

Six Marks of the Messiah's Mission

Luke 9:21-22

January 13, 2019

Well we are in Luke 9 this morning so I would invite you to turn your bibles to Luke 9. Luke 9:18-22 is really the section we're in, this is the perfect spot in the text to prepare our hearts really to participate together in the Lord's table, ah, later in the service and as your listening as we go through the text here be sure your listening prayerfully and reflectively, meditating on the very, very, weighty truths of the Gospel that the Lord is going to be teaching us today. Gonna read the verses that we're covering today and we're gonna back up and actually start the, the, with the section that we covered last time in Luke's Gospel. So if you are in Luke 9, find your way to verse 18, and we'll read from there to verse 22. "Now it happened that as he" as Jesus, "was praying alone, the disciples were with him. And he asked them, 'Who do the crowds say that I am?' And they answered, 'John the Baptist but others say, Elijah, and others, that one of the prophets of old has risen.'" Then he said to them, 'But who do

you say that I am?' And Peter answered, 'The Christ of God.' And he strictly charged and commanded them to tell this to no one, saying, 'The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised.'"

You may not realize it, but there are a couple of firsts in that section of Scripture in terms of the, the Gospel narrative, the story, the narrative of Jesus' life and ministry, a couple of firsts in that section. The first, first, is the identification of Jesus as the Christ, the as the promised Jesus, the Messiah, the, the one anointed by God to rule the nation. This is the first time that his disciples have identified him as the Christ.

All three of the synoptic Gospels record this occasion, as Jesus questions his disciples, and Peter gives this, good confession. In Mark 8:29, the, the record of the confession is very short. Peter simply answers, "You are the Christ." Here in Luke 9:20, it's "You're the Christ of God," a little more

information, there. Matthew 16:16, Peter says, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God," very important confession.

It's about two and a half years into Jesus' ministry, since his baptism, this is about two and a half years later. The disciples were first introduced to Jesus when he entered into his ministry at the time of his baptism in about the fall of A.D. 29, but they've really only been with Jesus now in close proximity, following along as his disciples, having left everything and followed him, for really about a year, a year and half's time. They'd been with him. They've shared this part with him and his ministry throughout Galilee, preaching in towns and villages. We saw, here, at the beginning of chapter 9, Luke 9:1-6, Jesus has returned, here, from the Feast of Tabernacles.

Depending on how you date it, this is around the fall of A.D. 31. Here in Luke 9:1-6, later in this chapter, the feeding of the 5,000, that happened in the spring time, probably just before the Passover, spring of A.D. 32, which means at this point, in Luke 10, ah, 9:10-17, the crucifixion from that point is only about a year away. Mentioned last time that between

verses 17 and verse 18 in Luke 9, there's quite a bit of travel that Luke has skipped over. Jesus, as we talked about, gets out of Galilee, he heads up to Phoenicia on the coast. He comes back to the Decapolis over to the east side of the Jordan. Now he's taken his disciples here, north to Caesarea Philippi, and it's now about the fall of A.D. 32. The clock is ticking, counting down to the crucifixion, which is now only about six or seven months away.

It's a very significant first in the narrative. And it's interesting, isn't it, that Jesus has waited until now to predict his suffering? It really is about time to Jesus to inform his disciples that the goal of the next six months is to march toward the Cross. That's the second, first, in this Gospel narrative, this prediction of suffering. Again, all three synoptic Gospels have recorded Peter's good confession, identifying Jesus as the Christ and in all three synoptic Gospels the confession is followed by Jesus' warning to silence, which is what we see in verse 21, and then Jesus' prediction of suffering, verse 22. It's been hinted at, but this is the first time in the narrative that Jesus has been absolutely explicit

about his suffering, his rejection, his death, and then his following resurrection.

You can imagine yourself there. You're with the disciples. You're among them. You're walking along with Jesus for the last year and a half. And there's this growing awareness on your part, something that's solidified into a deep, deep conviction that this is no mere man. Come to the conclusion, like Peter did, here, that Jesus is actually not, not a man, at, just just a man at all. He's, He is the Christ of God. And while this conclusion in your own mind, it may have seemed to be the product of your own internal unaided reasoning, as Jesus told Peter over in Matthew 16, the source of this conviction is actually from the God of Heaven. "Blessed are you, Simon bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father, who is in Heaven." He's come to that conclusion about Jesus that he is actually the Christ of God, was the product of divine illumination.

