

The Redeemer's Song
Isaiah 61:1-9

April 22, 2012

A. Songs of the Suffering Servant

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^A Isaiah 53:6, 11

^B Luke 4:1-21

^C Galatians 1:6-7, Matthew 5:3, Leviticus 25:10, 1Peter 2:9

^D Ezekiel 46:17, Matthew 11:28-30; 23; John 3:17, Luke 18:7-8, 19:41-44

^E Psalm 45:7, Philippians 4:4

^F Romans 15:27

^G Exodust 19:6, 1 Peter 2:9

^H Hebrews 8:13

A. Songs of the Suffering Servant

1. What are these?

- a. some of the passages in the last 27 chapters of Isaiah are called songs
- b. partly because they are poetic, partly for their beautiful language
- c. but also because in them is a record of
 - (A) the Suffering Servant of Yahweh speaking
 - (B) that is, the very words of the coming Messiah
- d. these songs are result from the description of the Suffering Servant
 - (A) such as is proclaimed in Isaiah 53:6, 'All of us like sheep have gone astray, Each of us has turned to his own way; But the Lord has caused the iniquity of us all To fall on Him.'
 - (B) and again in Isaiah 53:11, 'As a result of the anguish of His soul, He will see it and be satisfied; By His knowledge the Righteous One, My Servant, will justify the many, As He will bear their iniquities.'
 - (1) 'result of the anguish', or, 'of the travail' (AV) is what is called in grammar a 'pregnant expression', embracing meaning beyond that which the mere words say
 - (2) first of all, it conveys the thought of hard, wearisome toil
 - (3) but it also speaks of the satisfaction when that toil is complete
 - (4) as an analogy, consider a mother suffering in the pangs of delivering a child – that is beyond my imagination – but who is also expectant with joy of the new life in her arms
- e. Isaiah 61 contains the fifth such song, with Messiah anticipating His mission as well as its results: the birth, as it were, of the redeemed people of God
- f. in this Song, Messiah speaks first and describes the ministry that He is undertaking; then the Lord God, speaking through Isaiah, tells what the result of that ministry is going to be

2. Who is speaking here?

- a. primarily Jesus of Nazareth, the Messiah-Christ, is speaking
- b. look at Luke 4

- (A) Jesus had committed Himself to this ministry through the baptism
 - (B) the Holy Spirit visibly came upon Him
 - (C) He went out into the wilderness to confront Satan
 - (D) He returned to the synagogue in Nazareth, was handed the Isaiah scroll, turned to today's passage, and read Luke 4:18-19
 - (E) 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free those who are oppressed, to proclaim the favourable year of the Lord.'
 - (F) then to all present, Jesus said, 'Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.' (Luke 4:21)
- c. now, liberals will say Isaiah was speaking about himself in these verses
- (A) these words could never fully apply to Isaiah
 - (B) nor to any prophet speaking in the Spirit of Christ (1 Peter 1:11)
 - (C) there are many reasons showing that Jesus Messiah is speaking
 - (D) but let me just give you this simple one: Jesus did not say 'Today this Scripture has been fulfilled again' or 'it was fulfilled in Isaiah and me' but rather, after over 700 years of waiting, Jesus said, 'Today it is fulfilled and it was done so in your hearing; even as I read it, you heard God's promise as written by Isaiah being kept.'

3. Our outline this morning is

- a. The Redeemer's Words (1-3)
- b. The Redeemer's People (4-6)
- c. The Redeemer Blesses (7-9)
- d. and, we shall concentrate most of this message on ...

B. The Redeemer's Words 61:1-3

1. Jesus had a special preparation for His ministry

- a. this is found in the second phrase in the first verse
 - (A) 'because the Lord has anointed me -'
 - (B) anointing - externally, publicly and visibly - with oil was an OT way of establishing and setting a

- person apart for service to God
- (C) it was done in the case of the priests, such as Aaron; of kings, such as David; and of prophets, such as Elisha
 - (D) but the selection, by God, always preceded the external act
 - (E) it was because Jesus of Nazareth was chosen by God, even before His birth, that He was called the anointed one, the Messiah
- b. and, in turn, because He was thus anointed, Jesus could say, 'The Spirit of the Lord Yahweh is upon me ... I have been equipped, endued with gifts, like the ancient prophets, to minister to the Lord.'

2. What was the character of His ministry to be? ... verse 1

- a. first: 'to bring good news to the afflicted' or, 'to the meek or humble'
- (A) Jesus' ministry was first of all the message of good news – angels at His birth announced 'good tidings of great joy' – the gospel
 - (B) it was not the 'gospel' of a nation freed from Roman control, nor the 'gospel' of a revived Judaism – that, says Paul in Galatians 1:6-7, is not really any sort of true Gospel
 - (C) it is the gospel of salvation to those who are afflicted by sin and who humble themselves before God in repentance for that sin
 - (D) of such people, Jesus said, 'Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.' (Matthew 5:3)
- b. second: 'He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted'
- (A) sin ruined the original created nature of man
 - (B) spoiled the relationships that God designed should exist between man and his family, man and society, man and God
 - (C) breaking the hearts of men, women and even children
 - (D) to such fallen, hurting mankind comes Jesus, with healing
 - (E) healing to restore the broken relationship of man with God
- c. third: 'to proclaim liberty to captives'
- (A) I have used the word 'Redeemer' in my title, even though that word is not found in this passage; maybe you wondered, why?

- (B) with the word 'liberty' in verse 1, this may become clear
- (1) it is a special word associated with a special time in Jewish life
 - (2) you find it, for example, in Leviticus 25:10, 'You shall thus consecrate the fiftieth year and proclaim a release through the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee for you, and each of you shall return to his own property, and each of you shall return to his family.' – the word 'release' is the same word
 - (3) the background is this: when a person fell into debt, they could sell their property to pay it off; if it was really great, they might even sell themselves as slaves to pay it
 - (4) but such sales of property or self were not to be final
 - (a) every seven years there was a year of release when such slaves were freed
 - (b) in such a case, the Goel – the Kinsman-Redeemer – could also step in and redeem the land that had been sold
 - (c) but, in the 50th year, the land would be redeemed without money and restored without price
- (C) this is a beautiful picture of the gospel
- (1) when Adam and Eve sinned, all mankind fell under the debt of sin, a debt too great for them ever to pay by themselves, and so became enslaved to a new master, Satan
 - (2) but Jesus, the great Kinsman-Redeemer, comes and 'proclaims liberty to such captives' – paying the price of redemption
 - (3) without money, without price for us
 - (4) but at the cost of His own death upon Calvary's cross
- d. fourth: 'and freedom to prisoners' related to the third, but different
- (A) literally it means 'opening to the one's bound or imprisoned'
 - (B) that Hebrew word for 'opening' is never used of opening doors; but rather of the opening of eyes [and in one case of ears]
 - (C) that is why the NT rendering 'is recovery of sight to the blind'
 - (D) obedience to the gospel, trust in Jesus, opens spiritual eyes, brings a person 'out of darkness into His marvellous light' (1 Peter 2:9b)

3. The message of His ministry continues in verse 2

- a. 'To proclaim the favourable year of the Lord'
- (A) in one sense, this refers again to that Jubilee year when people returned to their family and their land
 - (B) Ezekiel 46:17 calls that 'the year of liberty', the same word as here
 - (C) but there is more: it is the year of God's favour
 - (D) it is the period of time of extending God's gracious invitation; that proclaimed by Jesus: 'Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.' (Matthew 11:28-30)
- b. yet there was another side to Jesus' ministry – whether or not Jesus read it in the synagogue is not said, but it would have been known by the assembly: 'And the day of vengeance of our God'
- (A) although '... God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him.' (John 3:17)
 - (B) nevertheless the gospel of salvation needed also that He proclaim 'the day of vengeance of our God,' day of coming judgement
 - (C) Jesus did so:
 - (1) against the religious rulers in Matthew 23
 - (2) against those that would hurt His chosen followers: 'now, will not God bring about justice for His elect who cry to Him day and night, and will He delay long over them? I tell you that He will bring about justice for them quickly. ...' (Luke 18:7-8)
 - (3) and against Jerusalem: 'When He approached Jerusalem, He saw the city and wept over it, saying, "If you had known in this day, even you, the things which make for peace! But now they have been hidden from your eyes. For the days will come upon you when your enemies will throw up a barricade against you, and surround you and hem you in on every side, and they will level you to the ground and your children within you, and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not recognize the time of your visitation.'" (Luke 19:41-44)
 - (D) because to ignore the message of the gospel is to incur judgement
- c. but even in that message, He came 'To comfort all who mourn'

4. The outcomes of His ministry in verse 3,
- a. the mourners of Zion are appointed a new suit of clothing:
 - (A) 'To grant those who mourn in Zion, Giving them a garland instead of ashes, The oil of gladness instead of mourning, The mantle of praise instead of a spirit of fainting.'
 - (B) the 'garland' or 'crown of glory' is either
 - (1) the ornate turban worn by a man on special occasions, such as the priest did when going into the tabernacle or temple to present offerings to God
 - (2) or the head-dress , the marriage tiara, of the bride
 - (C) in Psalm 45:7, a marriage Psalm for the king, the bridegroom is described as being anointed with this same 'oil of gladness'
 - (D) and the 'mantle' in 'mantle of praise' is a robe that is particularly suitable for a festive season
 - (E) so the language throughout is that associated with the festivities of a marriage – how appropriate for the Messiah-Christ who came to give Himself for the church that is to be His holy bride
 - (F) no wonder that Paul could exhort believers, 'Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice!' (Philippians 4:4)
 - b. and the mourners are established in a new position
 - (A) 'So they will be called oaks of righteousness'
 - (1) I have two board of oak; 2.5cm thick, 20 cm wide. 1.5 metres in length (1" x 8" x 5')
 - (2) I think I got them from a shipping skid many years ago
 - (3) I use them as ramps and drive the front end of my pickup onto them so as to be able to work underneath
 - (4) they are strong; they are durable; they can be trusted
 - (5) that is the picture here of those trusting in Jesus Christ
 - (6) they will be endued, not only with the righteousness imputed in Christ, but the righteousness implanted by the Holy Spirit
 - (7) this is the reason that they are also called ...
 - (B) 'The planting of the Lord'
 - (1) the people in which the seed of God's word has been planted
 - (2) the people who bear the fruit of the Spirit

(3) that even though this brings to them salvation and joy

(4) the end result is ...

(C) 'that He may be glorified.'

c. so now, let us consider briefly,

C. The Redeemer's People 61:4-6

1. verse 4: 'Then they will rebuild the ancient ruins, They will raise up the former devastations; And they will repair the ruined cities, The desolations of many generations.'

a. in a minor sense, this applies to the return of the Jews from exile

b. but such rebuilding has only been partial and temporary

c. but, as we saw this morning in our Bible Class, in looking at Noah and the flood, there has been a greater devastation – that of sin to the human race – a devastation that only grace can cure and restore

d. or, consider the visible church which went for centuries in following the rule of men rather than the rule of God's word

e. in practical terms, these are the devastations which Christians, the Redeemer's people, are to rebuild, to raise up, and to repair – by the proclamation of the gospel; by the preaching of Jesus Christ

2. then, verse 5: 'Strangers will stand and pasture your flocks, And foreigners will be your farmers and your vinedressers.' then the second part of verse 6, '...You will eat the wealth of nations, And in their riches you will boast.'

a. to the original Jewish church will be added the Gentile church

b. when the gospel first went forth to the Gentiles, it was through the lips of Jewish believers; to these missionaries – Peter, Paul, Barnabas, Silas, and many others – the Gentile converts were indebted

c. truth expressed in Romans 15:27, talking about the gifts to the Jewish church from Macedonia, 'Yes, they were pleased to do so, and they are indebted to them. For if the Gentiles have shared in their spiritual things, they are indebted to minister to them also in material things.'

d. but now we live in a day when we as the Gentile church have to reach out and share spiritual things with the Jewish people

3. and verse 6 shows there to be a shared ministry, Jew and Gentile together
 - a. 'But you will be called the priests of the Lord; You will be spoken of as ministers of our God.'
 - b. the OT saw the nation of Israel as a nation of priests: Exodus 19:6, "'and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.'" These are the words that you shall speak to the sons of Israel.'
 - c. truth that 1 Peter 2:9 applies to the NT people of God
 - d. finally, ...

D. The Redeemer Blesses 61:7-9

1. A Double Blessing: 'Instead of your shame you will have a double portion, And instead of humiliation they will shout for joy over their portion. Therefore they will possess a double portion in their land, Everlasting joy will be theirs. For I, the Lord, love justice, I hate robbery in the burnt offering; And I will faithfully give them their recompense And make an everlasting covenant with them. Then their offspring will be known among the nations, And their descendants in the midst of the peoples. All who see them will recognize them Because they are the offspring whom the Lord has blessed.'
 - a. God will bless and doubly bless His people
2. An Everlasting Blessing
 - a. with everlasting joy
 - b. with an everlasting covenant
 - c. of the OT covenant, made at Sinai, Hebrews 8:13 tells us this: 'When He said, "A new covenant," He has made the first obsolete. But whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to disappear.'
 - d. this covenant, which is to be found in Jesus Christ shall never cease: those who are in Christ, under that covenant, have eternal life

E. Conclusion

1. those of us who have trusted in Jesus Christ
 - a. have trusted in the Redeemer's words
 - b. we have become the Redeemer's people
 - c. we can testify that indeed the Redeemer blesses
2. will you not yield your full confidence to such a Saviour?

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NAS New American Standard version © 1960, 1995 The Lockman Foundation (usually the 1995 edition)
NIV New International Version © 1984 by the International Bible Society
NKJV New King James Version © 1979 Thomas Nelson Inc., Publishers

Some of my favourite commentaries and resources used in the preparation of this message are identified as follow:

BM – Biblical Museum, Editor James Comper Gray, ca 1870
EBC – The Expositor’s Bible Commentary, © 1986 Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 49530, Michigan
Volume 6, Isaiah, by Geoffrey W. Grogan, Principal, Bible Training Institute, Glasgow, Scotland;
EJY – The Book of Isaiah by Edward J. Young; © 1965; Wm. B. Eerdmans
K&D – Commentary on the Old Testament, by Keil & Delitzsch; Volume 7, Isaiah, by Franz Delitzsch
Kerux – The sermon & illustration data base compiled by Rev. David Holwick at the web-site, www.holwick.com.