

# A Declaration of Those Things Which Are Most Surely Believed Among Us

## An Expositional Study of **The Gospel According to Luke** **Chapter 4- Luke 4:14-21** 43- Jesus Going on the Offensive

---

August 23, 2009

### **Luke 4:14-21**

Now so far in Chapter 4- we have seen Jesus being driven into the wilderness by the Spirit of God and Him being bombarded with temptation after temptation. From verse 1 through verse 13- Jesus is on the defensive- He is being tempted, He is suffering, He is being attacked- but now beginning in verse 14- Dr. Luke writes to Theophilus to show this young Roman dignitary how Jesus begins to now take the offensive and to actually begin His ministry. And for the remainder of this Story of Salvation- Luke will show us that Jesus will be fully engaged in His Ministry to fulfill God's Will on the earth by dying on the Cross for the sins of the whole world.

Now first of all- I want you to notice what Luke says about Jesus immediately after His 40 day trial of suffering and fasting temptation in the wilderness. Please look again at **Luke 4:14&15:**

**14 Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about him spread through the whole countryside.**

**15 He was teaching in their synagogues, and everyone praised him.**

Now normally you would assume that after spending 40 days fasting and 40 days suffering and 40 days being tempted by satan himself- you would need six to nine weeks of a vacation to rest and recover. But the good doctor doesn't mention anything at all about Jesus even taking one single day off.

I have gone back and checked with other commentaries of great preachers from the past and never does anyone even allude to Jesus having anytime at all to rest or relax so that He might recover His

strength or so He can get His Mind back in order after going through such a powerful ordeal here with satan.

There is nothing in the Greek words that are used here to give us any indication at all that Jesus took even one day off- but the way that words read- it appears that Jesus began His Ministry the very next day. And I think this is significant because nobody else has ever conducted their ministry like Jesus did. I get tired and I have to take time off to rest and recover- and Jesus periodically took time off, too- to steal away to pray- but it does not appear that Jesus did that here- and I think there is a very good reason for that- please read again **Luke 4:13** with me:

**When the devil had finished all this tempting, he left him until an opportune time.**

Now there is nothing here in Luke's account that would give us any more insight into this- but when we look at how Matthew recorded this moment- we are given some additional information that will help us to understand just why Jesus was able to go immediately into His Ministry after going through such a rigorous time of suffering for 40 days. For example- **Matthew 4:11** says:

**Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him.**

So after Jesus completed His 40 fast and His 40 day time of agony and temptation- having utterly and completely defeated satan in all ways- Jesus was not left alone to recover and struggle in His Own Humanity to regain His strength- but God the Father sent holy angels to attend to Jesus and to strengthen Him and to feed Him and to restore Jesus supernaturally.

Now please remember that Jesus was fully God and fully Man at the same time in the same body without conflict or contradiction, and yet in order to fulfill God the Father's Will and in order to be fully led by God the Holy Spirit- Jesus- Who is God the Son- voluntarily laid aside the Prerogatives and Abilities of His Own Divine Nature and humbled Himself.

So Jesus was fully at God's Mercy and fully at the Spirit's leading and that was fine with Jesus. As I have told you before- Jesus loved His

Father more than anyone has ever or will ever love God. And because Jesus loved His Father fully, and because Jesus had fully submitted Himself to the leading of the Holy Spirit- it meant more to Jesus to be obedient to His Father and to please His Father and to be fully led by God the Holy Ghost than it did whether He ate or not. It meant more to Jesus that He was faithful to His Father and in full obedience to the Spirit's leading than it did that He lived or died.

Being happy and free and full and healthy and delivered from pain and set free from suffering and prosperous was *not* what was on Jesus' Mind- but to be obedient and faithful- *that* was what was on Jesus' Mind. Escaping pain and suffering and hardship and persecution and even dying- avoiding *those* things and being delivered from *those* things were *not* priorities for Jesus- and those things are not what should be our priorities either.

