

Isaiah (Part 4) - Behold, My Servant

by Ron Bailey

God's way of thinking is different from human thinking, and He views His people as one corporate person with individual responsibilities and a collective sense of responsibility and belonging.

Duration: 1:09:51

Scripture: Deuteronomy 6:16, Deuteronomy 8:3, Deuteronomy 10:20, Deuteronomy 11:7, Isaiah 42:1-2, Isaiah 42:4

Topics: "Isaiah"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the story of Job and how he was stripped of everything he had, including his cattle, camels, goats, servants, and even his sons. The speaker emphasizes that Job's response was not one of singing or clapping, but rather surrendering to God. Job's faithfulness and worship in the midst of his suffering demonstrated his true devotion to God. The sermon also highlights the essential connection between true worship and true service, emphasizing the importance of worshiping and serving God alone.

Transcript

Please turn to Isaiah 42. It's been a wonderful thing for me just to see how God integrates things and how he synchronizes things. That's, it's almost God's hallmark.

He works all things together. He synchronizes things so wonderfully. And the pattern of the ministry as it's been coming from the different brothers has really been a tremendous encouragement to me, just to know that God is linking it all together.

And all kinds of other help come as well. I had one gracious brother who offered to interpret for me into English. He, he was impressed with my pronunciation of Hebrew names, but didn't know what I meant by words like foot and book.

All right. I'll just read a few verses from Isaiah 42. Behold my servant whom I uphold, my elect in whom my soul delights.

I have put my spirit upon him. He shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street.

A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flecks shall he not quench. He shall bring forth judgment unto truth. He shall not fail, nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth, and the

isles shall wait for his law.

That passage really goes farther on, but I just want to pause there and go farther back into the Old Testament, to the book of Deuteronomy. And if you'll turn please to Deuteronomy chapter 8, I think it is, yes, Deuteronomy chapter 8. And if I can just remind you of the context of the book of Deuteronomy. The people of God, the people of Israel, had been denied access to the promised land because of their unbelief, and God had taken them in a kind of a circuit throughout the wilderness for a period of 40 years.

And then it comes to this point in the chronology of things, when the people have come back to the land that God has promised to them, and they are poised, ready to enter into the inheritance that God has promised for them. And Moses gathers them all together, and he reminds them of the covenant, and, if you read it carefully, almost re-enacts it, and joins others into it who were not originally part of it. If you read the book of Deuteronomy, you'll find that.

He actually says that what is happening is that a covenant is being established which isn't just the same as the one that was with their fathers, but it's now for you as well, he says. You who are listening, who are hearing. During those wilderness wanderings, it seems that maybe other peoples were added to them.

This is always a surprise for people when they hear this, but if you read, for example, the book of Numbers, you'll discover that at least 32,000 Midianite virgins were added to the people of Israel. So, they come together to the edges of this promised land, and Moses repeats to them the terms of the covenant, the understanding that is the basis of their relationship with God. And they're going to be joined into it, and this is why it's called Deuteronomy.

Deutero means second, and nomos as law. So, Deuteronomy really means the second giving of the law. And they come to, as I say, the edges of the promised land, and it's a wonderful book to read, the book of Deuteronomy, because it's not just a straightforward account of what has happened in the past.

It's an account of what has happened in the past, plus the consequence of Moses' meditations and contemplations. 40 years have passed in which he has digested some of the lessons that God has taught them, and God speaks to them again as they're about to go in. And this is chapter 8. I'm going to read from three different chapters, and they won't be in exact order, but there is an order in which I'm going to read some verses.

This is chapter 8. All the commandments which I command thee this day, shalt ye observe to do, that ye may live, and multiply, and go in, and possess the land which Jehovah swore unto your fathers. And thou shalt remember, notice the continuation of plurals and singulars. I mentioned this yesterday.

There are times when God regards his people just as one corporate person, as though it's one person, and that one person carries upon his two shoulders the responsibility that God has given to them as the nation. Sometimes he's referring to individuals, and the individuals have their individual responses to make to God. But God joins them together, and they become one people, and God views them as one people.

Now, this is very strange to our Western ears, because most of Western civilization is really based on Greek ideas, and one of the main Greek ideas was democracy and the individual. It didn't work for them either. That's in case people here are putting a lot of trust in democracy.

But it emphasized the individual. It emphasized the individual, and his rights, and his responsibility, these kind of things. If you go in the other direction, not West, but towards the East, you begin to get much more of a sense of belonging, a sense of being all together in something.

You needn't put your finger in, but we will come back to Deuteronomy chapter 8. I just want to turn to Hebrews, briefly, and not to go into any detail of anything, but just to touch on an illustration that is used by the writer to the Hebrews, which sits very uncomfortably sometimes on Western minds when they read it, because they can't quite get a hold of what's going on in this. This is Hebrews chapter 7. He's speaking about Melchizedek. Remarkable character, Melchizedek.

