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The Fourth and Seventh Day

The quest for absolute truth has been man's quest from the beginning. It is in that quest that difficult questions are asked. The motive of those questions should be founded on a sincere desire to test everything. In this series, we embark on the challenge of testing the teachings and claims of what is often referred to as the New Testament of the Bible, or also called in Hebrew the Brit Hadesha.

We hope that you enjoy studying and testing the following teaching:

It is not uncommon for Jewish commentary to point out that Jesus, we often refer to him as His Hebrew name being Yeshua, did not fulfill all of the Messianic prophecies.

You might hear those who promote this message being called anti-missionaries, or counter-missionaries.

Such groups bring a lot of questions and debates to the table, and often difficult and challenging questions at that.

For example, modern Jewish rabbis object at the idea that some prophecies are for a later time and that there is to be a “second coming” of the Messiah.

There is a reason for this modern position.

Have you ever wondered how ancient Jewish rabbis interpreted messianic prophecies and how such might compare to modern Jewish understanding?

Also, did you realize that the Torah reveals not only how the Messiah was to come twice, but also about when we should expect Him both times?

This teaching will touch on both of these subjects.

We will examine what ancient rabbis taught as it related to Messiah, what modern rabbis teach and believe, and even examine some interesting insight revealed in the Torah about the timing of the Messiah.

Modern Jewish commentary rejects the concept of two messianic comings, yet certain ancient rabbinical writings actually taught two messianic comings.

Why the difference?

What changed with what was once taught by rabbis verses what is taught today in typical Jewish circles?

Ancient Jewish rabbis noticed that messianic prophecies appeared to contain a dichotomy.

Some messianic prophecies appeared mutually exclusive, as though it was not possible for the prophecies to be of the same Messiah.

Ancient Jewish rabbinical writings, in an attempt to reconcile this tension in messianic prophecy, assigned a name to each of these messiahs, one being Messiah ben Yoseph, and the other Messiah ben David.

Generally Messiah ben David is assigned all of the messianic prophecies related the kingdom, and Messiah ben Yoseph is assigned the prophecies related to the suffering servant.

Of course there are various doctrinal differences in attempting to understand the details, meaning some of the rabbis differ on specifics, but some of the common denominators are that there are two Messiahs separated by a distance of time.

We are not going to pretend that rabbis did not differ on some of these matters, or that any particular rabbi had all messianic prophecy interpreted correctly in advance.

However, it should be interesting to note that Jewish scholarship already proposed a means to deal with these seemingly opposing messianic prophecies in such a way that required two Messiahs at two different times.

As a necessary disclosure, 119 Ministries believes that Yeshua in the first century, also known as Jesus in mainstream Christian circles, satisfied the messianic type of Messiah Ben Yoseph, and we also believe that He will return and establish the role of Messiah ben David.

We believe such, because we believe the TANAKH, or the Old Testament, to conclusively detail out in advance, in the form of messianic prophecy, the specific events that led to the accounts found in the New Testament, or also known as the Brit Hadasha.

Meaning this, according to the Old Testament prophecy, the TANKAH, it was necessary that the New Testament, or Brit Hadasha occurred how and when it did.

Most Jewish objection to Yeshua as a Messiah centers around the misunderstanding perpetuated by mainstream Christians, specifically, that Yeshua or Jesus changed the law of God.

Most Jews know that the Messiah could not change the law of God, as that would violate nearly every known messianic prophecy, and violate the very definition of a true prophet as detailed in Deuteronomy 13 and 18.

In other words, the common presentation of the Messiah to Jews by mainstream Christianity presents a man that forces a Jew to interpret Him as a false prophet, because mainstream Christianity has the Messiah changing the law of God.

119 Ministries also believes that the Law of God, or Torah, also stands intact today.

We present Yeshua the Messiah as leaving the law of God completely intact, meaning Yeshua is completely compatible with Deuteronomy 13.

So although we have tested this subject and arrived to these conclusions, our goal in this teaching is not to project our conclusions on to you.

What we will do is demonstrate how Jewish rabbis already interpreted messianic prophecy in such a way that was conducive to the validity of the Brit Hadasha or New Testament writings.

What we also find is that many of modern Jewish rabbis no longer interpret messianic prophecies in the same way that they once did. The reason for this is because most of modern Jewish doctrine is built on the framework of one particular rabbi who made every attempt to avoid such conclusions.

There are still many other reasons why mainstream Judaism has a difficult time acknowledging Yeshua as the Messiah detailed in the TANAKH.

Our focus on this teaching will be on the issue as to whether the Messiah was to come twice.

Currently mainstream Judaism still does not see one Messiah with two comings as a reality.

However, it is still interesting to note that ancient Judaism did see to messianic comings, to some degree, as we already mentioned, in the form of Messiah ben Yoseph and Messiah ben David.

Let's first examine Messiah ben Yoseph:

In the twelfth chapter of the Prophet Zechariah it is written,

Zechariah 12:10

¹⁰And I will pour out on the House of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the spirit of grace and supplication, so that they will look on me whom they have pierced, and they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over him, like the bitter weeping over a first-born.

To this the Rabbis respond (Babylonian Talmud Succa 52a / Yalkut Shimoni),

"This is Mashiach ben Yoseph, who is to be slain."- *Babylonian Talmud, Sukkah 52a*

In Zechariah we read that YHWH was to pour out the spirit of grace and supplication, and that He was to be pierced.

For those that are familiar with New Testament accounts, the parallels to Zechariah 12 are absolutely striking.

John 19:33-37

³³But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs.

³⁴But one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water. ³⁵He who saw it has borne witness—his testimony is true, and he knows that he is telling the truth—that you also may believe. ³⁶For these things took place that the Scripture might be fulfilled: “Not one of his bones will be broken.” ³⁷ And again another Scripture says, “They will look on him whom they have pierced.”

Hear John quotes what we just read in Zechariah 12

Zechariah 12:10

¹⁰They will look on him whom they have pierced.

But he also quotes Psalm 34:20

Psalm 34:20

²⁰He keeps all his bones; not one of them is broken.

In this instance, we have Jewish rabbis interpreting Zechariah 12 to be referring to the Messiah, and the Brit Hadasha account in John confirming that it did indeed happen.

One of the most debated chapters in all of the TANAKH about Messiah ben Yoseph is found in Isaiah 53.

The debate is whether Isaiah 53 is only about Israel, or is also about the Messiah.

Anti-missionaries and modern rabbis will often testify up and down that Isaiah 53 is only about Israel and has nothing to do with the Messiah.

Most modern rabbis will passionately insist that Isaiah 53 cannot be and is not about the Messiah, but instead only about Israel.

The Talmud, which is basically a collection of Jewish commentary on the TANAKH, or the Old Testament, reveals some insight that is not all to compatible with the more modern understanding of Isaiah 53.