And today, that truth that Jesus is the Christ that may seem obvious because everybody in America, religious or

irreligious, everybody here acknowledges that Jesus is the Christ. They do it every time they curse, don't they? There is a lack of clarity about the meaning and the implications that Jesus is the Christ. That lack of understanding is shared by people in the first and the twenty-first centuries alike, and by everybody in between. People don't know the nature of Jesus' ministry as the Messiah. They don't know what it means that he is, quote, "the Christ of God." Sadly, there are many professing Christians, even many who claim to be evangelicals, who, who lack clarity about this most basic Gospel issue. They all seem to know that Jesus is the answer to, to something, but they don't know the question. Jesus is the answer for what, exactly? For my brokenness? For my poor self-esteem? For my failures and, quote, "mistakes?" Is he the answer for my loneliness? He's at least that, isn't he? But isn't he so much more than that? Doesn't he answer a question that's more profound and more, more deeply sought and needed for the soul that actually solves all those other issues as well? You take it out of the realm of the narcissistic, individualistic, and the therapeutic, and there are many today who see that, say that Jesus is the answer for all kinds of social evils. Did he come to eradicate poverty? World hunger? Did he come to liberate the disenfranchised? Did he come to fight for the rights of the marginalized and make

sure that everybody who feels offended now has their day in court?

Beloved, there are many who misunderstand what Jesus came to do, who he really is. There are even so-called Christian missionaries, they're sent out by Christian Missions Organizations, and they lack clarity on this most basic point. This has been the topic of a number of conversations I've had with Chris Brumley, our missionary in Haiti, other missionaries as well. They are absolutely dismayed to see how many professing Christian missionaries come into their countries, and they want to help the indigenous people, those poor people, they want to help them overcome all manner of social ills and economic disparity, and everything else. But they seem to know nothing about the Gospel. They come from America, believing God told them to start a soccer ministry, to help young kids kind of grow up and do something with themselves, get a better education, go start an orphanage. Many people, Chris has told me, come into Haiti now, starting trinket shops. God told them to do that. Even some young ladies coming down there starting a micro-brew ministry. That's helpful. Real helpful. Look, you can baptize pretty much anything you want to do if you tell everyone that

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God told you to do it or he's leading you and if you call it a ministry. Oh, how we've strayed off course! And by sowing the seeds of confusion around the world, oh, how we have led other nations astray as well.

But look, the confusion about the Gospel, the confusion about the nature of the Messiah's ministry didn't start in our time. It starts in an unregenerate heart. It started back in Jesus' day; it goes all the way back to the first century, to Galilee, to Judea, even to the inner circle of Jesus' own disciples. Even they needed the instruction that Jesus gave in verse 22, like we do. And what Jesus says in verse 22, beloved, that is the Gospel in seed form. It's the Gospel in the kernel, which is going to grow into full form and fruitful productivity by the end of the story. And we're going to see that take full bloom in the book of Acts. Even after the crucifixion, the resurrection, when Jesus encountered two disciples walking on the road to Emmaus away from Jerusalem in Luke 24, he had to go back over the true ministry of the Messiah with them as well. He asked them, Luke 24:26, "Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory? And beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to

them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself." If they needed clarity, who were eyewitnesses, those who were there, if they needed clarity beloved, don't we?

So this morning, beloved, we're gonna go to work toward clarity about the Gospel. We're gonna go and work toward clarity about the nature of Jesus' ministry as the Christ of God. We want to make sure that we're not confused about the Messiah's mission. We want to make sure we're not confused, so that when we do open our mouth, Gospel truth comes pouring out, clarifying and not confusing, but clarifying for those who hear us. We've got two main points this morning, but the real meat of the message is going to come in the second point. That doesn't mean ignore the first point. Pay attention then. But pay attention now, too.

First point: let's consider number one, Jesus calls for secrecy. Jesus calls for secrecy, point number one. As I said, in all three synoptic Gospels, they record Peter's good confession. They also record Jesus' call for silence, though, they call, his call for secrecy. And then they give his prediction of suffering

leading to the Cross. In all three synoptic Gospels, the stricture of silence, it's strong, it's stark, it's even severe sounding. Peter said, "You're the Christ of God," verse 20. You expect this huge celebration of joy as they run off and tell everybody that they know. Hey! We know who the Christ of God is! Look! He's right here! No. Verse 21, "He strictly charged and commanded them, 'Tell this no one.'" Surprising, to say the least. Abrupt. Sharp. Verb translated there in the ESV that he, strictly charged, it's the verb, *epitimáō*, which can carry the sense, really, of a warning, strong admonishment. This is in no way light-hearted, gentle; it's stern, even a bit severe. And then combined with the verb, *paraggelló*, the whole verb phrase has the force of a, of a strict, stern military order. It's like a command to strict radio silence, a command to complete secrecy. It's as if spilling the news about this, about who he really is, that he is really Israel's Messiah, saying anything is going to jeopardize the entire mission. So keep your mouth shut. Wow! Is that true? Why, why such a strong, severe warning about telling anyone that he's the Christ of God? Some people believe this is a judgment against the people of Galilee. That is, because of the growing rejection and hostility that Jesus has really closed up revelation to them because they have rejected his ministry. They're misunderstanding. They're

believing the Pharisees, the scribes, who are teaching them, this isn't the Christ. He's a blasphemer. So this could be judgment by consequence of rejecting the light that he'd given them. Jesus is, is effectively here that some say he's closing the shutters, he, on the light. He's dropping the veil, He's, he's taking away the lamp stand. There's, there's warrant for that view in the previous chapter.

