

ISAIAH 53:
DEFUSING THE MISSIONARY NUCLEAR BOMB
A COUNTER-MISSIONARY SEMINAR WITH RABBI MICHAEL SKOBAC

SESSION 1:

**MESSIAH, SIN AND
HOW NOT TO MISREAD THE BIBLE**



JEWES FOR JUDAISM

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BIBLICAL CRITERIA FOR MESSIANIC AGE

1. INGATHERING OF THE JEWISH EXILES

JEREMIAH 30:3

For behold, days are coming, says the Lord, when I will return the captivity of My people Israel and Judah, said the Lord, and I will return them to the land that I gave their forefathers, and they will possess it. (cf. Deuteronomy 30:3; Isaiah 11:11-12, 43:5-6; Jeremiah 3:18, 32:37; Ezekiel 11:17, 34:13, 36:24, 37:21, etc.)

2. REBUILDING OF THE HOLY TEMPLE

ISAIAH 2:2-3

² It will happen in the end of days: The mountain of the Temple of the Lord will be firmly established as the head of the mountains, and it will be exalted above the hills, and all the nations will stream to it. ³ Many peoples will go and say: Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the Temple of the G-d of Jacob...(cf. Isaiah 56:6-7, 60:7,66:20; Ezekiel chapters 40-44; Malachi 3:4; Zechariah 14:20-21, etc.)

3. OBSERVANCE OF TORAH

EZEKIEL 11:19-20

¹⁹ I will give them an undivided heart and I will place a new spirit in them; I will remove the heart of stone from their flesh and give them a heart of flesh, ²⁰so that they may walk in My decrees and observe My laws and fulfill them...(cf. Deuteronomy 30:8,10; Jeremiah 31:32; Ezekiel 36:26-27, etc.)

4. UNIVERSAL KNOWLEDGE OF G-D

ZECHARIAH 14:9

And the Lord will become King over all the earth; on that day the Lord will be one and His Name one. (cf. Zechariah 8:23, 14:16; Isaiah 45:23, 66:23; Zephaniah 3:9; Jeremiah 31:33; Ezekiel 38:23; Psalm 86:9, etc.)

5. REIGN OF PEACE

MICAH 4:3-4

³ He shall judge between many peoples, and shall arbitrate between strong nations far away; they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore. ⁴But they shall all sit under their own vines and under their own fig trees, and no one shall make them afraid; for the mouth of the Lord of hosts has spoken. (cf. Hoseah 2:20; Isaiah 2:1-4, 32:16-18, 60:18, 65:25; Zechariah 14:11; Jeremiah 33:9, etc.)

THE DAVIDIC KING

ISAIAH 11:1-10

¹ A staff shall emerge from the stump of Jesse, and a shoot shall sprout from his roots. ² The spirit of G-d will rest upon him - a spirit of wisdom and understanding, a spirit of counsel and might, a spirit of knowledge and fear of G-d. ³ He will be filled with a spirit for the fear of G-d, and will not judge by what his eyes see nor decide by what his ears hear. ⁴ He will judge the poor with righteousness and decide with equity for the meek of the earth. He will strike (the wicked of) the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he will slay the wicked. ⁵ Righteousness will be the belt around his loins, and faithfulness the girdle around his waist. ⁶ The wolf will live with the sheep and the leopard will lie down with the kid; and a calf, a lion's cub and a fatling will walk together, and a young child shall lead them. ⁷ A cow and a bear will graze and their young will lie down together, and a lion will eat straw like the cattle. ⁸ A nursing child will play by a viper's hole, and a weaned child will put his hand on the adder's den. ⁹ They will neither hurt nor destroy in all of My holy mountain, for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. ¹⁰ It shall be on that day that the descendant of Jesse will stand as a banner for the peoples, nations will seek him and his resting place will be glorious.

JEREMIAH 23:5-6

⁵ The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will raise up for David a righteous branch, and he will reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. ⁶ In his days Judah will be safe and Israel will dwell securely. And this is the name by which he will be called: "The Lord is our righteousness."

(cf. Jeremiah 30:7-10, 33:14-17)

EZEKIEL 37:24-28

²⁴ My servant David shall be king over them; and they shall all have one shepherd. They shall follow My ordinances and keep My decrees and fulfill them. ²⁵ They shall live in the land that I gave to my servant Jacob, in which your ancestors lived; they and their children and their children's children shall live there forever; and My servant David shall be their prince forever. ²⁶ I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them; and I will bless them and multiply them, and will set My sanctuary among them forevermore. ²⁷ My dwelling place shall be with them; I will be their G-d and they shall be My people. ²⁸ Then the nations of the world will know that I, the Lord, sanctifies Israel when My sanctuary is among them forevermore. (cf. Ezekiel 34:23-30; Hosea 3:4-5; Zechariah 9:9-10)

SIN AND ATONEMENT

1) Cognitive Dissonance and re-defining the concept of Messiah

1 CORINTHIANS 15:3

For I delivered unto you first of all that which I received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures.

ROMANS 11:26

And so all Israel will be saved; as it is written, "Out of Zion will come the Deliverer; he will banish unG-dliness from Jacob."

2) This is based on the assumption that we can't do it:

GALATIANS 2:21

"I do not set aside the grace of G-d; for if righteousness could come through (observing) the Torah, then Christ died in vain".

- Christian concepts of original sin, total depravity and Satan as "G-d of this world"

3) The Torah's perspective:

GENESIS 4:6-7

And the Lord said unto Cain, "Why are you wroth, and why is your countenance fallen? If you do well, shall you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin waits at the door. And he (it) desires you, but you shall (can) conquer him (it)."

DEUTERONOMY 30:11-14

For this commandment that I command you today - it is not hidden from you and it is not distant. It is not in heaven, (for you) to say, "Who can go up to the heaven for us and take it for us, so that we can obey it and perform it?" Nor is it across the sea, (for you) to say, "Who can cross to the other side of the sea for us and take it for us, so that we can obey it and perform it?" Rather, the matter is very near to you - in your mouth and in your heart - to perform it.

PROVERBS 24:16

For the righteous one will fall seven times and rise, but the wicked ones will stumble through evil.

ISAIAH 59:20

And he will come to Zion as redeemer, to those in Jacob who turn from transgression, says the Lord.

THE PATH TO DIVINE FORGIVENESS IN THE TORAH

1 KINGS 8:46-53

If they sin against You, (for there is no man that does not sin), and You be angry with them, and deliver them to the enemy, so that they carry them away captives unto the land of the enemy, far or near; ⁴⁷ Yet if they shall bethink themselves in the land where they were carried captives, and **repent and make supplication** unto You in the land of them that carried them captives, saying, "We have sinned, and have done perversely, we have committed wickedness;" ⁴⁸ And **return to You with all of their heart**, and with all their soul, in the land of their enemies, which let them away captive, and pray unto You toward their land, which You gave unto their fathers, the city which You have chosen, and the house which I have built for Your Name: ⁴⁹ Then hear their **prayer and supplication** in heaven Your dwelling place, and maintain their cause, ⁵⁰ and forgive Your people who have sinned against You...

2 CHRONICLES 7:14

If My people who are called by My Name **humble themselves, pray, seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways**, then I will hear from heaven, **and will forgive their sin** and heal their land.

EZEKIEL 18:21-23

But if the wicked turn away from all their sins that they have committed and keep all My statutes and do what is lawful and right, they shall surely live; they shall not die. ²² None of the transgressions that they have committed shall be remembered against them; for the righteousness that they have done they shall live. ²³ Have I any pleasure in the death of the wicked, says the Lord G-d, and not rather that they should turn from their ways and live?

EZEKIEL 33:10-11; 14-16

Now you, son of man, say to the House of Israel, Thus have you spoken, "Since our sins are upon us and we are wasting away because of them, **how can we live?**" Say to them: As I live, declares the Lord G-d, I do not desire the death of the wicked one, **but rather the return of the wicked one from his way**, so that he may live. **Repent, repent from your evil ways!** Why should you die, O House of Israel?

Again, though I say to the wicked, "You shall surely die," yet **if they turn from their sin and do what is lawful and right** - if the wicked restore the pledge, give back what they have taken by robbery, and walk in the statutes of life, committing no iniquity - **they shall surely live**, they shall not die. None of the sins that they have committed shall be remembered against them; they have done what is lawful and right, they shall surely live.

JEREMIAH 36:3

It may be that when the house of Judah hears of all the disasters that I intend to do to them, **all of them may turn from their evil ways, so that I may forgive their iniquity and their sin.**

ISAIAH 55:6-7

⁶Seek the Lord while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near; ⁷**let the wicked forsake their way, and the unrighteous their thoughts; let them return to the Lord, that He may have mercy on them, and to our G-d, for He will abundantly pardon.**

DANIEL 4:24

Therefore, O king, may my counsel be acceptable to you; **atone for your sins with righteousness, and your iniquities with mercy to the oppressed**, so that your prosperity may be prolonged.

JONAH 3:6-10

⁶When the news reached the king of Nineveh, he rose from his throne, removed his robe, covered himself with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. ⁷Then he had a proclamation made in Nineveh: "by the decree of the king and his nobles: **No human being or animal, no herd or flock, shall taste anything. They shall not feed, nor shall they drink water.** ⁸Human beings and animals shall be covered with sackcloth, **and they shall cry mightily to G-d. All shall turn from their evil ways and from the violence that is in their hands.** ⁹Who knows? G-d may relent and change His mind; he may turn from His fierce anger, so that we do not perish. ¹⁰When G-d saw what they did, how they turned from their evil ways, G-d changed His mind about the calamity that He said He would bring upon them; and He did not do it.

HOW ATONEMENT DOESN'T WORK

PROVERBS 15:8

The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord, but the prayer of the upright is his delight.

ISAIAH 1:11,16

¹¹What to Me is the multitude of your sacrifices? says the Lord; I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams and the fat of fed beasts; I do not delight in the blood of bulls, or of lambs or of goats...¹⁶Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean; remove the evil of your doings from before My eyes; cause to do evil, learn to do good; seek justice, rescue the oppressed, defend the orphan, plead for the widow.

AMOS 5:22-24

²² Even though you offer Me your burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them; and offerings of well-being of your fatted animals I will not look upon. ²³ Take away from Me the noise of your songs; I will not listen to the melody of your harps. ²⁴ But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.

