

The Prophecy that Truly Happened

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[0 : 0 0] Father, we confess before you that there are many of us here who haven't read your word in our own personal devotions, Father, maybe in weeks, maybe in months. Father, we confess before you that there are many of us here who've maybe never read all of your word or never read all of Isaiah.

Father, we confess before you that we often are ignorant of your word and it cannot form us. We ask, Father, that you would gently but deeply pour out your Holy Spirit upon us.

Deliver us, Father, from our fear of your word. Create within us a hunger for your word. And help us, Father, as we read your word to read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest your word so that, gripped by the gospel, we will bear much fruit for your glory in our daily lives.

And this we ask in the name of Jesus, your Son, and our Savior. Amen. Please be seated. So, prophecies and predictions.

I'm old compared to a lot of you. I'm going to talk about ancient history for some of you, 1968 and 1972. I know that's like ancient history for some of you.

[1 : 2 3] But for those of us who were, I don't know, older than 10 or 11 at that point in time, you know who you are. We grew up under the shadow of two very, very significant predictions by technocrats and scientists that in many ways shaped us in a whole range of ways.

In 1968, there was a book put out called The Population Bomb. It was praised by the prestigious scientific journal, The New Scientist, when they did a review of the book.

And they called it In Praise of Prophets. And in that book, amongst other things, written in 1968, they said that during the 1970s, hundreds of millions of people would die.

That by the 1980s, most of the world's resources would be depleted. And that in the 80s, that's the 1980s, 65 million Americans would starve to death.

And they predicted that by the year 1999, which is 17 years ago, the population of the United States, due to the population explosion and the depletion of resources, that the population of the United States would be 22.6 million people.

[2 : 4 1] They're only off by about 300 million. In 1972, a more prestigious book came out. It was commissioned by a group of very, very rich people and government leaders called The Club of Rome.

They brought together many of the leading scientists and statisticians and mathematicians from around the planet, and they produced this report. And amongst other things, they predicted in 1972 that there would be no more gold left to be mined by 1981, that there would be no more oil left to find on the ground, that that would run out in 1992, and that all natural gas would be depleted by 1993.

And I could give you a whole long other list of things which they predicted. Every single one of them was wrong. Every one was wrong. In 1865, a major English group of scientists predicted that all coal would run out by 1900 and that the Industrial Revolution would come to an end in England.

I could keep going, and I could keep going. But the fact of the matter is, is that on one hand, we human beings have a great love of prediction and scientists who can predict and chart how things are moving.

But the fact of the matter is, is, I mean, they might be able to predict what the weather will be like in an hour or two here in Ottawa. But as it gets farther and farther away from that, there's just too many variables for scientists and technocrats and mathematicians and statisticians to accurately predict things.

[4 : 30] But we have a huge hunger for it. And at the same time that we often have a hunger for scientific predictions and prophecies, we have a hunger for, well, for others that claim to have some type of special knowledge about what's going to happen in the future.

There's a regular parade of people who go to things like seances to consult the dead about what's going to happen in the future. Or somebody who's channeling, I don't know, an alien or something like that and can predict and tell you what's going to happen in the future.

There are many people who read astrology to know and understand the meaning of their lives and what's going to happen in the future. We, a few years ago, were fascinated, or many people were fascinated by the Mayan prophecies.

These things are all wrong. They don't actually work, but we have a great deep hunger for them. And so here thing is, if you could put up the first point, here's the problem that faces us Christians, at least if you want to have a robust Christian faith.

In a world of failed predictions, prophecies, and promises, the true and living God predicted and promised. I mean, you know, if any type of skeptic or critic of the Bible, there's no denying that the Bible contains a variety of predictions and promises.

[5 : 54] One's made over 3,000 years ago, one that were made on the lips of Jesus. And so we live in a world where people have a great hunger to know the future.

And whether it's a spiritualist source or a technocrat source through computers and scientific data, we have a huge desire and hunger for it. And it's funny that human beings, even after the latest thing fails, it seems like another report can happen within a year and people flock to it because there's such a great hunger.

But is the Bible just like the Mayan prophecies? Obviously, you can't connect it to science, but is it less like the Mayan prophecies or people who believe that they can channel some being that's lived for hundreds of thousands of years or lives somewhere in another galaxy or in another plane of existence?