If you go to back to Luke 8:16-18, Jesus said, "No one after lighting a lamp covers it with a jar or puts it under a bed, but," he, "puts it on a stand, so that those who enter may see the light. For nothing is hidden that will not be made manifest, nor is anything secret that will not be known and come to light. Take care then," Jesus says, this is a warning. "Take care then how you hear, for to the one who has, more will be given, and from the one who has not, even what he thinks that he has will be taken away."

Clearly, that is happening. Jesus has been steadily withdrawing from Galilee, as we've said, but it's not the only reason, here, to command silence. It's not I think even the

fundamental reason to keep the messianic secret. I believe that this call to secrecy is better explained by a motivation in Jesus Christ of love. He's motivated, here, by love. Why? Because clarity about the truth, about his messiahship, it comes from a heart of genuine love lest anybody should be led astray. Here's the issue. Jesus does not want people to learn the nature of his identity without understanding the nature of his true ministry, the nature of his real mission. So widespread and so deeply embedded was a false understanding of the Messiah and his ministry among all these people. So for their sake, for the sake of God's glory, for the wise execution of God's plan for the Messiah, Jesus didn't want any kind of a false expectation, a false popular expectation, to set the agenda for him and his ministry. The people, they expected and wanted a political, military leader. That's, to them, what they thought the Messiah was, someone who would lead them in triumph over the Romans, someone who would propel them into economic, unparalleled economic prosperity, someone who would promote their physical welfare, their economic standing and prosperity, their standing among the whole world. After Jesus fed the 5,000, John tells us over in John 6:14-15 that after the people saw the sign Jesus had done, they were immediately excited. They started to take radical, revolutionary action. John tells us they were about to

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come and take him by force to make him king. They're all about revolution. Get this guy leading us; let's overthrow the Romans, get 'em out of here, and Israel's glory will be swept in. In today's language, they wanted health, wealth, and prosperity. And there's a sense in which they weren't entirely wrong about that. The people actually had biblical warrant to believe the Messiah would bring a time of unprecedented health, wealth, and prosperity. You can read about that, I was going to read, but we don't have the time, but Isaiah 65, Isaiah 66. You can jot those down and read them later. They had warrant and reason to believe that the Messiah's coming would usher in a time of Israel's glory. We still believe that to be true.

Here's the problem, though. The people, they failed to understand, they failed to comprehend the biblical, theological understanding of what it is that leads to true health and true wealth and true prosperity. They were satisfied with health, wealth, and prosperity on just a physical, temporal level. They didn't understand the need for health in the soul, for the wealth of heaven, for the real prosperity that brings salvation before God. Frankly, when it came down to it, they really didn't desire that at all. They loved the freedom that Jesus provided

from disease and demons. They loved to eat the free food that he miraculously distributed to them. Like the woman at the well in John 4, oh, yeah, they were interested in the fountain of Living Water that Jesus could provide because they didn't want to have the trouble of having to go to the well every day.

Inconvenient. Living water, you say? I'm all for it. Sign me up for more water, more food, no disease. Get the demons out of here! Not so interested in looking deeply at self. Not so interested in humbling self, in confessing sins. Not so interested in repentance, not so interested in taking a hard look at who they really are before a holy and righteous God. Not interested in trusting Christ. Not interested in being reconciled to God, to worship him in spirit and in truth because, in, in fact, point of fact, they didn't love God. They don't really want him. You know, that's why people don't want to go to heaven. Oh, sure, they love the streets lined with gold, the escape from their problems. Sure, they love to be free from all the trouble that their own mistakes and imperfections cause.

But at the end of the day, when they come to the end of the rainbow, and the pot of gold is not a pot of gold, but it's actually the God of heaven, you know what? They don't want him.

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Why? Because the God of heaven gets really invasive, and he wants every part of you. He wants your life. He wants your soul. He wants your decisions. He wants your priorities. He demands them because he is King of Kings and Lord of Lords. He says, "Follow me." In fact, we're gonna come to this next week, "anyone who would come after me," Jesus said, "let him deny himself." The end of you. "Let him take up his cross." That means, are you willing to die? Are you willing to walk with me do death, to execution? That's where I'm going. You want to come? And then this is the worst part, "and follow me." "Follow me," Jesus said. Follow what? Follow my teaching, follow my commands, follow my way, follow my, my command, this is the most difficult one, "love your enemies." Love them. The end of you. The end of your priorities. The end of what you want. It's all about what I want, Jesus says. You still want to come?

Beloved, are we so different? Have you come today because you love the living God, and you want to worship him? Have you come today because you want to bow before him? Have you come today because you want to confess your sins, repent, go away from yourself, the flesh, serving all of your desires, to give yourself completely and wholly to the living God. Or are you

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here because you like Bible study? Are you here because you like interesting sermons and theological precision? Isn't that our danger in a church like this, to love the truth of the Scripture, but not really be so interested in the God of Scripture. Do we love to sermonize, philosophize, talk about doctrine and truth and pride ourselves in how much we know and understand and yet we have no heart to humble ourselves, to be gracious toward one another, welcoming and inviting to people that know less, maybe, than we do?

I mentioned earlier the exporting of a false form of Christianity around the world through misguided missionaries. You know where that starts? Right here on home soil. Right here in our churches. So many churches and parachurch ministries are misleading people with a shallow, sub-Christian form of the Gospel, which is really no Gospel at all. And some churches, some ministries, they like to be so deep that no one really fits in their hole except them. You go on college and university campuses, everywhere, young people who are misled by older people, professing but not possessing, Christianized religious people, they're completely confused about this Jesus that they say they believe. They don't know or understand the Gospel.

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Sadly, that's happening on Christian colleges and universities as well. They're, they're watching, we're watching campus after campus compromise with the culture and lose the Gospel. I'm convinced that the American form of institutionalized Christianity, modified and improved by American innovation, compromised and distorted, changed by American pragmatism and all of it propelled along by American marketing prowess, this whole thing has mangled the Gospel, and to such a degree that people think you're heretical when you tell them the actual Gospel. When you just read them out of the Bible what Jesus says, they think you're the problem. When you call them to a Gospel of self-denial, and cross-bearing, Gospel of suffering, they brand you the heretic. They brand you the trouble maker, the problem. Beloved, like the disciples who walked with Jesus, like the people of the first century Israel, we, too, we need to set aside our preconceived notions inherited through our religious traditions and our upbringing. We need to let Jesus set the agenda for us. Will you do that?

This leads us to our second point: Jesus calls for clarity. He calls for clarity. Look again at the text, Luke 9:21-22, "He strictly charged, commanded them to tell this," what? That he is

the Christ? "tell this to no one, saying, 'The Son of Man must suffer many things, be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised.'" Amazing verse! It's the Gospel in a nutshell. It's gonna be unpacked throughout the rest of Luke's Gospel, but listen, if you, just practically speaking, if you memorize that verse, Luke 9:22, it's gonna serve you so well for evangelism, for discipleship, for a lifetime of study and meditation and deep reflection. This verse is gonna cause your heart to lift in worship because of all that Jesus has done for you.

I've got six sub-points for you. We'll call these six marks of the Messiah's mission. This is what Jews in Jesus' day did not understand, what even the disciples didn't understand, not until Jesus had died on the Cross, was buried in the tomb, and resurrected the third day, ascended into heaven; when he sent his Spirit, all the connections were made. As we were saying, it's what many people today, even many professing Christians today, don't understand. But for you, if you're able to get these six marks down, you have not only apprehended the Gospel, but you have all you need to understand how to be reconciled to

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a holy God. This brings you to God, who is our greatest joy, our eternal reward, our treasure forever.

Okay, you ready? Here's the first sub-point, letter A, sub-point A, Christ, this is the Messiah's mission, okay? Christ came to represent us before God. Christ came to represent us before God, sub-point A. Peter identified Jesus as the "Christ of God" in verse 20. When Jesus turns to help his disciples grasp the Messiah's mission, notice that Jesus does not use the term. He doesn't start out saying, The Christ must suffer. He doesn't say, The Messiah must suffer or the anointed one must suffer. What does he say? "The Son of Man must suffer." "The Son of Man must be rejected and be killed and be raised." Why the Son of Man? We don't have time to go into great detail and unpack this fully what's meant by the title "the Son of Man," but Jesus in Luke's Gospel, he first used the title, Luke 5. Luke 5 is where you'll find that I preached a sermon on that title called, *The Full Authority of the Son of Man*. You can find it on our web site. That's the fuller picture, but for now, let me just give the summary.

The title, the Son of Man, was Jesus' favorite self-designation. You might be surprised to know that the title, the Son of God, by comparison, very seldom used, just a few times in John's Gospel. The Son of Man though 25 uses of the title the Son of Man in Luke's Gospel. A total of 78 uses of the Son of Man, many of them Jesus designating himself, the Son of Man in all four Gospels. It's his favorite self-designation.

The highest concentration in the Bible of that title, the Son of Man, by an overwhelming majority, Ezekiel's prophecy; 93 uses of the title, the Son of Man. The Son of Man is actually a picture of perfect humanity, of an ideal humanity. It's got mediating implications. The Son of Man is the perfect representative of humanity. And the Son of Man, as you find, as you trace it through Scripture, has to do with this idea of representation, representative. The fact that Jesus came to represent a new humanity. He's the last Adam, representing his people before God.

Just as Adam was our first parent, he was our representative head, and just as the collective destiny of the

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entire human race was bound to Adam, and in Adam all died because all sinned like the father Adam, so also is Jesus Christ called, the last Adam. He's the parent of a new race, the head of a new, redeemed people. The Son of Man means Jesus is our representative head, our collective destiny as the people of God is bound to him. So whereas the first Adam failed in his representation of humanity, whereas the first Adam plunged the entire human race into sin, the last Adam succeeds in his representation of a new humanity, bringing a redeemed people to God. This Son of Man is the ideal man. He is the perfect humanity, representing us before a thrice-holy God. Christ represents us before God.

Beloved, think about that. If you know yourself, you know your own sin. You know you couldn't stand before God on your own. You need representation. Think about being dragged, sometimes I've watched some of the Supreme Court hearings or different things like that, and I think about sitting before that panel of frightening people, very powerful people, having to give an answer for... You know, I've watched the Kavanaugh hearings. He's giving an answer for things he did in high school. I shudder to think about if anybody called me to account

for stuff I did in high school. Don't you? Or are you better than me? You're not. I know you're not. But listen, isn't that frightening? Think about standing before the eternal God, not just the things you did in high school, but the things you did yesterday. Thought, word, and deed, all of it, standing before a holy God to give an account for all of that. Aren't you grateful for the representation of Jesus Christ for you?

Second sub-point, sub-point B: Christ came to fulfill the will of God. He came to fulfill the will of God. Again, verse 22, the Son of Man, and there's just one word for this point, he must. The Son of Man must. That little word, must, it's even, it's four letters in English language; in the Greek language it's three letters. But it punches way above its weight. The word in Greek is, *dei*. It means, it is necessary, one must, one has to, it must happen.

Sometimes it refers to moral necessity, like one should, what one should and should not do. Sometimes it refers to what's appropriate or fitting considering the circumstances. Other times, though, like here, it refers to a logical necessity, or

perhaps better stated, a theological necessity. And what it follows in this text that little word, must or it is necessary, all that comes next is what must happen, what is necessary by logical, by theological compulsion, by divine obligation. Everything that follows that word, must, is necessary.

Another way to see this: The necessity Jesus speaks of here; this has to do with the fulfillment of the divine will. It has to do with the execution and the accomplishment of a divine decree made before the foundation of the world, something that will come to pass. Why? Because God is God. As we're going to see, what follows this verb has to do with fulfilling the demands of the law. It has to do with Jesus' role as mediator, as the Redeemer. It has to do with fulfilling the promise of God in the prophecy of Scripture. It has to do with fulfilling the will of the Father, through the willing, eager, and joyful submission of the Son to the Father's will. Psalm 40:7-8, "Then I said, 'Behold, I have come; in the scroll of the book it is written of me: I delight to do your will, O my God; your law is within my heart.'" Oh, the Son of Man must. Christ is the fulfillment, perfectly obeying the will of God, perfectly

accomplishing all the work that God decreed and sent him to do. So Christ came to represent us to God, to fulfill God's will.

Here's a third sub-point. And here's where I'm going to need to stop; show you a bit of structure. Dreaded grammar. Here we go. Sub-point C. Write this down, sub-point C: Christ came to bear our sins before God. Christ came to bear our sins before God. You say, where's that, there? I'm going to show you in the structure, the sanctified, beautiful, glorious structure of grammar. You're going to love it. Here's what the Son of Man must do, He "must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders, chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised." Four verbs, there. He must suffer, be rejected, he must be killed, he must be raised. Four verbs. It's not as easy to see it in the English text, but the relationship of those verbs to one another, the grammatical structure of this sentence, it all helps us to understand the full, biblical significance of what, Jes, Jesus has just told his disciples about the Messiah's mission.

We'll start first with the verbs and their relationship to one another. The four verbs are paired up there, together as contrasting ideas. So the, suffering, is paired up with the, rejection. Maybe not as easy to see the contrast, there. It seems to be one and the same, but we're going to come to that in a minute, where the contrast is. In the second pairing, being killed and being raised, that contrast is easier to see, very plain.

Second thing to notice in Jesus' sentence is how he has structured this sentence in the form of a chiasm. You say, a what? A chiasm. It's been a while since we've talked about this, but the word, chiasm, comes from the Greek letter, *chi*, which is an X. It's an X, a large capital letter X in our, in our language. Jesus has set these four thoughts structured, conveyed with the four verbs in relationship to one another, and the structure is shaped like the Greek letter X. The first and the fourth thoughts at the top and the bottom of the, X, are parallel to one another, and then the second and the third thoughts closer to the middle of the, X, they're paired together. So the first and the fourth ideas, suffering and being raised, those thoughts are parallel to one another; second and

third ideas, being rejected and being killed, those thoughts, parallel to one another. The central focus in this particular chiasm is upon the rejection of the Son of Man by those he came to represent.

Instead of receiving him, what do they do? They killed him. So it's men who rejected him, men who killed him, it's men who are at the center there. Who's on the other side? Who's at the top and the bottom? What's the parallel there? It's God, isn't it? God is responsible for him suffering. God is responsible for him being raised from the dead.