MICAH 6:6-8

⁶ "With what shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before G-d on high? Shall I come before Him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? ⁷ Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?" ⁸ He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your G-d?

PSALM 51:15-17

¹⁵ O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise. ¹⁶ For You have no delight in sacrifice; if I were to give a burnt offering, You would not be pleased. ¹⁷ The sacrifice acceptable to G-d is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O G-d, You will not despise.

JEREMIAH 7:3-7

³ Thus says the Lord of hosts, the G-d of Israel: 'Amend your ways and your doings, and let me dwell with you in this place. ⁴ Do not trust in these deceptive words: 'This is the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord.' ⁵ For if you truly amend your ways and your doings if you truly act justly one with another, ⁶ if you do not oppress the alien, the orphan, and the widow, or shed innocent blood in this place, and if you do not go after other G-ds to your own hurt, ⁷ Then I will dwell with you in this place, in the land that I gave of old to your ancestors forever and ever.

1 SAMUEL 15:22

²² And Samuel said, "Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Surely, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams.

HOSEA 6:6

For I desire steadfast love and not sacrifice, the knowledge of G-d rather than burnt offerings.

PROVERBS 21:3

To do righteousness and justice is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice.

HOW NOT TO READ THE BIBLE

1. Putting the cart before the horse - reading the Bible with a preconceived agenda:

"Let me repeat this point: there is no self-evident blueprint in the Hebrew Bible which can be said to unambiguously point to Jesus. Only after one has come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, and more specifically the kind of Messiah that he is, does it all begin to make sense and hang together."

*"Yehoshua ben David" by Walter Riggans, Olive Press, 1995, page 155
(A Christian missionary textbook)*

2. Examples of Out-of-Context prooftexts:

ZECHARIAH 13:1-6

¹ In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and uncleanness. ² And it shall come to pass in that day, says the Lord of hosts, that I will cut off the names of the idols out of the land, and they shall no more be remembered: and also I will cause the prophets and the unclean spirit to pass out of the land. ³ And it shall come to pass, that when any shall yet prophesy, then his father and his mother that begat him shall say unto him, "You shall not live; for you speak lies in the name of the Lord:" and his father and his mother that begat him shall thrust him through when he prophesies. ⁴ And it shall come to pass in that day, that the prophets shall be ashamed every one of his vision, when he has prophesied; neither shall they wear a rough garment to deceive: ⁵ But he shall say, "I am no prophet, I am a husbandman; for man taught me to keep cattle from my youth." ⁶ And one shall say unto him, **"What are these wounds in your hands?"** And he shall answer, "Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends."

MATTHEW CHAPTER 2

¹³ And when they departed, behold, the angel of the lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying: "Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and stay there until I bring you word: for Herod will seek to destroy the young child." ¹⁴ When he arose, he took the young child by night, and went down into Egypt. ¹⁵ And stayed there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the lord by the prophet, saying, **"Out of Egypt have I called My son."**

HOSEA 11:1

When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called My son out of Egypt.

MATTHEW CHAPTER 2 (CONT'D)

¹⁶ Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked by the wise men, was very angry, and sent out, and killed all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from age two years and under, according to the time which he diligently inquired of the wise men. ¹⁷ Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying, ¹⁸ **"In Ra'ma was there a voice heard, lamentation and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not."**

JEREMIAH 31:15-17

¹⁵ Thus says the Lord; "A voice was heard in Ra'ma, lamentation, and bitter weeping; Rachel weeping for her children refused to be comforted for her children, because they were not." ¹⁶ Thus says the Lord; "Refrain your voice from weeping, and your eyes from tears: for your work shall be rewarded," says the Lord; "and they shall come again from the land of the enemy. ¹⁷ And there is hope in your end," says the Lord, "that your children shall come again to their own border."

PSALM 41:1-10

¹ Happy are those who consider the poor; the Lord delivers them in the day of trouble. ² The Lord protects them and keeps them alive; they are called happy in the land. You do not give them up to the will of their enemies. ³ The Lord sustains them on their sickbed; in their illness you heal all their infirmities. ⁴ As for me, I said, O Lord, be gracious to me; heal me, **for I have sinned against you.** ⁵ My enemies wonder in malice when I die, and my name perish? ⁶ And when they come to see me, they utter empty words, while their hearts gather mischief; when they go out, they tell it abroad. ⁷ All who hate me whisper together about me they imagine the worst for me. ⁸ They think that a deadly thing has fastened on me, that I will not rise again from where I lie. ⁹ **Even my bosom friend in whom I trusted, who ate of my bread, has lifted the heel against me.** ¹⁰ But you, O Lord, be gracious to me, and raise me up, that I may repay them.

3. Examples of Mistranslations:

(1)

PSALM 22 (Christian translation, King James Version)

¹² Many bulls have compassed me: strong bulls of Bashan have beset me round. ¹³ They gaped upon me with their mouths, as a ravening and roaring lion. ¹⁴ I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels. ¹⁵ My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaves to my jaws; and you have brought me into the dust of death. ¹⁶ For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have enclosed me; **they pierced** my hands and my feet.

כִּי סָבְבוּנִי כְּלָבִים עֲדַת מְרַעִים הִקִּיפוּנִי כְּאֵרֵי יָדַי וְרַגְלָי:

PSALM 22 (Jewish Translation, verse 16 appears as verse 17)

For dogs have encompassed me; a company of evil-doers have enclosed me; **like a lion**, at my hands and my feet.

ISAIAH 38:13

שְׁוִיתִי עַד בֶּקֶר כְּאֵרֵי כֹן יִשְׁבֵּר כָּל עֲצָמוֹתַי מִיּוֹם עַד לַיְלָה תִּשְׁלִימָנִי:

I cry for help until morning; **like a lion** he breaks all my bones; from day to night you bring me to an end.

NUMBERS 24:9

כָּרַע שָׁכַב כְּאֵרֵי וּכְלָבִיא מִי יִקְיָמֶנּוּ מִבְּרַכְיָהּ בְּרוּךְ וְאֶרְיָהּ אָרוּר:

He couched, he lay down **as a lion**, and as a great lion: who shall stir him up? Blessed is he that blesses you, and cursed is he that curses you.

(2)

MATTHEW CHAPTER 1

²² Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the lord by the prophet, saying, ²³ "Behold **a virgin** shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and **they** shall call his name Emanu-el, which being interpreted is, G-d with us."

ISAIAH 7:14

לְכֵן יִתֵּן אֲדֹנָי הוּא לָכֶם הוּא הִנֵּה הָעַלְמָה הָרָה וְיִלְדֶת בֵּן וְקָרְאת שְׁמוֹ עִמָּנוּ אֵל

Accurate translation:

Therefore, G-d Himself will give to you a sign; Behold, **the young woman** is with child and will give birth to a son and **she** will call his name Immanuel.

4) P'shat vs. Midrash

PARDES

- **Peshat** (פֶּשֶׁט) – Plain, simple, straightforward, intended meaning of a text.
- **Remez** (רִמְזוֹ) – Meanings alluded to through "Hints" such as Gematria (numerical value of letters)
- **Derash** (דְּרָשׁ) – From the Hebrew meaning to inquire, seek or to draw out. Homiletical or interpretative meanings not explicit in the text.
- **Sod** (סוּד) – Secret, mystical, Kabbalistic levels of understanding.

GENESIS 1:2

And the land was desolate and void, and darkness upon the face of the deep.

Desolate - this is the exile of Babylon. Void - this is the exile of Persia. Darkness - this is the exile of Greece. The deep - this is the exile of Rome. (Midrash Genesis Rabbah)

PSALM 22:1-2

For the conductor, on the *ayeles hashachar*, a psalm by David. My G-d, my G-d, why have You forsaken me; why so far from saving me, from the words of my roar?

(Esther said) But I have been placed in the bosom of this wicked man all these years, for me you do no miracles. My Lord, my Lord, why have you forsaken me?"

(Midrash Tehilim Buber, 22:16)

ISAIAH 53:
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SESSION 2:

**HOW MISSIONARIES MISREAD
ISAIAH 53**

ISAIAH 52:13-53:12 (CHRISTIAN TRANSLATION)

52:13 Behold, my servant shall prosper, he shall be exalted and lifted up, and shall be very high.

52:14 As many were astonished at him -- his appearance was so marred, beyond human semblance, and his form beyond that of the sons of men--

52:15 so shall he sprinkle many nations; kings shall shut their mouths because of him; for that which has not been told them they shall see, and that which they have not heard they shall understand.

53:1 Who has believed our message? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?

53:2 For he grew up before him like a young plant, and like a root out of dry ground; he had no form or comeliness that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him.

53:3 He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

53:4 Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by G-d, and afflicted.

53:5 But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that made us whole, and with his stripes we are healed.

53:6 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.

53:7 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 dumb, so he opened not his mouth.

53:8 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?

53:9 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.

53:10 Yet it was the will of the Lord to bruise him; he has put him to grief; when he makes himself an offering for sin, he shall see his offspring, he shall prolong his days; the will of the Lord shall prosper in his hand;

53:11 he shall see the fruit of the travail of his soul and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous; and he shall bear their iniquities.

53:12 Therefore I will divide him a portion with the great, 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 made intercession for the transgressors.

PROVERBS 18:17

The first to state his case seems right until another comes and cross-examines him.



Missionaries have set the bar very high for themselves - they claim this passage proves their position.

- **Red Herring #1** - Jesus insisted people accept him years before his crucifixion
- Red Herring #2 - This is not the critical divide between Judaism & Christianity

IS THIS PASSAGE CLEARLY ABOUT THE MESSIAH?

1) Jesus' followers did not understand it as a prophecy about the Messiah

MATTHEW 16:21-22

²¹ From that time forth began Jesus to show unto his disciples how he must go into Jerusalem, and suffer many things at the hands of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day. ²² Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, "G-d forbid it lord, this must never happen to you."

MARK 9:31-32

³¹ For he taught his disciples, and said unto them, "The son of man is delivered into the hands of men, and they shall kill him; and after that he is killed, he shall rise the third day."

³² But they understood not that saying, and were afraid to ask him.

