

Jewish Spiritual Life

PEACE THROUGH THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

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THE GOD OF ISRAEL FORETELLS THE COMING OF MESSIAH

It's in the Jewish Bible

By George Gruen

As a Jewish Bible believer, I share with you from my experience just what the Jewish Bible says as given to us by the Almighty God of Israel. Through understanding what the Holy Scriptures teach, we may know real peace today through the promises of God.

Isaiah is one of the major God inspired writers of the Jewish Holy scriptures. God revealed to Isaiah future events that would occur in the world. These times in history would concern Israel, many nations and touch our lives today. In this study we will consider just what Almighty God has said to us in the book of Isaiah, chapter 53. Most Jewish people have not read these verses of Holy Scripture, but they are in the Jewish Bible. In the Haftorah suggested readings, the references go up to Isaiah chapter 52 and verse 12. Chapter 53 is skipped and the next reading in Isaiah is chapter 54 and verse One and on. Please read this for yourself in your Bible. To whom does God refer as He moved upon the heart of the Jewish prophet, Isaiah, to record God's Holy Word for us about 700 years B.C.?

We read: *“Who hath believed our report and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed? 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. 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. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. 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. 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. 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. 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. 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. 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. 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. 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.”* Of whom do these verses in the Jewish Bible speak? The average person who reads these verses would say that it is a description of the life and death of Jesus. Let us see if this is true.

Before we go into a detailed study of Isaiah 53, we need to read chapter 52 and verses 13 through 15. These verses go hand in hand with the truths presented to us in chapter 53. These verses in chapter 52 read as follows: *“Behold, my servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high. As many were astonished at thee; his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men: 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.”* These verses tell us that God’s servant would be here on earth. This servant of God would be praised and followed as One sent from God. And yet, this One would suffer greatly. By His suffering, He would “sprinkle” many nations and people. Remember the blood of atonement in the 3rd book of Moses, Leviticus chapter 16? Aaron would take of the blood of the animal sacrifice for the sins of the people and “sprinkle” it in on the altar in the Jewish Tabernacle. That is what is meant here. We look for the details of the blood of atonement that God would provide for us for the forgiveness of our sins. These verses at the end of chapter 52 of the book of Isaiah are enlarged upon in chapter 53 with great detail so that we would know, beyond a shadow of doubt, who Messiah is when He would come to earth.

Our study of this prophecy in Isaiah 53 will be verse by verse to see just what the God of Israel has said to us that is so vital for us in the day in which we live. You will be amazed at what Almighty God has given to us in this chapter of His Holy Word.

In Isaiah chapter 53 verse 1 we read: “Who hath believed our report? And to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?” God asks: “Will you believe what I am going to say to you? Will you accept the prophecy I am going to tell you about my servant, the Messiah?” The “arm of the LORD” is referred to in His Word when God speaks of His strength and His power. It would also refer to the Messiah. God, in Isaiah chapter 53, reveals to us how He will show His power to mankind in providing for us the blood of atonement through His servant, the Messiah, who would suffer and die for our sins to be forgiven.

Verse 2 : “For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground....” We find here that this One spoken of in this chapter is born and grows up as “a root out of a dry ground.” It is my understanding from the Hebrew that the word for “dry” ground is “arid” ground. Nothing can grow in arid ground, for such earth has no moisture. There must be moisture for anything to grow or spring up. This is a prophecy of the miraculous birth of the One whom God sends into the world. His birth would not come as the result of normal conception, but it would be a miracle from God. Another prophecy in the Jewish Holy Scriptures that would go with this One is found in the book of Isaiah, chapter 7 and verse 14 where we read: “Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.” (Immanuel means “God with us.”) The God of Israel would send to earth the Messiah to take on a human body through the virgin conception and birth. When the 70 Jewish scholars in about BC 300 translated the word virgin “Almah” in Hebrew, in Isaiah 7:14 into the Greek language of the day, they used the Greek word “parthenos” which definitely means “virgin.” The Hebrew “Almah” is found seven times in the Jewish Bible and every time in context it refers to a virgin.

Again in verse 2 “he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him.” When reaching manhood this One would not attract attention by his physical appearance. We find in these Scriptures that he would draw people to God by his life, words and actions.

Verse 3 states: “He is despised and rejected of men....” The word used here for “men” would be that term that signifies men of stature or standing, or the leaders of the people. As a whole, the leadership of Judaism at the time of the coming of this servant of God would reject him. They would not accept his

message and work. Yet, some leaders and the common people would believe the new message given from God through this One, the Messiah. This verse continues: “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.” This servant of God would bear the sorrows of people and would suffer with them and for them. Again, the leadership of the people would turn away from the message given by the Messiah. They would not accept this One as the Messiah, for His message was not what they wanted to hear. They were looking for King Messiah who would defeat the enemies of Israel and give peace to the Jewish people. Such peace will happen when Messiah comes a second time as foretold in Jeremiah chapter 23, Zechariah chapter 14 and other Scriptures.

Verse 4: “Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.” Though the Messiah would bear the griefs and sorrows of suffering people, some people would interpret His burden to be an affliction from God. They would not understand, for this One would not conform to what they believed should be the mission of the Messiah. They looked for a Messiah to deliver them from the bondage of Roman oppression, but this One would speak of the love of God the Father. He would teach the people of the need for cleansing from sin by the provision of God’s atonement that they might live in joy and peace eternally in Heaven and not endure the suffering and torment of eternal hell. He would speak against the hypocrisy of those who failed to teach the true way of the God of Israel. We must all be true to what God has said to us in His Holy Scriptures. We must speak the truth about sin and how God can only forgive sin according to His way by the blood of atonement that would be provided for us by the Messiah.

In verse 5 we read: “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.” This One would be our substitute. He would be wounded for our transgressions. The word used here for wounded is that which means mortally wounded; literally “pierced” unto death. He would die for our transgressions, for our sins. Transgressions, or sins, are acts that we do that are contrary to the law of God and against the will of God, or disobedience to the Word of God. This One foretold in Isaiah chapter 53, would die for our sins, not for his own sin for we will see later in this chapter that he would be sinless. The One in this chapter would die for our sins in our place, even as the Jewish sacrifices in the Tabernacle and later the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem were offered to God so that the people could be forgiven of their sins. The animal sacrifice died and its blood was shed. The sacrifice took the punishment that was rightly due to the person who had sinned against God. Even so, here in Isaiah 53 this One, the Messiah, would come to earth to die in the place of the sinners so they could be cleansed of all sin.

In this fifth verse, we see this most important truth of the substitutionary death of Messiah in our place so that we might be forgiven of all sin and have peace with God. We read: “The chastisement of our peace was upon him.” When a person commits a crime, if justice is carried out, he or she must pay the penalty for their violation of the laws of society. God is saying here that this One would take upon Himself the penalty due us for our sin. I heard the story of the man who was drafted to go to war. Because of the love for him and his family, another man volunteered to take his place in the war. The substitute was accepted. The man who took the place of his friend went into battle and died. Then the government tried to draft the original man again. However, because someone else had paid the price in his place, he was not called upon to serve in the army. Someone else had taken his place and paid with his life. This Bible verse in Isaiah 53 says the chastisement, or the punishment, the suffering, the guilt and all that this means, was paid for by this One, the Messiah, in our place. When we put our trust in Messiah and ask God to cleanse us of all sin, we go free and have peace with God. When we have faith in

Messiah as our sin-bearer, God looks upon us as forgiven sinners, for the blood of atonement has been paid for us by Messiah's suffering and death in our place.

In the third book of Moses, Leviticus, chapter 5, we read of sin and substitution in verses 5 and on: "And it shall be, when he shall be guilty in one of these things, that he shall confess that he hath sinned... And he shall bring his trespass-offering unto the LORD for his sin which he hath sinned... a lamb or a kid of the goats, for a sin-offering; and the priest (that is the Jewish priest in the tabernacle) shall make an atonement for him concerning his sin...and it, his sin, shall be forgiven him." This is God's way of cleansing for a man or woman's sins. In the days when the Jewish Holy Scriptures were written, forgiveness of sin was granted by God when the blood of atonement of the specified slain animal was offered. Here in Isaiah 53, God is foretelling that He would send One to earth, the Messiah, who would die and provide the blood of atonement for our sins once for all time. Sin is our problem today. If we are to have peace, we must be cleansed of our sins. God in His love for us promised back in 700 B.C. that He would send from heaven to earth the Messiah to take on a human body to die to provide the way of cleansing for us. In the prophecy of the Jewish man of God, Daniel, in chapter 9, verses 24 through 27, we have an amazing prophecy about when Messiah would come to earth to die for our sins. His coming would be before the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem would be destroyed. We know this destruction occurred in 70 A.D., so Messiah would have to come the first time before that date. And He did in Messiah Jesus. Go to our audio section on this website and listen to this prophecy explained in the section on when would the Messiah come.

In verse 6 we read: "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." What does this verse of God's Word say to us? All people have gone astray from God and have sinned. Sin in this verse is defined as wanting our own way in life without God. Yet, God in His love for us places upon the Messiah the iniquity, or sins, of us all. Though you have drifted far from Almighty God, God loves you and wants you to return to Him in faith, trusting the One He sent to be your sin-bearer. Some people say that they have never sinned. Perhaps they have taken this philosophy so that they will not have to acknowledge their sins. The Bible says, "Be not deceived; God is not mocked, for whatsoever a man (or woman) sows, that shall he (or she) also reap. For he that sows to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that sows to the Spirit (that is being obedient to the Spirit of God working in our lives) shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." In the Jewish Bible in Ecclesiastes chapter 7, verse 20, we read: "There is not a just man (or woman) upon earth that doeth good and sinneth not." There are many good people, but all have sinned in God's sight. In our own human effort we cannot please God and find cleansing for our sins. Forgiveness of our sin must come from God, for it is against God that we have sinned. In spite of our sinfulness, God's love would send Messiah to earth to take on Himself all of our sins. Sins are forgiven when we ask for God's forgiveness and accept Messiah as our sin-bearer.

Verse 7 tells us more about the suffering that the Messiah would go through to provide the atonement for us. We read: "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." This foretells that He would not reply or fight back against his accusers who wanted him to be put to death. When a sheep is sheared, it is quiet and does not resist. Messiah would stand in silence as He would listen to those who rejected Him and would put Him to death.

In verse 8 we find addition prophecy about what would happen to this One whom God would send to earth. We read: "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." The

One God would send to die for our sins would be put on trial and be oppressed and afflicted at the hands of his accusers. He would be taken from the judgment hall after being condemned to die. To be “cut off out of the land of the living” is death. In this verse, God tells us again just why He would send Messiah to die. The Word of God says, “For the transgression of my people was He stricken.” He would die so that all of us could be forgiven of our sins. He would die to redeem sinful people who were under God’s sentence of eternal suffering in hell because of their sins. Unforgiven sin does sentence the unbeliever to separation from God for eternity. This One, whom God would send to earth, would die for the sins of the people. Messiah would take upon Himself in His death on the tree the iniquity, or sins, of all people.

Verse 9 gives the details regarding the burial of the body of this One after His death for our sins. Those who were responsible for his death would desire to bury him in the place where criminals were buried but God would overrule this and the body of Messiah would be buried in the tomb of a rich man. Does this sound familiar to you? Almost 2,000 years ago, these events happened in the life of Jesus. When He died on the cross, there were two wicked men who died when He did, one on either side of Jesus. When His body was taken down from the tree, it should have been buried with the other wicked men. Instead, a rich man, Joseph of Arimathaea came, took the body of Jesus and buried him in a tomb he had prepared for himself. Verse 9 reads: “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.” There were many who had accepted the One spoken of in this chapter as Messiah during his life’s ministry before he was taken, tried and sentenced to death on the cross. Why do I say he would die on a cross? In Isaiah chapter 52 and verse 14 we read “As many were astonished at thee; his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men.” One Bible commentator wrote concerning this verse: “The literal rendering of this verse is ‘So marred from the form of man was His aspect that His appearance was not that of a son of man’ – that is, not human.” This type of suffering is that of dying after being placed on a cross. This is a description of the life and death of Jesus for our sins.

Messiah’s suffering is also foretold in Psalm 22 where a description of death by crucifixion is given. When this Psalm was written, there was no such form of execution. Crucifixion was used much later by the Romans as the mode of death. Do not permit the prejudice of the past to hinder you from seeing the truth that the God of Israel would have us know about our Jewish Messiah and Redeemer from sin – Jesus. Do not let your faith be hindered because people have taken the name of Jesus and done terrible things against our Jewish people. God and Messiah Jesus never fostered nor condoned any anti-semitism. To the contrary, God will judge people for their acts of violence against the descendants of Abraham. The Lord God said in Genesis 12 and verse 3: “I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee (that is, Abraham and his seed the Jewish people through whom Messiah Jesus would come) shall all families of the earth be blessed.”

In verse 10 we have answers to many questions. We read: “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.” This verse tells us that it was God’s plan to send Messiah to die for our sins. There have been people down through the years that have called my Jewish people, “Christ killers.” Jewish people have suffered greatly as a result. Here in God’s Word, it tells us that God planned to send Messiah Jesus to earth so that Jesus could die in our place to provide the blood of atonement for us to be cleansed of our sins. The Bible also tells us that we all are responsible for the death of Jesus, for we all are sinners and He died to take away our sins. How great the love of God is for us that God would send His Son, Messiah Jesus, to suffer and die in our place for our sins.

We read in the New Covenant, or Testament, in the book written by the godly Jewish man, John, in chapter 3, verse 16, “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” In the book of Romans, written by the Jewish believer Paul, in chapter 5, verses 7, 8 and 11: “But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Messiah died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him...And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus the Messiah, by whom we have now received the atonement.” These verses in God’s Holy Scriptures tell us that we are sinners and deserve eternal judgment and punishment for our sins against God, but God in His love sent Messiah Jesus to take the penalty due us for our sins. When we accept Jesus as our Messiah and Redeemer from sin, we are forgiven of all sin, have peace with God now and when we die we will go to Heaven for all eternity. This is the love of God revealed to us in the Jewish Holy Scriptures in Isaiah chapter 53 written some 700 years before Messiah Jesus came to earth to be our sin-bearer. In Isaiah chapter 53, verse 10, we read that God would make Messiah an offering for sin. This involves death, for in the Law of God given through Moses, there had to be the death and shedding of the blood of the specified sacrifice in order for the sins of the people to be forgiven. It pleased Almighty God to send His Son, Messiah, to die for my sins and for yours. What tremendous love God has for us. Messiah Jesus’ sacrifice for our sins would be done once for all time, it would not have to be repeated as the daily sacrifices were in the Tabernacle and Temple.

Again In verse 10 we read: “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.” Death would not be the end for Messiah Jesus. The verse says that after he died for the sins of the people, God would prolong the days of the Messiah, and the pleasure of the LORD God would prosper in his hand. After his death for our sins, the One who dies sees life again, and the pleasure of God is worked out through His life, death and new resurrected life. God would raise the body of Messiah from the grave. In doing this, God would show all people that He accepted the death of Messiah on the tree as His offering of the blood of atonement for the cleansing of our sins.

The Lord God was satisfied, as it says in verse 11, with the blood of atonement offered by the Messiah for us. There is no sin in Heaven, the place of the abode of Almighty God, and so our sins must be forgiven in order for us to go to Heaven when we die. God would be pleased with the work of Messiah on our behalf to restore you and me to fellowship with God. In verse 11 we read: “He (God) shall see the travail of his (the Messiah’s) soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge (or by knowing Him, or believing in Him) shall my righteous servant (the Messiah) justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.” The One spoken of in this chapter in the Jewish Holy Scriptures, written about 700 years B.C., would come to earth, die on the tree to provide the blood of atonement, would be raised from the grave by God’s resurrection power, and bring true peace with God to all who would accept Him as their sin-bearer. Notice in this verse the sins of not all people would be forgiven, but rather the sins of many. The Word of God says He, the Messiah, would justify, or bear the sins, of *many* people. Men and women would find peace with God through the cleansing of their sins ... if they would believe in God’s plan for forgiveness of sin as given here in the Messiah.

According to all of the prophecies in the Jewish Holy Scriptures, we know that the Messiah came to earth in the person of Jesus. He died on the cross, was raised from the dead and lives today in Heaven at the right hand of God the Father. Do you believe this? Do you accept Jesus as your Messiah and Redeemer from sin? If so, and you have confessed your sins to God, not to any man or woman, but to God alone, and asked God to cleanse you with the blood of atonement provided in Jesus the Messiah, then

your sins have been forgiven as God promised in the Bible. If you have done this, then you are in that group of people designated as the “many” in verse 11 whose sins are gone! Notice again, that in this verse of Holy Scripture, it says, “by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many.” The key here is “by his knowledge,” or by knowing Him, by trusting in Messiah Jesus.

I am so thankful to God, that as a young person, I heard the truth that Messiah Jesus died in my place to take away my sins. As all people know they are going to die someday, I knew it. I also knew that I was not right with God, and I was not certain where I was going when I would die. How grateful I am that the Lord God helped me to see that Messiah Jesus died for my sins so that I would, by faith, have forgiveness. What great peace filled my life when I accepted Jesus as my Jewish Messiah and the One who took the punishment due me for my sins. Today, I know beyond any doubt that I am going to Heaven when I die. Heaven, where God the Father and Messiah Jesus are; where my Orthodox Jewish grandparents who believed in Messiah Jesus are; where my parents are and many, many loved ones and friends who put their faith in God’s plan for their lives. You will know this same cleansing, peace and assurance for the future as you put your trust in God’s will for your life.

The last verse in Isaiah 53 is verse 12: “Therefore will I (God) 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.” The One spoken of in this chapter and in these verses dies for the sins of the people, for He pours out His soul unto death, and He “bare the sin of many.” It is evident, from the reading of this entire chapter, that God will only forgive the sins of those people who put their trust in this One as their sin-bearer.

Some teach that the “he” of Isaiah chapter 53 refers to the nation or people of Israel, but it cannot. In verse 8 we read: “...for he was cut off out of the land of the living”... that’s death. If “he” referred to the people of Israel, then all Jewish people would die when “he” died. Then verse 8 says of this One, “for the transgression, (or sins) of my people was he stricken.” “My people” are the Jewish people. The “He” of this chapter dies so that Jewish people could be forgiven of their sins. If “He” is Israel, and they all, then there would be no one left to benefit from his death to forgive living people of their sins. This is not rational and it is not what this chapter teaches. The “he” in Isaiah chapter 53 cannot be Israel or the Jewish people. I have mentioned the great prophecy in the Jewish Holy Scriptures book of Daniel, chapter 9, verses 24 through 27. When we figure out the years of this prophecy according to the Jewish calendar, we learn that Messiah would die for the sins of the people around 33 A.D. If the “He” in Isaiah chapter 53 is Israel, then they all would have perished around 33 A.D. and the nation of Israel would not exist today. But Israel does exist, praise God, as a fulfillment of other prophecy in the Jewish Holy Scriptures. The nation of Israel will continue to exist under God’s protection. Again, in Isaiah chapter 53, it states that the One spoken of in this chapter has no sin; there is no deceit nor violence in him. In Isaiah chapter 1 it states that Israel is a sinful people, as are all people, both Jews and Gentiles are sinners before God. The Bible makes this very clear that all people have sinned. Therefore, the “he” cannot refer to the Jewish people or Israel as a nation. The chapter also states that this One would not fight back nor defend himself. This cannot be said of Israel, and rightly so, for our Jewish people should defend themselves against those who would destroy them.

Isaiah 53 foretells the coming of The Messiah to earth the first time to provide the blood of atonement for us. He would die to take the punishment due us for our sins, be resurrected from the grave and ascend to the Throne of God in Heaven (His ascension to the right hand of God in Heaven is foretold in Psalm 110 and verse 1.) God will send Messiah the second time to earth after a future period of seven

years that the Bible speaks of as the time of Jacob's trouble, or the Great Tribulation period. At the end of these seven years, which are yet in the future, Messiah Jesus will return in power to defeat the enemies of Israel and bring world peace. In that day, all Israel will see Messiah Jesus ascend from Heaven and come to Jerusalem and will accept Him (as foretold by the Jewish man of God, Zechariah, chapter 12, verse 10 and chapter 14).

Today, you can have personal peace with God by trusting Messiah Jesus as your sin-bearer. You will then be a Jewish Bible believer and you still are Jewish! Should you have any questions, write to me George Gruen at P.O. Box 156, Ephrata, PA 17522-0156, or email me at ggruen@dejazzd.com. Trust God and His Holy Scriptures, the Bible, and you will find true peace for this life and for all eternity in Heaven.