

The LORD and his ideal servant

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[0 : 00] Please turn to Isaiah 49. So let me start here.

! What is Christian salvation?! What is it that Jesus does? People are confronted with the person of Jesus.! I hope everybody here has made a serious attempt to understand just who is Jesus. Who is he? How are we to understand him? What is it to relate to him? People often say Jesus is the answer. But it does...

What was the question? What was he the question? What was the question to which he is the answer? Was the question, Who will make me healthy, wealthy and happy in this life?

Is he the answer to that question? And the answer is no. That was never the question. Who will overlook my sin and love me whether I turn from sin or not?

[1 : 02] He's not the answer to that question. That's not who he is. Who will bring about the massive purposes of the God of the Bible to bless all the nations of the world?

Yes, he's the answer to that question. Jesus is the answer to that question. Who will bring in the last day and bring in the world to come and bring all his people safe home?

Yes, he's the answer to that question. And it is classic Old Testament passages like the ones that we're looking at this morning that tell us the questions to which Jesus is the answer.

That's why they're so important that we get at least some sort of familiarity with them. The New Testament writers delve into these passages. You might even have noticed some echoes in what was read and they say, this is for you, Christian.

You need to have this, Christian. You need to be thinking this way, Christian. You need to be responding to this, Christian. So we're going to have a go at that this morning. Under the heading, The Plan and Glory of God, we have learned that God has a plan to bless all the nations of the world.

[2 : 07] But he will do this through a particular family and a particular national group, through Abraham and through Abraham's descendants. His servant, the ancient nation of Israel.

Things have changed since the coming of Jesus, but up to the time of Jesus, it was through the nation of ancient Israel. And we've been looking at three servants whom Isaiah says are the key figures in fulfilling the plan of God.

We looked at the victorious servant with a spear and we found out that this victorious servant was the Persian king Cyrus in Farsi, presumably Farsi, Kourish.

And he is the powerful international agent whom God predicts, even before he's born, this person will bring the people back.

And he will bring the people back from Babylon to their homeland. That will be an amazing thing. But all Cyrus can do is bring people back geographically.

[3 : 20] He can't bring people back spiritually. So we need another Cyrus, if you like, another Messiah, to do the work that Cyrus sort of attempted but couldn't finish.

We've also seen another servant, the worm servant. So there's a servant and there's a worm. And this servant is, in the first instance, his own people, Israel.

They're supposed to serve him, they're supposed to be a light to the nations, but they actually turn out to be blind, powerless, imprisoned, captives, useless, stuck, incapable.

And in that they're just like every other human being. But God says, I will take this worm servant and make them forgiven, redeemed, returned home, transformed from a worm to a weapon and given spiritual life.

And of course, that gives us the clue that this prophecy is not actually just speaking ethnically about a particular racial or ethnic group.

[4 : 31] It's talking about the whole plan of God to have a whole people who start off as worms and get turned into weapons through God's redemption. And if you're a Christian, I would like you to identify with that worm servant and say, that's me.

That's what God has done for me. And if he promises to do that for the worm, and that's me through Jesus Christ, I'm very happy to have that label attached to me. That's what I was.

That's what he's doing for me. And I want to take those passages, those promises and say, yeah, that's for me. And thirdly, the ideal servant. So there's the ideal servant who is shining as a light. So I'll try to put some light around the ideal servant. And we've learned already that this is the servant of whom God says, here is my servant whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight. So we've learned so far that this ideal servant is a delightful servant. God looks at him and says, he's brilliant. I think of no way in which he can be improved upon.

[5 : 36] And it's this servant who in Isaiah 42 verse 1, it says, I put my spirit on him. So those are the three servants that we've seen. And what I'd like us to do this morning, I want to do it by sort of picking out some bits across quite a large number of chapters in the following way.

I want to say something about his word work. I want to say something about his surprising setback. I want to say something about his righteous rise.

Those are all alliterations. So if you want to try and remember them, you think of W, word work. And you think of S, surprising setback. And you think of R, righteous rise.

And then I've actually got five words to the worm. And they mostly begin with A, awake, arise, announce, and then depart. Because I couldn't think of an A that meant the same as depart. So we've got three things about the servant and four words to the worm. Oh, it is four, isn't it? Right. So let's look at this servant.

[6 : 49] He's described in four passages in our section. And there are common themes and there are progress. So please look at Isaiah 42, verse 1, which is where we've already been.

And we've been here several times, actually. Isaiah 42, verse 1. Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight.

I will put my spirit on him, and he will bring justice to the nations. And this is his mission. He's going to have an effect on people.

And I haven't put the reference to that for some reason. Oh, yeah. If you go to 42, verse 6, it says, I will keep you and make you a covenant for the people.

So that's Israel. And a light for the Gentiles. So he's got two groups in his focus. The ancient people of God, Israel.

[7 : 59] And his task is not to abandon them, but to save some of them, at least. It's the remnant. And to bring righteousness or justice to the nations.

And you have to forgive me because I like words. In Hebrew, it's mishpat. And it means royal rightness. To get the nations doing the right things under the rule of the king.

And you see that in 42, verse 1. He will bring justice, mishpat, to the nations. So that's what the ideal servant is going to do.

And you also noticed, when I jumped into verse 6, the use of the word covenant. He is going to be a covenant for the people.

And that will crop up again later. But I just want to plant a thought in your mind. Do you think that this is a reference to the new covenant? Do you think he's saying, and you, servant, will actually revamp and revive and bring to its final form the covenant in a new covenant?

[9 : 11] Jesus said that at the communion, didn't he? This is my blood of the new covenant. So that just sets us up for the general thinking of this servant.

So let me tell you first about his word work or mouth ministry, if you'd like to alliterate it with an M. He's going to bring mishpat to the nations.

And how does he do it? Well, look at 42, verse 2. It mentions his mouth. He will not shout or cry out or raise his voice in the streets.

So there's something rather gentle about his words. He's not a ranting, shouting, I'm thinking of words.

Does bellicose mean shouting? I'm looking at Ben because he's got a great vocabulary. Does bellicose, what does that mean? Fierce. Okay, fierce, right. So he's not going to be that sort of person.

[10:20] And in Matthew's Gospel, Jesus talks about Jesus. Sorry. Matthew talks about Jesus and he says, spiritual condition. Jesus is exactly the doctor you want to meet because he won't chuck his weight about.

He won't tread on your toes. He might speak truth to you, but he's not going to be cruel and nasty to you. And let's go now to 49 because that's the second time this servant has mentioned.

And pick up the progress here where it says in 49, verse 1. Listen to me, you islands. Hear this, you distant nations. Before I was born, the Lord called me.

From my birth, he has made mention of my name. He made my mouth like a sharpened sword. In the shadow of his hand, he hid me.

And here is something also about his mouth. His mouth is like a sharpened sword. There's something, although he's gentle, there is something extremely powerful about the word of this servant.

[11:35] His mouth is like a sharpened sword. And this, as far as I can understand it, is the original text from which we get all the other texts which say things like, there's the sword.

Out of his, I saw the risen Christ, he says. Like flaming fire.

Like burnished bronze. And out of his mouth, says John in the Revelation, Out of his mouth came a sharp double-edged sword.

And this is the word, work of the servant. His word is extremely powerful. If we move over to chapter 50, verse 4.

This is the third song about the servant. And this is about words as well. There's a bit here. It says, The sovereign Lord has given me an instructed tongue to know the word that sustains the weary.

[12:43] He wakens me morning by morning. He wakens my ear to listen like one being taught.

The sovereign Lord has opened my ears and I have not been rebellious. And that's something about the word, work of the servant, isn't it?

And it says rather touchingly that he himself has learned discipleship. That every morning, every morning he wakes up and listens to the Lord.

And he learns from the Lord. And that way, he, verse 4, knows the word that sustains the weary.

What a wonderful thing that the Lord Jesus, because it's about him, himself learned so that he could speak to us to sustain the weary.

I think that's a very precious description, isn't it? That he knows what it's like. He himself has learned things.

[13:49] And he can speak to us. Please don't think, oh, God doesn't understand me today. I don't, it's no use me coming to him and telling him my problems, because he'll just tell me to go away and sort myself out.

But that's not right. To come to him, he knows the exact word for your situation. Come to him and listen to what he says.

And in Hebrews 5, it says along these lines, he learned obedience from. Anybody finish the text?

He learned obedience from. From what he suffered.

That brings in a very interesting note. How did he learn obedience? Well, not just from, by listening, but by suffering.

We'll find out a bit more about that in a moment. 50.10 says, Who among you fears the Lord and obeys the word of his servant?

[14:53] So the word of the servant is not only gentle, but powerful. It's understanding, but it's also to be obeyed.

That's the bottom line with Jesus, isn't it? Because he said, you're going to build your life? You can build your life on two things. You can either build it on rock or on sand.

On sand is to hear all the words of Jesus, but not do them. To build your life on rock is to hear the words and obey them. He who hears, fears the Lord and obeys the word of his servant.

That's what we're to do. To obey the word of his servant. To live a life of obeying what Jesus says.

To be in God's purposes is to obey the word of his servant.

I've come across in a few situations what I think is an attempt at word-free Christianity. In other words, you hardly listen to any of the things that Jesus said.

[16:01] You just take one or two bits that appeal to you and you say, that's all there is to it. That's not the Christianity of the Bible, is it? Christianity of the Bible says, whatever Jesus said, I take it seriously.

If it's a promise, I trust it. If it's a command, I seek to obey it. Jesus said, I will be ashamed of those who are ashamed of me, notice this bit, and my words.

We're not to be ashamed of the words of Jesus. What he says is important. Otherwise, we don't know which Jesus we're talking about.

If we separate his person from the things he said, we just don't know who he is or where we are.

So, number one about the ideal servant, his word work or his mouth ministry.

Number two thing about the servant, I'm going to go back through those passages again and pick out this theme and its progress. The surprising setback of the servant.

[17:11] Now, I haven't even put the reference, have I? Just bear with me. If you want to go to 42 verse 4, which talks about him bringing justice on earth.

In 42 verse 4, it says, he will not falter or be discouraged till he establishes justice on earth. So, it gives you the impression it's going to be smooth sailing for this servant.

But if you go to 49 verse 4, you find that the servant actually says, well, it's not quite as simple as that.

Yes, there will be success. But, 49 verse 4, I said, I have laboured to no purpose.

I have spent my strength in vain and for nothing. So, the word for labouring is the word to become weary. And he says, I've wearied myself for no purpose.

[18:25] And I've spent my strength and it was pointless, seems to be. And in saying this, this is rather a surprising thing, this idea that he gets weary.

He's unlike the Lord, who you will remember, the creator of the ends of the earth does not grow tired or weary. Unlike the Lord in heaven.

Rather like the worm servant, because of the worm servant, it says, he gives strength to the weary. Even youths grow tired and weary.

Then I can look around now and see who's tired and weary. And it's even young people get tired and weary. I've seen evidence of this.

And he says, so in this, he's like the worm servant. And in a sense, unlike the Lord in heaven. This is a different experience.

[19:26] He's got weary and he says it's for nothing. Now, he soon adds something to that and says, but that's a temporary thing. And we'll do the reverse of that in a minute.

But I want to just draw to your attention that it isn't all plain sailing for the ideal servant. There's a sense in which he goes down into an experience of frustration.

Of, as it says here, of laboring for nothing. And we can, I think I wanted to say some more on that.

Have I missed something out? Let me just hold on a second. No, I think I'm right. Look at 50 verse, I might be getting myself out of order.

But look at chapter 50 verse 6. Because this seems to take this downhill experience even further, this surprising setback.

[20:39] In chapter 50 verse 5 he says, Now where's this come from?

This servant is a delightful servant. He does nothing wrong. He's going to bring justice to the nations. But where does this come from? Not only does he labor and feel he's getting nowhere, but he even experiences this beating and mocking and apparently being disgraced in chapter 50 verse 7.

Now where does that come from? Well, I don't know. He's weakness is an experience that the worm servant has. Insult is an experience that the worm servant has.

Do you remember the field commander coming up to the gates of Jerusalem or the walls of Jerusalem and saying, you know, whatever he said, I shall smash you to pieces because you're rubbish and your God is rubbish and I've smashed all the other gods to pieces and I'm going to smash you to pieces.

And do you remember how Isaiah took that back and said, look, this is what he said to mock and blaspheme and insult the living God.

[22:18] And this ideal servant seems to have the same sort of experience. And what experiences did the worm servant have when the worm servant was taken into exile in Babylon?

What did they do? No, you correct me if I'm wrong because I didn't look this up. But wasn't one of the king's children taken into exile and blinded? Am I right?

Blinded. I mean, that's a pretty awful form of abuse, physical abuse. Is the ideal servant being spat on and beaten just like the exiles were?

Is that what's happening? And who's doing this mocking and beating and spitting? Where does this come from? I think we could say in Isaiah's mind, he's thinking of something that the nations do. The nations are God's instrument of wrath. They beat God's people to try and beat some sense into them because they won't learn any other way. That's what the nations do.

[23 : 24] They're agents of wrath. So, yeah, it comes from the nations. Could this maltreatment conceivably come from God's own people?

Could it be that this ideal servant is mocked, insulted, tried, condemned, rejected by his own people?

And you say, perish the thought. Perish the thought. And yet. Or could it even be that this mocking and spitting and rejecting and beating could even be something that comes from the Lord himself? There's a text that's going to say, we esteemed him smitten by God and rejected.

Could that conceivably be? Well, we'd have to wait to find out. But there is this surprising setback, which we're already seeing in these passages about the servant.

[24 : 53] And we shall see some more in a future passage. But the passage also talks about the righteous rise of the servant. So let's just do the same thing again and go through. The righteous rise of the servant.

So he doesn't stay down in the depths. He rises in this sense. So let's look at the rising texts, which say, I've got them 49, end of verse 5.

The Lord says, who formed me in the womb to bring his servant, to be his servant, to bring Jacob back to himself, to gather Israel to himself.

I am honored in the eyes of the Lord. And my God has been my strength. So there's something honored by the Lord. And in verse 6, it says, the Lord says, it is too small a thing for you to be my servant, to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back those of Israel I've kept.

I will make you a light for the Gentiles that you may bring my salvation to the ends of the earth. So there's something successful about the Lord. About the servant, beg your pardon. In verse 7, this is what the Lord says to the Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel, to him who was despised and abhorred by the nation, to the servant of rulers.

[26 : 11] Kings will see you and rise up in respect. Princes will see you and bow down because of the Lord who is faithful and the Holy One of Israel who has chosen you. He's going to be lifted high so that far from being simply despised and rejected, he's going to be respected and honored by the great of the earth.

And let's see, if you come to chapter 50, verse 7. Because the sovereign Lord helps me, I will not be disgraced.

Therefore I have set my face like flint and I know I will not be put to shame. He who vindicates me is near.

Who then will bring charges against me? Let us face each other. Who is my accuser? Let him confront me. It is the sovereign Lord who helps me.

Who is he who will condemn me? They will all wear out like a garment and the moths will eat them up. See, the servant has this strong conviction that he will have a righteous rise.

[27 : 30] I will not be disgraced, he says. I will be helped. And that's what it says in verse 7. So, again, it's a sort of judgment courtroom thing.

He seems to be condemned and treated like a criminal, beaten, spat on, mocked. But in this courtroom of God, God will say, you're not guilty, you're innocent.

And I will not treat you as if you're guilty. I will treat you as innocent. And I will say that verdict of righteous over you.

Now, please look at verse 8. Chapter 50, verse 8. Now, he who... What word have you got there? Vindicate.

Vindicate. It's an interesting word, isn't it? Vindicate. It means something like to prove right. To say, to prove, you're right.

[28 : 32] People thought you were wrong, but you're right. You're vindicated. Now, without trying to get too technical, the word is the word righteousness.

Righteousness. So, NIV says vindicate. The problem is that we've got different words in English that are actually all connected in Hebrew and in Greek.

So, righteousness, innocent, justify, vindicate are all extremely different sounding English words.

But in the underlying thought, it's all the same thing. The Lord vindicates me. The Lord declares me innocent.

The Lord says of me, you are righteous. Or in New Testament language, the Lord justifies me. Do you get that thought? It's very difficult to try and make that clear.

[29 : 34] But it's the Lord saying, you are righteous and you need to be treated as such. And that's exactly what this servant says. The Lord vindicates me.

Who then will bring charges against me? Let us face each other. Who is my accuser? Who's saying, you're guilty? Nobody can say that. It is the sovereign Lord who helps me.

Who will condemn me? So, the servant has a righteous rise. He is treated with honor after having been condemned.

And here's the thing, brothers and sisters. When he has this righteous rise, he brings the worm servant with him. There's the worm servant.

And the worm servant says, me as well. When this servant is vindicated, he brings the worm servant with him.

[30 : 35] And please can you turn to Romans chapter 8, verse 31 to 34. Because this is exactly what the Apostle Paul says, quoting these exact verses, unless I'm very, very much mistaken.

Romans 8, verse 31. He says that when Christ was vindicated, we who belong to Christ, he managed to lift us into vindication too.

Romans 8, verse 31. What then shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us?

If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own son, but gave him up for us all, how will he not also along with him graciously give us all things?

That's the wonder of belonging to Jesus Christ. Who, verse 33, who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen?

[31 : 49] It is God who justifies. Who is it that condemns? Christ who died, more than that who was raised to life, is at the right hand of God as is interceding for us.

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? When the servant righteously rose, he brings us worm servants along with him.

And he says, and who can bring any charge against them? I want to put it to you, that is the most amazing thing you're going to hear all week. That Christ has so done things that us sinners are in a position, can say, who can bring an accusation against us?

Who can condemn us? In Christ there is no condemnation because of what the servant did and the fact he scooped us up along with him.

Because of him, it's us worms, I think that says worm servants too. Ponder that. I think that's the best good news you're going to hear all week.

[33 : 02] Take it home with you. So we had the righteous, we had the word weapon or the word work of the servant, we had the surprising setback of the servant, and then we had the righteous rise of the servant.

And at this point, I think we can say that Isaiah notices the reaction of some of the people that are listening to him. So he went to 49 verse 14.

Zion says, the Lord has forgotten me, the Lord has forsaken me. And a lot of the text that follows is just trying to deal with that sense.

I hear what it says about Jesus Christ, I hear these promises, but I think God's forgotten me. Maybe you sometimes have thought that.

You know, I know what Jesus Christ did, I heard about it on Sunday, but today on Tuesday morning, it just feels as though God has forgotten me and forsaken me.

[34 : 07] What's the use? Oh, I feel like giving up. And that's the people to whom these next texts are addressed. So he answers it in various ways, and I'm not going to take you through absolutely all the detail of you, but if you looked at 49, 14, and then how it goes on in verse 15, the Lord says this, can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she's born?

To which the answer you'd think is no, no mother is going to forget her little baby. And God says, well, actually, it's not quite as simple as that because sometimes mums do.

Terrible though that thought is. But God says, but I won't. I won't forget you. Do you think I would forget you?

I looked after you when you were a little baby Christian and all you could do was take a few cubic centimetres of milk and that had to keep you going for another few hours.

And you were a little baby Christian and I nursed you at my breast, as it were, says the Lord God. Am I going to forget you? I'm not going to forget you.

[35 : 23] Don't be so silly. I have engraven you on the palms of my hands. You know, every time I blow my nose, I see on my hands, oh, I've got the names of these people.

I've engraven you on the palms of my hands, says God. And I'd like to pick up three things, four things, that God says. If you go to chapter 51, on the basis of what the ideal servant has done, there's things that begin with A.

So in verse 9, awake, awake, awake, clothe yourself with strength, O arm of the Lord, awake as in days gone by, as in generations of old.

He's saying, this is what we're looking at. We're looking at God getting down to work like he did in the days of Exodus and doing mighty things. Woo! What happened there? Sorry, that wasn't, that took me completely by surprise.

Has it stopped? That's righteous rise. That was a bit too clever, that bit. Okay, awake, arm of the Lord, get into action.

[36 : 41] Like you did at the Exodus. I don't know whether you remember the Exodus, but it said that God rolled up his sleeves and made known the power of his right hand and brought his people out of Egypt and it's saying, this is what's going to get into action.

The ransomed will return. You see it in chapter 51, verse 11, or verse 10. You dried up the sea, the waters of the great deep. You made a road in the depths of the sea that the redeemed might cross. The redeemed, the ransomed of the Lord will return and will enter Zion with singing and everlasting joy will crown their heads and gladness and joy will overtake them and sorrow and sighing will flee away.

Don't you think God's forgotten you? He will do all these things. It might be a matter of time. It might be a matter of the season. But don't for one moment think that God has forgotten you.

Awake, verse 17, arise. Chapter 51, verse 17, Awake, awake, rise up, O Jerusalem. And as he puts it there, you're not forgotten.

[37 : 54] Stop acting as though you were. And he talks about this cup that's been drained. You who have drunk from the hand of the Lord the cup of his wrath, you have drained it to its dregs, the goblet that made men stagger.

And of course there's a difference between the Old Testament experience of the exiles and the New Testament experience of the new covenant people of God. In the exile, they drank the cup themselves.

And it was finished and God said, that's done, now you can come back. In the New Testament, we don't drink the cup, do we? Someone else drank it for us.

He saw it in the Garden of Gethsemane. He said, Father, if it's possible, let this cup pass from me. But your will be done. Not my will, but your will.

And he took that cup of wrath and he drank it up for us. So now there's no wrath left for us. If we look into that cup, nothing left. A little bit like when somebody finishes off the last crisps and a bowl of crisps.

[38 : 54] It's all gone. Jesus took that cup of wrath completely and so rise up, O Zion. Awake, O Zion.

The cup has been drunk, but not for you, but not by you. And then 52 verse 1. Awake, awake, O Zion.

Clothe yourself with strength. Put on your garments of splendor, O Jerusalem, the holy city. He's saying, yes, I know you're still a sinner, but that's not the only thing that's true about you as a Christian.

That's not the only thing that's true about you as a Christian because the servant has done his stuff. The arm of the Lord has been revealed. He did it 2,000 years ago when he died on the cross and rose again from the dead and was exalted into heaven.

He's done all that. So you, Christians, stop thinking, oh, I don't know whether it's worth even carrying on. Wake up! Arise! Put on, clothe yourself with strength.

[39 : 58] Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on your garments of splendor. Let yourself believe that in the eyes of the Lord he cherishes you and for reasons other than yourself he

looks on you with favor.

He loves you and nothing can separate you from the love of God. Be strong in the Lord and be beautiful in the Lord. So I had awake, arise. I had awake again and I wanted to say announce. Announce, which was 52, verse 7. because it's not only awake, arise, but tell. How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation, who say to God, who say to Zion, your God reigns.

There's something to be told. So even the worm has a word ministry now. There's good news to be spread and the runners, those who have feet on the mountains, they're running to tell the good news and the watchmen lift up their voices and they bring this good news and it's good news of redemption.

The Lord returns to Zion. The Lord has redeemed Jerusalem and he says, there used to be deadness. That was all there was. There used to be deafness.

[41 : 26] Nobody could hear. There used to be blindness. Nobody could see. There used to be scattering. Everyone was far away from the Lord. There used to be captivity. They were all in bondage to their sin.

But now there is life by the Spirit. Now there is ears opened. Now there is eyes opened. Now there is a gathering and a returning. Now there is a setting free. And now there are songs of redemption to be sung. I know we're not fully there yet but we're on the way and the destination is clear.

There's no doubt about it. The Lord has redeemed Jerusalem. We're on the way there and there are songs to be sung on the way. And the Lord says to his people awake!

Arise! Announce! And depart. So there's an arrow. Oh that was interesting. It disappeared.

[42 : 30] Please look at 52 verse 11 which says depart. And this is addressed to those as it were the exiles in Babylon.

the Lord is redeeming his people. He's bringing them back from captivity and he says depart from Babylon. 52 verse 11 depart depart go out from there touch no unclean thing come out from it and be pure you who carry the vessels of the Lord.

He says come out of Babylon. Depart from Babylon. And I'm just wondering whether that's there because there are some people who said well actually it's quite nice in Babylon.

You know the technology in Babylon is amazing. You wouldn't believe the architecture. They've got hanging gardens here. Nothing got like that in Jerusalem. And do you know the Babylonians have invented geometry.

Do you know where 360 degrees comes from? It's the Babylonians. It's brilliant here. And God says yeah I know it's brilliant here. I mean that all came from me anyway but you don't belong here.

[43 : 39] You belong in Zion. Depart. Pack your bags. Just make up your mind where do you really belong? You don't really belong in Babylon do you?

I know it's got the technology and everything else but you need to depart. Do you remember Lot's wife? Bishop J.C. Ryle wrote a sermon and a book on Remember Lot's wife.

What did she do? Do you remember what she did that was a big mistake? She looked back didn't she? She had a city of this world that she belonged to and she was told to get out and depart and in a way I think she thought it was really quite nice there.

And that was her undoing. And I want to say Christians we have got to be quite definite about this. Lots of wonderful things about this world that we live in has got technology and comfort and ease and all sorts of art and all sorts of things like this.

They've come from the Lord and in the new world there will be the redeemed art and the redeemed architecture and everything so you're not going to miss out on that. But in terms of this world what's really your home?

[44 : 57] which city do you love? Which city do you think is yours Babylon or Jerusalem?

And the word of God says depart depart from Babylon Babylon. So we live in this world but we're not of this world.

We're in it we use it but we don't cling to it and say oh I can't manage unless I have this world. And we want to say to the Lord you're in heaven that's where my home is.

Where you are that's where I belong. and the one I'm going to follow is you. Because I'm going home and no one's going to stop me.

Let's sing a song.