

# Isaiah 52-54 – The Suffering Servant

The Hebrew Café

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## *On My Approach to Isaiah 53*

In the following examination of the most famous passage in Isaiah, I have chosen an approach different from others that I've seen in the past. The focus of my discussion is in two areas: (1) the use of gendered pronouns, verbal forms and suffixes (whether objective or possessive) in the Hebrew text; and, (2) the flow of the context from chapter 52 to chapter 54.

The focus on gender (and number) in the Hebrew text may seem rather odd to those who do not know Hebrew, but it actually comes as the result of discussions with missionaries and Christian defenders of Isaiah 53 as the messianic text *par excellence* of the Hebrew Bible. When carrying on dialogues with missionaries, I have often come across those who claim that the use of the masculine singular pronouns *he*, *his*, and *him* in this text shows that it cannot be speaking of the people of Israel. Rather, they claim, the use of these pronouns is a strong indicator that the text is speaking about an individual, and that individual – according to their conclusions – is Jesus, or Yeshua, as he is popularly called among Messianics.

By adding a focus to the investigation that includes commentary on the various pronouns used throughout the three chapters, we can see how the use of the masculine singular is actually sensible when referring to “My Servant” (as the text introduces the character into the song). It also clears up the use of a *plural pronoun* within the text of Isaiah 53 (the form לָמוֹ is plural in verse 8) as well as the plural form of the word “death” (the form מָתוּי in verse 9 is plural with a singular suffix). These make absolute sense when we see how pronouns are used throughout these three chapters together.

The second focus is on the flow of the context. In order to establish the context of these three chapters together, this presentation has been arranged with chapter 52 appearing first, then chapter 54 – and once the context is established, then chapter 53 is discussed within that context.

Too often the approach of missionaries has been to plaster the section on billboards and publish it in books outside of its proper context. Isaiah 52:13-53:12 is pulled from its context and proclaimed to speak of the Messiah, and specifically of Jesus. When placed within its proper context, however, it is clear that this passage is not talking about events that took place around the year 30 of the Common Era. It is, rather, a prophecy of the end of the age and of the coming redemption (גְּאֻלָּה) of the Jewish people from their exile in the world.

Both chapters 52 and 54 speak throughout about the redemption of the Jewish people, about the return from exile, about the elevation of Israel and the enlargement of its borders. It speaks of the rebuilding of the ruins of Jerusalem, about the joy and exultation that will be experienced by the Jewish people when they return from their wandering in the rest of the world.

I'll save the good stuff for the conclusion. In the meantime, please read what I've written below prayerfully. May my words demonstrate the meaning of the text as the prophet (and the spirit of God) intended it to be understood, and may this help any Jew out there who has stumbled upon missionary writings about Isaiah 53 and been cast into doubt regarding the validity of the Torah and of Judaism itself.

If you, a Jew, have been absorbed into the greater Christian culture and have begun to have faith in Jesus, I encourage you to do just as the prophet says:

סֹרוּ סֹרוּ צְאוּ מִשָּׁם טָמֵא אֶל־תִּגְעוּ צְאוּ מִתּוֹכָהּ הִבְרֹוּ נִשְׂאֵי כְלֵי יְיָ:

**Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence, touch no unclean thing;  
go ye out of the midst of her; be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the LORD.**

(Isaiah 52:11, KJV)

בְּרַגְעַ קָטָן עֲזַבְתִּיד  
וּבְרַחֲמִים גְּדֹלִים אֶקְבְּצִיד:  
For a short moment I left you,  
but with great mercy will I gather you.  
(Isaiah 54:7)

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### *The Fifty-Second Chapter of Isaiah*

*Isaiah 52:1*

Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city: for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean.

עוֹרֵי עוֹרֵי לְבָשִׁי עֲזוֹךְ צִיּוֹן לְבָשִׁי | בְּגָדֵי תִפְאֶרְתְּךָ יְרוּשָׁלַם עִיר הַקִּדְשׁ  
כִּי לֹא יוֹסִיף יִבְאֵרְךָ עוֹד עַרְל וְטָמֵא:

Here we see God (יְהוָה) addressing the city of Jerusalem in the feminine singular in Hebrew (through the feminine form of the command עוֹרֵי ["awake!"] and לְבָשִׁי ["put on (clothes)!"] as well as the feminine singular possessive and objective pronoun endings on the words עֲזוֹךְ ["your strength,"] תִּפְאֶרְתְּךָ ["your beauty"] and בְּךָ ["in you"]). As we progress through this servant song, we will notice along the way how the pronouns change as they refer to Israel and Jerusalem.

This verse continues (from chapter 50) to set the stage for the whole song, in which God begins to call Israel from exile, from his lowly position as a slave to the nations and the object of their ridicule to a place of honor and radiance. Jerusalem is seen as sleeping in ruins, and God calls her to get up and put on her garments of splendor, her “Sunday best,” so to speak. She is going to be most beautifully adorned, and nothing impure (here, “the uncircumcised and the unclean”) will ever enter her again. She is awaking to welcome back the people as they return from exile.

Israel will again inhabit the ancient places, with Jerusalem as the crown jewel of the nation. This is the same thing that we see all the way from the beginning of the book of Isaiah:

And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD’s house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. (Isaiah 2:2-3, KJV).

Here the prophet envisions a time when all of the nations will again flow to Jerusalem to attend the Temple of God, that it will sit as the highest mountain in the world (figuratively speaking). Isaiah chapters 52 to 54 provide us with more details about what those days will be like, speaking of the future Redemption, which we call גְּאֻלָּה *ge’ulah* in Hebrew. This is the motif of these chapters of the Hebrew Bible (Tanach) as will be discussed hereafter.

It should be remarked that the focus of the song until now is on Jerusalem, the city to which the exiled people will return.

*Isaiah 52:2*

Shake thyself from the dust; arise, and sit down, O Jerusalem: loose thyself from the bands of thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion.

הִתְנַעְרִי מֵעָפָר קוּמִי שְׁבִי יְרוּשָׁלַם הִתְפַּתְחִי מִזִּמְתְּךָ צִוְאֶרְךָ שְׁבִי  
בֵּת צִיּוֹן:

Jerusalem continues to be addressed in the feminine singular with the command forms הִתְנַעְרִי (“shake yourself!”), קוּמִי (“get up!”), שְׁבִי (“sit!”) and הִתְפַּתְחִי (“loose yourself”), as well as the possessive suffix on צִוְאֶרְךָ (“your neck”). As long as the city is being address, it is in the feminine singular.

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Here we see the continued metaphor of Jerusalem sitting in the dust. God is speaking to the ruined city rather than to the exiles scattered all over the world. The word picture is a bit odd, in which rather than saying “Get up and stand!” (קוּמִי עִמְדִי) we see a command to “Get up and sit!” (קוּמִי שִׁבִי). It wouldn’t make sense if we were speaking to a person, but addressing a city, it makes sense. The city is to rise up from the dust and to sit on its old ruins.

*Isaiah 52:3*

For thus saith the LORD, Ye have sold yourselves for nought; and ye shall be redeemed without money.

כִּי־כֹה אָמַר יְיָ חָנַם נִמְכַּרְתֶּם וְלֹא בְכֶסֶף תִּגְאָלוּ:

Here we have a sudden switch into the masculine plural pronoun through the verbal forms נִמְכַּרְתֶּם (“you were sold”) and תִּגְאָלוּ (“you will be redeemed”). The plural is used to refer to the people as a whole without any referent – that is, it doesn’t say “my people” or “Jerusalem” or anything else that would control the personal pronoun.

In the same way that Israel went into exile freely, so they would come out of exile without having to pay their captors any type of ransom. The Redemption will be accomplished by the power of God and not by the Jewish leaders being able to bribe any foreign powers to allow them to return. God is addressing the exiles themselves, thus the text uses the plural form of the second person. They had been sold in slavery and would again be redeemed by the power of God. This Redemption is the focus of the entire song.

*Isaiah 52:4*

For thus saith the Lord GOD, My people went down aforetime into Egypt to sojourn there; and the Assyrian oppressed them without cause.

כִּי כֹה אָמַר אֲדֹנָי יְיָ מִצְרַיִם יָרַדְעָמִי בְרָאשֵׁנָה לְגוֹר שָׁם וְאֲשׁוּר בְּאִפְסַ עֶשְׂקוֹ:

Here we see the pronoun switch the masculine singular, with “my people” (עַמִּי) as the referent, the verb יָרַד (“he went down”) in the masculine singular third-person, and the personal object pronoun of עֶשְׂקוֹ (“he [Assyria] oppressed him [my people]”). The alternating personal pronoun is affected by the words with it is associated with. עַם “people” is masculine singular, so all pronouns associated with it are masculine singular. Cities in Hebrew (such as יְרוּשָׁלַיִם and even צִיּוֹן when used as a synonym of Jerusalem) are feminine, so it appears as feminine in pronouns. עַבְדִּי “my servant,” as we will see, is also masculine singular – thus, the masculine singular pronouns that appear throughout this servant song, and the appearance of “he” in the English translations. There are a couple of exceptions in the song, and we’ll note them when they appear.

The final Redemption is placed in comparison to the redemption of the people from Egypt. This is done for a couple of reasons: namely, (a) God later mentions the two in comparison, saying that the final will be ultimately more important and that the Exodus will pale in comparison (Jeremiah 16:14-15 and 23:7-8); (b) it sets the stage for a couple of word pictures used later in the song. This will be mentioned later in the discussion.