The Talmud explains in regards to Isaiah 53:

"The **Messiah**---what is his name? Those of the house of Rabbi Yuda the saint say, the sick one, as it is said, '**Surely he had borne our sicknesses.**'" -Sanhedrin 98b

It has also been said:

"But he was wounded . . . meaning that since **the Messiah bears our iniquities** which produce the effect of His being bruised, **it follows that whosoever will not admit that Messiah thus suffers for our iniquities, must endure and suffer for them himself**" -Rabbi Elijah de Vidas

Here we have Jewish rabbis, contrary to modern Jewish doctrine, testifying that Isaiah 53 is about the Messiah.

However, before we really dig deep into Isaiah 53, we might question why this is even important or necessary.

The reality is that as some have begun exploring their Hebrew Roots, after realizing that hundreds of years of mainstream Christianity error, some take the faith they once had in men in Christianity, and then start misplacing their faith in rabbis in Judaism.

The sad reality is that both sides of the fence have much error. Just as mainstream Christianity, in error, latches on to traditions that abolish the law of God, mainstream Judaism projects much faith and credibility into rabbis that make a point to change the context and distance themselves from messianic texts.

This means that we need to be very careful, and be sure to test everything.

There is a ditch on each side of the narrow path.

Regardless of what traditions and doctrinal baggage we are coming out of, we need to be sure that we are not eager to simply jump into the other ditch on the other side of the narrow path.

One of easiest ways to illustrate this point is on the matter of Isaiah 53.

Just as mainstream Christianity has their “traditions of their fathers” so does “mainstream Judaism.”

The rabbi who has framed and shaped much of modern doctrinal thought in Judaism is Rashi.

It is understood by many other Jewish rabbis that Rashi, around the late 11th century, intentionally changed the context of Isaiah 53 to be about Israel instead of the Messiah.

That is not our claim about Rashi, but actually other Jewish commentators, which we will show you momentarily.

Rashi proceeded with this doctrinal shift despite the fact that other great rabbis such as Maimonides (mai-mon-i-dees) and Crispin professed that the central theme of Isaiah 53 is prophetically messianic.

Most agree that Rashi established this change because of his strong anti-Christian mentality, a fact in which he freely admitted.

He made no attempt to hide his doctrinal bias or the fact that his commentary was diverting away from hundreds of years of Jewish messianic interpretation, solely in an intentional attempt to distance one's doctrine and conclusions from professed Christians.

In his defense, as a Jew, it would have been very easy to have an anti-Christian mentality given the violent anti-semitism that occurred for hundreds of years in supposed Christian camps.

Christians certainly did not live like they believed the Bible to be truth, and did not preach an interpretation of the Messiah that was consistent with what the Old Testament demanded...

Meaning this, Christianity professed that the law of God changed, that the Torah changed, and no longer applied.

Because of this error, and because Christians did not walk the law of God, Jews distanced themselves greatly from the inaccurate presentation of Yeshua our Messiah.

They ran from it, and rightfully so.

But unfortunately, because Christians misunderstood the writings of Paul, many Jews from the third century on have not realized fulfillments of messianic prophecy that occurred in the first century.

Sadly, Christians not only did not walk the Word of God in the presence of the Jews, but they also distorted Yeshua's beliefs and teachings to such a degree that forced the Jews to not be able to accept such doctrine.

If you are confused or need clarification on what we just said, pause this teaching and watch our teaching titled, "The Deuteronomy 13 Test," at: <http://TestEverything.net>

To be fair, Rashi had every right to be against Christianity.

And because Christianity used Isaiah 53 to justify the New Testament Scriptures, Rashi changed the context of Isaiah 53.

Now please understand, as we revealed earlier, we believe the New Testament writings to be valid and true.

We love our Christian brothers and sisters.

We love our Jewish brothers and sisters.

We simply believe that mainstream Jewish doctrines need to leave traditions of men that are not compatible with the TANAKH, and discover the fulfillments of messianic prophecy that occurred in the first century.

We also believe that mainstream Christianity needs to realize the Hebraic aspects of the Messiah, realize that the TANAKH or Old Testament contains prophecy that demands that the law of God could not and would not change in the New Covenant.

Thus, both camps have issues to deal with.

We simply believe that hundreds of years of Christianity made some serious errors in doctrine pertaining to the Law of God.

And because of those errors, Jews were forced to reject Yeshua, or Jesus, as their Messiah.

Much of this error is due to a misunderstanding of Paul's writings.

For more on this, please see our teaching series *The Pauline Paradox*.

Let's read the chapter in question, starting in Isaiah 52:13, and then we will discuss the debate in more detail as it relates to Rashi.

We will read this portion in Isaiah and attempt to determine for ourselves whether the context is about Israel, or the Messiah.

Then, we will look more at what the ancient rabbis believed, versus what Rabbi Rashi taught and believed, and how that shapes current modern Jewish doctrine.

As a side note, we realize that there are many complexities in labeling groups of people with similar beliefs.

We fully understand that there are Jews who know their Messiah Yeshua. We realize that there are Orthodox Jews, we know that there are Karaite Jews, and we know there is everything in between and around.

We do not wish to offend, but recognize and respect these differences.

For the sake of simplicity of this teaching, more than often, when we use the term Jews, we are simply using that term to refer to orthodox Jews.

That being said, let's continue.

Sadly and quite revealing, Jews usually do not include Isaiah 53 in the Haftarah.

The Haftarah is a list of scheduled Scriptures that are read throughout every year.

This reading schedule is a tradition that developed in the dispersion, when they lived in countries that outlawed the Torah, but allowed them to read the prophets.

Just as Christianity has casual Christians, who maybe go to church on Christmas and Easter, or possibly every Sunday, to only hear what is read or preached, Judaism has casual Jews who simply listen to what the rabbis read and never really do any self study.

Because Isaiah 53 is usually passed over in these annual readings in the synagogues, many Jews have never even read that chapter.

It is very possible that if you ever encounter a discussion with a professed Jew, that they have never read Isaiah 53.

But, there are those that have, and also adopted a very non-messianic perspective about that chapter.

The point is this, what would you do if an Anti-missionary came to you and said that Isaiah 53 is only about Israel, not the Messiah? ...that Isaiah 53 having a messianic theme is a complete fabrication of Christians.

How would you answer that?

Is it only a fabrication of Christians?

Well, to answer the question, naturally we would start by reading Isaiah 53.

As we said earlier, the Jewish readings skip right over Isaiah 52 and 53.

In the Deuteronomy readings, the Haftorah portions go from Isaiah 51:12-52:12, skip over Isaiah 52:13 to Isaiah 53, and pick back up at Isaiah 54:1.

