

# Born to Win

## High & Lifted Up

by Ronald L. Dart

We were riding through the streets of Bombay, India in a taxi, fascinated by all the sights and the sounds. Actually, our cab had to stop and drive around a sacred cow. (Really. That sort of thing just *really* does happen over there.) And then one of my friends who was with me saw something that neither one of us have ever forgotten: a man was urinating against a wall in plain, public view. Now, this isn't so unusual once you leave England going east. You'll find it in France, Germany, Italy, you know—right on down through there. In fact, you can almost say it's not that uncommon, when you leave the English-speaking part of the societies of the world, to find that. But in this case, the water ran down the wall, underneath the wall; and on the other side of the wall, there was a little girl playing in the dirt, making mud pies with the water that was coming under the wall.

Now, I've traveled a lot in the world over the years, and I have seen a lot of squalor. I will never forget my first visit to the Philippines. I was warned very carefully to keep my hands and arms inside the car. My host pointed out to me that people had been known to lose rings off their fingers as they drove by in traffic; and if the ring didn't go easily, the finger went as well with it; and that the Philippines were something of a violent place. And we drove by an area where there was just a row of...what really looked like the results of a devastating hurricane worth of houses, but actually they were the houses as they were normally lived in. And all of them backed up to a canal. And *everything*, apparently, that was thrown out of those houses—from human excrement to garbage to you name it—was thrown right off the back porch, out the back windows, and into that canal, which really didn't flow anywhere. And it became a total...you know, they lived *on* a cesspool—a continuing cesspool—and the stench as you drove by those places was absolutely overpowering. I do not understand *how* people could live in those areas. And I've concluded that one of the things that separates civilized countries from the rest of the world is the way they handle (or don't handle) their sewage—such a simple little thing as that.

Now, back in Deuteronomy 23:12, there's a law that you might just read over and not think twice about it. It's a very simple thing, a very short law, and yet at the same time it underlines a principle that is ignored by *nearly* all of the world. He says in verse 12,

### Deuteronomy 23

AKJV

<sup>12</sup> You shall have a place also [outside] the camp, where you shall go forth abroad:

<sup>13</sup> And you shall have a paddle on your weapon; and it shall be, when you will ease yourself abroad, you shall dig therewith, and shall turn back and cover that which comes from you:

Dig a hole, relieve yourself, cover it up. God might have said, "I've taught the *cats* to do this, surely *you* can." But in any case, he gave them specific instructions as to how they should do this. Now, this is only one of *a lot* of sanitation laws that you find in the Bible. Some of them are unique to time and place; some of them, really, in principle are *permanent* principles of sanitation that ought to be followed in *any* civilization, *any* society, *anywhere*. But what comes next in this goes further than that, and it's a sobering thought. He says do this...

## Deuteronomy 23

AKJV

<sup>14</sup> For the LORD your God walks in the middle of your camp, to deliver you, and to give up your enemies before you; therefore shall your camp be holy: that he see no unclean thing in you, and turn away from you.

Now, you understand what he's saying here? He's saying, "You keep this camp clean. You don't have latrines *inside* the camp; the latrines will be *outside* the camp. Because I'm going to walk down through here; and you don't want me to come in there and see some unclean, disgusting thing, and turn my back on you and walk away." Now, that really, in a way, seems like a very small thing; and yet, when you consider the difference between those countries of the world that take sanitation seriously, and those countries of the world who do not, the difference is daylight and dark. It is *enormous*, and it has implications that reach beyond what most people would ever consider. But the thing that *I* thought was fascinating about it is that even sanitation can have *spiritual* implications.

We're prone to think that, "Well, man has a spiritual side and a physical side; and the physical side? That's not important, and we don't have to give much consideration—the *spiritual* things are what's important." But the fact of the matter is: man doesn't have a spiritual and a physical side. Man is physical through, all the way, clean through. One side to the other, front to back, top to bottom, *we are physical*. We can have a spiritual relationship with God, but we're not spirit yet; and as long as we are in the flesh, we need to understand that lots and lots of things that we do that are purely physical things have spiritual implications. And, strangely, here's one: sanitation. And all this led me to wonder if we need a higher view of the holiness of God than we carry with us much of the time.

There's a passage back in Isaiah 6 that I thought about when I thought about this. Isaiah, apparently, was in service in the temple at the time—just busily going about minding his own business, as it were. He says in chapter 6, verse 1,

## Isaiah 6

NKJV

<sup>1</sup> In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the temple.

<sup>2</sup> Above it stood seraphim; each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew.