No, what concerned Jesus most was that His Father's Will was carried out completely and faithfully. What concerned Jesus the most was whether or not He was in full submission to the leading of the Holy Spirit. What was on Jesus' Mind was not how He was *Personally* benefitting from what God wanted done- but whether or not God was being Glorified.

And we found out that that is the true definition of Love, and that is the true definition of devotion, and that is the true definition of obedience and service.

So Jesus had voluntarily laid aside His Divinity and submitted Himself fully to His Father's Will and the Spirit's leading. And now in this weakened and emaciated condition- Jesus was fully dependant on God rescuing Him or else His flesh would be in serious trouble- health wise.

So because God's Will had not yet been accomplished because Jesus had not died- God dispatched angles from Heaven to attend to Jesus, to bring Jesus back into perfect health, to feed Jesus supernaturally so that He would not have to take even one day off to recover.

And so not only was Jesus not weak- but Luke is faithful to tell us in verse 14 that Jesus returned back into Galilee:

**... in the power of the Spirit**

And because of His great triumph over satan, and because of His miraculous recovery from 40 days of fasting- **news about him spread through the whole countryside.**

After Jesus returned to Galilee- He went right into their synagogues, and this time- He didn't go to learn like He did when He was 12 years old- but He went to teach. He didn't go there to listen and ask questions- But this time Jesus- full of the Power of the Holy Spirit- having totally defeated satan at every turn- fully understanding His Mission from God and Who He was- went into the synagogues to teach and to instruct and show the people the Way of the Lord. So we see that Jesus is no longer on the defensive here- but Jesus now takes the initiative and goes on the offensive.

So in **Luke 4:18&19** the good doctor tells us that Jesus reads from the Greek Septuagint- which was the Greek translation of the Hebrew OT that the Jews had in the first century, and Jesus stands up and He reads from **Isaiah 61:1&2** which says:

**1 The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners,**

**2 to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn,**

... and He sits down, looks at the crowd of worshipers in the synagogue at Nazareth, and says,

**Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing**

So what Jesus was doing here is telling this crowd of Jews in no uncertain terms that He was the One Whom Isaiah was talking about. That He is the One Who the Spirit of God has anointed to preach the Gospel to the poor, that He is the One Who will heal the broken hearted, that He is the One Who will preach deliverance to the captives, that he is the One Who will recover sight to the blind and Who will set at liberty those Whom satan has bruised, and He is the One Who will preach the acceptable year of the Lord.

Now at this point- I really don't think that the Jews fully understood what Jesus actually meant when He said this. And the

reason that I don't think it had quite sunk in yet is because they didn't get up immediately and rend their garments and denounce His blasphemy and try to stone Him like they did several times later on.

At this point- they may have thought that Jesus was simply another prophet like John the Baptist- announcing that the Messiah would soon come. But that is not what Jesus meant when He read this passage.

For example over in **Luke 7:20** after his arrest- John the Baptist begins to doubt Jesus because He was not doing what so many thought the Messiah was supposed to do- and so John sent his servants to ask Jesus, **Are you the one who is to come, or should we expect someone else?** And Jesus answered them indirectly by saying to John's messengers, **Go back and report to John what you have seen and heard: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is proclaimed to the poor. Blessed is anyone who does not stumble on account of me.**

In other words- Jesus was telling John that many of the things that John thought were important in identifying the true Messiah were not really what would identify the One Who was to come- and that Jesus had no intention of rescuing John from the injustice of his imprisonment- because what was happening to John was part of God's Will and Jesus spoke on behalf of God here about whether or not John was going to live- which is just another way of saying that Jesus held life and death in His hands because He was God, and so John must take heed to his own heart so that he would not become offended at Jesus.

So what *Jesus* meant in the synagogue at Nazareth when He said that Isaiah's prophecy had come to pass that day in their ears was that the time of the Messiah had arrived and He was the Messiah. Jesus was telling these Jews that the long- hoped-for King, the long awaited son of David, the great Liberator, the Deliverer and the Savior of the whole world, the world Ruler, the Bringer of Justice and Peace- the Messiah had come.