Although the Southern Kingdom was exiled in Babylon, the Northern Kingdom was deported by Assyria and essentially lost. When the prophet mentions Assyria, it is in reference to the fact that all of Israel will come back together as one kingdom, both the North and the South. This is the ultimate Redemption at the end of this age, in which all of Israel will be brought together and united, even the Northern Kingdom that was thought to be lost forever (cf. Ezekiel 37:16-22).

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*Isaiah 52:5*

Now therefore, what have I here, saith the LORD, that my people is taken away for nought? they that rule over them make them to howl, saith the LORD; and my name continually every day is blasphemed.

וְעַתָּה מֶה-לִּי-פֹה נְאֻם-יְיָ כִּי-לָקַח עַמִּי חַנּוּם מִשָּׁלוֹ וְהִלִּילוּ נְאֻם-יְיָ וְתַמִּיד כָּל-הַיּוֹם  
שְׁמִי מְנַאֲץ:

In this verse he still uses the masculine singular pronoun. It is shown in the noun עַמִּי “my people” and in the verb לָקַח “he was taken.” The English translation again uses the plural, but the Hebrew has the singular.

When God looks at the desolate city of Jerusalem, he asks, “What do I have here now that my people are gone?” The answer? Nothing. Because Jerusalem is lying in ruins, the nations say that God has abandoned the Jewish people, making God out to be seemingly unfaithful to his covenant with Israel. People call God a liar on account of the Jewish people being in exile and Jerusalem lying in ruins.

The return of the people represents God’s faithfulness to his covenant, his proof to the nations both that he is still a powerful God and that he chose Israel to be his own. The Redemption is the time when God reaches out to bring his people out of exile again, just as he did in the Exodus. This time he will again reveal his arm, his power, his might to the world – and they will be speechless!

It’s important to note that while the English translation (KJV) says “them,” the Hebrew has “him.” This switch in pronouns makes it easy to hide the use of the singular to refer to the collective people of God. It also makes it seem like there’s a large switch from “they” in chapter 52 (talking about Israel) to “he” in chapter 53 (supposedly speaking about the Messiah). In actuality, the “him” of this chapter is the same “him” of the next chapter. We’ll see why there’s a switch to consistently using the singular after a while.

*Isaiah 52:6*

Therefore my people shall know my name: therefore they shall know in that day that I am he that doth speak: behold, it is I.

לָכֵן יֵדַע עַמִּי שְׁמִי לְכֵן בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא כִּי-אֲנִי-הוּא הַמְדַבֵּר הַגָּנִי:

The pronoun continues to be the masculine singular because of the use of עַמִּי again, and the verb that matches it is יֵדַע “he will know.” There is no masculine plural pronoun in this verse, yet the English again translates it in the plural – which leads the reader into thinking that references to Israel in this chapter are in the plural as opposed to chapter 53, which uses the singular. We should see by now that the pronoun depends on the context, and Israel can basically be referred to with the masculine singular (corresponding to אֲנִי-הוּא), feminine singular (אֲנִי-הִיא) or masculine plural (אֲנֵם-הֵם). Any of these pronouns may refer to Israel, depending on which noun is used as the referent.

When the Redemption happens, it will be obvious to the people that it came from God. God’s name will be known by all of his people – meaning that they will be aware of God’s existence and in his involvement in the redemption of his people. Disbelief will cease when all of Israel sees the complete return of the nation – both the Northern Kingdom and the Southern Kingdom together.

This event will leave the world stunned, when God’s people – his servant – is returned from their shame and elevated to the highest place of honor among the nations, with King Messiah as their leader. Those who were scattered and abandoned among the nations will suddenly be reunited and appear as if out of nowhere. No one will have expected it, but it will come to pass, nonetheless.

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*Isaiah 52:7*

How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!

מֵהֵנָּאוּ עַל־הַהָרִים רַגְלֵי מְבַשֵּׂר מְשֻׁמֵּעַ שְׁלוֹם מְבַשֵּׂר טוֹב מְשֻׁמֵּעַ יְשׁוּעָה אָמַר  
לְצִיּוֹן מְלֶךְ אֱלֹהֶיהָ:

Here the pronoun forms are unimportant in our investigation.

When the time arrives for Israel to return from their exile, those who bring the message to all parts of the earth will be considered blessed. They will announce peace for Israel, bring the good tidings that the time of exile has come to an end, and proclaim the deliverance (יְשׁוּעָה) of the people of Israel. Their message will be simple: “Your God reigns!” As Zechariah 14:9 states:

God will be king over all the earth, and on that day God will be One and his name One.

When the proclamation that Israel is returning full force goes out, everyone will know that God is the true King, for only he could accomplish such a feat!

In Isaiah 40:9, we see that this refers to Jerusalem itself making the announcement to the people of Israel:

O Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God!

*Isaiah 52:8*

Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice; with the voice together shall they sing: for they shall see eye to eye, when the LORD shall bring again Zion.

קוֹל צְפוּרָה נִשְׂאוֹ קוֹל יַחְדָּו יִרְנְנוּ כִּי עֵין בְּעֵין יִרְאוּ בָשׁוּב יְיָ צִיּוֹן:

Here again there's no importance in the pronouns, as above.

The “watchmen” (צְפוּרָה) here are those who are in the land of Israel, watching for the deliverance that is coming and also standing as defenders of the people of Israel. When they see the exiles returning, they will shout and sing for joy. The entire context of this servant song has to do with the return of the exiles of Israel, the rebuilding of Jerusalem, the exaltation of the people of Israel above the rest of the nations of the earth, the nations’ reactions when they see Israel’s change in stature, and the fact that Israel suffered at the hands of the nations and as a result of their evil-doing. This will be clear in chapter 53.

*Isaiah 52:9*

Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem: for the LORD hath comforted his people, he hath redeemed Jerusalem.

פְּצְחוּ רִנְנוּ יַחְדָּו תְּרַבּוֹת יְרוּשָׁלַם כִּי־נָחַם יְיָ עַמּוֹ נֶאֱלַ יְרוּשָׁלַם:

There are no pronouns or suffixes here, but the verb forms (פְּצְחוּ “rejoice” and רִנְנוּ “sing”) match the feminine plural word תְּרַבּוֹת (“ruins”).

The excitement expressed in singing and shouting continues in this verse, in which the ruins of Jerusalem receive the command to break into joy. This joy is because of the way in which God will

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comfort his people by bringing them back, taking away their mourning. No longer will there be a “wailing wall” in Jerusalem. In place of wailing and lamentation, there will be joy and exultation. The wailing wall will again only be a foundation support for the great Temple of God that will be in Jerusalem. God will have redeemed his people, and that comfort will be impossible to put into words!

Indeed, this is reason to break out in song and shouts of joy!

*Isaiah 52:10*

The LORD hath 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.

חֲשֵׁף יְיָ אֶת-זְרוּעַ קְדָשׁוֹ לְעֵינֵי כָּל-הַגּוֹיִם וְרָאוּ כָּל-אֲפֹסֵי-אֲרֶץ אֶת יְשׁוּעַת אֱלֹהֵינוּ:

There is no reference here to Israel. No relevant pronoun forms.

From this verse on we get into the meat of this servant song.

To whom will God reveal his arm? This question is asked in 53:1, but the answer comes *before* the question. It is in this very verse. God exposes his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations (לְעֵינֵי כָּל-הַגּוֹיִם)! In bringing Israel back to their home, God will show all the nations his deliverance and power.

It should be noted that in Hebrew the word יָד “hand” refers also the rest of the arm, shoulder to fingers. This is why, when the Torah states that we are to bind the Torah on our “hand” (יָד), we actually tie them from our upper arm down to the fingers. The word for “hand” in this verse is not יָד but זְרוּעַ, which also refers to the whole arm, but more directly to the upper arm between the elbow and the shoulder. What is God doing by delivering the people of Israel? He’s rolling back his sleeves and flexing his arm muscles at the nations. They see his strength in his deliverance and the impossibility of Israel ever truly being reunited!

*Isaiah 52:11*

Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence, touch no unclean thing; go ye out of the midst of her; be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the LORD.

סֹרוּ סֹרוּ צְאוּ מִשָּׁם טָמֵא אַל-תִּגְעוּ צְאוּ מִתּוֹכָהּ הִבְרֹוּ נִשְׂאֵי כָּלִי יְיָ:

Here the pronoun is masculine plural, since it doesn’t have a noun to refer to (no “my people” or the name of a city). This is seen in the commands סֹרוּ (“depart!”), צְאוּ (“leave”), תִּגְעוּ (“touch!”) and הִבְרֹוּ (“be pure!”). These are all masculine plural second-person verbs.

This is the official call for the people to leave their places of exile. Whereas they had been living among the impure (טָמֵא), they are called to leave the impure behind and to enter into Jerusalem purified. Bearing God’s vessels refers to returning also to the Temple, where these vessels and instruments have their proper place.

Verses throughout this presentation are quoted from the King James Bible. Problems in translation are noted in the text of the comments.

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*Isaiah 52:12*

For ye shall not go out with haste, nor go by flight: for the LORD will go before you; and the God of Israel will be your reward.

