

ISAIAH

ISAIAH 53:5-6, THE SUFFERING SERVANT, PART 7

Verse 5 is a revelation of the cross, although that would not be explicitly revealed until the Lord's crucifixion actually occurred, and not actually admitted until the fact of the Second Coming. Another important hint in the Old Testament concerning the fact of the cross was the curse of being hung on a tree (Dt. 21:23 cited by Paul in Gal. 3:13). "Thus verses 5-6 are a prophecy of saved Israelites' dramatic confession at the second advent that Christ bore *their* sins on the cross and that His death was substitutionary and atoning for them" [Merrill F. Unger, "Isaiah" in *Unger's Commentary on the Old Testament*, 1297].

Isaiah 53:5 ⁵But He [וְהוּא] was pierced [הֵלַל] through for [מִן] our transgressions [פְּשָׁעַי], He was crushed [דָּכָא] for our iniquities [עֲוֹנוֹי]; The chastening [מִסְקָר] for our well-being [שְׁלוֹמֵנוּ] fell upon Him, And by His scourging [חַבְרֵהָה] we are healed [רָפְאָה].

We would do well to remember that the people of Isaiah's day would not understand the complete revelation concerning just what this Scripture was actually revealing. I do think they would have understood that the Messiah was the subject, it also seems that they would understand that His death is being revealed. We understand it better due to progressive revelation and the passage of time; we are looking back at the cross. The people speaking here will not fully understand Isaiah's revelation until the Second Coming when they will finally realize the full significance of all these truths. These people will be the saved believing remnant that will enter the Messianic Kingdom. We also cannot ignore the fact that many Gentiles will reach the same conclusion at that time as the fact of the "many" reveals in the Suffering Servant song.

In verse 4, the people admitted that they did not esteem Him, yet, here in verse 5, they have finally come to the point where they admit that He died for them. The words used in this verse are very strong. "There were no stronger expressions to be found in the language, to denote a violent and painful death" [C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament: Isaiah*, vol. 7, 7:509]. We have examined the concept of substitutionary sacrifice that is identified in these verses, and now we have to modify that further with the idea of judicial punishment in verses 5-6. "Like verse 4, this verse cannot be understood without the idea of substitution to which, here, the adjective 'penal' must [also] be attached" [J. Alec Motyer, *Isaiah: An Introduction & Commentary*, 335].

There is no possible way to understand that what is happening here is anything but a vicarious or substitutionary sacrifice. Any honest exegesis of the Scripture must reach that conclusion. "What else, we ask again, can these words mean than that He suffered vicariously? Not merely *with*, but *for* others? By no exegesis is it possible to escape this conclusion?" [Thomas L. Constable, "Isaiah" in *Thomas Constable's Notes on the Bible: Volume IV: Isaiah-Daniel*, 4:154 quoting David Baron, *The Servant of Jehovah*, 89]. It is only when people insert humanistic thinking into their exegetical process that other conclusions concerning what is going on here emerge and the concept of vicarious sacrifice is rejected. "The Talmud calls Jesus a transgressor, and the renowned 12th century scholar, Maimonides, states that Jesus deserved the violent death which he suffered.... In spite of

the assertions of the rabbis and of some non-Jewish theologians that vicarious suffering is morally objectionable and unacceptable, this is exactly what the Scriptures teach" [Victor Buksbazen, *The Prophet Isaiah: A Commentary*, 417]. Of course, the famed Rabbi does not believe that Jesus is the Messiah; therefore, in the teacher's mind, the Suffering Servant did not die for the nation's sins; He merely died for His own sins. Others think that they can define morality on the basis of human rationalistic thought processes and emotions, but that is a faulty base. Morality is defined in the unchanging, inerrant Word of God. God has decreed that the penalty for sin is death, and it takes an unblemished, innocent, pure sacrifice to suffer that death whether human beings think so or not and whether they like it or not. So says the Word of God.

The verse begins "but He," [וְהוּא] which shifts the focus from the incorrect belief that He suffered for His own sins to the correct belief that He died for the sins of Israel and the many. This pronoun is first in the sentence rather than the verb, which is ordinarily the normal Hebrew word order. Subject first indicates emphasis by placing it on the Suffering Servant who is going to suffer the penalty due Israel and the many.

Pierced, הָלַל, means to pierce, to be pierced through or wounded, to bore through, or perforate referring to the penetration of a sharp object into the body which can harm, wound, or even kill. In this verb form, the intensive passive participle means to be intensely pierced or wounded by outside forces. The wounding or piercing may physically result in death or figuratively result in despair. In this context, death is obviously the result of being pierced. "The vb. occurs primarily in poetic texts, referring usually to a fatal wounding ..." [Willem A. VanGemeren, gen. ed., s.v. "הָלַל," *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis*, 2:151].

In this context, "pierced" relates to death; therefore, "wounded" is not the best translation although many versions use it (TANAKH, KJV, NKJV, RSV, ASV, NET Bible, ISV). Both of these are acceptable words to use in an English translation in terms of translating the Hebrew word into English, but context suggests the use of one, i.e., pierced (NASB, CSB, LEB, LSV, NIV, ESV, YLT), over the other. Wounds contribute to death, but the concept of a wound, in and of itself as an English word, does not mean death. We differentiate between the two by saying something like this: "He was shot and wounded" and "he was shot and killed" which have different meanings one from the other. One relates to death and one relates to an injury not resulting in death, at least at the moment. "... [A]nd there accompanies this thought usually that of a piercing through unto death. Perhaps there is also included the idea of a violent death. The thought is that because we had transgressed, he was pierced through unto the death.... The [participle] expresses a fact that has become completely accomplished. The servant has died, and not merely fallen into suffering; and his death was violent and painful" [Edward J. Young, *The Book of Isaiah: A Commentary*, 347, 347, n. 20].

The use of the word "pierced" is a strong indicator for the doctrine of the God inspired, inerrant nature of the Scriptures as well as an indication that God is omniscient knowing the past, the present, and the future. Isaiah wrote this prophecy hundreds of years before the Suffering Servant was hung on the tree. He was hung there by means of nails piercing His wrists and His feet which set the up the conditions under which His death would be

brought about. He was also pierced with a spear into His chest cavity to ensure He was actually dead before He was removed from the cross.

“The verb ‘he was pierced, slain’ is a verb that is used in the context of someone dying, often at the end of a sword.... Root II of ללל indicates that the dragon in [Isaiah] 51:9 was killed, while in Ezek 28:9 this verb is parallel to the verb for ‘kill,’ and in Jer 14:18 and Lam 4:9 it describes what the sword does that results in death” [Gary V. Smith, *The New American Commentary: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture: Isaiah 40-66*, 450, 450 n. 375]. [Note: the word also means to profane something which is what Smith is implying as root I.]

The word “for” [לְ] in the phrase “for our transgressions” may be translated “because of our transgressions” (NET Bible, CSB) which makes it very clear that He was pierced due to “our transgressions.” I believe that the grammar indicates this is the best translation because the word is used in a causal sense in this context, but most English translations use the word “for.” “Causal לְ (because, because of). The object of the preposition לְ can be the cause of something else” [Ronald J. Williams, *Williams’ Hebrew Syntax*, 3rd ed., sec # 319, p. 121]. “Causal—shows the reason or rationale behind an action.... In showing cause, לְ can at times designate the agent of a passive verb ...” [Bill T. Arnold and John H. Choi, *A Guide to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, 2nd ed., sec. 4.1.13(d), p. 130]. This word is usually translated “from,” “hence it is used of one thing arising from another, a relationship of cause and effect” [J. Alec Motyer, *Isaiah: An Introduction & Commentary*, 335]. I went through this simply to point out that the use of this word in connection with the passive participle “pierced” and the noun “transgressions” as the object of the preposition [לְ], supports the doctrine of substitutionary sacrifice. It was “because of the transgressions” committed by the nation and its citizens along with, as the context makes clear, the many people of the world, that the Suffering Servant was pierced.

Isaiah 53:5 ⁵But He was pierced because of our transgressions ... [CSB]

Isaiah 53:5 ⁵He was wounded because of our rebellious deeds ... [NET Bible]

Parallel to the word “pierced” is the word crushed [שָׁדַד] meaning, in this context and in this verb form, intensive passive, to be broken in pieces, to be crushed, to be beaten down, to be bruised, or to be oppressed. This verb is applied only to people (with one exception) and God is usually the subject meaning that He is the One doing the crushing. “According to Isa 53:10, God did crush his servant. Verse 5 indicates that he ‘was crushed for our iniquities.’ This emphasizes the emotional and spiritual suffering of the Savior as he became sin for us” [Harris, Archer, Jr., and Waltke, s.v. “שָׁדַד,” *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, 188-189]. “‘... [W]as crushed’ can refer either to general oppression or to a fatal crushing that kills” [Gary V. Smith, *The New American Commentary: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture: Isaiah 40-66*, 450]. “The participle suggests the complete destruction of the person involved” [Edward J. Young, *The Book of Isaiah: A Commentary*, vol. 3, 3:347].

Why did these things happen? The text reveals that they happened because of Israel's transgressions and iniquities. Israel is the specific subject of this truth, but it is equally true for the Gentile world. We know this truth is applicable to mankind in total because four

verses in the Suffering Servant song confirm that it is for the “many” as well as for the Israelites (Is. 52:14-15, 53:11-12).

Transgressions, פָּשַׁע, means rebellion and revolt referring to rising up in clear defiance to authority and it can mean a crime, offence, fault, and transgression referring to what is contrary to a standard, human or divine, with a focus on the rebellious nature of the sin. The primary focus on this word is rebellion against God and against His laws. “In addition to the act of transgression itself, this term can also be used to convey the guilt that comes from the transgression; the punishment for the transgression; or the offering that is presented to atone for the transgression” [Baker and Carpenter, s.v. “פָּשַׁע,” *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: Old Testament*, 927].

“The fundamental idea of the root is a breach of relationships, civil or religious, between two parties.... God's reaction to transgression may be judgment, but his deep desire is really to provide salvation from this way of living.... [T]here are two ways the rebellion may be ended: it may end with punishment or a renewal of the relationship. God's first step is to indict his people and expose their sin as rebellion.... God wants to pursue a different course of action: he wants to save his people.... Historically, Israel as a nation and as individuals knew God's acts of judgment and his acts of salvation. Man's rebellion was the cause of the judgments, but God's compassion was the grounds for their salvation” [Harris, Archer, Jr., and Waltke, s.v. “פָּשַׁע,” *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, 741-742].

Iniquities, עֲוֹן, means sin, wickedness, iniquity, referring to wrongdoing with a focus of liability or guilt for this wrong incurred. The sense of this word relates to sin as an act or feeling that transgresses something forbidden or ignores something required by God's law or character, whether in thought, feeling, speech, or action. “This word indicates sin that is particularly evil, since it strongly conveys the idea of twisting or perverting deliberately.... The Hebrew word means sin or transgression in a conscious sense ...” [Baker and Carpenter, s.v. “עֲוֹן,” *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: Old Testament*, 814].

“[The word] denotes both the deed and its consequences, the misdeed and its punishment. Both notions are present, but sometimes the focus is on the deed ('sin'), and at other times on the outcome of the misdeed ('punishment'), and sometimes on the situation between the deed and its consequence ('guilt')” [Harris, Archer, Jr., and Waltke, s.v. “עֲוֹן,” *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, 650]. In this situation, the focus is on the punishment that the Suffering Servant will undertake for the transgressions and iniquities of mankind.

Sins are evil, rebellious acts committed against God even when the act is focused on doing sinful things to another person. David acknowledged this truth when he implored God to forgive him of his great sins. Even though he personally committed those egregious, malicious acts against Uriah, Bathsheba, and their marriage, he did not ask God to have the other people involved forgive him. He asked God to forgive Him, because God was the ultimate subject of the sins the king committed.

Psalms 51:1-4 ¹Be gracious to me, O God, according to Your lovingkindness; According to the greatness of Your compassion blot out my transgressions. ²Wash me thoroughly from

my iniquity And cleanse me from my sin. ³For I know my transgressions, And my sin is ever before me. ⁴Against You, You only, I have sinned And done what is evil in Your sight ...

Every sin is a violation of a moral imperative or a command of God; therefore, the Suffering Servant, the God-man, died in place of mankind for the transgressions against God committed by mankind. Most sins that are committed against one another do not involve the death penalty, but sins are always committed against God the penalty for which is always the death penalty.

Genesis 2:17 ¹⁷but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die."

Romans 6:23 ²³For the wages of sin is death ...

"The transgressions and iniquities, whatever may be the original sense of those words, here refer not to the transgression of human laws but of the law of God. If the iniquities are merely unfortunate errors that we have made, and so in the light of human standards we are not all that we might be, that is one thing. It is then very difficult to understand why our failure to live up to or to obey human laws should result in the death of the servant as our substitute. If, on the other hand, the prophet is talking about something far more serious, namely iniquities and transgressions that God regards as such, then the profundity of the passage immediately becomes clear" [Edward J. Young, *The Book of Isaiah: A Commentary*, vol. 3, 3:347].

Are these words describing what the Suffering Servant did in His life or in His death? The obvious answer is in His death. "... [T]he meaning is not that it was our sins and iniquities that had pierced Him through like swords, and crushed Him like heavy burdens, but that He was pierced and crushed on account of our sins and iniquities. It was not His own sins and iniquities, but *ours*, which He had taken upon Himself, that He might make atonement for them in our stead, that were the cause of His having to suffer so cruel and painful a death" [C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament: Isaiah*, vol. 7, 7:509].

As this verse continues on, it also continues to confirm the substitutionary nature of the Suffering Servant's sacrifice.

Chastening, מוֹסֵר, means discipline, chastening, punishment, or correction, training, and instruction. In the Bibles I consult for comparison purposes, "chastisement" is the preferred word, followed by "punishment" and once by "discipline" which is actually the primary meaning of the word. The Septuagint translated this word παιδεία (*padeia*) meaning instruction and teaching. This word is from יָסַר meaning discipline, chasten, instruct. Both Hebrew words are denoting correction which results in education. "Isaiah 53 adds 'the chastisement of our peace was upon him.' This is clearly a context of substitutionary atonement [sacrifice]. Here the Servant of the Lord is seen as taking 'the severe punishment' vicariously, more clearly revealing God's merciful ways of dealing with his rebellious people through redemptive judgment and suffering" [Harris, Archer, Jr., and Waltke, s.v. "יָסַר," *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, 386-387]. "*Musar is correction, discipline, or chastisement, and does not refer to retributive punishment but often contains*

the thought of remedy and correction" [Edward J. Young, *The Book of Isaiah: A Commentary*, vol. 3, 3:348].

The punishment inflicted on the Lord is meant to remedy the situation in which mankind finds themselves due to rebellion and sin. "The nom. as discipline/punishment. Failure to hear and respond positively to instruction leads to discipline and/or punishment.... The problem lies in this unusual term to describe punishment, especially to the extent of death, for *mûsâr* generally suggests instruction, discipline, or the like ... Young points out that *mûsâr* does not, in fact, refer to retributive punishment but to remedy or correction. Thus the death of the Servant procures a remedy to the sinful condition of those for whom he dies" [Willem A. VanGemeren, gen. ed., s.v. "יָסַר," *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis*, 2:479-481]. Notice the subtly inserted Calvinist theology into this discussion on the meaning of this word. VanGemeren is a Calvinist, and I presume that the contributors to his dictionary are as well, and I suspect he holds to the Calvinist definition of election that claims the Suffering Servant died on the cross only for the elect which is why he states "of those for whom he dies" which is a subtle statement limiting the extent of the efficacy of the sacrifice to the elect. The truth is that He died for everyone so that all people are at least savable based on faith, trust, belief.

Well-being, שְׁלוֹמִים, means completeness, soundness, welfare, peace, safety, and so on. It is a good word having, in this context, the sense of peace and tranquility. This is a peace that can only come from God. "As a religious concept *šālôm* is an essential part of Yahweh's plan of salvation.... [I]t is evident that the *šālôm* prediction of the future dispensation of salvation is closely linked with righteousness as the ideal category of existence in accordance with God's will. Such an existence is blessed with divine peace as fulfillment of the ultimate purpose of being" [Willem A. VanGemeren, gen. ed., s.v. "שָׁלוֹם," *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis*, 4:130-134].

"'Peace,' says Hengstenberg, 'stands as an individualizing designation of salvation; in the world of contentions, peace is one of the highest blessings.' Those things that once stood as barriers between God and ourselves have been removed, and we are now in a right relationship with Him" [Edward J. Young, *The Book of Isaiah: A Commentary*, vol. 3, 3:348, n. 24, quoting E. Hengstenberg].

If the vicarious nature of the sacrifice is to have efficacy, then the one bearing the guilt of sin must be Himself sinless. "If, however, the language is to have meaning, the servant must be one who was himself utterly free of transgression and iniquity, else his vicarious suffering could be of no avail. If one who himself was iniquitous bore the sins of another, then there is a travesty upon justice, for the sinbearer [sic] in this case would have need that his own sins be borne by another" [Edward J. Young, *The Book of Isaiah: A Commentary*, vol. 3, 3:348].

The final clause in the verse is a parallel to the immediately preceding one and it affirms the truth that He died for the sins of mankind, i.e., the Israelites and the many.

Scourging, תַּבְּיָרָה, means a wound, a bruise, a welt, or an injury referring to the object of a damaging blow to the body causing a wound. "The nom. occurs as one of several terms relating to serious tissue trauma described as wounds, in which the skin was ruptured, blood was lost, and organs or limbs were disabled or destroyed.... Granted this

identification, 'wounds' is a metonymy for the violent substitutionary death that was suffered by the Righteous Servant so that all may be healed. By this is meant restoration to the total well-being mentioned in the earlier phrase ... This peace indicates 'a rounded wholeness comprising personal fulfillment, harmonious society and a secure relationship with God'" [Willem A. VanGemeren, gen. ed., s.v. "עֲבוּרָה," *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis*, 2:4-5].

A literal translation of this clause in the verse is: "and by scourging of Him He was healed to us." Scourging is in a genitive form (scourging of Him). "In a wider sense this use of the genitive also includes statements of the purpose for which something is intended" [Wilhelm Gesenius, *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar*, sec. 128 q, p. 417]. In other words, the grammar is telling us that the scourging of Him was for the purpose of healing the Israelites and the many.

The healing is "on account of" or "by means of" the Suffering Servant's sacrifice. "The preposition כּ [by] expresses the means by which something was accomplished.... [T]his is a כּ *preti* (of price) placed before the noun to express the price one pays to purchase something. Thus 'at the cost of, in exchange for' would be the translation" [Gary V. Smith, *The New American Commentary: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture: Isaiah 40-66*, 451, n. 378], [cf. Wilhelm Gesenius, *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar*, sec. 119o; 119p, p. 380].

Healed, רָפָא, means to be healed or cured. This verb is passive meaning that the healing is not something that anyone who is healed has done to bring about their own healing. Instead, their healing has been done to and for them from an outside source, which has been identified as the work of the Suffering Servant. The sense is to be provided with a cure, that is, to be made healthy again. Healing may refer to physical healing, spiritual healing, or both (cf. Is. 19:22).

Many people claim that this clause proves that physical healing is in the sacrifice of the Suffering Servant. "Since the problems in [Isaiah] 53:5 are rebellious acts and iniquities, it appears that the healing relates primarily to the healing of the people's spiritual relationship to God, though a more holistic eschatological interpretation would include both spiritual and physical healing" [Gary V. Smith, *The New American Commentary: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture: Isaiah 40-66*, 451]. Spiritual and physical healing will be the order of the day during the Messianic Kingdom, but, of course that is not true in this dispensation.

Mayhue studied this issue and wrote a journal article detailing his conclusions. The synopsis of the article reads: "Outside Isaiah 53, Scriptures touching on Christ's atonement in Leviticus and Hebrews deal only with sin, not sickness. The context and language of Isa 53:3-12 address sin alone. A broad range of Scriptures teach that Christ died to deal with humankind's sin dilemma. Matthew 8:16-17 uses an illustration of physical healing to demonstrate a spiritual truth about the Christian resurrection hope of being sinless and thus in perfect health. First Pet 2:24, studied in both broad context (2:18-25) and narrow (2:24-25), reasons that Christ atoned for sin, not sickness. Therefore, the conclusion is that physical healing is not in the atonement, but rather comes through the atonement after resurrection, because only then does the atonement eliminate the moral cause of

physical infirmities, which is sin in one's personal experience" [Richard L. Mayhue, "For What Did Christ Atone in Isa 53:4-5?" *The Master's Seminary Journal* 6, no. 2 (Fall 1995):120].

"Physical healing is not in the atonement for the following reasons: (1) Christ was never sick, (2) the old nature is not eradicated in this life, (3) death is conquered but not destroyed, and (4) Christ has a purpose in the sickness of saints, because God is sovereign and because Christ died to atone for sin, not sickness, which is not sinful in itself, but merely the result of sin" [Merrill F. Unger, "Isaiah" in *Unger's Commentary on the Old Testament*, 1298].

The substitutionary sacrifice of the Suffering Servant on the cross was a sacrifice made necessary by sin. Disease and infirmities are symptoms of the problem; sin is the problem, and sin is the issue the sacrifice began to remedy. The remedy has not been fully implemented; therefore, sin is still a problem. If sin is still a problem, then illnesses and diseases are still problems.

Verse 6 continues the explanation for the necessity and the reality of the substitutionary sacrifice. The first part of the verse addresses the reasons for the sacrifice of the Suffering Servant, and the second part of the verse reveals that Yahweh caused the sins of the people to fall on Him in place of the people. Note the contrast between "us" (3x) and "him" (1x).

Isaiah 53:6 'All [כָּל] of us [כָּלָנוּ] like sheep have gone astray [תָּעוּ], Each [אִישׁ] of us has turned [פָּגַע] to his own way; But the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all To fall [פָּגַע] on Him.

All, כָּל, means the whole, the whole of, totality, all, and completely which refers to all, every, and any as the totality of any object, mass, collective, or extension. It relates to completion, totality. As a totality, it pertains to being entire or whole with a focus on the totality of the object or the idea. The sense of the word is to the whole thing, that is, to all of something including all its component parts. The word "all" is used twice in this verse, at the beginning and at the end, which serves to emphasize that the entire population is the problem. "The entire people is compared to a flock of sheep. *all of us* both opens and closes the verse, emphasizing the extent of the problem, and by its lack of specificity inviting an extension to the whole human race" [John N. Oswalt, *The New International Commentary on the Old Testament: The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40-66*, 389].

The point being made here is not just "all" in a generic sense; the point is "all of us" [כָּלָנוּ]. Since it is a reference made by the Israelites, it is a reference to the totality of the population. The problem being identified is that they have all turned away from Yahweh, they have all been committing iniquities, and the Suffering Servant has endured the punishment due them for their transgressions. The concept of the "many" revealed here in the Suffering Servant song applies this truth to mankind. "'All we'—'kullanu'—is an emphatic assertion concerning all men, without exception, that they have an innate bent to stray or wander away from the path of righteousness" [Victor Buksbazen, *The Prophet Isaiah: A Commentary*, 418].

The recognition of this state of affairs will not take place until the end of the Tribulation is in view. "It is the state of exile, upon which the penitent Israel is here looking back; but exile as being, in the prophet's view, the final state of punishment before the final deliverance. Israel in its exile resembled a scattered flock without a shepherd; it had lost the way of Jehovah (63:17), and every one had turned to his own way, in utter selfishness and estrangement from God (56:11)" [C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament: Isaiah, volume 7, 7:510*].

A figure of speech, a simile, is used to explain human behavior in comparison to/with the behavior of sheep. This is not a flattering comparison. Sheep have no sense of direction, and they are not intelligent animals. They will follow without question the lead sheep or the shepherd who is leading them, even into danger which is a characteristic that probably flows from their strong flocking instincts and family bonds. They are essentially defenseless; they can only flee and kick. Once restrained, they give up to await their fate. Once on their back, sheep cannot right themselves. They do know their shepherd's voice, and they are likely to flee a stranger's voice. Sheep are not meant to carry loads. They cannot care for themselves. Sheep represent purity and innocence in the Bible, hence, the Lamb of God as a name for the Messiah (John 1:29). <https://www.livingwithgotlands.com/2018/07/five-things-you-should-know-about-sheep-behavior/>, accessed 18 Nov. 2021 and <https://momremade.com/god-compares-us-to-sheep/>, accessed 18 Nov. 2021]. Using sheep as a simile in this situation is quite appropriate given the agrarian culture of Israel, and the use of sheep in the ritual sacrifices at the Tabernacle and the Temple. People would have been very familiar with the points being made through the use of this figure of speech.

Sheep are valuable agricultural commodities, however, and so too are people valuable in the Lord's sight. Jesus called Himself the Good Shepherd (John 10:11-18), and He is offering Himself as the sacrifice to afford mankind the opportunity to be reconciled to God.

Here, the problem is that people, like sheep, have gone astray and left their shepherd. Not only have they left Him, but they have gone their own way which is a rebellious course of action.

Astray, אָצָה, means to err, to wander, and to go astray. This word is being used to represent holding a wrong view about something, with a focus that this wrong belief also has wrong behaviors which need correction and is used as a figurative extension of wandering off a correct path. The word is most frequently used to refer "to erring or being misled in a moral or religious sense" [Baker and Carpenter, s.v. "אָצָה," *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: Old Testament*, 1238]. This verb is a perfect verb referring to completed action. All people have gone astray and rebelled against God. "The verb אָצָה 'lead astray' is employed to describe how leaders 'confuse, lead astray' people from the path of God, how wise men 'delude, lead astray' the leaders of Egypt" [Gary V. Smith, *The New American Commentary: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture: Isaiah 40-66*, 452]. We know that the leadership of Israel was instrumental in leading whatever Israelites were inclined to accept the Messiah as their King to instead reject the Messiah at His First Advent (Mt. 12:22-45). The same argument may be made today concerning the

Rabbis who continue to lead the Jewish people away from understanding that Jesus was, and is, their Messiah.

Not only have all people gone astray, each individual has specifically turned away. Each, אִישׁ, means man, male, or husband, and not to mankind in general but to the individual; however, in this context it means each or every referring to each one of a totality in a distributive sense. “Frequently, the word functions as an individualizing element connoting the concept ‘each’ as in ‘each person’” [Harris, Archer, Jr., and Waltke, s.v. “אִישׁ,” *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, 38].

Turned, פָּנָה, means to turn, that is to make a non-linear pivoting motion in order to make a change in direction. The sense is to change orientation or direction including in an abstract sense. It has many meanings depending on context. In this verse, it is used in a figurative manner to refer to everyone turning away from God to do whatever their own individual rebellion against God looks like. The turning revealed here is deliberate; it is not by accident and it is not forced. This is a perfect verb meaning completed action; all have turned away—and all will keep turning away until the end. The believing remnant has very few people in it.

“The emphasis here is upon ‘his own way’—not God’s way. Sheep are not accountable for wandering off and becoming lost, because they have no understanding or judgment. But when men who are endowed with a God-given mind and with a conscience yet behave like sheep, they cannot be held blameless” [Victor Buksbazen, *The Prophet Isaiah: A Commentary*, 418].

A literal rendering of the final clause would be: “and Yahweh he caused to fall upon Him [the] iniquity of all of us.”

Fall, פָּגַע, means to meet or to encounter, or to fall upon. The sense is to cause to befall or to cause to happen to. It may refer to meeting someone with hostility in which case, the meaning of to fall upon is used. The verb form here is causative, meaning that Yahweh caused the sins of mankind to be placed on the Person of the Suffering Servant, hence to lay upon or to burden. “Laid [fall]: (lit) ‘caused to meet’, descriptive of the divine act of gathering into one place, on to one substitutionary Victim, the sins of all the sinners whom the Lord purposed to save. The Servant is the solution of the LORD to the needs of sinners” [J. Alec Motyer, *Isaiah: An Introduction & Commentary* 336].

Notice the Calvinist, covenant theology Motyer inserted into this quote with the comment “all the sinners whom the Lord purposed to save.” This is very subtle, but Covenant theologians in general believe that Christ died only for the elect. I am pointing this out because I want to warn you that the theology of the interpreter can affect the interpretation and the development of the commentary, and that may be done in some very subtle ways. It helps to know the basics of theological systems other than Dispensational Theology so this kind of subtle manipulation can be spotted and nullified. The Bible says He died for the sins of the world (1 John 2:2) and that all men are savable because He desires for “all men to be saved” (1 Tim. 2:4).

Young pulled the same Calvinist theological trick in his commentary. “Consequently, we are no longer without a shepherd, for the shepherd has given his life for the sheep. Those for whom he served as substitute are designated *all of us*. In this phrase the prophet includes himself and all for whom he speaks. It is not warranted to draw from these words a doctrine of universal atonement” [Edward J. Young, *The Book of Isaiah: A Commentary*, vol. 3, 3:350]. This is a very subtle way of saying the Suffering Servant died only for the elect, “all for whom he speaks,” and a not-so-subtle way of saying that the sacrifice was not applicable to mankind in total by denying a universally efficacious sacrifice.

In addition to the Scriptures just quoted that apply the sacrifice to everyone, this verse specifically says that it is applicable to “all of us,” and it says it twice for emphasis. The verse begins by saying that “all of us” have gone astray and turned to our own way, and the verse ends by saying that the iniquities “of us all” have fallen on Him. “All” means everyone without exception, or the word has no meaning whatsoever. The sacrifice is not universal in the sense that every person is saved by His work on the cross, but it does mean that every human being has the opportunity to be saved by faith in who He is and what He did on the cross.