And the way Jesus quotes **Isaiah 61** reveals a mystery about the Messiah's coming. It is an extraordinarily short Scripture reading for a synagogue service. Most of the time when the Jews had a Scripture reading in one of their services- it was an entire Chapter or even an entire Book. So this was very short- and if you know this passage in

**Isaiah**- then you know that Jesus breaks it off right in the middle of a verse.

Jesus says in **Luke 4:19** that he has been sent "**to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor**" and then He just abruptly stops. But if you read **Isaiah 61:2**- the prophet actually said:

**To proclaim the year of the LORD's favor and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn,**

So why didn't Jesus finish the sentence? Because there is a mystery about His coming, namely, that the coming of the Lord is a two-act drama. The Old Testament prophets (like Isaiah) saw the entire concept of the Messiah as being just one single event and they didn't separate the two times that the Messiah would come- His first as a babe and the second as the all conquering King. They never divided Jesus' first coming from His second coming. The OT prophets did not comprehend that part of the Ministry of the Messiah. They looked at Salvation and Judgment as being together. The year of liberation and the day of vengeance were all one to them.

But when Jesus came, He said in **John 12:47&48**:

**47 If anyone hears my words but does not keep them, I do not judge that person. For I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world.**

**48 There is a judge for the one who rejects me and does not accept my words; the very words I have spoken will condemn them at the last day.**

So the *first* coming of Jesus Christ ushered in what Isaiah called "The Acceptable Year of the Lord"- a "year" or a "time" or a "season" or a "dispensation" for Salvation- but not Judgment.

The Apostle Paul said in **2Corinthians 6:2b**,

**...now is the time of God's favor, now is the day of salvation**

So we live in a day of great Grace and Mercy where God withholds His Judgment and Wrath and offers full amnesty to our rebellious hearts as long as the acceptable "year" or this "dispensation" of Grace lasts. And this period is called throughout the Bible as "The Last Days" or "The Church Age", and began with the Death, Burial, and Resurrection of Jesus and extends all the way until Jesus returns in the

future. So "The Last Days" has now begun its third 1,000 year dispensation since the Resurrection.

But when the "year of acceptance" is over- when the Last Days is finished, when God is through with the Church Age- and the Lord bursts the clouds and returns to this earth- in His Second coming- then the "day" of Salvation is over, the hour of Grace is finished, the time of God's Mercy is completed, the time of the full number of Gentiles has been accomplished where every one of God's elected people whom He chose to be saved from before the foundation of the world have been saved- and the time appointed by the Father has come- then the "Day of Vengeance" will arrive, and the 2700 year old prophecy of **Isaiah 61:2** will finally completed.

The Apostle Paul says in **2Thessalonians 1:7-10**:

**7 And give relief to you who are troubled, and to us as well. This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels.**

**8 He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.**

**9 They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might**

**10 on the day he comes to be glorified in his holy people and to be marveled at among all those who have believed. This includes you, because you believed our testimony to you.**

Therefore, what Jesus is saying here in **Luke 4:18&19**- at the very beginning of His Ministry- is that He is the Messiah and that He is ushering in a day of Good News—a Day of Release and Healing and Liberation and Salvation- and that for now- that fearful Day of Vengeance that has also been promised- is postponed.

Now before we look at just what this Good News really is- let me give you two reasons why I think **Luke 4:18&19** describes not only the mission of Jesus- but also the mission of His Church.

First, in **John 20:21**- Jesus met His disciples after the Resurrection just before He returned to Heaven and said,

**Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.**

So the Church is an extension of Jesus' Mission in the world. We are to be like Him in His suffering for others. He is the light of the world, and according to **John 12:36** and **Matthew 5:14-16**- we are little beams or little reflections of that Light. We are not that Light- but we are a reflection *of* that Light. So as God sent Jesus into the world- the Bible says that Jesus has sent us into the world.

