

Last week we began looking at the amazing predictions of the fourth Servant Song. We saw the remarkable contrast predicting the Servant would be brutalized beyond recognition but be exalted and revered by kings. Another contrast is that though kings would honor Him, people would despise Him. Though He is the mighty arm of the Lord, He bears our grief and carries our sorrows. Though He bears our griefs and carries our sorrows, mankind would consider Him stricken by God. It was for our transgressions that He was pierced, and His wounds bring healing to our souls. The contrasts seem impossible to be fulfilled by an individual, and yet we see them all fulfilled in detail by Jesus of Nazareth.

We pick back up in this prophetic song just after the declaration that it would be for our iniquities that the Servant suffers this abuse. That punishment He received brings us peace and heals us. We ask, what are the wrongs we have done that He should have to suffer like this? How did we lose peace with God? Why do our souls need healing? The next verse gives us the answers. <sup>6</sup> *All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.* Isaiah 53:6

Every single human being is like a sheep that wanders away from their shepherd (Psalm 23:1). This is a metaphor for our spiritual condition. Sheep stay near their shepherd for protection and provision. He watches out for poisonous plants, for predators, and leads them to where they can find grass and water. Occasionally a stupid, rebellious sheep will wander off ignoring the shepherd. It pays no attention to the shepherd's call and refuses to follow where He is leading? If it is fortunate, it will be found by the shepherd before it is devoured by wolves or dies of thirst (Zechariah 10:2).

Shepherds have a way of training this kind of sheep. They will break its leg and carry it until it heals, feeding it by hand. It is a burden, a great sacrifice on the shepherd's part, but that sheep will never again wander. It will stay close to the shepherd's side from then on.

God is telling us that we are all like that stupid sheep that wanders. He will call to us, but our nature is to go our own way. So we wander off into rebellion and are in grave danger. That rebellion should result in our death or at least a broken leg. But the punishment for all our iniquity, all our going astray, God laid on the Servant. This song emphasizes that His suffering is on our behalf. He receives what we deserve. **In verse 5 the iniquity was plural as it is each and every sin of every person. In verse 6 it is singular as it is speaking of the sin of mankind, going astray.**

Each of us has gone our "own way." I did it my way! We sing it, boast of it, laud it in others because our culture highly values the independent spirit of autonomy. No one

**Commented [PW1]: Psalm 23:1 (ESV)**

<sup>1</sup> The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.

**Commented [PW2]: Zechariah 10:2 (ESV)**

<sup>2</sup> For the household gods utter nonsense, and the diviners see lies; they tell false dreams and give empty consolation. Therefore the people wander like sheep; they are afflicted for lack of a shepherd.

can tell me what to do! I decide what is right or wrong for me. The spirit of lawlessness is on the rise. You see it in traffic, the legal system, the media, academia, and daily interactions. We are becoming a “me” centered society. That is to go our own way.

A recent twitter trend was to “shout out your abortion.” Women were encouraged not to carry any guilt. Go ahead and tell everyone you aborted a baby and are glad you did. **When the conscience is silenced, the results are an increase in lawlessness.** Jesus took the punishment we all deserved upon Himself. That is the only place our souls can find peace. That is the only way our sin sick souls can be healed (Acts 4:12).

The path to this sacrifice on our behalf was not an easy one. We saw a hint of it in an earlier Servant Song. <sup>6</sup> *I gave my back to those who strike, and my cheeks to those who pull out the beard; I hid not my face from disgrace and spitting.* Isaiah 50:6 At the beginning of this song we read that His form would be marred beyond human likeness. This song continues with what He endured on the way to the cross. <sup>7</sup> *He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth.* Isaiah 53:7 This was depicted so well in Lewis’ *The Lion, Witch, and the Wardrobe*. The lion was a Christ figure named Aslan. With all the demons howling in delight they shaved Aslan’s mane, while Aslan lay silent awaiting the blade of the witch.

Jesus said so little during His trials. He had one before Annas, one before Caiaphas, one before Herod, and another by Pilate. At each location Jesus was mocked and physically abused. Before Annas, Jesus only spoke twice. One comment was to encourage the powerbrokers to conduct the trial according to the Law (John 18:20-21). Another was to make everyone aware of the duplicity that was taking place (John 18:23). Before Caiaphas, the Sanhedrin, and the false accusers He only spoke once to warn them of the future (Matthew 26:64). Jesus did not say a word to Herod. He spoke the most before the Gentile ruler, Pilate. The comments He made to Him seemed to be directed to Pilate’s lost soul. The Gospel writers declare that Pilate was shocked that Jesus would not say more (John 19:11).

After silently taking the abuse and listening to the false accusations against Him, Jesus was judged guilty of blaspheming, condemned to death by the Sanhedrin, and then when threatened with political extortion, Pilate reluctantly sentenced Jesus to crucifixion. <sup>8</sup> *By oppression and judgment he was taken away; and as for his generation, who considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people?* Isaiah 53:8 The word “oppressed” was used in the previous verse as well. In Hebrew the word is to tyrannize, or to treat like an animal. It is what a taskmaster does to slaves. This is prophetic of the scourging Jesus received. The verse sounds like Rome’s treatment of Jesus: scourged, sentenced, and led to crucifixion (John 19:16).