כִּי לֹא בְחַפְזוֹן תֵּצְאוּ וּבְמְנוּסָה לֹא תֵלְכוּן כִּי־הַלֹּךְ לְפָנֵיכֶם יְיָ וּמֵאַסְפָּקֶם אֱלֹהֵי  
יִשְׂרָאֵל:

This verse continues the “you plural” pronoun. It’s seen in the verbs תֵּצְאוּ (“leave!”) and תֵּלְכוּן (“go!”), as well as the suffix on מֵאַסְפָּקֶם (“your rear guard” not “your reward” as per the KJV) and לְפָנֵיכֶם (“before you”).

Here we see HaShem going before the people and keeping them together, also keeping up their rear and protecting them. As above, where God stated that the people would go free “without money” (verse 3), here it is stated that it will not be hurried, meaning that they will not be running away from their enemies, as was the case with the Exodus from Egypt.

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### *Wrap-Up of Isaiah 52*

We will find that there are three major focus points of this servant song:

- (1) **The land of Israel itself, desolate and unpopulated.** It is represented anthropomorphically in the city of Jerusalem or Zion. The pronoun that is used when addressing the land or the city is feminine singular because the word for “land” in Hebrew (that is, אֶרֶץ) is feminine, as well as the word for “city” (that is, עִיר). Any city that is referred to in Hebrew will be referred to in the feminine as well. In chapter 54, we will see the feminine pronoun used again when the city is addressed.
- (2) **The people of Israel.** Any time that the people is mentioned as a collective, it is with the word עַם in Hebrew. Any pronouns that accompany the use of the word עַם are also masculine singular, as we should expect. This means that anything that refers to the collective “people of God” must, in Hebrew, say “he” rather than “they.” We saw this in verse 5 above, for example.
- (3) **The people of Israel in direct address as individuals in the group.** When addressing the people, not as “the people of God,” but as a group of individuals, the Hebrew uses the masculine plural. We see this in verse 3, for example, which says “you were sold, etc.”

The chapter moves in a progression – starting with Jerusalem sitting in the dust of ruin, then a call going forth to wake her up, and then the land preparing itself for the return of her children (see the previous three chapters of Isaiah’s prophecy for more information about this). The focus of Isaiah 52:13-53:12 goes from the land of Israel and the city of Jerusalem being called to wake up and prepare for the return of the people of God, and it switches to how the “servant of God” appears at the time of the Redemption. It tells us what has been happening to the servant just before he is elevated and brought higher than the kings of the earth.

Before we get there, though, let’s continue into chapter 54 and look at the land of Israel *after* the people have resettled there.

Chapter 52 calls the land to prepare for the return of the people. Chapter 54 tells us what it will be like when they return. And when we come back, chapter 53 will describe the people themselves as they return from exile. Let’s go into chapter 54, as we continue to investigate the context.



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### *The Fifty-Fourth Chapter of Isaiah*

*Isaiah 54:1*

Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child: for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the LORD.

רְנִי עֲקָרָה לֹא יָלְדָה פִּצְחוּי רִגְוָה וְצַהֲלִי לֹא־חֲלָה כִּי־רַבִּים בְּנֵי־שׁוֹמְמָה מִבְּנֵי בְּעוּלָה  
אָמַר יי:

All of the relevant pronouns in this entire chapter are feminine singular, since it is the “barren woman” (that is, Jerusalem) who is in picture throughout the chapter.

With this verse, the song takes up the theme previously laid out in 51:18, in which the land of Israel is pictured as an afflicted woman become childless and barren through the loss of her children. This is referring to the fact that the people were taken away into bondage, and the land was left desolate and empty.

At the exaltation of God’s servant, Israel, the people will again return to their land. Suddenly, the barren land will have inhabitants – the children of this land will return and repopulate it. In the end, the inhabitants of what was once a desolate land will be more numerous than lands that had been populated for generations (here described as the “married woman,” Hebrew בְּעוּלָה).

*Isaiah 54:2*

Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations: spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes;

הֲרַחֲבִי אֶמְקוֹם אֶחֱלֶה וְיִרְעוּת מִשְׁכְּנוֹתַי וְיִטּוּ אֶל־תַּחֲשָׁכֵי הָאָרֶץ מִיַּתְרֶיךָ  
וַיִּתְדַתְּךָ תִּגְקִי:

As a result of the large number of people who have returned from exile, the borders of the land must be stretched out. The current borders of the State of Israel are nothing in comparison to the original dimensions of the promised land in the Torah. To make room for all of the returnees, it will be necessary that the borders of Israel be extended.

*Isaiah 54:3*

For thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left; and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited.

כִּי־יִמְצֵא וְשִׂמְאוֹל תִּפְרָצִי וְזָרְעֶךָ גּוֹיִם יִירָשׁ וְעָרִים נְשֹׁמֹת יוֹשִׁיבוּ:

A result of the extension of the borders of Israel will be that the people will again displace certain Gentiles nations. These are surely those who oppose Israel in war, desiring to destroy the people as they return or once they’re settled in the land. Cities which had remained without inhabitants for perhaps thousands of years will once again be inhabited.

Whereas in chapter 52 we caught a glimpse of Jerusalem being ordered to rise up and prepare herself for the return of the people, whereas we heard the shouts of the land as it began to ready

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itself for the Jews' reinheritance of their possession – now we see the land full of residents. We have come full circle, first seeing the land being called to readiness and then receiving confirmation that the people have returned.

*Isaiah 54:4*

Fear not; for thou shalt not be ashamed: neither be thou confounded; for thou shalt not be put to shame: for thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth, and shalt not remember the reproach of thy widowhood any more.

אֵל-תִּירָאִי כִּי-לֹא תִבּוֹשִׁי וְאֵל-תִּכְלָמִי כִּי לֹא תִחְפְּיִרִי כִּי בְשֵׁת עַלְמִיךָ תִשְׁכַּחִי  
וְחִרְפַּת אֱלֻמְנוּתֶיךָ לֹא תִזְכְּרִי-עוֹד:

“The reproach of your widowhood” (Hebrew חִרְפַּת אֱלֻמְנוּתֶיךָ) refers to the shame that the land of Israel experienced because of the expulsion of the people. This shame was originally caused by the pollution of the land with idols. The Northern Kingdom was taken into captivity by the Assyrians, and there was never a large-scale return from that exile. The Southern Kingdom was later taken into captivity in Babylon. The Hebrew Bible indicates that the cause of the exile was the rampant idolatry that was taking place throughout the land.

When the Southern Kingdom (that is, Judah) returned from exile, the people had left idolatry behind. They lived on the land for a few hundred more years until the Temple went through its second destruction in the year 70 CE. Later, the land was again ravished when Bar Kosiba (Bar Kochba) failed to lead a revolt against the Roman authorities.

All of the difficulties and shame that the land experienced over the years will suddenly be forgotten when compared with the joy and peace of the Messianic Age. Israel will live in peace and God will show Israel compassion and cause it to thrive and succeed.

*Isaiah 54:5*

For thy Maker is thine husband; the LORD of hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; The God of the whole earth shall he be called.

כִּי בַעֲלֶיךָ עֲשִׂיךָ יְיָ צְבָאוֹת שְׁמוֹ וְנֹאֲלֶיךָ קְדוֹשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל אֱלֹהֵי כָל-הָאָרֶץ יִקְרָא:

In the book of Hosea, we find the story of how God forsook Israel, his wife. Her children were then called “not my people” (לֹא עַמִּי – Hosea 1:9) and “unloved” (לֹא רַחֲמָהּ – Hosea 1:6). In Hosea 2, we receive a breakdown of the situation in which Israel is described as an adulterous wife because of the idolatry that she committed, and no compassion is shown for her children.

While God's people are in exile, however, God continues to speak with them tenderly (Hosea 2:14), and when they finally return from exile to live in peace, we see that they will again be called “my people” (עַמִּי) and that God will show compassion to those who had once been called “unloved” (2:25). At that time, just as we are told in the present verse, we hear that Israel will call God once and for all time “my husband” (אִישִׁי – Hosea 2:16).

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*Isaiah 54:6*

For the LORD hath called thee as a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, and a wife of youth, when thou wast refused, saith thy God.

כִּי־כְאִשָּׁה עֲזוּבָה וְעֵצוּבַת רֵיחַ קָרָאךָ יי וְאִשָּׁת נְעוּרִים כִּי תִמָּאֵס אָמַר אֱלֹהֶיךָ :

For more information, read Hosea chapters 1 and 2.

*Isaiah 54:7*

For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee.

בְּרֵנַע קָטָן עֲזַבְתִּיךָ וּבְרַחֲמִים גְּדֹלִים אֶקְבְּצֶךָ :

This verse gives in six words (in Hebrew) an overview of the past 2,000 years. Israel was left to exile two millennia ago, but with great compassion will God gather back those who call themselves by his name. At the Redemption, not only will we forget the shame of our exile (see above), but the length of time that Israel was left in exile will seem to be but a moment compared with the age of peace and joy that we will enter into.

*Isaiah 54:8*

In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the LORD thy Redeemer.

בְּשַׂצָּף קֶצֶף הִסְתַּרְתִּי פָנַי לְרֵנַע מְמֹד וּבְרַחֲמֵיךָ עוֹלָם רַחֲמֵיךָ אָמַר גֹּאֲלֶךָ יי :

This is a restatement of the idea expressed in verse 7. Notice the use of the phrase “hid my face from you,” which reminds us also of Isaiah 53:3. Again, when it mentions God’s mercy here, it is speaking about his returning the people to the land and causing them to thrive.

*Isaiah 54:9*

For this is as the waters of Noah unto me: for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth; so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee.