He appears 2,000 years before Christ, very briefly in the history of Abraham. Then, there's no mention of him for another thousand years, when David speaks of him very briefly in a psalm, and then you come another thousand years farther on into the book of Hebrews, and there are virtually three chapters about him. So, he's an interesting person, and it speaks of Melchizedek here, and what the writer to the Hebrew is doing is he is showing the way in which the new covenant is superior to the old covenant.

Right the way through the letter to the Hebrews, you've got this reference to better, better. It's a better covenant based upon better promises. He's a better mediator.

It's a better hope. It's all better. It's a contrast with the old against the new, and one of the things that the writer of the Hebrew wants to express is that the priesthood of Jesus Christ is better than the priesthood of Aaron and the descendants of Levi, and he does this by touching upon this mysterious character of Melchizedek, and the reason that Melchizedek is chosen in this way is because in the whole of the Bible there is only one man who was both a priest and a king at the same time.

With his own people, God split the two things very definitely. The descendants of Judah would be the kings. The descendants of Levi, one part of the family of it, would be the priests.

The two were never to come together. They had separate responsibilities. There were some kings who would have liked to have been priests and paid the penalty for it.

Uzziah was one of those, but God had taught them over hundreds of years that these two functions were quite separate, until you come to begin to speak about the Lord Jesus, and he says his priesthood is of the kind of priesthood of Melchizedek. He is both a king and a priest, and then he's going to show how that kind of priesthood has to be better than the priesthood that comes through the line of Levi. And this is what he says, chapter one, for this Melchizedek, king of Salem, there he is, he's a king, priest of the Most High God, there he's a priest, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, to whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all, being, first being by interpretation, king of righteousness, and after that also king of Salem, which is king of peace.

Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like unto the Son of God, abides a priest continually. Now consider how great this man was, unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils. And verily, they that are of the sons of Levi, who receive priesthood, have a commandment to take tithes of the people according to the law, that is, of their brethren, though they come out of the loins of Abraham.

But he whose descent is not counted from them, received tithes of Abraham and blessed him that had the promises. And without all contradiction, the less is blessed of the better. That's one of the key words of

Hebrew, better.

And here, men that die receive tithes, but there he receives them, of whom it is witnessed that he liveth. And, as I may so say, Levi also, who received tithes, paid tithes in Abraham, for he was yet in the loins of his father when Melchizedek met him. If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, for under it the people received the law, what further need was there that another priest should rise after the order of Melchizedek, and not be called after the order of Aaron? For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law.

Do you understand that? It's a strange bit of reasoning to western ears, because the writer is saying, you can tell, he says, that the priesthood of Melchizedek is greater than the priesthood of Aaron, and the reason for that is, he says, during the priesthood of Aaron, their priests received tithes. The priests were, in a special sense, the servant of God, and they received tithes. So, during the time of Aaron's priesthood, the priests received tithes.

So, they're pretty important. But he goes on to say, the priesthood of Aaron, the people of Aaron, actually they prayed tithes too. And you say, well, who do they pay tithes to? And he says, oh, well, they paid tithes to Melchizedek, because they were in the loins of Abraham when Abraham paid tithes to Melchizedek.

You see, there is a corporate sense. They're all in this together. They're all part of one thing.

Abraham paid tithes, and because Abraham paid tithes, Levi, who was in him, was paying tithes to Melchizedek. Is that strange? If you're going to be honest, it's probably strange to most of us. It's strange because we have been taught from earliest days, this strict sense of personal responsibility, personal identity, I, me, mine.

But if you go farther to the east, there's much more a sense of being in something together. And me being responsible for my father's debts, and in some circles, of course, being responsible for worship at my father's shrine. And the whole thing is kept together in a much more collective sense.

Well, let's go back to Deuteronomy now. Deuteronomy chapter 8. We do need this book to orientate us, because the western way of thinking is not God's way of thinking. Neither is the eastern way of thinking, for that matter.

But God's way of thinking is different to anyone else's way of thinking, and what we have in this book is the expression of the way in which God thinks and declares his thoughts. There's a little word that's used quite often in the Old Testament and in the New Testament, and I love it. It's the word, therefore.

Because, therefore, means this next statement is the next logical step to the one that we've just taken. That's what the word, therefore, is there for. That's what Dennis Clark used to say, whenever you see the word, therefore, in the scripture, you should always endeavor to discover what it's there for.

It's always the next step. If you can cast your mind far enough back to days when you were sitting in school and doing maths, there was a little sign which was three dots and a triangle, which meant, therefore. And it meant, if you're falling through some algebraic problem or some geometrical thing, it meant that this statement that you are now making is the next logical step from the one that you've just taken.

Well, God is logical, too. It's not human logic, but it is a step-by-step reasonableness in the way that God works. And as you read the scriptures and just notice those, therefore, you'll begin to see something of God's logic, the way in which God works.

And it's very different to the way in which men work. Okay, back to Deuteronomy chapter 18. This is Moses speaking to the people.

All the commandments which I command thee this day shall ye observe to do, that ye may live and multiply and go in and possess the land which the Lord sware unto your fathers. And thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness to humble thee and to prove thee to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments or no. And he humbled thee and allowed thee to hunger and fed thee with manna which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know, that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live.