**Commented [PW3]: Acts 4:12 (ESV)**

<sup>12</sup> And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”

**Commented [PW4]: John 18:20-21 (ESV)**

<sup>20</sup> Jesus answered him, “I have spoken openly to the world. I have always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where all Jews come together. I have said nothing in secret.

<sup>21</sup> Why do you ask me? Ask those who have heard me what I said to them; they know what I said.”

**Commented [PW5]: John 18:23 (ESV)**

<sup>23</sup> Jesus answered him, “If what I said is wrong, bear witness about the wrong; but if what I said is right, why do you strike me?”

**Commented [PW6]: Matthew 26:64 (ESV)**

<sup>64</sup> Jesus said to him, “You have said so. But I tell you, from now on you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven.”

**Commented [PW7]: John 19:10 (ESV)**

<sup>10</sup> So Pilate said to him, “You will not speak to me? Do you not know that I have authority to release you and authority to crucify you?”

**Commented [PW8]: John 19:16 (ESV)**

<sup>16</sup> So he delivered him over to them to be crucified. So they took Jesus,

When that happened it seemed there was only one onlooker who understood what was happening, a criminal crucified along with Jesus. Who considered that He was stricken for the transgression of my people? The criminal next to Jesus who asked that he be remembered when Jesus came into His kingdom (Luke 23:42). Ron Kess recently shared a great expression with me that I want you to remember. "Heaven is not for good people. It is for forgiven people." The criminal beside Jesus knew He didn't deserve heaven. He was asking for forgiveness.

*...who considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people?* "Cut off" is an expression in the Law that is the most severe penalty for the breaking of God's law (Exodus 12:19). Our witness to the world is to invite people to consider that Jesus received God's punishment for our transgressions of God's laws.

*<sup>9</sup> And they made his grave with the wicked and with a rich man in his death, although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth.* Isaiah 53:9 We have come to another of these amazing predictions that sound impossible. If a person dies with the wicked, why would they be with the rich in death? Why would they be die with the wicked if they had done no violence or never spoken deceit? These details were amazingly fulfilled in Jesus being crucified between two criminals and yet buried in the tomb of the wealthy Joseph of Arimathea. Normally a crucified person would be thrown on the Jerusalem trash heap for dogs to consume. At best they might be buried in a hole in the ground as was the case with the recent find of one crucified individual from Jesus' time. But to be put in a wealthy person's hewn out tomb was unheard of. This innocent Servant called "the arm of the LORD" died with criminals but was buried in a rich man's tomb just as this passage predicted.

*<sup>10</sup> Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him; he has put him to grief; when his soul makes an offering for guilt, he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days; the will of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.* Isaiah 53:10 If the Servant was innocent, how could it be the will of the LORD to crush Him and put Him to grief? There is only one answer. He was bearing our sins, like the scapegoat (Azazel) on the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16:8).

We need to be aware that many churches that claim to be Christian churches reject the idea of atonement. They reject the belief that Jesus took our sins upon Himself and was punished in our place so that we might have eternal life. However, that is clearly the prophetic word here which was fulfilled and taught in the New Testament. To reject this concept is to reject the Bible. The reason that is done gets back to the same idea I mentioned earlier. If this book accurately predicted future details as no one in history ever has, then it is from God. That means it is truth from God and holds us to an unattainable standard (John 7:19). It means every person that ever lived needs to

**Commented [PW9]: Luke 23:42 (ESV)**

<sup>42</sup> And he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom."

**Commented [PW10]: Exodus 12:19 (ESV)**

<sup>19</sup> For seven days no leaven is to be found in your houses. If anyone eats what is leavened, that person will be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether he is a sojourner or a native of the land.

**Commented [PW11]: Leviticus 16:8 (ESV)**

<sup>8</sup> And Aaron shall cast lots over the two goats, one lot for the LORD and the other lot for Azazel.

**Commented [PW12]: John 19:16 (ESV)**

<sup>16</sup> So he delivered him over to them to be crucified. So they took Jesus,

recognize that without God's mercy and grace each of us will be judged with eternal consequences. It means we are obligated to live lives of gratitude in service to the One who loved us enough to take our punishment. **We have to accept Jesus as our guilt offering if we want to be forgiven and be in God's presence forever.**

Guilt offerings die (Leviticus 5:16)! The servant died as a guilt offering. But then the text says He prolonged His days. Is that the forty days he walked the earth after His resurrection or His eternal resurrected condition? Perhaps it refers to both. He shall see His offspring. They are all those who come to faith through His offering of Himself (Galatians 5:26). We become children of God, His offspring. God's desire for the salvation of many, the reversing of the curse, is accomplished in Jesus. It was done through His sacrifice, while being hidden in the hand of God (Isaiah 49:2).

This is one of those passages that has second potential translation that can deepen the meaning. ...*when his soul makes an offering for guilt*, can also be translated, "when you make His soul an offering for guilt..." When you, (including all who read or hear this), make His soul your guilt offering, you become His offspring, and He sees you as a child of God. He died for you, but you must make Him your offering. God used the Hebrew language in a way so as to give us these rich double meanings.

