

“All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.”

We will conclude our lessons on the Path of the Suffering Servant with the end of this chapter. There is much to be learned here, and sadly, insufficient time to adequately study this passage as much as it deserves. The student will need to pick up where we left off. The Gospels in the New Testament are a good place to start the study of the Messiah. We will attempt to hit the main points of the passage, and hope that we, as students of God’s Word, will gain from our endeavors wisdom, knowledge and a stronger desire to serve God better from what we learn. Let us begin:

“All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.” The prophet states the fact that all, without exception, have willingly gone astray, that is, out of the path of righteousness that God has put before all of us. The writer describes the erring ones as sheep, as elsewhere in this poem, and Christ the sacrificial lamb. This verse states this as the reason why the Servant of God had to suffer. The second half of the verse states that God the Father made the Servant suffer by placing on Him the iniquity that belonged to all of us. Here, instead of individually, this is speaking about all in the group. Our iniquity doesn’t come back on us and strike us as it should but instead strikes Christ Who stands in our place. The Good Shepherd has given His life for the sheep, or all in the group. Since it is talking about a particular group of people, it is not talking about universal sin or universal atonement.

:7. “He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.” This of course is literally fulfilled during the trial of Christ, when He would not answer His accusers, nor defend His innocence against the false accusations, so much so that Pilate was surprised. “Then saith Pilate unto him, Speakest thou not unto me? Knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee?” John 19:9,10. Instead, Christ permitted Himself to be afflicted without resistance.

:8. “He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? For he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken.” Here we have the next steps on the path of suffering that the Savior took on our behalf. He was oppressed, arrested and confined unjustly. He was then taken from prison and the connected judgment to be cut off from the land of the living, meaning executed, also described in vivid detail in the Gospel accounts. The human powers that directed these actions were actually empowered by God’s permission, against the Servant, hence, we see the line, “Father, forgive them for they know not what they do!” spoken by Christ and recorded in Luke 23:34. From the midst

of suffering, He was taken away by His death on the cross. It is clear that the stroke of punishment and death fell not on behalf of all men, but as stated, on behalf of “my people.” As seen in previous lessons, the “my people” spoken of here, as elsewhere, is referring to one group known as the real “Israel of faith,” (Romans 9:4-8) which is another way of stating He died for the Children of Promise, or those born of faith. This whole passage is speaking about a substitutionary propitiation for these people of faith. The New Testament describes these ones as being born again. Because of sin, He didn’t continue to live among us here on earth, that will wait for a future time as seen in the Book of Revelation. He was taken away from us. Now, we also see in this verse the fact that His generation shall never end, though He is gone from us, that is through the ages ahead, His generation shall live on, or to put it another way, His posterity will continue to live on, one generation after another. That is the full sense of the phrase, “Who shall declare his generation?” To the Jewish mind, this would be a form of saying that the Messiah has everlasting life, that is, they believe even to this day for the most part that there is no afterlife in the world to come, but that we only live through our children and their children’s children. To be cut off from the land of the living is as dreaded to the Jewish Old Testament mind set as being childless, or for a woman to be barren.

:9. “And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death: because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.” The wicked regarded Him as a lowly, disgraceful criminal and was executed as such, but the LORD exalted Him even in death by giving Him a rich man’s tomb, as so stated here and in the New Testament witness. In a way, Christ’s exultation began with His honorable death, honorable since He didn’t die for any sin or crime of His own, but on behalf of others, though dishonored by men.

:10. “Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.” Because of the purpose of God’s will that was established before the history of man began, it is said that God the Father had pleasure in the Son fulfilling that plan, perfectly. In this wording we see that it was the Father Who bruised the Son on purpose for the benefit of the lost sheep, as per the divine council that was agreed upon within the Trinity before the world began. “His soul” means Christ’s entire being. He was entirely the sacrifice. The Messiah’s life was surrendered as a living sacrifice in a trespass offering. Sadly, Judaism has missed this important point about the Messiah, and mostly views Him as a political leader who leads armies to victory. Some ancient Jews believed the Messiah would be a leper based on Isaiah 53:2. The phrase, “He shall see his seed,” means that He sees in His Redemption all the numberless for whom he dies. His redeemed are said to be His seed or His own offspring, in particular. In that it was said earlier, that He shall sprinkle

many nations, it is not just Israel that is being included in the redemption, but many nations, obviously not all nations, however. This may explain why the Gospel has not made it into some nations. There are nations that have strongly resisted the Gospel. This gives us the fact that salvation was for the Gentiles, also, and precedes the New Testament's Gospel call to the Gentiles. Thus we are to go into all the world and preach the Gospel, even against the world's resistance. The last part of this verse shows that Christ's mission was and continues to be a success. His Kingdom prospers under His hand.

:11. "He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many: for he shall bear their iniquities." The Messiah shall see the results of His sacrifice and be abundantly satisfied. His people are redeemed and justified. The travail of his soul poetically pictures the Messiah giving birth to His seed through their gracious justification based on His atonement. Christ isn't shown to bring salvation by being a teacher, but by being a sin bearer. Those who are saved do so by gaining the knowledge about the Suffering Savior, and what He has done for them. Knowledge in evangelism is a must. Also, it must not ever be viewed as a nation or particular people are forever darkened and thus withhold the Gospel from them. It is not up to us to judge who gets the Gospel. The Gospel is to be thrown out there, indiscriminately, and the Holy Spirit will use it. He shall justify many, not all, since not all will be saved. He bore the sins of the many is plainly stated. Many means a very large number that no man can count as seen in the Book of Revelation.

:12. "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 with the transgressors; and made intercession for the transgressors." God proclaims the reward of the victorious Servant. He will receive His just portion with the mighty or great. This word great may refer to what or who is being divided. His people also shall be great, as well as being His portion. Here we see the meek servants inheriting the earth and all things along with Him. The reason for this grand reward is because of the Suffering Servant's sacrificial death for the sins of others. Notice also that it is the Messiah who performs the actions of a priest, and intercedes for those whose transgressions He has covered. There is no verse that actually states He intercedes for anyone else but the redeemed, though God is merciful and gracious to all. He Who made the ear, is not deaf, and can hear the cry of the least. Intercession is exclusively the work of the priest, and in the Messiah's case, the High Priest. Intercession, therefore, cannot be done by a loved one who has gone on to glory, nor any saint or even Mary. Just the High Priest, Christ, and He is the One we are to come to in prayer, asking for His intercession before the Throne of the Universe. It is correct to understand that intercession can only be done by the Sin Bearer, and no other.