explains a lot, doesn't it? Now, I'm closing with this moment for the time being, but this comprehends God's whole conception of a spiritual Israel.

Why we've taken that fragment or been led to it. The Israel of God. You know, Paul was almost envious when he used it.

Don't know what I mean by that. You look at the letters of the Galatians, you will see that he's dealing with two Israels, and in that phrase he's saying there's a true and there's a false Israel. I think Philip, in his letters to young churches, has put in the word, which while it is not in the text, is what is generally believed to be the meaning of Paul.

He has said to the true Israel of God. The true Israel of God, and that is exactly what Paul meant. You know the letters of the Galatians, don't you? The one Israel, he's also saying let not it.

Those who walk by this rule, this measure, this standard. What standard? Well, look at the letter, you'll see. My little children, for whom I am again in trouble, till Christ be fully formed in you.

Many has walked by this measure. They are the true Israel of God. The measure of Christ He made complete through travail.

Truth. That is the theme which is of the travel, of giving. Well, we perhaps should come back to that.

But there's enough here in what we've said to instruct, perhaps to reduce, to correct, perhaps encourage. No getting away from it, like it or not like it. It's an established law.

You do all sorts of things you like artificially to get rid of the travel, but thank you that God's law means there is something, something that comes out of preciousness when you suffer for it. When you suffer for it. Oh may we never get to the place where we try to make the Christian life cheap and easy.

A perpetual holiday while there's the joy, and it should be there, while there should be the deep worship, thanksgiving, and praise to God. I feel that the reality even of the joy is that it comes from deep experience through suffering. Is that not true? The truest joy is born out of suffering, not the superficial, little, frivolous kind of Christian that really knows the Lord most.

So we rejoice and call in all our significance to something precious. The Lord binds up with suffering. You and I have to face that, to face it.

So I might add this as I close. I have just received about from China a message which was given by our brother Watson Lee just before he was put into about four years ago. You know what that message is on? The necessity for the breaking of the vessel in order to reveal the preciousness of the treasure within.

He said it. He's knowing it. It's true.

He shall feel the treasure. He shall see the treasure and shall be happy.

---

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/1/SID1065.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/t-austin-sparks/the-israel-of-god-part-1/>

# *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](http://www.sermonindex.net)**