Okay? Everybody with me so far? Maybe you're a little lost trying to figure out what a chiasm is, trying to imagine an, X, and all that stuff, wondering what in the world this has to do with the Gospel. Just take a deep, deep breath. Inhale...exhale. Now focus. Here's the point. If you didn't follow the structure, you're just going to have to trust me that when Jesus begins, here, by telling us that "the Son of Man must suffer," it says here the translation is many things or it could be much. "When the Son of Man suffer," he's not talking about suffering

directly at the hands of men. That is not a, a heading, suffering many things and then, it's gonna be suffering many things and here's what follows: rejection and killing. Well, how does being raised from the dead fit into that heading? Okay? It doesn't. So it's not a heading. He's not talking about suffering directly at the hands of men. What men did to him comes in the middle two verbs: he was rejected, he was killed. But this suffering and then the raising from the dead, those two things happened by the will of God the Father.

What is this suffering, then? What's he talking about? ESV translates, many things, as the word, pollas. It's not a wrong translation, but it may be a little misleading, here. The word, pollas, can be translated, much or many, with a wide range of reference, what it's pointing back to. It can talk about many in number, or it can refer to much, like an extent or magnitude, or quantity or degree. That's the idea, here. Suffering in great extent and magnitude and quantity and degree. The suffering, the verb, here, is paschō. You hear the term, paschal lamb, that's this verb, here. Paschō, which has at its root, in the most basic meaning has to do with what happens to a person, an experience that a person undergoes. And when that something is

something negative, it refers to enduring, or bearing with, or bearing up under, or bearing on your back, something negative. Like the paschal lamb, the Passover lamb that bore on its back, on its head, the sins of the people. It's what Gary read earlier out of Genesis 22, "God will provide a lamb."

We read earlier in the service from Isaiah 53. Hopefully, your mind is going back to what we heard from that incredible chapter. What did Isaiah 53 tell us the Suffering Servant bore for us, for his people? "Surely, he has borne our griefs; he has carried our sorrows." Isaiah 53:4. Why do we have griefs in the context, there? Why do we have sorrows? Is it because we're disappointed that we didn't get the job we wanted? We're disappointed because we didn't get the right toy for Christmas? Why the grief? Why the sorrow? Isaiah 53: "We esteemed him stricken, smitten by God and afflicted, but he was pierced for our transgressions." That's where the grief, the sorrow comes from, our transgressions. "He was crushed for our iniquities." Iniquities, sin, that's what causes all grief, all sorrow, all sadness in the world. "Upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace. With his wounds we are healed."

Now who's the cause, here, Luke 9, of Jesus' suffering, of bearing this burden, of enduring and bearing up under it? No man has the authority to assign the sins of others to Jesus. That's something God did. Isaiah 53:10: "It was the will of the Lord," the will of Yahweh to punish him, "to crush him. He has put him to grief." That's why I put you through the torment of trying to get your mind around that chiastic structure, so you can see this clearly. Four verbs. He must suffer, be rejected, be killed, be raised. The second and the third verbs are about man's responsibility, what they did. But the first, the fourth verbs, God the Father is the responsible party. It's God, not man.

"But God," 2 Corinthians 5:21, Who "made him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf." It's God who assigned the role of sin-bearer to Jesus, and Jesus is not a reluctant recipient of that role. I praise God for that! He willingly stepped into that role, 1 Peter 2:24, "he himself bore our sins in his body on the tree." He took this dreadful assignment; he joyfully accepted this heavy, heavy burden.

I can think of all my sins that I know of, and if I add all the sins I don't know of, just in myself, it's too great of a burden for me to bear, let alone him. The sinless one, take all of our sins collectively. Could any of us stand under that? To take all the sins of all who've ever believed, all whoever will believe, and put them on Christ. He took this heavy burden joyfully. Hebrews 12:2, "Who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame." No shrinking back. Eagerness to bear our sins. "Behold, I have come. In the scroll of the book it is written, 'I delight to do your will, O my God.'"

Again, beloved, I know my own sins, and you know yours. Our Savior, Jesus the Christ, the Son of Man, took the full weight of our sin-burden upon himself. What an ugly load to carry. What a terrible burden to bear. No wonder Jesus says here, "The Son of Man must suffer much." And that by the loving will and the saving purpose of God. He bore all our sins away.

So he represents us. He fulfills God's will. He bore our sins in himself. Another sub-point, sub-point D: Christ came to

vindicate the wisdom of God. Christ came to vindicate the wisdom of God. As I said, this point and the next point, these have to do with what sinful men did to Jesus, to the Son of Man. But being rejected by men, being killed by men, these are still the marks of the Messiah's mission. "He came to his own," John 1:11, "and his own people did not receive him." That is by divine design. It's not only to accomplish the redemption of God's people; it's to vindicate God, to set in contrast the wisdom of man and the wisdom of God. "For since," 1 Corinthians 1:21, "since in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom," the divine wisdom came in the Messiah. They rejected him and crucified him.

Amazing statement, there, in Luke 9:22. "The Son of Man must," necessary that he, "is rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes..." Those three designations, elders, chief priests, scribes, designates there the Jewish Sanhedrin, the highest ruling court of Israel. Someone summarized it well, writing this, quote, "The Sanhedrin" composed, "comprised 71 members divided into three groups, chief priests, elders, and scribes. Elders, both Pharisees and Sadducees, and scribes, most of whom were, were Pharisees,

constituted 70 members of the Sanhedrin. The ruling chief priest constituted the 71st and lead member of the Sanhedrin although predecessors, member of his family, could also be included in that designation." Hence, chief priests, plural.

So the ruling chief priest, he not only presided over the Sanhedrin, but sort of like the Vice President in a tie vote in the Senate, he acts as the tie-breaking vote in the case of a 35-35 split in the Sanhedrin. So the scribes, who are they? They're the lawyers. They're the scholars in Jewish law. They are the experts in the law, the ones who know the oral tradition, which is like Jewish case law. Scribes had, they had positions, official positions on the Sanhedrin, but they also sat around the Sanhedrin providing legal advice, like a team of lawyers around the Sanhedrin.

So this Jewish Sanhedrin, what does this represent? In this text, what does this mean to us? Understand, this is the highest court in the land that rejected and killed Jesus. This is the highest legal body on the earth. Why? Because they're handling justice based on divine law, not man's law. They're handling

cases with laws revealed to them directly from heaven, written down by Moses. In this group of wise men, all of them respected as elders, revered as intelligent legal minds, backed by the political prowess and the power of the, the, the priesthood, when they came together, when they thoroughly examined Jesus, when they *dokimazo*, that's the verb, here. They put him to the test, they rendered an unfavorable judgment, *apodokimazo*, rejection. We do not want this man to reign over us.

Notice the irony, here. Utterly astounding for Jesus' disciples because it's not the thugs and the reprobates and the criminals and the prostitutes who rejected and killed the Messiah. It's the greatest minds in Israel. As one commentator put it, "The Son of Man would not be a victim of criminal lawlessness and anarchy, but of careful deliberations of lawful and religious leaders, who, in rendering their decisions, believed themselves to render service to God." End quote.

And then the next verb, the Son of Man...be killed, by men? The Jewish Sanhedrin tried Jesus in their courts. Caiaphas, though, handed him over to Pilate. Pilate delivered him to the

executioners. James Edward, Edwards said it this way, "Jesus was arrested with official warrants, tried and executed by the envy of jurisprudence in the world of that time, the Jewish Sanhedrin, and also the law of the Romans."

Again, what does this tell us about the mission of the Messiah? Why is it important in his mission that he is tried, examined, rejected by the elders, and the chief priests, and the scribes? Why is it that Jesus is tried and condemned, tested, and rejected by the highest of all religious expression in the world, by the brightest of all legal minds in the world? To show you that this world cannot save you. As high as you can ascend in this world, the highest philosophy, the highest degrees, the highest training, the greatest education, the highest courts, the greatest prominence, the most respect, amounts to nothing for your eternal soul.

This vindicates the wisdom of God. Only God has saving truth. "None of the rulers of this age understood this," 1 Corinthians 2:8, "for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory." That's why, as Paul said, 1 Corinthians

1:23-25, "we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews,' yes, "a folly to Gentiles," yes, "but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men." Christ came to vindicate the wisdom of God. Aren't you glad? Aren't you glad that you don't have to be so intelligent that you've got to figure it out on your own?

Fifth sub-point, just briefly, sub-point E: Christ came to propitiate the wrath of God. I really shouldn't be brief because this is so important, but time is ticking away. I'm not going to go into a lot of detail in these final two points. They're related, but I'll just say this, sub-point E: Christ came to propitiate the wrath of God. The Son of Man, whom the elders and the chief priests and the scribes rejected and killed, Isaiah 53 says, "He was despised and rejected by men. He is a man of sorrows, acquainted with grief. As one from whom men hide their faces. He was despised and we esteemed him not, but rather," verse 4, "we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God and afflicted."

That's the irony of it. The elders, chief priests, scribes, they thought they were doing God's will, killing a false Messiah. But again in a turn of divine irony, in another sense, these men in their heinous sin of pride, of jealousy, of envy, they in their heinous sin, they accomplished God's decree, didn't they? They sacrificed the sin-bearer. God did provide another lamb, paschal Lamb of God and it is God "who made him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in him." "He is the propitiation for our sins," wrote John, a Jewish believer, 1 John 2:2, "and not for ours only," the Jewish nation, "but also for the sins of the whole world." Aren't you glad, as a Gentile? I am. "God put Jesus forth as a propitiation by his blood," Romans 3:25. "In this is love, not that we have loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son to be a propitiation for our sins."

What does propitiate mean? To satisfy the wrath of an angry deity. God took away the wrath. His death substituted for our death. His death satisfied, expiated the full wrath of God for our sins. That is the Gospel, beloved. There's no, if you believe in Jesus Christ, if you repented from your sins, if you believe in him, if you're walking in obedience to the truth, you

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have no fear of an angry judge hovering over your head. But when you stand before him, you're going to cry, "Abba, Father!" and run into his arms. You're not going to cower before him like those who do not believe. Such good news.

Christ came to represent us, to fulfill God's will, to bear our sins, to vindicate God's wisdom, propitiate God's wrath, the final sub-point, sub-point F: Christ came to triumph in God. This is the capstone of the story. We must know this, that he is raised from the dead, that he conquered death. Sub-point F: Christ came to triumph in God. Just briefly, it's necessary for the Son of Man to bear our many, many sins. It's necessary that he's rejected, killed by men. And all of that in order that he should atone for the sins of the people. But after that, "If he did not," 1 Corinthians 15, "If he did not rise from the dead, your faith is in vain." This is futility. We might as well wrap it up and go home and get ready for the football games. Ah, but he did raise from the dead. He did triumph over death; God raised him from the dead. That, too, was necessary. I'm going to make this point as briefly and as powerfully as possible, not with any words I say, but with, with the preaching of Peter in the book of Acts.

Go over to Acts chapter 2. Acts chapter 2, Peter is preaching, there, to his fellow Jews on the Day of Pentecost. Jesus at this point has risen from the dead. He's ascended into heaven. He is sitting at the right hand of the Father, interceding for the church. He sends the Holy Spirit to the church, and the Apostles there are preaching. All these Jewish pilgrims have come for the Feast of Pentecost. They are gathered in Jerusalem, and Peter and, his, the Twelve Apostles break out of the room, filled with the Holy Spirit, Acts 2:22-24, "Men of Israel,' they say, "hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know."

By the way, no one denied his miracles. No one denied the supernatural, then. They saw it with their own eyes. As you yourselves know, "this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men." But, "God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it."

And Peter goes on and proves his case from the Old Testament in Psalm 16, is it possible for the Holy One to see decay? Next chapter, look at chapter 3 verses 13-15. Peter said, that "The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob," Act 3:13-15, "the God of our fathers, glorified his servant Jesus, whom you delivered over and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he decided to release him. But you denied the Holy and Righteous One." You preferred a murderer to be granted to you. You killed the author of life. What a contrast. Give us Barabbas the murderer; kill the author of Life. Whom God raised from the dead, to this we are witnesses.

Peter didn't let them off the hook, did he? Not at all. But he did speak words of mercy and grace to them. Look at verse 17, he said, "Brothers, I know you acted in ignorance, as did your rulers. But what God foretold by the mouth of all the prophets, that his Christ would suffer, he thus fulfilled. Repent, therefore, turn back, that your sins may be blotted out, that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, that he may send the Christ appointed for you, Jesus."

One more portion of Peter's preaching, Acts 4:10-12, "Let it be known to you, to all of you and to all the people of Israel that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified," but, "whom God raised from the dead, by him this man is standing before you well." The stone, this Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, but has become the chief cornerstone. There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."

Getting the point, beloved? I hope so. If you make the connection that this is Peter speaking, Peter who made the good confession, but then was silenced by Jesus because he didn't understand enough. Once Peter understood the true Gospel, once he understood the real mission of the Messiah, the ban of secrecy and silence is lifted, and now there's no shutting this guy up. I mean, you can kill him, you can throw him in prison, he's not going to stop talking. He knew what we all know now, that Christ came to represent us, to fulfill God's will, to bear our sins, to vindicate divine wisdom, to propitiate God's wrath, and to triumph over death itself. Praise be to God! Now you know

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the truth, too, don't you? You know the full truth. You know the marks of the Messiah's mission. You know the Gospel, and that means that you, too, can go and proclaim as well. Amen? Let's pray.

Our Father, we thank you for the mission of the Messiah, and your grace to extend his work, his saving work, to us Gentiles. Oh, that we should be so favored, we who are so far from Israel, so far from Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the promises and the covenants made to your people. You've brought us near by the blood of Christ. You've saved us by his death and burial and resurrection. And now, what can we say, Father, but Thank you! What can we do but live our lives to glorify you? What can we do but use our mouths to proclaim this truth, this saving Gospel? We give ourselves to you this day. We rejoice to come before the Lord's table to remember these truths and to meditate on them and reflect upon them deeply and think about our own sins that we need to confess to you, repent of, ways we need to be fully reconciled to you and to one another. We come collectively as a church to call one another to obedience and encourage one another while it is still called today, lest there

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be in any of us an unbelieving heart. We commit this time to you
for Jesus' sake, in his name, Amen.