כִּי־מִי נַחַל זֹאת לִי אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁפַּעְתִּי מֵעֶבֶר מִי־נַח עוֹד עַל־הָאָרֶץ כִּן נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי מִקֶּצֶף עָלֶיךָ וּמִנְעֹר־כָּפֶךָ :

Just as God swore in the time of Noah that he would no longer destroy the earth completely by water (Genesis 9:11), so he now states that when he brings back the people of Israel, he will establish an everlasting covenant with them that will ensure that God will never be angry with them again. Never again will he drive them from the land as he did before.

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*Isaiah 54:10*

For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the LORD that hath mercy on thee.

כִּי הִהְרִים יְמוּשׁוּ וְהִנְבְּעוּת תִּמְוֶטֶינָה וְחֶסְדִּי מֵאַתְנָךְ לֹא-יִמוּשׁ וּבְרִית שְׁלוֹמִי לֹא תִמוּט  
אָמַר מִן-חֶסֶד יי:

When the Prophets speak of the return of the people, they often do so in terms of a new covenant (really, a “renewed” covenant) with the people. Let’s make a comparison between Jeremiah 31:31-36, Hosea 2:16-23 and Ezekiel 37:23-28.

These three chapters are all examples of what we see in terms of the “new covenant” that is established with the people of Israel and Judah (reunited under one head – the rightful king of Israel, the Messiah). Read through the chapters, as they are presented here side-by-side from the King James Version (with two Hebrew words added).

<b>Jeremiah 31:31-36</b>	<b>Hosea 2:16-23</b>	<b>Ezekiel 37:23-28</b>
<p>31 Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that <b><u>I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah:</u></b> 32 Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband (בעלתי) unto them, saith the LORD: 33 But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, <b><u>I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts;</u></b> and <i>will be their God, and they shall be my people.</i> 34 And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for <b><u>they shall all know me,</u></b> from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for <u>I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.</u> 35 Thus saith the LORD, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar; The LORD of hosts is his name: 36 If those ordinances depart from before me, saith the LORD, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever.</p>	<p>16 And it shall be at that day, saith the LORD, that thou shalt call me Ishi; and shalt call me no more Baali (בעלי). 17 For <u>I will take away the names of Baalim out of her mouth, and they shall no more be remembered by their name.</u> 18 And <b><u>in that day will I make a covenant for them</u></b> with the beasts of the field and with the fowls of heaven, and with the creeping things of the ground: and I will break the bow and the sword and the battle out of the earth, and will make them to lie down safely. 19 And I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in lovingkindness, and in mercies. 20 I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness: and <b><u>thou shalt know the LORD.</u></b> 21 And it shall come to pass in that day, I will hear, saith the LORD, I will hear the heavens, and they shall hear the earth; 22 And the earth shall hear the corn, and the wine, and the oil; and they shall hear Jezreel. 23 And I will sow her unto me in the earth; and <u>I will have mercy upon her</u> that had not obtained mercy; and I will say to them which were not my people, <i>Thou art my people; and they shall say, Thou art my God.</i></p>	<p>23 <u>Neither shall they defile themselves any more with their idols,</u> nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions: but I will save them out of all their dwellingplaces, wherein they have sinned, and will cleanse them: so <i>shall they be my people, and I will be their God.</i> 24 And David my servant shall be king over them; and they all shall have one shepherd: <b><u>they shall also walk in my judgments, and observe my statutes, and do them.</u></b> 25 And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob my servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt; and they shall dwell therein, even they, and their children, and their children's children for ever: and my servant David shall be their prince for ever. 26 Moreover <b><u>I will make a covenant of peace with them;</u></b> it shall be <b><u>an everlasting covenant</u></b> with them: and I will place them, and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore. 27 My tabernacle also shall be with them: yea, <i>I will be their God, and they shall be my people.</i> 28 And the heathen shall know that I the LORD do sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore.</p>

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Notice these similarities between the passages:

- Both Jeremiah and Ezekiel proclaim that this covenant is with both the house of Israel and the house of Judah. Ezekiel actually stresses this in the verses just before this passage, in which he speaks about the unification of the tribes of Israel under the one shepherd (Messiah).
- Each chapter makes the explicit statement that “I will be their God and they will be my people.” This is important in light of Hosea’s prophecy stating that the people would be cast off and then later regathered and declared again to be God’s people.
- Both Jeremiah and Hosea make mention of the fact that the people would know God. There would be no need to tell the people of Israel to know God, since knowledge of God will be within each person.
- Each chapter states clearly that God will make a covenant with Israel in the Messianic Age. Hosea’s is a little less clear, since it mentions that it will be with the beasts. This is not talking about the animals of the earth but about the enemies of Israel, who had behaved like these animals and exhibited their characteristics in their desire to destroy Israel. The peace is political and spiritual – and it is lasting. This is clarified in the statement that God would “break the bow and the sword and the battle out of the earth, and will make them to lie down safely.” (See the same idea in Isaiah 11.)
- Each passage mentions God having compassion on the people of Israel. In both Ezekiel and Hosea the idolatry is mentioned, and it may be significant that Jeremiah uses the word *ba’alti* as the term for God’s arrangement with Israel, whereas Hosea says that they will no longer refer to God as *ba’ali* but as *ishi* (both terms meaning “my husband,” but the second avoiding the use of the name *Ba’al*).
- Jeremiah states that the people would have the Torah placed inside them (internal awareness of the law of God), while Ezekiel says that the people will walk in God’s laws and ordinances. These are references to the same thing – the fact that the people will naturally keep the law of God in the Messianic Era.

These are only three examples of the Prophets’ mentioning the new covenant (the “covenant of peace,” the “everlasting covenant”) that God will make with the people of Israel when they return to the land. It is also mentioned here in our text in Isaiah. Notice that just as Jeremiah mentions the luminaries of the skies as examples of the eternity of the new covenant, so the firm features of the earth are called to mind in Isaiah to express the same idea. God’s covenant with Israel at the Redemption will be as everlasting as the heavens above and the earth below!

*Isaiah 54:11*

O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted, behold, I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and lay thy foundations with sapphires.

עֲנִיָּה סְעָרָה לֹא נִחְמָה הָיְתָה אֲנֹכִי מִרְבִּיץ בַּפּוֹדִי אֶבְנֶיךָ וַיִּסְדְּתִיךָ בַּסַּפִּירִים:

Calling Israel afflicted here calls to mind the suffering of the servant in Isaiah 53:4. Though it’s not the same form (53:4 has מְעַנָּה and here we have עֲנִיָּה), the meaning and root is the same. The affliction that Israel suffered was in terms of abandonment and being tossed about (being forced to wander the earth and suffer expulsion at the whim of those in power) without any comfort, but at

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the Redemption, God will establish Israel like a city with precious and firm foundations (compare this to the description of Jerusalem in Ezekiel's prophecies).

*Isaiah 54:12*

And I will make thy windows of agates, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleasant stones.

וְשִׁמְתִי בְּדָכְרִי שְׁמֹשֶׁתִּיךָ וְשַׁעֲרֶיךָ לְאַבְנֵי אֶקְדָּח וְכָל־גְּבוּלְךָ לְאַבְנֵי־חֶפֶז:

More description of the adornments of the city of Jerusalem, the glorification of which is a reflection of the elevation of all of Israel.

*Isaiah 54:13*

And all thy children shall be taught of the LORD; and great shall be the peace of thy children.

וְכָל־בְּנֵיךָ לְמוֹדֵי יְיָ וְרַב שְׁלוֹם בְּנֵיךָ:

We should again think of the “new covenant” of Jeremiah, in which it is stated that “no longer shall a man teach his brother or a man his neighbor, saying, ‘Know the LORD.’ For they shall all know me.” All the people of Israel will come to know God personally, to have an intimate connection with God at the Redemption. People will know of God from experience and will not need someone to lead them into knowledge of the Holy One.

*Isaiah 54:14*

In righteousness shalt thou be established: thou shalt be far from oppression; for thou shalt not fear: and from terror; for it shall not come near thee.

בְּצַדִּיקָה תִּכּוֹנְנִי רַחֲמֵי מַעֲשֶׂיךָ כִּי־לֹא תִירָאִי וּמִמַּחֲתָהּ כִּי לֹא־תִקְרַב אֵלֶיךָ:

No foreign power will take possession of the land of Israel again. There will be peace, and Israel will not have to live in terror. The people will be established in righteousness, just as we see in the comparison of covenant passages above that they will keep the Torah from internal motivation.

*Isaiah 54:15*

Behold, they shall surely gather together, but not by me: whosoever shall gather together against thee shall fall for thy sake.

הֲנֵן גּוֹר יְגוּר אֶפְסִי מֵאוֹתֵי מִי־גַר אֶתְּךָ עָלֶיךָ יְפוּל:

This verse hints at the idea that the nations will still operate with free will during the Messianic Age. The nations will be able to choose whether or not to obey God. Whereas “the Torah will go forth from Zion and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem” (Isaiah 2:3), the Gentiles will be able to choose whether or not to obey it.

Zechariah mentions the same thing in chapter 12 of his prophecy:

And it shall be, that whoso will not come up of all the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain. And if the family of Egypt go not up, and come not, that have no rain; there shall be the plague, wherewith the LORD will smite the heathen that come not

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up to keep the feast of tabernacles. This shall be the punishment of Egypt, and the punishment of all nations that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles. (Zechariah 14:17-19)

The command is given that they need to come and worship God in Jerusalem, but they have the choice of whether or not to do it. They will fall under punishment if they choose otherwise, but they will have the choice, which is contrary to Christian eschatological beliefs.

So, in this verse of Isaiah, we are told that if any nation on earth gathers against Israel after the Redemption, it will not be by the will of God, and they will not succeed. Israel will have nothing to fear. As it is stated: “They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain” (Isaiah 11:9).

*Isaiah 54:16*

Behold, I have created the smith that bloweth the coals in the fire, and that bringeth forth an instrument for his work; and I have created the waster to destroy.

הוּ הִנֵּה אֲנֹכִי בְרָאתִי חָרֶשׁ נֹפֵחַ בְּאֵשׁ פְּחָם וּמוֹצִיא כְּלֵי לְמַעֲשָׂהוּ וְאֲנֹכִי בְרָאתִי מְשַׁחֵת לְחִבְלֵי:

This verse declares that it is God who has the power to determine who or what gets destroyed. He created all, so he has the power to decide.

*Isaiah 54:17*

No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness is of me, saith the LORD.

כָּל-כֶּלִי יוֹצֵר עָלַיִךְ לֹא יִצְלַח וְכָל-לְשׁוֹן תְּקוּם-אֶתְךָ לְמִשְׁפַּט תְּרַשְׁעֵי זֹאת נִחְלֵת עִבְדֵי יְיָ וְצִדְקָתָם מֵאֵתִי נְאֻם-יְיָ:

With this verse, we see a switch into the third-person plural in the word צִדְקָתָם (“their vindication, their righteousness”). This is reference to the plural noun עִבְדֵי ה' (“servants of God”).

With that power to decide who suffers destruction, God declares that any enemy that rises up against Israel, whether it be in word or in aggression, such an enemy will be thrown down by the power of God. The use of “servants of the LORD” recalls Isaiah 52:13 as well as back to Isaiah 43:10 (“you are my witnesses and my servant”).

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### *Wrap-Up of Isaiah 54*

This chapter serves to complete the context in which Isaiah 53 must be read. In chapter 52, we see calls going out for Zion (that is, Jerusalem) to prepare for the return of the people. Chapter 54 pictures them already having returned, and the land is called on to enlarge its borders, to make room for the influx of people that will arrive after the exile.

God promises that he will never let Israel be forsaken again, that any enemy who arises against the people will not have been sent by him, that his covenant with Israel – which is the very “new covenant” of Jeremiah 31 – will never be lost or replaced.

All that’s left is to see the transition – the change that Israel must go through as they are called out of exile, and this is exactly what chapter 53 shows us. Now that the context is set, let’s look at Isaiah 53 as part of the context of chapters 52 and 54 to complete the song about the Suffering Servant – Israel.



## Isaiah 52-54 – The Suffering Servant

### Isaiah 52:13-53:12

Isaiah 52:13

Behold, my servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high.

הִנֵּה יִשְׁכִּיל עַבְדֵי יְרֹם וְנִשָּׂא וְנִבְהָ מְאֹד:

Throughout this chapter, the pronouns are *always* in the masculine singular (הוא) except in a couple of instances. These instances will receive remarks below. The reason for the masculine singular is to match with the antecedent noun עַבְדֵי (“my servant”).

The word for “deal prudently” in Hebrew is הִשְׁכִּיל *hiskil*, which is often a synonym of הִצְלִיחַ “to succeed.” The prophet opens this section by stating that the servant of God would succeed or prosper in the end. He would be exalted and raised up high.

It is the traditional Jewish stance that “my servant” here refers to Israel. In the following examination, this will be assumed without argumentation. Suffice it to say that Isaiah identified the servant as Israel within the servant songs on several occasions (Isaiah 41:8; 44:1, 21; 45:4; 49:3). It should hardly be expected of him to repeat himself yet again when his audience would naturally read it this way. Confusion has crept into the text only because it has been separated off and not read as a complete book. Missionaries get the greatest advantage by cutting into the text in chapter 53 and ignoring the greater context of the servant songs as they appear in Isaiah.

The concept of Israel being exalted and finally being lifted into a place of success is not foreign to the end-times passages of the Tanach. In fact, Isaiah himself began his prophecy on the same note:

And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD’s house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. (Isaiah 2:2; cp. Micah 4:1)

Thus we begin this section of the song with a proclamation that the servant of God (that is, Israel) will be exalted in the last days. Whereas Israel had been as nothing in the eyes of the nations, suddenly will they be exalted above all the nations, and it will be proclaimed and known that the God of Israel is Lord over all the earth.

Isaiah 52:14

As many were astonished at thee; his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men:

כַּאֲשֶׁר שָׁמְמוּ עָלָיָהּ רַבִּים כִּן־מִשְׁחַת מַאִישׁ מְרֵאָהוּ וְחִאָרוּ מִבְּנֵי אָדָם:

The “many” (Hebrew רַבִּים) here might be the same “many” of verses 11 or 12 below (in verse 12, the same word is translated as “the great”). For nearly 2,000 years Israel existed without a state, without a homeland. The people of Israel lived all over the world (as they still do today) among the Gentile nations. In the lands of the Gentiles, they have suffered persecutions of many kinds. It is a fact that all over the world the nations have looked upon the Jewish people as subhuman, treated them like they were nothing and looked at them as enemies. Not that they were generally

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understood to be enemies in the normal sense – that is, as a warring people who must be overcome in order for the rest to survive, but more as blemish on society that should be forced away or covered up.

The description of the servant is of one who was badly formed and ugly. He was so ugly that he was hardly recognizable as a human being. That is to say, the nations of the world looked at Israel as if they were not even human beings, as an ugly fact of life.

*Isaiah 52:15*

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.

כִּן יִיְהִי גוֹיִם רַבִּים עָלָיו יִקְפְּצוּ מַלְכִּים פִּיהֶם כִּי אֲשֶׁר לֹא-סִפְּרָ לָהֶם רָאוּ וְאֲשֶׁר  
לֹא-שָׁמְעוּ הִתְבּוֹנְנוּ:

The word translated here as “sprinkle” should be “startle.” This is a repetition of the fact that this servant will cause them to be unsettled. In verse 14 we see that they would be “astonished,” and here that they would be “startled” or “alarmed” by what they hear. It’s such a shock that this person we are now calling the “servant” will actually be exalted above them. They hadn’t even considered it possible that Israel could be right, that Israel could have ever come out of their reproach! Suddenly, what no one had told them, what they had never heard before – these very things will be fulfilled in front of their own eyes. They will see the redemption of the people of Israel, the exaltation of Israel from the lowly mistreated refuse of the nations to the house of the King of the Universe!

*Isaiah 53:1*

Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?

מִי הֵאֱמִין לְשִׁמְעֵתֵנוּ וּזְרוּעַ יְיָ עַל-מִי נִגְלְתָהּ:

In the above verse, we see that the kings of the earth shut their mouths in shock when they see the change that the servant goes through. They never would have believed it had they not seen it with their own eyes. In this verse, we see these same kings begin to speak, still in shock – “Who in the world would ever believe what we have just seen? And who is this whom the power of God has redeemed?!”

The reference to the “arm of the Lord” is to the power God displays when he delivers his people from slavery or servitude. It is the exhibition of God’s power before the nations of the world. When the kings ask “to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?” it is in reference to Israel’s redemption. The text doesn’t really say that it is revealed “to them” but “upon them.” A more literal translation would be: “And the arm of the Lord, upon whom is it revealed?” This question was answered above in chapter 52:10.

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*Isaiah 53:2*

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.

וַיֵּעַל כִּיּוֹנֵק לְפָנָיו וְכִשְׂרָשׁ מֵאֲרֶץ צִיָּה לֹא תֵאָדָר לוֹ וְלֹא הָדָר וְנִרְאָהוּ וְלֹא מְרָאָה  
וְנִחְמְדָהוּ:

I'm not sure where the KJV gets the future tense at the beginning of this verse. It might be an interpretive translation, trying to establish the idea of Jesus growing up before God. The verb is actually an imperfect with the vav-consecutive and most naturally corresponds to the English past tense: "and he came up."

This is still the kings of the nations speaking, and they are remarking about how Israel was weak and had no appearance or stateliness that anyone should think that they were worth their consideration. They're still shocked that Israel suddenly appeared out of nowhere – as if they had grown out of dry ground without any real root. Suddenly, they are exalted and have received the blessing of God! These kings think it's just remarkable that Israel has risen to such a state when no one would have expected it.

*Isaiah 53:3*

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.

נִבְזָה וְחִדְּלָ אִישׁ מִכְּאֲבוֹת וַיִּדְוַע חָלִי וְכִמְסֻתָּר פָּנִים מִמֶּנּוּ נִבְזָה וְלֹא חֲשַׁבְנָהוּ:

Again, Israel is seen despised among the nations. This is exactly what the prophet has stated in other places (Isaiah 49:7, 13; 52:11; 60:14). Israel was despised and afflicted among the nations. The kings of the earth continue their description of the servant, saying that Israel had the appearance of someone from whom you would hide your face as you passed him in the street.

The image is of a sickly homeless person lying in the street. You can imagine him lying there: without any decent appearance, with sickness sticking to him, his feet uncovered, his face unshaved and filthy, even deformed features spread across his face. These kings are telling us that just like someone of this description, someone that is so cut off that you don't even feel sorry for them – you just feel that they are there by God's appointment, and they must obviously have done something wrong to deserve that state – suddenly, this vagabond is raised up to the highest place! He sits in power! Where did that come from? This is the feeling that they are expressing when they contemplate the change of state that Israel has undergone.

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Isaiah 53:4

Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

אָכֵן חָלִינוּ הוּא נָשָׂא וּמִכָּאֲבִינוּ סָבְלָם וְאַנְחֵנוּ חִשְׁבָּנוּהוּ נָנוּעַ מִכָּה אֵל הַיּוֹם וּמֵעַנָּה:

Why did this servant of God lie filthy and sick on the ground? Why was he despised and afflicted? This was their doing. He was bearing what the nations had placed on him. And he suffered without complaint. They looked at this poor vagabond, alone and probably dying, and they felt little compassion for him. They thought only that it was God's will that he was suffering. It was God's will that he was lying nearly dead and that people would hide their faces in disgust when they saw him.

Israel was mistreated among the nations, abused and scorned – and all along, the nations thought that it was their own fault. They surmised that it was because of Israel's great sin that they sat in exile and suffered. Little did they know, not only was Israel being punished for their own sin (the guilt of which was surely repaid long ago!), but they were also suffering "double" (Isaiah 40:2) what their sins deserved! What was the purpose of this doubled suffering? Israel was suffering so as to alleviate the suffering of others in the world.

As a priest bears the iniquity of the people when he goes before God, so Israel bears the iniquity of the world when their prayers make intercession – even when they are suffering at the hands of the nations. It was the sorrows of the world that Israel carried on their shoulders all the long years of exile. It was the iniquity that the nations placed on Israel that he bore without complaint.

Isaiah 53:5

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.

וְהוּא מִחֻלָּל מִפְּשָׁעֵנוּ מִדַּרְכָּא מַעֲוֹנוֹתֵינוּ מוֹסֵר שְׁלוֹמֵנוּ עָלָיו וּבַחֲבֵרְתּוֹ נִרְפָּא-לָנוּ:

This is a bit different than the previous verse, in which we see Israel bearing the griefs and sorrows of the nation. The Hebrew text does not say that Israel suffered *for* the crimes of the nations, but rather that Israel suffered *from* these crimes. It was the crime of the nations that they were torturing Israel, and these crimes will still be required of them. All the time that Israel was praying for the peace of the nations in which they lived, all of the time that the wounds that were inflicted on Israel upheld the peace of the other nations (mainly when they targeted Israel as a scapegoat and didn't pursue the real causes of their problems), these transgressions were accumulating against the nations.

So, what does this mean? Israel suffered for two reasons: (1) because the nations were unjustly heaping punishment upon the Jewish people; and, (2) because by suffering more than what their sins deserved, and doing so while continuing to serve God and to make intercession for the nations of the world and maintaining their prayers for peace in the world, Israel was suffering also in order to bring justice to the world.

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Isaiah 53:6

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.

כָּלֵנוּ כִצְאָן תַעֲיִנוּ אִישׁ לְדַרְכּוֹ פְּגִינוּ וַיִּלְּהַפְּנוּ עָלֵינוּ אֶת עֲוֹן כָּלֵנוּ:

All the nations of the earth (their kings are still speaking) have gone astray, and the iniquity of the nations has been laid upon Israel – again, as a priest coming before God bearing the iniquity of those for whom he intercedes. Israel bore this iniquity in the form of suffering. It does not mean that the nations of the earth are *forgiven* by the suffering of Israel. But it does mean that the nations enjoyed long periods of peace and thriving as Israel suffered the damages that should rightly have been theirs.

Isaiah 53:7

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.

נִגְשׁ וְהוּא נִעְנֶה וְלֹא יִפְתַּח פִּיּוֹ כִשְׂהוֹ לְטַבַּח יוֹבֵל וּכְרֹחֵל לְפָנֵי גֹזֵזִיהָ נֶאֱלָמָה וְלֹא יִפְתַּח פִּיו:

This was seen most clearly in the Holocaust, where the majority of the six million Jews who were murdered by the Nazis did not even put up a fight. Israel has repeatedly suffered pogroms and tortures, banishment and execution, and all along they did not rise up in national wars, gather together in the millions and attack their enemies.

Isaiah 53:8

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.

מֵעֶצֶר וּמִמִּשְׁפַּט לָקַח וְאֶת־דִּוְרוֹ מִי יְשׁוּחַח כִּי נִגְזַר מֵאֶרֶץ חַיִּים מִפֶּשַׁע עַמִּי נִגַּע לָמוֹ:

The pronoun *למו* here is in the plural, calling attention to the fact that we're not just talking about one person in reality.

The “land of the living” is surely a reference to Israel, where the people would have lived and thrived. The people lived in exile, which the prophet Ezekiel described as though they were dead – a valley of dry bones represented the people of Israel in exile (Ezekiel 37). We are told that this valley of dry bones came back to life, and it is a picture of what is to happen for Israel. That is, that they were cut off from the land of life, and they were banished among the nations where they suffered and were stricken with plagues (נגע); and yet, they will eventually be raised from despair and return to their homeland.

Being taken from prison and from judgment refers to the fact that no justice was given them among the nations where they were banished.

It is important to note that the phrase translated “was he stricken” at the end of the verse uses a *plural* pronoun in the Hebrew. “And from the transgression of my people, a plague [came] to

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them.” This gives us insight into the mind of the prophet, who did not have a problem switching to the plural here because he was referring to Israel throughout this narrative.

In this verse, we might observe a switch in speaker. It seems that from here on that the speaker is God and the Prophet. The word “my people” could refer to Israel, whose past sins had merited their own exile. However, the generation that is alive at the time of the Redemption is surely not guilty of the sin from earlier generations, yet it is as a result of that sin that the current generation remains in exile.

*Isaiah 53:9*

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.

וַיִּתֵּן אֶת־רִשְׁעִים קִבְרוֹ וְאֶת־עֲשִׂיר בְּמִתּוֹ עַל לֹא־חָמָס עָשָׂה וְלֹא מְרָמָה בִּפְּיוֹ:

Here we see the word מִתּוֹ (that is מֵתִים [“deaths”] with the singular possessive ending) in the plural.

Throughout the generations, Israel has died among the nations – even the wealthiest of nations – and the people have made their grave there. This is another place in which the plural reference appears, in the word מִתּוֹ *motav*, which means “his deaths” rather than “his death.” The servant has suffered death again and again at the hands of his enemies. It should come as no surprise that there is a plural word for death here.

Israel was falsely accused before kings and princes, brought to kangaroo courts and sentences to executions time and again. Yet, they did none of the criminal acts for which they were tried (at least in the majority of cases – surely there are some exceptions). They were accused of lying, of speaking blasphemy against God (that is, against the Christian God), tried for blood libel and witchcraft.... and time and again, they were punished for things they hadn’t done.

*Isaiah 53:10*

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.

וַיִּיְחַפֵּץ דְּבָאוֹ הַחֲלִי אִם־תָּשִׂים אָשָׁם נַפְשׁוֹ יִרְאֶה זֶרַע יִאֲרִיד יָמִים וְחַפֵּץ יְיָ בְּיָדוֹ  
יִצְלַח:

This verse is not very well translated in the KJV. From the word אִם until the end of the verse, we have a conditional sentence. It doesn’t appear natural to read תָּשִׂים as a second-person verb, but rather as a third-person feminine, whose subject is נַפְשׁוֹ. That is, “if his soul should make a guilt offering....”

How does a “soul” make an offering? This is a problem of the English language. Ezekiel states that the “soul” that sins will die (Ezekiel 18:4, 20). The Torah says that Isaac wanted his “soul” to bless his son Esau before he died (Genesis 27:4, 25). It also states that if “any soul” sins, it should bring a sacrifice of a year-old female goat (Numbers 15:27). In that passage, the verb “shall offer” in that verse is actually in the feminine even though the KJV says “he shall bring.” Thus, it is not odd for

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the Bible to state that a “soul” will make a sacrifice. It simply means that the person himself will do it.

So, the conditional should read: “If his soul (that is, the man himself) makes a guilt offering, he will see seed, he will prolong his days, and the will of the Lord will prosper in his hand.” It’s a simple conditional. The future tense is regular form in the if-statement (that is, the protasis) of Hebrew conditionals.

Although it was God’s will to cause Israel to suffer among the nations and to subject them to grief (first, in punishment for their own sins that drove them into exile; later, for the peace of the nations as discussed above), if Israel would continue to offer their service to God, then God would stay faithful to them.

What is the guilt offering that is discussed here? It is the prayer of the people, which is as much a sacrifice as that of an animal (Hosea 14:2; Psalm 141:2). By maintaining their prayers and offering themselves always in the service of God, Israel is guaranteed future generations.

*Isaiah 53:11*

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.

מַעֲמֵל נַפְשׁוֹ יִרְאֶה יִשְׁבְּעַ בְּדַעְתּוֹ יִצְדִּיק צְדִיק עַבְדִּי לְרַבִּים וְעֹנֵתָם הוּא יִסְבֹּל:

This travail of his soul is the outpouring of his prayers. Notice here that it is through knowledge that Israel will bring the nations (“many”) to justification before God. The verse repeats the fact that Israel carries the guilt of the nations when they come before God. What knowledge is it that brings justification? It is knowledge of God, and it is this knowledge that will eventually flood the world.

*Isaiah 53:12*

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.

לְכֵן אֶחְלַק-לוֹ בְּרַבִּים וְאֶת-עֲצוּמוֹת יַחְלַק שְׁלֵל תַּחַת אֲשֶׁר הִעֲרָה לַמּוֹת נַפְשׁוֹ  
וְאֶת-פְּשָׁעִים נִמְנָה וְהוּא חָטָא רַבִּים נִשָּׂא וְלַפְּשָׁעִים יִפְגִּיעַ:

Because Israel intercedes for the nations; because they suffer unjustly as a result of the crimes of the peoples among whom they’re scattered; because they offer up their prayers and service to God and seek out his commandments; because they would rather die than give up on God and Torah; because they are counted as guilty even though they are innocent... because of all these things, God will give Israel a portion with the great. He will exalt Israel to the highest place and cause him to inherit the nations.

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### *Wrap-Up of the Fourth Servant Song*

This servant song has been hotly debated for centuries. Christian missionaries have claimed that it is the most obvious telling of the Gospel in the Hebrew Bible. Phrases like “man of sorrows” and “crushed for our sins” ring in the ears and conjure up pictures of Jesus being tortured just before his crucifixion, and the heart rends as missionaries tell us about how much he suffered so that our sins could be forgiven.

The problem is that this is not what the Prophet was foretelling at all. While missionaries might claim that this has a “primary” (that is, literal) and “secondary” (that is, extended) meaning, just as they do for the supposed “virgin birth” of Isaiah 7:14, it cannot be imagined that Jesus or any other dying messiah was in the mind of the Prophet when he penned the words of these three chapters.

<i>Isaiah Verse</i>	<i>Comment</i>
<b>52:14</b> <i>As many were astonished at thee; his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men:</i>	<p>This verse describes the servant as someone who suffered from deformation to a shocking degree. The New Testament indicates that Jesus was an attractive person who drew multitudes to himself. Whether this attraction was to his personality or to something in his appearance, it cannot be shown that Jesus' looks ever shocked or astonished anyone at all.</p> <p>It might be argued that the disfigurement was caused by the beatings that Jesus suffered before his death. However, there's nothing here to show that this is the intention of the verse. Just as it states that the servant was יָדוּעַ חֹלִי <i>yedua' chóli</i> (“familiar with sickness”), these are descriptions of someone who suffers from physical deformity and disease. There's no indication either in the New Testament or anywhere in Christian literature that Jesus was ever sick or that he had a physical deformity. This verse certainly finds no fulfilment in Jesus.</p> <p>This is in distinction to the fact that Israel is said to be full of sickness and sores, wounds and bruises from head to foot, which was a description of the land lying desolate with its cities in ruin (Isaiah 1:5-7). This connection in Isaiah's own words is very revealing.</p>
<b>52:15</b> <i>So shall he sprinkle (“startle”) 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.</i>	<p>There was really only a couple hundred years in which the Christian message could possibly be called “shocking” or “surprising.” Since the Roman Empire became the Holy Roman Empire, baptizing their society and creating the first Christian empire, no king of consequence in the world has been shocked to hear the message of Christianity.</p> <p>This verse speaks of the shock that the kings of nations will go through when they hear about Israel's return at the time of the redemption. The type of shock described in this verse cannot be imagined as happening if these verses refer to Jesus and to Christianity.</p>



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<i>Isaiah</i>	<i>Verse</i>	<i>Comment</i>
<b>53:1</b>	<i>Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?</i>	<p>This is related to 52:10, in which it is stated that God would lay his arm bare in the eyes of the nations in his redemption of Israel from the lands of their exile. The coupling of divine intervention and the act of redemption with the picture of God’s “arm” often appears in the literature of the Jewish Bible.</p> <p>The verse also continues the description of shock that the kings of nations experience when they receive the surprising news about the servant’s elevation. They report that no one would believe what they were seeing – yet, if it had to do with the Christian message, then surely <i>most</i> in the world would have believed it pretty simply.</p>
<b>53:2</b>	<i>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.</i>	<p>Here we see repeated the concept that the servant grew up without any form or comeliness or any type of beauty. This confirms the above contention that this cannot apply to Jesus. The deformity described in 52:14 is natural, not the result of beatings but the natural state in which we find the servant before his exaltation.</p>
<b>53:3</b>	<i>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.</i>	<p>Again, this is a description of the life of the servant, who was acquainted with sickness, deformed, hated by people (because of his ugliness), an object of derision from whom people would hide their faces, a person whose entire life was filled with sorrow and grief. This does not describe the life of Jesus as portrayed in the New Testament.</p> <p>The missionary might try to say that this has to do with the beatings and crucifixion of Jesus, but taken with the verse above we see that this is how the servant “came up” (וַיַּעַל <i>vayá’al</i>).</p>
<b>53:8</b>	<i>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.</i>	<p>While this verse seems to match the missionaries’ story regarding Jesus, the plural pronoun לָמוֹ <i>lámo</i> (mentioned above in relation to this verse) mixes the plural into the verse, which adds weight to the standard Jewish claim that this is not speaking of Jesus.</p>
<b>53:9</b>	<i>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.</i>	<p>In this verse, as the one mentioned above, the plural is mixed in with the singular. The Jewish people suffered death throughout the world in their exile, and this verse states that they made their grave with the rich of the world. It is shown that this is not speaking of one person’s death, which in Hebrew would be מוֹתוֹ <i>motó</i>, but of the deaths of many people.</p> <p>In Hebrew, we could speak of the “deaths of the people,” in which “deaths” is plural and “people” is actually a collective singular noun (עַם <i>am</i>). This collective singular would take a singular possessive suffix, and we would get מוֹתָיו <i>motáv</i>, which is exactly what we find in this verse (מוֹתָיו <i>motáv</i>). More than one death is in question here, and these deaths are of the one servant of God – Israel. The plural form of this word cannot be interpreted satisfactorily in regard to Jesus.</p>
<b>53:10</b>	<i>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.</i>	<p>This verse says that the servant would “see his seed,” an obvious reference to having physical descendants. God promised Israel that if they walked before him, they would have descendants like the numbers of the stars. Here we see that God would continue to bless Israel with offspring if they would continue to bring their religious service to him. On the contrary, Jesus never had physical children.</p> <p>The word זֶרַע <i>zera’</i> is not used in Hebrew to refer to spiritual or intellectual successors. It is used only of physical children. The word בֶּן <i>ben</i> (“son”), however, is at times used metaphorically.</p>

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<i>Isaiah</i>	<i>Verse</i>	<i>Comment</i>
<b>53:11</b>	<i>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.</i>	One obvious problem here for missionaries is the fact that this does not mention blood. We are told that the servant would justify people by his knowledge – by what he <i>knows</i> (and by implication, <i>teaches</i> ). There is nothing in Christianity which says that Jesus justifies his followers by his knowledge. Rather, it is “by his blood” (Romans 5:9) that such justification is claimed.

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The entire context of this servant song creates an image of Israel returning to their own land, of their mistreatment among the nations, of the nations’ reactions of shock and amazement when they see Israel elevated to such heights, of the land expanding its borders to bring the people home, of the eternal covenant that God makes with the people once they’re resettled and of God’s commitment to protecting his people from their enemies. The entire song is about the redemption of Israel from exile.

This context, along with the difficulties above, make it absolutely clear that Isaiah 52-54 do not predict the death of the Messiah. These are word pictures that are carried throughout the text of the book of Isaiah and which find their culmination in this chapter. As early as the first chapter of Isaiah’s prophecy, we find the statement that Israel was full of sores and unbandaged wounds, having been beaten. This is shown to refer to the fact that the land was desolate of the people! In chapter 2, we find the theme of the restoration and exaltation – of Jerusalem being lifted up high and all the nations flowing into her. We find time and again references to God’s servant, Israel, who would be redeemed. The themes repeat themselves over and over, and the only thing you can assume is that someone who interprets this chapter as referring to Jesus simply spends too much time in this chapter and not enough in the rest of the words of the Prophet Isaiah. Context defeats the missionaries’ claims once again.

Contrast this, though, with the one who is called God’s servant in the text of Isaiah – Israel. The same Israel who grew like a sapling (Hosea 14:6-8), who was despised and forsaken by men (Isaiah 49:7, 14-15; 54:6-11), whose prayers were accepted for the iniquity of the nations (Jeremiah 29:7), and who was afflicted and oppressed like sheep (Psalms 18:28; 44:12,22) will then, in the final days, emerge victorious – having been redeemed from his oppressors and set free from the chains of exile.

Isaiah’s final servant song is an amazing literary tapestry that weaves together elements from the entire first half of the prophet’s book. It takes pieces from the rest of the prophets and splices them together in a word picture that creates vivid visuals for those who read the passage correctly. This song is about Israel – about God’s mercy and faithfulness to Israel, whom the rest of the world had rejected and counted as nothing. Despite the missionary enthusiasm for Isaiah 53, there is no direct prophecy of the Messiah in the text of Isaiah’s fourth servant song.