The second reason I think **Luke 4:18&19** describes our mission as well as Jesus' mission is that the Church is called the Body of Christ. **Ephesians 1:22&23** says:

**22 And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church,**  
**23 which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.**

And the Apostle Paul wrote this in **Ephesians 4:15&16**:

**15 Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ.**  
**16 From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.**

So just as our physical bodies are all that people see of us- so the Church is all that people see of Christ. So as our bodies put our wills into visible action- so, too, Christ puts His will into visible action in the earth- through His Church. Therefore, the mission which Christ once performed in His Own physical Body during His first appearing on earth- He now performs during the Last days or during the Church Age through His corporate Body, which is the Church.

So every time you read what Jesus did or said- always give attention to two things: what He did *for you*, that you could not do for yourself, *and* the *example* He gives *to you* that we all should emulate. Everything Jesus said and did was to cause us to *trust* Him and to *imitate* Him- both of those things. Everything Jesus did is both a foundation of our faith and a call to action.

For example turn with me and read- **1Peter 2:21-24**,

**21 To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.**



**22 “He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth.”**

**23 When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly.**

**24 “He himself bore our sins” in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; “by his wounds you have been healed.”**

Now notice very carefully how the Apostle Peter said this. In verse 21- Peter said,

**... because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.**

Now when Peter says "**Christ suffered for you**"- that's talking about Salvation. Jesus suffered and died on the Cross so that we could be saved. Our Salvation was purchased at a cost we could never have paid. So this part is something that Jesus and only Jesus could do. But then Peter also said, "**Leaving you an example**"- and that's our illustration. So even though we can't atone for sins- we *can* take up our crosses and deny ourselves and follow Jesus, and we can endure hardships and persecutions and trials and afflictions so that we may lead people to the only One Who *can* atone for sins.

So in order to encourage our faith and call ourselves to action- let's trace Jesus' footsteps and listen to His Words.

And to do that- I first want us to see the crucial work of the Holy Spirit in Jesus' life. In **Luke 1:35** Jesus is conceived by the Holy Spirit. Then in **Luke 3:22**, when Jesus was thirty years old, the Spirit descended on Him like a dove at His baptism. This was a special anointing for ministry and a sign of His Father's approval and love.

Then in **Luke 4:1**, Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan, and was led or driven by the Spirit for forty days into the wilderness, to fast and suffer and to be tempted by the devil.

And while He was in the wilderness- satan tried to allure Jesus away from His Mission as the Suffering Servant Who would completely empty Himself and Who would completely submit Himself and Who would completely obey His Father's Will and Who would completely be led by God the Holy Ghost and Who would die for our Salvation.

And we saw that Jesus resisted this temptation by the Word of God and by the Spirit of God, and he came forth in power and victory.

Now I want you to see a beautiful contrast here between two *sources* of Power. Remember back in **Luke 4:3–13**- where satan tempted Jesus to avail Himself of His Rights and Power as God's Son to get the pleasure of food, the glory of a world ruler, and the acclaim of a wonder-working Messiah.

But Jesus kept His Face set towards the Cross and the fulfillment of His father's Will, and utterly renounced that kind of deliverance and power and glory. And the result of this sacrifice is given in verses 14& 15:

**14 Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about him spread through the whole countryside.**

**15 He was teaching in their synagogues, and everyone praised him.**

So Jesus refused to seek pleasure and power and glory and the praise of men and deliverance according to satan's agenda- and the result was the enjoyment of the Power of God.

And I pray that you can see that the same thing is true for us today. Look what the Apostle James said in **James 4:5-10**:

**5 Or do you think Scripture says without reason that he jealously longs for the spirit he has caused to dwell in us?**

**6 But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: “God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble.”**

**7 Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.**

**8 Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.**

**9 Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom.**

**10 Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.**

So as long as we- who represent Christ's Body, which is the Church- as long as we resist the temptation to make ourselves great in the earth by the emissaries of satan- and as long as we continue to delight ourselves in the straight and narrow path, as long as we

determine to be faithful to God's Will- regardless of how that affects us personally, as long as we purpose in our hearts to continue to be led by God's Spirit- even when that means that it involves suffering and rejection and pain, as long as we continue to reject the temptations by the modern pied pipers- who represent satan- who promise earthy treasures and glory and who tempt us with physical healings and deliverance from all sufferings and who try to seduce us with an escape from all problems and deliverance from all afflictions- just like satan did with Jesus- then, we, too, may return from that time of temptation, suffering and agony in the Power of the Spirit, and, we, too, will come back- fully prepared to carry the Good News and the news of the acceptable Year of the Lord to the lost and dying nations of the world.

Now why does God talk so much about suffering and afflictions and agonies and persecutions for His Own people all throughout the Holy Bible? Why does God focus on these hard aspects, and why do so many teachers in the modern Church seek to completely avoid any mention of this aspect of Christianity and some go so far as to actually denounce it?

Why is it that God receives Glory from the suffering of His Own people? Isn't the whole purpose of being saved that we could avoid and be delivered *from* suffering? Isn't it the devil that wants to hurt us while God wants to prosper us and make us healthy and allow us to live in this world- happy and free? Those are good questions and ones that desire a good answer.

And part of that answer lies in the fact that over the last 100 years or so- there has been a huge shift away from any kind of preaching or teaching about suffering being the Will of God in the life of a believer. But before that time- for the first 1900 years of Christianity- the Church of Jesus clearly taught that suffering was part and parcel to being a believer.

So why the change? If the Bible teaches from cover to cover that suffering in the life of a believer brings Glory to God and that is what the Christian Church taught for the first 19 centuries of its existence - why did the Church change that Doctrine? Did the Bible change? Were all those great men of God who lived before us- were they all wrong about this?

I suggest to you that there is a missing piece in our own personal theologies about this issue that has escaped us and something that is

very rarely, if ever, even mentioned anymore. And this piece is the missing ingredient that if you can grasp it- if you can comprehend it- it will set your heart on fire with a passion for God like you have never known, and it will cause all the confusing pieces of this great jigsaw called Salvation and why God's people suffer to fall into place.

And this aspect is so profound and so important and so gigantic and so powerful- that as soon as you do see it- you will immediately understand why sufferings and trials and problems and afflictions and agonies and persecutions and sicknesses are really the only things that God could bring into our lives to assist this thing in being real and powerful and dominant in our lives. This is huge- so please listen up.

Please turn with me to read **Isaiah 48:9-11:**

**9 For my own name's sake I delay my wrath; for the sake of my praise I hold it back from you, so as not to destroy you completely.**

**10 See, I have refined you, though not as silver; I have tested you in the furnace of affliction.**

**11 For my own sake, for my own sake, I do this. How can I let myself be defamed? I will not yield my glory to another.**

Now what we have to understand, dear friends, is that God does not love Man near as much as God loves God. We need to understand that the Bible declares over and over and over again that God Almighty is infinitely passionate about His Own Glory. God's very first commitment is to His *Own* Glory- and not to us. God does everything that He does throughout His Universe for His Own Glory- and that is why everything that we do should be for God's Glory- and not for our own. God loves God- or more rightly- God the Father's delight is in the panorama of His Own Perfections reflected as a perfect Image in the Lord Jesus Christ.

So when you ask the question, "*Who is the most God centered Person in all the Universe?*" the answer is, "*God*". God is the most God-centered, the most God-focused, the Most God-loving Being in all the Universe. For example- the reason why God told us in His Word not to have any gods before Him is because God does not have any gods before Himself.

The Westminster catechism- a brilliant Reformed Confession of Faith asks the question: "*What is the chief end of man?*" And then it

answers that question by saying, "*The chief end of man is to know and love and serve God and to enjoy Him forever*". And the reason why that should be the chief end of *Man* is only because that is the chief end of God- God knows God perfectly, and God loves God infinitely, and God enjoys God supremely, and that is why God desires to share that knowledge and to share that love with us.

And I suggest to you that that is what Salvation is really all about- God sharing the knowledge that He has *of* Himself, and God sharing the love that He has *for* Himself with undeserving sinners so that we may stand in awe of God and worship God and give to God the Glory that He is entitled to receive so that our joy may be full.

But we are sinful and our desires are not God's desires and we are tempted to seek after our own glory, and we are tempted to be self-centered and to not give Glory to God and rob God of the Glory that only rightfully belongs to Him. And so rather than just destroy us for our sin- God refines us in the furnace of afflictions. He burns off of us the hay and the wood and the stubble that would cause us to seek after our own glory rather than the Glory of God.

What we have to understand is that sin is nothing more or less than falling short of the Glory of God. It is failing to bring to God the Glory that is due to Him. That is what sin is. The suffering of God's people helps to remove that natural tendency to not give God glory so that all that we seek is to live our lives to the Glory of God. That is why the Apostle Peter taught in **1Peter 4:1**:

**... whoever suffers in the body is done with sin.**

400 years ago- the greatest American Theologian, Jonathan Edwards, wrote a paper entitled, "*The End for Which God Created the World*". In that paper- Edwards said this about the Glory of God:

"God had respect to Himself, as His last and highest end, in this work; because He is worthy in Himself to be so, being infinitely the greatest and best of all beings. All things else, with regard to worthiness, importance, and excellence, are perfectly as nothing in comparison of Him.  
... all this is ever spoken of in Scripture as an ultimate end of God's works is included in that one phrase, the glory of God."

So I ask you this morning, *"Why is it important that all of us be stunned by the radical God-centeredness of God?"* And the answer to that question is because most people today are only willing to be God-centered because they perceive that God is Man-centered. In other words- most people today are willing to do for God only because they think that God will do for them, and if God ever decides not to do for them- they will immediately stop doing for God.

And all I am saying is that- that is not really serving the Lord at all; that is not being God-centered at all- it is really only being self-centered. We may *think* that we are centering our lives on God- but if we are not careful- we do what we do for God because underneath it all we are expecting God to return the favor.

So to allow us to escape that sinful thinking- God allows us to suffer- not to punish us, but to redirect us toward Himself. God wants to impress upon us that God loves His Own Glory more than He loves us- and it is that love for His Own Glory that is the foundation of His love to us.

#### **Isaiah 2:22**

**Stop trusting in mere humans, who have but a breath in their nostrils. Why hold them in esteem?**

#### **Psalms 146:3**

**Do not put your trust in princes, in human beings, who cannot save.**

#### **Jeremiah 17:5**

**This is what the LORD says: "Cursed is the one who trusts in man, who draws strength from mere flesh and whose heart turns away from the LORD.**

#### **Isaiah 40:15-17**

**15 Surely the nations are like a drop in a bucket; they are regarded as dust on the scales; he weighs the islands as though they were fine dust.**

**16 Lebanon is not sufficient for altar fires, nor its animals enough for burnt offerings.**

**17 Before him all the nations are as nothing; they are regarded by him as worthless and less than nothing.**

God's ultimate commitment is to Himself- not to us- and that is where our security is found. God loves His Own Glory above all else.

### **Isaiah 48:9-11**

**9** For my own name's sake I delay my wrath; for the sake of my praise I hold it back from you, so as not to destroy you completely.

**10** See, I have refined you, though not as silver; I have tested you in the furnace of affliction.

**11** For my own sake, for my own sake, I do this. How can I let myself be defamed? I will not yield my glory to another.

God performs Salvation toward unworthy sinners for His Own Sake. He justifies wretches and liars and blasphemers and adulterers and whoremongers and thieves and idolaters- *not* just so that we can be in bliss in Heaven, *not* just so that we can walk on streets of gold, and *not* just so that we can be reunited with loved ones who have gone before us. But God justifies sinners *so that He might be glorified!* Turn with me to **Ezekiel 36**.

### **Ezekiel 36:22&23, 32**

**22** Therefore say to the Israelites, 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: It is not for your sake, people of Israel, that I am going to do these things, but for the sake of my holy name, which you have profaned among the nations where you have gone.

**23** I will show the holiness of my great name, which has been profaned among the nations, the name you have profaned among them. Then the nations will know that I am the LORD, declares the Sovereign LORD, when I am proved holy through you before their eyes.

**32** I want you to know that I am not doing this for your sake, declares the Sovereign LORD. Be ashamed and disgraced for your conduct, people of Israel!

So why did God save us? Why did God predestinate His chosen for Salvation? Please turn with me to **Ephesians 1**.

### **Ephesians 1:5&6, 12&14**

**5** he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will—

**6** to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves.

**12** in order that we, who were the first to put our hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory.

**14** who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory.

Why did God spare rebellious Israel in the wilderness and finally bring them to the Promised Land? Look at **Ezekiel 20**:

**Ezekiel 20:1-22**

**1** In the seventh year, in the fifth month on the tenth day, some of the elders of Israel came to inquire of the LORD, and they sat down in front of me.

**2** Then the word of the LORD came to me:

**3** “Son of man, speak to the elders of Israel and say to them, ‘This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Have you come to inquire of me? As surely as I live, I will not let you inquire of me, declares the Sovereign LORD.’

**4** “Will you judge them? Will you judge them, son of man? Then confront them with the detestable practices of their ancestors

**5** and say to them: ‘This is what the Sovereign LORD says: On the day I chose Israel, I swore with uplifted hand to the descendants of Jacob and revealed myself to them in Egypt. With uplifted hand I said to them, “I am the LORD your God.”

**6** On that day I swore to them that I would bring them out of Egypt into a land I had searched out for them, a land flowing with milk and honey, the most beautiful of all lands.

**7** And I said to them, “Each of you, get rid of the vile images you have set your eyes on, and do not defile yourselves with the idols of Egypt. I am the LORD your God.”

**8** “But they rebelled against me and would not listen to me; they did not get rid of the vile images they had set their eyes on, nor did they forsake the idols of Egypt. So I said I would pour out my wrath on them and spend my anger against them in Egypt.

**9** But for the sake of my name, I brought them out of Egypt. I did it to keep my name from being profaned in the eyes of the nations among whom they lived and in whose sight I had revealed myself to the Israelites.

**10** Therefore I led them out of Egypt and brought them into the wilderness.

**11** I gave them my decrees and made known to them my laws, by which the person who obeys them will live.



**12** Also I gave them my Sabbaths as a sign between us, so they would know that I the LORD made them holy.

**13** “Yet the people of Israel rebelled against me in the wilderness. They did not follow my decrees but rejected my laws—by which the person who obeys them will live—and they utterly desecrated my Sabbaths. So I said I would pour out my wrath on them and destroy them in the wilderness.

**14** But for the sake of my name I did what would keep it from being profaned in the eyes of the nations in whose sight I had brought them out.

**15** Also with uplifted hand I swore to them in the wilderness that I would not bring them into the land I had given them—a land flowing with milk and honey, the most beautiful of all lands—

**16** because they rejected my laws and did not follow my decrees and desecrated my Sabbaths. For their hearts were devoted to their idols.

**17** Yet I looked on them with pity and did not destroy them or put an end to them in the wilderness.

**18** I said to their children in the wilderness, “Do not follow the statutes of your parents or keep their laws or defile yourselves with their idols.

**19** I am the LORD your God; follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.

**20** Keep my Sabbaths holy, that they may be a sign between us. Then you will know that I am the LORD your God.”

**21** “But the children rebelled against me: They did not follow my decrees, they were not careful to keep my laws, of which I said, “The person who obeys them will live by them,” and they desecrated my Sabbaths. So I said I would pour out my wrath on them and spend my anger against them in the wilderness.

**22** But I withheld my hand, and for the sake of my name I did what would keep it from being profaned in the eyes of the nations in whose sight I had brought them out.

So why did God's people suffer in the wilderness? So that they would know that God is God and that they are sinners, and so that through their suffering they would cease from their rebellion.

Why didn't God destroy Israel when they rejected Him from being a King over them and demanded to be like the other pagan nations?

**1Samuel 12:22** says:

**For the sake of his great name the LORD will not reject his people, because the LORD was pleased to make you his own.**

God's great love for the Glory of His Own Name is the Fountain of the free Grace that comes to us and the Rock of our everlasting Security.

Why did the Lord bring the children of Israel back from captivity in Babylon? Because in **Daniel 9:17** Daniel prayed:

**Now, our God, hear the prayers and petitions of your servant. For your sake, Lord, look with favor on your desolate sanctuary.**

Why did the Father send the incarnate Son to Israel? The Apostle Paul gave us the reason in **Romans 15:8&9**:

**8 ... For I tell you that Christ has become a servant of the Jews on behalf of God's truth, so that the promises made to the patriarchs might be confirmed  
9 and, moreover, that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy. As it is written: "Therefore I will praise you among the Gentiles; I will sing the praises of your name."**

Why did Jesus come to His final hour? He said in **John 12:27&28**:

**27 Now my soul is troubled, and what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour.**

**28 Father, glorify your name!** Then a voice came from heaven, "I have glorified it, and will glorify it again."

Jesus suffered and died to glorify the Father and to repair all the shame that we had brought upon God's Honor and Integrity and Name through our sins. And **Romans 3:24-26** says that our only hope of eternal life is that the death of Jesus satisfied God's Righteous claims to receive proper Glory from His creatures.

Brothers and sisters- God loves His Own Glory! And He is determined and committed with all His infinite and eternal Might to display that Glory throughout the Universe and to preserve the integrity and Honor of His Great Name.

When the Apostle Paul says in **2Timothy 2:13**, "if we are faithless, he remains faithful, for he cannot disown himself." Paul was *not* saying

that we are saved in spite of faithlessness, because the verse right before that says:

**... If we disown him, he will also disown us**

No, what Paul was saying here is that even if we want to disown God what belongs to Him- God will not disown Himself. God's fundamental allegiance is to His Own Glory. God is committed to being God before he is committed to being anything else. Suffering helps to bring all that into clarity. Suffering drowns out the noise of the world so that we can know and see God for Who God really is.

So how long do we need to suffer? Until God is glorified in us. So the question is not, "Why does God want me to suffer?" But the real question is, *"What can God bring into my life that will bless me to the point where I no longer live my life to my own glory, but I live my life to the Glory of God?"*

So I ask you this morning, Do you know these things? Do you realize that the answers to your prayers are based on God's love for His Own Glory? Do you plead your case before God on the basis that God does all that He does for His Own Name's sake? Do you realize that the prayer that Jesus told us to pray "Hallowed be thy Name" means that we are asking God to glorify Himself as God in and by and through us?

You have been told a hundred times- "Do all to the Glory of God". But do you realize that the foundation of that commandment is that God loves His Own Glory? God loves His Own Glory with infinite energy and passion and commitment. And God the Holy Spirit is ablaze with this Love for God's Glory. And that is why the children of God love the Glory of God- because they are led by this Spirit. And that is why Satan does not love the Glory of God and why he seeks to steal it and kill it and destroy it in our lives.

Suffering is specifically designed by God to weed out all of that out of us. It helps us to guard ourselves from the vast ocean of man-centeredness that is all around us. And so that is why I say to you that suffering is your best friend, it is a gift of God, it is that which keeps you and that which will establish you. So seek not to always be delivered from afflictions- but seek rather to be delivered from robbing God of the Glory that is due to His Holy Name.

## Let's come and pray

© 2008- 2014 by The Covenant of Peace Church. All rights reserved. Printed in the United States of America

The Covenant of Peace Church 13600 John Clark Road Gulfport, Mississippi 39503 228.832.7729 [www.covenantofpeace.net](http://www.covenantofpeace.net)

Scripture quotations, except those noted otherwise, are from *The New American Standard Bible* © 1996 by The Lockmann Foundation. Used by permission.

This is a single transcript in a larger series of teachings taken from a verse by verse study of **The Gospel According to Luke**. You are free to reproduce it and distribute it as the Lord leads you- without cost or reimbursement to us with the stipulation that you may not add anything or take anything away from this transcript without the express written permission of The Covenant of Peace Church and that this complete copyright statement be at the end of all copies.

The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone.