

עזר האמונה החדש

The New Aid for Faith

ISAIAH 53 PART 1- PDF

UNEDITED

By

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PREFACE

The question of Isaiah 53 and what it means comes up in every discussion with a Christian. For that reason, I have collected information that I have available and compiled the following summary. I hope that the readers will look at it from beginning to end, consider the information presented and judge it favorably. Because of the amount of information, please read all of it before you pass judgment. Some questions that you might have may be answered later on.

A work of this size is not one which a single person can lay claim to. There were many people and sources that were used to build this. Some in a positive manner, and some by criticism of it. I would like to mention some of them here. This is not to reduce the blame for whatever errors may have crept into this analysis. It is to acknowledge my thanks for them and the input that they have had.

First, I would like to thank my friend Tovia Singer. My writings on Isaiah 53, originally started as an attempt to transcribe his ideas on Isaiah 53 from his lecture series, "Let's Get Biblical." Some of these ideas can still be found in parts of section 2. After showing my initial effort to a number of people, including discussions on the Internet, I recognized major deficits in that approach. I restarted my research and made some massive revisions and changes to the second part, developed the material which now appears as sections 1 and in the coming part dealing with the Rabbis and Isaiah 53.

Second, I would like to acknowledge the help that has come from those who have read this. Especially those Christians who have attempted to counter the views stated here. The points they raised have been addressed. I also added much information that clarifies the ideas, and approach.

Finally I would like to acknowledge my debt to our Rabbis who have shown us the way to understand the simple meaning of the words of the Tenach, including Isaiah 53. This work represents a view consistent with Jewish thought.

INTRODUCTION

The Prophecy of Isaiah 53 is considered by many Christians the most important prophecy in the whole Tenach. They feel they have from it their needed 'proof' that their Messiah was to die. The late Manny Brotman of the Messianic Jewish Movement International calls it the 'main messianic chapter in the Jewish Bible'. Every missionary who has approached me will eventually mention Isaiah 53. They feel this way even though neither the word 'Messiah', 'king' 'son of David' or any of the code names for the Messiah that are used in the Tenach are ever mentioned in this passage. It also does not mention any of the known accomplishments that the Messiah is to achieve. (Ingathering of the Jewish people and ruling over the world etc.) They maintain this belief even though the belief of a dying Messiah is contrary to ALL the other clearly Messianic prophecies, which show that the Messiah will appear and succeed, all within a short amount of time.

There are many arguments and counter-arguments that I will be covering here. I would like to approach this important prophecy from three angles.

1. Why the clear simple meaning of the text of Isaiah 53 indicates that it was not and cannot have been fulfilled by Jesus Many times missionaries will read it and assume, it can only mean Jesus The problems with associating Isaiah 53 with Jesus are usually ignored in most discussions. I will deal with this first as this is the primary Biblical text used by Christians, and should be answered before we explore the true meaning of this passage. In fact, after this section it is totally unnecessary to explain any further, since if it is not Jesus it is invalid to use it as a proof of Christianity.

2. Whom does Isaiah 53 refer to and how do I know it. I will go through this important passage verse by verse starting at Isaiah 52:13, which is acknowledged by the overwhelming majority of sources as part of the prophecy of Isaiah 53. It should be noted that the Masoretic Text actually divides this text before Isaiah 52:13 and not before Isaiah 53.

3. Finally, in another work, I will explain the true meaning of some of those Rabbinic texts that are used by missionaries in their claim that the Rabbis held a different view as to the simple meaning of the prophet then the one I have here presented. We will explore the nature of Rabbinic commentary, and the deceptions that are used with regards to them by those who would falsify their teachings. From this, we will see that the Rabbis' understanding of the simple meaning of this text and the view I present here are the same.

PART I: Why Jesus has not fulfilled Isaiah 53.

PROPHECY

In order to see the problems with associating this prophecy with Jesus let us examine two important ideas. The first is how the Tenach's prophecies work. Many people do not realize what a future prophecy and what its fulfillment should be like. Let's examine two prophecies and their fulfillment in the Tenach and see what they will tell us about how prophecy works. The two we will examine are:

1. The prophecy regarding what would happen to the person who would rebuild Jericho.

In Joshua 6:26 we read:

26 And Joshua swore at that time, saying, Cursed be the man before the Lord who shall rise up and build this city Jericho. In his first-born shall he lay its foundation, and in his youngest son shall he set up its gates.

In 1 Kings 16:34 we see the fulfillment:

34 In his days Hiel the Bethelite built Jericho; he laid its foundation in Abiram his firstborn, and set up its gates in Segub his youngest, according to the word of the Lord which he spoke through Joshua the son of Nun.

2. The prophecy regarding what would happen later to the alters of the northern kingdom of Israel.

In 1 Kings 13:1-2 we read:

1. And behold, there came a man of God from Judah, by the word of the Lord, to Bethel; and Jeroboam stood by the altar to burn incense.
2. And he cried against the altar by the word of the Lord, and said, O altar, altar! thus saith the Lord: Behold, a child shall be born unto the house of David, Josiah by name; and upon thee shall he sacrifice the priests of the high places that burn incense upon thee, and men's bones shall be burned upon thee.

In 2 Kings 23:15-17 we see it fulfilled:

15. Moreover the altar that was at Bethel, the high place that Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who caused Israel to sin, had made, both that altar and the high place he broke down; and burned the high place, stamped it small to powder, and burned the Asherah.
16. And Josiah turned himself, and saw the sepulchres that were there on the mount; and he sent and took the bones out of the sepulchres, and burned [them] upon the altar, and defiled it, according to the word of the Lord, that the man of God had proclaimed, who proclaimed these things.
17. Then he said, What tombstone is that which I see? And the men of the city told him, It is the sepulcher of the man of God who came from Judah and proclaimed these things which thou hast done against the altar of Bethel.

From these verses we can notice a few things:

1. Each prophecy had clear points that would tell us that it was fulfilled. In the first case, the one who violated the ban would bury his first and last sons. In the second case a certain named person of the descendants of David would destroy the alters.
2. All the points described were fulfilled completely and literally.
3. While some specifics were not mentioned, (for example the name of the person in the first, and when either would occur), after they came to pass it was clear that the prophecy was fulfilled. There was no doubt as to whether it was fulfilled and the exact meaning of the prophecy.

CHRISTOLOGY

The second idea we should look at is what the majority of Christian's (including Messianics) believe about Jesus. There are three beliefs of Christians with regards to Jesus that relate directly to why this prophecy cannot be said to refer to Jesus

1. Jesus is called the 'Son', the second person of the trinity. Without going into a deep theological discussion, let me sum up the main points of this concept. The godhead is made up of three 'aspects' or 'persona' that are separate, but are equal and of one essence. They are not three gods. So the 'Son' is equal to the 'Father' although separate. Neither is greater or lesser than the other. This aspect 'Son' is what is incarnate in the body of Jesus. All three share the same eternal and unchanging essence. There are others who believe that do not believe in the trinity, but in oneness and contend that Jesus is not a separate 'persona' from the father, but that they are the same. Much like water has different forms, solid, liquid and gas, but not all three at once. (There are those who deny the divinity of Jesus, like Arius.)

2. The death and resurrection of Jesus is what brings atonement and nothing else. Not his teachings, nor his miracles, nor anything else has any effect on atonement, not even the suffering that occurred to Jesus BEFORE the crucifixion. It is only the death and resurrection.

3. To receive this atonement one must believe that this death was for that purpose. You may be familiar with the doctrine, and know that people believe it, but if you don't believe in it, then you are not saved.

Now we can examine some of the verses that are part of the prophecy and see how they could never be said to apply to Jesus. Some of these are clearer in their contradiction to the above principles and some are subtler. Each is, however significant enough on it's own to cast doubt on any thesis claiming that Jesus fulfilled this Biblical prophecy according to the rules we have shown above.

Isaiah 52:13

Verse 52:13 (53:11) refers to the subject of these verses as 'my servant'. The 'my' here is referring to G-d (the Father for Christians.). When we say that Tom is John's servant there are a few things that we understand from that.

1. Tom and John are not the same person. The servant and master are totally separate entities. A person cannot be a servant to himself.
2. Tom is inferior to John. A servant is always inferior in position to his master.
3. Tom must do the will of John, but John does not have to listen to Tom. The servant is subject to the will of his master, but the master need not consider the will of the servant.
4. Tom may not do what he wants, unless John allows him. The servant is never free to act outside of the limits the master sets.

There are however problems with saying that Jesus is a servant. Since Jesus is the incarnation of G-d (according to Christian theology), a co-equal member of the trinity and not a separate entity, he must be the same, he could not be inferior. He could not be either subject to the will of another, nor could he be said to lack the freedom to act in all areas. How could part of the godhead be called a servant to another part of itself, and still be coequal? The servant here cannot be a 'part' of the godhead. Either we must assume that Jesus is not a part of the trinity, or the Messiah of Christians is not the one meant by Isaiah 53. The questions of 'wills' here is also one that is problematic. How could Jesus be subject to the will of the Father, when he is, according to Christian theology,

the same? For these reasons it would not be possible for a Christian to say that Jesus is the servant of G-d. This is, obviously, even more a problem to the non-Trinitarian, 'oneness' Christians.

There is another problem here. What does it mean 'lifted up', he shall be high? That would imply that at one time he was in a lowly position and after that he was in a higher position. Physically the only lifting up that occurred with Jesus during his lifetime was when he was put on the cross. That is clearly not what this prophecy means, since that is not a sign of greatness, but degradation. If we are talking about the divine nature, how could it be changed and 'lifted up', to higher or lower level? G-d was and is great, mighty, and unchanging before Jesus appeared and after he appeared. Who could imagine that G-d would be in a state of depression and then be lifted up? Similarly we have a problem with the word 'Yaskel'. If we understand it as meaning to prosper, we have the previously stated problem. If it is meant as being related to the root 'understand', the meaning would be to acquire knowledge (or deal prudently, i.e. with wisdom). How could this refer to the godhead, since His knowledge is eternal and cannot be said to increase. Was there a time when G-d had less knowledge? Did he deal imprudently? Such things are absurd and cannot fit the verses.

Finally, if the servant here is Jesus there is another problem. Jesus is the second person of the trinity. If the servant refers to the second person of the trinity, we have a fourth function and hence a fourth member: the 'servant'. That means that there are FOUR persons and not three: father, son, Holy Spirit and servant.

Isaiah 52:15

What does it mean 'what had not been told them'? This would mean that we are dealing with something that was totally unknown until it is finally revealed as the truth. This recognition and astonishment of verse 15 has not occurred yet, so it must be a future event. It must be referring to when Jesus comes again and is fully revealed. However this is a problem. Is there anyone in the world who has not heard of the story of Jesus and the claims made about him? Certainly if this is referring to the Jewish people, they have heard it, they just didn't believe that it was a fulfillment of the prophecies. But the verse claims that they are to have revealed something they never heard, not something they failed to believe in previously. If we say that this refers to the acts of G-d, are they not likewise known? Even atheists are aware of the stories in the Bible. It could not be said that they are in the category of things that were not heard. Just things that were rejected as false. That is not what the verse is saying.

Isaiah 53:3

A 'Man of pains' indicates that the person was one who suffered from pain often. For example, Moses is called a 'man of G-d' (heb. ish elokim) because of his constant association with G-d. We do not consider a person who suffered for a short time before dying as a 'man of pains'. Even if the death was a very painful one, we would only say that he died a painful death, and not call him a man of pains. The same is with someone 'acquainted with sickness', which can only refer to someone who suffered sicknesses constantly. To say that he was sensitive to others' illnesses makes him no better than Mother Teresa or any other of the thousands of people who felt the pain of others. (Maybe it refers to President Clinton who claimed to have 'felt our pain'?)

Isaiah 53:4

This verse says he was considered 'stricken of G-d'. That is just not true. No one said that Jesus was stricken of G-d. The Romans struck him. There are no sources where we see anyone claiming that the crucifixion of Jesus was a sign that he was stricken by G-d, or some type of divine punishment for him. Certainly that was not the view of the Jews, who are supposed to be the speakers here (according to the Christian interpretation). And the New Testament makes no such claim. There is just no support for referring this to J at any time in his life.

Isaiah 53:8

According to Christian theology, Jesus had to die and suffer because of the sin of Adam. Since when Adam sinned death came to the world, the death of Jesus ended this punishment. Romans 5:12,14

12 "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:

14 Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come."

So how can we say that he was stricken for the sin of 'my people'? It wasn't the sin of the Jewish people or any people in particular. It was the sin of the whole human race from Adam (according to their belief). The inherited sin of Adam needed atonement, not any individual sins.

Secondly, it does not say his 'death' was for sin, but his 'suffering'! What happened to Jesus before the crucifixion when he suffered for a short time IS NOT WHAT IS SUPPOSED TO BRING ATONEMENT. It is ONLY his death. That is not what this verse or any of the other verses in this passage says.

Isaiah 53:9

There is a contradiction to the NT from these verses. According to the NT, Jesus was killed together with two thieves, but buried in the tomb of a rich man. However verse 9 says the opposite. His grave (Heb. kever) is with the wicked, and his death(s) (Heb. meisav) is with the rich.

This verse claims that his grave was with the wicked. That means his resting place was one of a lowly and ignominious character. This cannot be a reference to the Messiah since in a prophecy that is universally accepted as Messianic the prophet Isaiah says (11:10) that his 'rest will be glorious'. Which is it, glorious, or lowly?

Isaiah 53:10

Verse 10 says that there are two rewards that the servant's accepting of suffering causes to occur. The first is that he shall see 'seed'. The word 'seed' (heb. zarah), when applied to humans refers to their physical descendants (it is literally used to refer to male seed: semen). But Jesus had no physical children!

To answer this many Christians try to counter and say that it refers to disciples, and not physical children, but that is not the case. The word zarah (seed) always refers to physical children while the word banim (children) can refer to disciples or followers. The Torah has an interesting story, which illustrates this. For a long time Abraham had no children, and G-d came to him and said he would reward him. Abraham said of what value is it since he has no son to inherit, only the head of his household Eliezer.

Genesis 15:2-4: 2. 'And Abram said, 'My Lord, G-d, what can you give me seeing that I am childless and the son (ben) of my house is the Damascene Eliezer?

3. Then Abram said, 'See, to me you have given no seed (zarah – physical child), and see the son (ben - son referring to follower) of my house is my heir."

4. Suddenly, the word of G-d came to him, saying: 'That one will not inherit you. None but him that shall come forth from within your bowels shall be your heir.'

So G-d answered him, and told him that not his follower who is referred to as a 'ben' will inherit, but his physical son, his zarah, will inherit from him. Clearly the Torah is teaching that zarah means a physical child and if the verse had wanted to say followers than it would have used the word ben, as is used in other places in the Tenach.

We likewise see in 2 Kings 2 where banim is shown to refer to followers or students:

3 "And the sons of the prophets that [were] at Bethel came forth to Elisha, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the LORD will take away thy master from thy head to day? And he said, Yea, I know [it]; hold ye your peace.

5 And the sons of the prophets that [were] at Jericho came to Elisha, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the LORD will take away thy master from thy head to day? And he answered, Yea, I know [it]; hold ye your peace."

Clearly we see that zerah is used for physical 'seed' and ben is used for both physical and spiritual offspring.

Isaiah 57:3-4 is sometimes brought as a proof that 'zerah' can mean non-physical children. However by examining these verses we see the exact opposite. Is. 57:3-4: "But you--come here, you sons of a sorceress, you offspring (zerah) of adulterers and prostitutes! Whom are you mocking: At whom do you sneer and stick out your tongue? Are you not a brood of rebels, the offspring (zerah) of liars?" However it should be noticed that by the word 'sorceress' the word 'benei' (sons) is used. But they were called zerah (physical seed) of adulterers, prostitutes and liars, since their parents had done those sins. When referring to those sins that their parents did, the proper word zerah is used, since they were PHYSICAL CHILDREN of people who were sinners.

A second reward in verse 10 is that he shall have long life. There are two problems here.

First, the verse makes the rewards CONTINGENT upon the servant's performance. It is very problematic to claim that Jesus' suffering resulted in his having long life. If you believe that Jesus is G-d then the eternal existence of G-d is not, and never can be contingent upon the acceptance of the suffering of this servant or on any other event in the physical world. Both Christians and Jews believe that G-d is eternal and his eternal existence is not contingent upon any outside events.

Second, This long life can clearly not refer to the 'divine nature'. How can we say that G-d's days will be lengthened? That is basically absurd. He is eternal, and this is not something that is subject to change or lengthening. If we say this refers to Jesus' human part, he died quite young. He clearly did not literally fulfill this.

Also this verse says 'IF' his soul makes. The Hebrew word is 'ki', which means 'if'. Do they believe that it was only conditional, and that maybe it wouldn't have happened? Was there really a choice here? Jesus could will to do something other than G-d wanted? If Jesus and G-d are coequal, how could one part have a will different than the other? It is just not possible, but in the verse there is a clear choice. Was there a possibility that one part of the godhead would not agree to what the other part wanted? Sounds a bit absurd.

We see in this verse the words "it pleased the Lord to smite him"? If he is part of the godhead it should have said, it pleased HIMSELF to be smitten or something like that. The verse implies that the one who is pleased is not the one smitten. That would contradict the trinity concept as it applies to Jesus.

Isaiah 53:11

There is no place in Isaiah 53 which supports the important principle that 'belief' in the death of J is needed for forgiveness of sin. In fact, Verse 11 says that he will teach people to be righteous. It is his knowledge and teaching that brings people to righteousness and not his suffering, death or blood. (This cannot refer to his followers as the one doing the action here is the servant himself, and not an agent of the servant.)

Isaiah 53:12

How did he fulfill verse 12, which says that he will 'divide spoil' (Heb. shalal)? This word shalal is used for booty of war as the following collection of verses clearly illustrates:

Genesis 49:27 "Benjamin shall ravin [as] a wolf: in the morning he shall devour the prey, and at night he shall divide the spoil (shalal)."

Exodus 15:9 "The enemy said, I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil (shalal); my lust shall be satisfied upon them; I will draw my sword, my hand shall destroy them."

Numbers 31: "11 And they took all the spoil (shalal), and all the prey, [both] of men and of beasts.
12 And they brought the captives, and the prey, and the spoil (shalal), unto Moses, and Eleazar the priest, and unto the congregation of the children of Israel, unto the camp at the plains of Moab, which [are] by Jordan [near] Jericho."

Deuteronomy 20:14 "But the women, and the little ones, and the cattle, and all that is in the city, [even] all the spoil (shalalah) thereof, shalt thou take unto thyself; and thou shalt eat the spoil of thine enemies, which the LORD thy God hath given thee."

Joshua 7:21 "When I saw among the spoils (shalal) a goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, then I coveted them, and took them; and, behold, they [are] hid in the earth in the midst of my tent, and the silver under it."

1 Samuel 30:20 "And David took all the flocks and the herds, [which] they drove before those [other] cattle, and said, This [is] David's spoil (shalal)."

Isaiah 8:4 "For before the child shall have knowledge to cry, My father, and my mother, the riches of Damascus and the spoil (shalal) of Samaria shall be taken away before the king of Assyria."

Isaiah 9:3 "Thou hast multiplied the nation, [and] not increased the joy: they joy before thee according to the joy in harvest, [and] as [men] rejoice when they divide the spoil (shalal)."

Isaiah 10:6 "I will send him against an hypocritical nation, and against the people of my wrath will I give him a charge, to take the spoil (leShalal Shalal), and to take the prey, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets."

Isaiah 33:4 "And your spoil (shalalchem) shall be gathered [like] the gathering of the caterpillar: as the running to and fro of locusts shall he run upon them." How did he fulfill this? How could he? We must conclude that J has not fulfilled this prophecy, since it is not clear that he has fulfilled it.

How can we ascribe to him that 'he interceded for the transgressors'? To whom could he intercede? The word intercede implies that there is a person who intercedes and the one to whom he intercedes. Since he is a part of the godhead there is no one to intercede with. He himself should be the one to forgive. This shows that the servant IS NOT G-d, but a servant of G-d.

As I mentioned before, when a prophecy has been fulfilled, it is always clear that it has been fulfilled. However, Isaiah 53 is not clearly fulfilled by him. Besides the many reasons above for denying that he fulfilled this prophecy, how do we know that his death did anything? It is claimed, but since so much of Isaiah 53 cannot

apply, why should this be assumed to apply. Now look at the full text of Isaiah 53, and consider if ALL the details of the prophecy have been fulfilled, or even if they could be fulfilled by Jesus (as we have seen above). Look carefully where it refers to a servant. Consider verse 10, 11, 12. The text below is from the Authorized Version - KJV. (I will later go through verse-by-verse and give a fuller understanding of the wordings and the translation).

Isaiah 52:13-53:12

13. Behold, my servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high.
14. As many were astonished at thee; his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men:
15. So shall he sprinkle many nations; the kings shall shut their mouths at him: for [that] which had not been told them shall they see; and [that] which they had not heard shall they consider.
 1. Who hath believed our report? And to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?
 2. For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, [there is] no beauty that we should desire him.
 3. He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were [our] faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.
 4. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.
 5. But he [was] wounded for our transgressions, [he was] bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace [was] upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.
 6. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.
 7. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.
 8. He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? For he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken.
 9. And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither [was any] deceit in his mouth.
 10. Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put [him] to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see [his] seed, he shall prolong [his] days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.
 11. He shall see of the travail of his soul, [and] shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.
 12. Therefore will I divide him [a portion] with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

PART II. Who does Isaiah 53 refer to?

Before we can discuss intelligently the meaning of this prophecy we must clarify the difference between a Messianic prophecy and a prophecy about the Messiah. Although many think they are the same, they clearly are not. A Messianic prophecy describes what will occur in the Messianic period, when the Messiah has come, and what it will look like. This does not mean that the Messiah, himself, is described in that prophecy. For example, Ezekiel chapters 40 through 48 are clearly Messianic. They describe the temple that shall be built, the redistribution of the land and a number of other events. But we do not see an extensive description of the Messiah himself there. On the other hand, Isaiah 11 is a Messianic prophecy that ALSO describes what the Messiah will be like. We shall see that Isaiah 53 is a Messianic prophecy of the first type (Ezekiel 40-48) and that there is almost no disagreement among Jewish and Christian scholars as to its being Messianic, in this sense of the term. (There are a few major exceptions among Jewish commentators, one refers it to the prophet Jeremiah and the other to the King Josiah. Also the Talmud applies it to Moses.)

The problem with understanding this prophecy is: how to approach it so that the true meaning of the prophet appears. As we have seen from the previous section, since it cannot apply to Jesus, it appears that this passage can be easily misunderstood. While a good translation or knowledge of Hebrew is essential to understanding, the ONLY way of understanding any prophecy is by trying to understand the context, and what the prophet is trying to say. We have gone through it and seen that it cannot refer to Jesus. Now we need to find the context and understand this passage.

One way of starting to understand the context, is to decide who is talking in the passage, and who is he about. Then we can try and find other verses in the Tenach that confirm our results. If we examine this passage carefully we see that there are a number of speakers in the passage 52:13 - 53:12. The speaker of 52:13 is NOT the speaker of 53:1; there was a change from the singular of 52:13 to the plural of 53:1. It can't be the same person, since the last verses of Isaiah 52 are singular and the first verses of Isaiah 53 are plural. If it is plural it cannot be Isaiah. Since it discusses the speaker's sins it cannot be G-d. The last verses of chapter 53, verses 10, 11 and 12 do not appear to be spoken by the same persons as 1-9. These facts must be considered to understand the context and the speaker.

By seeing these obvious points, we can begin to delve into the context. The main portion of this prophecy is verses 1-9 of chapter 53. Let's look at this passage for a moment and try and see who the speaker is. Verse 1 of 53 has the speaker showing astonishment, it is in the first person plural. We read: "*Who hath believed our report? And to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?*" The speaker has exclaimed in wonderment about something, which he will describe in the next few verses. Let's look at the context. If we can find someone here who is astonished, and even more, find some other verses in the Tenach to support it, we will be on our way to understanding this passage. In verse 52:14, we see that many people are astonished at the servant. In verse 15 we see that the kings are taken with shock. In fact the last words of 52:15; "*[that] which they had not heard shall they consider*", send the same message as the first verse of 53. According to the context the gentile kings and the gentile people are in astonishment at this servant and what they hear about him.

But that still leaves us with the issue as to whom this servant is. Many are called G-d's servant in the Tenach. Let's examine another Messianic prophecies that relate the same ideas:

Micah 7:15-16: *'Just as in the days of your coming out of Egypt, will I show him marvelous things (lit. wonders). The nations shall see and be put to shame for all their might, they shall put their hands on their mouths, their ears shall be deaf.'*

Here we see again that when the messianic period comes and the Jewish people go out of exile, as they did from Egypt, the nations will cover their mouths with wonder. This is almost the exact thing said here in Isaiah:

Isaiah 52:15: "... the kings shall shut their mouths at him: for [that] which had not been told them shall they see; and [that] which they had not heard shall they consider."

We see here clearly that the NATIONS OF THE WORLD are in confusion about the redemption of Israel from exile. In another Messianic prophecy we read:

Isaiah 41:11: "All those who incensed against you shall be ashamed and confounded..."

Again we see that there is a state of confusing among the gentile nations of the world when the Jewish people are taken out of exile. The nations, the gentiles (and specifically their leaders who represent them) are the ones speaking here because they have just seen something they would never have imagined. They are the ones astonished. They are astonished and in shock at the redemption of Israel.

There is even more support for the idea that the servant is Israel from chapter 41 of Isaiah which I quoted above. Israel is called G-d's servant in that passage, in verse 8: "But you, ISRAEL, are My servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the SEED of Abraham My friend." And they are again mentioned in verse 14: "Fear not worm of Jacob, men of Israel." In Micah 5:6 which is a little before the above passage we see a reference to : The REMNANT OF JACOB; verse 7: The REMNANT OF JACOB. The nations as described in Micah are surprised at the great miracles that will occur with the coming of the Messianic age to the remnant of Jacob.

Who and what has confounded the nations? Israel and their redemption from the exile in the Messianic period has caused this astonishment and confusion. The servant is Israel, and specifically the righteous remnant of Israel and the nations are confused. Why should they be confused? Imagine what it will be like when the Messiah comes. How will the Christians and Muslims react when they will see that the Messiah has come, and it is not JESUS. It is some Ultra Orthodox Rabbi with a long beard! A funny looking person who, until very recently, was the butt of their jokes and derision. As the prophet predicted: Jeremiah 16:19: "The NATIONS shall come to you from the ends of the earth and shall say, 'SURELY OUR FATHERS HAVE INHERITED LIES, VANITY, AND THINGS WHEREIN THERE IS NO BENEFIT.'"

It is interesting to note that in the Tenach there is one place where the same theme of this prophecy appears. It is in Psalm 44:9-26, which parallels the main ideas of this prophecy. It should be kept in mind while you look at each of the verses:

9. But thou hast cast off, and put us to shame; and goest not forth with our armies.
- 10 Thou makest us to turn back from the enemy: and they which hate us spoil for themselves.
- 11 Thou hast given us like sheep [appointed] for meat; and hast scattered us among the heathen.
- 12 Thou sellest thy people for nought, and dost not increase [thy wealth] by their price.
- 13 Thou makest us a reproach to our neighbours, a scorn and a derision to them that are round about us.
- 14 Thou makest us a byword among the heathen, a shaking of the head among the people.
- 15 My confusion [is] continually before me, and the shame of my face hath covered me,
- 16 For the voice of him that reproacheth and blasphemeth; by reason of the enemy and avenger.
17. All this is come upon us; yet have we not forgotten thee, neither have we dealt falsely in thy covenant.
- 18 Our heart is not turned back, neither have our steps declined from thy way;
- 19 Though thou hast sore broken us in the place of dragons, and covered us with the shadow of death.
- 20 If we have forgotten the name of our God, or stretched out our hands to a strange god;

21 *Shall not God search this out? for he knoweth the secrets of the heart.*

22 *Yea, for thy sake are we killed all the day long; we are counted as sheep for the slaughter.*

23 *Awake, why sleepest thou, O Lord? arise, cast [us] not off for ever.*

24 *Wherefore hidest thou thy face, [and] forgettest our affliction and our oppression?*

25 *For our soul is bowed down to the dust: our belly cleaveth unto the earth.*

26 *Arise for our help, and redeem us for thy mercies' sake.*

Let's now examine this important prophecy verse by verse. I will compare the verses to many parallel prophecies in the Tenach and some examples of historical fulfillment. The main text here is from the KJV, with notes from the Darby and KJV between "(" and ")". My notes on the Hebrew language are between "{" and "}". When we look at the first verse we can see clearly that G-d is the one talking:

Is. 52:13: Behold, my servant shall deal prudently (KJV: alt. shall prosper), {Heb: be successful or be wise} he shall be exalted and extolled (D: be lifted up) {alt: raised up}, and be very high.

In verse 52:13 and again in 53:11 the subject is called 'my servant'. Who is called 'my servant'? Who does Isaiah call the servant of G-d? Let us look at Isaiah 41:8-9: "But you, ISRAEL, are My servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the SEED of Abraham My friend. Whom I have taken from the ends of the earth, and from the nobles I called you, and I said to you, 'You are my servant', I chose you and I did not despise you." It is clear from this: ISRAEL IS THE SERVANT OF G-D!

This is repeated many times in Isaiah: Isaiah 44:1 "Yet now hear, O Jacob my servant; and Israel, whom I have chosen: 2 Thus saith the LORD that made thee, and formed thee from the womb, [which] will help thee; Fear not, O Jacob, my servant; and thou, Jesurun, whom I have chosen."

Isaiah 44:21 "Remember these, O Jacob and Israel; for thou [art] my servant: I have formed thee; thou [art] my servant: O Israel, thou shalt not be forgotten of me." Isaiah 45:4 "For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name: I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me." Isaiah 48:20 "Go ye forth of Babylon, flee ye from the Chaldeans, with a voice of singing declare ye, tell this, utter it [even] to the end of the earth; say ye, The LORD hath redeemed his servant Jacob." Isaiah 49:3 "And said unto me, Thou [art] my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified." Not just here, but throughout the Tenach 'my servant' is commonly used for Israel. It is well known, in scholarly circles, that this passage Isaiah 53, is called the fourth of the servant songs. Each of which is about Israel and G-d's relationship to her.

One of the main objections to saying that the servant is Israel is that the passage is in the SINGULAR and not the plural. How can it refer to Israel in the singular? (Actually, as we shall see, verses 8 and 9 have plural references so this is not such a strong question, but let us examine it anyway). To answer this we need only look at Is. 43:10: "You are my WITNESSES (plural) says the L-rd, and My SERVANT (singular) whom I have chosen..." Here we see that Isaiah refers to the witnesses, Israel, both in the singular and the plural IN THE SAME VERSE. In the passage just prior to Is. 53 (52:1-2) and just after Is. 53 (54:1) Israel is also referred to in the singular. I have previously mentioned a number of verses where Israel is referred to as G-d's servant, and they are ALL in the singular. The truth is that throughout the Tenach Israel is referred to more often in the singular than the plural. The TEN COMMANDMENTS themselves, were spoken to Israel in the singular!!! This objection is no problem at all!!! In fact, the question shows an ignorance of the language used in the Tenach where Israel as a whole are continually referred to in the singular.

With regards to the prosperity and exaltation of the Jewish people in the Messianic times we need only look into the Tenach which is filled with prophecies on that subject. Just look at the following prophecies:

Isaiah 48:15 "I, [even] I, have spoken; yea, I have called him: I have brought him, and he shall make his way prosperous." Jeremiah 30:10 "Therefore fear thou not, O my servant Jacob, saith the LORD; neither be dismayed, O Israel: for, lo, I will save thee from afar, and thy seed from the land of their captivity; and Jacob shall return, and shall be in rest, and be quiet, and none shall make [him] afraid." Jeremiah 46:27 "But fear not thou, O my servant Jacob, and be not dismayed, O Israel: for, behold, I will save thee from afar off, and thy seed from the land of their captivity; and Jacob shall return, and be in rest and at ease, and none shall make [him] afraid. 28 Fear thou not, O Jacob my servant, saith the LORD: for I [am] with thee; for I will make a full end of all the nations whither I have driven thee: but I will not make a full end of thee, but correct thee in measure; yet will I not leave thee wholly unpunished." The exalted nature of Israel in the Messianic age is one of the clear messages of the Tenach.

Isaiah 52:14: As many were astonished (D: were astonished) {alt: wondered} at thee {you}; his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men (D: children of men):

Can this verse be said to apply to Israel? Unfortunately from history we have seen that it is true. Those who have hated Jews have always referred to them as if they were not human. The Evan Ezra points out that in Edom (Europe) and Ishmael (the Arab lands) many of the gentiles considered the features of Jews different from all other humans. In Der Struermer from Dec. 29, 1942 we read "The scholar Darwin said, in 1859, that man is descended from the ape. Whether this is correct or not, we do not wish to decide. Perhaps the reader will take the trouble to compare the features of the ape from the New York Zoo and the face of the Jewish old-clothes dealer from the New York ghetto and draw his own conclusions." The Nazis considered the Jews vermin to be exterminated. (The use of gas was compared to exterminating vermin) As Isaiah says here the nations wondered about Israel: "How marred his appearance from that of man, and his features from that of people." Isn't the prophet reminding us of that? The Islamic Jihad put out a pamphlet in Oct. 1988 that stated the Jews were 'the brothers of monkeys.' Arafat on Jan 30, 1992 called Jew, 'The dogs. Filth and Dirt.' Yes, this verse testifies about the righteous of Israel: "How marred his appearance from man and his features from that of people." In every generation anti-semites picture Jews in a sub-human form.

Isaiah 52:15: So shall he sprinkle (D: astonish) {alt: cast down see Isaiah 63:3} many nations; the kings shall shut their mouths at him: for [that] which had not been told them shall they see; and [that] which they had not heard shall they consider.

The gentiles never even considered it would be possible for Israel to be redeemed from their exile. I mentioned the verses of Micah 7:14-15 with regards to the kings reactions above. Consider Jeremiah 16:19-20: "O Lord, my strength and my fortress, and my refuge in the day of affliction. The NATIONS shall come to you from the ends of the earth and shall say, 'SURELY OUR FATHERS HAVE INHERITED LIES, VANITY, AND THINGS WHEREIN THERE IS NO BENEFIT. Shall a man make gods unto himself, and they are no gods?" Isaiah 66:8 "Who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? [or] shall a nation be born at once? for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children." When Israel will be gathered from the exile the NATIONS will come to recognize that for all these years THEY have made a mistake. All of what they have been taught was only LIES.

This ends the words of G-d about Israel and how the nations will react when the Messianic age comes. The next verse goes to the plural and the NATIONS start to speak and give witness of their reactions to the coming Messianic age and the end of the exile of the Jewish people.

Isaiah 53:1: Who hath believed our report? (KJV: Heb. hearing) and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed? (D: been revealed)

Now, what does it mean the 'arm of the Lord'? The 'arm of the Lord' refers to when G-d shows his power to redeem Israel from physical troubles and exile. Exodus 14:31 "And Israel saw that great work {heb. great hand} which the LORD did upon the Egyptians: and the people feared the LORD, and believed the LORD, and his servant Moses." Exodus 15:6 "Thy right hand, O LORD, is become glorious in power: thy right hand, O LORD, hath dashed in pieces the enemy." Deuteronomy 7:19 "The great temptations which thine eyes saw, and the signs, and the wonders, and the mighty hand, and the stretched out arm, whereby the LORD thy God brought thee out: so shall the LORD thy God do unto all the people of whom thou art afraid."

If you examine Scripture you will find that it does not mean a small act but a great salvation or victory for the Jewish people: Isaiah 40:10 "Behold, the Lord GOD will come with strong [hand], and his arm shall rule for him: behold, his reward [is] with him, and his work before him. 11 He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry [them] in his bosom, [and] shall gently lead those that are with young." Isaiah 63:11 "Then he remembered the days of old, Moses, [and] his people, [saying], Where [is] he that brought them up out of the sea with the shepherd of his flock? where [is] he that put his holy Spirit within him? 12 That led [them] by the right hand of Moses with his glorious arm, dividing the water before them, to make himself an everlasting name?" Is. 52:9-12 (The introductory verses to Isaiah 53). "Break forth into joy, sing together, you waste places of Jerusalem, for the Lord has COMFORTED HIS PEOPLE, He has REDEEMED JERUSALEM. The Lord HAS MADE BARE HIS HOLY ARM IN THE EYES OF THE NATIONS and all the ends of the earth shall see the SALVATION OF ISRAEL." What is the 'arm of the Lord'? The prophet is telling us about the reaction of the gentiles to the redeeming of Israel from Exile.

Who sees it? The NATIONS OF THE WORLD. Two verses later it starts, 'Behold My Servant shall prosper....' In this verse we see the reaction of the nations, G-d has redeemed His people from the exile and the Nations are shocked beyond belief. This is further stated in the prophet: Habakkuk 1:5 "Behold ye among the heathen, and regard, and wonder marvellously: for [I] will work a work in your days, [which] ye will not believe, though it be told [you]."

Isaiah 53:2: For he shall grow up before him {alt. he came up} as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness (D: lordliness); and when we shall see (D: we see) him, [there is] no beauty that we should desire him.

Who is to sprout as a tree from dry land where it was never expected to? Israel. Look at what the prophet says: Isaiah 27:6 "He shall cause them that come of Jacob to take root: Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit." Israel shall blossom!! Hosea 14:6-7: "I will be as dew for ISRAEL; he shall grow as a lily, and CAST FORTH HIS ROOTS as Lebanon. HIS BRANCHES SHALL SPREAD, and his beauty shall be as the olive tree and his smell as Lebanon." Isaiah 66:8 "Who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? [or] shall a nation be born at once? for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children." When the Messianic time comes Israel will sprout and grow as never before.

How was Israel treated by the nations? Here is what the prophet said: Isaiah 42:22 "But this [is] a people robbed and spoiled; [they are] all of them snared in holes, and they are hid in prison houses: they are for a prey, and none delivereth; for a spoil, and none saith, Restore." What have the nations said about the 'form' Israel while she was in the exile? Voltaire said "the most imbecile people on the face of the earth", "most obtuse, cruel and absurd", "disgusting and abominable". As the prophet said. "he had neither form nor comeliness" Kant said "The euthanasia of Judaism can only be achieved by means of a pure and moral

religion, and the abandonment of all its old legal regulations." Again the words of the prophet, "we saw him that he had no appearance that we should have desired him" St. Gregory of Nyssa referred to the Jews as, "haters of grace, enemies of their fathers religion, advocates of the devil, brood of vipers, slanderers, scoffers, men of darkened minds, leaven of the Pharisees, congregation of demons, sinners, wicked men, stoners, and haters of goodness." As the prophet said "he had no appearance that we should have desired him." That is the testimony of the Nations. "Who would have believed it?"

Isaiah 53:3: He is despised and rejected of men (D: left alone of men) ; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were [our] faces from him (D: like one from whom [men] hide their faces); he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

Who is the one who has been ashamed and despised? In the passage RIGHT AFTER THIS ONE: Is 54:4-17: 4. Fear not, for you shall not be ASHAMED and not EMBARRASSED, for you shall not be put to shame; for the SHAME OF YOUR YOUTH you shall forget; and for the humiliation of your widowhood you shall no longer remember. For your maker is your husband, the Lord of Hosts is his name... 6. For like a wife who was FORSAKEN AND AFFLICTED in spirit has the Lord called you, and a wife of one's youth who was REJECTED, said you G-d. 11. Oh thou AFFLICTED who was not consoled... 14. With righteousness shall you be established, for you will be far from oppression... 17. No weapon that is formed against you will prosper, and any tongue that raises against you in judgement, you shall not condemn; this is the heritage of the SERVANTS OF THE LORD and their righteousness is from me, says the Lord." Who has despised Israel, THE NATIONS. As the prophet says "despised and we esteemed him not."

Again from Isaiah 49:7-15: "For so said the Lord, the redeemer of ISRAEL, his Holy One about him who is DESPISED OF MEN, about him whom the nations ABHORS, about a SLAVE OF RULERS. Kings shall see and rise, princes, and they shall prostrate themselves, (see Micah 7:15-17), for the sake of the Lord who is faithful, the Holy One of Israel, and He chose you. 13. Sing O Heavens and rejoice O earth, and mountains burst out in song for the Lord has consoled His people, and he shall have mercy on His AFFLICTED. 14. But Zion said 'The Lord has FORSAKEN ME, and the Lord has forgotten me.' 15. Shall a women forget her suckling child, from having mercy on the child of her womb? These too shall forget, but I will not forget you." A mother will forget her baby who she nurses. BUT G-d will not forget Israel!!!

Isaiah 60:14 "The sons also of them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee; and all they that despised thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet; and they shall call thee, The city of the LORD, The Zion of the Holy One of Israel. 15. Whereas thou hast been forsaken and hated, so that no man went through [thee], I will make thee an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations." Isaiah 62:4 "Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken; neither shall thy land any more be termed Desolate: but thou shalt be called Hephzibah, and thy land Beulah: for the LORD delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married."

How have the nations reacted to the Jewish people? St. John Chrysostam referred to the Jews as: "most miserable of all men." "debauchery and drunkenness have given them the manners of the pig and the lusty goat." "They have surpassed the ferocity of wild beasts, for they murder their offspring and immolate them to the devil." Just as Isaiah said would happen: "He is despised and rejected of men" St. Thomas Aquinas: 'It would be licit, according to custom, to hold Jews , because of their crime, in perpetual SERVITUDE, and the princes may regard the possessions of Jews as belonging to the State.' As Isaiah said, "a SLAVE OF RULERS" and "despised and we esteemed him not."

The next verses are the hardest ones for Christians to understand and to see their relationship to Israel. To understand them we must consider: If you ask a Christian why are the Jews suffering so much in their exile? What would he answer? He would say, 'the Jews are punished because they rejected their Messiah'. (I have heard this myself many times). As I quoted above from Thomas Aquinas, it was the reason that Jews could be kept as serfs of the state, and all their possessions held by the crown. Because of their crime, all of the persecution was justified. This has been the theology of the Church from the start. BUT NOW when the Messiah comes and he is not JESUS but the true royal descendant of David, and the Jewish people are returned to their kingdom. When all the nations see that the Jews were right in rejecting J, what are the nations going to say about their persecution of the Jews? What are they going to say about all the suffering they caused Israel?

If JESUS isn't the Messiah, the actions of the nations toward the Jews are SINS. The nations are going to see they were wrong, and all these years the Jews suffered from their sins. Look at Genesis 31:36, after Laban had persecuted Jacob, Jacob asked him, "What is my trespass, what is my sin". He asked, 'how have I sinned against you?' When a person treats another incorrectly it is called sinning against him. The nations are going to say 'we have sinned against Israel by persecuting them all these years'. This concept was clearly acknowledged by Pope John XXIII when he said: "We realize now that many, many centuries of blindness have dimmed our eyes, so that we no longer see the beauty of Thy Chosen People and no longer recognize in their faces the features of our firstborn brother. We realize that our brows are branded with mark of Cain..." The mark of Cain. The sign of evil and sin! The gentile nations will see that THEY were truly sinners in all their persecutions of the Jewish people.

Isaiah 53:4-5: Surely he hath borne our griefs {alt: illnesses}, and carried our sorrows {alt: pains}: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. 5 But he [was] wounded {alt: pained} for our transgressions, [he was] bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace {alt: welfare} [was] upon him; and with his stripes (KJV: Heb: bruise) {alt: wounds} we are {alt: were} healed.

Who did the gentiles think were smitten of G-d? Israel: Jeremiah 50:7 "All that found them have devoured them: and their adversaries said, We offend not, because they have sinned against the LORD, the habitation of justice, even the LORD, the hope of their fathers."

The nations will look at what they have done to the Jews and say, they have suffered because we have sinned in not recognizing who they really were. We have sinned and acted shamefully. Israel has suffered the shameful and sinful actions of the nations. This is echoed in the words of the prophet: Ezekiel 36: 6-7,15 6 "In My jealousy and in my anger I have spoken, because the shame of the nations you have borne. 7. Therefore, thus says my Lord, G-d: I have lifted My hand in an oath. Surely the nations which surround you will bear their shame. 15. And I shall no longer cause the ridicule of nations to be heard about you, and the shame of the nations you shall no longer bear...." The nations will admit their sin.

How have the nations acted toward Israel? Look what it says in the Koran (Sura 2.61) "And humiliation and wretchedness were stamped upon them and they were visited with wrath from Allah. That was because they disbelieved in Allah's revelations and slew the prophets wrongfully. That was for their disobedience and transgression." As the prophet says, 'we accounted him as plagued, smitten by G-d'. Luther asked, "What shall we do with this rejected and condemned people, the Jews" His program included: Burning synagogues and houses, confiscating Jewish Holy books, forbidding Rabbis to teach, Jews to travel or give loans at interest, forcing Jews to do hard labor, and expelling them from Christian countries. 'He was pained because of OUR transgression, crushed because of OUR iniquities.' In the fall of 1944 when the deportations from

Slovakia to Auschwitz were going on, Rabbi Weissmandel approached the papal nuncio on a Sunday and asked him to intervene with President Tiso (a Catholic priest). He was told, "This, being a Sunday, is a holy day for us. Neither I nor Father Tiso occupy ourselves with profane matters on this day". When the Rabbi reminded him that there were innocent women and children being sent to Auschwitz, he replied, "There is no innocent blood of Jewish children in the world. All Jewish blood is guilty. You have to die. This is the punishment that has been awaiting you because of that sin (the death of J)." "we accounted him plagued, smitten of G-d and oppressed. ...crushed because of OUR iniquities..."

Isaiah 53:6-7: All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all {alt. Heb. the Lord accepted his prayer for our iniquities. The Hebrew word Hifgiah the root of which means also to entreat or intercede as in verse 12}. 7 He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought (D: led) as a lamb to the slaughter, and [D: was] as a sheep before her shearers is dumb {alt: mute}, so (D: and) he openeth not his mouth.

We have already seen from Jeremiah 16:19 how the nations will admit that they have been going in a false way. Remember Psalms 44: 12. "You have delivered US like SHEEP TO THE SLAUGHTER, and among the GENTILES you have scattered us. 14. You have made us a disgrace to our neighbors, the mockery and scorn of those around us. 22. Because for your sake we are KILLED ALL DAY LONG, we are considered as SHEEP FOR THE SLAUGHTER." Jeremiah 50:17 "Israel [is] a scattered sheep; the lions have driven [him] away: first the king of Assyria hath devoured him; and last this Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon hath broken his bones." The Jewish people are slaughtered in every generation, quietly going to their deaths, for the sake of G- d's name.

Isaiah 53:8: He was taken from prison (D: oppression) and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living {lit: the living land}: for the transgression of my people was he stricken {Heb. Lawmo. KJV mistranslates 'was HE stricken', instead of the correct THEY. }

Before explaining this, let me show the mistranslation. The Hebrew word is Lawmo and in its other appearances in Tenach the KJV is CORRECTLY translated to 'them'. For example in Isaiah 44:7 (unto them) 16:4 (to them). (There are no examples of exceptions where a plural prepositional pronoun is used referring to other than a plural noun). The translation is just made to distort the true meaning.

Next the verse uses the expression 'the land of the living' (Heb. Eretz Chaim). This always denotes the land of Israel. The words cut off from the land of the living refers to the exile from Israel. Ezekiel 32:23 "Whose graves are set in the sides of the pit, and her company is round about her grave: all of them slain, fallen by the sword, which caused terror in the land of the living." (See the full text of Ez. 32:23-27 where the prophet describes the punishment for those who terrorized Israel and calls the land of Israel 'the land of the living'). Likewise Ezekiel 26:20 "When I shall bring thee down with them that descend into the pit, with the people of old time, and shall set thee in the low parts of the earth, in places desolate of old, with them that go down to the pit, that thou be not inhabited; and I shall set glory in the land of the living; 21 I will make thee a terror, and thou [shalt be] no [more]: though thou be sought for, yet shalt thou never be found again, saith the Lord GOD." This verse tells us that the Jewish people are being sent into exile from the land of Israel (as everyone knows).

Isaiah 53:9: And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death (KJV: Heb. deaths) {Heb. BeMosav 'in his deaths' plural and not BeMoso 'in his death' singular} ; because he had done no violence, neither [was any] deceit in his mouth.

Here again we see that the KJV used singular where there is a plural in the Hebrew. This signifies the many persecutions and deaths that have followed the righteous of Israel throughout the many generations. It is not just once or twice that evil men have stood up against the Jewish people and oppressed them. But every generation finds someone ready to kill Jews.

A parallel to this is Zeph. 3:12-20 12. "And I will leave over in your midst a humble and poor people, and they shall take shelter in the name of the Lord. 13. The remnant of ISRAEL shall neither commit injustice nor SPEAK LIES, NEITHER SHALL DECEITFUL SPEECH BE FOUND IN THEIR MOUTH... 15. The Lord has removed your AFFLICTIONS; He has cast out your enemy... 19 Behold, I wreak destruction upon all those who have AFFLICTED you at that time. And I will save the one who LIMPS, and I will gather the stray one, and I will make them a praise and a name throughout all the land where they SUFFERED SHAME. 20. At that time I will bring them, and at that time I will gather you, for I will make you a name and a praise among all the peoples of the earth when I RESTORE your captivity before your eyes, said the Lord." The people who are not deceitful, this is G-d's holy remnant.

Some have tried to say that this prophecy is ONLY of a future generation, but looking at verse 19 and comparing it to the many other verses I have brought above which tell the same story of the suffering of Israel in the exile, makes it impossible to consider this about a future remnant, but of the holy remnant of the Jewish people that has suffered in the exile and held fast to the Torah of G-d.

Isaiah 53:10: Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put (D: subjected) [him] to grief: when {Heb. Im means 'if' not 'when' as the KJV translates} thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see [his] seed {Heb. zarah}, he shall prolong [his] days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.

Who was given the promise of a long live with abundant children and prosperity? The people of Israel. Look at the words of the prophets:

Isaiah 65:20 "There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner [being] an hundred years old shall be accursed. 21 And they shall build houses, and inhabit [them]; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. 22 They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree [are] the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands. 23 They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for they [are] the seed of the blessed of the LORD, and their offspring with them." In the Torah itself we see that at the end of times this is to occur: Deuteronomy 30:5 "And the LORD thy God will bring thee into the land which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it; and he will do thee good, and multiply thee above thy fathers."

Throughout the Tenach, again and again we see prophecies of the wondrous things that will happen when Israel leaves the exile. Isaiah 66:22 "For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the LORD, so shall your seed and your name remain." Ezekiel 36:37 "Thus saith the Lord GOD; I will yet [for] this be enquired of by the house of Israel, to do [it] for them; I will increase them with men like a flock. 38 As the holy flock, as the flock of Jerusalem in her solemn feasts; so shall the waste cities be filled with flocks of men: and they shall know that I [am] the LORD." Zechariah 10:8 "I will hiss for them, and gather them; for I have redeemed them: and they shall increase as they have increased. 9 And I will sow them among the people: and they shall remember me in far countries; and they shall live with their children, and turn again."

We have seen that in this verse the speaker changing again. The prophet is continuing and saying what the purpose is of the exile. Everything was done so that Israel should be able to have her reward. The promises here are a restatement of the promises in the Torah. Deut 30:19-20: 19. "I call Heaven and earth as witnesses. Before you I have placed life and death, the blessing and the curse. You must choose life, so that **YOU AND YOUR SEED WILL SURVIVE**. 20. If you choose to love the lord your G-d, to obey Him, and to attach yourself to Him. That is your life and the **LENGTH OF YOUR DAYS**, that you may dwell in the land which the Lord swore to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them." The choice is given to Israel, if they accept then they will have long life and many descendants.

Isaiah 53:11-12: He shall see of the (D: [the fruit of]) travail of his soul {alt: From the toil of his soul he would see}, [and] shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many (D: instruct many in righteousness); for he shall bear their iniquities. 12 Therefore will I divide him (D: assign him) [a portion] with the great, and he shall divide the spoil {alt: Heb: plunder} with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered (D: reckoned) with the transgressors; and he bare (D: bore) the sin of many, and made intercession {alt: interceded} for the transgressors.

Here we see that G-d has again speaks about His servant, and the servant's reward. Much of this has been mentioned before let me just add those things not previously cited. First is the point of Israel's purpose in the world, to teach righteousness: Is 60:3 "AND THE NATIONS SHALL GO BY YOUR LIGHT and kings by the brilliance of you shine." Isaiah 42:6 "I the LORD have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles;" Isaiah 49:6 "And he said, It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth." Zechariah 8:13,23 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. 23. So said the Lord of Hosts: In those days, ten men of all the languages of the gentiles shall take hold of the skirt of a Jewish man saying, "Let us go with you, for we have heard that G-d is with you."

The strangest part about this prophecy is the last verse 12. Here the prophet talks about sharing portions and plunder. What is this plunder. The word here, 'shalal' means physical wealth wherever it is used. What does it refer to? It is a promise that G-d has made to HIS people of what will happen in the end of days after the great war of Gog and Magog. Zechariah 14:14 "And the wealth of all the nations round about shall be gathered together, gold and silver and apparel in great abundance." What is to happen to this wealth that was gathered around Jerusalem? Ezekiel 39:10: "'And they shall spoil those that spoiled them, and rob those that robbed them," said the Lord' All the wealth that was stolen from the Jewish people, by all the nations, all the special taxes, all the houses, all the land everything will be returned. This is the plunder of Is 53:12.

What is the meaning of 'their iniquities he would bear'? Examine Is. 61:6. "And you shall be called 'The Priests of the Lord', 'Servants of Our G-d' shall be said of you...." This mirrors what was said in Exodus 19:5-6 "You will be a kingdom of priests". Now if the Jews are the priests, who are the laity? The gentile nations who we have seen will eventually join the Jews in worshipping the true G-d. What was the role of the priests? It is described in Numbers 18:1 "And G-d said to Aaron, 'You and your sons, and your father's house with you, you must **BEAR THE INIQUITY** against the sanctuary, and you and your sons must **BEAR THE INIQUITY** against you priesthood.'" That is the role of the priesthood - to bear iniquity. They are the vessel through which the laity/gentiles will correct themselves.

Next the idea of interceding for the nations (mentioned above in verse 6) appears openly in a prophecy by Jeremiah 29:7: "And seek the peace of the city where I have exiled you and **PRAY FOR IT TO THE LORD**."

for in its peace you shall have peace." A clear indication that Israel intercedes for the nations while in exile. In fact, there is a prayer said in many synagogues, TO THIS DAY, for the well being of the government.

The following prophecy summarizes the words of Isaiah and his message to us and the whole world:

Joel 2:25-3:2

"25 And I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten, the cankerworm, and the caterpillar, and the palmerworm, my great army which I sent among you. 26 And ye shall eat in plenty, and be satisfied, and praise the name of the LORD your God, that hath dealt wondrously with you: and my people shall never be ashamed. 27 And ye shall know that I [am] in the midst of Israel, and [that] I [am] the LORD your God, and none else: and my people shall never be ashamed. 1. For, behold, in those days, and in that time, when I shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem, 2 I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there for my people and [for] my heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted my land."

Now that I have finished explaining the passages, there remains two questions that are asked.

1. What you say is fine but everything that you have said is not the authentic ancient traditional explanation of the Jews. This was just made up by Rashi in the 11th century so that Jews shouldn't convert. The Jews before that all knew that it meant the Messiah. The answer to this is that it is an outright lie. First, the Zohar on Exodus, and the Midrash Rabbah on Numbers both ancient Rabbinic works bring that Is. 53 refers to Israel. Second, and more importantly than that, one of the oldest references to this chapter by a Christian source (in Contra Celsum), has Origin (late 2nd century) quoting the ancient Jewish understanding that this refers to the Jewish people and their sufferings. "I remember that once in a discussion with some whom the Jews regard as learned I used these prophecies (Is 53). At this the Jew said that these prophecies referred to the whole people as though of a single individual..." Even Origin in the second century knew that the Jews understood Isaiah 53 as referring to Israel.

But even more than that, it can be shown that in the time of JESUS they NEVER associated this with a dying Messiah. How do I know. Look at Matthew 16:16-20 where we see that according to the NT, Peter correctly understood that JESUS was the Messiah, and he is told not to reveal it. But let's see Matthew 16:21-22 (right after that) "From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things 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, 'BE IT FAR FROM THEE, LORD: THIS SHALL NOT BE UNTO THEE!'" What's going on here? If it was true that the Jews knew that Is 53 referred to the Messiah, Peter should have said 'Yes Lord we understand, that is what it says in Is 53, the Messiah has to suffer and die.' But what does he do? He REBUKES JESUS and tells him, are you crazy? The Messiah is not supposed to die. Peter never knew, and the Jews never knew, because it never meant the Messiah. In the time of JESUS nobody attached Is. 53 to the Messiah.

2. You might say, listen Moshe. What you say is how Jews understand it, but Christians understand it another way. Who knows what is right? It just depends on who you are. A Jew says it's Israel and a Christian JESUS But that is NOT true. There are a number of Christian Bibles, that have been translated with commentaries from Christian sources.

One of the most well known is called the New English Bible - Oxford Study Edition. And there we read: "52:13-53:12. Fourth servant song. The suffering servant. See 42.1- 4 n. Israel, the servant of G-d, has suffered as a humiliated individual. However, the servant endured without complaint because it is 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. 2: In traditional Hebrew though, the good man prospers like a tree by water but the wicked is like a plant growing in parched ground: see Ps. 1.3-6. 3: Turn away their eyes; lit. hide their faces, an expression used in relation to lepers, whose sickness, considered a sign of sin, made them despised. 4-5: The vicarious suffering expressed here is in contrast both to the traditional solidarity of guilt of Exod. 20.5 and to individual responsibility proposed by the prophets at the time of the Exile; see Jer. 31.30; Ezek. 18 5: Health for us: lit. "our peace" which means "general welfare" 6-7 The servant is led like a sheep in contrast to the peoples going their own way. 8: Although some legal process seems to be involved, the servant does not receive justice; see Jer 39:5-6. 9: The death probably refers to the destruction and Exile of Israel. Compare Ezek. ch 37. 10- 12: The theme of 52:13 is resumed. Israel, which has suffered for all mankind, will now be granted her rightful place. 10: long life and childrens children are the signs of a final vindication before G-d; see Job 42:16-17. 11: Bathed in light; enjoying G-d's favor; Ps. 80.3. There you have it, even the Christian scholars KNOW who Isaiah 53 refers to. It is ISRAEL, G-d's SUFFERING SERVANT." This shows that this is not just a 'Jewish' idea but one that is supported by Christians also!

Likewise in volume 5 of 'The Interpreter's Bible' published by Abingdon Press on page 629 we find: "The great surprise of the nations reflected in vs 1 and in 52:13 need not imply that an individual is meant: surely the elevation and "success" of Israel, conceived with great elasticity and fluidity, would occasion a similar reaction (cf. Ezek. 37:1-14)."