*<sup>11</sup> Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities.* Isaiah 53:11 This song tells us the anguish of the Servant's soul is when He is marred beyond human likeness, despised and rejected by the people. He carries our sorrows and is innocent, but He is oppressed (scourged) and abused physically. He is crushed by God, our sins are placed on Him, and He is offered up as a sacrifice. That is certainly anguish of soul. But it doesn't end there. He sees the result. He sees the offspring that come from the sacrifice. He knew it before the crucifixion (Hebrews 12:2). That is what He looked forward to your salvation and mine. By bearing our iniquities He has made many to be accounted as righteous.

Jesus said if He was lifted up He would draw all men to Himself (John 12:32). There is another double meaning. It can mean lifted up on a cross, or as in 52:13 it can mean to be exalted. But the two are tied together. It was because He was lifted up on a cross for us that He is exalted over all mankind. Every knee will bow before Him and declare Him Lord. This is so clearly filled with the Gospel message which is repeated again and again. **By my count God tells us in seven different ways that the Servant takes our sins upon Himself and pays for them (verses 5, 6, 8, 11, 12).** God is driving home the point that Jesus suffered for our sins to bear them away. The Servant takes our transgressions upon Himself so that we can be made righteous in the eyes of God. Hallelujah!

**Commented [PW13]: Leviticus 5:16 (ESV)**

<sup>16</sup> He shall also make restitution for what he has done amiss in the holy thing and shall add a fifth to it and give it to the priest. And the priest shall make atonement for him with the ram of the guilt offering, and he shall be forgiven.

**Commented [PW14]: Galatians 3:26 (ESV)**

<sup>26</sup> for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith.

**Commented [PW15]: Isaiah 49:2 (ESV)**

<sup>2</sup> He made my mouth like a sharp sword; in the shadow of his hand he hid me; he made me a polished arrow; in his quiver he hid me away.

**Commented [PW16]: Hebrews 12:2 (ESV)**

<sup>2</sup> looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

**Commented [PW17]: John 12:32 (ESV)**

<sup>32</sup> And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself."

*12 Therefore I will divide him a portion with the many, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong, because he poured out his soul to death and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and makes intercession for the transgressors.* Isaiah 53:12 Because the Servant has done this, the Father will divide Him a portion with the many. The glory that Jesus received from the Father is to be shared with those who suffer with Him (Romans 8:17; 2 Thessalonians 2:14). That is one of those truths of Scripture that I have a difficult time grasping because the promise is so great.

I understand the dividing of the spoil with us to be the pouring out of the Holy Spirit. That seems to be the Apostle Paul's thought in Ephesians 4:8. It is the Spirit that gives us power to be a witness (Acts 1:8). It was only Jesus' death that sanctifies us to be vessels of the Holy Spirit (John 16:7). Though He committed no sin, He was numbered with us, a fellow son of man. But He was also numbered with the two criminals.

Finally, to sum it all up, in spite of pouring out His soul to death and being numbered among the transgressors, *He bore the sin of many and makes intercession for the transgressors.* Notice the word "many." He carries away the sins of those who receive Him. He died for the sins of all (2 Corinthians 5:15). But if our sins are to be carried away as prefigured by the scapegoat, we have to receive Him as our guilt offering. We have to realize our indebtedness and dependency on Him (John 1:12).

Also notice the present tense of the last phrase. He makes intercession right now and always for those who transgress. He is at the right hand of the Father, even as I speak, presenting the full payment for our past, present, and future sins (Hebrews 7:25). How thankful we should be. How hopelessly in love we should be with this Servant who loves us so! I close with the chorus on my heart from the hymn *Living for Jesus*.

O Jesus, Lord and Savior, I give myself to Thee, For Thou, in Thy atonement, Didst give Thyself for me; I own no other Master, My heart shall be Thy throne, My life I give, henceforth to live, O Christ, for Thee alone.

#### Questions

- 1 Why are we compared to sheep that stray?
- 2 What happens to our iniquity?
- 3 What is wrong with autonomy?
- 4 How was verse 7 fulfilled?
- 5 How was verse 8 fulfilled?
- 6 Who is in heaven?
- 7 How was verse 9 fulfilled?
- 8 Why did the LORD crush the Servant?
- 9 Where do we see resurrection in this song?
- 10 In what is Jesus satisfied?

#### Commented [PW18]: Romans 8:17 (ESV)

<sup>17</sup> and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.

#### Commented [PW19]: 2 Thessalonians 2:14 (ESV)

<sup>14</sup> To this he called you through our gospel, so that you may obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

#### Commented [PW20]: Ephesians 4:8 (ESV)

<sup>8</sup> Therefore it says, "When he ascended on high he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men."

#### Commented [PW21]: John 16:7 (ESV)

<sup>7</sup> Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you.

#### Commented [PW22]: 2 Corinthians 5:15 (ESV)

<sup>15</sup> and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.

#### Commented [PW23]: John 1:12 (ESV)

<sup>12</sup> But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God,

#### Commented [PW24]: Hebrews 7:25 (ESV)

<sup>25</sup> Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.