

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ISAIAH.

"Yet he bare the sin of many, and makes intercession for the transgressors."
Isaiah 53:12b.

Isaiah lived about 250 years after David and 750 years before Christ. He lived in a time of world upheaval and distress. "Isaiah's land and kings were caught in the restless and ambitious surgings of the peoples." Isaiah was pre-eminently the gospel prophet. The place of his prophecy in both the Old and the New Testaments is unparalleled. According to Westcott and Hort's list of quotations from the Old Testament found in the New, there are 229 references to Isaiah. In Isaiah are found two distinctive titles for the Messiah. The one is "Immanuel" and the other the "Servant of Jehovah". The Servant of Jehovah has been called the greatest thought of the Old Testament, and Isaiah 53 the greatest chapter. The line which closes this chapter (53:12b) might be called the heart of the gospel according to Isaiah.

from the psalm
(Isaiah: 53)

Some of the sublime and glorious truths at this sunlit summit of Isaiah's prophecy have been pointed out to us as follows- Beginning with chapter 52:13 there are five strophes in the whole "Psalm of the Suffering Servant of Jehovah." The first tells of the Servant lifted up, (52:13-15) foreshadowing the words of Jesus, "And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me." The second stanza shows Him as humiliated (53:1-3), "It behooved Him in all things to be made like unto His brethren." The third stanza reaches the heart of the meaning of the sufferings of the Servant when it shows His suffering was not for Himself, but for us (53:4-6) See 1 Cor. 15:3 and 2 Cor. 5:21. The fourth stanza (53:7-10a) describes His sufferings more in detail, and ends with death and the tomb. See 1 Peter 2:23-24. Then in the fifth stanza (53:10b-12) we see the Servant living and victorious. "Thus it was written that the Christ should suffer and rise again from the dead." See Luke 24:46. Finally, in a brief epilogue is given a comprehensive view of the primary work of the Messiah which is twofold, namely atonement and intercession. "Yet He bare the sin of many, and makes intercession for the transgressors." As suggested by Dr. Edward Mack, the most adequate comment on this epilogue is found in the words of the apostle Paul in Romans 8:34. "It is Christ Jesus that died, yea, rather, that was raised from the dead, who is at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us."

The heart of the heart of the gospel according to Isaiah brings especially into view the Messiah as substitute. "Yet He bare the sin of many." The central stanza of the whole psalm of the suffering Servant has the vicarious atonement as its theme. Substitution and imputation may well be called the Jochin and Boaz of the atonement. The apostle Paul states the truth in these words, "Him who knew no sin he made to be sin on our behalf; that we might become the righteousness of God in him." (2 Cor. 5:21) Following the interpretation of our great teacher, Dr. R.A. Webb, we believe that the atonement is vicarious, not personal, that it takes some one other than the offender to pay the price of sin. The sinner could never pay it himself. The only way he can do it is to suffer the pains of hell forever. If he escapes there must be some one else qualified, infinitely rich to pay the price for him. It takes the divine, human, sinless Substitute, the Suffering Servant of Jehovah.

On the Day of Atonement the High Priest only of all in the nation was permitted to draw near with the blood to represent offending Israel. The guilty sinner had no direct audience with Deity. So it is only through the mediation of Christ, our substitute, that the sinner receives remission of sins. "For He was manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." (Heb 9:26)

Christ's intercession is based on the blood. "Through his own blood He entered in once for all into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption." This intercession is sympathetic in character. "It behooved him in all things to be

made like unto his brethren, that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest—
For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succor them that are
tempted." His intercession is also missionary. "That the world may know that thou didst
send me, and lovedst them, even as thou lovedst me," "That the world may believe that
thou didst send me", were parts of his intercessory prayer in John 17.

Again his intercession is prevailing prayer. Standing by the tomb of Lazarus, Jesus
lifted up his eyes and said, "Father, I thank thee that thou heardest me. And I know
that thou hearest me always." Then his intercession is personal. He said to Simon Peter
the night before the crucifixion, after he had warned him of his peril, "But I have
prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." What a comfort it is to know that right now
Jesus Christ, the Righteous, is interceding for me personally at the court of heaven
in the presence of God himself! And his intercession is for sinners. "He maketh
intercession for the transgressors". That includes me. That includes the soldiers
who crucified him. His prayer for them was, "Father, forgive them; they know not
what they do." This intercession includes you and me, sinners though we are.
"He bare the sins of many, and makes intercession for the transgressors," is a
glorious gospel for a lost sinner.

As recorded in the book of the Acts of the apostles, the evangelist Philip,
beginning from the gospel according to Isaiah, preached unto the Ethiopian, Jesus.
The eunuch found his Savior, was baptized, and went on his way rejoicing. Today the
Bible is being read by large numbers of people in Korea. Is it being understood and
correctly interpreted by them? "Understandest thou what thou readest?" Many may
respond like the Ethiopian and say, "How can I, except some one shall guide me?"
God grant that there may be many an evangelist as effective as Philip, and beginning
with this Scripture preach unto them—Jesus.