*Isaiah 52-54 from the Tanach*

אָכַן חֲלִינֵנוּ הוּא נֶשֶׂא וּמְכַאֲבֵינוּ סִבְלָם וְאַנְחָנוּ  
חֲשַׁבְנָהוּ נְנוּעַ מִכָּה אֱלֹהִים וּמַעֲנָה: וְהוּא  
מַחֲלֵל מִפְּשָׁעֵנוּ מִדָּבָר מֵעֹנֹתֵינוּ מוֹסֵר  
שְׁלוֹמֵנוּ עָלֵינוּ וּבְחִבְרָתוֹ גִּרְפָּא־לָנוּ: כִּלְנוּ  
כִּצְאֵן תִּעֲיֵנוּ אִישׁ לְדַרְכּוֹ פָּנֵינוּ וַיִּי הַפְּגִיעַ בּוֹ  
אֵת עֵזֶן כִּלְנוּ: נָגַשׁ וְהוּא נִעְנָה וְלֹא יִפְתַּח־פִּי  
כִּשְׁהָ לְטַבַּח יוֹכֵל וּכְרַחֵל לִפְנֵי גְזוּתָהּ  
נֶאֱלָמָה וְלֹא יִפְתַּח פִּיו: מַעֲצָר וּמְמַשְׁפֵּט  
לָקַח וְאֶת־דֹּרוֹ מִי יִשׁוּחַח כִּי נִגְזַר מֵאַרְצָן  
חַיִּים מִפֶּשַׁע עַמִּי נִנְעַ לְמוֹ: וַיִּתֵּן אֶת־רִשְׁעִים  
קִבְרוֹ וְאֶת־עֲשִׂיר בְּמִתּוֹ עַל לֹא־חֶמֶס עָשָׂה  
וְלֹא מִרְמָה בְּפִיו: וַיִּי חֲפֵץ דָּבָאֵן הַחֲלִי  
אִם־תִּשִּׁים אֲשֶׁם נִפְשׁוֹ יִרְאֶה זֶרַע יֶאֱרִיךְ  
יָמִים וְחֲפֵץ יִי בִּיָּדוֹ יִצְלַח: מַעֲמַל נִפְשׁוֹ  
יִרְאֶה יִשְׁבַּע בְּדַעְתּוֹ וּצְדִיק צְדִיק עֲבָדֵי  
לְרַבִּים וְעֹנֹתָם הוּא יִסְבֵּל: לָכֵן אַחֲלַק־לוֹ  
בְּרַבִּים וְאֶת־עֲצוּמִים יַחֲלַק שְׁלַל תַּחַת אֲשֶׁר  
הֵעֲרָה לְמוֹת נִפְשׁוֹ וְאֶת־פִּשְׁעִים נִמְנָה וְהוּא  
חֲטֵא־רַבִּים נֶשֶׂא וּלְפִשְׁעִים יִפְגִּיעַ: פ  
רְנִי עֲקָרָה לֹא יִלְדָה פִּצְחוֹ רִגְהָ וּצְחִלִּי  
לֹא־חֲלָה כִּי־רַבִּים בְּנֵי־שׁוֹמְמָה מִבְּנֵי בַעֲלָהּ  
אָמַר יִי: הִרְתִּיבִי אֶמְקוֹם אֶהְלֵךְ וַיִּרְעוּת  
מִשְׁכַּנּוֹתַי וַיִּשׂוּ אֶל־תַּחֲשֻׁכֵי הָאָרֶץ מִיִּתְרֵךְ  
וַיִּתְדַתֵּךְ חֲזָקִי: כִּי־יִמִּין וּשְׂמֹאל תִּפְרָצִי  
וְזָרַעַךְ גּוֹיִם וַיִּרְשׁ וְעָרִים נִשְׁמֹת יוֹשִׁיבוּ:  
אֶל־תִּירָאִי כִּי־לֹא תִבּוֹשִׁי וְאֶל־תִּכְלָמִי כִּי  
לֹא תַחֲפִירִי כִּי בִשֵׁת עֲלוּמִיךְ תִּשְׁפָּחִי  
וְחֲרַפְתִּי אֶלְמֹנִיתִיךְ לֹא תִזְכְּרֵי־עוֹד: כִּי  
בְּעֲלִיךְ עֲשִׂיךְ יִי צְבָאוֹת שָׁמֹ וְגֹאֲלֵךְ קְדוֹשׁ  
יִשְׂרָאֵל אֱלֹהֵי כָל־הָאָרֶץ יִקְרָא: כִּי־כֹאשָׁה  
עֲזוּבָה וְעֲצוּבַת רֵיחַ קָרְאֵךְ יִי וְאַשֶׁת נְעוּרִים  
כִּי תִמָּאֵס אָמַר אֱלֹהֵיךְ: בִּשְׂצַף קִצְף  
הִסְתַּרְתִּי פָנֵי רִגְעַ מִפְּנֵי וּבְחֶסֶד עוֹלָם  
רַחֲמֵתִיךְ אָמַר גֹּאֲלֵךְ יִי: ס

עוֹרֵי עוֹרֵי לְבָשִׂי עֵזֶךְ צִיּוֹן לְבָשִׂי אֶבְנֵי  
תַּפְאֲרֹתֶיךָ יְרוּשָׁלַם עִיר הַקִּדְשׁ כִּי לֹא יוֹסִיף  
יִבְאֲבֵךְ עוֹד עָרַל וְטָמֵא: הַתְּנַעֲרִי מֵעַפְרֵךְ  
קוּמִי שְׁבִי יְרוּשָׁלַם הַתְּפַתְחִי מוֹסְרֵי  
צִוְאֲרֵךְ שְׁבִיָּה בַת־צִיּוֹן: ס  
אָמַר יִי חֲנֹם נִמְכַרְתֶּם וְלֹא בְכֶסֶף תִּנְאַלוּ: ס  
כִּי כֹה אָמַר אֱדֹנָי יִי מִצְרַיִם יִרְד־עַמִּי  
בְּרֹאשְׁנָה לְגוֹר שָׁם וְאֲשׁוּר בְּאַפְסֵ עֲשָׂקוֹ:  
וְעַתָּה מִה־לִּי־פָה נֹאֵם־יִי כִּי־לָקַח עַמִּי חֲנֹם  
מִשְׁלֹו יְהִלִּילוּ נֹאֵם־יִי וְתִמִּיד כָּל־הַיּוֹם שְׁמִי  
מִנְאָץ: לָכֵן וְדַע עַמִּי שְׁמִי לָכֵן בְּיָוִם הַהוּא  
כִּי־אֲנִי־הוּא הַמְדַבֵּר הַגָּנִי: ס  
מִה־נְאוּוֹ  
עַל־הַהָרִים רִגְלֵי מְבַשֵּׁר מִשְׁמִיעַ שְׁלוֹם  
מְבַשֵּׁר טוֹב מִשְׁמִיעַ יְשׁוּעָה אִמָּה לְצִיּוֹן מִלְּךָ  
אֱלֹהֵיךְ: קוֹל צְפִידָךְ נִשְׁאֹו קוֹל יַחֲדוֹ יִרְגְּנוּ כִּי  
עֵין בְּעֵין יִרְאוּ בְּשׁוּבֵי יִי צִיּוֹן: פְּצַחוּ רִגְנֵי  
יַחֲדוֹ חֲרָבוֹת יְרוּשָׁלַם כִּי־נַחֵם יִי עַמּוֹ גֹּאֲלֵ  
יְרוּשָׁלַם: חֲשַׁף יִי אֶת־זְרוּעַ קִדְשׁוֹ לְעֵינֵי  
כָּל־הַגּוֹיִם וְרָאוּ כָּל־אַפְסֵי־אֲרָץ אֵת יְשׁוּעַת  
אֱלֹהֵינוּ: ס  
סוֹרוּ סוֹרוּ צְאוּ  
מִשָּׁם טָמֵא אֶל־תִּנְעוּ צְאוּ מִתּוֹכָהּ הִבְרוּ נִשְׁאֵי  
כָּלִי יִי: כִּי לֹא בַחֲפוֹזִן תִּצְאוּ וּבִמְנוּסָה לֹא  
תִלְכּוּן כִּי־הֲלֵךְ לִפְנֵיכֶם יִי וּמֵאֲסַפְכֶם אֱלֹהֵי  
יִשְׂרָאֵל: ס  
הִנֵּה יִשְׁכִּיל עֲבָדֵי  
יְרוֹם וְנִשְׂא וְנִבְהָ מֵאֵד: כֹּאֲשֶׁר שָׁמְמוּ עֲלֵיךְ  
רַבִּים כִּן־מִשְׁתַּח מֵאִישׁ מִרְאֵהוּ וְחֲאָרוּ מִבְּנֵי  
אָדָם: כִּן יִזְהַ גּוֹיִם רַבִּים עָלֵינוּ יִקְפְּצוּ מְלָכִים  
פִּיהֶם כִּי אֲשֶׁר לֹא־סִפְּרָ לָהֶם רָאוּ וְאֲשֶׁר  
לֹא־שָׁמְעוּ הִתְבּוֹנְנוּ: ס  
מִי הָאֱמוּן  
לְשִׁמְעַתְנוּ וְזָרוּעַ יִי עַל־מִי נִגְלַתָּה: וַיַּעַל  
כִּיּוֹגֵךְ לִפְנֵינוּ וְכִשְׁרָשׁ מֵאַרְץ צִיָּה לֹא־תֵאָר לֹו  
וְלֹא הִדָּר וְנִרְאֵהוּ וְלֹא־מִרְאֵה וְנִחְמַדְהוּ:  
נִבְזָה וְחֲחַל אִישִׁים אִישׁ מְכַאֲבוֹת וַיִּדְוַע חֲלִי  
וּכְמִסְתָּר פָּנִים מִלְּפָנֵי נִבְזָה וְלֹא חֲשַׁבְנָהוּ: