

Title: **THE MAN'S TRAVAIL**

Text: Jeremiah 30:6-7

Subject: *Christ's Travail and Satisfaction*

Date: Tuesday Evening — December 29, 2009

Tape # Z-79a

Readings: *David Burge and Rex Bartley*

Introduction:

Did you ever hear of a man's travail? Did ever a man travail in birth pains and give birth? On one occasion there was one man who travailed in the pangs of birth and actually gave birth. Turn to Jeremiah 30:6-7, and I will try, as God the Holy Spirit enables me, to talk to you about **THE MAN'S TRAVAIL**.

I cannot think of a better way to conclude the year than by directing your hearts and my own to meditate once more upon the sufferings and death of our dear Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. Normally, when I seek a message for our last meeting at the end of the year, as the old year closes and a New Year dawns, I tend to think either about remembering past blessings and failures or stirring our hearts to seek the revival of God's grace in our souls, giving us renewed devotion to our Redeemer. But the fact is, — All the blessings of the past and all those yet to be bestowed upon us, all the stirrings of our souls, all our repentance, all our faith, all our revivings are the fruit of our Lord's sufferings and death as our Substitute. May God the Holy Spirit show

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us something about our Savior's travail of soul by which he gives life and birth to his redeemed.

(Jeremiah 30:6-7) "Ask ye now, and see whether a man doth travail with child? wherefore do I see every man with his hands on his loins, as a woman in travail, and all faces are turned into paleness? 7 Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it."

BIRTH BY A MAN

In order to take away our sins, the Lord Jesus had to fully experience and fully endure all the curses of God that fell upon our fallen parents in the Garden; he had to suffer the curses of the Triune God upon Adam and the curses of the Triune God upon Eve. The curse could not be removed except it be exhausted. Review the curses the Lord God pronounced upon the fallen pair in the Garden. In Genesis 3:15, the Lord God promised redemption by the woman's Seed; but redemption could not come without the curse being removed.

(Genesis 3:15-19) "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel. — 16 Unto the woman he said, **I will greatly**

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multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire *shall be* to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. ^{17 ¶} And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: **cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life**; ¹⁸ **Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee**; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; ¹⁹ **In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground**; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou *art*, and unto dust shalt thou return.”

(Galatians 3:13) “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed *is* every one that hangeth on a tree.”

The Lord Jesus, in his own sacred person, literally and truly bore every curse of God against our father Adam and his sin. In sorrow he ate his bread all the days of his earthly pilgrimage.

- He, and he alone, by way of emphasis, is peculiarly called, “**The man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief**.”
- He alone sweat a bloody sweat as a man in the Garden.

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- He it was who was crowned with thorns from the cursed earth.
- He said to the Father, “Thou hast brought me into the dust of death” (Psalm 22:15).

But how shall the curse be removed from the woman, the distinct curse God placed upon the woman? How shall the curse of conception, child bearing and subjection be removed from the woman? Isaiah tells us, “He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied” (Isaiah 53:11).

Thus, by the travail of his soul in death, the Lord Jesus, gave birth to and brings all his children to Glory. — “*Ask ye now, and see whether a man doth travail with child? Wherefore do I see every man with his hands on his loins, as a woman in travail, and all faces, are turned into paleness? Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it; it is even the time of Jacob’s trouble: but he shall be saved out of it*” (Jeremiah 30:6-7).

What a delightful shock! Our all-glorious Christ is that Man, the God-man, our mighty Jacob who supplanted death and hell for us and won for us the birthright! He travailed for his children. And while all faces are turned into paleness by reason of sin, Christ, our glorious Jacob, our Israel, Jehovah’s Servant, in the great day of his soul’s

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travail, was saved out of it. Now, being saved out of his great travail and trouble, the Spirit of God declares, — “**He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied!**” He remembers no more his travail and trouble and anguish, for joy of that multitude to whom he gives birth, as innumerable as the stars of heaven and the sand upon the shore!

HIS TRAVAIL

“*He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied.*” — **First, think of our Savior's travail.** This is the covenant promise of our faithful God and Father. Think about this solemn expression, — “**the travail of his soul.**” Did the Lord Jesus really sustain in soul a travail like those throes of nature with which a woman is panged in giving birth? Did he travail in birth for his redeemed?

Pause, O my soul, and very solemnly consider this astonishing thing. — **The Travail of the God-man!** In **Psalms 18** there is a prophetic allusion to our blessed Lord in his agony. He cried, — “*The sorrows of hell compassed me about: the snares of death prevented me*” (Psalm 18:5). We read the same thing again in **Psalms 116:3**. — “*The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell gat hold upon me: I found trouble and sorrow.*” Stronger

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expressions of agony and sorrow, of suffering and torment are not found anywhere.

“He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied.” — Isaiah 53 contains the whole of the Gospel and this expression in Isaiah 53:11 gives us the very essence of the wondrous mystery of redemption. Here the Prophet of God declares both the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow. If *“the angels desire to look into these things,”* — how much more should we desire to look into them? Everything stated here is true, and wonderful, and sublime, everything stated infinitely important and absolutely necessary!

The allusion is obvious. — *“A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world”* (John 16:21). Both Isaiah and Jeremiah were inspired by God the Holy Spirit to use very a strong and striking words to compare the risen Savior to a woman who has delivered a child.

- In each case there is suffering.
- In each case the suffering is followed by pleasure.
- And in each case the pleasure is looked upon as a complete recompense of the suffering. — The birth of the child repays the travail of the mother; and the

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salvation of the God's elect satisfies the Savior. — “*He shall see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied.*”

INCOMPARABLE SORROW

When we are in pain, we all tend to think our pain is the greatest pain a man can know. When we are in sorrow, we think there is no sorrow like our sorrow. But the Lord Jesus truthfully declares that there is no sorrow like his sorrow (Lamentations 1:12-14). His sorrow was incomparable sorrow. His travail was incomparable travail.

“*Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the LORD hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger.* ¹³ From above hath he sent fire into my bones, and it prevaieth against them: he hath spread a net for my feet, he hath turned me back: he hath made me desolate *and* faint all the day. ¹⁴ The yoke of my transgressions is bound by his hand: they are wreathed, *and* come up upon my neck: he hath made my strength to fall, the Lord hath delivered me into *their* hands, *from whom* I am not able to rise up.” (Lamentations 1:12-14)

Two things here tell us of the greatness of his suffering.

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- First, the term by which it is expressed. “*Travail*” — not trouble — but “*travail*.”
- And, second, the seat of his travail — His Soul! — “*The travail of his soul.*” **The distress of the soul is the soul of distress.**

“*The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity: but a wounded spirit who can bear?*” (Proverbs 18:14) — While all is calm and firm within, external trials are borne with comparative ease. Then we may be “*troubled on every side, yet not distressed,*” like a ship in the sea, which does not sink by the water around it; but when the waves break above the bow and enter the vessel trouble begins.

David, speaking prophetically as our Lord Jesus, cried, — “*My bones are vexed, my soul is also sore vexed!*” — “*O, my God, my soul is cast down within me!*” Our blessed Savior’s sufferings were “*the travail of his soul.*”

Without question, our dear Savior suffered outwardly, too. With regard to outward distresses, he was the man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. **But even his external sufferings derived much of their pressure from the tenderness and sensibility of his soul.**

- Some are little affected, even with bereavements: but he, at the grave of Lazarus, groaned in spirit and wept.

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- Some seem careless about their reputation; but he said, “reproach hath broken my heart.”
- Some when stricken are not grieved, but make their faces harder than rock; but he “in the days of his flesh made supplications with strong cryings and tears.” — What a gentle, tender man he was!

MADE SIN

Second, think what it must have been that caused our Lord Jesus to exclaim on the cross, — “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” What made him in the garden, before the hand of man had yet touched him, to be “sore amazed and very heavy?” What led him to say, “My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death?” while “his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling to the ground?”

Some imagine that it was the thought of his approaching crucifixion that caused the Lord's agony. But that cannot possibly be so. — We find many in history who had to endure torturing and lingering agonies, who yet rejoiced in the prospect, who left their prisons singing, kissed the instrument of their pain, and thanked the executioner.

- John Bradford, when informed that he was to be burned at the stake the next day, fell upon his knees and praised God for an honor he had so long waited for.

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- When a popish priest said to John Hooper at the place of execution, “I am truly sorry to find you here,” the martyr replied, — “O man, keep thy sorrow to thyself, and mourn over thine own wickedness, I am well blessed by God, and to die for the sake of Christ is sweet to my soul.”

Is the servant above his Master, or the disciple above his Lord? Certainly not! — Those martyrs had Calvary before them, but not Gethsemane. They had to endure the cross, but not the curse. They died by men, but not for them. They had not to bear the sins of many; they had not to bear their own sins — not one of their own sins — or they would have sunk down under the burden. But “he bare our sins in his own body on the tree.” — “The Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all.” — “Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows.” — “The chastisement of our peace was upon him, and by his stripes we are healed.” — His soul was made an offering for sin. — “He hath made him sin for us, who knew know sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him!”

DECLARED THE SON

Third, the Scriptures tell us that our Lord Jesus was declared to be the Son of God with power by his resurrection from the dead. He was declared to be the Son

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of God by his resurrection in by virtue of the fact that when he arose from the dead he who bare our sin in his own body on the tree, rose without sin, as the Man who had put away sin, “justified in the Spirit” (Romans 1:4; 1 Timothy 3:16).

“He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied.” — Something was derived from the travail of his soul. It was the salvation of his people. To show that this infinite good is the result of his suffering, our Lord compared his dying to the sowing of seed, which dies and then produces. — “Verily, verily, I say unto you. Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die it abideth alone: but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit” (John 12:24).

Here we are reminded of our great debt to him. If we are reconciled unto God, it is by the death of his Son: if we are redeemed from the curse of the law, it is because he was made a curse for us. The blessing, though free to us, was beyond expression expensive to him. He accomplished it, not by a mere volition of his will, or an exertion of his power, but by his obedience unto death, even the death of the cross!

“He sunk beneath our heavy woes,
To raise us to his throne;
There’s not a gift his hand bestows,

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But cost his heart a groan.”

“Worthy is the Lamb that was slain!”

JOY BEFORE HIM

Fourth, this salvation, the salvation of all his elect, was the joy set before him, for which he endured the cross, despising the shame (Hebrews 12:2).

A child may grow up, and be acknowledged as the offspring of his mother; but if she dies in giving birth, though others see the travail of the mother, she never does. She is laid low in the dust; and in vain her infant goes to her grave. — His cries, when oppressed, cannot reach her ears. If he is well treated well the news can never gladden her heart. — If her son comes to honor, she will never know it. — If he is brought low, she will not be injured. She is dead.

So it was with Rachel: “**Rachel travailed, and she had hard labor. And it came to pass, when she was in hard labor, that the midwife said unto her. Fear not; thou shalt have this son also.**” And she had a son, and he became a patriarch, and the head of a tribe; but she saw it not: for she only sighed out a name expressive of her disappointment

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and sorrow. — She called his name Benoni (son of my sorrow), and died.

So would it have been with our Savior, had he not risen from the dead. Whatever blessings he procured for us by dying he could not have seen the application and enjoyment of them, had he remained in the grave. But the grave could not hold him! **It was said of him.** — He shall live. — A seed shall serve him. — And he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand.

This is his reward. His saved people are the joy which was set before him, for which he endured the cross, despising the shame. — **“He shall see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied!”** He shall see his seed...

- Justified!
- Sanctified!
- Perfect!
- Satisfied!
- With Himself!

“By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered

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with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.”

As present we see not all things put under him, but we see him, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor. We see him with power over all flesh: with all power in heaven and in earth — able therefore to counteract all the designs of his enemies, and to make them subservient to the accomplishment of his own — able to take the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession — able to subdue Paganism, and the false prophet, and the man of sin — able to take away the veil from the hearts of men, and induce them to look upon him whom they have pierced, and to mourn for him — able to root up in his churches every plant which his heavenly Father hath not planted — able to increase a thousand fold all the excellences and usefulness of his people. — “For brass I will bring gold, and for iron I will bring silver, and for wood brass, and for stones iron.” — “Moreover the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be seven-fold, as the light of seven days, in the day that the Lord bindeth up the breach of his people, and healeth the stroke of their wound.”

SUCCESS SURE

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“He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied.” — His success is sure! Nothing is more trying and shameful to men than to labor without success, especially when great difficulties are encountered, and great sacrifices incurred. But **how pleasing is it to the farmer** after fertilizing, plowing, and sowing, to go out to his fields and see, first the blade, then the ear, and after that the full corn in the ear; and when he has borne the burden and heat of the day in harvest to behold the precious grain safely housed in the garner! How delightful it must have been to ancient warriors after their marchings, and deprivations and all the perils of war, to return home in peace, and enjoy the spoils and rewards of their victory!

Take the image to which Isaiah refers. How is the mother recompensed for her pain when she sees a living child — her own — **the object of her deep affection** — **the wearer of the father’s name and image** — an endeared creature **depending upon her** — to be **fed at her breasts** — to be **bounced on her knee** — to be **assisted by her in all his attempts to walk and speak**.

But there have been days wherein it was said, *“Blessed is the womb that bare not, and the paps that never gave suck.”* Many a Rachel is weeping for her children, and refusing to be comforted, because they are not. — **But the pleasure of the Lord Jesus is liable to no such**

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disappointment — “He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied.”

HIS SATISFACTION

Fifth, let's think for just a minute or two on our Redeemer's satisfaction. What can be so animating and improving? Paul says to the Thessalonians, “Ye are our glory and joy.” Yet he and his brethren were only ministers by whom they believed, even as the Lord gave to every man. But if converts are the glory and joy of those who are only the instruments of their salvation, in how much higher a degree must they be so to him who is the sole author of it!

When the Pharisees and Scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners and eateth with them...

“What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? ⁵ And when he hath found *it*, he layeth *it* on his shoulders, rejoicing. ⁶ And when he cometh home, he calleth together *his* friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost. ⁷ I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth,

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more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.” (Luke 15:4-7)

The Good Shepherd, instead of complaining of his wearisome and painful search only exults in his success! — This is the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls.

In the fourth chapter of John's Gospel, when he came to the well he was not only thirsty, but hungry, and therefore his disciples went away into the city to buy meat. When they returned they spread it before him, saying, “*Master, eat.*” — But he said unto them, “*I have meat to eat that ye know not of.*” They asked, “*Hath any man brought him aught to eat?*” He then said, — My disciples, since you left me I have had an opportunity to enlighten and convert, by my grace, a poor sinful wretch who came here to draw water; and she has left her vessel for my use; and has gone into the city to tell her neighbours; and is, as you see yonder, returning over the plain with a large number, who will receive my doctrine and become my followers. Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest. Behold, I say unto you, lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest. Ah! my disciples, this is food! There is no repast like the satisfaction of doing good. — My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.

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Behold, my friends, the worth and importance of the salvation of the soul. — Is he satisfied with it as the proper and full reward of his soul's travail? It is a strong proof of the importance of salvation that the angels of God rejoice over one sinner that repenteth. But the salvation of his elect is the satisfaction of our Divine Redeemer himself! — O that we estimated our souls as he estimates them! Everything else would appear less than nothing and vanity compared with their salvation.

Then we may enlarge our notions of the number of the saved. — **A generous heart is never satisfied; it is always planning, always desiring to do something more.** And would his soul, which is compassion itself, be satisfied with a few that should be saved? How many must be made partakers of the benefit before he stays the process of mercy, and says, It is enough! I am satisfied! But it was promised him that his seed shall be as the stars of heaven, as the sand on the sea shore and as drops of dew.

What encouragement there is here for faith and hope. He does merely not invite sinners: He both commands guilty sinners to come to him assures them that it their salvation by him is his infinite soul's pleasure and satisfaction! **We can therefore plead with you his interest as well as your own.** Let him then see you at his feet, and hear you crying, Lord, save me, I perish — That charms

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him more than the songs of angels. — It is the satisfaction of his soul's travail of his soul.

What a noble example we have in our Lord Jesus to follow. Let the same mind be in us that was in him. Let his joy be our joy. Let us spare no pains; let us grudge no sacrifices in order to be useful. And let the satisfaction arising from it be our reward — *“Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; let him know, that he which converteth a sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.”*

Hail! Almighty Lord Jesus! The trophies of your redemption shall correspond to the greatness of your name! The satisfaction of your soul shall be according to the travail of your soul! — *“Men shall be blessed in thee, and all nations shall call thee blessed.”* — *“And so, all Israel shall be saved!”*

Amen.