<sup>3</sup> And one cried to another and said:  
"Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts;  
The whole earth is full of His glory!"

<sup>4</sup> And the posts of the door were shaken by the voice of him who cried out, and the house was filled with smoke.

*Man*, what an *incredible* thing to see. "High and lifted up", he said, "I saw God."

## Isaiah 6

AKJV

<sup>5</sup> Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the middle of a people of unclean lips: for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.

The very fact he spoke profanity, to him was *so demeaning*, once he actually saw the presence of God in vision in the temple, that he just felt that he was absolutely undone; because he felt that a man of unclean lips cannot come into the presence of God. You can't use lips that curse to turn and then bless

God. Isaiah *knew* all this, because he understood the holiness of God, and then the vision underlined it more than anything had ever done.

**Isaiah 6**

AKJV

<sup>6</sup> Then flew one of the seraphim to me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar:

The angel itself took it *with tongs*, mind you.

**Isaiah 6**

KJ2000

<sup>7</sup> And he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this has touched your lips; and your iniquity is taken away, and your sin purged.

That sort of thing? Cleansed by a hot coal on the lips.

**Isaiah 6**

AKJV

<sup>8</sup> Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me.

But the implication of it is that God is *high and lifted up*. And a man who understands this, and suddenly realizes that he's seen the Lord of Hosts, and realizes that even unclean lips are not acceptable to God, would be profoundly, deeply disturbed by it. It's an *awesome* encounter, and it underlies once again, from a curious angle, the importance of *cleanliness*. And it's a curious human tendency, like I said, to want to separate the physical stuff from the spiritual stuff. But the physical stuff that we do, the physical things that we say, all have implications that we ought to be thinking about. God is pristine, clean, holy, untouched, unsullied, pure. And the word holy itself means "apart" from anything like that. Isaiah 57 has another instance of this. He says in Isaiah 57:6, 15 and 16,

**Isaiah 57**

KJ2000

<sup>15</sup> For thus says the high and lofty One that inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.

<sup>16</sup> For I will not contend forever, neither will I be always angry: for the spirit should fail before me, and the souls which I have made.

God said, "I'm not going to always be angry. If I did that, the spirit would fail before me, and all the souls which I have made would die, if I stayed angry." But this is "the high and lofty one" who "inhabits eternity". Isaiah 66:

**Isaiah 66**

AKJV

<sup>15</sup> For, behold, the LORD will come with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire.

And you begin to understand why fire is important, because fire is purifying; fire is the one thing that will clean up all the germs that are around, and bacteria, viruses, and so forth.

**Isaiah 66**

AKJV

<sup>16</sup> For by fire and by his sword will the LORD plead with all flesh: and the slain of the LORD shall be many.

<sup>17</sup> They that sanctify themselves, and purify themselves in the gardens behind one tree in the middle, eating swine's flesh, and the abomination, and the mouse, shall be consumed together, said the LORD.

Physical uncleanness, even what you eat, has *serious spiritual implications*. Now, this particular passage of Scripture, “Behold, the LORD will come with fire”, you look at it in its context, it’s talking about the last time—that return of Christ; God coming to this earth, finally. And when he comes, who’s he going to be burning up? People who eat pork, the abomination, and the mouse—rodents, like squirrels. He said, “I’m going to wipe them out.”

Now, it may seem a small thing to us, and yet it also may be a small thing that the human HIV virus entered the human population because of men who were hunting simians—monkeys—in Africa: killing them, slaughtering them, getting their blood all over them, eating their flesh, and so forth, contrary to the Law of God. Whenever you begin to understand what God’s Law says and why it says it...that the cleanliness, not only in terms of human excrement, but cleanliness in terms of the things that we eat, cleanliness even in terms of the things that we say and speak out of our mouths, is *crucial* to God. It’s *very important* to God. It’s a *spiritual* matter with God, and has far-reaching spiritual implications.

Now, I want us to think about this for a moment, and the reason I bring this to you is to think what it means for one who is *so* pristine, *so* pure, and *so* holy to come down and enter the cesspool of life—to actually come and live in this planet and to walk among us. Consider what it meant (even in the Old Testament while still in the spirit, as it were) for God to actually enter the city of Sodom—which apparently he did. But consider what it would mean for him to come *in the flesh* and to expose himself to all this. You find *a lot* of this in the New Testament: Second Corinthians, chapter 5, for example, where Paul has the famous, the very well-known expression, “we are ambassadors for Christ”.

**2 Corinthians 5**

AKJV

<sup>20</sup> Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ’s stead, be you reconciled to God.

<sup>21</sup> For he has made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; [...]

He has made Jesus *sin* for us, who knew no sin. Now, just take the whole gamut of human sin. Take the worst thing you can think about. Think of all of the gamut—the whole spectrum of things that people do, the corruption of this world—and consider that God made *him*, that one who was *so* pristine, *high* and lifted up, who didn’t even want to walk in the camp of Israel and see some disgusting thing lying on the ground, and said, “I’ll turn my back on you and walk away if I see it, so keep your camp clean”...for this one to become flesh and be made *sin* for us...

**2 Corinthians 5**

AKJV

<sup>21</sup> [...] akjv that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

In First Peter, chapter 1, Peter writes (verse 15):

**1 Peter 1**

KJ2000

<sup>15</sup> But as he who has called you is holy, so be holy in all manner of conduct;

“As he who has called us is holy, so be you holy.” I have to consider that what God is calling upon us to do at this time is to clean up our act—to live a *clean* life, in every aspect. He says,

**1 Peter 1**

AKJV

- <sup>15</sup> But as he which has called you is holy, so be you holy in all manner of conversation;  
<sup>16</sup> Because it is written, Be you holy; for I am holy.  
<sup>17</sup> And if you call on the Father, who without respect of persons judges according to every man’s work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear:  
<sup>18</sup> For as much as you know that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold[....]

The normal ransom that was paid when someone was being bought back out of slavery was *money*. You weren’t redeemed, he said, with money.

**1 Peter 1**

AKJV

- <sup>19</sup> But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:

You understand why it was necessary that, when lambs were brought in for sin offerings, they had to be without blemish, they had to be without spot, they had to be absolutely perfect in every way; or they were not a proper, fit representation of God [e.g., **Exodus 12:5, Leviticus 22:20**]. He was...

**1 Peter 1**

KJ2000

- <sup>19</sup> [...] a lamb without blemish and without spot:  
<sup>20</sup> Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you,  
<sup>21</sup> Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God.  
<sup>22</sup> Seeing you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto sincere love of the brethren, see that you love one another with a pure heart fervently:

The examination of the heart, the consideration of the wickedness that sometimes enters into the human heart, and the necessity of *changing* the way we work, changing the way we interact with people, of changing sometimes the things we *think* about others, and *certainly* changing the way we *speak* of others and to others lest we be a man or a woman of unclean lips who lives in the midst of a people of unclean lips. Later, in First Peter, chapter 2, he will say this (verse 19):

**1 Peter 2**

AKJV

- <sup>19</sup> For this is thank worthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully.  
<sup>20</sup> For what glory is it, if, when you be buffeted for your faults, you shall take it patiently? but if, when you do well, and suffer for it, you take it patiently, this is acceptable with God.  
<sup>21</sup> For even hereunto were you called: [...]

Called what? That when we have not done anything wrong, we take it patiently when we suffer for it. He said,

**1 Peter 2**

AKJV

<sup>21</sup> For even hereunto were you called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow his steps:

<sup>22</sup> Who did no sin, [...]

In all of his lifetime, Jesus Christ *never* committed sin, *never* got his hands dirty, *never* spoke evil, *never* defiled his lips (as Isaiah had done)—never did *any* of those things—but kept himself *absolutely* clean.

**1 Peter 2**

AKJV

<sup>22</sup> [...] neither was guile found in his mouth:

No pretense. No games to be played.

**1 Peter 2**

AKJV

<sup>23</sup> Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judges righteously:

<sup>24</sup> Who his own self bore our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live to righteousness: by whose stripes you were healed.

Now, think carefully about that and keep it in mind: By *his own self*, he *bear our sins, in his body, on the tree*. When Jesus Christ was up there on that cross, he was accursed; and he carried upon him *all* of our sins—the worst that we have done, the whole spectrum of things that we have done, our uncleannesses, our pettiness, our viciousness, basically the whole pattern of that. He says,

**1 Peter 2**

AKJV

<sup>25</sup> For you were as sheep going astray; but are now returned to the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.

Now, this is the Christ with whom we have to do—the one who himself was clean, pure, wholesome, unsullied by the world, who then became *totally* the opposite of all these things, in one moment of time, on behalf of us. In Psalm 113:

**Psalm 113**

AKJV

<sup>1</sup> Praise you the LORD. Praise, O you servants of the LORD, praise the name of the LORD.

<sup>2</sup> Blessed be the name of the LORD from this time forth and for ever more.

<sup>3</sup> From the rising of the sun to the going down of the same the LORD's name is to be praised.

<sup>4</sup> The LORD is high above all nations, and his glory above the heavens.

<sup>5</sup> Who is like to the LORD our God, who dwells on high,

<sup>6</sup> Who humbles himself to behold the things that are in heaven, and in the earth!

<sup>7</sup> He raises up the poor out of the dust, and lifts the needy out of the dunghill;

God has to actually humble himself to look at the things that are in heaven, and *certainly* to look at the things upon earth. ...who raises up the poor out of the dust, and the needy out of the dunghill—that God himself would come down here and raise up the poorest of the world, from the *worst places* of the world, is a marvelous thing. He...

### Psalm 113

AKJV

<sup>7</sup> [...] lifts the needy out of the dunghill;

<sup>8</sup> That he may set him with princes, even with the princes of his people.

<sup>9</sup> He makes the barren woman to keep house, and to be a joyful mother of children. [...]

All of these things develop a theology of a pure, pristine, high, lifted up God; who comes *down* to human flesh; who actually *lives* in human flesh; who lives a clean, sinless life in the flesh (which is no simple matter, as all of us know); and who does it so that he can pull the *worst* of us out of the *worst* dunghills of the world, and make princes out of us and set us alongside princes. It's really an *incredible* thing that this God has done for us.

Ephesians, chapter 1. Paul writes to the Ephesians on this occasion and says,

### Ephesians 1

KJ2000

<sup>15</sup> Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints,

<sup>16</sup> Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers;

<sup>17</sup> That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him:

<sup>18</sup> The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of his calling, and what is the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,

<sup>19</sup> And what is the exceeding greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his mighty power,

<sup>20</sup> Which he performed in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places,

<sup>21</sup> Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in that which is to come:

The realization that Jesus, having been *in the flesh*, now is raised up and *once again* is at the Father's right hand—*far* above *every* kind of principality, *every* kind of power, *all* might, *all* dominion on the earth and everything that is named... And yet at the same time, he still is able to relate to us in a profound and important way. Hebrews, chapter 7, verse 26: He's gone through the time and he has established the fact that Jesus Christ *is our high priest*, and he says in verse 26,

### Hebrews 7

KJ2000

<sup>26</sup> For such a high priest was befitting for us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens;

Now, as I started out, I said I really think we do not have a high enough view of the *holiness* of God—of the *wonder* of God—but Jesus is described as “holy”, “harmless”, “undefiled”, “separate from sinners”, “higher than the heavens”.

## Hebrews 7–8

AKJV

<sup>27</sup> Who needs not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself.

<sup>28</sup> For the law makes men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, makes the Son, who is consecrated for ever more.

<sup>1</sup> Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens;

<sup>2</sup> A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man.

And the writer of Hebrews goes on through this whole section to establish and impress upon in our minds the fact that we don't have a high priest who can't be touched with our infirmities—that he was tempted *in all points* like we are, and *never committed sin*. And it's going to make it very difficult for anyone who wants to come before Christ and excuse himself, and to say, "Well, Lord, I didn't mean to do that. It was really more than I could handle"—that Jesus Christ will know and will tell him, "No, I faced that. I know exactly what it's like. I went through that type of thing; you could have handled it." And yet at the same time, Jesus will fully understand the pull of the flesh, the weaknesses of the flesh. He will understand our failures. He will lift us out of the dunghill and make us seat with princes, if we trust him, and if we believe him. It is a *truly* remarkable thing that he is doing for us.

In Isaiah 52...I'd like you to turn back there, because this is a *profound* section of prophecy, and one that I think we need to give a little more attention to. And oftentimes we turn to Isaiah 53, because here is where the prophecy comes in about Jesus Christ and his sacrifice, but Isaiah 52 starts off with the theme which actually comes to its culmination in chapter 53. He says,

## Isaiah 52

AKJV

<sup>1</sup> Awake, awake; put on your strength, O Zion; put on your beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city: for from now on there shall no more come into you the uncircumcised and the unclean.

Now we are going to change *everything*.

## Isaiah 52

KJ2000

<sup>2</sup> Shake yourself from the dust; arise, and sit down, O Jerusalem: loose yourself from the bands of your neck, O captive daughter of Zion.

<sup>3</sup> For thus says the LORD, You have sold yourselves for nothing [*You actually have sold yourself for just dung.*]; and you shall be redeemed without money.

<sup>4</sup> For thus says the Lord GOD, My people went down at first into Egypt to sojourn there; and the Assyrian oppressed them without cause.

<sup>5</sup> Now therefore, what have I here, says the LORD, that my people are taken away for nothing? they that rule over them make them to wail, says the LORD; and my name continually every day is blasphemed.

He's saying, "My people are out here in the world, they're being held captive in the world, and my name is being blasphemed all around them at all times."

## Isaiah 52

KJ2000

<sup>6</sup> Therefore my people shall know my name: therefore they shall know in that day that I am he



that does speak: behold, it is I.

<sup>7</sup> How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that brings good tidings, that publishes peace; that brings good tidings of good, that publishes salvation; that says unto Zion, Your God reigns!

You now, it is very hard, living where we do and in the time we live in, to come to grips with some of these things. Some little time ago, though, I was reading a book titled *Man's Search for Meaning* by Viktor Frankl, and I was so struck by the living conditions of those poor people in the German concentration camps—the way they had to sleep...I mean, you have to read the descriptions of it from somebody. He gives you a very unimpassioned description of the way they lived. He isn't railing, he isn't trying to color things up; he's just telling you methodically how it was done, and how they had these hard wooden bunks with no mattresses in them. They were just wooden bunks across with a little 1"x4" around the sides of it, in which...I think it was six or eight, I believe it was six men had to sleep together in that bunk; and they had to basically get on their sides, sleep like spoons across that, in order for all of them to fit in that place. And there was no opportunity for them to turn over; they were there, on a hard wooden board, all night long, every night that they were there. And that's the way they had to sleep. The description of their food, and the way they scrabbled for food, and the way they would take this one bowl of soup that was not much more than just water with a few little bits of scraps which actually had been *exposed* to vegetables at one time...That was their soup for the day, and they got one chunk of bread every day. And his story about how these poor, pitiful men would save this bread: they would hide it in their clothes, they would pinch off a little piece of it now, they would try to save it and make it last all day long; because they knew if they ate it all at once they would have nothing again until the day.

These descriptions that he gives of the squalor, the difficulty, and the hardship of the life that they had in that camp is really...it's depressing to read about, but the thing that I kept waiting for, as I read through this account, was what I knew was coming. Because, after all, he's alive; he wrote the story. So I know he lived through it. And what I was waiting for was the liberation that would come to these people in these camps. And the story of that, in many ways, is almost more heartrending than what it was like for them to be there in the camp itself. But I remember his story of the time when it finally hit him.

He was going from the concentration camp where they were being rehabilitated, and he decided to walk to a village a few kilometers away. He walked across a field; and as he walked across this great, wide, grassy field with all kinds of wildflowers cropping up all over the place, it suddenly hit him that he was free—that he was able to be out there. And he said he fell to his knees in the middle of that grass and wept like he had not wept since he was a little bitty child. All of that which was pinned up inside of him *finally* came out. And that made me think of this, when I read, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that brings good tidings, and that publishes peace." And I can tell you for sure that those men in those concentration camps would've been ready to kiss the feet of the soldiers that finally found them, and brought them out of those camps, and began to feed them. (And it was a dangerous time, by the way, even for the prisoners; because a lot of them died right there, because they could not handle food once food began to be given to them.) It was a *tragic* era in human history, and yet the *squalor* that many people today live in, who *are* free, is every bit as bad—and in some ways worse—than what those men lived in at the concentration camp. And then you think about the scripture:

## Isaiah 52

KJ2000

<sup>7</sup> How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that brings good tidings, that publishes peace; that brings good tidings of good, that publishes salvation; that says unto Zion, Your God reigns!

<sup>8</sup> Your watchmen shall lift up their voice; with the voice together shall they sing: for they shall see eye to eye, when the LORD shall bring again Zion.

<sup>9</sup> Break forth into joy, sing together, you waste places of Jerusalem: for the LORD has comforted his people, he has redeemed Jerusalem.

Yeah, how? What?

**Isaiah 52**

*KJ2000*

<sup>10</sup> The LORD has made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.

<sup>11</sup> Depart you, depart you, go out from there, touch no unclean thing; go out of the midst of her; be you clean, that bear the vessels of the LORD.

And that echoes all the way down to me today. I say to myself, “Here I am, I’m bearing the word of God”, and then the cry comes, “Be *clean*, you that bear the vessels.” If somebody had to be clean that actually carried a pot into the temple of God, how much more someone who carries the *word* of God? And you feel like Isaiah who said, “Oh, woe is me! I’m a man of unclean lips. How can I do this?” And yet, if you have God’s word, you must speak it.

**Isaiah 52**

*AKJV*

<sup>12</sup> For you shall not go out with haste, nor go by flight: for the LORD will go before you; and the God of Israel will be your rear guard.

<sup>13</sup> Behold, my servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high.

My servant? Now, you start hearing these references to “my servant” in here, and I’ll just tell you shortly that these are the passages that begin to talk about the Christ.

**Isaiah 52**

*KJ2000*

<sup>13</sup> Behold, my servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high.

<sup>14</sup> As many were astonished at you; so his appearance was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men:

<sup>15</sup> So shall he startle many nations; the kings shall shut their mouths at him: for that which had not been told them shall they see; and that which they had not heard shall they consider.

His visage was so marred, more than any man, and his form, more than the sons of men. Before Jesus ever got to Golgotha; before he was ever hammered onto that stake, and then put up into the sky, and hung there to die; he had been beaten so badly that you probably would not have recognized him, even if you had seen him before.

**Isaiah 53**

*AKJV*

<sup>1</sup> Who has believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?

<sup>2</sup> For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he has no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him.

It’s a strange scripture, in a way, for there’s nothing in the gospel accounts that would lead me to believe that Jesus was an ugly man. I expect that he was well developed, he was healthy. I’m sure he

looked just fine. And it makes me wonder if what they're talking about here is that the stricken, beaten Christ.

### Isaiah 53

AKJV

<sup>2</sup> [...] no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him.

<sup>3</sup> He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

<sup>4</sup> Surely he has borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

It has been the lot of man, down through time, to suffer in many ways. The Holocaust is only one aspect of the suffering of man, and the stories of that have been written by the people who survived it, and I think it's important that we know their stories, and that we understand what those people have been through. And yet, the point seems to be being made here is that what Jesus was doing when he came down to this earth was to take upon himself every kind of suffering that mankind had ever been through. And it started on that night with the betrayal of Judas. And that had to happen, because human beings have, all of us, suffered betrayal at one time in our lives and may yet again. He *had* to go through that night. He had to go to the garden, and pray there before God, and suffer the fear and torment of the damned; because the fear of death is common to all of us. Jesus had to face up to death, and the anticipation of death, and the dread of death that would come to him the next day. He was arrested *unjustly*. He was accused *falsely*. Which of us has not, at some time in our life, had to face false accusations of things that we supposedly had done that we are absolutely innocent of? Jesus, therefore, had to suffer false accusation. He had to suffer humiliation, for all of us at one time or another are humiliated. He had to go through the mocking, the spitting, the plucking off the hair of his cheeks. He had to go through pain and suffering throughout that long and torturous night, and into the next morning, because it is the lot of human beings to suffer.

Pain, sickness, agony—sooner or later, it comes to us. Our brother Jim Ussery is laid up in the hospital now, and he knows what pain is, trust me, after having gone through open heart surgery and having had them take that buzz-saw right up his chest and lay his chest open so that they could work on his heart. He knows what *pain* is like when you wake up, apparently, after that operation, from what I have heard. Pain is a fact of life that *you're* going to face sooner or later, *I'm* going to face it sooner or later, in degrees that we have probably still not had to deal with. And so, consequently, these being a part of life, it was necessary that Jesus faced these things. And it says,

### Isaiah 53

AKJV

<sup>4</sup> Surely he has borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

Now, what could that mean? What I take that to mean is that whenever you do *not* acknowledge that the sacrifice of Christ was in your place, when you're not prepared to acknowledge that you deserve what he got, when you're not prepared to acknowledge *him* as savior, then what you are tacitly saying is, "Well, yeah, he was smitten; but he was smitten of God for *his own* sake. He was smitten by God. It wasn't for me; God did it to him." That's what people tacitly are saying. But, he was wounded for *our* transgressions. He was bruised for *our* iniquities. The chastisement of *our* peace was upon him. And with his stripes, we are healed. All of it, Isaiah says, is for us.

**Isaiah 53**

AKJV

<sup>6</sup> All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

And the librettist [Charles Jennens] who did it, and Handel who wrote it, have done one of the most *incredible* pieces of music I've ever heard in my life—one of the ones that touches me more deeply to the *core* of my being than anything I've ever heard is that one passage out of here [*Messiah* - movement 24] that “Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows.”

**Isaiah 53**

AKJV

<sup>6</sup> [...] and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

<sup>7</sup> He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opens not his mouth.

<sup>8</sup> He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken.

<sup>9</sup> And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.

Throughout his entire human life, Jesus Christ never deceived anybody, never lied to anybody, never hurt anybody, never harmed anyone; never committed sin, never sinned against God, never sinned against man; and was *pristine* in his human life, as he had been high and lifted up and holy and separate from sinners in all the time from before the creation of this planet until the time he finally came down here. And yet, in the end, he still *became sin for us*. You know, it's very hard for me...I mean, like to be clean; I don't like to be dirty. I can stand it for two or three days in a camping trip or something like that, but every day that passes when you can't bathe, and every day that passes when can't clean yourself up, you progressively become more and more miserable. And even at just simple little levels, those of us who have grown up being taught to keep ourselves clean, we have not a very high tolerance for filth. And I can't even imagine what it would be like for me to go and try to live in some of the societies of this world where the most *fundamental* elements of human hygiene are not known or practiced. And to go from here—Tyler, Texas—with all nice running water, indoor toilets, good sewers, a clean life, the ability to go wash yourself anytime you feel like it...to go from this into that would be a terrible thing. To go from where *Jesus* was—to be plunged into the deepest cesspool of human sin that you can imagine—is beyond our capacity I think, to comprehend. It's *certainly* beyond my capacity to describe for you. But I'd like for you to come back with me to Matthew, the 27<sup>th</sup> chapter, verse 27. Because something develops, as this goes along, that I think is important.

**Matthew 27**

AKJV

<sup>27</sup> Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the common hall, and gathered to him the whole band of soldiers.

<sup>28</sup> And they stripped him, and put on him a scarlet robe.

<sup>29</sup> And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it on his head, and a reed in his right hand: and they bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews!

<sup>30</sup> And they spit on him, and took the reed, and smote him on the head.

<sup>31</sup> And after that they had mocked him, they took the robe off from him, and put his own raiment on him, and led him away to crucify him.

<sup>32</sup> And as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name: him they compelled to bear his cross.

<sup>33</sup> And when they were come to a place called Golgotha, that is to say, a place of a skull,

<sup>34</sup> They gave him vinegar to drink mingled with gall: and when he had tasted thereof, he would not drink.

<sup>35</sup> And they crucified him, [...]

It's just one word—crucified—and it says so very much. They crucified him. They nailed him to the stake, and then put the stake up in the air and let it thump down into the hole and tear against his arms and his hands and his body, and put him up there to die.

**Matthew 27**

*AKJV*

<sup>35</sup> And they crucified him, and parted his garments, casting lots: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, They parted my garments among them, and on my clothing did they cast lots.

<sup>36</sup> And sitting down they watched him there;

<sup>37</sup> And set up over his head his accusation written, THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS.

And it was a true statement; but the Jews resented it, went to Pilate, wanted him to take it down [**John 19:20–22**]. “Get that sign off of there!” Because they actually denied him, specifically, as their king.

**Matthew 27**

*AKJV*

<sup>38</sup> Then were there two thieves crucified with him, one on the right hand, and another on the left.

<sup>39</sup> And they that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads,

<sup>40</sup> And saying, You that destroy the temple, and build it in three days, save yourself. If you be the Son of God, come down from the cross.

<sup>41</sup> Likewise also the chief priests mocking him, with the scribes and elders, said,

<sup>42</sup> He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him.

<sup>43</sup> He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God.

All the ridicule, and the reviling, along with the pain. Now, verse 45:

**Matthew 27**

*AKJV*

<sup>45</sup> Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land to the ninth hour.

<sup>46</sup> And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

Now, why did he say *that* at this moment in time? Jesus did not normally refer to God, by the way, as “God”. He referred to him as “Father”. But there’s a reason why, on this particular case, I think, he says, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” But you have to hearken all the way back to Deuteronomy 23, where he said, “I want all the refuse out of the camp, lest I come into this camp and I see some unclean thing, and I turn away from you.” Jesus Christ had become *sin*, and God turned away from him in that moment. And Jesus cried out, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” And, of course, he died.

**Matthew 27**

KJ2000

<sup>51</sup> And, behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks were split;

Now, why did he say, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” Well, if you’ll turn back to the 22<sup>nd</sup> Psalm, I’ll show you. He was actually quoting Scripture when he did this. He was quoting this 22<sup>nd</sup> Psalm—the words of David, who wrote in Psalm 22, verse 11,

**Psalm 22**

AKJV

<sup>1</sup> My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? why are you so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring?

<sup>2</sup> O my God, I cry in the day time, but you hear not; and in the night season, and am not silent.

<sup>3</sup> But you are holy, O you that inhabit the praises of Israel.

God is *holy*. He’s apart from, separate from, sinners—high and lifted up and exalted. He said, “I call out to you”...

**Psalm 22**

AKJV

<sup>4</sup> Our fathers trusted in you: they trusted, and you did deliver them.

<sup>5</sup> They cried to you, and were delivered: they trusted in you, and were not confounded.

<sup>6</sup> But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people.

And here this is; this comes in from an angle into Isaiah 53—that he was reproached and despised by men.

**Psalm 22**

AKJV

<sup>7</sup> All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying,

<sup>8</sup> He trusted on the LORD that he would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him.

I mean, *precisely* what the Psalm said, *that’s* what they were saying—at the foot of the cross, the people who walked by and reviled him and insulted him.

**Psalm 22**

AKJV

<sup>9</sup> But you are he that took me out of the womb: you did make me hope when I was on my mother’s breasts.

<sup>10</sup> I was cast on you from the womb: you are my God from my mother’s belly.

“You have *always* been my God.”

**Psalm 22**

AKJV

<sup>11</sup> Be not far from me; for trouble is near; for there is none to help.

<sup>12</sup> Many bulls have compassed me: strong bulls of Bashan have beset me round.

<sup>13</sup> They gaped on me with their mouths, as a ravening and a roaring lion.

<sup>14</sup> I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax; it is melted in the middle of my bowels.

<sup>15</sup> My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue sticks to my jaws; and you have brought me into the dust of death.

And I am sure that the total thirst that was on that cross, on that day, was just unbelievable. He said,

**Psalm 22**

*AKJV*

<sup>16</sup> For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have enclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet.

David, a prophet, foretold it long ago. “Lions, bulls, dogs, they’ve compassed me.”

**Psalm 22**

*KJ2000*

<sup>16</sup> [...] they pierced my hands and my feet.

<sup>17</sup> I can count all my bones: they look and stare upon me.

<sup>18</sup> They part my garments among them, and cast lots for my clothing.

<sup>19</sup> But be not far from me, O LORD: O my strength, haste you to help me.

<sup>20</sup> Deliver my soul from the sword; my life from the power of the dog.

<sup>21</sup> Save me from the lion’s mouth: for you have heard me from the horns of the wild oxen.

<sup>22</sup> I will declare your name unto my brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise you.

And in Jesus’ last prayer, he told God, “I have declared your name to my brethren” **[John 17:26]**.

**Psalm 22**

*AKJV*

<sup>23</sup> You that fear the LORD, praise him; all you the seed of Jacob, glorify him; and fear him, all you the seed of Israel.

<sup>24</sup> For he has not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; neither has he hid his face from him; but when he cried to him, he heard.

<sup>25</sup> My praise shall be of you in the great congregation: I will pay my vows before them that fear him.

<sup>26</sup> The meek shall eat and be satisfied: they shall praise the LORD that seek him: your heart shall live for ever.

<sup>27</sup> All the ends of the world shall remember and turn to the LORD: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before you.

Why? Because Jesus went through that one terrible moment when God forsook him.

**Psalm 22**

*AKJV*

<sup>28</sup> For the kingdom is the LORD’S: and he is the governor among the nations.

<sup>29</sup> All they that be fat on earth shall eat and worship: all they that go down to the dust shall bow before him: and none can keep alive his own soul. *[And it’s the truth.]*

<sup>30</sup> A seed shall serve him; it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation.

<sup>31</sup> They shall come, and shall declare his righteousness to a people that shall be born, that he has done this.

And here we are, the generation that was ultimately to be born.

In conclusion, there is this moment in Jesus' prayer, after he affirmed so many of the things that the prophets said that he would do and carry out and so forth, when he said to the father—John 17, verse 4:

**John 17**

*AKJV*

<sup>4</sup> I have glorified you on the earth: I have finished the work which you gave me to do.

<sup>5</sup> And now, O Father, glorify you me with your own self with the glory which I had with you before the world was.

So he left glory; came to the earth; lived in the cesspool of the earth; lived a perfect, clean, sinless life; but in the end had to be made sin *for us*. This had to be...I mean, there's no way that we can even begin to understand what a sacrifice *even coming down here* was for him. But I think it's also important to know that his prayer was answered—that God would glorify him *with his own self*, with the glory that he had with God before the world was. The glory he has now is the glory he had then; and the glory he had then, is the glory that he had now: *holy, separate* from sinners, *undefiled*. And then Peter says, if you really are going to try to draw near to this God, that we also need to be pure, as he is pure. We ought to purify ourselves. And John said the time is going to come when...

**1 John 3**

*AKJV*

<sup>2</sup> [...] we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

<sup>3</sup> And every man that has this hope in him purifies himself, even as he is pure.

That he can come into the presence of a God who is high and lifted up.

Transcript of a  
sermon by  
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