2) No clear identifying marks that it is about the Messiah

3) Not consistent with passages that are clearly about the Messiah

4) No corroboration for this Messianic concept:

“Before you venture forward in this pilgrimage through Isaiah 53, it is essential to know that no other prophesy in the entirety of the Old Testament Scriptures explicitly links the death of the Messiah with his work of atonement.”

*The Gospel According to Isaiah 53, Bock and Glaser, editors
Kregel Publications 2012, page 29*

5) Lack of clarity demonstrated by the fact that among Christian Bible scholars and commentators, there are at least 15 different theories regarding who the Servant of the Lord is in this chapter.

“The Suffering Servant in Isaiah” by Father Hayden Williams OFM Cap,

“Theories which identify the Servant with some individual name: Fifteen names have been suggested:

1. Isaiah
2. Uzziah
3. Hezekiah
4. Josiah
5. Jeremiah
6. Ezekiel
7. Job
8. Moses
9. Jehoiachim
10. Cyrus
11. Sheshbazzar
12. Zerubbabel
13. Meshullam
14. Nehemiah
15. Eleazar”

Indeed, many Christian scholars recognize that lack of probative value in Isaiah 53:

“It is important to recognize that there is a significant scholarly line of argument that concludes that this poem [Isaiah 53] will not bear the theological freight familiarly assigned to it, and that its theological claims are rather minimal...One must recognize a certain dis-ease about making a maximal theological interpretation (a large Christian inclination) on what are at best unstable critical grounds.”

*Walter Brueggemann, Professor of Old Testament
at Columbia Theological Seminary*

IS IT CLEAR THAT JESUS IS THE SUBJECT OF THIS PASSAGE?

1) The identification is built upon circular reasoning. What is the very maximum Christianity can extract from this passage?

2) The language of Isaiah's passage seems to exclude Jesus as a possible subject:

(a) ISAIAH 52:13-15

¹³ See, my servant shall prosper; he shall be exalted and lifted up, and shall be very high.

¹⁴ Just as there were many who were astonished at you, saying, "Surely his visage was marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men."

¹⁵ **So shall he startle many nations. Kings shall shut their mouths because of him; for that which had not been told them they shall see, and that which they had not heard they shall understand.**

(b) Was Jesus someone of unpleasant appearance, appearing to many as inhuman? ISAIAH 52:14 and 53:2

(c) Despised and rejected of men? ISAIAH 53:3

- How often does the Bible teach us that the Messiah will be despised and rejected?
- Do these terms really apply to Jesus?

MATTHEW 4:23-25

And Jesus was going about in all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness among the people. And the news about him went out into all of Syria...And great multitudes followed him from Galilee and Decapolis and Jerusalem and Judea from beyond the Jordan.

MARK 3:7-9

⁷ Jesus departed with his disciples to the sea, and a great multitude from Galilee followed him; ⁸ hearing all that he was doing, they came to him in great numbers from Judea, Jerusalem, Idumea, beyond the Jordan, and the region around Tyre and Sidon. ⁹ He told his disciples to have a boat ready for him because of the crowd, so that they would not crush him.

LUKE 2:52

And Jesus increased in wisdom and in years, and in divine and human favor.

LUKE 4:14-15

¹⁴ Then Jesus, filled with the power of the spirit, returned to Galilee, and a report about him spread through all the surrounding country. ¹⁵ He began to teach in their synagogues and was praised by everyone.

(d) "a man of pain and one who knows sickness" ISAIAH 53:3

- How many times does scripture teach that the Messiah would suffer constant pain and illness?
- Is there any evidence that Jesus experienced pain and illness throughout his life?

(e) Did Jesus go silently to his death? ISAIAH 53:7

MATTHEW 26:39

And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet not what I want but what you want.

MATTHEW 27:46

And about three o'clock, Jesus cried with a loud voice, "El, Eli, lama sabachthani?" that is, "My G-d, my G-d, why have you forsaken me?"

JOHN 18:36

Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not from this world. If my kingdom were from this world, my followers would be fighting to keep me from being handed over to the Jews. But as it is, my kingdom is not from here."

(f) ...due to the transgression of my people, they (lamo) were afflicted (or: affliction came to them) ISAIAH 53:8

ISAIAH 48:21

They did not thirst when he led them through the deserts; he made water flow for them (למו) from the rock; he split open the rock and the water gushed out.

(g) Was Jesus someone disconnected from violence? ISAIAH 53:9

LUKE 8:32-33

³² Now there on the hillside a large herd of swine was feeding; and the demons begged Jesus to let them enter these. So he gave them permission. ³³ Then the demons came out of the man and entered the swine, and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and were drowned.

LUKE 19:27

"But as for these enemies of mine who did not want me to be king over them -- bring them here and slaughter them in my presence."

MATTHEW 21:18-20

¹⁸ Now in the morning as he returned into the city, he hungered. ¹⁹ And when he saw a fig tree in the way, he came to it, and found nothing thereon, but leaves only, and said unto it, "Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward forever." And presently the fig tree withered away. ²⁰ And when the disciples saw it, they marveled, saying, "How soon is the fig tree withered away."

MARK 11:13-14

¹³ And seeing a fig tree afar off having leaves, he came, if haply he might find anything thereon: and when he came to it, he found nothing but leaves; for the time of figs was not yet. ¹⁴ And Jesus answered and said unto it, "No man eat fruit of the hereafter forever." And his disciples heard it.

JOHN 2:14-15

¹⁴ And found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting: ¹⁵ And when he had made a whip of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables;

LUKE 22:36

He said to them, "But now, the one who has a purse must take it, and likewise a bag. And the one who has no sword must sell his cloak and buy one."

(h) Was Jesus someone disconnected from violence? ISAIAH 53:9

JOHN 18:20

Jesus answered, "I have spoken openly to the world; I have always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where all the Jews come together. I have said nothing in secret."

HOWEVER:

MARK 4:10-12

¹⁰ When he was alone, those who were around him along with the twelve asked him about the parables. ¹¹ And he said to them, "To you has been given the secret of the kingdom of G-d, but for those outside, everything comes in parables; ¹² in order that they may indeed look, but not perceive, and may indeed listen, but not understand; so that they may not turn again and be forgiven."

MATTHEW 16:19-20

¹⁹I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven." ²⁰ Then he sternly ordered the disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah.

LUKE 8:53-56

⁵³And they laughed at him, knowing that she was dead. ⁵⁴ But he took her by the hand and called out, "Child, get up!" ⁵⁵ Her spirit returned, and she got up at once. Then he directed them to give her something to eat. ⁵⁶ Her parents were astounded; but he ordered them to tell no one what had happened.

(i) If his soul would acknowledge guilt... ISAIAH 53:10

(j) He will see his seed (zera), he shall prolong his days... ISAIAH 53:10

The word used in scripture for figurative progeny is never "Zera" (seed) but "Ben" (son/child)

DEUTERONOMY 14:1

You are children (בנים) of the Lord your G-d.

GENESIS 15:2-4

But Abram said, "O Lrd G-d, what else will you give me, for I continue childless, and the **heir** (בן) of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?" And Abram said, "You have given me no **offspring** (זרע), and so a slave born in my house is to be my **heir** (בן). But the word of the Lord came to him, "This man shall not be your heir; no one but your very own issue shall be your heir."

ISAIAH 45:11

Thus says the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, and its Maker: "Will you question me about my **children** (בנים), or command me concerning the work of my hands?"

ISAIAH 45:19

I did not speak in secret, in a land of darkness; I did not say to the **offspring** (זרע) of Jacob, "Seek me in chaos." I the Lord speak the truth, I declare what is right.

(k) ...with his knowledge, the righteous one, My servant will cause many to be just... ISAIAH 53:11

3) The idea that Jesus was a sacrifice to atone for the sins of those who would believe in him is problematic:

(a) If Isaiah 53 is saying this, it would be the only source in the Bible for such an idea. An idea that Christians insist is the most central idea about the Messiah and actually, the most central teaching of the Bible - all resting on this isolated and highly controversial passage.

(b) The passage doesn't speak of belief in this servant - quite the opposite.

(c) The idea of vicarious suffering is finessed in Christian translations with a subtle mistranslation:

Isaiah 53:5 But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities...

However, a more accurate translation would be:

He was wounded from our transgression, bruised as a result of our iniquities...

(d) This concept violates virtually all Biblical teachings about atonement:

1) Sacrifices were not sufficient to atone for sin.

2) Sacrifices were ultimately not necessary to atone for sin - repentance is.

3) Torah does not endorse the idea of an innocent person dying for guilty ones:

EXODUS 32:32-33

³²But now, if you will only forgive their sin - but if not, blot me out of the book that you have written. ³³But the Lord said to Moses, "Whoever has sinned against me I will blot out of my book."

DEUTERONOMY 24:16

Parents shall not be put to death for their children, nor shall children be put to death for their parents; only for their own crimes may persons be put to death.

EZEKIEL 18:1-4

¹The word of the Lord came unto me again, saying, ² "What mean you, that you use this proverb concerning the land of Israel, saying, 'The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge?' ³As I live," says the Lord G-d, "you shall not have occasion any more to use this proverb in Israel. ⁴Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sins, it shall die."

4) Jesus would not have been a "kosher" sacrifice:

- Sacrifices had to be offered by Cohanim (Priests)
- Sacrifices had to be physically perfect, without blemish
- Sacrifices had to be brought on the altar of the Temple

- Sacrifices had to be burned
- Sacrifices were never brought for future sins
- The Christian Bible designates Jesus as a Paschal lamb, which was not brought to atone for sin

(e) If Jesus was the final, once and for all sacrifice for sin, why does the Bible say there will be a third Temple in Jerusalem with the restoration of the sacrificial system in the future?

HEBREWS 10:10,18

¹⁰And it is by G-d's will that we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ **once for all**...

¹⁸**Where there is forgiveness of these, there is no longer any offering for sin .**

EZEKIEL 37:26-27

²⁶Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them: and I will place them, and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore. ²⁷My tabernacle also shall be with them; yea, I will be their G-d, and they shall be my people.

EZEKIEL 44:27-29

²⁷On the day that he goes into the holy place, into the inner court, to minister in the holy place, he shall offer his sin offering, says the Lord G-d. ²⁸This shall be their inheritance: I am their inheritance; and you shall give them no holding in Israel; I am their holding. ²⁹They shall eat the grain offering, the sin offering, and the guilt offering; and every devoted thing in Israel shall be theirs.

EZEKIEL 45:22-23

²²On that day the prince shall provide for himself and all the people of the land a young bull for a sin offering. ²³And during the seven days of the festival he shall provide as a burnt offering to the Lord seven young bulls and seven rams without blemish, on each of the seven days; and a male goat daily for a sin offering.

ZECHARIAH 14:20-21

²⁰On that day there shall be inscribed on the bells of the horses, "Holy to the Lord." And the cooking pots in the house of the Lord shall be as holy as the bowls in front of the altar; ²¹and every cooking pot in Jerusalem and Judah shall be sacred to the Lord of hosts, so that all who sacrifice may come and use them to boil the flesh of the sacrifice. And there shall no longer be traders in the house of the Lord of hosts on that day.

MALACHI 3:2-4

²For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap; ³he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver,

and he will purify the descendants of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, until they present offerings to the Lord in righteousness. ⁴Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the Lord as in the days of old and as in former years.

ISAIAH 56:6-7

⁶ And the foreigners who join themselves to the Lord, to minister to him, to love the name of the Lord, and to be his servants, all who keep the Sabbath, and do not profane it, and hold fast my covenant – ⁷these I will bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer; their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be accepted on my altar; for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples.

ISAIAH 53:
DEFUSING THE MISSIONARY NUCLEAR BOMB

A COUNTER-MISSIONARY SEMINAR WITH RABBI MICHAEL SKOBAC

SESSION 3:

HOW MISSIONARIES MISREAD
ISAIAH 53

ISAIAH 52:1-12 (KETER CROWN TRANSLATION)

52:1 Awake, awake, put on your strength O Zion! Put on your garments of splendor! O Jerusalem, the holy city, for the uncircumcised and the defiled people will never enter you.

52:2 Shake the dust from yourself; arise, and sit up O Jerusalem. Release the bonds on your neck, O captive, Daughter of Zion.

52:3 For thus says the Lord: "You were sold for nothing, and you shall be redeemed without money."

52:4 For thus says the Lord G-d: "As for Egypt my people went down at first to sojourn there, but Assyria oppressed them for no reason."

52:5 "And now why should I remain here?" declares the Lord. "Since my people were taken for nothing, their rulers glorify themselves," declares the Lord. "And all day long my name is constantly blasphemed.

52:6 Therefore my people shall know my name; therefore on that day they will know that it is I who speaks, I am here!"

52:7 How pleasant are the footsteps of the herald upon the mountains proclaiming peace heralding good news proclaiming salvation, saying to Zion, "Your G-d has become king!"

52:8 The voice of your centuries is raised, they sing glad song in unison, for with their own eyes they will see the Lord returning to Zion.

52:9 Burst out in song and sing songs of praise together, O ruins of Jerusalem, for the Lord will have comforted his people, He would have redeemed Jerusalem.

52:10 The Lord will reveal the power of his holiness in the sight of all the nations, and all the ends of earth shall witness the salvation of our God.

52:11 Turn away! Turn away! Get out of there, do not touch the defiled one. Get out from within it, purify yourselves O bearers of the Lord's armor.

52:12 You will not leave in haste, no go in flight, for the Lord will go ahead of you, and the God of Israel will be your rear guard.

ISAIAH 54:1-17 (KETER CROWN TRANSLATION)

54:1 Sing out, O barren one who has not given birth; break into glad song and be jubilant, you who have not been in labor. For the children of the desolate Jerusalem will outnumber the children of the inhabited place, says the Lord.

54:2 Broaden the place of your tent and let the curtains of your dwellings extend out, do not spare them; lengthen your cords and strengthen your pegs.

54:3 For you will break out ot the right and to the left; your offspring will inherit nations, and they will settle desolate cities.

54:4 Do not fear, for you will not be shamed; do not feel humiliated, for you will not be disgraced; for you will forget the embarassment of your youth and you will no longer remember the disgrace of your widowhood.

54:5 For your master is your maker, the Lord of hosts is his name; your redeemer is the holy one of Israel; and he will be called the G-d of the entire world.

54:6 For the Lord has called you like a wife who had been deserted and has been distressed, and like a wife of one's youth who had become despised, says your G-d.

54:7 I have forsaken you only for a brief moment, G-d says, but with abundant mercy I will gather you in.

54:8 With a little bit of wrath I have hidden my countenance from you for a moment, but with eternal kindness I shall show you mercy, said your redeemer who is the Lord.

54:9 For this shall be to me like the waters of Noah, just as I swore that the waters of Noah would never again pass over the earth, so I have sworn not to be angry with you nor to rebuke you.

54:10 For the mountains may be moved and the hills may be swayed, but my kindness shall not depart from you and my covenant of peace will not be swayed, says the Lord, who shows you mercy.

54:11 O afflicted, tempestuous one, who had not been consoled, I am going to set your floorstones with gems and lay your foundation with sapphires.

54:12 I will set your window frames with jasper and make your gate of carbuncle stones, and your entire territory of precious gems.

54:13 All of your children will be disciples of the Lord, and your children will have abundant peace.

54:14 With righteousness you shall be established, distance yourself from oppression, for you need not fear it, and from ruin, for it will not come near to you.

54:15 Indeed, he shall fear the one who I am not with, and whoever gathers against you in battle will fall in submission to you.

54:16 Look, I created the smith, who fans his charcoal flame to produce a tool for his work, but I have also created a destroyer to wreck it.

54:17 Any weapon sharpened against you will not succeed, and you will find guilty any tongue that contends with you in judgment.

EVIDENCE THAT THE SERVANT OF ISAIAH 53 IS ISRAEL

Does Isaiah ever identify G-d's servant?

ISAIAH 41:8-9

⁸ But you Israel, **My servant**, Jacob who I have chosen, descendant of Abraham My friend;
⁹ You whom I have taken from the ends of the earth, and called from its remotest parts, and said to you, **you are My servant**, I have chosen you and not rejected you.

ISAIAH 43:10

You are My witnesses declares the Lord, and **My servant** whom I have chosen: that you may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me there was no god formed, neither shall there be after me.

ISAIAH 44:1-2

¹ But now listen, **O Jacob my servant**, and Israel whom I have chosen: ² Thus says the Lord who made you, and formed you from the womb, who will help you, "Do not fear **O Jacob My servant**, Jeshurun who I have chosen."

ISAIAH 44:21

Remember these things O Jacob, and **Israel, for you are My servant**, I have formed you, **you are My servant O Israel**, you will not be forgotten by Me.

ISAIAH 45:4

For the sake of **Jacob My servant**, and Israel My chosen one, I have even called you by your name:

ISAIAH 48:20

Go forth out of Babylon, flee from the Kasdim with a voice of singing declare, tell this, say it even to the ends of the earth; say, "The Lord has redeemed **his servant Jacob**."

ISAIAH 49:3

And said to me, "**You are my servant, Israel**, in whom I will be glorified.

Israel are the Servants of G-d in Isaiah 54:17, 63:17, 65:8-9, 13-15 and 66:14.

Elsewhere in the Bible, there is a similar identification:

JEREMIAH 30:10-11

But as for you, do not fear the word of the Lord, **My servant Jacob**, and do not be afraid, O Israel, for see that I am saving you from distant places, and your descendants from the land of their captivity, and Jacob will return, and be at peace and ease, and no one shall make him afraid. For I am with you, declares the Lord, to save you, for I will bring annihilation upon all the nations among whom I have dispersed you, but upon you I will not bring annihilation; I will chastise you with justice, but I will never eliminate you altogether.

JEREMIAH 46:27-28

But as for you, do not be afraid, **My servant Jacob**, and do not be disheartened, O Israel, for see that I am saving you from a distant land, and your offspring from the land of their captivity; and Jacob will return and be calm and serene, and no one will frighten him. Do not be afraid, O my servant Jacob, declares the Lord, for I am with you. Though I will utterly destroy all the nations where I have dispersed you, I will not utterly destroy you; I will punish you with justice, but I will never totally wipe you out.

DEUTERONOMY 32:36, 43

For the Lord will vindicate His people, and have compassion upon **His servants**; When He sees that their strength is gone, and there is none remaining, bond or free.

O nations, sing the praises of His people, for He will avenge the blood of His servants; He will bring retribution upon His foes, and He will appease His land and His people.

See also Leviticus 25:42,55; Ezekiel 28:25, I Chronicles 16:13, Nehemiah 1:10-11, Psalm 79:10, 135:1

Factors that lead to an interpretation of Israel (or the righteous of Israel) as G-d's servant:

- 1. In the chapters leading up to 53, Israel has been identified as G-d's servant**
- 2. The surrounding chapters, 52 and 54 speak about the ultimate redemption of Israel after their long history of suffering and humiliation**
- 3. We will see that this approach is consistently and thoroughly corroborated by numerous parallel passages throughout the book of Isaiah and the Bible.**
- 4. Due to the compelling nature of this approach and its clarity, it has been accepted by a very large and growing number of Christian scholars and Bible commentators:**

a) THE NEW ENGLISH BIBLE : OXFORD STUDY EDITION

52.13-53.12: Fourth servant song. The suffering servant. See 42.1-4 n. Israel, the servant of God, has suffered as a humiliated individual. However, the servant endured without complaint because it was vicarious suffering (suffering for others). **13-15:** *Nations* and *kings* will be surprised to see the servant *exalted*. **53.1:** The crowds, pagan nations, among whom the servant (Israel) lived, speak here (through v. 9), saying that the significance of Israel's humiliation and exaltation is hard to believe.

b) THE HARPER COLLINS STUDY BIBLE, 1989, Commentary to Isaiah by J.J.M. Roberts, Ph.D. Professor of Old Testament Literature, Princeton Theological Seminary