Is the Bible like how does the Bible fit in with all of this? So we're going to look at one prophecy. There's well over 300 prophecies that if you read the Bible, Christians would claim that over 300 prophecies were fulfilled by Jesus in his birth and life and death.

And you can't obviously look at all of them, but we're going to look at one in detail that makes a significant set of prophecies about Jesus. So if you have your Bibles, it would be a great help if you turn to the reading that Rachel read so well just a few minutes ago, Isaiah chapter 52, verse 13.

[7 : 24] Isaiah 52, 13 until the end of chapter 53. And we're going to look at this prophecy that was written. And it was probably written.

We know that Isaiah, if you look at this historic, there's some debate amongst scholars as to when this was written. But the debate amongst scholars is by the internal evidence. This was Isaiah prophesied between the year 740 B.C. and 681 B.C.

It means he was born before 740. He lived a little bit after 681. I'm just going to say it's 700 years before the birth of Jesus and the death of Jesus. You know, some people think it was 600 years before, some 500.

But, you know, listen, that's not much of a big difference for our purposes, whether it's 700 and 500. But I'll say it's about 700 plus years before the birth and death and resurrection of Jesus.

And that's when this is written. So let's start. We'll start at verse 13. Behold, my servant shall act wisely. He shall be high and lifted up and shall be exalted.

[8 : 31] Now, we're just going to pause here. This is one of the reasons why it's good to read the Bible together. And it's, in a sense, part of my job is to help you to learn to read. One of the things that you can pray for me is that I grow in my ability to read the Bible, to read it attentively, and to try to help all of us be able to read the Bible more attentively.

Now, it sounds very innocuous. In fact, it sounds very religious, doesn't it? Behold, my servant shall act wisely. He shall be high and lifted up and shall be exalted. But this is Isaiah 52, verse 13.

And if we don't know something, we don't know that Jesus or Isaiah has just made a shocking claim. Like, it's something that just go, whoa, one moment. Whoa, what did he just say?

There's only three places in the book of Isaiah where the phrase high and lifted up is used of someone. Only three places. This is one of them.

The first place, if you just turn in your Bibles to Isaiah 6, the first place that it's used in is Isaiah 6. Some of you who know your Bibles very well will go, whoa, Isaiah 6.

[9 : 41] But the rest of you don't know your Bibles as well. Here's what it says in Isaiah 6, verse 1. In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of his robe filled the temple.

He's seen God. He's just seen God. And the word Lord there is the word for Jewish people, the unspeakable name of God because it's so holy.

In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord, Yahweh, sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above him stood the seraphim, each had six wings.

With two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew, and one called to another and said, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts. The whole earth is full of his glory.

And the foundations of the threshold shook at the voice of him who called. And the house was filled with smoke. And I said, Woe is me, for I am lost, for I am a man of unclean lips.

[10 : 44] You know how hard it is to get a baby to cry just when I'm saying, Woe is me? Once again, this is superior planning by the church of the Messiah. Verse 5, And I said, Woe is me, for I am lost, for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips.

For my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts. Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a burning coal that he had taken with tongs from the altar. And he touched my mouth and said, Behold, this has touched your lips.

Your guilt is taken away, and your sin atoned for. You read this, it's talking about God. So we look at verse 6 again. In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting upon the throne, high and lifted up, and the train of his robe filled the temple.

He was exalted. The only other time in the book of Isaiah that this phrase is used is Isaiah chapter 57, verse 15. Isaiah chapter 57, verse 15.

And it goes like this. It's another sort of a messianic prediction. But verse 15 says, For thus says the one who is high and lifted up, who inhabits eternity, whose name is holy.

[12 : 01] I dwell in the high and holy place, and also with him who is of a contrite and lowly spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly, and to revive the heart of the contrite.

See that? It's talking about God. So now let's go back, and we're going to go back to this prophecy. I know it's not, it's significant for the prophecy. It's not part of the prophetic thing, but it's very, very significant for the prophecy.

Go back to Isaiah 52, verse 13. The third place where high and lifted up is used. Only places in the book of Isaiah.

