

# The Messiah משיח

## 9. Isaiah Chapter 52:13-53:12, Part 2



“He was brought like a lamb to the slaughter” Isaiah 53:7

Why is the prophecy in Isaiah 52:13-53:12, a major focus of the Christian faith? The Christians will claim this verse is evidence for their faith in Jesus Christ, as the Messiah. Because the words in this prophecy, in a “Literal” sense, talk about a person, who dies for the sins humanity it vividly seems to picture the life of Jesus. For this very same reason, many Jewish interpreters counter this Christian interpretation.

The history and interpretation of this verse goes back to the time of Jesus. What did the rabbis think these verses meant? Has their understanding of these verses changed over the years? These are important questions today, when we discuss the issue of Messiah. Since the importance of these verses cannot be understated, it is very important in any discussion to know the history behind the interpretation.

### *Background on interpretation*

When examining the history of interpretation on these verses, it would be good to review the sources of rabbinical interpretation. There are several sources of interpretation, which can be used to understand how Jewish interpreters over the last two thousand years understood Isaiah 53's meaning. These rabbinical sources include the *Mishna*, the *Talmuds* (*Palestinian* and *Babylonian*), The *Targums*, the *Midrash*, the *Zohar* and more. In addition to these well-known sources, authoritative rabbis such as the *Ramban*<sup>1</sup>, *Ibn Ezra*<sup>2</sup>, *Rashi*<sup>3</sup>, *Radak*<sup>4</sup> and others have commented extensively on this section in Isaiah.

When we examine the views of these varied sources of rabbinic interpretation, we see they are not uniform in the fifty-third chapter. Currently, many Jewish interpreters leave an impression, the interpretation of Isaiah 53, is the “nation” Israel suffering, and that this has long been the interpretation.

The earliest “authoritative” rabbinical interpretations on Israel, “the nation”, being the servant of Isaiah 53 can be traced to Rashi, Ibn Ezra and Radak dating from the 11<sup>th</sup> to the 13<sup>th</sup> century. While, earlier commentators such as 9<sup>th</sup> century Babylonian Rabbi, *Sa'adiah Gaon* (A.D. 882-942) saw the figure in Isaiah 53, as a person. Gaon saw the prophet Jeremiah as fulfillment of these verses. This is an important point, since he predates these those who saw Isaiah fulfilled in the nation of Israel. Maimonides was inclined to see the nation in Isaiah, but choose to follow ancient tradition, and embrace the individual view of Messiah here. Michael Brown sums up these diverse views on Isaiah.

While it is true that Rashi, Ibn Ezra and Radak all interpreted the passage with reference to Israel, other equally prominent leaders, such as Moses ben Nachman (called Nachmanides or the Ramban) felt compelled to follow the weight of ancient tradition and embrace the individual, Messianic interpretation of the Talmudic rabbis (found in the Midrash, despite his belief that the plain sense of the text supported the national interpretation). Noteworthy also is the oft-quoted comment of Rabbi Moshe Alshech, writing in the sixteenth century, “ Our rabbis with one voice accept and affirm the opinion that the prophet is speaking of the Messiah, and we shall

<sup>1</sup> **Ramban**: Acronym for Moses Maimonides ; (1135-1204 A.D.) His systematic compilation of the Jewish law is known as the Mishne Torah, and is the standard legal text for Judaism to this day.

<sup>2</sup> **Ibn Ezra**. Abraham Ibn Ezra (1089-1164). One of the three greatest Jewish Medieval biblical commentators, especially famous for his careful attention to Hebrew grammar.

<sup>3</sup> **Rashi**: Acronym for Rabbi Sholomo Yitschaki (1040-1105 A.D.), the foremost Jewish commentator on the Tanakh and Babylonian Talmud. Traditional Jews Rashi's commentary as their main guide in their study of the Bible and Talmud.

<sup>4</sup> **Radak** Acronym for Rabbi David Kimchi (1160-1235). Author of commentaries on much of the Tanakh.

ourselves also adhere to the same view.” This too is highly significant, since Alshech claims that all his contemporaries agreed with the Messianic reading of the text, despite the fact that Rashi, Ibn Ezra and Radak had all come out against that reading.<sup>5</sup>

Even today, followers of *Menachem Schneerson* (1902-1994), the Grand Rabbi of the *Lubavitcher Hasidic* movement, apply Isaiah 53 to him as an individual, believing him to be the Messiah who suffered.

This is important in answering the following objections about the Messianic (Christian) understanding of Isaiah 53, as being fulfilled by Yeshua ha Messiah (Jesus the Messiah).

**1. Objection:** *The Rabbis have always interpreted Isaiah 52:12-53 as applying to the nation and not to an individual!*

**Reply to Objection 1.** *Isaiah 52:13-53:12 from the earliest times, has been viewed as Messianic, and not as the nation of “Israel”, by rabbis with “Authority”. The national interpretation is more recent, than the oldest rabbinic views. See the chart below to illustrate this point.*

<b>Targum</b>
<p>“Behold, My Servant the Messiah shall prosper.”          -- Targum (“Targum Jonathan”) to Isaiah 52:13, various editions (such as Samson H. Levey, <i>The Messiah: An Aramaic Interpretation; the Messianic Exegesis of the Targum.</i> Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College, 1974, p. 63).</p>
<b>In the early cycle of synagogue readings</b>
<p>“We know that messianic homilies based on Joseph's career (his saving role preceded by suffering), and using Isaiah 53 as the prophetic portion, were preached in certain old synagogues which used the triennial cycle...”          -- Rav Asher Soloff, “The Fifty Third Chapter of Isaiah According to the Jewish Commentators, to the Sixteenth Century” (Ph.D. Thesis, Drew University, 1967), p. 146.</p> <p>“The addition of 53.4-5 [to the cycle of synagogue readings] was evidently of a Messianic purport by reason of the theory of a suffering Messiah. The earlier part of [the Haftarah] (52.7ff.) dealt with the redemption of Israel, and in this connection the tribulations of the Messiah were briefly alluded to by the recital of the above 2 verses.”          -- Jacob Mann, <i>The Bible as Read and Preached in the Old Synagogue</i> (NY: Ktav, 1971, © 1940), p. 298.</p>
<b>Babylonian Talmud, Sanhedrin 98b</b>
<p>“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. [Isaiah 53:4].”          -- Soncino Talmud edition.</p>
<b>Ruth Rabbah 5:6</b>
<p>The fifth interpretation [of Ruth 2:14] makes it refer to the Messiah. Come hither: approach to royal state. And eat of the BREAD refers to the bread of royalty; AND DIPPY MORSEL IN THE VINEGAR refers to his sufferings, as it is said, But he was wounded because of our transgressions. (Isa. LIII, 5).          -- Soncino Midrash Rabbah (vol. 8, p. 64).</p>
<b>The Karaite Yefeth ben Ali (10th c.)</b>
<p><i>The Karaite Yefeth ben Ali (10th c.)</i>          “As to myself, I am inclined, with Benjamin of Nehawend, to regard it as alluding to the Messiah, and as opening with a description of his condition in exile, from the time of his birth to his accession to the throne: for the prophet begins by speaking of his being seated in a position of great honour, and then goes back to relate all that will happen to him during the captivity. He thus gives us to understand two things: In the first</p>

<sup>5</sup> Answering Jewish Objection to Jesus, Michael L. Brown, Pgs. 49-50, Baker Books, 2003

instance, that the Messiah will only reach his highest degree of honour after long and severe trials; and secondly, that these trials will be sent upon him as a kind of sign, so that, if he finds himself under the yoke of misfortunes whilst remaining pure in his actions, he may know that he is the desired one..."

-- S. R. Driver and A. Neubauer, editors, *The Fifty-third Chapter of Isaiah According to the Jewish Interpreters* (2 volumes; New York: Ktav, 1969), pp. 19-20. The English translations used here are taken from volume 2. The original texts are in volume 1. Cf. Soloff, pp. 107-09.

*Another statement from Yefeth ben Ali:*

"By the words "surely he hath carried our sicknesses," they mean that the pains and sickness which he fell into were merited by them, but that he bore them instead. . . . And here I think it necessary to pause for a few moments, in order to explain why God caused these sicknesses to attach themselves to the Messiah for the sake of Israel. . . . The nation deserved from God greater punishment than that which actually came upon them, but not being strong enough to bear it. . . . God appoints his servant to carry their sins, and by doing so lighten their punishment in order that Israel might not be completely exterminated."

-- Driver and Neubauer, pp. 23 ff.; Soloff pp. 108-109.

*Another statement from Yefeth ben Ali:*

"And the Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all." The prophet does not by avon mean iniquity, but punishment for iniquity, as in the passage, "Be sure your sin will find you out" (Num. xxxii. 23).

-- Driver and Neubauer, p. 26; Soloff p. 109.

#### **Mysteries of R. Shim'on ben Yohai (midrash, date uncertain)**

"And Armilauis will join battle with Messiah, the son of Ephraim, in the East gate . . . ; and Messiah, the son of Ephraim, will die there, and Israel will mourn for him. And afterwards the Holy One will reveal to them Messiah, the son of David, whom Israel will desire to stone, saying, Thou speakest falsely; already is the Messiah slain, and there is non other Messiah to stand up (after him): and so they will despise him, as it is written, "Despised and forlorn of men;" but he will turn and hide himself from them, according to the words, "Like one hiding his face from us."

-- Driver and Neubauer, p. 32, citing the edition of Jellinek, *Beth ha-Midrash* (1855), part iii. p. 80.

#### **Lekach Tov (11th c. midrash)**

"And let his [Israel's] kingdom be exalted," in the days of the Messiah, of whom it is said, "Behold my servant shall prosper; he will be high and exalted, and lofty exceedingly."

-- Driver and Neubauer, p. 36.

#### **Maimonides, Letter to Yemen (12th c.)**

"What is to be the manner of Messiah's advent, and where will be the place of his appearance? . . . And Isaiah speaks similarly of the time when he will appear, without his father or mother of family being known, He came up as a sucker before him, and as a root out of the dry earth, etc. But the unique phenomenon attending his manifestation is, that all the kings of the earth will be thrown into terror at the fame of him -- their kingdoms will be in consternation, and they themselves will be devising whether to oppose him with arms, or to adopt some different course, confessing, in fact, their inability to contend with him or ignore his presence, and so confounded at the wonders which they will see him work, that they will lay their hands upon their mouth; in the words of Isaiah, when describing the manner in which the kings will hearken to him, At him kings will shut their mouth; for that which had not been told them have they seen, and that which they had not heard they have perceived."

-- Driver and Neubauer vol 1: p. 322. Edition is Abraham S. Halkin, ed., *Igeret Teman* (NY: American Academy for Jewish Research, 1952). See Soloff pp. 127-128.

#### **Zohar II, 212a (medieval)**

"There is in the Garden of Eden a palace named the Palace of the Sons of Sickness.

This palace the Messiah enters, and He summons every pain and every chastisement of Israel. All of these come and rest upon Him. And had He not thus lightened them upon Himself, there had been no man able to bear Israel's chastisements for the transgressions of the law; as it is written, "Surely our sicknesses he has carried."

-- Cited in Driver and Neubauer, pp. 14-15 from section "va-yiqqahel". Translation from Frydland, Rachmiel, What the Rabbis Know About the Messiah (Cincinnati: Messianic Literature Outreach, 1991), p. 56, n. 27. Note that this section is not found in the Soncino edition which says that it was an interpolation.

#### **Nachmanides (R. Moshe ben Nachman) (13th c.)**

"The right view respecting this Parashah is to suppose that by the phrase "my servant" the whole of Israel is meant. . . .As a different opinion, however, is adopted by the Midrash, which refers it to the Messiah, it is necessary for us to explain it in conformity with the view there maintained. The prophet says, The Messiah, the son of David of whom the text speaks, will never be conquered or perish by the hands of his enemies. And, in fact the text teaches this clearly. . . . And by his stripes we were healed -- because the stripes by which he is vexed and distressed will heal us; God will pardon us for his righteousness, and we shall be healed both from our own transgressions and from the iniquities of our fathers."

-- Driver and Neubauer, pp. 78 ff.

#### **Yalkut ii: 571 (13th c.)**

"Who art thou, O great mountain (Zech. iv. 7.) This refers to the King Messiah. And why does he call him "the great mountain?" Because he is greater than the patriarchs, as it is said, "My servant shall be high, and lifted up, and lofty exceedingly" -- he will be higher than Abraham, . . . lifted up above Moses, . . . loftier than the ministering angels."

-- Driver and Neubauer, p. 9. The same passage is found in Midrash Tanhuma to Genesis (perhaps 9th c.), ed. John T. Townsend (Hoboken, NJ: Ktav, 1989), p. 166.

*Yalkut ii. 620 (13th c.), in regard to Psalm 2:6*

"I.e., I have drawn him out of the chastisements. . . .The chastisements are divided into three parts: one for David and the fathers, one for our own generation, and one for the King Messiah; and this is that which is written, "He was wounded for our transgressions," etc.

-- Driver and Neubauer, p. 10.

#### **R. Mosheh Kohen ibn Crispin (14th c.)**

"This Parashah the commentators agree in explaining of the Captivity of Israel, although the singular number is used in it throughout. . . .As there is no cause constraining us to do so, why should we here interpret the word collectively, and thereby distort the passage from its natural sense? . . . As then it seemed to me that the doors of the literal interpretation of the Parashah were shut in their face, and that "they wearied themselves to find the entrance," having forsaken the knowledge of our Teachers, and inclined after the "stubbornness of their own hearts," and of their own opinion, I am pleased to interpret it, in accordance with the teaching of our Rabbis, of the King Messiah, and will be careful, so far as I am able, to adhere to the literal sense."

-- Driver and Neubauer, pp. 99-100.

*Another comment from R. Mosheh Kohen ibn Crispin*

"If his soul makes itself into a trespass-offering, implying that his soul will treat itself as guilty, and so receive punishment for our trespasses and transgressions."

-- Driver and Neubauer, p. 112.

#### **R. Sh'lomoh Astruc (14th c.)**

My servant shall prosper, or be truly intelligent, because by intelligence man is really man -- it is intelligence which makes a man what he is. And the prophet calls the King Messiah my servant, speaking as one who sent him. Or he may call the whole people my servant, as he says above my people (lii. 6): when he speaks of the people, the King Messiah is included in it; and when he speaks of the King Messiah, the people is

comprehended with him. What he says then is, that my servant the King Messiah will prosper.

-- Driver and Neubauer, p. 129.

**Objection 2:** *There are early records of Israel being interpreted as the subject of Isaiah 53, so its not a recent interpretation at all!*

**Reply to Objection 2:** *Yes, there are some older views mentioned by Christian commentators dating to the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, but these views were never carried forward within "Authoritative" rabbinical Judaism. Secondly, the Talmud interprets the suffering of "Righteous" individuals within Israel, but not a national suffering.*

Michael Brown writes on the point of a national interpretation in the more ancient rabbinical writings.

"Targum Jonathan interprets Isaiah 52:13-53:12 with reference to the Messiah, despite the fact the Targum virtually rewrites the entire passage, changing the verses that speak clearly of the servant's suffering so they speak instead of the suffering of the nations.....

"The Talmud interprets various verses in this section with reference to righteous individuals within Israel (including the Messiah) but never once with reference to the nation of Israel as a whole....

"Midrash Rabbah interprets 53:5 with reference to the Messiah (Ruth Rabbah 2:14), while interpreting 53:12 with reference to Israel in exile (Numbers Rabbah 13:2). This last interpretation, offered in a passing interpretation of Song of Solomon 5:1, is the one and only time in the first thousand years of recorded Rabbinic literature that any portion of any verse in Isaiah 53 is applied to Israel as a nation."<sup>6</sup>

The *Targum Jonathan* interprets Isaiah 53:3 in with the Messiah as subject of interpretation.

"Then he (my servant Messiah) 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 sickness; and as though the presence of the Shekinah had been withdrawn from us, they will be despised, and esteemed not."

**Targum Jonathan**

According to the Targum, the nations are in pains and fall prostrate before the Messiah, who they in turn despise, because their glory is "cut off". The nation of Israel is not the "despised" but the nations, who the Messiah will despise and Messiah who will be despised by the nations, according to Targum Jonathan.

The reference in Christian writings to the "national" interpretation is from a work of Origen (A.D. 185-254), a Second century writer. In his work *Contra Celsum*<sup>7</sup>, Origen disputes with Celsus, an opponent of Jews and Christians, and makes mention of his discussion with Jews regarding their understanding of Isaiah 53 and "national suffering".

Now I remember that, on one occasion, at a disputation held with certain Jews, who were reckoned wise men, I quoted these prophecies; to which my Jewish opponent replied, that these predictions bore reference to the whole people, regarded as one individual, and as being in a state of dispersion and suffering, in order that many proselytes might be gained, on account of the dispersion of the Jews among numerous heathen nations. And in this way he explained the words, "Thy form shall be of no reputation among men;" and then, "They to whom no message was sent respecting him shall see;" and the expression, "A man under suffering." Many arguments were employed on that occasion during the discussion to prove that these predictions regarding one particular person were not rightly applied by them to the whole nation. And I asked to what character the expression would be appropriate, "This man bears our sins, and suffers pain on our behalf;" and this, "But He was wounded for our sins, and bruised for our iniquities;" and to whom the expression properly belonged, "By His stripes were we healed." For it is manifest that it is they who had been sinners, and had been healed by the Savior's sufferings (whether belonging to the Jewish nation or converts from the Gentiles), who use such language in the writings of the prophet who foresaw these events, and who, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, applied these words to a person. But we seemed to press them hardest with the expression, "Because of the iniquities of My people was He led away unto death." For if the people, according to them, are the subject of the prophecy, how is the man said to be led away to death because of the iniquities of the people of God, unless he be a different

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, Pg. 59,

<sup>7</sup> Origen's great vindication of Christianity against pagan attack, *Contra Celsum*, written (probably in 248) at Ambrose's request, survives in its entirety in one Vatican manuscript, with fragments in the Philocalia and on papyruses.

person from that people of God? And who is this person save Jesus Christ, by whose stripes they who believe on Him are healed, when "He had spoiled the principalities and powers (that were over us), and had made a show of them openly on His cross?" At another time we may explain the several parts of the prophecy, leaving none of them unexamined. But these matters have been treated at greater length, necessarily as I think, on account of the language of the Jew, as quoted in the work of Celsus.<sup>8</sup>

Origen points out the distinction between the "Servant" and those for whom he suffers. Asking the question, if the "Servant" suffering is Israel, who are the people he suffers for? How is it he is led away because of the iniquities of the "People of God"? Since, the servant is the "People of God"?

The other point is, the argument was available to Jews interpreters at the time of Origen, those who wrote in the *Mishna* and *Talmuds* but they choose not to include this view in the most authoritative writings. It was not until the 10<sup>th</sup> century did the "national interpretation" of Isaiah become accepted with the writings of Rashi.

**Objection 3:** *Isaiah 52:13 to 53:12 refers to the suffering of the nation of Israel and not an individual!*

**Reply to Objection 3:** *If you read the text "Literally", Isaiah is clearly speaking about a "righteous person" and not a nation. The only way a "National" interpretation could be seen is if you put words and meaning into Isaiah that are not there.*

In the beginning of Isaiah 52, the hopeless situation of Israel is presented. The Lord's people are captives in a foreign land and seem without hope. In verse one, Jerusalem is told to put on your "Beautiful garments" because a day is coming when the "unclean" will no longer be part of the city. This is a day in the future when Jerusalem and Israel are redeemed.

1 Awake, awake! Put on your strength, O Zion; Put on your beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city! For the uncircumcised and the unclean Shall no longer come to you.  
2 Shake yourself from the dust, arise; Sit down, O Jerusalem! Loose yourself from the bonds of your neck, O captive daughter of Zion!  
3 For thus says the Lord: "You have sold yourselves for nothing, And you shall be redeemed without money."  
4 For thus says the Lord God: "My people went down at first Into Egypt to dwell there; Then the Assyrian oppressed them without cause. Isaiah 52:1-4

The Lord sees the helpless condition of his people and proclaims they will one day know His "Name". Because "salvation" will one day come and the Lord's people will know the Lord is the one speaking to them saying "Behold, it is I".

5 Now therefore, what have I here," says the Lord, "That My people are taken away for nothing? Those who rule over them Make them wail," says the Lord, "And My name is blasphemed continually every day.  
6 Therefore My people shall know My name; Therefore they shall know in that day That I am He who speaks: 'Behold, it is I.'" Isaiah 52:5-6

The subject before the reader is "Redemption" and relationship. The Lord will redeem his people who do not yet know him, who are now captives. Isaiah looks to a day of redemption and salvation, when the whole world will see the Lord's salvation and Jerusalem's redemption, by "His holy arm". What is meant by this term, "Holy arm"?

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 our God. Isaiah 52:9-10

Is this term, "holy arm" poetry is there more substance than at first glance. This "Arm" of the Lord is again referenced in Isaiah 53:1 and again in Isaiah 59:16. In each case, there is an association of "Salvation" and "Redemption" with the "Arm" of the Lord.

---

8

From the start of the chapter, Israel is the one in need of “Redemption”, they are the captives in a foreign land, they are helpless. The Lord is the one who is coming to their aid. The captivity of his people and their redemption is the Lord’s aim, His “Servant” is called forward to accomplish this task of redemption. His servant, called the “Arm of the Lord” in the very first verse is the one despised and rejected by men.

13 Behold, My Servant shall deal prudently; He shall be exalted and extolled and be very high.

14 Just as many were astonished at you, So His visage was marred more than any man, And His form more than the sons of men;

15 So shall He sprinkle many nations. Kings shall shut their mouths at Him; For what had not been told them they shall see, And what they had not heard they shall consider. Isaiah 52:13-15

If we examine the text, we can see Israel is the one who needs redemption, Israel is captive, first by Egypt, then Assyria and now Babylon (Isaiah 52:4). So, “My Servant” the Lord’s servant, his “Holy Arm” (Isaiah 52:10, 53:1, 59:16), accomplishes Israel’s redemption.

The evidence a “Man” and not a nation is the referent is very clear from the words used here to describe the servant. The term, “His visage was marred more than any man” is clearly making a comparison between the servant and other men. The Hebrew word, אִישׁ *’ysh* means, man and is used over 1000 times in the Tanakh, to mean just that. The next term used to demonstrate his humanity is “Sons of men”, translated בְּנֵי אָדָם *Ben adam* ‘adam, clearly demonstrating the servant’s descent of Adam, being a “Son of man” or literally, “Son of Adam”. The “Servant” is humiliated and marred, before He is exalted.

The humanity of this “Son of Man” is further demonstrated throughout Isaiah 53, using words, which clearly demonstrate “Humanity”. He is called a “Man of sorrows” (Isaiah 53:3), again the word *’ysh* is used here, reiterating his humanity.

Throughout the flow of chapter 53, we see the humanity of the servant, repeated over and over, for example, lets look at verse 8.

8 He was taken from prison and from judgment, And who will declare His generation? For He was cut off from the land of the living; For the transgressions of My people He was stricken. Isaiah 53:8

In this one verse alone, we can count four, specific references to his humanity. In addition, we read, “he was cut off from the land of the living”, referring to the “human” state of living.

Verse 8, also makes a distinction between “My people” and the “Servant”. The servant is wounded for “My people”. For this reason its important to understand the context of this verse, the chapter is talking about redemption of a “Captive” people who are in a hopeless state, who need redemption. They need redemption because of their sin, which resulted in their captivity. For this reason, was the “Man”, the servant stricken, for the redemption of “My people”. Who are “My people”? Why they are the Lord’s people, Israel and Judah, who the nations have assaulted, they will see the salvation of the Lord, in this coming “servant”.

***Objection 4:*** *Even if this verse talks about Messiah, the Christian understanding the Messiah is God is blasphemous and not supported here one iota!*

***Reply to Objection 4*** *Who is this person, called the “Servant”? He is called the “Arm of the Lord” in the very first verse of the 53<sup>rd</sup> chapter. Who is the “Arm of the Lord”? Isaiah 59:16 tells us it’s the Lord Himself. The Lord Himself will come to His people and the world will see the “Salvation” of God.*

Starting in the 10<sup>th</sup> verse, of Isaiah 52, Isaiah proclaims the coming “Salvation”. We are told, the nations will see this salvation. What is “the salvation”? It’s the Lord bearing his “Holy Arm” in the eyes of the nations. What does this mean? It means this coming “Servant” who is rejected and despised by the nations is the “Arm of the Lord” (Isaiah 53:1). The Lord Himself will save humanity and He will pay for their sins of humanity in the person of the “Servant”, will suffer as the “Lamb” of God’s sacrifice.

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 our God. Isaiah 52:10

1 Who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?

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., Isaiah 53:1,6

This same point of the “Arm of the Lord”, repeats in Isaiah 59. In the 59<sup>th</sup> chapter, the hopeless condition of humanity is again, demonstrated, as was the hopeless condition of Israel in the 52<sup>nd</sup> chapter. The first 15 verses of the 59<sup>th</sup> chapter focus on man’s hopeless condition, then in the 15<sup>th</sup> verse, we see the Lord takes notice of man’s need of redemption and his inability to attain salvation. Therefore, the Lord has the solution in the 16<sup>th</sup> verse.

4. No one calls for justice, Nor does any plead for truth. They trust in empty words and speak lies; They conceive evil and bring forth iniquity.

10. We grope for the wall like the blind, And we grope as if we had no eyes; We stumble at noonday as at twilight; We are as dead men in desolate places.

15. So truth fails, And he who departs from evil makes himself a prey. Then the Lord saw it, and it displeased Him That there was no justice. Isaiah 59:4,10,15

The solution is the Lord’s “Own arm” will bring salvation to Him. The Lord sees there is “no man” (“*iysh*”) or intercessor, someone to come to the aid of humanity and their lost state. So what does the Lord do? Why his own “Arm”, the “Servant” of Isaiah 52:13 comes to the aid of “My people”, Israel and the whole world, through Israel.

16 He saw that there was no man, And wondered that there was no intercessor; Therefore His own arm brought salvation for Him; And His own righteousness, it sustained Him. Isaiah 59:16

The Messiah is none other then the Lord Himself, who has bared His holy “Arm” and entered humanity in the flesh of man. The Lord in the past has taken human form when He appeared to Abraham, Moses and Ezekiel. In Genesis, Abraham sees the Lord as a man, along with two angels who go on judge Sodom (Genesis 19). Moses sees the form of God, as God himself declares. Ezekiel describes the scene of God’s throne and a man sitting on the throne, who is clearly God. This man on throne is called the “*Glory of the Lord*” (Ezekiel 1:28, 3:12,23 10:4,18), God’s “Presence” manifest in human form to interact with His creation. So, if God can appear here in the Tanakh in the form of man, why is it so difficult to believe the Messiah, can be the Lord in human flesh?

1 Then the Lord appeared to him by the terebinth trees of Mamre, as he was sitting in the tent door in the heat of the day. 2 So he lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, three men were standing by him; and when he saw them, he ran from the tent door to meet them, and bowed himself to the ground, Genesis 18:1-2

I speak with him face to face, Even plainly, and not in dark sayings; And he sees the form of the Lord. Why then were you not afraid To speak against My servant Moses?” Numbers 12:8

And above the firmament over their heads was the likeness of a throne, in appearance like a sapphire stone; on the likeness of the throne was a likeness with the appearance of a man high above it. Ezekiel 1:26

This time, in the person of Messiah, he enters the world and becomes a “Son of man” dying for the sins of his people.