52.13-53.12 The last and most striking of the so-called servant songs (see note on 42.1-9). The early church indentified the servant in this passage with Jesus (Acts 8.32-35), and Jesus' own sense of identity and mission may have been shaped by this figure (Mk 8.31; 9.30-32; 10.33-34). In the original historical context, however, the servant appears to have been exiled Israel. **52.13-15** God's deliverance and exaltation of Israel will astound the nations who formally despised this disfigured slave (49.7). **53.1-6** The nations speak, expressing their astonishment at the deliverance of Israel, which forces them to revise their assessment of Israel. **53.1-3** The servant's outward appearance suggested nothing special. **53.2** There may be an allusion in the term *root* to Israel's messianic expectations (11.1,10), but the servant had no *majesty* to suggest a royal status. **53.3** The servant was *despised* by the nations. **53.4-6** Israel's suffering suggested God had rejected it. Now, however, contrary to the nations' original impression, they see that the servant's suffering was vicarious. God's surprising way of restoring all people to himself

c) NEW INTERPRETER'S STUDY BIBLE, 2003

52:13-53:12 The fourth, last, and longest of the so-called "Servant Songs" (42:1-4; 49:1-6; 50:4-9; 52:13-53:12) is also the most difficult because of its distinctive theology of vicarious suffering and because of its appropriation in NT and later Christian tradition **52:13-15** The LORD speaks, promising that the servant Israel, although disfigured because of the agonies of exile, will be exalted so that the nations will be astonished. Paul uses the LXX of v.15 to justify his Gentile mission (Rom 15:21). **53:1-3** The nations respond, describing both Israel's seeming insignificance and the suffering it endured at their hands. The description of Israel coming forth *like a root out of dry ground* shows how unprepossessing the nation appeared. **53:4-6** The nations, although they once took Israel's suffering as a sign that God had rejected the nation, now proclaim a new understanding: that Israel's suffering was to atone for their sins so that they can be made righteous (*whole*) and brought into relationship with God.

MISSIONARY OBJECTIONS TO IDENTIFYING THE SERVANT AS ISRAEL

(1) The language of the passage (he, him) is in the singular. It can't be referring to the nation.

RESPONSE:

ISAIAH 43:10

You are My **witnesses** says the Lord, and My **servant** whom I have chosen . . .

EXODUS 4:22

And you shall say unto Pharaoh, Thus says the Lord, Israel is My son, My first born.

HOSEAH 8:3

Israel has rejected the good - the enemy will pursue **him**.

HOSEAH 11:1

When Israel was a child, then I loved **him**, and called My son out of Egypt.

HOSEAH 14:5-6

⁵I will be like the dew to Israel, **he** will blossom like the lily, and **he** will take root like the cedars of Lebanon. ⁶**His** shoots will sprout, and **his** splendor will be like the olive tree, and **his** fragrance like the cedars of Lebanon.

PSALM 130:8

And He will redeem Israel from all **his** sins.

JEREMIAH 48:27

Now was Israel a laughingstock to you? Or was **he** caught among thieves? For each time you speak about **him** you shook your head in scorn.

JEREMIAH 50:19

And I shall bring Israel back to **his** pasture, and **he** will graze in the Carmel and the Bashan, and **his** desire will be satisfied in the hill country of Ephraim and Gilead.

EXODUS 19:2

When **they** set out from Rephidim, **they** came to the wilderness of Sinai, and camped in the wilderness, and there **he**, Israel, encamped in front of the mountain.

EXODUS 1:10-12

¹⁰ Pharaoh says regarding the Jewish people: "Come, let us deal wisely with **him** (usually translated **them**) lest **he** increase, and if there will be a war, **he** will join our enemies and fight against us and go up from the land. ¹¹ So they appointed taskmasters over **him** (usually translated **them**) to afflict **him** (see above) with hard labor. And **he** built for Pharaoh storage cities, Pithom and Ramses. ¹² But the more they afflicted **him**, the more **he** spread out, so that they were in dread of the sons of Israel.

DEUTERONOMY 32:8-13

⁸ When the most High gave the nations their inheritance, when He separated the sons of man, He set the boundaries of the peoples according to the number of the sons of Israel. ⁹ For the Lord's portion is His people, Jacob is the allotment of His inheritance. ¹⁰ He found **him** in a desert land, and in the howling waste of a wilderness. He encircled **him**, He cared for **him**, He guarded **him** as the pupil of His eye. ¹¹ Like an eagle that stirs up its nest, that hovers over its young, He spread His wings and caught **them**, He carried **them** on his pinions. ¹² The Lord alone guided **him**, and there was no foreign god with **him**. ¹³ He made **him** ride on the high places of the earth, and **he** ate the produce of the field, and He made **him** suck honey from the rock, and oil from the flinty rock.

(2) How can the servant be Israel, when the Jewish people will admit they were wrong for rejecting G-d's servant by confessing "All we like sheep have gone astray" (verse 6). Furthermore, how could Israel say, "for the transgression of my people he was stricken" (verse 8). It doesn't make any sense for Israel to reject Israel or for Israel to suffer for Israel.

RESPONSE:

This objection stems from a critical error in reading our passage. It jumps to a stereotyped conclusion about who is speaking in chapter 53 without fully thinking this through:

ISAIAH 52:13 - 53:1

¹³ See, my servant shall prosper; he shall be exalted and lifted up, and shall be very high.

¹⁴ Just as there were many who were astonished at you, saying, "Surely his visage was marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men."

¹⁵ So shall he startle many nations; Kings shall shut their mouths because of him; for that which had not been told them they shall see, and that which they had not heard they shall understand.

¹ "Who would have believed what we are hearing? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?"

WHAT IS REALLY GOING ON IN CHAPTER 53?

An overview:

1. It's a Messianic prophecy, but not a prophecy about the person of the Messiah.
2. It describes the reflections of the kings and nations of the world during the Messianic age.
3. Their reflections will be about their history with the Jewish people, specifically focusing on understanding the historical suffering of the people of Israel.
4. They will confess that while they always assumed that the Jews suffered because they were rejected by G-d for their treachery, this was not the case. In the Messianic age these nations and kings will understand that it was actually they who were wicked, and that the Jewish people suffered as a result of that wickedness. The nations, in an effort to ease their own troubles, mercilessly scapegoated the Jewish people and assumed they were getting what they deserved.
5. G-d speaks at the end of the chapter and explains that there was an ultimate purpose to the suffering of the Jewish people and that ultimately, they would be vindicated.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF ISAIAH 53:

ISAIAH 52:13

See, my servant shall prosper; he shall be exalted and lifted up, and shall be very high.

After being downtrodden, the ultimate elevation and exaltation of the Jewish people:

ISAIAH 45:25

In the Lord all the offspring of Israel shall find righteousness and glory.

ISAIAH 49:23

Kings will be your foster fathers and queens your nursing mothers. With their faces to the ground they shall bow down to you and lick the dust of your feet; and you shall know that I am the Lord: for they shall not be ashamed that wait for me.

ISAIAH 60:1-3

¹ Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you. ² For behold, darkness will cover the earth, and deep darkness the peoples, but the Lord will rise upon you, and His glory will appear upon you. ³ And **nations** will come to your light, and **kings** to the brightness of your rising.

ISAIAH 60:14-15

¹⁴ And the sons of those who **afflicted** you will come bowing to you, and all those who **despised** you will bow themselves at the soles of your feet, and they will call you the city of the Lord, the Zion of the Holy One of Israel. ¹⁵ Whereas you have been **forsaken** and **hated**, with no one passing through, I will make you an everlasting pride, a joy from generation to generation.

ISAIAH 61:6-7,9

⁶ But you will be called the priests of the Lord, you will be spoken of as ministers of our G-d. ⁷ Instead of the **shame**, you will have a double portion, and instead of **humiliation** they will shout for joy over their portion.

⁹ Then their offspring will be known among the nations, and their descendants in the midst of the peoples. All who see them will recognize them, because they are the offspring whom the Lord has blessed.

ISAIAH 62:2-3

² And the **nations** will see your righteousness and all the **kings** your glory, and you will be called by a new name that the mouth of the Lord will designate. ³ You will also be a crown of beauty in the hand of the Lord and a royal diadem in the hand of your G-d.

ISAIAH 62:11-12

See, the Lord has announced to the ends of the earth: Say to the daughter of Zion, Look, your Saviour has come! Look, His reward is with Him and His wage is before Him. People will call them the holy people, the redeemed of the Lord, and you will be called, "The one sought after; a city not forsaken."

ZEPHANIAH 3:19-20

Behold I am going to deal at that time with all of your **oppressors**; I will save the lame and gather the outcast, and I will turn their **shame** into praise and renown in all the earth.

At that time I will bring you in, even at that time when I gather you together; Indeed I will give you renown and praise among all the nations of the earth, when I restore your fortunes before your eyes says the Lord.

MALACHI 3:12

And all the nations will call you blessed, for you shall be a delightful land says the Lord of Hosts.

NACHUM 2:2

For the Lord will restore the splendor of Jacob like the splendor of Israel. Even though devastators have devastated them and destroyed their vine branches.

HOSEAH 14:6-8

⁶I will be like the dew to Israel, he will blossom like the lily and will take root like the cedars of Lebanon. ⁷His shoots will sprout and his splendor will be like the olive tree, and his fragrance like the cedars of Lebanon. ⁸Those who live in his shadow will again raise grain, and they will blossom like the vine. His renown will be like the wine of Lebanon.

ISAIAH 52:14-53:1

¹⁴ Just as there were many who were astonished at you, saying, "Surely his visage was marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men."

¹⁵ So shall he startle many nations; Kings shall shut their mouths because of him; for that which had not been told them they shall see, and that which they had not heard they shall understand.

¹ "Who would have believed what we are hearing? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?"

The marred appearance of the Jewish people because of the ravages of exile:**LAMENTATIONS 4:8**

Their appearance had become blacker than soot, they are not recognized in the streets; their skin has shriveled on their bones, it became dry as wood.

The shock and astonishment of the world upon the vindication of Israel, G-d's servant:**MICAH 7:15-16**

¹⁵ According to the days of your coming out of the land of Egypt will I show unto them marvelous things. ¹⁶ The nations shall see and be confounded, **they shall lay their hands upon their mouths**, their ears shall be deaf.

ISAIAH 41:11

Behold, all those who were incensed against you shall be ashamed and confounded, those who quarreled with you shall be as naught and lost.

JEREMIAH 16:19

O Lord, my strength and my fortress, and my refuge in the day of affliction, the Gentiles shall come to You from the ends of the earth and say: "Surely our fathers have inherited lies, vanity, and things of no benefit."

ISAIAH 66:8

Who has ever heard such a thing? Who has ever seen things such as these? Has a land ever gone through her labor in one day? Has a nation ever been born in one moment, as Zion went through her labor and gave birth to her children?

ISAIAH 53:1

"Who would have believed what we are hearing? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?"

What is meant by G-d manifesting His holy arm?**ISAIAH 52:9-10**

⁹ Break forth into joy, sing together you waste places of Jerusalem, for the Lord has comforted His people, He has redeemed Jerusalem. ¹⁰ The **Lord has made bare His holy arm in the eyes of all the nations**, and all the ends of the earth shall see the **salvation** of Israel.

ISAIAH 62:8

The Lord swore by His **right hand** and by the **arm of his strength**: I will no longer give your grain to your enemies, and foreigners shall no longer drink your wine for which you have toiled.

ISAIAH 63:12

Who caused His **glorious arm** to go at the right hand of Moses, who divided the waters before them to make for Himself an everlasting name...

EXODUS 3:20

So I will stretch out **My hand** and strike Egypt with all of My miracles which I shall do in the midst of it, and after that he will let you go.

EXODUS 14:31

Israel saw **the great hand** that G-d inflicted upon Egypt, and the people feared G-d, and they believed in G-d and in Moses His servant.

EXODUS 15:6,12

⁶ Your **right hand**, O Lord is majestic in power, Your **right hand**, O Lord shatters the enemy. ¹² You stretched out Your **right hand**, the earth swallowed them.

DEUTERONOMY 4:34

Or has G-d tried to take for Himself a nation from within a nation by trials, by signs and wonders and by war and by a **mighty hand and by an outstretched arm** and by great terrors as the Lord your G-d did for you in Egypt before your eyes?

DEUTERONOMY 7:19

The great miracles that you saw with your own eyes, the signs, the wonders, the **mighty hand and outstretched arm** with which G-d brought you out of Egypt.

PSALM 44:3

For by their own sword they did not possess the land, and their own arm did not save them, but Your **right hand, and Your arm**, and the light of Your presence, for You did favor them.

PSALM 98:1-3

¹ O sing to the Lord a new song, for He has done wonderful things, **His right hand and His holy arm** have gained the victory for Him. ² The Lord has made known His **salvation**, He has revealed His righteousness in the sight of the nations. He has remembered His lovingkindness and His faithfulness to the House of Israel. ³ All the ends of the earth have seen the **salvation** of our G-d.

ISAIAH 53:2

For he grew up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of dry land. He had no form or comeliness that we should look upon him, nor appearance that we should delight in him.

PLANT IMAGERY OF JEWISH PEOPLE TAKEN FROM ARID LAND:**DEUTERONOMY 32:9-10**

⁹ For the Lord's portion in His people, Jacob is the allotment of His inheritance. He found him in a **desert land, and in the howling waste of a wilderness**. ¹⁰ He encircled him, He cared for him, He guarded him as the pupil of His eye.

HOSEAH 13:4-5

⁴ Yet I have been the Lord your G-d since the land of Egypt. And you were not to know any god except me. ⁵ For there is no savior besides Me. I cared for you in the **wilderness, in the land of drought**.

PSALM 80:8

You removed a **vine** from Egypt, You drove out the nations and **planted** it.

JEREMIAH 2:2

Go and proclaim in the ears of Jerusalem saying: Thus says the Lord, "I remember concerning

you the devotion of your youth. The love of your betrothals. Your following after Me in the **wilderness, through a land that was not sown.**

JEREMIAH 12:2

You have **planted** them and they have even taken **root**; they even produce fruit...

PSALM 107:4

They wandered in the **wilderness, in a desert region.**

EZEKIEL 16:5-7

⁵No eye looked with pity on you to do any of these things for you, to have compassion on you. Rather, you were thrown out into the open **field**, for you were **abhorred** on the day that you were born. ⁶When I passed by you and saw you wallowing in your blood, I said to you while you were in your blood: Live! I said to you while you were in your blood: Live! ⁷I made you numerous **like plants of the field...**

HOSEAH 13:5

I knew you in the wilderness, in a parched land.

HOSEAH 14:5-6

⁵I will be like the dew to Israel, he will blossom like the lily, and he will take root like the cedars of Lebanon. ⁶His shoots will sprout and his beauty will be like the olive tree, and his fragrance like the cedars of Lebanon.

ISAIAH 53:3

For he was despised and rejected of men, a man of pains and well acquainted with disease, and as one from whom men hide their faces; he was despised and we esteemed him not.

JEWISH PEOPLE DESPISED AND REJECTED:

ISAIAH 60:14-15

¹⁴The sons of them that **afflicted** you shall come bending unto you, and they that **despised** you shall bow themselves at the soles of your feet, and they shall call you the city of the Lord, the Zion of the Holy One of Israel. ¹⁵Whereas you have been **forsaken and despised** with no passerby, I will make you an everlasting pride, the joy of every generation.

LAMENTATIONS 1:11

All her people groan, seeking bread; they have given their precious things for food to restore their lives themselves. "See, O Lord, and look, for **I am despised.**"

EZEKIEL 16:5

No eye looked upon you with pity to do any of these things for you, to have compassion on you. Rather, you were thrown out into the open field, for you were **abhorred** on the day that you were born.

EZEKIEL 34:28-29

²⁸And they will no longer be **prey to the nations**, and the beasts of the earth will not devour them, but they will live securely and no one will make them afraid. ²⁹And I will establish for them a renowned planting place, and they will not again be victims of famine in the land, and they will not endure the **insults of the nations** anymore.

EZEKIEL 35:5-6

⁵Because you have **everlasting enmity** and have delivered the sons of Israel to the power of the sword at the time of their calamity... ⁶I will give you over to bloodshed and bloodshed will pursue you...

ISAIAH 49:13

Shout for joy O heavens, and rejoice O earth! Break forth into joyful shouting, O mountains! For the Lord has comforted His people, and will have compassion on his **afflicted**.

ISRAEL'S NATIONAL SUFFERING DESCRIBED AS SICKNESS AND WOUNDS:**JEREMIAH 30:12-13,17**

¹²For thus says the Lord: Your hurt is incurable, your wound is grievous. ¹³There is no one to uphold your cause, no medicine for your wound, no healing for you.

¹⁷For I will restore you to health and I will heal you of your wounds, declares the Lord. Because they have called you an outcast saying: 'It is Zion, no one cares for her.'

HOSEAH 6:1

Come, let us return to the Lord, for He has torn us, but He will heal us. He has wounded us, but He will bandage us.

ISAIAH 30:26

And the light of the moon will be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun will be seven times brighter, like the light of seven days, on the day the Lord **binds up the fracture of His people and heals the bruise He has inflicted**.

MICAH 1:9

For her wound is incurable, for it has come to Judah it has reached the gate of My people, even

to Jerusalem.

ISAIAH 1:5-6

Where could you be smitten, that you continue to rebel? Every head is sick and every heart faint. From the sole of the foot even to the head there is no soundness in it, but bruises and sores and bleeding wounds; they are neither pressed out nor bound up nor softened with oil.

ISAIAH 53:4

Surely our diseases he did bear, and our pains he carried, but we considered him stricken, smitten of G-d and afflicted.

THE NATIONS THOUGHT THE JEWS WERE REJECTED BY GOD:

JEREMIAH 50:7

All who came upon them devoured them, and their adversaries have said: We are not guilty, inasmuch as they have sinned against the Lord who is the habitation of righteousness, even against the Lord, the hope of their fathers.

PSALM 94:5,7

⁵They crush thy people, O Lord, and afflict Thy heritage.

⁷And they have said: "The Lord does not see, nor does the G-d of Jacob take heed.

ISAIAH 53:5-6

But he was wounded from our transgressions, he was crushed as a result of our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that made us whole, and with his stripes, we were healed. All we like sheep have gone astray, we turned everyone to his own way; and the Lord has laid upon him the iniquity of us all.

The Jewish nation suffered due to the cruelty and wickedness of the nations.

JEREMIAH 2:3

Israel was holy to the Lord, the first of His harvest; all who devour him will be guilty, evil will come upon them, declares the Lord.

JEREMIAH 10:25

Pour out Thy wrath upon the nations that do not know You, and upon the families who do not call upon Your name. For they have devoured Jacob, they have devoured him and consumed

him, and have laid waste his habitation.

ZECHARIAH 1:15

But I am very angry with the nations who are at ease; for while I was only a little angry, they furthered the disaster.

ZEPHANIAH 2:10

This they will have in return for their pride, because they have taunted and become arrogant against the people of the Lord of hosts.

PSALM 79:4-7

⁴We have become a reproach to our neighbors, a scoffing and derision to those around us.

⁵How long, O Lord? Will You be angry forever? Will Your jealousy burn like fire? ⁶Pour out Your wrath upon the nations which do not know You, and upon the kingdoms which do not call upon Your name. ⁷For they have devoured Jacob, and laid waste his habitation.

PSALM 83:1-4

¹O G-d, do not remain quiet, do not be silent, do not be still. ²For behold, Your enemies make an uproar, and those who hate You have exalted themselves. ³They make shrewd plans against Your treasured ones. ⁴They have said: "Come, let us wipe them out as a nation, that the name of Israel be remembered no more."

PSALM 94:3-5

³How long shall the wicked, O Lord, how long shall the wicked exult? ⁴They pour forth words, they speak arrogantly, all who do wickedness vaunt themselves. ⁵They crush Thy people, O Lord, and afflict Thy heritage.

ISAIAH 53:7

He was oppressed and he was afflicted, but he did not open his mouth; as a lamb that is led to the slaughter and as a sheep that before her shearers is dumb, and did not open his mouth.

AS LAMBS TO THE SLAUGHTER WHO DIDN'T OPEN THEIR MOUTHS

PSALM 44:12-21

¹²You have given us as sheep to the slaughter, and have scattered us among the nations.

¹³You sell your people for no great gain, and have not put their price high. ¹⁴You have made us a reproach to our neighbors, a scoffing and derision to those around us. ¹⁵You have made us a byword among the nations, a laughingstock among the peoples. ¹⁶All day long my dishonor is before me, and my humiliation is overwhelming me. ¹⁷Because of the voice of him who reproaches and reviles, because of the presence of the enemy and the avenger.

¹⁸All this has come upon us, but we have not forgotten You, and we have not dealt falsely with your covenant. ¹⁹Our heart was not turned back, and our steps have not deviated from Your way, yet You have crushed us on a place of jackals, and covered us with the shadow of death. ²⁰If we had forgotten the name of our G-d, or extended our hands to a strange god, would not G-d find this out? For He knows the secrets of the heart. ²¹But for Your sake we are killed all day long. We are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.

*Have pity on us, Lord, in Your compassion, and do not hand us over to cruel oppressors. Why should the nations say, "Where is their God now?" For Your own sake, deal kindly with us, and do not delay. Please turn away from Your fierce anger, and have compassion on the people You chose as Your own. Lord, God of Israel, turn away from Your fierce anger, and relent from the evil against Your people. Heed our voice and be gracious. Do not abandon us into the hand of our enemies to plot out our name. Remember what You promised our fathers: "I will make your descendants as many as the stars of heaven" - yet now we are only a few left of many. Yet, despite all this, we have not forgotten Your name. Please do not forget us. **(Daily Prayer Book:Tachanun)***

Yet despite all this: After the Holocaust, the concentration camp at Theresienstadt was excavated. A hidden room was discovered, which had served as a secret place in which the prisoners would pray. On one of its walls were written the words: "Yet, despite all this, we have not forgotten Your name. Please do not forget us."

Commentary of Chief Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, Koren Siddur

ISAIAH 53:8

From dominion and judgment he was taken away, and his history - who is able to relate? For he was cut off out of the land of the living. As a result of the transgression of my people, they were afflicted.

THE JEWISH PEOPLE EXILED FROM THE LAND OF ISRAEL

PSALM 52:7

Likewise, G-d will shatter you for eternity; He will break you and tear you from the tent, and uproot you from **the land of the living**.

PSALM 116:3,8-9

The cords of death surrounded me, and the pains of the grave seized me. I found trouble and sorrow.

For You have saved my soul from death, my eyes from tears, and my feet from falling. I walk before the Lord in **the land of the living**.

PSALM 142:6

I have cried out to You, Lord; I have said, "You are my refuge, my portion in the land of the

living.”

EZEKIEL 32:23-24

Their graves are set in the sides of the pit, and her company surrounds her grave; all of them are killed, felled by the sword, who struck terror in **the land of the living**.

There are Elam and all of her multitude around her grave, all of them slain, those fallen by the sword, who descended uncircumcised to the nethermost earth, because they instilled their terror in **the land of the living** and they bore their shame with those who descend into the pit. (See also verses 25-27 and 32)

ISAIAH 53:9

And his grave was set with the wicked, and with the wealthy with his kinds of deaths, although he had done no violence, neither was there any deceit in his mouth.

ZEPHANIAH 3:13-20

¹³The remnant of Israel shall neither commit injustice nor speak lies; **neither shall deceitful speech be found in their mouth**, for they shall graze and lie down, with no one to cause them to shudder. ¹⁴Sing aloud, O daughter Zion; shout, O Israel! Rejoice with all your heart, O daughter Jerusalem! ¹⁵The Lord has taken away the judgment against you, he has turned away your enemies. The king of Israel, the Lord, is in your midst; you shall fear disaster no more. ¹⁶On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem: Do not fear, O Zion; do not let your hands grow weak. ¹⁷The Lord, your G-d, is in your midst, a warrior who gives victory; he will rejoice over you with gladness, he will renew you in his love; he will exult over you with loud singing ¹⁸as on a day of festival. I will remove disaster from you, so that you will not bear reproach from it. ¹⁹I will deal with all your oppressors at that time. And I will save the lame and gather the outcast, and I will change their shame into praise and renown in all the earth. ²⁰At that time I will bring you home, at the time when I gather you; for I will make you renowned and praised among all the peoples of the earth, when I restore your fortunes before your eyes, says the Lord.

ISAIAH 53:10

And the Lord wished to crush him, He made him ill; if he would acknowledge his guilt, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days. And the purpose of the Lord will prosper in his hand.

REWARDS TO THE JEWISH PEOPLE: FRUITFUL AND LONG LIFE

DEUTERONOMY 11:21

In order to prolong your days and the days of your children upon the land that the Lord has sworn to your forefathers to give them, like the days of the heaven over the earth.

DEUTERONOMY 28:11

And the Lord will make you abound in prosperity, in the fruit of your body and in the fruit of your beast...

DEUTERONOMY 30:5

And the Lord, your G-d, will bring you into the land your fathers possessed, in order that you may possess it; and He will make you more prosperous and numerous than your fathers.

DEUTERONOMY 30:19-20

I call heaven and earth as witnesses. Before you, I have placed life and death, the blessing and the curse. Choose life, so that you and your seed will survive. If you choose to love the Lord your G-d and obey Him, and to attach yourselves to Him. This is the sole means of survival and long life when you dwell in the land that G-d swore to your fathers...

JEREMIAH 3:13-16

But you must recognize your sin, that you have rebelled against the Lord your G-d, and that you have spread out your ways to seek foreign gods under every leafy tree, and you did not heed My voice, declares the Lord. Return, O wayward sons, declares the Lord, for I shall be your master. I shall take you, even one from a city and two from a family, and I shall bring you to Zion. I shall appoint shepherds for you according to My own heart, and they will care for you with knowledge and wisdom. And it shall be, in those days when **you multiply and become fruitful in the land**, declares the Lord, that they will no longer say, The Ark of the Covenant of the Lord and it will not come to mind; they will not mention it and will not recall it and it will not be used anymore.

JEREMIAH 23:3

Then I Myself shall gather the remnant of My flock out of all the countries where I have driven them and shall bring them back to their pasture; and they will be fruitful and multiply.

ISAIAH 65:20

No longer will there be an infant who lives but a few days, or an old man who does not live out his days; for the youth will die at the age of one hundred, and one who does not reach the age of one hundred shall be thought accursed.

ZECHARIAH 8:4

Thus says the Lord of hosts: Old men and old women will again sit in the streets of Jerusalem, each man with his staff in his hand because of the multitude of days.

ZECHARIAH 10:8

I will whistle for them to gather them together, for I have redeemed the; and they will multiply as they multiplied.

GENESIS 22:16-18

¹⁶ ...because you have done this thing, and not withheld your son, your only son: ¹⁷ Indeed I will greatly bless you, and I will greatly multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens, and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your seed shall possess the gate of their enemies; ¹⁸ And in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice.

EZEKIEL 36:37

Thus says the Lord, G-d, "Moreover, this request I will grant the House of Israel, fulfilling it for them: I will increase their men like flock."

ISAIAH 53:11

From the labor of his soul he shall see, he shall be satisfied. With his knowledge, the righteous one, My servant will cause many to be just, and their iniquities he shall bear.

The Jewish people will ultimately bring light and blessing to the world by teaching G-d's ways:

ISAIAH 49:3,6

³And he said to me: You are My servant, Israel, in whom I will be glorified. . .

⁶I will also make you a light unto the nations so that My salvation may reach the ends of the earth.

DEUTERONOMY 4:5-6

See, I have taught you decrees and ordinances, as the Lord, my G-d, has commanded me, to do so in the midst of the land to which you come, to possess it. You shall safeguard and perform them, for it is your wisdom and discernment in the eyes of the peoples, who shall hear all these decrees and who shall say, "Surely a wise and discerning people is this great nation!"

EXODUS 19:5-6

⁵Now, then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My special treasures among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine.

⁶And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation...

ZECHARIAH 8:13

And it shall come to pass that as you were a curse among the gentiles, O house of Judah and house of Israel, so will I save you, and you shall be a blessing. Fear not, may your hands be strengthened.

ZECHARIAH 8:23

Thus says the Lord of hosts: In those days it shall come to pass that ten men from all the languages of the nations shall take hold of the garment of a Jew saying, We will go with you, for we have heard that G-d is with you.

ISAIAH 55:5

. . . nations that knew you not shall run to you because the Lord your G-d, the holy one of Israel has glorified you.

GENESIS 28:14

Your descendants shall also be like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread out to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south, and in you and your descendants shall all the families of the earth be blessed.

MICAH 4:2

And many nations shall come and say: Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the House of the G-d of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways and we will walk in His paths, for Torah (instruction) shall go forth from Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

MALACHI 2:7

The Torah of truth was in his mouth and iniquity was not found in his lips; he walked with Me in peace and uprightness, and he turned many away from iniquity. For the Priest's lip should guard knowledge and they should seek the Torah from his mouth, for he is a messenger of the Lord of Hosts.

ISAIAH 55:5

...nations that knew you not shall run to you because the Lord your G-d, the Holy One of Israel has glorified you.

ISAIAH 60:3

And nations shall come to your light and kings to the brightness of your rising.

ISAIAH 61:6

But you shall be called the Priests of the Lord; people shall call you the Ministers of our G-d...

HABAKKUK 2:14

For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters that cover the seas.

ISAIAH 53:12

Therefore I will allot a portion to him with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the mighty, because he poured out his soul to the death, and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

REWARD GIVEN TO THE JEWISH PEOPLE:**ISAIAH 60:5-11**

⁵ Then you will see and be radiant, and your heart will thrill and rejoice; because the abundance of the sea will be turned to you, the wealth of the nations will come to you. ⁶ A multitude of camels will cover you, the young camels of Midian and Ephah, all those from Sheba will come, they will bring gold and frankincense, and will bear good news of the praises of the Lord. ⁷ All the flocks of Kedar will be gathered to you, and the rams of Nevayot will serve you; they will be offered with favor upon My altar and I will glorify the House of My splendor. ⁸ Who are these who fly like a cloud, like doves to their dovecote? ⁹ For the island will hope in Me, with ships of Tarshish as in earlier times, to bring your children from far away, with their gold and silver with them, in the Name of the Lord your G-d and for the Holy One of Israel, for He will have glorified you. ¹⁰ Then the foreigners will build your walls, and their kings will serve you. Though I struck you in My wrath, in My grace I have been compassionate to you. ¹¹ Your gates will always be open; they will be closed neither by day nor by night; for them to bring you the wealth of the nations, and their kings under escort.

ISAIAH 61:5-6

Strangers shall stand and feed your flocks, foreigners shall be your plowmen and vinedressers. But you shall be called Priests of the Lord; men shall say of you: Ministers of our G-d; you shall eat the wealth of the nations and glory in their riches.

ZECHARIAH 14:14

And the wealth of all the nations all around will be gathered – gold, silver and garments in great abundance.

ISRAEL INTERCEDES FOR THE NATIONS:**JEREMIAH 29:7**

And see the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf; for in its welfare you will have welfare.

HOW DO RABBINIC SOURCES UNDERSTAND ISAIAH 53?

ORIGEN CONTRA CELSUM

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“Behold, my servant shall have understanding, and shall be exalted and glorified. .

Isaiah 52:13 - 53:12

I remember that once in a discussion with some whom the Jews regard as learned I used these prophecies. At this the Jew said that these prophecies referred to the whole people as though of a single individual, since they were scattered in the dispersion and smitten, that as a result of the scattering of the Jews among the other nations many might become proselytes. In this way he explained the text: ‘Thy form shall be inglorious among men’; and ‘those to whom he was not proclaimed shall see him’.

MIDRASH RABBA NUMBERS 13:2

I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey (Song of Songs 5:1) : because the Israelites poured out their soul to die in the captivity, as it is said, **“Because he poured out his soul to death, and with transgressors he was counted; and, he bore the sins of many, and interceded for the transgressors”** (Is. 53:12) and bruised themselves with the Torah which is sweeter than honey, the Holy One, blessed be He, will therefore in the hereafter give them to drink of the wine that is preserved in its grapes since the six days of creation, and let them bathe in rivers of milk.

ZOHAR GENESIS, VAYERA

Come, consider **the congregation of Israel, how it is called a lamb, as it said, “like a lamb to the slaughter he would be brought, like a sheep that is mute before her shearers, and he would not open his mouth.”** (Is. 53:7) Why was it mute? Because while other nations ruled over it, it was deprived of speech and made mute.

BABYLONIAN TALMUD, TRACTATE BRACHOT 5a

Raba, in the name of R. Sahorah, in the flame of R. Huna, says: If the Holy One, blessed be He, is pleased with a man, he crushes him with painful sufferings. For it is said: *And the Lord was pleased’ with [him, hence] he crushed him by disease.* Now, you might think that this is so even if he did not accept them with love. Therefore it is said: *To see if his soul would offer itself in restitution.* Even as the trespass-offering must be brought by consent, so also the ‘sufferings must

be endured with consent. And if he did accept them, what is his reward? *He will see his seed, prolong his days.* And more than that, his knowledge [of the Torah] will endure with him. For it is said: *The purpose of the Lord will prosper in his hand.*

BABYLONIAN TALMUD, TRACTATE BRACHOT 57b

Six things are a good sign for a sick person, namely, sneezing, perspiration, open bowels, seminal emission, sleep and a dream. Sneezing, as it is written: His sneezings flash forth light. Perspiration, as it is written, In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread.; Open bowels, as it is written: If he that is bent down hasteneth to be loosed, he shall not go down dying to the pit. **Seminal emission, as it is written: Seeing seed, he will prolong his days.** Sleep, as it is written: I should have slept, then should I have been at rest. A dream, as it is written: Thou didst cause me to dream and make me to live.

BABYLONIAN TALMUD, TRACTATE SOTAH 14a

R. Simlai expounded: Why did Moses our teacher yearn to enter the land of Israel? Did he want to eat of its fruits or satisfy himself from its bounty? But thus spake Moses, 'Many precepts were commanded to Israel which can only be fulfilled in the land of Israel. I wish to enter the land so that they may all be fulfilled by me'. The Holy One, blessed be He, said to him, 'Is it only to receive the reward [for obeying the commandments] that thou seekest? I ascribe it to thee as if thou didst perform them'; **as it is said, Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he poured Out his soul unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bare the sins of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.** 'Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great' –it is possible [to think that his portion will be] with the [great of] later generations and not former generations; therefore there is a text to declare, 'And he shall divide with the strong', i.e., with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob who were strong in Torah and the commandments. 'Because he poured out his soul unto death' –because he surrendered himself to die, as it is said, *And if not, blot me, pray thee etc.* 'And was numbered with the transgressors' –because he was numbered with them who were condemned to die in the wilderness. 'Yet he bare the sins of many' –because he secured atonement for the making of the Golden Calf. 'And made intercession for the transgressors' –because he begged for mercy on behalf of the sinners in Israel that they should turn in penitence; and the word *pegi'ah* ['intercession'] means nothing else than prayer, as it is said, *Therefore pray not thou for this people, neither lift up cry nor prayer for them, neither make intercession to Me.*

TARGUM YONATAN, ISAIAH 52:13-53:12

¹³Behold my servant Messiah shall prosper; he shall be high, and increase, and be exceeding strong: ¹⁴ as the house of Israel looked to him during many days, because their countenance was darkened among the peoples, and their complexion beyond the sons of men, ¹⁵ 'so will he scatter many peoples: at him kings shall be silent, and

put their hands upon their mouth, because that which was not told them have they seen, and that which they had not heard they have observed. ¹Who hath believed this our glad tidings? and the strength of the mighty arm of the Lord, upon whom as thus hath it been revealed? ²The righteous will grow up before him, yea, like blooming shoots, and like a tree which sends forth its roots to streams of water will they increase—a holy generation in the land that was in need of him: his countenance no profane countenance, and the terror at him not the terror at an ordinary man; his complexion shall be a holy complexion, and all who see him will look wistfully upon him. ³Then he will become despised, and will cut off the glory of all the kingdoms; they will be prostrate and mourning, like a man of pains and like one destined for sicknesses; and as though the presence of the Shekhinah had been withdrawn from us, they will be despised, and esteemed not. ⁴Then for our sins he will pray and our iniquities will for his sake be forgiven, although we were accounted stricken, smitten from before the Lord, and afflicted. ⁵But he will build up the Holy Place, which has been polluted for our sins, and delivered to the enemy for our iniquities; and by his instruction peace shall be increased upon us, and by devotion to his words, our sins will be forgiven us. ⁶All we like sheep had been scattered, we had each wandered off on his own way; but it was the Lord's good pleasure to forgive the sins of all of us for his sake. ⁷He prayed, and he was answered, and ere even he had opened his mouth he was accepted: the mighty of the peoples he will deliver up like a sheep to the slaughter and like a lamb dumb before her shearers; there shall be none before him opening his mouth or saying a word. ⁸Out of chastisements and punishment he will bring our captives near; the wondrous things done to us in his days who shall be able to tell I for he will cause the dominion of the Gentiles to pass away from the land of Israel, and transfer to them the sins which my people have committed. ⁹He will deliver the wicked into Gehinnom, and those that are rich in possessions into the death of utter destruction, in order that those who commit sin may not be established, nor speak deceits with their mouth. ¹⁰But it is the Lord's good pleasure to try and to purify the remnant of his people, so as to cleanse their souls from sin: these shall look on the kingdom of their Messiah, their

sons and their daughters shall be multiplied, they shall prolong their days, and those who perform the Law of the Lord shall prosper in his good pleasure. ¹¹“From the subjection of the nations he will deliver their souls, they shall look upon the punishment of those that hate them, and be satisfied with the spoil of their kings : by his wisdom he will hold the guilt less free from guilt, in order to bring many into subjection to the law; and for their sins he will intercede. ¹²Then will I divide for him the spoil of man’y peoples, and the possessions of strong cities shall he divide as prey, because he delivered up his soul to death, and made the rebellious subject to the Law: he shall intercede for many sins, and the rebellious for his sake shall be forgiven.

RUTH 2:14

At mealtime, Boaz said to her, “Come over here and partake of the bread, and dip your morsel in the vinegar.”

MIDRASH RUTH RABBA 2:14

“Another explanation (of Ruth 2:14): --He is speaking of king Messiah; **“Come here”** draw near to the monarchy; **“and eat of the bread,”** that is, the bread of the kingdom; **“and dip thy morsel in the vinegar,”** this refers to his afflictions, as it is said, *“he was pained because of our transgressions”*.

SANHEDRIN 98b

‘Rav said: The world was created only on David’s account. Samuel said: On Moses’ account; R. Johanan said: For the sake of the Messiah. What is his [the Messiah’s] name? –The School of R. Shila said: His name is Shiloh, for it is written, *until Shiloh come*. The School of R. Yannai said: His name is Yinnon, for it is written, *His name shall endure for ever: e’er the sun was; his name is Yinnon.*” The School of R. Haninah maintained: .His name is Haninah, as it is written, *Where I will not give you Haninah.*” Others say: His name is. Menahem the son of Hezekiah, for it is written, *Because Menahem [the comforter], that would relieve my soul, is far.*’ **The Rabbis said: His name is ‘the leper scholar,’ as it is written, Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him a leper, smitten of God, and afflicted..’**

SANHEDRIN 98a

R. Joshua b. Levi met Elijah standing by the entrance of R. Simeon b. Yohai’s tomb. He asked him: ‘Have I a portion in the world to come?’ He replied, ‘If this Master desires it.’ R. Joshua b. Levi said, ‘I saw two, but heard the voice of a third. He then asked him, ‘When will the Messiah come?’ – ‘Go and ask him himself,’ was his reply. ‘Where is he

sitting?' – 'At the entrance.' 'And by what sign may I recognise him?' – 'He is 'sitting among the poor lepers: all of them untie [them] all at once, and rebandage them together, whereas he unties and rebandages each separately [before treating the next], thinking, should I be wanted, [it being time for my appearance as the Messiah] I must not be delayed [through having to bandage a number of sores].' So he went to him and greeted him, saying. 'Peace upon thee, Master and Teacher.' 'Peace upon thee, O son of Levi,' he replied. 'When wilt thou come Master?' asked he, 'To-day', was his answer. On his returning to Elijah, the latter enquired, 'What did he say to thee?' – 'Peace upon thee, O son of Levi,' he answered. Thereupon he [Elijah] observed, 'He thereby assured thee and thy father of [a portion in] the world to come.' 'He spoke falsely to me,' he rejoined, 'stating that, he would come to-day, but has not.' He [Elijah] answered him, 'This is what he said to thee, *Today, if ye will hear his voice!*'