Behold, my servant shall act wisely. He shall be high and lifted up and shall be exalted. Now, here's the thing.

There's a big riddle here. In fact, you know, I've been thinking about it all week. We don't know how it is that the Jewish people, originally out of all of their writings, because if you read the Old Testament, you'll see that there's other writings that exist.

[13 : 03] So how out of all of their writings did they pick these ones as actually being the words of God? We know they did it. We know that Jesus authenticates it, but we don't know how they chose it. But this is a profound riddle. How can there be both one God and two gods at the same time?

Like this, for the Jewish people at this day, they were always tempted towards believing that there were a whole host of gods like the pagans, but it's very, very clear that at the heart of the Jewish faith, they were just like Muslims.

And so you can imagine somebody in Tehran today saying there is both one Allah and two Allahs at the same time. Well, you can imagine it for about five minutes before they were killed, and then you couldn't imagine it.

But that's what this is saying. Look at that again. Verse 13, Behold my servant. So God is speaking. He's talking about my servant. He shall act wisely. He shall be high and lifted up and shall be exalted.

There's this deep riddle right at the very, very start of the text. And so here, if you could put up the second point, we seek predictions and prophecies to make us more powerful.

[14 : 14] God spoke of the future to humble and save us. This is going to be the very, very first thing that's going to be very different about reading a prophecy in the Old Testament or the New Testament from our cultural and human longing and yearning to be able to make predictions and know the future.

That we like these things, and in different ways, it can make us feel superior, that we have a secret knowledge that others don't have, that we can make plans that others don't have.

Imagine for a moment that somebody could accurately predict, and you knew for a fact that you could know what the stock market was going to be on every different item in a year's time. In fact, if I was to say that right now, that was somehow guaranteed, and you trusted me because I'd done it before, a whole lot of you would leave the room and go make some stock purchases right now to become rich.

Some of you would ask, how can I borrow money to make these stock purchases and so become rich? And so we human beings, part of our great desire and hunger to know the future is a desire to be more powerful, to be more special, to be exalted.

But we're going to see here that what happens is that the biblical prophecies always humble us. It begins with a riddle that at the time makes absolutely no sense. There's only one God and there's two gods.

[15 : 40] Makes no sense. You'd go, what on earth does that mean? For 700 years, what on earth does that mean?

And then the text takes a huge, huge, huge zag. We expect it to be linear.

Okay, it's talking about the servant who's high and lifted up and exalted, who's going to do high and exalted and lifted up things. And, you know, there's even a phrase in our culture, it's going to be biblical, right?

And when they say this thing in a movie, it's going to be biblical, what does it mean? It's going to be a really big explosion. There's going to be unbelievable catastrophes. There's going to be widespread death. It's going to be biblical.

I don't know where they get that from, but that's an expression in our culture, right? And so we expect it to be biblical. Whoa, there's going to be something really big. But what happens in verse 14?

[16 : 42] As many were astonished at you, his appearance was so marred beyond human semblance and his form beyond that of the children of mankind. So shall he sprinkle many nations.

Kings shall shut their mouths because of him, for that which has not been told them they see, and that which they had not heard they understand. Here's the big zag. How can God die a horrible human death?

That's what verse 14 is talking about, or at least it's going to look like he's human. And this marred, some of your translations have crushed, but it's crushed or marred that leads to death.

How can you do that to God? I mean, that's a common complaint of Muslims about the Christians. Like, if God actually existed, and this was actually God's son, how preposterous to imagine that God would allow his son to be crushed to the point of death.

It is beneath the dignity and honor of God to allow anything like that to possibly happen. It's a very, very standard criticism of the Christian faith. And here we see, we're expecting it to be biblical.

[17 : 56] Whoa, just watch his power. Maybe in glory, maybe in doing good things, maybe in doing bad things, but all of a sudden it goes, rather than going up here, it goes way down here. He's going to be marred and crushed to the point of death, beyond human semblance.

That last little puzzling part at the end of verse 15 means that whatever God is going to do is going to have a double whammy on human beings. The Irish have this expression that somebody's gobsmacked.

It means the deer in the headlight moment where you're silenced. And so if you were translating this into Irish, it would be the people are going to be gobsmacked. And they're going to know something by revelation.

So some of you, and so here's the thing, if you come up to the next point, Rebecca, that would be great. Through his word, here's going to be one of the problems with understanding this prophecy because, you see, often what we have with prophecies with scientists and stuff is they're just going to tell you the things that happen in the future.

What does it mean? We might understand a little bit why it matters for us, you know, that global warming and it's going to inconvenience our lives or ruin our lives or lead to a lot of people being killed, but it's just, it's a prediction of what's going to happen.

[19 : 17] And often, if you go to hear astrologers speak or go to seances, a lot of it's connected to flattery of the person, right? But what we're going to see here mixed into this prophecy is that it's, my point, through his word, God tells us what he will do and the meaning of what he will do.

And that's going to be one of the things that's going to confuse us. It will always confuse us when we're reading the prophecies in the Bible is because we just want information, but God doesn't just give us information, he gives us interpretation at the same time, what it means.

And by the way, if you're a guest here this morning and you haven't given your life to Jesus, you're not sure what to think of the whole Christian thing, this is huge. If God exists, and I know you haven't necessarily, you haven't agreed with me on this, but if the God described in the Bible actually exists, it means that there is meaning to human life.

It means that there is meaning to human life. That human life is not one dang thing after another. That human life is not about whoever dies with the most toys wins.

That human life is not all about just clutch whatever meaning or happiness we can get at the moment because that's all there is. That if in fact, God can tell us what he's going to do in the future and the meaning and significance of what it is that he's going to do, it means that there is meaning for human life that can be discovered and entered into.

[20 : 54] It's absolutely huge if this is true. Let's continue. Some of you might say, okay, George, all you've said right now, it's just all like philosophical speculation.

You haven't actually really talked about much prophecy whatsoever. Okay, so let's go. We get to the prophecy. It gets into it. Okay, there's a context to the prophecy that's going to be significant by the end.

Let's look at verses 1 to 3 of chapter 53. Who has believed what he has heard from us? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? And by the way, the arm of the Lord been revealed, the idea behind it in the original language is that God's strength is personally present.

That's what it means. The arm of the Lord being revealed. It's like when we have the piano up here for some services and it has to be pushed around the corner up there and in there.

It's not good enough to know that there's a lot of strong young guys who had attended the service earlier or gals. What you need is the arm of the Lord to be right there at the end to push the dang thing up that hill and back there.

[22 : 08] And that's the language here. It's the God's strength is personally present. Who has believed what he has heard from us? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?

For he grew up before him like a young, sorry, he grew up before him like a young plant and like a root out of dry ground. He had no form or majesty that we should look at him and no beauty that we should desire him.

He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. Now remember, all of this is still part of that shocking thing that they're describing this servant who's God.

But now we see a little bit about some of the prophecies involved here specifically in who this servant is going to be. prophecies that can be taken to be either true or false.

We've already seen that this person's going to die a terrible death. He's going to be crushed. We see that this servant, there's going to be nothing special or remarkable about him.

[23 : 13] He's not as good looking as George Clooney or Brad Pitt or I don't know, pick your pick of who's good looking. He's not famous like Prince Charles from a royal family.

He's not somebody who has a PhD from Cambridge or Oxford and now teaches there and there's nothing particularly special or remarkable about him.

If you saw a crowd and he was there, you wouldn't notice him. That's what it's saying here. And you're also seeing that he's going to be rejected by human beings, that when he comes to the attention of human beings, he's going to be rejected.

That's what the prophecy here is telling us. That even though he actually is the strength of God personally present, there's nothing remarkable about him and he will, in fact, be rejected.

Now, the next thing is a bit of another zag in the prophecy. And by the way, just one story, I really, you know, I always feel funny saying this. There are grammar geeks in the room.

[24 : 20] You know who you are. Okay? So the rest of you don't fall asleep. Grammar geek moment. This poem is really cool if you're a grammar geek.

There are 15 verses, but really what it is, it's organized in five sections. And the sections, the first section, have nine lines of poetry, the second, 10, the third, 11, the fourth, 12, and the final one, 13, because it's building to a climax.

And within it, I'm not going to mention it, in some of them, the order within how the lines of poetry are developed, because within each stanza, there's the groups. And sometimes they go up to bring you to a high point, and some of them, they go down.

Like, whoever wrote this has been a long time in the poetry. Okay, hopefully come back awake, non-geek, grammar geek people. But I just, I had to tell you that.

I'm sorry. I'm not really a grammar geek, but sometimes, you know, I get to study, I get paid to read the Bible. And sometimes, I come home to my poor, long-suffering wife, and I say, Louise, this is so cool at a grammatical level.

[25 : 32] You wouldn't believe how cool this is. And I usually don't inflict it on you. Anyway, so here, we've gone through the two sections, and we come to the third section, the very, very center section.

And by the way, from a grammatical point of view, the way this poem is structured is the whole meaning of the entire 15 things, the five stanzas and 15 verses, the entire, the way it's structured, these verses 4, 5, and 6 are the meaning of the whole thing.

Just from a grammatical point of view, that's how it works. But it's not a prophecy, but it's something that I regularly have people leave the church over.

I regularly have people leave the church over because it's, people don't think it, they don't like it. One of the things they don't like about the Christian faith, but friends, this is the heart of the Christian faith.

4, 5, and 6. Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows. Yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God and afflicted.

[26 : 41] But he was pierced for our transgressions. He was crushed for our iniquities. Upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace. And with his wounds we are healed.

All we like sheep have gone astray. We have turned everyone to his own way. And the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. So, the, from a final grammar geek moment, this is, this is one, it's not obvious in English because of the way, the way they've set up the poetry, but it's, it's four lines, four lines, three lines because the last line, they automatically, he goes, in Hebrew, it goes too long.

And it shows this descending idea and, but more in particular, the long line means that you really have this emphasis on the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

And the image behind the word iniquity is bent double. And so, it's trying to present the idea that we understand that human beings, when they're completely healthy and whole, that we stand relatively straight like this.

And the image here is that human beings, by having iniquity, the image is bent double. The image is that we human beings, without realizing it, are walking around every day like this.

[28 : 07] And when sociologists and psychologists describe what is natural, what they're describing is what is modal characteristics or means or medians of human experience, but all they're doing is measuring human beings who walk around like this, saying, I am God, I am God, I am God, but that's a separate matter.

And that's the image behind iniquity. And just before, I'm just going to say a few words about this, but could you put up the next point, please? If you think about it for a second, just think about it for a second.

You don't have to necessarily accept these words, but just think about it for a second. If there is, only the God who creates and sustains all things would know what is needed to make right his bent creatures and the entire created order.

If there is a God who exists, who's created all things and sustained all things, if you grant that that happens, is real, then surely only he would know what is needed to make human beings like ourselves who are bent and who will die make us right with himself.

Only he would know it. Only the God who creates and sustains all things would know what is needed to make right his bent creatures in creation. And so what we see here is that in this prophecy of the servant who's described in the very, very opening stanza as God, but then increasingly we see that he's going to be human and he's going to be born, he's going to grow, he's going to be despised, he's going to be rejected.

[29 : 52] And then you have this other deep riddle and I think it's the final riddle I'm going to mention in this. There's others, but the final riddle I'll mention. How can a man or how can God be a sacrificial lamb?

How can a man or how can God be a sacrificial lamb? This is all sacrificial language. Surely he has borne our griefs.

These are a variety of different images to try to help us to understand the human condition and our separation and alienation from God. He has borne our griefs, carried our sorrows.

We esteemed him stricken, smitten by God. We thought that just like sometimes, you know, when something bad happens to us, many people wonder why is God punishing me? And so by implication when bad things happen to other people, we wonder why is God punishing that other person?

And when people would look at Jesus, many people, not his enemies particularly, would say, why is God punishing that man to die such a horrible death of crucifixion, to be rejected by his friends, to be rejected by his people?

[31 : 00] Why is God doing that to him? Verse 5, but he was pierced for our transgressions. And the word here, pierced, means pierced until you die.

It doesn't mean having like piercings in your ear or your nose or your lips or your tongue or I'll stop mentioning body parts there. It means pierced until you die.

But he was pierced until he died for our transgressions. He was crushed until he died for our bent-overness. Upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace.

And with his wounds we are healed. All we, like sheep, have gone astray. We have turned everyone to his own way. And the Lord has laid on him the iniquity, all that causes us to be bent over and separated from God, our human condition, our alienation, our sadness, our shame, the evil we do, the good that we fail to do.

This is the profound, it's the, it's, it's, and it's all just riddled with language and imagery that goes back to the book of Leviticus that describes sacrifices. If you go to the going deeper section, I give you one of them in particular.

[32 : 21] And this is all the language of sacrifice. Only it's not the sacrifice of a lamb or a bull or a goat or a ram. It's the sacrifice of a human being.

And at the heart of all of those things, if you go back and read the book of Leviticus mindful of this, there's this profound idea that there can be, that there's this, that an animal, that, that the innocence and the purity of the animal, that it can be a substitute for us, for all that separates us from God.

And that when we put our hands, that the priest puts his hands on the head of the lamb, in a sense, what's happening is all that, all of my bentness, all of my shame, all of my wounds, all of my death, all of my evil is being placed on the head of the innocent one.

And the innocence of the lamb is being given to me. And, and that's what's being described here.

But it's saying that God is the lamb. It's saying that there is this, the servant, who's also God and a man, that he is the lamb.

[33 : 36] You see, brothers and sisters, friends and guests, at the very, very heart of the Christmas, Christian message, is that when Jesus dies upon the cross, that he is dying as that lamb.

I haven't proved it to you yet, but that's, obviously, this is where all of the New Testament is coming from. And here's the profound message for us, that a lamb or a sheep is a very, very temporary thing.

And there's a very profound sense within anybody who would do it that obviously a human being is worth more than the sheep and that in some ways it's a very imperfect and inadequate sacrifice.

But that when we reach out to Jesus and, of course, there's an infinite gap between us and God and so when we put our hands out to Jesus, when we put our hearts out to Jesus, God himself has to cross that infinite distance of being, that infinite time.

And so he comes to us but we put our hands out and when we put our hands in him, in a sense, we are putting our hands on the head of the Lamb of God who comes to take away the sin of the world and we just come, like when I first came to Jesus, it was because I knew that there was a profound emptiness in my life and I worried that my life had no meaning and I had a sense that if I gave my life to Jesus, that there would be a type of fullness and meaning that would come to my life.

[35 : 02] That is all I understood when I gave my life to Jesus. But God is so shameless in his mercy that even if we have a very, very imperfect knowledge of who Jesus is, when we put our hands out to him and ask him to be our savior, what we are doing is we are putting our hands on the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world and from the moment of my conception to the moment of my death, everything about me that is bent double, everything about me that is broken, everything about me that I feel ashamed about, every accusation made against me by other people, every single thing that I should have done that I did not do, all of those things, even though I don't entirely know it, when I call upon him as savior, they go on him.

He is the perfect substitute, fully God and fully human and they go on him and his innocence and standing and being right with the father, come on me.

That is what the gospel is and if you come here and you didn't know that happened when you put your hands in the hands of Jesus, I am here to tell you that's what happened. And if you are wondering whether to give your life to Jesus, that's what will happen because he turns no one away.

And this is the center of the poem. And so you can say, well, George, why believe this? Where's the prophecy? It just sounds like words.

It sounds like beautiful words and wonderful words, but they're just words. So let's just summarize. Up until now, the prophecy has said that there will be one who will die a terrible death. There's nothing special about him that will be rejected.

[36 : 47] Verse 7 to 9 gets far more deeply into the actual prophecy part of it. Verse 7, he was oppressed and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth like a lamb that is led to the slaughter and like a sheep that before it shears is silent.

So he opened not his mouth. When it was said he was oppressed, he would suffer an unjust trial. He would be oppressed by oppressors, by an oppressive imperial power of Rome.

He would be unjustly accused by his own people. And that he would go into this crowd just as we read just a few moments ago, silent to the charges.

Silent to the charges. Verse 8. Oh, and the other thing about it here, and this, you have to read all of the Gospels to realize this. You know, it's so cool.

I can't remember which one of the Gospels it is. I don't know if you've ever seen some charismatic things where people get slain in the Spirit. And I know a whole pile of Reformed and Evangelical people, they get their knickers in a twist over it and they have problems with it, but there's a thing in the Bible, it's Jesus.

[37 : 54] There's one of the Gospel accounts and Jesus just says who he is and all the soldiers just fall down like that. Just, they fall down. I have a good, good friend who was a very Reformed Evangelical type, completely and utterly did not believe in any of this stuff.

He went to one of these services and he said, you know what, some of these people they just want to fall down, but I was going up to get prayed about because I was going to show people that I wouldn't fall down. And I was 20 feet away and the guy put his hand up to me and I went down.

I just went down. I know it sounds really weird, but you know platypuses are weird. Light is weird. Talk to Dick or somebody about quantum mechanics.

You want to talk about weird. That is weird. Really weird. And God does, but Jesus, in all of the Hebrew language here, everything about it is that the person is not compelled, but it's voluntary.

It's voluntary what he does. It's not our plan, it's God's plan. And the servant does it voluntarily. Continue in reading verse 8.

[39 : 07] By oppression and judgment he was taken away. And as for his generation who considered that he was cut off, cut off out of the land of the living, another image of death, he will die, stricken for the transgression of my people.

Then look at verse 9. And they made his grave with the wicked and with the rich man in his death. In the Hebrew, wicked is plural. He will die with multiple criminals.

And he will be buried and rich man is singular in Hebrew. He will be buried in a rich man's grave. Although he had done no violence, in other words, what did Pilate's wife send to him?

This man is innocent, have nothing to do with him. You read the accounts, people couldn't come up with a charge that would stick against Jesus. They knew he was innocent. They had to trump up charges against him.

And he was killed by Pilate for political expediency. This man will die with more than one criminal. He will end up, though, not like the other criminals who will just go to whatever happens to them.

[40 : 20] He will die singular and be buried in a singular man's tomb. Although he had done no violence and there was no deceit in his mouth. We get right to the prophetic aspect.

And some of you might say, well, you know, maybe if you troll through all of history, you could find some other people who, you know, they didn't look like they were important. They died with several criminals and they got buried in a rich man's tomb.

And you would be right. Maybe you'd be right. I don't know. Maybe it's just coincidence, statistically coincidence. But then you get to verses 10 to 12, the end of the poem, which is really crucial.

Look at verse 10. Yet it was the will of the Lord to crush him. Notice this. Remember, this thing, verses 4 to 6, human beings didn't cook up this plan. We didn't demand this of God.

This is God's plan. And the servant enters into it willingly. And he does it for us, not for himself. Yet it was the will of the Lord to crush him. That is, to crush him until the point of death.

[41 : 31] He has put him to grief. When his soul makes an offering for guilt. Remember I said to you that we all have a basic sense that even with this Old Testament image that a lamb's death can't possibly really substitute for mine.

This, his soul, makes an offering of death. His life. This is the servant. This is God himself making an offering for us. Surely, that can count not just for me, but for every human being who is born, who puts their faith and trust in Jesus.

He is the one perfect sacrifice, the one perfect substitute who can bring one perfect completed salvation for people who put their trust in him.

because he is God. When it says earlier that he was pierced for our transgressions, we can easily understand that every single wrong thing that George has ever done and every good thing that George should have done that he did not do and every shameful thing and everything about George that just isn't right, every one of them individually is a piercing in the heart of God and every one of yours as well.

All pierced him. All born by him. Yet it was the will of the Lord to crush him. He has put him to grief.

[43 : 00] When his soul makes an offering for guilt and now the zag, he shall see his offspring, he shall prolong his days, the will of the Lord shall prosper in his hand.

It's not as obvious here in English. It's there, but it's very, very powerful in the Hebrew. In the Hebrew, every time, it talks about in the Old Testament, they believed that people lived after death.

And so there's Old Testament passages where it might talk about Jacob seeing his children. But in all of those cases, the way it's structured in the Hebrew, it's as if, you know, it's sort of as if there's a separate world right here and there's Jacob and he's died, but now Jacob can watch us and there's Abraham and he's died and Abraham can watch us.

But he can't do anything, he can just watch. But here, the Hebrew changes and it's that the servant is alive amongst us seeing us, that he's present and can affect things.

So here's the powerful thing. Could you put up the next point, please? What do we know about death? Death, death, thrones. How important, how many executive decisions does Steve Jobs make right now?

[44 : 21] And, I mean, Harper, he's not even dead. How many decisions does he make that matter? Death, dethrones. But what happens here, the next point, please?

Jesus dies and is not dethroned. He is exalted and alive. That's what the text is saying here. He shall, when his soul makes an offering for guilt, he shall see his offspring, he shall prolong his days.

In other words, he's living forever. It's poetic Hebrew language which is very concrete for living forever. And the will of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. In other words, he's alive, he's exalted, he's, everything he does, it's, he's the, he's the golden boy, the golden child.

Everything he touches is now just going and flourishing. And then it continues out of the anguish of his soul and it just goes on. He's alive. You see, here's the thing. Here's the reason you should believe the prophecy.

There is good historical evidence that Jesus rose from the dead. In fact, I would say that the only thing that accounts for the explosion of belief in Jerusalem that Jesus was alive was the fact that the grave is empty and he really was alive.

[45 : 35] They could never produce the body. He is alive. There's good reasons for it. Explosive growth of the Christian faith. Not because of military power. Far from it. Jesus had no military power.

People flocked to Muhammad. Why? Because he was able to successfully win battles. Jesus won only one battle. And the one battle that he won, he won not for his own glory but for his own sake but for yours.

He defeated death. He defeated that which causes death which is our rebellion and alienation from God and he does it for you and you, ordinary people in me can share in that when we put our faith and trust in Jesus.

Jesus predicted he would die. He predicted he would rise from the dead. The Old Testament predicts Jesus' coming and his death and his resurrection. The resurrection of Jesus vindicates who he is and what he did.

Could you put up the almost final point please? Remember at the beginning of the service I said the world have failed predictions, prophecies and promises the true and living God predicted and promised and now we see that he kept his word in the person and work of Jesus.

[46 : 49] Three things very briefly you're going to have to put them up quickly. The first one know him as your savior and your lord. There is no better time than now to reach out your hands to Jesus that he would be your savior and lord.

Know him as your savior and your lord. He died for you. He knows you. He loves you. He died for you. The second thing put it up please. Christians know his word written.

Trust it and seek to obey him. Know his word written. Trust it and seek to obey him. Read your Bibles brothers and sisters.

Read them cover to cover. When you have questions ask others but know it. And finally many of us like to know what God's will is for our lives.

700 years between this prophecy and its fulfillment. 700 years. Seek God's will for your life but remember the Lord is always playing the long game.

[47 : 55] This will take away a lot of anxiety that we feel. Why am I going through this? Well I don't know. You know I don't know why you're going through this because you know what maybe you're going through this because you're going to say something to little Liam in five years about what you're going through and little Liam will tell somebody else or do something else and he'll do something else and in 300 years if Jesus comes back it's the new Billy Graham and in heaven God will show you how he was playing the long game.

and even with your will you know we want to know what to do tomorrow and he will give us guidance about what to do tomorrow but he's always playing the long game.

He has your eternal happiness in mind. Please stand. Let's bow our heads in prayer.

Father, many people make us promises and they don't keep them. Father, we confess that we make promises and we don't keep them.

And Father, many people claim to be able to predict the future but they're almost always wrong. And many people claim to have special connections or special interior knowledge and they're just wrong.

[49 : 13] Father, we give you thanks and praise that in a world where we want to know the future we want to know if there's meaning to our lives that you spoke and you talked about the future and you kept your promises you kept your word and you kept your promises in a word and your word in a shocking way in a way that both humbles us but provides the means by which we can be reconciled to you and where we can now begin to live as your adopted children knowing that we will live with you forever.

That death is not the final word about us that death will be just us being in your presence until you make the new heaven and the new earth where we will continue in your presence forever.

Father, fan into flame within us a longing and yearning to see you. Fan into flame within us a longing and yearning for the new heaven and the new earth. Make us disciples of Jesus who are gripped by the gospel who are living for your glory.

And Father, if there are any here who have not yet given their lives to Jesus, pour out your Holy Spirit upon them. Help them, Father, to throw out their hands to you, throw out their hands to Jesus, that he might be their Savior and their Lord.

All this we ask in the name of Jesus. Amen. Amen.