Herbert Lowe, a Cambridge University Rabbinics Professor notes:

“Quotations from the famous 53rd chapter of Isaiah are rare in the Rabbinic literature. Because of the Christological interpretation given to the chapter by Christians, it is omitted from the series of prophetic lessons (Haftorah) for the Deuteronomy Sabbaths. The omission is deliberate and striking.” - Schwarz, “Dear Rabbi,” (p. 16)

Striking indeed....but it also has quite the impact in shaping Jewish doctrine in the synagogues.

The Torah portion and Haftorah reading schedule is used by Jews in synagogues all over the world, so the doctrinal impact of this intentional omission is quite significant indeed.

They intentionally avoid and neglect what we are about to read.

Let's see if Isaiah 53 is about only Israel or the Messiah's relationship with Israel.

Let's see what they are missing.

Let's begin.

Isaiah 52:13

¹³Behold, my servant shall act wisely; he shall be high and lifted up, and shall be exalted.

To be fair, the previous verses in Isaiah 52 were indeed about Israel, and in fact, all of the proceeding chapters were about Israel...and here, in the middle of Isaiah 52, we see a mention to “my servant.”

In the TANAKH, the Old Testament, Israel is indeed referred to as Yahweh's servant, however, this still could be a reference to the Messiah.

We need to continue to glean more context.

Isaiah 52:14-15

¹⁴As many were astonished at you— his appearance was so marred, beyond human semblance, and his form beyond that of the children of mankind—¹⁵so shall he sprinkle many nations; kings shall shut their mouths because of him, for that which has not been told them they see, and that which they have not heard they understand.

Isaiah 53:1

¹Who has believed what he has heard from us? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?

Question:

Where in the TANAKH is Israel referred to as the right arm of Yahweh?

If Isaiah 53 is indeed about Israel, should we not be able to find additional scriptural confirmation of Israel being referred to as the arm of Yahweh?

Let's continue:

Isaiah 53:2

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

Question:

If Isaiah 53 is about Israel and only Israel, meaning Israel is the "he" ...then who is the "we" here?

How can Israel be both the "he" and the "we" in the same context?

Already, the "Isaiah 53 as only Israel belief" is appearing quite shaky.

Let's continue:

Isaiah 53:3

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

Again, there is the difference between the "he" and the "we" ...the "we" is known to be Israel, so the "he" can not be Israel. The "he," the "arm of Yahweh," must be someone else.

Isaiah 53:4

⁴Surely *he* has borne *our* grief's and carried *our* sorrows; yet *we* esteemed *him* stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted.

Again, a difference between the "we" as Israel, and the "him" as someone else.

Isaiah 53:5

⁵But *he* was pierced for *our* transgressions; *he* was crushed for *our* iniquities;
upon *him* was the chastisement that brought us peace,

So the "our" must be Israel, which begs the question again, who is the "he?"

Now, unlike Rashi, other Jewish Rabbis believe this to be about the Messiah:

For example, as we read earlier:

When Zechariah 12 is cited, about He who is pierced, and like Isaiah 53 also states, Jewish commentary refers to Him as the Messiah who is to be slain:

"This is Mashiach ben Yoseph, who is to be slain." - (Babylonian Talmud Succa 52a / Yalkut Shimoni)

Certainly one would not believe that Israel was pierced and slain for Israel's own transgressions.

Is Israel dead?

Did Israel die and is nowhere to be found?

Of course not!

The He who is to be pierced and slain must be someone other than Israel.

In addition, that person is slain for Israel's transgressions.

Hebrews 9:15

¹⁵Therefore he is the mediator of a new covenant (*see Jeremiah 31:31-33*), so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, since a death has occurred that redeems them from the transgressions committed under the first covenant.

Was the author of Hebrews just making this up while noting first century events, or was he referencing Isaiah 53?

Let's continue with Isaiah 53:

Isaiah 53:5-6

⁵...and with *his* wounds *we* are healed. ⁶All *we* like sheep have gone astray; *we* have turned—every one—to his own way;

So Israel is healed by someone else's wounds...

Isaiah 53:6

⁶...and the Lord has laid on *him* the iniquity of *us* all.

Again, Israel's iniquity was laid on someone else.

Isaiah 53:7

⁷*He* was oppressed, and *he* was afflicted, yet *he* opened not his mouth; *like a lamb that is led to the slaughter*, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so *he* opened not *his* mouth.

The "he" which is different than Israel, is referred to as a lamb...

John 1:36

³⁶and he looked at Yeshua (Jesus) as he walked by and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God!"

Isaiah 53:8

⁸By oppression and judgment he was taken away; and as for his generation, who considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living,

So if Israel is the "he" then when did Israel die and was cut off from the land of the living?

Are there no more Israelites today?

Have they all been killed?

Are they no longer among us?

Again, the “he” must be someone else who was slain.

Isaiah 53:8-9

⁸...stricken for the transgression of my people? ⁹And they made his grave with the wicked and with a rich man in his death,

Question:

If the “my people” is Israel, how can Israel be stricken for the transgression of Israel?

Continuing on...

Isaiah 53:9

⁹...although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth.

“He” did no violence and there was no deceit in his mouth?”

How can the He be Israel in light of Jeremiah?

When has Israel ever been innocent?

Is Israel innocent?

Jeremiah 3:8

⁸She saw that for all the adulteries of that faithless one, Israel, I had sent her away with a decree of divorce. Yet her treacherous sister Judah did not fear, but she too went and played the whore.

This is a *very* important question.

How can Israel be innocent and able to also die for a not innocent Israel?

How can Israel be innocent and not innocent at the same time?

Let's continue examining Isaiah 53

Isaiah 53:10

¹⁰Yet it was the will of the Lord to crush him;

We find that the “he” has been abused, crushed, and killed for the transgressions of Israel...and here, we find that this is Yahweh's will...that this innocent man be sacrificed for the sake of Israel's transgressions, to literally crush him.

Let's continue:

Isaiah 53:10-11

¹⁰...he has put him to grief; when his soul **makes an offering for guilt**, he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days; the will of the Lord shall prosper in his hand.¹¹ Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities.

So, this man, makes many righteous by bearing their iniquities through the anguish of his soul, when his soul becomes and offering for Israel's guilt.

Again, how can Israel die for Israel?

How can a blemished Israel be a guilt offering for a blemished Israel?

How could that make any sense whatsoever?

Typical modern Jewish commentary teaches that a man cannot become a guilt offering for someone else, by bearing their iniquities when they are crushed or slain.

Yet, here it is....right in the TANKAH.

Unfortunately, this chapter is skipped over in annual readings, effectively hiding it from the masses.

You don't have to explain what most do not see...or so the theory goes.

Moving on:

Isaiah 53:12

¹²Therefore I will divide him a portion with the many, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong, because he poured out his soul to death and was numbered with the transgressors, yet he bore the sin of many, and makes intercession for the transgressors.

Without question, it must be interpreted that Isaiah 53 is a messianic prophecy.

Isaiah 53 cannot be only about Israel.

As we said earlier, most modern Judaism does not believe Isaiah 53 to be a messianic prophecy simply because of the doctrine of Rabbi Rashi.

This is not a big secret, but something that is already known:

..the weight of Jewish authority preponderates in favor of the Messianic interpretation of this chapter...that until recent times this prophecy has been almost universally received by Jews as referring to Messiah is evident from Targum Jonathan who introduces Messiah by name (in chp. LIL 13;); from the Talmud (Sanhedrin vol. 98b); and from the Zohar...In fact, until Rabbi Rashi (Rabbi Solomon Izaak (1040-1105), considered the originator of the modern school of Jewish interpretation, who applied it to the Jewish nation, **the Messianic interpretation of this chapter was almost universally adopted by Jews.** - Baron, *Rays of Messiah's Glory* (pp. 225-229)

Here we are told that Rashi is the main cause of the belief that Isaiah 53 is not of messianic interpretation. He even quotes the Sanhedrin!

Is that true?

Are other rabbis of the opinion that Isaiah 53 is a messianic prophecy?

Is this why the portion we just read in Isaiah is avoided in annual Jewish readings?

Let's read other rabbinical commentary on Isaiah 53.

From Targum...

“Behold my Servant the Messiah shall prosper.” - Targum Jonathan (Aramaic commentary on the prophets, on Isaiah 53)

Targum commentary on Isaiah 53 mentions that the servant is the Messiah, yet the word messiah is not found anywhere in Isaiah 52 or 53, clearly demonstrating the belief that Isaiah 53 is centric to the role of the Messiah.

Another....

“We know that messianic homilies based **on Joseph's career** (his saving role preceded by suffering), and using Isaiah 53 as the prophetic portion, **were preached in certain old synagogues which used the triennial cycle...**” - Rav Asher Soloff, "The Fifty Third Chapter of Isaiah According to the Jewish Commentators, to the Sixteenth Century" (Ph.D. Thesis, Drew University, 1967, p. 146.)

Here the understanding is established that not only is Isaiah 53 messianic, but related to the story of Joseph and his suffering, hence the concept of Messiah ben Joseph.

Meaning this, the messiah, as Mashiach ben Yosef, or Messiah son of Joseph, simply means that Joseph is a type of a role of the messiah.

Even more astounding, this understanding was preached in old synagogues long ago!

The Talmud...

“The Rabbis said, His name is “the leper scholar,” as it is written, Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried out our sorrows yet we did esteem him a leper, smitten of God, and afflicted (Isaiah 53:4)” – Babylonian Talmud, Sanhedrin 98b Soncino Talmud edition.

If Isaiah 53 is only about Israel, then why are so many rabbis saying it is not only about Israel, but also about the Messiah?

Good question...

Why is the very commentary of Jews proving the validity of New Testament writings?

The next quote interprets Ruth to illustrate a hidden parallel to the Messiah and even relates it back to Isaiah 53:

“The fifth interpretation (of Ruth 2:15) makes it refer to the Messiah. Come hither approach to royal state. And eat of the **BREAD** refers to the bread of royalty, **AND DIP THY MORSEL IN THE VINEGAR** refers to his sufferings, as it is said, But he was wounded because of our transgressions (Is. 53)” Ruth Rabbah 5:6 -Soncino Midrash Rabbath (vol. 8, p. 64)

Let's read this verse in Ruth

Ruth 2:14

¹⁴And at mealtime Boaz said to her, “Come here and eat some bread and dip your morsel in the wine.” So she sat beside the reapers, and he passed to her roasted grain. And she ate until she was satisfied, and she had some left over.

This interpretation of Ruth, in which the Messiah is the bread is consistent with the testimony of the Brit Hadasha.

John 6:41

⁴¹So the Jews grumbled about him, because he said, “I am the bread that came down from heaven.”

John 6:48

⁴⁸I am the bread of life.

Matthew 26:26

²⁶Now as they were eating, Yeshua (Jesus) took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, “Take, eat; this is my body.”

Again, why are the Rabbis giving an interpretation of Isaiah 53 as the Messiah if it is only about Israel?

The next quote is from a Karaite Jew.

There are different “denominations” that exist in what is often referred to as Judaism.

A Karaite Jew literally means to be a Scripturalist.

They make every attempt to simply call Scripture as they see it.

They do not try to find the deeper meanings of Scripture.

They make every attempt to only focus on the plain meaning of the text.

This quote is from the 10th century, well before Rabbi Rashi began teaching the idea that Isaiah 53 was only about Israel and not about the Messiah.

“As to myself, I am inclined, with Benjamin of Nehawend, to regard it as alluding to the Messiah...”

(This is of course referring to Isaiah 53, and note that he is agreeing with another ancient rabbi.)

...and as opening with a description of his condition in exile, from the time of his birth to his accession to the throne: for the prophet begins by speaking of his being seated in a position of great honour...

(This is found in Isaiah 52:13-15.)

...and then goes back to relate all that will happen to him during the captivity. He thus gives us to understand two things: In the first instance, that the Messiah will only reach his highest degree of honour after long and severe trials;

(So first suffering servant, and then as king...it is a two part process.)

...and secondly, that these trials will be sent upon him as a kind of sign, so that, if he finds himself under the yoke of misfortunes whilst remaining pure in his actions, he may know that he is the desired one.... "(The Karaite Yefeth ben Ali) -- S. R. Driver and A. Neubauer, editors, *The Fifty-third Chapter of Isaiah According to the Jewish Interpreters* (2 volumes; New York: Ktav, 1969, pp. 19-20.) (The English translations used here are taken from volume 2. The original texts are in volume 1. Cf. Soloff, pp. 107-09.)

Here is another statement by the same Karaite rabbi:

"By the words "surely he hath carried our sicknesses," they mean that the pains and sickness which he fell into were merited by them (*the "them" in this statement means Israel*) but that he bore them instead. . . . And here I think it necessary to pause for a few moments, in order to explain why God caused these sicknesses to attach themselves to the Messiah for the sake of Israel. . . . The nation deserved from God greater punishment than that which actually came upon them, but not being strong enough to bear it. . . God appoints his servant to carry their sins, and by doing so lighten their punishment in order that Israel might not be completely exterminated." (The Karaite Yefeth ben Ali) -- Driver and Neubauer, pp. 23 ff.; Soloff pp. 108-109.

This understanding of course explains why Israel is mentioned as the servant before Isaiah 52, but from mid Isaiah 52 onward, the head servant role is attributed to a messianic figure, in order to help Israel accomplish what they were always supposed to accomplish, which is to bring the Torah to the nations.

So why do literal Karaite rabbis teach that Isaiah 53 is about the Messiah if it is only supposed to be about Israel?

This very next rabbinical quote is very interesting. It directly states that Messiah ben Yoseph will be slain, and then Messiah ben David will come...also referring to Isaiah 53.

And Armilus will join battle with Messiah, the son of Ephraim, in the East gate . . .; and Messiah, the son of Ephraim (*This is a reference to Messiah ben Yoseph*), will die there, and Israel will mourn for him. And afterwards the Holy One will reveal to them Messiah, the son of David, whom Israel will desire to stone, saying, Thou speakest falsely; already is the Messiah slain, and there is none other Messiah to stand up (after him): and so they will despise him, as it is written, "Despised and forlorn of men;" but he will turn and hide himself from them, according to the words, "Like one hiding his face from us." (Mysteries of R. Shim'on ben Yohai, midrash, date uncertain) --Driver and Neubauer, p. 32, citing the edition of Jellinek, Beth ha-Midrash (1855), part iii. p. 80.

Again, why are the Rabbis giving an interpretation of Isaiah 53 as the Messiah if it is only about Israel?

"And let his [Israel's] kingdom be exalted," **in the days of the Messiah**, of whom it is said, "Behold my servant shall prosper; he will be high and exalted, and lofty exceedingly." (Lekach Tov (11th c. midrash) -- Driver and Neubauer, p. 36. (*Talking about Messiah in Isaiah 52:13-15*))

Again, why are the rabbis giving an interpretation of Isaiah 53 as the Messiah if it is only about Israel?

What is to be the manner of Messiah's advent, and where will be the place of his appearance? . . . And Isaiah speaks similarly of the time when he will appear, without his father or mother or family being known, He came up as a sucker before him, and as a root out of the dry earth, etc. But the unique phenomenon attending his manifestation is, that all the kings of the earth will be thrown into terror at the fame of him -- their kingdoms will be in consternation, and they themselves will be devising whether to oppose him with arms, or to adopt some different course, confessing, in fact, their inability to contend with him or ignore his presence, and so confounded at the wonders which they will see him work, that they will lay their hands upon their mouth; in the words of Isaiah, when describing the manner in which the kings will hearken to him, At him kings will shut their mouth; for that which had not been told them have they seen, and that which they had not heard they have perceived. (Maimonides, Letter to Yemen 12th c.)
-- Driver and Neubauer vol 1: p. 322. Edition is Abraham S. Halkin, ed., Igeret Teman (NY: American Academy for Jewish Research, 1952). See Soloff pp. 127-128. (*Clearly giving understanding to the book of Isaiah with the Messiah.*)

Again, why are the Rabbis giving an interpretation of Isaiah 53 as the Messiah if it is only about Israel?

It should be noted that just because we are quoting various rabbis, it does not mean that we necessarily agree with all of their doctrine and understanding.

The purpose of citing them is strictly to prove that many rabbis already believed that Isaiah 53 is about the Messiah, not only Israel.

Here is another:

"There is in the Garden of Eden a palace named the Palace of the Sons of Sickness. This palace the Messiah enters, and He summons every pain and every chastisement of Israel. All of these come and rest upon Him. And had He not thus lightened them upon Himself, **there had been no man able to bear Israel's chastisements for the transgressions of the law**; as it is written, "Surely our sicknesses he has carried." -- Cited in Driver and Neubauer, pp. 14-15 from section "va-yiqqahel". (Zohar II, 212a (medieval))
(Translation from Frydland, Rachmiel, *What the Rabbis Know About the Messiah* (Cincinnati: Messianic Literature Outreach, 1991), p. 56, n. 27. (Note that this section is not found in the Soncino edition which says that it was an interpolation.)

Again, why are the Rabbis giving an interpretation of Isaiah 53 as the Messiah if it is only about Israel?

"The right view respecting this Parashah is to suppose that by the phrase "my servant" the whole of Israel is meant. . . .As a different opinion, however, is adopted by the Midrash, **which refers it to the Messiah**, it is necessary for us to explain it in conformity with the view there maintained.

The prophet says, **The Messiah, the son of David** of whom the text speaks, will never be conquered or perish by the hands of his enemies. And, in fact the text teaches this clearly. . . . And by his stripes we were healed -- because the stripes by which he is vexed and distressed will heal us; ("*us*" meaning "*Israel*") **God will pardon us for his righteousness**, and we shall be healed both from our own transgressions and from the iniquities of our fathers." (Nachmanides) (R. Moshe ben Nachman, 13th c.) -- Driver and Neubauer, pp. 78 ff.

Again, why are the rabbis giving an interpretation of Isaiah 53 as the Messiah if it is only about Israel?

"Who art thou, O great mountain (Zech. iv. 7.) This refers to the King Messiah. And why does he call him "the great mountain?" (*The "Mountain" here often prophetically means kingdom or nation, referring here to the Messianic kingdom*) Because he is greater than the patriarchs, as it is said, "My servant shall be high, and lifted up, and lofty exceedingly" -- he will be higher than Abraham, . . . lifted up above Moses, . . . loftier than the ministering angels." -- Driver and Neubauer, p. 9. (The same passage is found in Midrash Tanhuma to Genesis (perhaps 9th c.), ed. John T. Townsend (Hoboken, NJ: Ktav, 1989), p. 166.)

Interestingly, in the Letter to the Hebrews, it also states that Yeshua, following his resurrection, is now higher than Moses and the angels. . . . both Hebrews and the 9th century rabbi shared the same perspective on the Messiah, at least in this instance.

Hebrews 1:3-4

³He (*Yeshua*) is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, ⁴ **having become as much superior to angels** as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs.

Hebrews 3:3

³For Yeshua has been counted worthy of **more glory than Moses**—as much more glory as the builder of a house has more honor than the house itself.

Moving on. . .

This particular Rabbi believed Messiah ben Yoseph and Messiah ben David to be the same Messiah. . . . linking the role of the Messiah that suffers for our transgressions in Isaiah 53 and the role of reigning as King in Psalm 2:6.

"I have drawn him out of the chastisements. . . . The chastisements are divided into three parts: one for David and the fathers, one for our own generation, and one for the King Messiah; and this is that which is written, "He was wounded for our transgressions," etc. (Yalkut ii. 620 (13th c.), in regard to Psalm 2:6) -- Driver and Neubauer, p. 10.

Again, why are the Rabbis giving an interpretation of Is 53 as the Messiah if it is about Israel?

Why are they linking Isaiah 53 to all other portions of messianic texts?

Let's continue. . . . rabbi Crispin states that in his understanding, Isaiah 53 is certainly about the King Messiah.

In saying this, he not only declares this to be the obvious literal interpretation, but also the same position that is consistent with the other rabbis, meaning this, Isaiah 53 as a messianic text is dominantly consistent with the other rabbis....at least until this point in history.

Let's read...

This Parashah the commentators agree in explaining of the Captivity of Israel, although the singular number is used in it throughout. . . .As there is no cause constraining us to do so, why should we here interpret the word collectively, and thereby distort the passage from its natural sense?. . . .As then it seemed to me that the doors of the literal interpretation of the Parashah were shut in their face, and that "they wearied themselves to find the entrance," having forsaken the knowledge of our Teachers, and inclined after the "stubbornness of their own hearts," and of their own opinion, I am pleased to interpret it, **in accordance with the teaching of our Rabbis**, (*Meaning he is agreeing with older Rabbis, contrary to the more modern and dominant usage of Rashi*) **of the King Messiah**, and will be careful, so far as I am able, to adhere to the literal sense. (R. Mosheh Kohen ibn Crispin (14th c.)) -- Driver and Neubauer, pp. 99-100.

It must be said again, why are the Rabbis giving an interpretation of Isaiah 53 as the Messiah if it is only about Israel?

Another...

My servant shall prosper, or be truly intelligent, because by intelligence man is really man -- it is intelligence which makes a man what he is. And the prophet calls the **King Messiah my servant** (*so he believes the servant to be the Messiah, not Israel*), speaking as one who sent him. Or he may call the whole people my servant, as he says above my people (lii. 6): when he speaks of the people, the King Messiah is included in it; and when he speaks of the **King Messiah**, the people is comprehended with him. What he says then is, **that my servant the King Messiah will prosper**. (R. Sh'lomoh Astruc) (14th c.) -- Driver and Neubauer, p. 129.

Again, why are the Rabbis giving an interpretation of Isaiah 53 as the Messiah if it is about Israel?

Another...

Since the **Messiah bears our iniquities which produce the effect of His being bruised**, it follows that whoso will not admit that the Messiah thus suffers for our iniquities, must endure and suffer for them himself. (R. Elijah de Vidas) (16th c.) -- Driver and Neubauer, p. 331.

Again, why are the rabbis giving an interpretation of Isaiah 53 as the Messiah if it is about Israel?

Here is another rabbi that not only declares Isaiah 53 to be about the Messiah, but also declares that his view is consistent with the other rabbis.

I may remark, then, that our Rabbis with one voice accept and affirm the opinion that the prophet is speaking of the King Messiah, and we ourselves also adhere to the same view. (Rabbi Moshe Alshekh (El-Sheikh) of Sefad (16th c.) -- Driver and Neubauer, p. 258.

The evidence continues to mount that numerous rabbis, contrary to rabbi Rashi's view, believe Isaiah 53 to be about the Messiah, not only Israel.

The insight of this particular rabbi is quite astounding:

The fact is, that it (*meaning Isaiah 53*) refers to the King Messiah, who will come in the latter days, when it will be the Lord's good pleasure to redeem Israel from among the different nations of the earth.....Whatever he underwent was in consequence of their own transgression, the Lord having chosen him to be a trespass-offering, like the scape-goat which bore all the iniquities of the house of Israel. Herz Homberg (18th-19th c.) -- Driver and Neubauer, p. 400-401.

Concluding this section on Isaiah 53, it is certain that numerous rabbis believed Isaiah 53 to be about the messiah.

However, modern rabbis admittedly rely mostly on rabbi Rashi, which through anti-christian sentiment, has deliberately chosen to change the context of Isaiah 53 to be only about Israel.

Psalm 22 is also another good portion to consider in the context of Messiah ben Yoseph, our Messiah as the suffering servant.

Recall what Yeshua proclaimed on the tree:

Matthew 27:46

⁴⁶And about the ninth hour Yeshua (Jesus) cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" that is, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

Yeshua cried this out right before His death. One might question what was going through His mind at the moment, and the reason why He spoke these words, and we will get to that.

Before we do, we must note a couple more pieces of critical information found in the event of Yeshua's death.

They casted lots for Yeshua's garments.

Matthew 27:35

³⁵And when they had crucified him, they divided his garments among them by casting lots.

And they pierced Yeshua's side.

John 19:34

³⁴But one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water.

The reason they pierced his side was to make sure He was indeed dead.

The fact that blood and water came out, meant Yeshua had already died.

The reason they made sure He was dead was because they were instructed to break the legs to accelerate death, thus assuring that the bodies could be removed and disposed on before the High Sabbath of the first day of Unleavened Bread.

When the legs were broken, the individual being crucified had to hold themselves up physically with their arms, just to take a breath and get air into their lungs.

Obviously, you can only that for so long, till strength gives out, and one suffocates under their own weight.

It was a means to accelerate death...

John 19:31-33

³¹Since it was the day of Preparation, and so that the bodies would not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken and that they might be taken away. ³² So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first, and of the other who had been crucified with him. ³³ But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs.

Yeshua was also mockingly told:

Matthew 27:40-42

⁴⁰“You who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself! If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross.” ⁴¹ So also the chief priests, with the scribes and elders, mocked him, saying, ⁴² “He saved others; he cannot save himself. He is the King of Israel; let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him.”

So we learn that Yeshua's legs were not broken, and that lots were cast for His garments...and He was mocked and told to save Himself, again, all in the context of His death when Yeshua cried out, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”

Matthew 27:35

³⁵And when they had crucified him, they divided his garments among them by casting lots.

Also keep in mind that given the circumstances Yeshua endured in the events leading up to and including the crucifixion, His strength would have been drained, he would have been massively dehydrated, the piercing of His side released water and blood, he was surrounded by evildoers, and His hands and feet were pierced...

Try to keep all of this in mind as we continue...

In the first century, Scripture did not have numbers and chapters. To refer to a particular portion of scripture, they would cite a few words of it that most were familiar with.

Knowing that, we realize that Yeshua was referring to Psalm 22 in the prophetic context of His death as the suffering servant aspect of the Messiah.

Psalm 22:1-18 (ESV)

¹*My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?* Why are you so far from saving me, from the words of my groaning? ² O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer, and by night, but I find no rest. ³ Yet you are holy, enthroned on the praises of Israel. ⁴ In you our fathers trusted; they trusted, and you delivered them. ⁵ To you they cried and were rescued; in you they trusted and were not put to shame. ⁶ But I am a worm and not a man, scorned by mankind and despised by the people. ⁷ *All who see me mock me; they make mouths at me; they wag their heads;* ⁸ *“He trusts in the Lord; let him deliver him; let him rescue him, for he delights in him!”* ⁹ Yet you

are he who took me from the womb; you made me trust you at my mother's breasts. ¹⁰ On you was I cast from my birth, and from my mother's womb you have been my God. ¹¹ Be not far from me, for trouble is near, and there is none to help. ¹² Many bulls encompass me; strong bulls of Bashan surround me; ¹³ they open wide their mouths at me, like a ravening and roaring lion. ¹⁴ *I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint; my heart is like wax; it is melted within my breast; ¹⁵ my strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to my jaws; you lay me in the dust of death. ¹⁶ For dogs encompass me; a company of evildoers encircles me; they have pierced my hands and feet—¹⁷ I can count all my bones— they stare and gloat over me; ¹⁸ they divide my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots.*

Because crucifixion was not yet heard of when King David wrote this Psalm, and was not invented until centuries later, this makes the prophecy found in Psalm 22 particularly remarkable.

Simply the sample of parallels we just illustrated should have been interpreted as highly compelling at minimum that Psalm 22 is a Messianic prophecy.

Others, however, have claimed that this Psalm speaks of the sufferings of David when he was pursued by King Saul.

Who then is right?

Those are really our only two options to consider.

Since Psalm 22 was written by David, it is understandable that one might believe that the Psalm refers to him.

However:

The experiences described in Psalm 22 far exceed anything that ever happened to David.

An example of this is found in verses 14-18.

Psalm 22:14-18

¹⁴ I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint; my heart is like wax; it is melted within my breast; ¹⁵ my strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to my jaws; you lay me in the dust of death. ¹⁶ For dogs encompass me; a company of evildoers encircles me; they have pierced my hands and feet—¹⁷ I can count all my bones— they stare and gloat over me; ¹⁸ they divide my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots.

The things that are mentioned here never happened to David.

Some say that David was using hyperbole to describe the times when Saul pursued Him.

However, the sufferings are exactly what one would expect to occur when facing death at the hands of one's enemies (verses 16 & 20).

These are not exaggerations.

The one suffering is one being mocked not for a crime, but for trusting in God (verses 8-9).

Psalm 22:8-9

⁸“He trusts Yahweh (LORD); let him deliver him; let him rescue him, for he delights in him!”

⁹Yet you are he who took me from the womb; you made me trust you at my mother’s breasts.

David is never described in Scripture as being restrained and mocked for trusting in God.

Also, Scripture neither describes David as counting all of his bones (verse 17), nor does it describe David’s bones being out of joint (verse 14).

This Psalm says a great deal about the suffering One, including:

He feels abandoned by God. (verse 1)

He has trusted in God. (verse 8)

The Lord has been his God since birth. (verses 9-10)

There is a group of people who are mocking Him for His trust in God. (verses 7-8)

He is hoping in the Lord, the God of His fathers, to deliver Him, because there is no one to help Him (verses 4-5, 11, 19-21).

Like we read in Isaiah 53, He is despised of the people (verse 6).

His suffering is extreme, humiliating, and to the point of death (verses 14-17).

His adversaries are described in vivid and terrifying ways, including:

- a. "Many bulls, strong bulls of Bashan" (verse 12)
- b. Roaring lions (verse 13, 21)
- c. Dogs (verse 16)
- d. Wild oxen (verse 21)

The sufferings described in this Psalm specifically occur during crucifixion, including bones being out of joint, the heart being like wax and "melted," strength being dried up, and the tongue cleaving to one's throat (verses 14-15).

Verse 17 also states that “He can count all of His bones”

This is also stated in Psalm 34:20 in the context of His bones not being broken.

Psalm 34:20

²⁰He keeps all his bones; not one of them is broken.

We know of course that Yeshua’s bones were not broken...

As already noted, the Psalm describes numerous things that occur during crucifixion.

In addition, it describes additional things that specifically occurred at Yeshua's crucifixion.

For example, in verse 18, it says that those present would divide his clothes among themselves by casting lots for them.

Verse 1 includes Yeshua's quoted words at His crucifixion.

However, the most dramatic description of crucifixion occurs in verse 16.

In some translations the last part reads:

Psalm 22:16

¹⁶They pierced my hands and my feet.

Other translations, including that of the Jewish Publication Society, translate the verse as follows:

Psalm 22:16

¹⁶Like a lion they are at my hands and my feet.

The key issue is: Which translation is correct? If it says, "They pierced my hands and my feet," then here is a complete and vivid description of Yeshua's crucifixion--hundreds of years before crucifixion was even invented! To answer this question, one must look at four issues:

- 1) How do the vast majority of Jewish manuscripts translate this verse?
- 2) Which translation is more in keeping with the context or better fits the surrounding verses?
- 3) Which translation better fits the grammatical structure of the passage?
- 4) Does the Hebrew word in question (kah'aru) exist in ancient literature?

So let's answer these questions...

How do the Vast Majority of Ancient Jewish Manuscripts Translate this Verse?

Those who claim that it says, "like a lion they are at my hands and my feet" cite the main Masoretic texts (the Cairo Genizah and Leningradensis) to support their contention.

However, many other Jewish translations translate this portion differently, including:

Some manuscripts of the Masoretic tradition read, "they have pierced my hands and my feet."

These are two later manuscripts of Kennicott and de Rossi of Ginsburg. This information is included in the apparatus of the Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia, bottom of page 1104.

The older edition by Rudolf Kittel lists even more Hebrew manuscripts that say, "they have pierced (karu)," or "they have pierced (ka'arey)."

The Midrash on Psalm 22 says "they have made my hands and my feet ugly (or hateful)."

The Aquila Jewish Greek, translation 1 reads, "they have disfigured my hands and my feet," while translation 2 reads, "They have bound my hands and my feet."

The Targum (from the first century) reads, "they bite like the lion at my hands and my feet."

The Symmachus text reads, "like those who seek to bind my hands and my feet."

The Syriac text reads, "they have pierced my hands and my feet."

The Old Latin (pre-Vulgate) reads, "they have dug my hands and my feet."

The Septuagint (190 B.C.E. translation into Greek by 70 Jewish Rabbis) reads "they have bore through my hands and my feet."

It is important to note that the Septuagint was translated long before Yeshua came, so these Jewish scholars had no bias.

Every version, except the main Masoretic texts (the Cairo Genizah and Leningradensis), tells us something has happened to the hands and feet of the one suffering.

They are either pierced, made to look ugly, bored through, bound, or bitten as by a lion.

Of all the versions, only the two mentioned above say something else—something that has nothing to do with the hands and feet specifically.

Only these say that the enemies are merely at his hands and feet, while not doing anything to his hands and feet (such as biting, piercing, boring through, or binding).

Which Translation Is More in Keeping with the Context (or better fits the surrounding verses)?

The surrounding verses all have references to the body parts of the sufferer: For example,

The bones are out of joint (verse 14)

His heart is melted like wax (verse 14)

His tongue clings to his jaws (verse 15)

He can count his bones (verse 17)

All these parts are being acted against.

It makes perfect sense that in this song the body parts of verse 17 (his hands and his feet) would also be acted against.

That is exactly what the vast majority of the different manuscripts say.

The two exceptions literally read, "Like a lion, my hands and my feet."

Not only is this not a complete sentence, but the anatomical parallelism found throughout the passage is broken, because nothing happens to the hands and feet, even though something happens to every other body part mentioned.

The majority of the manuscripts appear to correctly preserve this symmetry.

In addition, four metaphors are used to describe the sufferer's enemies.

They are described as lions, dogs, bulls, and wild oxen (verses 12, 13, 16, and 21).

All of these animals kill their victims by piercing them.

The lion and dog bite with spike-like teeth, while the bull and oxen gore with their spiked horns.

In fact, in verse 21, the speaker appears to be asking for deliverance from such piercing when He cries out:

Save me from the mouth of the lion!
You have rescued me from the horns of the wild oxen!

In addition, the context seems to suggest that the sufferer has already been pierced, as people are not typically delivered from something that has not befallen them.

The Hebrew phrase, according to the two main Masoretic texts, literally reads, "Like a lion, my hands and my feet." (Ka'aree ya-dah v'rag-lai)

The problem with this translation is that it is not a complete sentence.

There is no verb, no infinitive, and no participle!

That makes the phrase ambiguous.

For example, technically it could mean "My hands and feet are like a lion."

However, this would make no sense.

Here, the sufferer is in a weakened condition.

He is not in any condition to attack like a lion.

The passage makes it clear that he is a passive victim—not an aggressive lion.

Technically, it could also mean, "a lion is like my hands and my feet."

However, this also makes no sense in the context of this passage.

The sufferer's hands and feet are not swift, strong, and ready to pounce like a lion.

So again, which Translation Better Fits the Grammatical Structure of the Passage?

The grammatical structure of the phrase in the two Masoretic texts occurs seven times in the Hebrew Bible, including six times in the Psalms (Psalm 22:10; Psalm 22:16; Psalm 23:5; Psalm 31:9 Psalm 62:7 and Psalm 68:24) and in Job 33:3.

In every case, except in Psalm 22:16, the subject is clearly distinguishable from the object.

(For example, in Psalm 23:5, “oil” is the subject, and “my head” and “my cup” are the objects.)

But in Psalm 22:16 under the main Masoretic rendering, one must guess as to the subject and object with no reason to believe one is correct and another incorrect.

If the phrase is read, “they have pierced,” it contains a verb, kah-ru.

In addition, the confusion over the subject/object difficulty disappears.

The verb in the perfect tense (past event with continuing effects—“they have pierced”) fits the phrase well grammatically—unlike the alternative, “like a lion.”

Certain translations render the verse, “A mob of the wicked has encircled me like lions; on my hands and my feet I can count all my bones.”

However, this rendering does not fit the pattern of the song.

The pattern of the verses is three sets of three words, with every set conveying a different idea.

(This pattern is easily discernible in verses 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, etc.)

However, if the phrase is translated, “They pierced my hands and my feet,” the pattern of the verses is preserved.

Here is an important question we should consider...

Does the Hebrew word kah’aru, meaning “they have pierced” exist in ancient literature?

Some claim that the Hebrew word kah’aru does not exist and that Christians made it up.

However, according to Keil and Delitzsch, in their Commentary on the Old Testament, Volume 5, page 318, in other manuscripts, the variant reading kah’aru is found in the Hebrew text itself.

Keil and Delitzsch point out that the addition of an aleph is also found in Zechariah 14:10 and also Daniel 7:16 (in the words rah’amah and kah’amieyah, respectively). (See Keil and Delitzsch, Commentary on the Old Testament, Volume 5, page 319).

Thus, the additional aleph does not mean that the word is a Christian invention.

Another important source, Introduction to the Masoretico-Critical Edition of the Hebrew Bible, Numbers 24:9, in the margins of the Massorah Magna, states that the reading in Psalm 22:16 is indeed kah'aru.

The author states that the word has two different meanings when comparing Psalm 22:16 and Isaiah 38:13.

He also investigated the charge of scholarly fraud leveled against a printer of the early rabbinic Bible, and concluded that there was in fact ancient reading where Psalm 22:16 was kah'aru, meaning "they have pierced."

Finally, the reading of kah'aru as a verb in the perfect third person plural is preserved by the Midrash on Psalms where they made it rendered, "they made hateful." (See Introduction to the Masoretico-Critical Edition of the Hebrew Bible, pages 969-972.)

Psalm 22 graphically depicts the sufferings of the Messiah in great detail, including his crucifixion.

Verse 16 specifically indicates that his hands and feet would be pierced.

The rendering "they have pierced", or something similar, makes perfect grammatical sense, fits the context, and fits the poetic pattern of the passage.

In addition, contrary to the claims of the critics, kah'aru does not exist in ancient manuscripts.

However, the rendering by the two Masoretic texts is inaccurate.

"Like a lion, my hands and my feet" is not a sentence, it does not fit either the context or structure of the passage, and it appears nonsensical.

In addition, it is contrary to the vast majority of ancient Jewish translations.

However, the fact that the Messiah was to be pierced does not hinge merely on Psalm 22:17.

Zechariah 12:10 states very clearly that Messiah would be pierced, or "thrust through."

No Jewish translation disputes that Zechariah 12:10 speaks of such piercing.

This passage states that Israel will ultimately turn to this pierced one and will then be redeemed from all of her uncleanness (Zechariah 12:10-13:1).

What certainly needs to be mentioned is that Yeshua is not the first Jew to be crucified by the Romans.

However, in order for one to be slain for the transgressions for Israel, one must have never sinned against God...ever...and we learned that in the first teaching in the Brit Hadasha series, titled "His Sacrifice" in which Moses tried to make atonement for Israel, but our Creator clearly said, that Moses could not.

Why?

Because God said that ANYONE who has sinned against God will be blotted out of the Book of Life.

Thus, Yeshua is the only person who has ever qualified to do what Moses tried to do, because Yeshua was different in such a way that he had never sinned against God.

This concludes the portion of the teaching that covers the Messiah ben Yoseph as the role of the Messiah.

In the second part of this teaching, we will examine the Messiah ben David role of the Messiah in some detail.

And in conclusion of this teaching, we will examine the structure of the Tabernacle, and reveal how its design, hidden in the Torah, revealed the timing of both roles of the Messiah, Messiah ben Yoseph and Messiah ben David.

We hope that this teaching has blessed you, and remember, continue to test everything.

Shalom

For more on this and other teachings, please visit us at www.testeverything.net

Shalom, and may Yahweh bless you in walking in the whole Word of God.

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