

The smitten shepherd

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[0 : 00] The Old Testament upon the little ones.

This morning I would like to look at the first part of the verse. I wake your sword against my shepherd and against the man that is my fellow, seer the Lord of hosts.

Smite the shepherd and so on. Now friends, we find that the plowton that is mentioned there in verse 1 that was to be opened for sin and for uncleanness that is of course the smiting that is spoken of here in verse 7.

And there we see of course an allusion to gospel promises. And after that we find that the Lord of course in his own good time would confound the false prophets and put them to shame.

And then in verse 7 itself we have predictions there about the sufferings and the death of Christ and his disciples being scattered.

[1 : 38] And finally of course at least a large part of the nation something like two thirds of the nation being destroyed and a third being purified.

Now friends, God out of his good pleasure chose some everlasting life. He didn't allow the whole of mankind to perish.

And so certain questions have been raised about the good pleasure of God. Is it to be regarded as an arbitrary will of God or a will rooted in the nature of God?

Well it appears that the good pleasure of God is founded in the love and in the justice of God.

Love provided the way God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son. And justice saw to it that the law of God would be honored.

[2 : 55] Now the ancient Sositians opposed this doctrine. They did not believe that justice and mercy could exist together.

That they were contradictions. But that is not so. When we look at the atonement of Christ there we see that God could freely pardon sin and yet at the same time God's justice was honored.

And to deny that would be to deny the punitive justice of God as one of the inherent qualities of his nature.

Now friends in looking at this verse or this part of the verse I want to divide it into two parts. The victim and the smiting.

And in looking at the victim I would like to look at them in this order. First my fellow then the man and thirdly my shepherd and in the second point we can look at the smiting itself.

[4 : 17] First of all then my fellow. Now this verse beyond any doubt is of course pointing to Christ.

And Christ is God's fellow in terms of essence and nature. There are many verses in scripture that could be quoted.

I will just mention a few. First from Isaiah where we have both the incarnation of Christ and the deity of Christ contained there in the same verse.

Unto us a child is born. Unto us a son is given. And the government shall rest upon his shoulders. And his name shall be called wonderful or preferably wonder counselor the mighty God the everlasting father the prince of peace.

the son who was to be born was both the almighty father and the prince of peace.

[5 : 33] Or to return to Paul's epistles in the Philippians there he speaks of them as being equal with God.

He thought it not robbery to be equal with God. Or if you turn to the first chapter of the epistle to the Hebrews but unto the son he said thy throne O God is for ever and ever.

And so we find that he is co-equal with God the father and co-equal with God the spirit in terms of essence and nature.

And even our shorter catechism defines the trinity as three persons. Within the God and the father the son and the holy ghost and these three are the same God equal in power and glory.

So friends whilst then whilst then they are the same and whilst they are equal in power and glory yet their relative properties distinguish which is the one from the other.

[6 : 47] To God the father belongs the name God to the first person God belongs the name father and to the second person the name son because he is begotten eternally begotten of the father and to the spirit of course the breath of God for he proceeds from both father and son and again they are distinguished one from the other in terms of the what each person has to do but that by the way again we see that he is God's fellow in terms of his will to do thy will I take delight now someone can say what about his prayer there in the garden of Gethsemane did he not pray to the father that the cup should be removed from him nevertheless not my will but thine be done yes but there you are listening to the voice of Jehovah's servant but as God his will is one and the same with the father it cannot be anything else further more friends when we look at the work that the son does we see that that work is the same in substance as the father's work it is not simply resembling the father's work it is the same in substance in John chapter 5 and verse 19 Christ tells us that what the father doth he doth likewise and after all friends all things were made by him and without him was not anything made that was made he is also God's fellow in point of worship we don't find in the new testament Christ forbidding any who came to him from worship they were permitted to worship him and then the scriptures are full of passages that substantiate this look unto me all the ends of the earth come unto me and I will give you rest and we find Christ there casting out demons not in the name of the father but in his own name and again we find the disciples casting out demons in the name of Christ they perform their miracles in his name and we find the people there coming to worship him he that hath seen me hath seen my father also now friends why was it necessary for Christ for our redeemer rather to be co-equal with God first it was necessary for him to be co-equal with God to defeat the powers of evil the human nature of Christ would have been insufficient to bear the burden that was placed upon him so the human nature of Christ was sustained by the divine nature and we find there the powers of darkness defeated we see there Satan and hell conquered and we see him rising triumphant over the grave and we find friends that when Christ was finally taken by wicked hands we mustn't think that he was powerless to do anything about it he was not he knew that his hour had come that he had fulfilled all things and that it was the father's will that he should now be taken by these wicked and cruel men and finally crucified what does he remind us of in the 18th verse of the chapter we have the 10th chapter in the gospel according to John I have power he said to lay it down and I have power to take it up again this commandment have I received of my father and when

christ finally was there arrested by these wicked men he had fulfilled everything the father had given them to do up to that point and then we see another case everything friends was walking here towards calvary towards his death there upon the cross and hence it was necessary that he should be god's fellow it was also necessary that he should be god's fellow the cause of the dignity of these others he was to be the mediator between god and man who could be sufficient for these things not everyone was appointed to be a high priest in the older dispensation and that high priest was honored to enter the holy of holies on behalf of the people no one friends could undertake this one but

Christ himself and these men who were only figures of what was to come and the one appointed by Jehovah was to come to the order of Melchizedek he was to have no successor he was to be a high priest for us we are reminded there in the epistle to the Hebrews that having made that offering once he sat down and that is in my contrast to the holy of holies we find within the temple and within the tabernacle but there was no accommodation made for the priest to sit down and rest the implication was that this matter was not complete it had to be repeated every year generation after generation but when he the son had offered up himself to

God once that offering was not to be repeated and hence he sat down in heaven itself at that place of honor at the right hand of the majesty on high he had to be also God's fellow in order to confer the blessings upon those for whom he died no friends when we sympathize with people who are in trouble it is our heart's desire to help our heart's desire to comfort them but we haven't got the ability to effect the very thing we desire so much for them but when we turn to Christ he has the ability to effect the very things that he has purchased for his own people only one co-equal with

[15 : 40] God has that power you remember there in Genesis where we find Isaac conferring the blessing unwittingly upon Jacob that was a blessing Isaac had reserved for Esau and unwittingly that blessing was conferred on Jacob and afterwards when Esau identified himself and Isaac realized that he had been cheated he couldn't reverse the blessing it wasn't wishful thinking it was from God it was prophetic and he knew it couldn't be altered that Jacob would be blessed so we see friends that only one who had power to effect the very things that he had purchased for his people was adequate for this task mine hell next the man the word was made flesh and dwelt among us what a great mystery what a great mystery the word is in the beginning was the word and the word was

God and the word was God great mystery isn't it you know friends when we're dealing with the human nature of Christ we have to be very careful we do not attribute anything of the divine to the human I think it was the anabaptists who believed that the human nature of Christ actually came from heaven what heresy it came from the woman he was true man and at the beginning of one's conversion one is in danger of ascribing to the human what belongs to the divine as if we would be robbing the Lord of glory to do otherwise Christ but that is not so the two must be kept distinctly apart yet they are united in the one person so we see that first he was a poor man look at how humble his beginnings were there are many people and when they get on in the world they forget their humble beginnings but we find that down through the centuries thousands and millions are reminded of his humble beginnings and he was not ashamed of his humble beginnings this was the father's will and he delighted in doing the father's will and there we see him born as an infant and at every stage of development he matured like anyone else at every stage of development he was still

God's son and at every stage of development he was still holy harmless undefiled and separate from sinners in offense when we look even at his mother Mary and Joseph they were not given special protection in their own land when the king was trying to destroy the holy child Jesus God didn't just blind the eyes of the persecutor no they were like any other family persecuted by the king they had to flee from their own land certainly God of course made that known to Joseph and a dream and they had to remain from their own land until it was saved to return and so we see that through his poverty we are made rich let his mind be in you which was also in

Christ Jesus who being in the form of God thought it not robbery to be equal with God but made himself of no reputation and took upon him the form of the servant and was made in the likeness of man and being found in fashion as a man he humbled himself and became obedient to death even the death of the cross he was also a wise man never the common people receive him gladly never speak man like this man behold a greater than Solomon is here in a sense friends could you blame the Jews and I've seen this with all due reference

I wouldn't want anyone to misunderstand me in a sense could you blame the Jews that Christ was a stumbling block to them their idea of the Messiah was of some illustrious figure who would lead the nation and make it great ah my ways are not your ways saith the Lord of us for as the heavens are higher than the earth so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts how could the Messiah be born of a woman he was too common too ordinary so it was an offense to them and a stumbling block to them no friends in addition to all that he was a man of sorrow no one knew sorrow like

[22 : 49] Christ and how sorrowful an experience this in itself would be for one who was holy harmless and undefiled to live in this sinful world if you found yourself in the company of blasphemers you would long to get out of it you would be horrified imagine now the son of God living in this sinful world that in itself must have been unbearable he knew what hunger was he was tempted 40 days and 40 nights he knew what thirst was he asked the woman of Samaria to give him a drink he knew what exhaustion was we find him there sleeping in the midst of the storm the hairs were plucked from his cheek they plowed furrows on his back they spat upon he was reproached and rejected and crucified like a rascally man though why was it necessary that he should also be man first of all friends

God justice was such that the nature which was to be punished that same nature would have to make satisfaction and secondly it was necessary to be man because Satan conquered man and one in our nature would have to conquer Satan the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent said and thirdly it was necessary to be man so that he could be born under the law made under the law and be subject to the law and being our surety the curse and the wrath of God fell upon him it was necessary that he thus should be both

God and man man alone wouldn't have done God alone wouldn't have done he had to be both God and man before I leave this point let me direct your attention to the book of Revelation there we find John and he has the book that is all sealed and he wept and he looked for someone to break the seals and open the book and he scanned heaven and he couldn't find one worthy to break the seals and open the book and he scanned the earth and he couldn't find one worthy either nor under the earth could one be found worthy and he wept and where could the worthy one be found if he couldn't be found in heaven nor on earth nor under the earth he was to be both from heaven and from earth not from heaven alone not from earth alone but from heaven and earth the god man and none else was sufficient my feral the man my shepherd this doubtless points to his mediatorialness there are a number of references in scripture to the lord as shepherd first we have psalm 80 i know that is ambiguous some reckon that the reference there to the shepherd is to god himself and not to christ oh thou shepherd of israel psalm 80 and verse one and then in john chapter 10 and verse 11 i am the good or preferably i am the beautiful shepherd shepherd and then of course in hebrews chapter 13 and verse 20 he is spoken of there as the great shepherd and in first the first epistle of peter chapter 2 and verse 25 he is the shepherd and the bishop of our soul and in first peter again chapter 5 and verse 4 he is the chief shepherd now friends he is god's shepherd by appointment he was appointed by god to be the shepherd who should lay down his life for the sheep but he is our shepherd on account of what he has done for us and you have a right here today to call your shepherd the lord is my shepherd the lord is my redeemer he is my shepherd now friends this designation of course presupposes a flock doesn't it and when we look at his relationship to that flock he has a proprietary right just as much as the one by whom he was sent and this flock was given to him from all eternity but in no way could this flock become his property but by taking to a mountain and atoning for their sins the veil of sorrow the death at Calvary stood between him and his flock and he

was sent forth to lay down his life for the sheep and that he did I will leave that first point there and very briefly I don't want to take up too much time look now at the smiting away oh sword and smite many a soldier drew a sword and yet maybe never smote with it maybe he threatened someone with a sword but this sword was drawn for one specific purpose to smite to kill the shepherd we find I think it's in Jeremiah 47 and verses 67 the sword there as a figure for justice is personified oh thou sword of the

Lord the prophet complains the sword there is addressed and the sword is commanded to lay itself up in its scabbard and to be quiet and the reply is how can it be still when the Lord has given a charge against Ashkelon and the seacoast there has he appointed it and again in the book of Psalms David speaks of the wicked as being God's sword and in Romans chapter 13 civil magistrates are there spoken of as the sword of the Lord and hence the sword here is a figure for justice awake oh sword I'm sure if we could go back in history and visit some of these ancient dwellings in the highlands when they had a bit of peace maybe their swords would be placed aside maybe they would be greased and sharp but set aside and then in times of war or summer uprisings these swords would be again taken out and hung slung rather by the side of the soldier and the implication here is the sword has been still and now it is commanded to awake and to smite surely friends

[32 : 20] God's justice was not silent from the beginning from the moment Adam sinned we see the justice of God the day thou sinest thereof thou shalt surely die and every time we see death it reminds us of God's justice and again when we see the overthrow of the old world does it not remind us of God's justice the destruction of Sodom Gomorrah the destruction of the Amalekites many more what is so different here ah this is different here is one who has done nothing amiss hence the sword is commanded to rise against him because he was willing to do the father's will and the father's will was that he should be the surety of his people and for his people to escape the surety must die he must forfeit his life his soul must be made an offering for sin he must give himself a ransom for many and doubtless friends there is an allusion here to a sharp two edged sword on the one hand

God employed the wicked people they out of the malice of their heart took Jesus and scourged him and crucified him they are answerable to God for that and on the other hand we see another side to God's justice and that is the suffering of the soul and that was dealt with solely by God friends I have to make this confession I never deal with a natural stem that I don't feel a degree of superficiality about myself in the handling of it for this specific reason we can all up to a point understand a little maybe about his physical subjects we know ourselves how it would feel to injure any part of our body we know ourselves how we feel when we are reproached or if you are forsaken in some measure you can understand what he felt but when we turn to the sufferings of the soul what do we understand about that what even could the martyrs understand about that however much their bodies were mutilated their souls were not made offerings for sin and I honestly feel that we can be too flippant even in our handling of this very solemn subject the Lord knows our shortcomings in all these matters and it is our hearts desire to understand the truth we proclaim far more clearly than we do but let us trust that God will overlook our shortcomings and so measure solemnize to us his word and bless to us what we have been looking at and there you see that the man of solace on his way to

Calvary was there anyone there friends to help him was there anyone there to bathe his brow to refresh him to comfort him no not one not one how could he be comforted when he was being made an offering for sin how could he be comforted when the wrath and the justice of God were set against him how could he be comforted when he was there about to bear the wrath and curse of God due to his people for his sins for their sins so we turn to Psalm 22 and look at the deep pages of that Psalm almost from beginning to the end or not quite to the end my God my God why has thou forsaken me why art thou so far from helping me and from my words that roaring out my mouth is like a pod share dried my tongue it cleaveth fast into my jaws and to the dust of death the broad me hast awake and smite and he was smitten and a fountain was open for sin and for uncleanness and here friends we witness today the fruit of Christ's suffering his suffering and death was not in vain he died for his own we find as the generations go by the Holy

Spirit apply to the souls of men and women the work or the efficacy of the work that Christ did on their behalf may God bless to us these few thoughts let us pray O Lord our God forgive us our many sins and when we handle these very solemn matters we are fully aware and deeply conscious of our inadequacy for such things bless however to us thy truth and bless to us now the second part of this service we pray that thou wouldst overrule in everything may thy name be glorified may thy people be blessed take away sin graciously for Jesus sake

Amen let us and and and thank you and my and I thank you and thank you and thank you and my God for me and my God and man can has been meet making