

Who could say of Israel in the Babylonian captivity that "as a sheep before her shearers is dumb so he openeth not his mouth?" In the previous chapters we have seen the complaints of Israel and the tendency to despair and even sometimes to turn against God instead of recognizing the fact of guilt and need of deliverance from sin. This is true of all human beings. None of us suffer like this One who is described here. It is the perfect Son of God who, before His persecutors, does not answer back. As Peter says, "When he was reviled he reviled not again." (I Peter 2:23.)

Verse eight describes the seeming hopelessness of the end of His life. He was taken from p*rison and from judgment and who shall say that there is any future for Him? "Who shall declare his generation?" He died as a young man only thirty years of age. He had no posterity. A small group of disciples had been following Him, but even these had fled in panic. In this situation He was cut off from the land of the living. But it was "for the transgressions of my people" that He was stricken.

Verse nine is a little hard to understand at first, "He made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death." The statement does not make sense except with the understanding that something is to be filled in. A reasonable way to take it is: "One appointed for Him a grave with the wicked but at His death He was buried with the rich." The pronoun at the beginning does not refer to Christ but represents the impersonal "one." This expression is common in many languages, but in modern English is usually expressed by the passive, so that we would say: "He was assigned a grave with the wicked, but at His death He was buried with the rich." It had been understood that He would be cast into the graves where the malefactors were buried without identification or ceremony, but after His death He was placed in the tomb of a rich man. The version published by the Jewish Publication Society of America renders this phrase: "And they made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich His tomb." While this is not as literal a translation of the original as the wording of our Authorized Version, perhaps it brings out the idea more clearly. At first sight it is a strange statement. It is not part of the humiliation of the Servant that He is to be buried in the tomb of a rich man; neither is it much of a sign of exaltation; nor does it contrib-