This little phrase here, these few sentences, in which Moses tells us something more. The years in the wilderness were not just punishment. They were not just punishment.

In any case, all God's punishments are remedial. They're always as a result of his love, whom he loves, he rebukes, and chastens. God actually said to his people Israel, it's recorded in the prophecy of Amos, he said, you alone have I known of all the nations of the earth.

That's why I will punish you for all your sins, said God said. Part of his training, part of his chastening and his bringing up of his people. So this time that they spent in the wilderness, as well as being a punishment for their unbelief, was more constructive than that.

It was positive. God was doing something during these 40 years. Verse 2, thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these 40 years in the wilderness.

We sometimes refer to wilderness wanderings, and I think the scripture does on occasion, but you mustn't think of aimless wanderings. These were led wanderings. He led them in the wilderness.

They weren't lost in the wilderness. They were being led specifically stage by stage. God was ordering things, and this was the purpose of his ordering, to humble thee and to prove thee.

That's to say, to put people to the test. Sometimes the Bible uses this word prove in a way that we use it, but perhaps don't think of using it very often. If you have a piece of gold or something, it is taken to an essayist, someone who tests it and checks it, and if he gives it his approval, it is proved.

That's part of the meaning of the word prove in the New Testament. It has built into it the idea of a testing which has taken place in order that approval might be given. So this time of being led in the wilderness, these 40 years, was for a purpose.

It was so that a testing could take place, and this is how it's expressed, to humble thee and to prove, as to say, to test with a view of approving, to prove thee to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep the commandments or no. And during those 40 years, Moses says, this is what happened, and he humbled thee, and allowed thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know, that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live. I'm sure that latter verse, man shall not live by

bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord, will be familiar to you.

Let's go to Deuteronomy chapter 6, verse 1. Now these are the commandments, the statutes and the judgments, which the Lord your God commanded to teach you, that you might do them in the land whither ye go to possess it. That thou mightest fear the Lord thy God, to keep all his statutes and his commandments, which I commend thee, thou and thy son. Can you see that thou and thy son is actually part of the thee? Does that sound very complicated? You'll need to look at this in the authorized version.

Look at it in verse 2. I commend thee, and then he explains who he means by thee. When he says thee, he means thou and thy son. In other words, when he says thee, he means you.

But he's all gathered it together into one. So I'm sorry if this archaic English grammar is a bit strange. Which I command thee, thou and thy son, and thy son's son, that's three generations, all thee, all the days of thy life, and that thy days may be prolonged.

Hear therefore, O Israel, and observe to do it, that it may be well with thee, and that ye may increase mightily, as the Lord God of thy fathers hath promised thee, in the land that flows with milk and honey. Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord, and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words which I commend thee this day shall be in thine heart, and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.

And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates, that shall be when the Lord thy God shall have brought thee into the land which he swarent to thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give thee great and godly cities which thou buildest not, and houses full of all good things which thou fillest not, and wells digged which thou diggest not, vineyards and olive trees which thou plantest not. When thou shalt have eaten and be full, then beware, lest thou forget the Lord which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage.

For thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, and serve him, and swear by his name. Let me put another word instead of fear. It's really part of the same thing, and we'll say more about it in a moment too.

Verse 13. Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and serve him, and shalt swear by his name. Let's read on.

Ye shall not go after other gods, of the gods of the people which are round about you. For the Lord thy God is a jealous God among you. Lest the anger of the Lord thy God be kindled against thee, and destroy thee from off the face of the earth.

Ye shall not tempt the Lord your God, as ye tempted him in Massa. Now, I'm not going to read any more, but I want, if you will, just to make a mental note of verse 13. Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and serve him.

And verse 16. You shall not tempt the Lord your God. And I have also asked you to keep a mental note of that part that says, it is written that man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.

What I want us to notice, if we will, is that these three verses all come from the same section of Scripture. Don't worry about the fact that they have now been broken down into chapters. Moses did not deliver Deuteronomy in chapters and in verses.

That's, at most, an accidental thing. There's an old legend that the first person who put the Bible into chapters and verses did is a horseback. And every time his horse stumbled, he started a new chapter.

No, every time he stumbled, he started a new verse, and every time he fell off it, he started a new chapter. And there are times when you look at the chapter divisions in the Bible, and you think there may be some truth in this kind of story. Well, Deuteronomy was not divided up into chapters, it was one whole thing.

This is one discourse of Moses speaking at one point in the time. So, in the one discourse that Moses gives, you have these three sentences. Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.

Thou shalt not tempt the Lord your God. Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God and serve him. They all come from the same piece of Scripture.

I hope you know where they all come together again, but we'll look at it in a minute if you don't. Now, let's turn to Deuteronomy chapter 11. This is still the same discourse, all the same time.

Let's read from verse 7. Chapter 11 and verse 7. If we had the time, I would love to read the whole of Deuteronomy, because it really would set the scene for what I want to say next, but I'm trying to take some representative parts of the book of Deuteronomy just to give the atmosphere and the feeling for verse 7 of chapter 11. But your eyes have seen all the great acts of the Lord which he did. Therefore shall ye keep all the commandments which I command you this day, in order that you may be strong and go in and possess the land whether ye go to possess it.

If you are, I'm sorry to keep breaking into the readings, but if you are ever doing any kind of study about Joshua and the time when it came for the people to possess their possessions, it might interest you to know that the word possess is used more in Deuteronomy than it is in the book of Joshua. The whole purpose of this book was to, or of this period of time, was to express to the people of Israel the terms under which they would be able to possess the land. The only way they would be able to possess the land is if they were rightly related to God, if they were keeping his commandments.

If they were keeping his commandments, God guaranteed that they would possess the land. And as a consequence of their possessing the land, they would dispossess the people who were already in possession of the land. And I'm using this kind of language purposely because I want us to try and make some connections.

The land of Canaan was a possessed land. It wasn't an empty land waiting for some people to come and settle in it. It was a possessed land.

The land was people-possessed. I hope you understand what I'm trying to say. The land was people-possessed.

And God was raising up this people of his to exorcise the land of Canaan, to cast out the people who already possessed it, so that it could come under God's law and genuinely become God's land. At the time when they came to the borders, it wasn't God's land. It wasn't under God's law and God's rule.

The people who were going to bring it under God's authority had to be themselves people who were under God's authority. They had to be. It isn't an optional extra.

The only way you can possess this land, God says to this people, is if you are rightly related to me. If you're keeping my commandments, if you're walking before me, if you're living and breathing the things that I've spoken to you. It's the only way you will bring this land under the authority that is ultimately my authority.

So now they're with Moses, and Moses begins to say these things in verse 8. Therefore shall ye keep all the commandments which I command you this day, that you may be strong and go in and possess the land whither ye go in to possess it, and that you may prolong your days in the land. This is another factor. The only way, once the people of Israel had possessed their land, that they could hold on to it, was if they were rightly related to God.

And if they lost their right relationship to God, they would lose their possession of this land. And they did do. Constantly.

It was always because the vertical relation had been broken, and that worked its way out in the horizontal relationships being broken. The covenant was in two dimensions. It was vertical, that's to say between God and man, and it was horizontal between men and men.

And usually the signs that it had broken down on the vertical were seen in the horizontal. I'm sorry if that sounds a bit kind of technical, but what it simply means is this. That if you are rightly related to your brothers and sisters, if things are right there, it's usually a good indication that things are right in the other dimension.

And if things are wrong in that dimension, don't fool yourself, says John in his letter, into thinking that things are right in the other dimension. Don't you dare say that you love God if you don't love the people in whom God's life already is. Don't you dare say this relationship, the vertical relationship, is right if the horizontal relationship is wrong.

The only way they could hold on to their possession is if they were rightly related to God. Verse 9, that you may prolong your days in the land which the Lord swear to your fathers, to give unto them and to their seed, a land that flows with milk and honey. For the land whither thou goest in to possess it is not as the land of Egypt from when ye came out, where thou sowest thy seed and waterest it with thy foot as a garden of herbs.

But the land whither ye go to possess it is a land of hills and valleys, and drinketh water of the rain of heaven, a land which the Lord thy God careth for. The eyes of the Lord thy God are always upon it from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year. And it shall come to pass if ye shall hearken diligently unto my commandments, which I command you this day to love the Lord your God and to serve him.

Put that connection together again. Love and serve him. To love and serve him with all your heart and with all your soul, that I will give you the rain of your land in his due season, the first rain and the latter rain, that thou mayest gather in thy corn and thy wine and thine oil.

And I will send grass in thy fields for thy cattle, that thou mayest eat and be full. Take heed to yourselves, that your heart be not deceived, and ye turn aside and serve other gods." Can I just remind any who may

not have been here previously, this people had been a servant nation. They had been the servants of Pharaoh in a foreign land.

And God had said, let my people go so that they can serve me. They're going to come into the land so that they can be God's servants, under God's authority, expressing, exercising God's will in the land that he has brought them to. And he says, you be careful that you don't serve other gods.

Don't come under any other bondages, any other lords, any other gods. Verse 16, take heed to yourself, that your heart be not deceived, and ye turn aside and serve other gods and worship them. And then the Lord's wrath be kindled against you, and he shut up the heaven, that there be no rain, and that the land yield not her fruit, and lest ye perish quickly from the good land which the Lord giveth you.

Therefore shall ye lay up these words in your heart and in your soul, and bind them for a sign upon your hand, that they may be as frontlets between your eyes. And ye shall teach them, your children, speaking of them, when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. He keeps on repeating this.

In other words, at every possible circumstance of life, every possible family event, every possible time in the day, they were to be contemplating the things of God. They were to be conscious that they were not their own, but that they belonged to somebody else. And the land that they were living in, they were there as tenants on a strict tenant agreement.

And the agreement was that they were in right relationship with God. And if they broke their tenancy, they would lose their land. Okay.

Verse 20. And thou shalt write them upon the doorposts of thine house, and upon thy gates, that your days may be multiplied, and the days of your children, in the land which the Lord sware unto your fathers, to give them as the days of heaven upon earth. Isn't that an amazing statement? This was God's full intention with the people of Israel, to bring them then as His representatives, His servant into this land, and under His authorities to subdue it, and bring it into perfect order, into the way that God wanted it to be.

And the consequence of that, God said, it would be like heaven upon earth. It would be heaven's rule upon earth. It would be God's will in heaven, done upon the earth.

They would have been as the days of heaven upon earth. This was God's intention. This was the willingness of God's heart.

He provided for His people all things necessary for them to accomplish this. He wasn't pretending with them. He wasn't going through a charade.

He was offering them a genuine destiny, a genuine purpose, providing for them all that they needed, as long as they would walk in His way and in right relationship with Him, it would be accomplished. You can understand again, can't you, why the Lord Jesus should look upon Jerusalem and weep, and say, how often, Jerusalem, how often? Again and again and again. And there's no callousness of God in this.

There's no cynicism of God in this. Although God knows everything that will happen, although He knows the end from the beginning, that does not, that gives Him no defense against it. It still impacts upon Him as though He hadn't known it was going to happen.

What I mean is, His disappointments are genuine. They're not contrived, because love always believes all things. Love always hopes all things.

Love never is thinking they're going to mess this one up as well. It's hopeless. That isn't the way love works, and it isn't the way God worked.

He constantly encouraged them, rising up early and sending prophets to them. That was the way He expressed it on one occasion. Constantly, again and again.

There's a poignant comment in the book of Ezekiel. Ezekiel was prophesying in Babylon, when the people had lost their land for a period of 70 years. And during that time, Ezekiel is expressing God's heart.

And there's one point in it, I think it's in Ezekiel chapter 6. And God says this concerning the people. He says, you've broken me with your whoring heart. That's incredible.

I don't want us to be sympathetic towards God, but what is happening in God when He expresses Himself like this? You've broken me, He says. You see, He didn't get used to their sin. He didn't become hardened to it.

He isn't like human beings can be when, and you know why they do it. They keep themselves distanced from people, because they know if they get too close, they'll get hurt. Let me just share with you a very, very simple principle that is at work right the way through the scripture, and right the way through life.

And it's this, that if you love someone, you give to that person a terrible power to hurt you. If you love someone, you give to that person a terrible power to hurt you. If you don't love them, if you keep your distance from them, if you harden your heart, if you--what's the opposite to enlarge--if you cause your heart to shrink so that it doesn't keep on getting hurt, you can save yourself a lot of harm.

You can save yourself a lot of hurt, but you won't be like God anymore, because His heart is enlarged. And it doesn't matter how often the arrows come against Him, and how often people spit in His face and turn away from Him, He still keeps coming. All day long, He says, I've stretched out my arms to a contradictory people, all day long.

He says in Ezekiel, you've broken me. And He wanted it to be as the days of heaven upon us. He wanted this people who were His people to worship Him and serve Him.

They were to be the servant of the Lord, those who worshipped the true and living God, and expressed the consequence of that worship in lives that were utterly surrendered to Him, lives that were not their own. Now, let me just, if I may, just remind you again of what happened on the cross. That was man's power to hurt God.

And what that tells you, more than anything else, is the measure of God's love towards men. He loved men so much, and as a consequence of loving them so much, He put that deadly power into their hands, that when the time came, they could actually say away with Him, crucify Him. And if we're going to love one another, we just have to keep on taking risks, and we just have to keep on getting hurt.

There's no other way for it. Yes, you can insulate yourself against a lot of hurt, but you will never be the person God wants you to be, if that's what you do. So, Israel closed on the edges.

You know the point at which they entered into the promised land? They entered into the promised land just opposite Jericho, at a place called Gilgal. They went across the river Jordan, and that was the place where ultimately they were to enter into the promised land. This was the place where Moses gave this discourse, when he said these things, when he reminded them of their glorious destiny, when he reminded them of what God was fully willing to do with them, as long as they would stay in right relationship with Him.

Now, let's go from the Old to the New Testament in our Bible, and look at Matthew chapter 4. We'll take a verse or two from the end of chapter 3. It tells us, I think it's in John's Gospel, I'm not sure, it tells us that John the Baptist conducted his baptisms in Bethabara, beyond Jordan. That means he was actually the wrong side of the river. Beyond Jordan, that's what it means.

It means, in that sense, he was the other side of the land. And I have often speculated, and I don't know whether I shall ask him, I shall have more important things to do, I think, when I get to heaven, and asking John where exactly he was he did his baptizing. But I have wondered whether, when the people came to John, they were baptized in the river Jordan, and got out the other side of the river.

You see, he was baptizing beyond Jordan. His congregation, if you like, the people he was speaking to, were the other side of the river. Then they stepped into the river, and I suppose the next row of people would move towards the river.

So, I don't know where you can get out, except the other side. And the river Jordan is not a deep, and big river at certain points. It's very easily, easy to wade across it, except the kind of time, of course, when the people of Israel came to the land of Jordan, when it was the time of the barley harvest, and then Israel flood, Jordan floods all its banks at that time.

So, something was needed at that time. But generally, at certain points of it, it would be possible to baptize from one side and bring them out the other side. I have in my mind, I know it didn't happen, but I have in my mind a sense in which the people of Israel are paused, and poised, ready to enter into the land, to subdue it, to bring it under God's authority, to bring in days like the days of heaven upon earth.

And in my mind, it's almost as though I see God saying, this is my son, this is my servant, he's going to accomplish all my will, he's going to bring all this land under my authority. But they didn't. But another time came.

If Jesus went into the wilderness close to Bethabara beyond Jordan, he went into the wilderness very close to the place where Moses gave his discourse. He may well have been standing or kneeling in the exact spot where Moses said these things. Certainly, he would be able to see that spot from where he was.

This is God reenacting history. This is the Son who has come to the edge of the Jordan. This is the Son who for 40 days is tested in the wilderness to see what was in his heart, to see whether he will keep my word or not.

This is the Son. He comes, he spends this time in the wilderness beyond Jordan, and his mind is filled with Deuteronomy. He is thinking in terms of Deuteronomy.

His points of reference are Deuteronomy. When the temptation comes, the things that automatically come out are Deuteronomy. He's thinking Deuteronomy.

Let's read chapter 4, please. Then was Jesus led. Do you remember we read about Israel being led in the wilderness? All right, now was Jesus led.

Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil, tested, proved. And when he had fasted 40 days and 40 nights, it's an established biblical precedent that a day can stand for a year. Read the prophecy of Ezekiel, and you'll find that work out.

When he had fasted 40 days and 40 nights, he was afterward unhungered. And when the tempter came to him, he said, if thou be the Son of God, commend these stones be made bread. And he answered and said, and quoted straight out of Deuteronomy, man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.

Then the devil takes him up into the holy city and sets him on a pinnacle of the temple and says to him, if thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down. For it is written, he shall give his angels charge concerning thee. And in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.

And Jesus said unto him, it's written again, and he quoted directly from Deuteronomy, thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. Again the devil takes him up into an exceeding high mountain and shows unto him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them. And saith unto him, all these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.

Then saith Jesus unto him, get thee hence Satan, for it is written, and he quotes from Deuteronomy, thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. Can you see the point I'm trying to make? This is the servant of Jehovah. He has stepped into the footprints of Israel.

He has come to the place where Israel stood. He is tempted in the way that Israel was tempted, but he has stood the test. God has discovered, not that he needed to discover, but God has demonstrated what was in his heart.

And now he comes to this place. It was the end of these temptations that these things come together in this kind of way, and it's settled. It's settled.

Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. This is the servant. This is the servant of Jehovah.

There is an essential connection between true worship and true service. You can't have one without the other. Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

We always end up serving the thing that we worship. Always, in the end, man will always end up serving the thing that he worships. If you worship yourself, you'll end up serving yourself and pleasing yourself.

If you worship your wife, you'll end up serving your wife. Whatever you worship, the result in the end will be that you'll serve it. But why is that? Well, it's because of what worship really is.

What is worship? There's a brother here I recall. On one occasion, I was traveling in a car with him, and he asked that question. He said something like, if there was just one other word that you could use instead of worship, what word would you use? And I said, submission.

Or if you like, surrender. Surrender. That's what worship is.

More than anything else, worship is total, unconditional surrender. That's what it is. I know that in our minds, it's got all kinds of other connotations now.

We begin to think of singing and music. Although, if you read the Bible carefully, you'll find that worship and music never come together. Praise and music come together a lot, but you won't find worship and music coming together.

And it's not an accident, because the word for worship literally means to prostrate yourself. It means to be flat on your face. And it's not easy to play a tambourine flat on your face, or a guitar, or a pipe organ, or anything else at all.

It's not easy to clap your hands lying in your face. It's not easy to dance lying in your face. In fact, there's nothing you can do lying on your face.

You are utterly at the mercy of the one that you have just surrendered to. And that is the essence of worship. You don't usually have great conversations with people when you're lying on your face.

There's nothing to say. The action itself is saying everything. This is utter and absolute surrender.

It's very interesting to go through the scriptures and look at the first occasions of a word or an idea. It's what Bible students sometimes call the law of the first mention. The idea that whenever you get the first use of something, it's almost like a seed, and in that seed are all the essential truths that will later come to full fruition in other parts of the scripture.

You've already had read to you this week, the very first use of the word worship in the Bible. When Abraham said to his servants, I am the lad will go yonder and worship. And I actually quite like a tambourine.

I'm not the same as some other people who I know don't. I can play a tambourine a little bit. I was a Pentecostal pastor for a while, so I have a kind of a history of this difference to some other people's history.

But Abraham didn't take a tambourine. He took fire and a knife in his hand when he went to worship, because he was going to surrender. He was going to surrender the thing that was most precious to him, the thing which, in a sense, you might almost say he worshipped.

You see, everything was in this man, Isaac. Everything. All the promises of God were in him now.

Abraham was an old man. His possibilities of doing many of these things, fulfilling these implications, was gone. The only hope now is this new generation.

There are no grandchildren yet. There's just Isaac. Everything is in this man.

All the promises of God are in this man, Isaac. I don't know how old Isaac was when he went with Abraham, his father. We're not told.

I know if, when you, by the time you get to the next chapter, chapter 23, Isaac is 40 years old. So, he may not have been the nine-year-old boy that your Sunday school teacher has told you about, or that you've seen pictures of. The Jews were quite convinced that he was 21.

I'm quite convinced that he was 33. But I can't prove it from the Bible. Abraham and Isaac, the two of them, go together to this place of utter, total surrender to the will of God.

There's another classic illustration of the word worship in the first chapter of Job. When Job is a wealthy man, he's the wealthiest of all the men of the East. He's a good man.

He has a large family. He has lots of herds and animals, and one day he's sitting, and the messengers begin to come. And one by one the messages come, and each message is worse than the last one.

And slowly, stage by stage, he's being stripped of everything that he had. He's lost his cattle. He's lost his camels.

He's lost his goats. He's lost his servants. He's lost his sons.

Stage by stage, all of it's stripped away, stripped away. Let me read a verse just to get it. This is the last message.

Behold, there came, this is a servant saying this, behold, there came a great wind from the wilderness and smote the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young men, that's Job's sons, and they are dead, and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. Then Job arose and tore his clothes and shaved his head and fell down upon the ground and worshipped. I don't think he would have been singing.

I don't think he would have been clapping or skipping, but he was surrendering. Naked came I out of the womb. Naked shall I return.

The Lord has given and the Lord has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord. Utter, absolute surrender.

That's worship. That's worship. And those who surrender will serve Him.

They will. Those who don't surrender will be serving some other interest, either themselves or something else. It is inevitable.

And here's Jesus who comes and he says, I come to do thy will, O God. He pleased not himself, Paul says of the Lord Jesus when he refers to this in Romans. He pleased, he was not serving his own interests.

Wow. Doesn't the time go quickly when you're enjoying yourself? Um, let's turn please to, um, I want, sorry, I want to read a little bit more from Matthew. I want to read just a little bit farther on so that we can see the other part of the link with it.

Verse 11, Matthew chapter 4 verse 11. Then the devil leaves him and behold angels came and ministered to him. I'll wait and everyone got it.

Matthew 4 verse 12 now. Now when Jesus had heard that John was cast into prison, he departed into Galilee. And leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the seacoast, in the borders of Zebulun and Naphtalene, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying the land of Zebulun, the land of Naphtalene, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles.

The people which sat in darkness saw great light. And to them that sat in the region and shadow of death, light is sprung up. From that time, Jesus began to preach and to say, repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

He was going to bring in the kingdom of heaven. That that the other servant of Jehovah never did, he was going to do it. He was going to, because of his right relationship with his father, he was going to bring the will of heaven unto the earth.

That's what he was doing. It's only Matthew who speaks about the kingdom of heaven, because Matthew is the gospel to the Jews, and this whole concept of God's intention and what he was going to do was all wrapped up in this whole thing. He's coming to be what they had never been.

There's another way in which it was symbolized, and that's in the fact that I think, as far as I know, of all the nations of the earth, Israel is the only nation that has ever taken a non-predatory animal for its national symbol. If you know a nation that has another animal, please tell me, and I will revise this the next time I say it. But I don't know of a nation which has taken a non-predatory animal for its symbol, except Israel.

Their symbol was the dove, and so the Holy Spirit, in bodily form as a dove, comes upon the land, and he says, this is my son, my beloved one, in whom I am well pleased. He's quoting. Or is he? Is he quoting from Isaiah 42, or is Isaiah 42 quoting from him? What has Isaiah heard? Behold my servant, mine elect, in whom my soul delights.

The other morning at breakfast, two mornings ago, I think it was, there was a conversation going around the table. I'm in a family which has two little girls and a new baby boy, and the youngest of the girls was looking forward to her birthday, which was the next day, and talking and planning and wondering what she might get and what she might not get. And one of the things she began to speak about was a watch, and was promising her daddy that if he needed this watch at the office, he could borrow her watch, if she got a watch, because she wasn't absolutely sure that she was going to get a watch.

And then the next day came, after just as breakfast was being ended, and she began to open her presents. And she opened one, and it was a nice blue top, and she opened another one, and it was some soap, and she opened another one, and she was sitting or standing the opposite side of the little breakfast bar to me. And I know people say this, but I'm not exaggerating.

Her face lit up. It was as though someone had shone a light onto her face. She was delighted, absolutely delighted.

It fulfilled all her expectations. It's what she'd thought might just possibly happen. It's here.

It's almost as though she's saying, it's here. This is my watch, in which I delight. Here it is.

It's pink, so I don't know whether daddy will ever wear it to the office. But it's delight, absolute delight. Can you imagine, God? This is the sun, my beloved one.

The AV says, in whom I am well pleased. It could equally be translated, in whom I delight. Oh, can you, can you feel the longing of God's heart? Disappointment after disappointment, generation after generation, failure, failure, failure.

This is the sun, mine, in whom I delight. He had at last got what he'd always wanted, the one who would fulfill his will. Let's turn back briefly to Isaiah 42.

Behold my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen one, mine elect, in whom my soul delights. I think it's in Proverbs chapter 8 that it speaks about the delight within the Godhead before anything was. You read it.

It speaks in terms of wisdom, speaks, it's a personification of wisdom. It is the Lord Jesus, but spoken of as under the heading of wisdom. And there's a little, little phrase in it, and it's using, it's using earthly language, but it's expressing heavenly things, and it says, I was daily his delight.

That's right. And now the one who, from eternity past, has daily been his delight, is now in flesh and blood, on the earth, poised to begin his mission, to bring the rule and the realm of God onto the earth. And he says, this is my son, in whom I delight.

That's wonderful, isn't it? It really is. He, I have put my spirit upon him. He shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles.

He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. That's to say, he wouldn't be strident and harsh, he wouldn't be forcing his way, he wouldn't be making a big fuss. It's not his way.

The bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench. He shall bring forth judgment unto truth. He shall not fail, nor be discouraged till he have set judgment in the earth, and the isle shall wait for his law.

I have a very patient wife, and a few weeks ago, long before I was thinking of the Exeter Bible Week, she came bustling into the kitchen, and she said, what is it? What's that terrible smell? Well, I was conducting an experiment in the kitchen. I'd managed to get one of these little reproductions of a Roman oil lamp, that you can buy sometimes at places like Carnarvon Castle, or something like that. And, I got some extra virgin olive oil, because I knew that was the kind of oil that came from the first pressing, which was used in the oil lamps in the temple.

And, the experiment that I was conducting was, I wanted to see what the effect was when you begin to extinguish flax, which has been soaked in virgin olive oil. Have you ever done this? Maybe you're not of this kind of, maybe you haven't got a wife whose patience is mine. Well, the smell hung around for about two days.

It's acrid, it's penetrating, you can't ignore it. There's no way that you can say, oh well, even people with not very good olfactory senses, like earlier preachers today, would have smelled it, I'm sure. It was, it's a terrible smell, terrible smell.

But, even a smoking flax, he wouldn't quench. Literally, it's really a dimly burning flax. I had to take it out into the garden in the end.

I was banished from the house in my experiment. A bruised reed shall he not break. There's something that happens in these two verses which doesn't really come out into the A.V., maybe you'll use another version in which it does come out.

And, it's the fact that this word for bruised, in verse three, the bruised reed, shall he not break. And, the word for smoking flax, or something which burns dimly, is actually carried on into the next verse. So, that

literally, the next verse says, he shall not be broken and he shall not burn dimly.

It's exactly the same word. You see, there's a contrast between these two verses. God is conscious of that that was intended to be the light of the world, and show forth the praises of God's name, which is failed utterly.

It's a broken reed. It's a smoking flax. He was conscious of that, but even of that he wouldn't just, he wouldn't just rubbish it.

He wouldn't just throw it into the bin, because his whole disposition is not to do that. His disposition is one of one who is not broken, and of one who will not burn dimly. It's the servant of Jehovah.

It's one of the special roles of the high priest in ancient Israel, to trim the wick of the lamps, and to make sure they didn't burn dimly, and to cut off what needed to be cut off, and to make sure they were replenished with good virgin oil, so that the light was good and clear and steady. She's still the servant of the Lord, still. At the Father's right hand in the heavenly temple, walking amongst the lampstands of his church, he's still doing the same thing, trimming and replenishing.

Judgment is his strange work, one of the prophets says. It's his strange work. He's just so full of love, so full of expectation, full of a love that doesn't keep scores and accounts, full of a love that gives and gives and gives and gives again.

Hallelujah. Let's just stop and we'll surrender to him, shall we? Do you feel you can surrender to someone like this? Oh, there's not a harsh note in his voice. There's just such a willingness to come and serve, knowing who he was, knowing where he'd come from, knowing where he was returning to.

His instinct is to be on his knees at the feet of his disciples, washing them, cleansing, renewing, replenishing. Oh, Father, our delight is in him too, Lord. He is the desire of nations.

He is more than we ever dreamed might be possible. Thank you, Lord, by your Spirit you reveal him to us in all his wonder, in all his grace, in all his provision, in all his willingness to dispossess the territory of that that has no right there and to bring in heaven's rule. Lord Jesus, our greater than Joshua.

Hallelujah. Oh, Lord, do glorify your Son in the gaze of our spirits, Lord. Oh, help us not to be dismayed by looking here and there, but fix our eyes upon him.

Behold, my servant, he shall not fail, nor be discouraged. Blessed, blessed Lord. Oh, hallelujah.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/2/SID2750.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/ron-bailey/isaiah-part-4-behold-my-servant/>

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