

Six Marks of the Messiah's Mission, Part 2

Luke 9:21-22

Luke 9, 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 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, he is the Christ of God. 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?

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 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 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, yhe 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?

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 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. 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 shoo, 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, 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 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 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.

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.'" "

PILLAR OF —TRUTH—



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.