

**WHO IS THE SUFFERING SERVANT IN “ISAIAH 53”?**  
**PART I - THE JEWISH INTERPRETATION: VALID OR NOT?**<sup>1</sup>

**I. INTRODUCTION**

The Book of Isaiah contains four passages commonly known as the **Four Servant Songs**: (1) **Isaiah 42:1-4**, (2) **Isaiah 49:1-6**, (3) **Isaiah 50:4-9**, (4) **Isaiah 52:13-53:12**. Three of these *Four Servant Songs* (#1, #2, #4) explicitly use the Hebrew term עַבְדִּי, (*avdi*), **My servant**,<sup>2</sup> while in #3 such terminology is absent. Yet, the description of the subject's characteristics in #3 is so strikingly similar to those of the one to which the other three passages refer as עַבְדִּי, that it is included in the set of four. These *Four Servant Songs* are considered as passages of exceptional expressive beauty (especially in the Hebrew language) and great religious depth. According to the major Jewish commentators, it is apparent that three of these *Four Servant Songs* also present some interpretive challenges since our Jewish Sages do not always concur on the identity of the servant in them. The only exception is the **Fourth Servant Song**, commonly referred to as "**Isaiah 53**", where the Sages all agree that the servant is the righteous remnant of Israel, and henceforth referred to as **Israel**. Consequently, from the perspective of Judaism, "Isaiah 53" is not a passage about מָשִׁיחַ (*mashi'ah*), the promised **King/Messiah**, of Judaism, in its plain reading (*PSHAT*).<sup>3</sup>

By contrast, most Christians, including the Christian missionaries, consider the *Fourth Servant Song* to be one of the most important so-called “proof texts” in the Christian messianic vision. With its many references to "Isaiah 53", the New

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<sup>1</sup> Transliterations of Hebrew terminology into the Latin alphabet will follow these guidelines:

- Transliterated terminology is shown in ***bold italicized*** font
- The accented syllable in transliterated terminology is shown in ***SMALL CAPS*** font
- Latin vowel-sounds, A – E – I – O – U, are used (not the English versions thereof!)
- Distinct Hebrew letter that have ambiguous Latin letter sounds are transliterated according to the following rules:
  - A vocalized letter א is transliterated as the equivalent Latin vowel
  - A vocalized letter ו is transliterated as the equivalent Latin vowel with an added underscore
  - The letter ה is transliterated as “h”
  - The letter ח is transliterated as “ch”
  - The letter כ is transliterated as “k”
  - The letter ק is transliterated as “q”
  - A vocalized **SHVA** (וְ נִשְׁבֵּה) is transliterated as a superscripted “e” following the consonant
  - There is no “doubling” of letters in the transliterations to reflect the **dagesh** (emphasis)

<sup>2</sup> This term is the 1<sup>st</sup>-person, singular inflection of the noun עַבְדִּי, (*Eved*), **a servant, a slave**.

<sup>3</sup> The methodology of Jewish biblical exegesis consists of four levels: **plain reading** (פְּשָׁט – *PSHAT*), **symbolic reading** (רֵמֵז - *REMEZ*), **homiletic reading** (דְּרָשׁ - *DRASH*; also דְּרֻשׁ - *DRUSH*), and **mystical reading** (סוּד - *SOD*). These four levels are commonly referred to by their Hebrew acronym פ"ד"ר"פ (*PARDES*). Whereas all four levels are important and have heuristic value the conceptual understanding of biblical passages, according to Judaism's rules of exegesis, the actual meaning of a passage is derived from the plain reading and cannot be changed by the other three levels.

Testament provides for believing Christians a record of the fulfillment of the prophecy of a suffering and dying Messiah and his eventual return, triumph, and glory. Curiously, this is all being accepted and believed even though the common reference terms used in the Hebrew Bible for the promised Messiah, such as *David*, *son of David*, or *king*, are conspicuously absent from the plain text of "Isaiah 53". Moreover, a suffering and dying Messiah is not part of the traditional Jewish messianic paradigm, according to which the promised future king of (a united) Israel, מָלֶכְךָ, shows up only once and will successfully execute the messianic agenda, as it is described in the Hebrew Bible, during his reign.

It is interesting to note that not all Christians subscribe to this view on "Isaiah 53". Several prominent Christian sources agree with the common Jewish perspective that the **suffering servant** in the *Fourth Servant Song* is a reference to collective Israel, the Jewish people. For example, Christian bibles, such as the *New Revised Standard Version Bible* (NRSV), *The New Jerusalem Bible*, and *The Oxford Study Bible*, identify Israel as the suffering servant of "Isaiah 53".

This essay subjects the *Fourth Servant Song* to a rigorous analysis in which the Jewish interpretation of "Isaiah 53" is tested against a combination of the teachings of the Hebrew Bible and the historical record. The analysis employs a well-known and widely used methodology from the domain of research and discovery, the **Scientific Method**, which has been adapted and applied to the entire process of validation. In a subsequent essay, the Christian interpretation will be subjected to a similar process.<sup>4</sup>

## II. WHAT IS THE SCIENTIFIC METHOD?

In scientific and other disciplines, researchers follow a process known as the **Scientific Method**, a methodology that usually involves four stages:

- ① First is the **Observation** stage. The study of any phenomenon must start with the collection of data (observations) and their systematic arrangement.
- ② Second is the **Generalization** stage. Not all data related to an event can ever be observed, as this would involve an infinite number of observations of the occurrences of a particular phenomenon. It is usually desired to draw conclusions without waiting for future occurrences. Thus, it is assumed that the facts obtained in the previous stage constitute a fair sample, and that a generalized statement about them can be made. This generalized statement is a tentative scientific law, which is yet unproved – a **hypothesis**.
- ③ Third is the **Verification** stage. If the hypothesis is a useful one, likely to become a valid scientific law, it will have a wider range of applications than that covered by the original observations. It can be used as a model from which to predict expected occurrences in this broader realm. This newly deduced information must then be tested in order to determine whether it is, in fact, correct. If the confirmation agrees with the prediction, the hypothesis becomes firmly established as a rule or law.

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<sup>4</sup> *Who Is the Suffering Servant in Isaiah 53? Part II - The Christian Interpretation, Valid or Not?* - <http://thejewishhome.org/counter/Isa53CP.pdf>

- ④ Fourth and last is the **Application** stage. Once the *Verification* stage has been completed and the hypothesis validated, the scientific law can be used to predict, with confidence, future results. These results may then be used to expand the scope of the original observations.

In this study of the *Fourth Servant Song*, the **Observation** stage consists of an iterative process that yields the desired fair sample of "data". In the **Generalization** stage, this sample is used in formulating a hypothesis. The validity of this hypothesis is then tested in the **Verification** stage, which involves a verse-by-verse analysis of the entire passage. The **Application** stage of the **Scientific Method** cannot be adapted to this particular study, since the results obtained apply only to this specific situation and, unlike scientific research, cannot be generally applied to widen the scope of the study. However, this does not affect the results and conclusions..

Clearly, when studying the Hebrew Bible, one is not dealing with observed data from natural or social phenomena that need to be subjected to complex and rigorous statistical testing and analysis for the purpose of research and discovery. However, there is information ("data") contained within the Hebrew Bible, some of which is being misrepresented and misused by Christian missionaries in promoting their claims through their own interpretations. A rigorous approach to the processing of this "data" proves to be very helpful in effectively dealing with such claims.

The analysis presented herein demonstrates how elements of the **Scientific Method** can be adapted to polemics and, along with a thorough knowledge and understanding of the Hebrew language and the Hebrew Bible, forms a powerful tool for countering and successfully refuting the claims made by Christian missionaries.

The length and detail of this analysis of "Isaiah 53" necessitate dividing it into four internal segments – Isaiah 52:13-15, Isaiah 53:1-4, Isaiah 53:5-8, and Isaiah 53:9-12 – each of which is separately processed and the results cumulatively summarized at the end of each segment.

### III. SEGMENT 1 – ISAIAH 52:13-15

#### A. The Hebrew text with Jewish and Christian translations

Side-by-side English renditions and the Hebrew text of Isaiah 52:13-15, are displayed in Table III.A-1. The King James Version (KJV) translation is shown with pointers to cross-referenced passages in the New Testament. These references are taken from the New American Standard Bible (NASB). However, the corresponding passages below the table are quoted from the KJV for consistency.

**Table III.A-1 – Isaiah 52:13-15**

Isaiah	King James Version Translation	Jewish Translation from the Hebrew	Hebrew Text	ישעיה
52:13	Behold, my servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high.	Behold, My servant shall prosper; he shall be exalted and lifted up, and he shall be very high.	הִנֵּה יִשְׁכַּל עַבְדִּי יָרוּם וְנִשְׂא וְנִבְּה מְאֹד :	נב, יג
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:	As many wondered about you, "How marred his appearance is from that of a man, and his features from that of people!"	כִּאֲשֶׁר שָׁמְמוּ עָלָיְךָ כִּן־מִשַּׁחַת מְאִישׁ מִרְאֵהוּ וְתֵאָרוּ מִבְּנֵי אָדָם :	נב, יד
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. <sup>(i)</sup>	So shall he cause many nations to be startled; kings shall shut their mouths because of him, because that which had not been told to them they saw, and that which they had not heard they perceived.	כִּן יִזְהוּ גוֹיִם רַבִּים עָלָיו יִקְפְּצוּ מַלְכִים פִּיהֶם כִּי אֲשֶׁר לֹא־סִפְּרוּ לָהֶם רְאוּ וְאֲשֶׁר לֹא־שָׁמְעוּ הִתְבּוֹנְנוּ :	נב, טו

(i) Romans 15:21(KJV) - But as it is written, To whom he was not spoken of, they shall see: and they that have not heard shall understand.

Before this passage can be analyzed via the *Scientific Method*, the *Scientific Method* itself must be initiated, a step that involves the execution of the *Observation* stage and the *Application* stage.

## B. Formulating a hypothesis on the identity of the servant

The overall goal of this study is to determine the identity of the servant, who is the subject in the *Fourth Servant Song*.

The opening verse, Isaiah 52:13, provides an opportunity to apply the first stage of the *Scientific Method*, *Observation*, i.e., to collect, record, and organize the "data" in a systematic manner that facilitates the preparation of a useful sample of "data" for the next stage. This verse invokes a reference to a servant, specifically, to **My servant**, עַבְדִּי. Here, Isaiah, speaking in the name of God, describes one of God's servants, and this becomes the first data element in the sample being collected in the *Observation* stage:

**Data Element #1: "My servant" is a reference by God to one of His servants.**

What other "data" (observations) might be relevant to an entity to which God refers in this way, i.e., as עַבְדִּי? Table III.B-1 shows the result of a search for all instances in the Hebrew Bible of the expression עַבְדִּי that refer specifically to a servant of God.

**Table III.B-1 – Identified instances of עֶבֶדְיָ in the Hebrew Bible**

Book	#	Name of Servant	Reference
Genesis	1	Abraham	26:24
Numbers	2	Moses; Caleb*	12:7,8; 14:24*
Joshua	1	Moses	1:2,7
2Samuel	1	David	3:18, 7:5,8
1Kings	1	David	11:13,32,34,36,38, 14:8
2Kings	2	Moses; David	21:8; 19:34, 20:6
Isaiah	4/"X"	Isaiah; Eliakim; David; Israel-Jacob-Jeshurun; "not explicitly named"	20:3; 22:20; 37:35; 41:8,9, 43:10**, 44:1,2,21(2x), 45:4, 49:3; "42:1,19, 52:13, 53:11"
Jeremiah	3	Nebuchadnezzar; Israel-Jacob; David	25:9, 27:6, 43:10; 30:10, 46:27,28; 33:21,22,26
Ezekiel	2	Israel/Jacob; David	28:25, 37:25; 34:23,24, 37:24,25
Haggai	1	Zerubbabel	2:23
Zechariah	1	Tsemah	3:8
Malachi	1	Moses	3:22
Psalms	1	David	89:4,21
Job	1	Job	1:8, 2:3, 42:7,8(3x)
1Chronicles	1	David	17:4,7

\* To facilitate correlation between **Name of Servant** and **Reference**, alternating highlighting is used when more than one name appears.

\*\* Though not explicitly named, the context unambiguously identifies Israel/Jacob as servant.

Table III.B-1 contains the "raw data", from which it is evident that multiple entities in the Hebrew Bible are called עֶבֶדְיָ by God. An important task in the *Observation* stage is to organize the data so that a suitable sample is obtained, a process that may require several iterations before a suitable sample can be extracted from the "raw data".

**First iteration:** With the passage under consideration being located in the Book of Isaiah, the first logical iteration in the process is to focus on the "data" therein. The recorded "data" for the Book of Isaiah indicate four explicitly identified entities and perhaps as many as four additional unidentified entities being referred to as עֶבֶדְיָ. However, this is still an inadequate sample of "data" to be used in the next stage of the *Scientific Method*, and a sharper focus is required.

**Second iteration:** It stands to reason that, since the passage being studied is one of the *Four Servant Songs*, the next iteration in the process should focus the search for useful "data" on the general area in the Book of Isaiah that contains these passages, namely, Chapters 41-54. Table III.B-1 shows the 13 instances of עֶבֶדְיָ that are present in this portion of the Book of Isaiah. Of these 13 instances, in eight cases only one entity is explicitly identified as עֶבֶדְיָ, namely, *Israel*; in one case עֶבֶדְיָ can be positively identified as *Israel* from the context; and the remaining four cases, including the two from the *Fourth Servant Song*, do not have an explicit reference to a specific entity. The passages in which the servant is explicitly identified as *Israel* are (highlighting added for emphasis throughout this document unless stated otherwise):

**Isaiah 41:8-9** - (8) But you, Israel, are My servant [עַבְדִּי], Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham My friend. (9) You whom I have taken from the ends of the earth, and called you from its farthest corners, and said to you, "you are My servant [עַבְדִּי]; I have chosen you and I [will] not cast you away".

**Isaiah 44:1-2,21** - (1) Yet hear now, O Jacob My servant [עַבְדִּי], and Israel, whom I have chosen. Thus says the Lord your Maker, and He who formed you from the womb shall help you. (2) Fear not, My servant [עַבְדִּי] Jacob, and Jeshurun whom I have chosen.

(21) Remember these, O Jacob and Israel, for you are My servant [עַבְדִּי]; I have formed you; you are MY SERVANT [עַבְדִּי], O Israel, you shall not be forgotten of Me.

**Isaiah 45:4** - For the sake of My servant [עַבְדִּי] Jacob, and Israel My chosen one, I called to you by your name.

**Isaiah 49:3** - And [God] said to me: "you are My servant [עַבְדִּי], O Israel in whom I will be glorified!"

The one case in which *Israel* is identified from the context is (lead verse included to show context):

**Isaiah 43:1,10** – (1) And now, so said the Lord, your Creator, O Jacob, and the One Who formed you, O Israel, "Do not fear, for I have redeemed you, and I called by your name, you are Mine.

(10) "You are My witnesses," says the Lord, "and My servant [עַבְדִּי] whom I chose," in order that you know and believe Me, and understand that I am He; before Me no god was formed and after Me none shall be.

These eight cases and the one case (Isaiah 43:10) where the context provides a positive identification of *Israel* as God's servant, combine to form a useful sample of "data", which produces another data element:

**Data Element #2:** Nine instances located within the portion of the Book of Isaiah that includes the four Servant Songs – Isaiah 41:8,9, 43:10, 44:1,2,21(2x), 45:4, 49:3 – positively identify the servant as *Israel*.

Finally, the subject in the two adjacent chapters to the *Fourth Servant Song* – Isaiah 52 [from verse 1 through verse 12] and Isaiah 54 [in its entirety] – is indisputably the restored and redeemed nation of *Israel*. This generates another data element from this portion of the Book of Isaiah:

**Data Element #3:** *Israel* is the subject of the two chapters that surround the *Fourth Servant Song*.

Data Elements 1, 2, &3 comprise the set of "data" (or observations) with which it is now possible to proceed to the *Generalization* stage of the *Scientific Method* and formulate a hypothesis concerning the identity of the servant in Isaiah's *Fourth Servant Song*.

This is the hypothesis for the current analysis:

☆ **Hypothesis:** *Israel* is the servant in the Fourth Servant Song.

Since our hypothesis is only a preliminary identification of the servant as *Israel*, this proposed explanation must now be tested, which is done in the *Verification* stage of the *Scientific Method* using a verse-by-verse analysis.

### C. Analysis of Isaiah 52:13-15

Here starts the *Verification* stage of the *Scientific Method*. The preliminary identification of the servant as *Israel* has been postulated, and now it must be tested, using evidence from the Hebrew Bible as well as from the historical record, to validate whether *Israel* = **servant** "fits" into the context. A correct interpretation of the text is facilitated by knowing who the "speakers" are as one proceeds through the *Fourth Servant Song*. In the opening passage, Isaiah 52:13-15, it is God speaking through Isaiah, who conveys His message.

#### ISAIAH 52:13

Isaiah	King James Version Translation	Jewish Translation from the Hebrew	Hebrew Text	ישעיה
52:13	Behold, <b>my servant</b> shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high.	Behold, <b>My servant</b> shall prosper; he shall be exalted and lifted up, and he shall be very high.	הִנֵּה יִשְׁכִּיל עַבְדִּי יָרוּם וְנִשְׂא וְגָבַהּ :מְאֹד	נב, יג

The highlighted terms are the Hebrew word עַבְדִּי and its respective translations. The two English renditions of the verse are similar. Viewed in the context of the current segment, Isaiah prophesies that God's servant, *Israel*, will be exalted, an event that will cause much surprise among the (Gentile) nations.

That the servant is spoken of in the singular is not an issue here in terms of whether the servant can only be a single individual or may be a compound entity, such as a nation. To wit, as can be seen from the context and poetic motif surrounding "Isaiah 53", Isaiah refers to the servant (singular), עַבְדִּי, as God's witnesses (plural), עֵדִי, (*eidai*), **My witnesses**, and he utilizes verbs that are conjugated in the 2<sup>nd</sup>-person plural form, תִּדְעוּ וְתֵאֱמִינוּ לִי וְתִבְיֵנוּ, (*teid'u v<sup>e</sup>ta'aminu li v<sup>e</sup>tavinu*), **you will know and believe me, and understand:**

**Isaiah 43:10** – "You are my witnesses [עֵדִי]", says the Lord, "and My servant [עַבְדִּי] whom I have chosen, so that you will know and believe Me, and understand [תִּדְעוּ וְתֵאֱמִינוּ לִי וְתִבְיֵנוּ] that I am He; before Me no god was formed and after Me none shall be."

Similarly, in the 52<sup>nd</sup> and 54<sup>th</sup> chapters, the prophet uses both singular and plural terms when he refers to *Israel* (e.g., Isaiah 52:1-3, Isaiah 54:1). This characteristic is not unique to Isaiah's style, it is rather common throughout the Hebrew Bible (e.g., Hosea 11:1-2,5).

- ☆ **Question:** Does *Israel* (as God's servant) "fit" into Isaiah 52:13?
- ☆ **Answer:** YES!

**ISAIAH 52:14**

Isaiah	King James Version Translation	Jewish Translation from the Hebrew	Hebrew Text	ישעיה
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:	As many wondered about you, "How marred his appearance is from that of a man, and his features from that of people!"	כַּאֲשֶׁר שָׁמְמוּ עָלֶיךָ כְּ-מִשְׁחַת מְאִישׁ מִרְאֵהוּ וְתִאֲרוּ מִבְּנֵי אָדָם :	נב, יד

The two English renditions of the verse are similar, though the Jewish version is clearer on who is speaking, and of whom this is being said. It is also worth noting that, in several Christian renditions, a subtle contextual change in this verse is effected by switching the pronoun from **you** to **him**, an action that is acknowledged via a footnote by some (e.g., NIV, RSV).

In the previous verse, Isaiah prophesies that, in the end, *Israel* will prosper and take its rightful place in God's plan. Here, in verse 14, the prophet, still speaking for God, describes how the (Gentile) nations habitually looked down upon [the nation of] *Israel*; people who were thought of as being disfigured and "sub-human", people whose God was not with them. Still being the narrator here and speaking for God, Isaiah quotes what the (Gentile) nations will be saying about *Israel* in their astonishment. The dismayed (Gentile) nations will see a people, thought to be disfigured and "sub-human", become exalted and successful, a people who have God with them and not against them (e.g., Isaiah 52:9-10). Isaiah reassures his people, *Israel*, that those who had such visions of them will be stunned when they see that *Israel* is the one who is exalted in the end.

- ☆ **Question:** Does *Israel* (as God's servant) "fit" into Isaiah 52:14?
- ☆ **Answer:** YES!

**ISAIAH 52:15**

Isaiah	King James Version Translation	Jewish Translation from the Hebrew	Hebrew Text	ישעיה
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.	So shall he cause many nations to be startled; kings shall shut their mouths because of him, because that which had not been told to them they saw, and that which they had not heard they perceived.	כִּן יִזֶּה גּוֹיִם רַבִּים עָלָיו יִקְפְּצוּ מְלָכִים פִּיהֶם כִּי אֲשֶׁר לֹא-סִפֵּר לָהֶם רְאוּ וְאֲשֶׁר לֹא-שָׁמְעוּ הִתְבּוֹנְנוּ :	נב, טו

The highlighted terms are the Hebrew word יִזֶּה and its respective translations. Except for the discrepancy between the Jewish and KJV renditions of the Hebrew term יִזֶּה (*yazeh*) as shall he cause ... to be startled and shall he sprinkle,



respectively, the two English translations of the verse are similar. The discrepancy on **הִזָּח** is significant and, therefore, further analysis is required.

The root verb **הִזָּח** (*NUN-ZAYin-HEH*), which can take on any of the meanings **[to] sprinkle, [to] shake, [to] drip**, appears in the Hebrew Bible on 24 occasions in various conjugations, with and without prepositions, all of which are shown in Table III.C-1.

**Table III.C-1 – Applications of the verb **הִזָּח** in the Hebrew Bible**

Hebrew word	Transliteration	Translation	#	What Is Sprinkled?	References	
1	<b>הִזָּח</b>	<i>yIZEH</i>	will have been/has been sprinkled	2	blood	Leviticus 6:20(2x)
2	<b>וַיִּז</b>	<i>v<sup>e</sup>YEIZ</i>	and ... was sprinkled	1	blood	Isaiah 63:3
3	<b>וַיִּז</b>	<i>va'YIZ</i>	and ... was sprinkled	1	blood	2Kings 9:33
4	<b>וְהִזִּיתָ</b>	<i>v<sup>e</sup>hizeItah</i>	and you shall sprinkle	1	blood & oil	Exodus 29:21
5	<b>וְהִזָּח</b>	<i>v<sup>e</sup>hizAH</i>	and he shall sprinkle	13	blood	Leviticus 4:6,17, 5:9, 14:7,16,27,51,16:14,15,19 Numbers 19:4,18,19
6	<b>וּמְזַח</b>	<i>u'mAZEH</i>	and [the one who] sprinkles	1	water	Numbers 19:21
7	<b>הִזָּח</b>		he shall sprinkle	1	blood	Leviticus 16:14
8	<b>הִזָּח</b>	<i>yaZEH</i>	<b>he shall [do what?]</b>	1	<b>not specified</b>	<b>Isaiah 52:15</b>
9	<b>וַיִּז</b>	<i>va'YAZ</i>	and he sprinkled	2	blood	Leviticus 8:11,30
10	<b>הִזָּח</b>	<i>hAZEH</i>	Sprinkle! (imperative)	1	water	Numbers 8:7

As Table III.C-1 shows, in all but one of the 24 applications, the substance that was, or was to be, sprinkled is explicitly specified in the respective passages. The two instances in which the word in question, **הִזָּח**, appears require a closer look.

The Jewish and KJV renditions of the passage with the first of these two cases (#7 in the table) are:

**Leviticus 16:14** - And he shall take of the blood of the bull, and sprinkle it with his finger upon the Ark cover on the eastern side; and in front of the Ark cover **shall he sprinkle [הִזָּח]** with his finger **from the blood** seven times.

**Leviticus 16:14(KJV)** - And he shall take of the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it with his finger upon the mercy seat eastward; and before the mercy seat **shall he sprinkle of the blood** with his finger seven times.

Both translations not only state that the blood from a slaughtered bull is to be sprinkled, but also that it is to be sprinkled with the (Priest's) finger upon the cover of the Ark. With Leviticus 16:14 as the "model", the KJV rendition of Isaiah 52:15 has [the servant doing the sprinkling, but there is no mention of *what* will be sprinkled or *where and how* this "sprinkling" will be done. The question is: *Which translation of Isaiah 52:15, the Jewish translation or the KJV translation, is the correct one?*

The first clue is provided by the "data" shown in Table III.C-1, where it is clear that item #8 is different from the other 23 cases in the collection. Noting that, in general, the act of sprinkling is a direct result of a shaking motion by the agent who does the sprinkling, it is reasonable to posit that nothing is being sprinkled as it concerns item #8, which is the case of Isaiah 52:15. Rather, that the appearance of this entity, עֲבָדָי, is what will cause those who are present to shake or tremble, perhaps from fear – a common reaction to being startled or surprised. After all, the term in question, הִזְיֶה, is a verb in the *hif'il* stem, an active causative form of the *pa'al/QAL* stem in Hebrew grammar, which means that it reflects an outcome caused by the action of an external agent.

A second clue comes from two Biblical personal names that derive from the root verb הִזְיֶה – לְיִזְיֵאל (Y<sup>e</sup>zi'EL) son of אֶזְמַוֶּת (AZMAVET) [1Chronicles 12:3] and הִזְיֶה (yiziYAH) son of פְּרָעֶשׁ (Par'OSH) [Ezra 10:15]. As is commonplace with many Hebrew names, each of these two names combines a title of God with a verb or noun that describes some accolade, action, or attribute associated with Him. The possible meanings of the names לְיִזְיֵאל and הִזְיֶה are similar (the bracketed portion applies to the latter): **God will sprinkle [me], God will shake [me], God will startle [me]**, all of which are plausible. However, since Hebrew names that involve a title of God generally project a positive message, perhaps the most likely meaning for these names is “**God will sprinkle [me]**”, which raises the obvious question: *What is it that will be sprinkled by God?* One idea is that the sprinkling is a metaphor, or a euphemism, for “anointing”, i.e., being chosen or selected for some mission in a manner similar to the way some prophets described the way they received their commission [e.g., Isaiah 49:1,5, 61:1; Jeremiah 1:5]. Another possible interpretation is that whatever will be “sprinkled” is something intangible, such as knowledge and wisdom, rather than a physical substance.

Although both of the above explanations work well for the names, they do not fit into the context of Isaiah 52:15 since no physical matter that will be sprinkled by the servant on the many (Gentile) nations, such as blood, oil, or water is explicitly mentioned. The literal scenario, that the servant is the one who will be doing that which is described with the verb הִזְיֶה and the many (Gentile) nations are those who will be affected by this action, leads to the conclusion that the Jewish rendition of הִזְיֶה in Isaiah 52:15 as, **shall he cause ... to be startled** is the proper translation.<sup>5</sup>

The astonished, surprised, and dismayed (Gentile) nations will see *Israel* become exalted and successful, a people who have God with them and not

<sup>5</sup> It should be noted that, while the KJV and most other Christian Bibles mistranslate this term, several Christian translations either agree with the Jewish rendition (e.g., AMP ["startle"], RSV ["startle"], Darby ["astonish"]) or acknowledge it via a footnote (e.g., NIV ["sprinkle"; footnote: Hebrew; Septuagint so will many nations marvel at him], NLT ["startle"; footnote: Or cleanse], NKJV ["sprinkle"; footnote: Or startle]).

against them (e.g., Isaiah 52:9-10). As God's spokesperson, Isaiah reassures his people, *Israel*, that those who had such visions of them will be stunned when they see that *Israel* is the one who is exalted in the end.

The intensity of the surprise these (Gentile) nations will experience will not only startle them, it will cause them to be dumbfounded. They will perceive events that were previously beyond their imagination, and their shock upon witnessing the exaltation of *Israel* is foretold in the Hebrew Bible:

**Isaiah 41:11** – Behold, all those who were incensed against you shall be ashamed and confounded; they who quarreled with you shall be as naught, and be lost.

**Jeremiah 16:19-21** – (19) O Lord, my strength, and my fortress, and my refuge in the day of affliction, the Gentiles shall come to You from the ends of the earth, and shall say: "Only lies have our fathers handed down to us, emptiness in which there is no benefit." (20) Can a man make gods for himself, and they are no gods? (21) Therefore, behold I let them know; at this time I will let them know My power and My might, and they shall know that My Name is the Lord.

**Micah 7:15-16** – (15) As in the days of your coming out of the land of Egypt will I show him wonders. (16) Nations shall see and be ashamed of all of their might; they shall lay a hand upon their mouth, their ears shall become deaf.

**Psalms 48:5-7** – (5) For behold, the kings have assembled; they have passed together. (6) They saw, so they wondered; they were startled, yea, they were bewildered. (7) A quaking seized them there, pangs like [those of] a woman in confinement.

In sharp contrast to the reaction of the (Gentile) nations, the prophets never foretell that the Jewish people will ever proclaim shock or will need to admit a mistake to the (Gentile) nations. In fact, just the opposite is prophesied:

**Zechariah 8:13,23** - (13) And it shall come to pass that, [just] as you were a curse among the nations, O House of Judah and House of Israel, so will I save you, and you shall be a blessing; fear not, may your hands be strengthened!  
(23) So said the Lord of hosts: "In those days, when ten men of all the languages of the nations shall take hold of the garment of a Jewish man, saying: 'Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you'."

The Hebrew Bible makes it very clear who made the mistake. The mistaken ones are the (Gentile) nations, not the Jewish people!

☆ **Question:** Does *Israel* (as God's servant) "fit" into Isaiah 52:15?  
☆ **Answer:** YES!

#### D. Interim Summary – Isaiah 52:13-15

The following hypothesis was formulated with the help of the *Scientific Method*:

☆ **Hypothesis:** *Israel* is the servant in the Fourth Servant Song.

In this segment, the hypothesis was tested on the opening three-verse segment of the *Fourth Servant Song*. The results of the analysis of these three verses, Isaiah 52:13-15, validate the identification of *Israel* as the servant for this opening passage, are summarized in Table III.D-1.

**Table III.D-1 – Summary of results from Verification stage: Isaiah 52:13-15**

Isaiah	Jewish Translation from the Hebrew	Who Is The "Speaker"?	Does Hypothesis "Israel = Servant" Fit?
52:13	Behold, My servant shall prosper; he shall be exalted and lifted up, and he shall be very high.	God	YES
52:14	As many wondered about you, "How marred his appearance is from that of a man, and his features from that of people!"	God	YES
52:15	So shall he cause many nations to be startled; kings shall shut their mouths because of him, because that which had not been told to them they saw, and that which they had not heard they perceived.	God	YES

**IV. SEGMENT 2 – ISAIAH 53:1-4**

**A. The Hebrew Text with Jewish and Christian Translations**

Side-by-side English renditions and the Hebrew text of the first portion of the *Fourth Servant Song*, Isaiah 53:1-4, are displayed in Table IV.A-1. The King James Version (KJV) translation is shown with pointers to cross-referenced passages in the New Testament. These references are taken from the New American Standard Bible (NASB). However, the corresponding passages below the table are quoted from the KJV for consistency.

**Table IV.A-1 – Isaiah 53:1-4**

Isaiah	King James Version Translation	Jewish Translation from the Hebrew	Hebrew Text	ישעיה
53:1	Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed? <sup>(i)</sup>	Who would have believed our report, and to whom was the arm of the Lord revealed?	מי האמין לשמענתנו וזרוע יהוה על-מי נגלתה:	נג,א
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.	And he came up like a sapling before it, and like a root out from dry ground; he had no features and no splendor; and we saw him that he had no appearance; and how could we desire him?	ויעל כיונק לפניו וכשרש מארץ ציח לא-תאר לו ולא הדר ונראהו ולא-מראה ונחמדהו:	נג,ב
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. <sup>(ii)</sup>	He was despised and forsaken by men; a man of pains, and accustomed to illness, and as one from whom we would hide our faces; he was despised, and we had no regard for him.	נבזה וחדל אישים איש מכאבות וידוע חלי וכמסתתר פנים ממנו נבזה ולא חשבנהו:	נג,ג

<b>53:4</b>	Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. <sup>(iii)</sup>	Indeed, he bore our illnesses and our pains – he has carried them, yet we had regarded him plagued, smitten by God, and oppressed.	אָכַן חָלֵינוּ הוּא נָשָׂא וּמְכַאֲבֵינוּ סָבָלָם וְאַנְחָנוּ חֲשַׁבְנָהוּ נְגוּעַ מִכֹּה אֱלֹהִים וּמַעֲנָה:	נג, ד
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- (i) John 12:38(KJV) – That the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?  
Romans 10:16(KJV) – But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?
- (ii) Luke 18:31-33(KJV) – (31) Then he took unto him the twelve, and said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished. (32) For he shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spitted on: (33) And they shall scourge him, and put him to death: and the third day he shall rise again. [See also Mark 10:33-34; John 1:10-11]
- (iii) Matthew 8:17(KJV) – That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses.

## B. Analysis of Isaiah 53:1-4

An introductory "thumbnail sketch" of scenes out of Jewish history should help set the stage for understanding the next eight verses. This summary puts into perspective the confession of guilt and admission of unjust mistreatment of *Israel* by the (Gentile) nations as they begin to realize *Israel's* proper place and role in history.

Throughout their exile, the social ranking of Jews was often placed beneath that of domesticated animals. Jews have been demonized and vilified in terms of much non-human imagery, which caused Jewish blood and life to become cheap commodities (as described in another essay,<sup>6</sup> where it was demonstrated how this behavior can be traced to teachings of the New Testament). The following examples from Jewish history illustrate this:

- ➔ **Jews have been pictured with large hooked noses and hunched backs, and perceived as having an odd, characteristic Jewish aroma.**
- ➔ **Jews have been accused of sacrificing Christian children to the devil, who allegedly controls them, and using the blood of these children in the preparations for Passover ("Blood Libel").<sup>7</sup>**
- ➔ **Jews have been accused of poisoning wells and desecrating hosts.**
- ➔ **The skin of Jewish victims has been used to make lampshades, and the hair to weave fabric.**

To those who have hated and persecuted the Jews, their victims have been beyond human semblance. Because the Jewish people have endured so much

<sup>6</sup> *The Anti-Jewish New Testament* - <http://thejewishhome.org/counter/AntiJewishNT.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> See, for example, *Two Christian myths against Jews: Blood libel & host desecration; 1144 CE to present time* - [http://www.religioustolerance.org/jud\\_blib2.htm](http://www.religioustolerance.org/jud_blib2.htm)

suffering throughout their history, the description of the Jewish visage as being scarred from all the suffering while in their host countries is certainly an applicable metaphor. In fact, given the many medical experiments performed on Jews by the Nazis during the Holocaust, the "marred appearance" (Isaiah 52:14) of the victims can be understood even in the literal sense.

Against this backdrop, the *Verification* stage of the *Scientific Method* resumes with testing the hypothesis on the four verses in the current segment of the *Fourth Servant Song*, Isaiah 53:1-4. Evidence from the Hebrew Bible and from the historical record is used to check whether *Israel* = **servant** "fits" into the context.

The importance of knowing the identity of the "speakers" was pointed out at the start of the analysis. In the opening passage, Isaiah 52:13-15, it was the "voice" of God as recorded by Isaiah. As Chapter 53 opens, an abrupt change occurs in the "voice". From Isaiah 53:1 through Isaiah 53:8, the prophet conveys the words of the (Gentile) nations, i.e., the text reads as if it were coming from a spokesperson for, or the leaders of, the (Gentile) nations.

**ISAIAH 53:1**

Isaiah	King James Version Translation	Jewish Translation from the Hebrew	Hebrew Text	ישעיה
53:1	Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?	Who would have believed our report, and to whom was the arm of the Lord revealed?	מי האמין לשמעֵתנו וזרוע יהוה על-מי נגלתה:	נגא

Aside from some variation in tenses, there are no significant differences between the two translations.

This is the opening verse of a passage in which the (Gentile) nations contrast their former scornful attitude toward the Jewish people (Isaiah 53:1-3) with their new realization of *Israel*'s grandeur (Isaiah 53:4-7), and wherein the leaders of these (Gentile) nations express the magnitude of their shock at the received news with the information about *Israel*'s greatness. Consequently, the answer to the opening question in this verse "Who would have believed our report?" is "No one would have believed it.", because the report was too incredible to be believed.

The second question in this verse "to whom was the arm of the Lord revealed?" contains an anthropomorphic reference to the "arm of the Lord", which requires further comment before it can be answered.<sup>8</sup>

The Hebrew Bible contains scores of metaphoric references to God's arm, hand, and finger, among others, and these generally represent God's direct actions and

<sup>8</sup> A detailed investigation of the phrase "the arm of the Lord", as used in the Hebrew Bible, is available in the essay "*Arm of the Lord*" – *Revealing the Truth and Exposing the Lie* - <http://thejewishhome.org/counter/Arm.pdf>

His acts of vindication. Such terms are commonly used throughout the Hebrew Bible to point to both the physical and spiritual redemption of the Jewish people from the hands of their oppressors, the (Gentile) nations (see, for example, Exodus 14:31, 15:6; Deuteronomy 4:34, 7:19; Is 51:9, 52:10, 62:8, 63:12; Jeremiah 21:5, 27:5; Ezekiel 20:33,34; Psalms 44:3, 98:1).

*Israel's* redemption and final vindication, witnessed by the surprised and astonished (Gentile) nations, is the central theme of the last 27 chapters in the Book of Isaiah. The two adjacent chapters to Isaiah 53, Chapters 52 and 54, speak of the salvation of the afflicted Jewish people in the presence of their persecutors, the (Gentile) nations:

**Isaiah 52:9-12** – (9) Burst out in song, sing together, O ruins of Jerusalem, for the Lord has comforted His people. He has redeemed Jerusalem. (10) **The Lord has revealed His Holy Arm to the eyes of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God!** (11) Turn away, turn away, get out of there, touch no unclean one; get out of its midst, purify yourselves, you who bear the Lord's vessels. (12) For not with haste shall you go forth and not in a flurry of flight shall you go, for the Lord goes before you, and your rear guard is the God of Israel.

**Isaiah 54:7-10** – (7) "For a small moment have I forsaken you, and with great mercy will I gather you. (8) With a little wrath did I hide My countenance for a moment from you, and **with everlasting kindness will I have compassion on you**", said your Redeemer, the Lord. (9) "For this is to Me [as] the waters of Noah, as I swore that the waters of Noah shall never again pass over the earth, so have I sworn neither to be wroth with you nor to rebuke you. (10) **For the mountains shall depart and the hills totter, but My kindness shall not depart from you, neither shall the Covenant of My Peace totter**", said the Lord, Who has compassion on you.

Therefore, the answer to the second question in the verse "to whom was the arm of the Lord revealed?" is "To *Israel*, in the presence of the (Gentile) nations." In other words, *Israel* merited the manifestation of God's power; whereas the (Gentile) nations never earned it on their own merit.

☆ **Question:** Does *Israel* (as God's servant) "fit" into Isaiah 53:1?  
 ☆ **Answer:** YES!

**ISAIAH 53:2**

Isaiah	King James Version Translation	Jewish Translation from the Hebrew	Hebrew Text	ישעיה
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.	And he came up like a sapling before it, and like a root out from dry ground; he had no features and no splendor; and we saw him and he had no appearance; and how could we desire him?	וַיַּעַל כַּיּוֹנֵק לְפָנָיו וְכִשְׂרָשׁ מֵאֶרֶץ צִיָּה לֹא-תֵאֵר לוֹ וְלֹא הָדָר וְנִרְאֶהוּ וְלֹא-מְרֹאֶה וְנִחְמְדָהוּ:	נגב

A comparison of the two English renditions reveals significant differences in the tenses of verbs. Namely, the KJV shows verbs in the future tense, whereas the corresponding Hebrew verbs are conjugated in the past tense. Since Isaiah

52:15 clearly indicates that the next passage is spoken at some time in the future from a past tense perspective, i.e., the future speaker will be “looking back” when saying this, the KJV translation is in error by projecting the context of this verse into the future.

Isaiah 53:2 begins to describe, via metaphoric language, the reasons for the disbelief expressed by the (leaders of the Gentile) nations in the preceding verse. Throughout their harsh and dangerous exile, the Jewish people struggled like a young tree that is trying to grow on parched land. Examples of the imagery of a tree struggling to grow in dry earth as a metaphor for *Israel's* struggle to survive in exile are found elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible:

**Ezekiel 19:10-13 – (10) Your mother is like a vine in your likeness, planted by the water, fruitful and full of branches from the abundance of water. (11) And it had sturdy rods for the scepters of rulers, and its stature was exalted among the thick branches, and it could be seen because of its height with its multitude of tendrils. (12) But it was plucked up in fury and it was cast down to the ground, and the east wind dried up its fruit; its sturdy rods were broken and withered – fire consumed them. (13) And now it is planted in the wilderness, in a dry and thirsty ground.**

However, the future will be different. By employing similar metaphors, the prophets foretell that things will change:

**Isaiah 60:21 – And your people, all of them righteous, shall inherit the land forever, the scion of My planting, the work of My hands in which I will glory.**

**Hosea 14:6-8 – (6) I will be like dew to Israel, he shall blossom like the lily, and strike his roots like the [roots of trees of] Lebanon. (7) His [young] branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be like the olive tree, and his aroma like the Lebanon. (8) Those who dwell in his shade shall return; they shall revive like grain and blossom like the vine; their fragrance shall be like the wine of Lebanon.**

**Amos 9:15 – "And I will plant them on their land, and they shall no longer be uprooted from their land that I have given to them," said the Lord your God.**

This is a rather different picture from that which was described by the (Gentile) nations in Isaiah 53:2. Instead of a beaten and struggling people, *Israel* will be an exalted and successful people.

☆ **Question:** Does *Israel* (as God's servant) "fit" into Isaiah 53:2?

☆ **Answer:** YES!

**ISAIAH 53:3**

Isaiah	King James Version Translation	Jewish Translation from the Hebrew	Hebrew Text	ישעיה
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.	He was despised and forsaken by men; a man of pains, and accustomed to illness, and as one from whom we would hide our faces; he was despised, and we had no regard for him.	נְבִיָּה וְחָדַל אִישִׁים אִישׁ מְכַאֲבוֹת וְיָדוּעַ חָלִי וְכִמְסַתֵּר פָּנָיו מִמֶּנּוּ נְבִיָּה וְלֹא חָשְׁבָנָהוּ:	נג,ג



A comparison of the two English renditions reveals significant differences, as was the case with the previous verse. In this verse, the KJV shows some verbs in the present tense, yet the corresponding Hebrew verbs are conjugated in the past tense. There are also some issues of incorrect translation, although these do not impact the context to the extent that the incorrect renditions of the tenses do. In terms of the timeline, as defined in the previous verse, the KJV usage of the verbs is incorrect.

Similar to this verse, *Israel* is described elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible as being despised:

**Isaiah 49:7** – Thus said the Lord, the Redeemer of Israel, his Holy One, **to him who is despised of men, to him who is abhorred by nations, to him who is a slave of rulers, ...**

**Nehemiah 3:36** – Hearken, our God, for **we have been despised**, and return their reproach upon their head, and make them despised in a land of captivity.

*Israel* is also described as being forsaken:

**Isaiah 60:15** – Instead of your **being forsaken and hated** without a passerby, I will make you an everlasting pride, the joy of every generation.

*Israel* is described as being afflicted, with the adversities often likened to injuries and diseases:

**Isaiah 1:5-6** – (5) **Why are you beaten** when you continue to rebel? **Every head is [afflicted] with illness and every heart with malaise.** (6) **From the sole of the foot to the head, nothing in him is whole; only wounds and contusions and fresh sores; they have not been treated, and they have not been bandaged, and [the wound] has not been softened with oil.**

**Jeremiah 10:19** – **Woe is to me for my hurt; my wound is acute**, and I said [to myself], **"This is but an illness, I will bear it".**

Isaiah 53:3 describes the one whom the (Gentile) nations characterize as having been despised, as being a "man of pains" who is accustomed to illness, and similar pictures were drawn elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible. The lesson here is that all this has been going on for long periods of time, for centuries. Therefore, these descriptions can only be of a people, not of a single individual.

☆ **Question:** Does *Israel* (as God's servant) "fit" into Isaiah 53:3?  
☆ **Answer:** YES!

A change in perspective starts to emerge from the next set of four verses, which are still spoken in the "voice" of the (Gentile) nations' leaders. The leaders of the (Gentile) nations begin to realize that *Israel* had suffered because of them.

**ISAIAH 53:4**

Isaiah	King James Version Translation	Jewish Translation from the Hebrew	Hebrew Text	ישעיה
53:4	Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.	Indeed, he bore our illnesses and our pains – he has carried them, yet we had regarded him plagued, smitten by God, and oppressed.	אָכֵן חָלֵינוּ הוּא נָשָׂא וּמְכַאֲבֵינוּ סִבְלָם וְאַנְחָנוּ חֲשַׁבְנָהוּ נְגוּעַ מִכָּה אֱלֹהִים וּמַעֲנָה:	ג, ד

Here, the KJV suddenly reverts to the past tense, which makes it somewhat more consistent with the Jewish translation and with the Hebrew text, yet raises some questions regarding its translations of the previous three verses.

As noted at the end of the analysis of the previous verse, the leaders of the (Gentile) nations are beginning to see their role in the suffering of *Israel*. These leaders may have been saying something such as the following:

*We despised the Jewish people because we saw nothing worthwhile in them. Eventually, we pushed our own troubles on them, using them as a convenient scapegoat, thereby allowing us to escape our problems. We now realize that, in blaming the Jewish people for our troubles, we have sinned and caused them much pain - they suffered directly from our sins. As we saw them suffer, we told them that God was the one who caused this pain, it was their own fault. Yet, in truth, they suffered from us alone, not so much because of God.* [The source for this is unknown.]

The prophet Jeremiah alludes to the actions of the (Gentile) nations when he speaks of the redemption of God's servant, *Israel*:

**Jeremiah 30:10,17 – (10) "And you, fear not, My servant Jacob," says the Lord, "and do not be dismayed, O Israel, for behold, I am saving you from afar and your seed from the land of their captivity, and Jacob shall again be at peace and tranquil, and none will frighten him."  
(17) "For I will bring healing to you, and of your wounds I will heal you," says the Lord, "for they called you an outcast [saying], 'she is Zion for whom no one cares'."**

The (Gentile) nations acknowledge that *Israel* was the victim who bore the dire penalties which the iniquities of others have incurred. The Jewish people have been forced to carry ills and pains caused by the direct actions of the (Gentile) nations. They have borne the consequences of the (Gentile) nations' sickness, and have suffered (and continue to) suffer because of them. The (Gentile) nations have held that the Jewish people are cursed by God, and they were (and many still are) determined to see that they suffer the consequences of this alleged curse. Although it cannot be denied that some of *Israel's* suffering was due to its own transgressions of Torah, the (Gentile) nations, by “going overboard” with their misdeeds, inflicted most of the suffering on *Israel*, and not God punishing *Israel* for its sins. God has, indeed, used the (Gentile) nations as a “rod” against *Israel* for its misdeeds, but He is not pleased with the way they have exceeded their “license” in this function (e.g., Zechariah 1:15).

☆ **Question:** Does *Israel* (as God's servant) "fit" into Isaiah 53:4?  
 ☆ **Answer:** YES!

### C. Interim Summary – Isaiah 52:13-53:4

Using a verse-by-verse analysis of the Hebrew text and a correct translation from the Hebrew, testing of the hypothesis formulated in Section III.B continued via the *Verification* stage of the *Scientific Method*.

A new "voice" appears in Isaiah 53:1 – the collective "voice" of the (Gentile) nations or, perhaps, the "voice" of a spokesperson for them or their leaders. Given this change in "speakers", and based on their contextual consistency with the teachings of the Hebrew Bible and the historical record, the current segment continues to confirm the validity of the hypothesis that *Israel*, as God's servant, is the subject in the *Fourth Servant Song*. The cumulative results obtained thus far are summarized in Table IV.C-1.

**Table IV.C-1 – Summary of results from Verification stage: Isaiah 52:13-53:4**

Isaiah	Jewish Translation from the Hebrew	Who Is The "Speaker"?	Does Hypothesis " <i>Israel</i> = Servant" Fit?
52:13	Behold, My servant shall prosper; he shall be exalted and lifted up, and he shall be very high.	God	YES
52:14	As many wondered about you, "How marred his appearance is from that of a man, and his features from that of people!"	God	YES
52:15	So shall he cause many nations to be startled; kings shall shut their mouths because of him, because that which had not been told to them they saw, and that which they had not heard they perceived.	God	YES
53:1	Who would have believed our report, and to whom was the arm of the Lord revealed?	The (Gentile) Nations	YES
53:2	And he came up like a sapling before it, and like a root out from dry ground; he had no features and no splendor; and we saw him that he had no appearance; and how could we desire him?	The (Gentile) Nations	YES
53:3	He was despised and forsaken by men; a man of pains, and accustomed to illness, and as one from whom we would hide our faces; he was despised, and we had no regard for him.	The (Gentile) Nations	YES
53:4	Indeed, he bore our illnesses and our pains – he has carried them, yet we had regarded him plagued, smitten by God, and oppressed.	The (Gentile) Nations	YES

### V. SEGMENT 3 – ISAIAH 53:5-8

#### A. The Hebrew Text with Jewish and Christian Translations

Side-by-side English renditions and the Hebrew text of the next portion of the *Fourth Servant Song*, Isaiah 53:5-8, are displayed in Table V.A-1. The King James Version (KJV) translation is shown with pointers to cross-referenced passages in the New Testament. These references are taken from the New

American Standard Bible (NASB). However, the corresponding passages below the table are quoted from the KJV for consistency.

**Table V.A-1 – Isaiah 53:5-8**

Isaiah	King James Version Translation	Jewish Translation from the Hebrew	Hebrew Text	ישעיה
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. <sup>(i)</sup>	But he was pained because of our transgressions, crushed because of our iniquities; the chastisement of our welfare was upon him, and with his wounds we were healed.	וְהוּא מְחֻלָּל מִפְשָׁעֵינוּ מִדְּכָא מֵעוֹ נִתְיָנוּ מוֹסֵר שְׁלוֹמֵנוּ עָלָיו וּבְחִבְרָתוֹ נִרְפָּא-לָנוּ:	נגה
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.	We all went astray like sheep, we have turned, each one on his way, and the Lord inflicted upon him [or, accepted his prayers for] the iniquity of all of us.	כָּלֵנוּ כְּצֹאן תַעֲיִינוּ אִישׁ לְדַרְכּוֹ פָּנִינוּ וַיְהוּה הַפְּגִיעַ בּוֹ אֶת עוֹן כָּלֵנוּ:	נגו
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. <sup>(ii)</sup>	He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he would not open his mouth; like a lamb to the slaughter he would be brought, and like a ewe that is mute before her shearers, and he would not open his mouth.	נִגְשׁ וְהוּא נֶעְנֶה וְלֹא יִפְתַּח-פִּיו כְּשֶׁה יּוֹבֵל וּכְרַחֵל לִפְנֵי גֹזְזֵיהָ נֹאֲלָמָה וְלֹא יִפְתַּח פִּיו:	נגז
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.	From imprisonment and from judgment he was taken, and his generation who shall tell? For he was cut off from the land of the living; because of the transgression of my people, a plague came upon them.	מֵעֶצֶר וּמִמִּשְׁפָּט לָקַח וְאֶת-דֹּרוֹ מִי יִשׁוּחַח כִּי נִגְזַר מֵאַרְצַ חַיִּים מִפְּשַׁע עַמִּי נִגַּע לָמוֹ:	נגח

(i) Romans 4:25(KJV) – Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.

1Corinthians 15:3(KJV) – For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures;

Hebrews 5:8(KJV) – Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered;

Hebrews 9:28(KJV) – So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.

1Peter 2:24-25(KJV) – (24) Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed. (25) For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.

(ii) Matthew 26:63(KJV) – But Jesus held his peace, And the high priest answered and said unto him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God.

Matthew 27:12-14(KJV) – (12) And when he was accused of the chief priests and elders, he answered nothing. (13) Then said Pilate unto him, Hearest thou not how many things they witness against thee? (14) And he answered him to never a word; insomuch that the governor marveled greatly.

Mark 14:61(KJV) – But he held his peace, and answered nothing. Again the high priest asked him, and said unto him, Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?

Mark 15:5(KJV) – But Jesus yet answered nothing; so that Pilate marveled.

Luke 23:9(KJV) – Then he questioned with him in many words; but he answered him nothing.

John 19:9(KJV) – And went again into the judgment hall, and saith unto Jesus, Whence art thou? But Jesus gave him no answer.

Acts 8:32-33(KJV) – (32) The place of the scripture which he read was this, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth: (33) In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth.

## B. Analysis of Isaiah 53:5-8

The *Verification* stage of the *Scientific Method* resumes with testing the hypothesis on the four verses in the current segment of the *Fourth Servant Song*, Isaiah 53:5-8. Evidence from the Hebrew Bible and from the historical record is used to check whether *Israel* = **servant** "fits" into the context.

The importance of knowing the identity of the "speakers" was pointed out at the start of the analysis. The opening segment of the *Fourth Servant Song*, Isaiah 52:13-15, was in the "voice" of God. As Chapter 53 opens, an abrupt change occurs in the "voice", and now the prophet conveys the words of the (Gentile) nations. In this segment, the (Gentile) nations are still "speaking" and, as they begin to recognize *Israel's* proper place and role in history, they confess their guilt and admit the unjust mistreatment of *Israel* at their hands.

### ISAIAH 53:5

Isaiah	King James Version Translation	Jewish Translation from the Hebrew	Hebrew Text	ישעיה
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.	But he was pained because of our transgressions, crushed because of our iniquities; the chastisement of our welfare was upon him, and with his wounds we were healed.	וְהוּא מְחַלֵּל מִפְּשָׁעֵנוּ מִדָּכָא מִעוֹנֹתֵינוּ מוֹסֵר שְׁלוֹמֵנוּ עָלָיו וּבְחִבְרָתוֹ נִרְפָּא-לָנוּ:	נגה

There are several significant differences between the two translations, which are shown in highlighted form. First is the problem of the expressions **because of** (Jewish rendition) and **for** (KJV rendition), which are not interchangeable here [the corresponding Hebrew prepositions for the two cases are מִן-מִי (*mei-mi*); both are abbreviations of the preposition מִן (*min*), meaning **from, because, of**]. The Jewish rendition relates that the servant was hurt due to the sinful acts of the

(Gentile) nations, i.e., this was caused by the conduct of the (Gentile) nations against the servant, and the effect was his being hurt. The KJV rendition creates the perception that the servant vicariously took on the sins of the people, which caused him, and not them, to bear the consequences. In other words, the preposition “for” in the KJV implies that the servant took on the iniquities of the (Gentile) nations and, thereby, causing their sins to be expiated through his suffering. This idea contradicts what the Hebrew Bible teaches, according to which (human) vicarious atonement is strictly forbidden; each person is responsible for his or her own sins (e.g., Exodus 32:31-33; Numbers 35:33; Deuteronomy 24:16; 2 Kings 14:6; Jeremiah 31:29[30 in Christian Bibles]; Ezekiel 18:4,20; Psalms 49:7-8).

Second, in the closing phrase of the verse, a change in tenses occurs in the KJV relative to the Jewish translation. The KJV has “... we are healed ...”, whereas the Jewish translation has “... we were healed ...”. The application of the root verb, רפא (*RESH-FEI-Alef*), [to] heal, is common in the Hebrew Bible. However, the phrase רפא-לנו (*nirpa-Lanu*) is an idiomatic expression that occurs only once, at Isaiah 53:5. The first word in this phrase, נרפא (*nirpa*), is the 3<sup>rd</sup>-person, singular, masculine, past tense conjugation of the root verb in the *nif’AL* stem (the reflexive and passive form of the simple stem, *QAL*, of the Hebrew verbs), giving it the meaning [he/it] was healed. The second word in the phrase is לנו (*Lanu*), meaning to/for us. Thus, the *literal* translation of the phrase רפא-לנו is [it] was healed for us, referring to an illness, and from which is formed the idiomatic expression that means “we were healed”.

Finally, the KJV and the Jewish translations differ on their respective renditions of a term that derives from the Hebrew collective noun חבורה (*havurah*). The KJV renders it as **stripes** (singular, a **stripe**, meaning a **blow** or a **stroke** [as is imparted by a whip]), while the Jewish translation renders it as **wounds** (singular, a **wound**). Table V.B-1 shows the references to all seven applications of this term in the Hebrew Bible along with their respective correct translations and their translations in the KJV.

**Table V.B-1 – Applications of חבורה/חבורתי (*havurah/haburah*) in the Hebrew Bible<sup>9</sup>**

Hebrew Word	Transliteration	Reference	Correct Translation	KJV Rendition
לחבורתי	<i>l’haburati</i>	Genesis 4:23	for giving me a bruise	to my hurt
חבורה	<i>haburah</i>	Exodus 21:25(2x)	a wound	wound
וחבורה	<i>v’haburah</i>	Isaiah 1:6	and contusions	and bruises
חבורתי	<i>haburotai</i>	Psalms 38:6	my wounds	my wounds
חבורות	<i>haburot</i>	Proverbs 20:30	contusions	the blueness of a wound

<sup>9</sup> This term appears in the Hebrew Bible in two forms with regard to its vowel punctuations, חבורה (*havurah*) and חבורתי (*haburah*), which have identical meanings.

וּבְחִבְרָתוֹ	<i>u'va'havurato</i>	Isaiah 53:5	and with his wounds	and with his stripes
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The information indicates that the KJV rendition in Isaiah 53:5 not only differs from the correct translation, but also is inconsistent with its own renditions of this term in all but one of the other instances in which it appears in the Hebrew Bible (the KJV translation at Proverbs 20:30 is clearly in error since the Hebrew word חֲבִירוֹת (*haburot*) is the plural of חִבְרָה).

The meaning of this verse, with *Israel* as the servant, is consistent with the history of the Jewish people, and with their promised future, as was already shown in the previous segment. The (Gentile) nations realize that their own sickness (perhaps it is the sickness of *anti-Semitism*) became the vehicle for oppressing the Jewish people throughout the years. They brought suffering on the Jews for their own selfish purposes; it was not, as they had claimed, God punishing *Israel* for its own sinful behavior, such as the claim by some (Gentile) nations regarding *Israel's* rejection of Jesus. Whereas the (Gentile) nations had believed that *Israel* was experiencing divine retribution for her sins, they have come to the realization that the suffering of *Israel* was mostly due to the actions and sinfulness of her oppressors. This theme is further developed throughout the Hebrew Bible:

**Jeremiah 10:25 – Pour out Your wrath upon the nations that do not know You and upon the families that have not called in Your name, for they have devoured Jacob and consumed him and destroyed him, and have wasted his dwelling.**

**Jeremiah 50:7 – All who found them devoured them, and their adversaries said, "We are not to blame because they sinned against the Lord, the Abode of justice and the hope of their forefathers – the Lord."**

In the previous segment, it was demonstrated how *Israel* is often characterized in the Hebrew Bible as having been bruised and wounded by the (Gentile) nations. The healing they have experienced may be the end of this anti-Semitism once they will have experienced this magnificent revelation about *Israel*.

An often asked question is: *How will Israel's wounds heal the (Gentile) nations?* In other words, what is the process by which this healing is effected? This is a good question, the answer to which provides additional insight into the eventual redemption of *Israel* and its impact on the (Gentile) nations of the world.

As was noted above, the (Gentile) nations have believed, and many still do, that the wounding and suffering of the Jewish people was inflicted by God because they have been cursed. This is not true. The suffering that was due to Divine retribution is actually part of a "refining" process that will eventually bring about the redemption and higher glory. The wages of disobedience are described in excruciating detail in the "Admonition" [תּוֹכַחַת (*tocheiḥah*) in Hebrew] in the Torah (Leviticus 26:14-43; also Deuteronomy 28:15-68) – the consequences that will befall those who transgress the commandments. This reproof, which has

resulted in wounds and suffering, will lead the people to repent and, as the conclusion of the “Admonition” states (Leviticus 26:40-43), repentance will bring restoration, it will put *Israel* back on the right path, at which time *Israel* will merit to be healed. This is similar to a parent disciplining a child for misdeeds, with the expectation that such behavior is corrected and not repeated in the future.

In the end, when *Israel* merits the arrival of the messianic era, the (Gentile) nations will also benefit – they will be healed of anti-Semitism, idolatry, and other abominations. In other words, *Israel's* suffering will eventually lead to the world's redemption, from which the (Gentile) nations will also benefit.

☆ **Question:** Does *Israel* (as God's servant) "fit" into Isaiah 53:5?

☆ **Answer:** YES!

**ISAIAH 53:6**

Isaiah	King James Version Translation	Jewish Translation from the Hebrew	Hebrew Text	ישעיה
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.	We all went astray like sheep, we have turned, each one on his way, and the Lord inflicted upon him [or, accepted his prayers for] the iniquity of all of us.	כָּלֵנוּ כָצֵאן תַעֲיִנוּ אִישׁ לְדַרְכוֹ פָּנִינוּ וַיְהוּהוּ הַפְּגִיעַ בּוֹ אֶת עֲוֹן כָּלֵנוּ:	נגו

The highlighted portion of the last phrase in this verse may be translated in two ways, as shown in the Jewish rendition. Although the common Jewish rendition is similar to the translation in the KJV, it does not convey the message of vicarious atonement that is being promoted in the KJV. When God punished *Israel*, He often used (Gentile) nations as His "rod of discipline":

**Isaiah 10:5 – Woe that Assyria is the rod of My wrath, and My fury is a staff in their hand[s].**

**Habakkuk 1:12 – Are You not from everlasting, O Lord, my God, my Holy One? We shall not die. O Lord, You have ordained them [the Chaldeans] for judgment, and, O Mighty God, You have established them for correction.**

The (Gentile) nations were used by God to punish *Israel*, but they went beyond their specific mission, thereby causing *Israel* to suffer more than was intended.

The alternate translation, in which the phrase "... inflicted upon him ..." is replaced with the phrase "... accepted his prayers for ...", is also plausible in terms of the parameters of the Hebrew language. The verb used here, הִפְגִיעַ (*hifgi'a*), is the 3<sup>rd</sup>-person, singular, masculine, past tense conjugation of the root verb פגע (*PEH-gimeL-ayin*) in the *hif'il* stem (the active causative form of the Hebrew verb). This verb has common Biblical applications in the context of [to] hit, [to] hurt, [to] inflict, [to] insult, and less common applications in the context of [to] bid, [to] pray, [to] request, [to] intercede, [to] supplicate (e.g., Genesis 23:8, Isaiah 53:12, 59:16, Jeremiah 7:16, 27:18, Job 21:15, Ruth 1:16). Therefore, according to this meaning of the verb הִפְגִיעַ, the (Gentile) nations, like stray



sheep, left the path of their designated mission to do whatever they wanted and, through it all, the Jewish people prayed and interceded on their behalf. An example of this is found in Jeremiah's letter to the Jewish exiles in Babylon, wherein he conveys to them God's message to pray for the peace of the cities in which they dwell:

**Jeremiah 29:7** – And **seek the peace of the city where I have exiled you and pray for it to the Lord**, for in its peace you shall have peace.

Either one of the Jewish interpretations is consistent with the teachings of the Hebrew Bible with *Israel* as the servant.

☆ **Question:** Does *Israel* (as God's servant) "fit" into Isaiah 53:6?

☆ **Answer:** YES!

**ISAIAH 53:7**

Isaiah	King James Version Translation	Jewish Translation from the Hebrew	Hebrew Text	ישעיה
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.	He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he would not open his mouth; like a lamb to the slaughter he would be brought, and like a ewe that is mute before her shearers, and he would not open his mouth.	נִגְשׁ וְהוּא נִעְנָה וְלֹא יִפְתַּח-פִּיּוֹ כַּשֶּׂה יוֹבֵל וּכְרֹחַל לִפְנֵי גֹזְזֵיהָ נֶאֱלָמָה וְלֹא יִפְתַּח פִּיּוֹ:	נגז, ז

The two translations are reasonably similar and do not require further analysis.

Regarding the context, the remnant of *Israel* has been massacred like sheep being slaughtered, a symbolism that is common in the Hebrew Bible:

**Zechariah 11:4-7** – (4) So said the Lord, my God: "**Tend the flock of slaughter**, (5) whose buyers shall slay them and not be guilty; and whose sellers shall say, 'Blessed be the Lord, for I have become wealthy'; and whose shepherds shall not have pity on them. (6) For I will no longer have pity on the inhabitants of the land," says the Lord. "And behold! I will deliver the men, each one into his neighbor's hand and into his king's hand. And they shall crush the land, and I will not save [them] from their hand[s]. (7) **And I tended the flock of slaughter; indeed, the poor of the flock**. And I took for Myself two staves; one I called Pleasantness, and one I called Destroyers; and I tended the flock."

**Psalms 44:12,23** – (12) **You deliver us as sheep to be eaten**, and You scatter us among the nations.

(23) For it is for Your sake that we are killed all the time, [that] **we are considered as sheep for the slaughter**.

Psalms 44 vividly portrays the recurring oppression and persecution of the Jewish people in exile, with *Israel* pleading for strength to endure until their redemption.

The fact that the Jewish people have suffered through the sins of the (Gentile) nations is hardly disputable. Yet, in spite of all the troubles that befell the Jewish

people throughout their history, there always existed a righteous remnant who never blamed God for their troubles. As far as their relationship with God was concerned, they voiced no resentment and, though led to their deaths, they remained meek as sheep. Is it not interesting that the Jews were both shorn and slaughtered in the Nazi death camps? And when they were led on their death marches to the gas chambers or to the front of mass grave pits to be shot, all they had on their lips is the *Sh'ma* (Deuteronomy 6:4).

☆ **Question:** Does *Israel* (as God's servant) "fit" into Isaiah 53:7?  
 ☆ **Answer:** YES!

**ISAIAH 53:8**

Isaiah	King James Version Translation	Jewish Translation from the Hebrew	Hebrew Text	ישעיה
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: <b>for</b> the transgression of my people was <b>he</b> stricken.	From imprisonment and from judgment he was taken, and his generation who shall tell? For he was cut off from the land of the living; <b>because of</b> the transgression of my people, a plague came <b>upon</b> <b>them</b> .	מַעֲצָר וּמִשְׁפָּט לְקַח וְאֶת-דָּוְרוֹ מִי יְשׁוּחַח כִּי נִגְזַר מֵאֶרֶץ חַיִּים מִפְּשַׁע עַמִּי נִגַע לָמוֹ:	נגח

The two renditions are reasonably similar, except for two mistranslations. The first problem is the case of the expressions **because of** (Jewish rendition) and **for** (KJV rendition), which are not interchangeable here, and which was encountered and resolved in v. 5 above. The second problem is in the last phrase, where the difference in the respective translations of the Hebrew word לָמוֹ (*lamo*) has a significant impact on the context of the verse. The Jewish version renders the word as **upon them**, while the KJV renders it as **he**. In the Jewish rendition, the context points to a nation that was stricken. In the KJV translation, the context points to an individual who was afflicted. Since both versions cannot be valid simultaneously, it is important to determine which one of them is correct.

A closer look at the word לָמוֹ helps resolve this issue. A good Hebrew-Hebrew dictionary will identify the word לָמוֹ as a synonym for the Hebrew pronoun לָהֶם (*laHEM*), meaning, **them(selves)**, **for/from them(selves)**, **to/unto them(selves)**, **they [have]** (particularly in Biblical Hebrew).

Figure V.B-1 shows the scanned portion of a page from a Hebrew-Hebrew dictionary,<sup>10</sup> which verifies that לָמוֹ and לָהֶם [highlighted] are synonyms.

<sup>10</sup> The Hebrew-Hebrew dictionary, *MeAleph ad Tav – Milon Ivri Shimushi [From Aleph to Tav – A Practical Hebrew Dictionary]*, by Meir M<sup>e</sup>dan, p. 286, Achiasaf Publishing House, Ltd., Jerusalem (1954; Special Edition for readers of the Ma'ariv Daily).

Figure V.B-1 – The equivalence of לָמוֹ and לְהֵם in a Hebrew-Hebrew dictionary

לָמוֹ	286	לְהֵם
לְמַסְרָם. חַיִּים. לְאַחֲרֵי. וְשָׁבֵר. עַל סֵם שָׁמַח לָרֵם לְבָנוּ. מִן הַיּוֹף עַל הַמְּהַרְקֵהוּ.		לְהֵם. בְּ, מִן הַיּוֹף עַל הַמְּהַרְקֵהוּ (Auchenia lama), — נִמְנָן עַל צֵה בִּרְמָא וְשִׁיבָם.
לְמַרְוֹת, מִי, עַל אֲמֵי. הַגִּיד לִי. אֲמֵי עֲלֵי שֵׁי.		לְמוֹ. מִי, לְהֵם.
לְמַסְרָם. חַיִּים, בְּנִקְיֹת, בְּאֶשֶׁן הַלֵּק. לְנֵי, רֵאשֶׁה לְוֵן.		לְמוֹ. מִי, לִי.
לְנֵי. טַלְמִיּוֹתָם לִי עִם עֲנֵי לְקַבְּרֵיהֶם		לְמוֹד, ה' אֲרָגֵל. מְנַפֵּחַ. לְמוֹד, ד'. הַרְשָׁה. מְנַפֵּחַ הַרְשָׁהוּ רְבִישָׁה

Likewise, a good Hebrew-English dictionary will provide the correct English translation of the word לָמוֹ.

Figure V.B-2 shows the scanned portion of a page from a Hebrew-English dictionary,<sup>11</sup> which also verifies that לָמוֹ and לְהֵם [highlighted] are synonyms, and that the English translation of לָמוֹ is [poetic] them, to them.

Figure V.B-2 – The equivalence of לָמוֹ and לְהֵם in a Hebrew-English dictionary

1132	למד - למו"ט	1131
nought, vanity, nonentity, nothingness	יְלִמָּה, ג.	למד חובה (קטגוריה) על to judge unfavourably.
who was reduced to nought and nothing	שֶׁהָיָה לְלִמָּה וְלֹא כְלֹמ	to accuse, indict, arraign
you are nought and your words are nought	אַתָּם לְמָה וְדִבְרֵיכֶם לְמָה	מִלְמַד שֵׁי from this one may deduce that
llama	יְלִמָּה, ג. [למדת]	לְלַמֵּד שֵׁי. in order to explain to
lama (Tibet)	יְלִמָּה, ו.	you that
Dalai Lama	דָּלַי לְמָה	to be trained, taught, schooled
To what can this be likened (compared)?	למה ד - למה הדבר דומה?	למד מִצְוֹת אֲנָשִׁים מִלְמֹדָה ר' מִצְוֹת
(poet.) them, to them	למו, מ"ו = להם	to learn by oneself, teach, train
(poet.) to	למו, מ"י	החל למד oneself, practise, be used
trained, accustomed, experienced, used to, taught	למוד, ת. [למודה, למודים, למודות]	למד, ו. [למוד] (poet.) study, knowledge
		למד, ת. [למודה, למודים, למודות] (to be) learned; learning, accustomed, taught; fo argue, argu- mentative
		ולא תביישן למד ולא תקפדון מלמד (אבות ב, ה) the shamefast man cannot learn and the impatient

These two sources provide the correct meaning and translation of the word לָמוֹ.

A word study on לָמוֹ also confirms that it is synonymous with לְהֵם in the manner it is used in the Hebrew Bible. Table V.B-2 shows all 55 instance of the word לָמוֹ in the Hebrew Bible.

<sup>11</sup> *The Complete Hebrew-English Dictionary*, by R. Alcalay, p. 1132, Chemed Books, Jerusalem (1990)

**Table V.B-2 – Identified instances of לָמוֹ in the Hebrew Bible**

Hebrew	Book	#	References
לָמוֹ	Genesis	2	9:26,27
	Deuteronomy	4	32:32,35; 33:2(2x)
	Isaiah	11	16:4; 23:1; 26:14,16; 30:5; 35:8; 43:8; 44:7,15; 48:21; <b>53:8</b>
	Habakkuk	1	2:7
	Psalms	22	2:4; 28:8; 44:4[3]*,11[10]; 49:14[13]; 55:20[19]; 56:8[7]; 58:5[4],8[7]; 59:9[8]; 64:6[5](2x); 66:7; 73:6,10,18; 78:24,66; 80:7[6]; 88:9[8]; 99:7; 119:165
	Proverbs	1	23:20
	Job	10	3:13[14]; 6:19; 14:21; 15:28; 22:17,19; 24:16,17; 30:13; 39:4
	Lamentations	4	1:19,22; 4:10,15

\* Numbers in brackets, e.g., Psalms 44:4[3], identify respective verses in Christian Bibles

The study of the Hebrew term לָמוֹ now focuses on the 11 instances of the term in the Book of Isaiah, which comprise 20% of the total – a fair sample drawn entirely from within the Book of Isaiah. Listed in Table V.B-3 are the biblical citations for each case along with a correct translation and the KJV translation of the phrase that contains the term לָמוֹ. The respective renditions of לָמוֹ are highlighted in each translation.

**Table V.B-3 – Identified instances of לָמוֹ in the Book of Isaiah**

Passage In Isaiah	Correct Translation	KJV Translation
16:4	...Become a hiding place <b>for them</b> ...	...be thou a covert <b>to them</b> ...
23:1	...he appeared <b>to them</b> .	...it is revealed <b>to them</b> .
26:14	...have put an end to any memory <b>of them</b> .	...and made all <b>their</b> memory to perish.
26:16	...when Your chastening is <b>upon them</b> .	...when thy chastening was <b>upon them</b> .
30:5	...a people that will not be of benefit <b>to them</b> ...	...a people that could not profit <b>them</b> ...
35:8	...and it shall be <b>for them</b> ...	...but it shall be <b>for those</b> ...
43:8	...and deaf ones <b>who have</b> ears.	...and the deaf <b>that have</b> ears.
44:7	...let them tell <b>for themselves</b> .	...let them shew <b>unto them</b> .
44:15	...they made graven images and bowed <b>to them</b> .	...he maketh it a graven image, and falleth down <b>thereto</b> .
48:21	He made water run from a rock <b>for them</b> ...	...he caused the waters to flow out of the rock <b>for them</b> ...
53:8	... <b>because of the transgression of my people, a plague came upon them</b> .	... <b>for the transgression of my people was he stricken</b> .

In all but two cases, the KJV translations of לָמוֹ are in the plural and close to the correct respective context. The two exceptions are at Isaiah 44:15 & 53:8.

The KJV rendition of Isaiah 44:15 is problematic for the following reason. The verse in question is part of a passage wherein Isaiah decries the futility of idols and derides the foolish zeal of idolaters (Isaiah 44:9-20). In the Hebrew text, the prophet switches between the plural and the singular as he refers to those who fashion the idols and to the idols themselves. Clearly, the context here is in the plural for both – Isaiah is speaking of people who make and worship idols, and not to a singular individual who makes a single idol. [The usage of collective

nouns is common in the Hebrew Bible.<sup>12</sup> The plural application of the collective noun פְּסֵל (PESEL), **idol**, in Isaiah 44:15 is such an example (Psalms 97:7 is also an example of an application of a collective noun, and where the KJV has the correct translation for it!).] Even though cast in the singular form, the Hebrew text of the passage Isaiah 44:13-17 conveys, without ambiguity, the notion that the prophet is speaking of wooden idols as one kind of useless gods, how they are made and then worshipped. This is evident from the fact that the passages that immediately precede and follow it are cast in the plural. Therefore, the correct translation is in the plural. It is interesting to note that even the Christian LXX has this verse rendered in the plural:

**Isaiah 44:15(LXX) – That it might be for men to burn: and having taken part of it he warms himself; and they burn part of it; and bake loaves thereon; and the rest they make for themselves gods, and they worship them.**

The KJV rendition provides a contextually incorrect translation for this passage and, therefore, the reader may be misled to think that this particular application of לָמוֹ is in the singular and not in the plural. Since Isaiah applied the word לָמוֹ on 11 occasions throughout his Book, why would he use it in a different way here, in Isaiah 53:8, where it might create an ambiguity? Surely he would not want to be ambiguous when it comes to berating idolatry!

Without the support from the incorrect KJV rendition of לָמוֹ in Isaiah 44:15, the rendition by the KJV of לָמוֹ in Isaiah 53:8 stands out as a peculiar exception, one that promotes a Christian theological concept, and this is addressed in the essay that deals with the Christian perspective.<sup>13</sup> Thus, according to authoritative sources on the Hebrew language, and as demonstrated from the applications in the Hebrew Bible, the Jewish rendition of לָמוֹ, as **upon them**, is the correct one.

An additional interesting Hebrew linguistic nuance supports לָמוֹ as being plural and not singular. There is a poetic suffix, לָמוֹ-, (-*mo*), commonly used in the Hebrew Bible in place of the more common suffix לָמוֹ-, (-*hem*), which usually ends verbs and nouns conjugated in the 3<sup>rd</sup>-person, plural, masculine gender.<sup>14</sup> These instances occur primarily in passages that have a poetic structure. Consider, for example, Moses' *Song of the Sea* (Exodus 15:1-19), which contains the following examples:

- Verse 7 - יֹאכְלֵמוֹ (yochLEImo), [it] devours **them**
- Verse 9 - תִּמְלֵאמוֹ (timla'EImo), [it] shall be filled from **them**,  
תֹּרִישְמוֹ (torisHEImo), [it] shall impoverish **them**
- Verse 10 - כִּסְמוֹ (kisAmo), [it] covered **them**
- Verse 12 - תִּבְלַעְמוֹ (tivla'EImo), [it] swallowed **them**

<sup>12</sup> Some examples of collective nouns in the English language are: chicken, hair, sheep.

<sup>13</sup> See Footnote 4

<sup>14</sup> There are also similar poetic suffix substitutions that apply to other pronouns, but these are not relevant to the present discussion.

- Verse 15 - לֹאֲחַזְמוּ (yohazeimo), [it] seized them
- Verse 17 - תְּבִיאֵמוּ וְתִטְעֵמוּ (t'vi'Elmo v'etita'Elmo), shall bring them and plant them

There are additional examples in the *Farewell Song of Moses* (Deuteronomy 32:1-43), and scores of other instances in the Book of Psalms and in the Book of Job. The salient point concerning the suffix מוֹ- is that it also applies to the common term לְהֵם, which is the form of the preposition לְ- (l'-), to, in the 3<sup>rd</sup>-person, plural, masculine gender, i.e., a combination of לְ- and the suffix הֵם-. By replacing the הֵם- with the מוֹ-, the (poetic) synonym לְמוֹ is obtained. This demonstrates that לְמוֹ is a collective term which must point to a plural entity and not to an individual. In the case of Isaiah 44:15, it clearly points to people bowing to idols and not to any specific person bowing to a specific idol.

Now that the grammatical issue has been resolved, and the Jewish translation proves to be the correct one, the meaning of this verse can be explained. As noted earlier, a change in attitude by the (Gentile) nations takes place in Isaiah 53:4-7, as a new realization of *Israel's* grandeur was settling in their minds. In Isaiah 53:8, [עַמִּי (ami), my people] iniquities inflicted the suffering on *Israel*. When *Israel's* exile finally ends, the leaders of the (Gentile) nations will marvel at a people who survived the expulsion(s) from the land of the living [אֶרֶץ חַיִּים (Eretz ha'hayim)]; an expression often used in the Hebrew Bible for the Land of Israel {e.g., Ezekiel 26:20, 32:23,24,25,26,27,32}}, along with all the unfair and unjust treatment throughout their time in exile.

Has this been the experience of *Israel* during its times in exile? The "thumbnail sketch" of scenes out of Jewish history (Section IV.B) contains the answer.

- ☆ **Question:** Does *Israel* (as God's servant) "fit" into Isaiah 53:8?
- ☆ **Answer:** YES!

### C. Interim Summary – Isaiah 52:13-53:1-8

Using a verse-by-verse analysis of the Hebrew text and with the help of a correct translation from the Hebrew, testing of the hypothesis formulated in Section III.B continued as part of the *Verification* stage of the *Scientific Method*.

The voice of the (Gentile) nations, the new "voice" that appeared in Isaiah 53:1, continued to speak in the current passage. Based on its consistency with the teachings of the Hebrew Bible and the historical record, the present segment continues to confirm the validity of the hypothesis that *Israel*, as God's servant, is the subject in the *Fourth Servant Song*.

The results obtained thus far are summarized in Table V.C-1.

**Table V.C-1 – Summary of results from Verification stage: Isaiah 52:13-53:8**

Isaiah	Jewish Translation from the Hebrew	Who Is The "Speaker"?	Does Hypothesis " <i>Israel</i> = Servant" Fit?
52:13	Behold, My servant shall prosper; he shall be exalted and lifted up, and he shall be very high.	God	YES
52:14	As many wondered about you, "How marred his appearance is from that of a man, and his features from that of people!"	God	YES
52:15	So shall he cause many nations to be startled; kings shall shut their mouths because of him, because that which had not been told to them they saw, and that which they had not heard they perceived.	God	YES
53:1	Who would have believed our report, and to whom was the arm of the Lord revealed?	The (Gentile) Nations	YES
53:2	And he came up like a sapling before it, and like a root out from dry ground; he had no features and no splendor; and we saw him that he had no appearance; and how could we desire him?	The (Gentile) Nations	YES
53:3	He was despised and forsaken by men; a man of pains, and accustomed to illness, and as one from whom we would hide our faces; he was despised, and we had no regard for him.	The (Gentile) Nations	YES
53:4	Indeed, he bore our illnesses, and our pains – he has carried them, yet we had regarded him plagued, smitten by God, and oppressed.	The (Gentile) Nations	YES
53:5	But he was pained because of our transgressions, crushed because of our iniquities; the chastisement of our welfare was upon him, and with his wounds we were healed.	The (Gentile) Nations	YES
53:6	We all went astray like sheep, we have turned, each one on his way, and the Lord inflicted upon him [or, accepted his prayers for] the iniquity of all of us.	The (Gentile) Nations	YES
53:7	He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he would not open his mouth; like a lamb to the slaughter he would be brought, and like a ewe that is mute before her shearers, and he would not open his mouth.	The (Gentile) Nations	YES
53:8	From imprisonment and from judgment he was taken, and his generation who shall tell? For he was cut off from the land of the living; because of the transgression of my people, a plague came upon them.	The (Gentile) Nations	YES

## VI. SEGMENT 4 – ISAIAH 53:9-12

### A. The Hebrew Text with Jewish and Christian Translations

Side-by-side English renditions and the Hebrew text of the final portion of the *Fourth Servant Song*, Isaiah 53:9-12, are displayed in Table VI.A-1. . The King James Version (KJV) translation is shown with pointers to cross-referenced

passages in the New Testament. These references are taken from the New American Standard Bible (NASB). However, the corresponding passages below the table are quoted from the KJV for consistency.

**Table VI.A-1 – Isaiah 53:9-12**

Isaiah	King James Version Translation	Jewish Translation from the Hebrew	Hebrew Text	ישעיה
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. <sup>(i)</sup>	And he gave his grave to the wicked, and to the wealthy in his deaths, because he committed no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth.	וַיִּתֵּן אֶת-רִשְׁעִים קְבָרוֹ וְאֶת-עֲשִׂיר בְּמִתּוֹ עַל לֹא-חֲמָס עָשָׂה וְלֹא מִרְמָה בְּפִיו :	נג, ט
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. <sup>(ii)</sup>	And the Lord wished to crush him, He made him ill; if his soul would acknowledge guilt, he shall have descendants [or, he shall see progeny], he shall prolong his days, and God's purpose shall prosper in his hand.	וַיְהוּה חָפֵץ דָּכְאוֹ הַחֲלִי אִם-תִּשְׂשִׂים אֲשֶׁם נַפְשׁוֹ יִרְאֶה זֶרַע יִאֲרִיךְ יָמָיו וְחָפֵץ יְהוּה בְּיָדוֹ יִצְלַח :	נג, י
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. <sup>(iii)</sup>	From the toil of his soul he shall see [and he shall] be satisfied; with his knowledge My servant will vindicate the righteous before the multitudes, and their iniquities he shall carry.	מֵעֲמַל נַפְשׁוֹ יִרְאֶה יִשְׁבַּע בְּדַעְתּוֹ יִצְדִּיק צְדִיק עַבְדֵי לְרַבִּים וְעוֹנֹתָם הוּא יִסְבֵּל :	נג, יא
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. <sup>(iv)</sup>	Therefore, I will allot him a portion among the multitudes, and with the mighty he shall share booty, because he has bared his soul to death, and with transgressors he was counted; and he bore the sin of many, and he will [continue to] intercede for the transgressors.	לָכוּן אֶחְלַק-לוֹ בְּרַבִּים וְאֶת-עֲצוּמִים יִחְלַק שָׁלַל תַּחַת אֲשֶׁר הָעֵרָה לְמֹנֹת נַפְשׁוֹ וְאֶת-פְּשָׁעִים נִמְנָה וְהוּא חָטָא רַבִּים נִשָּׂא וְלִפְשָׁעִים יִפְגִּיעַ :	נג, יב

(i) Matthew 27:57-60(KJV) – (57) When the even was come, there came a rich man of Arimathaea, named Joseph, who also himself was Jesus' disciple: (58) He went to Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be delivered. (59) And when Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, (60) And laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock: and he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre, and departed.

1Peter 2:22(KJV) - Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth:

(ii) John 1:29(KJV) - The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.



- (iii) John 10:14-18(KJV) – (14) I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. (15) As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep. (16) And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd. (17) Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. (18) No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.
- Romans 5:18-19(KJV) – (18) Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. (19) For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.
- (iv) Matthew 26:38-39,42(KJV) – (38) Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me. (39) And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.  
(42) He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done.
- Mark 15:28(KJV) - And the scripture was fulfilled, which saith, And he was numbered with the transgressors.
- Luke 22:37(KJV) - For I say unto you, that this that is written must yet be accomplished in me, And he was reckoned among the transgressors: for the things concerning me have an end.
- 2Corinthians 5:21(KJV) - For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.
- Philippians 2:9-11(KJV) – (9) Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: (10) That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; (11) And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

## B. ANALYSIS OF ISAIAH 53:9-12

The *Verification* stage of the *Scientific Method* resumes with testing the hypothesis on the four verses in the final segment of the *Fourth Servant Song*, Isaiah 53:9-12. Evidence from the Hebrew Bible and from the historical record is used to check whether **Israel** = **servant** "fits" into the context.

The importance of knowing the identity of the "speakers" was pointed out at the start of the analysis. The opening segment of the *Fourth Servant Song*, Isaiah 52:13-15, was in the "voice" of God. In Isaiah 53:1-8, the prophet conveys the words of the (Gentile) nations. A difference of opinions exists among the Jewish Sages concerning the "voice" at the start of the final segment, at Isaiah 53:9. Some hold that Isaiah 53:9 is a continuation of the confession by the (Gentile) nations who, in the previous verse, have realized that **Israel** suffered because of them, and then the "voice" changes at Isaiah 53:10. Others say that the "voice" has switched to that of the narrator, Isaiah, who summarizes the impact that the (Gentile) nations' iniquities had on **Israel**, and then the "voice" changes at Isaiah

53:10. Still others maintain that it is the "voice" of God as He starts to respond to the (Gentile) nations with a description of what happened to *Israel* because of their [the (Gentile) nations'] sins. The latter is the one that will be followed here. This "voice", conveying God's response, continues to the end of the *Fourth Servant Song*. [Note: It does not matter which opinion is followed here, since any particular choice will not impact the overall interpretation of "Isaiah 53".]

**ISAIAH 53:9**

Isaiah	King James Version Translation	Jewish Translation from the Hebrew	Hebrew Text	ישעיה
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.	And he gave his grave to the wicked, and to the wealthy in his deaths, because he committed no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth.	וַיִּתֵּן אֶת־רִשְׁעִים קְבָרוֹ וְאֶת־עֲשִׂיר בְּמֹתָיו עַל לֹא־חָמָס עָשָׂה וְלֹא מְרָמָה בְּפִיו :	נג,ט

A significant discrepancy exists between the Jewish and KJV translations of the Hebrew term בְּמֹתָיו (*b<sup>e</sup>motav*). The Jewish rendition of the term, **in his deaths**, indicates an inherent plurality, while the KJV rendition, **in his death**, is in the singular form, and appears to be designed to support a Christological message.

To help determine which of these two renditions is correct, a linguistic analysis of this term is required. The term בְּמֹתָיו is a compound expression, a combination of a preposition and a (conjugated) noun. The preposition, בְּ- (*b<sup>e</sup>-*), is used in multiple applications in the Hebrew Bible, generally having any of the meanings, **in**, **with**, or **at**. The noun, מֹתָיו (*motav*), is the inflection in the possessive 3<sup>rd</sup>-person, singular, masculine gender, of the plural noun מוֹתִים (*motim*; the plural of the root noun מָוַת (*MAvet*), **death**),<sup>15</sup> and translates as **his deaths**. This term appears only once in the entire Hebrew Bible, and only one other related term is found in the Hebrew Bible in the plural form and in a compound expression, מוֹתֵי עֲרֻלִים (*motei areilim*), at Ezekiel 28:10, where the term מוֹתֵי (*motei*), is the possessive form of the plural, מוֹתִים, meaning, **deaths of ...**. This phrase is correctly translated in the KJV as **the deaths of the uncircumcised**. Another word for **deaths** in the Hebrew Bible is מְמוֹתִים (*m<sup>e</sup>motim*), which also derives from the same root noun מָוַת. This term occurs twice, though only in the possessive plural form, מְמוֹתֵי (*m<sup>e</sup>motei*), **deaths of...**, at Jeremiah 16:4 in the expression מְמוֹתֵי תַחֲלָאִים (*m<sup>e</sup>motei tahalu'im*), **deaths from/of diseases**,

<sup>15</sup> The "-av" suffix is the typical ending of a conjugation of a Hebrew plural noun in the 3<sup>rd</sup>-person, masculine, singular mode.

and at Ezekiel 28:8 in the expression מְּוֹתַי חָלַל (*m<sup>e</sup>motei halal*), **deaths of the slain**.<sup>16</sup> Table VI.B-1 shows the relevant terminology for the noun מְּוֹת.

**Table VI.B-1 – Study of מְּוֹת as found the Hebrew Bible**

Hebrew Term	Transliteration	Biblical Examples	Correct Translation	KJV Rendition
מְּוֹת	<i>MAvet</i>	Isaiah 38:18	death	death
מְּוֹת-	<i>MOT-</i>	2Chronicles 22:4	death of [his father]	death of [his father]
מְּוֹתוֹ	<i>mOTO</i>	Judges 13:7	[day of] his death	[day of] his death
בְּמְּוֹתוֹ	<i>b<sup>e</sup>mOTO</i>	<b>Proverbs 14:32</b>	<b>in his death</b>	<b>in his death</b>
מְּוֹתִים	<i>motIM</i>	[not available]	deaths; plural of מְּוֹת	[not available]
מְּוֹתַי	<i>mOTEI-</i>	Ezekiel 28:10	deaths of [the uncircumcised]	deaths of [the uncircumcised]
בְּמְּוֹתָיו	<i>b<sup>e</sup>mOTAV</i>	<b>Isaiah 53:9</b>	<b>in his deaths</b>	<b>in his death</b>
מְּמוֹתִים	<i>m<sup>e</sup>motIM</i>	[not available]	deaths, plural of מְּמוֹת	[not available]
מְּמוֹתַי	<i>m<sup>e</sup>mOTEI-</i>	Jeremiah 16:4	[They shall die] deaths from/of [diseases]	[They shall die] of grievous deaths
		Ezekiel 28:8	[and you will die the] deaths of [the slain]	[and thou shalt die the] deaths of [them that are slain]

The information in the table indicates that the Hebrew term for **in his death** (the singular form) is בְּמְּוֹתוֹ (*b<sup>e</sup>mOTO*). Clearly, the terms בְּמְּוֹתוֹ and בְּמְּוֹתָיו are different Hebrew words, the latter being the term that appears in Isaiah 53:9. Thus, the Jewish translation of בְּמְּוֹתָיו as **in his deaths** is the correct one.

An interesting interpretational "twist" is attributed to the prominent 12<sup>th</sup> century C.E. Sage Rabbi Avraham Ibn Ezra who, in a complex analysis, considered the term בְּמְּוֹתָיו as a variant of the term בְּמְּוֹתָיו (*bamOTAV*), which literally means **his high places**. Ibn Ezra interpreted "a high place" as a **mound**, using it as a metaphor for a tomb. The term בְּמְּוֹתָיו appears three times in the Hebrew Bible - at 2Kings 18:22, Isaiah 36:7, and 2Chronicles 32:12 - all in reference to Hezekiah's removal and destruction of the illicit sacrificial altars that were constructed in places outside of the Temple grounds. There are no other cases in the Hebrew Bible where any form of the root noun בְּמָה (*bamaH*), a **high place**, is used to describe a tomb or grave, which leaves Ibn Ezra's interpretation as rather unusual, though some Jewish and Christian translators have adopted it.

With both בְּמְּוֹתָיו and לְמוֹ being plural terms, and noting how both verses, Isaiah 53:8 and Isaiah 53:9, interchangeably refer to the same entity in the singular (collective noun) and in the plural, it follows that the servant cannot be an

<sup>16</sup> The noun חָלַל (*halal*) is used as a collective noun in the Hebrew Bible, i.e., it is applied in this form either as a singular noun or as a plural noun (e.g., 2Sam 23:8,18), while its plural form, חָלָלִים (*halalim*), is also used in the Hebrew Bible.

individual. Therefore, it must be a compound entity, a plurality, which is entirely consistent with *Israel* as this entity.

The historical record testifies that many Jews chose to die like common criminals rather than renounce their faith; and many wealthy Jews were wantonly slain, not because of any crimes or violent acts they committed, but for no reason other than to enable their killers to rob them of their possessions. These words are reflected in scenes shown in photographs displayed at the National Holocaust Museum and in motion pictures such as *Schindler's List*, where Jews are shown to be kneeling before a trench while Nazis were aiming their weapons at them. In most cases, the Jews did not even put up any resistance to being murdered. Most died with the *Sh'ma* on their lips, and not with any form of deceit on them to accept doctrines and beliefs about gods that their Jewish forefathers had not known.

☆ **Question:** Does *Israel* (as God's servant) "fit" into Isaiah 53:9?  
 ☆ **Answer:** YES!

**ISAIAH 53:10**

Isaiah	King James Version Translation	Jewish Translation from the Hebrew	Hebrew Text	ישעיה
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.	And the Lord wished to crush him, He made him ill; if his soul would acknowledge guilt, he shall have descendants [or, he shall see progeny], he shall prolong his days, and God's purpose shall prosper in his hand.	וַיְהוּה חֲפָץ דַּכָּאוֹ הַחֲלִי אִם-תִּשְׂשִׁים אָשָׁם נַפְשׁוֹ יִרְאֶה זֶרַע יִאָרִיךְ יָמָיו וַחֲפָץ יְהוּה בְּיָדוֹ יִצְלַח:	נגי

Significant differences exist between the two translations and their respective interpretations.

It is helpful in the analysis of this verse to note that the portion of the verse that follows the initial declaration about God punishing *Israel* is constructed as a *conditional statement*, namely, **IF (A) THEN (B)**. In other words, **if Condition A is satisfied, then Outcome B will occur**.

The respective translations of the Hebrew phrase, "אִם-תִּשְׂשִׁים אָשָׁם נַפְשׁוֹ" (*IM-tasim aSHAM nafsho*), which is the statement of **Condition A**, are the source of the first significant discrepancy. The Jewish translation has "if his soul would acknowledge guilt", whereas the KJV has "when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin". The KJV translation casts the phrase in such a way as to continue with its message of a vicarious atonement by the servant – a concept that is contrary to what the Hebrew Bible teaches, wherein it is strictly forbidden. The problem stems from the fact that the Hebrew term אָשָׁם (*ASHAM*) is rendered in the KJV as **an offering for sin**. Yet, when the term אָשָׁם is used in the Hebrew Bible, it

serves in two distinct applications: (1) **זָבַח** is used to refer to a **guilt offering**, not a sin offering, brought by a sinner for the atonement of any one of a number of specific sins committed with intent (e.g., Leviticus 5:15; Numbers 6:12), and (2) **זָבַח** is used to refer to a **sin or an iniquity committed with intent** (e.g., Jeremiah 51:5; Proverbs 14:9). In the correct context of the Hebrew phrase, and without violating what the Hebrew Bible teaches, it is impossible for someone to bring himself or herself as a guilt offering.

The structure of a verse in the form of a *conditional statement*, as is the case with Isaiah 53:10, is not an anomaly in the Hebrew Bible, as illustrated by the following examples (which are color-coded to emphasize their structure):

**Genesis 18:26** - And the Lord said, "IF I find in Sodom fifty righteous men within the city, THEN I will forgive the entire place for their sake."

**Jeremiah 18:8** - IF that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turns from its evil, THEN I will relent of the evil that I intended to do to them.

Clearly, the context of Isaiah 53:10 is that there is a reward being promised to *Israel* if the people admits their guilt and repent. *Of what use would a reward be to the servant if he were to submit himself to be sacrificed? What is this reward?* This reward, symbolized as **Outcome B**, is described in the remainder of the verse.

Two additional significant differences between the Christian and Jewish views concern the respective interpretations of the reward to the servant. The first component of the servant's reward is that "... he shall have descendants [or, see progeny] ..." according to the Jewish rendition, or that "... he shall see his seed ..." according to the KJV. On the surface, the two renditions appear to be similar. The major difference between them stems from the way in which the Hebrew term **זָרַע** (*zera*), **seed**, is interpreted. According to the Christian perspective, the servant's **seed** refers to his **figurative children**, i.e., his **spiritual children**, his **followers**. According to the Jewish understanding, **seed**, as it is used in the Hebrew Bible, refers exclusively to the servant's **biological offspring**, i.e., his **physical descendants**, his **progeny**. Clearly, the two views cannot both be correct.

The Hebrew word **זָרַע** is yet another example of a collective noun, i.e., a noun that can be used in both a singular and plural context. The noun **זָרַע** is used in the Hebrew Bible 230 times (229 times in Hebrew, 1 time in Aramaic) in several different applications, as summarized in Table VI.B-2.

**Table VI.B-2 – The noun זָרַע in the Hebrew Bible (with emphasis on Isaiah)**

Hebrew Term	Meaning	#	Biblical Examples (all 25 cases in Isaiah included)	Remarks
זָרַע	Part of a plant's fruit from which a new plant will grow	27	Isaiah 5:10, 55:10	
	Sowing season	2	Genesis 8:22; Leviticus 26:5	No cases in Isaiah
	Field crops and grain	11	Isaiah 23:3, 30:23	
	<b>Progeny (biological descendants)</b>	<b>182</b>	Isaiah 1:4, 6:13, 14:20, 41:8, 43:5, 44:3, 45:19,25, 48:19, <b>53:10</b> , 54:3, 57:3,4, 59:21[3x], 61:9[2x], 65:9,23, 66:22	
	Semen	8	Leviticus 15:32	No cases in Isaiah

The manner in which the noun זָרַע is applied in the Hebrew Bible is that, when used in reference to (generic) offspring, the term is implicitly plural, and where it concerns an explicitly identified offspring, it is implicitly singular.<sup>17</sup> Moreover, it can be easily demonstrated that, when זָרַע is used in reference to children, it exclusively refers to biological descendants.

In Isaiah 53:10, however, the term זָרַע is not a "stand alone" noun; it is part of an idiomatic expression that involves a verb in conjunction with the noun, namely, the Hebrew expression is יִרְאֶה זָרַע (*yir'EH ZERA*), literally, **[he] shall see seed**. The KJV adds the term "his" before the word "seed". This is simply not congruent with the Hebrew text, since the Hebrew term for **his seed** is the word זָרְעוֹ (*zar'o*), a word that does not appear in this verse. In the Hebrew Bible, idiomatic expressions in which a verb is combined with the collective noun זָרַע, regardless of its specific application, the reference is always to physical *seed*, as demonstrated by the following examples from the Hebrew Bible:

- Genesis 1:11,12 - מְזַרְיֵעַ זָרַע (*mazRI'a ZERA*), **yielding seed**
- Genesis 19:32,34 - וּנְחִיָּה מְאַבְיֵנוּ זָרַע (*u'n<sup>e</sup>haYEH mei'avinu ZARA*) and **let us bring to life seed from our father**
- Genesis 38:8 - וְהָקִים זָרַע (*v<sup>e</sup>haQEIM ZERA*), and **[you] establish offspring**
- Isaiah 30:23 - זָרַעְךָ אֲשֶׁר-תִּזְרַע (*zar'aCHA ASHER tizRA*) **your seed that you will sow**
- Amos 9:13 - בְּמִשְׁךָ הַזָּרַע (*b<sup>e</sup>mosHECH ha'ZARA*) **the one who carries the seed [for sowing]**

The idiomatic expression יִרְאֶה זָרַע in Isaiah 53:10 is similar to these examples; it refers to one who will be able to procreate and see his descendants. Although this particular idiomatic expression appears only once in the Hebrew Bible, a similar expression, רָאָה בְּנִים (*ra'AH VANIM*), **[he] saw sons**, is used on several

<sup>17</sup> A detailed discussion of this is found in the essay: *The "Seed of A Woman": A Kernel of Deception* – <http://thejewishhome.org/counter/Gen315.pdf>

occasions (in different forms of the expression; see examples below), and it clearly demonstrates that *seeing seed/children* refers to having and seeing biological descendants. In the following passage, the reader is told that Joseph saw his own descendants of several generations. Remember, Ephraim and Menasheh were the sons of Joseph:

**Genesis 50:23 – And Joseph saw Ephraim’s children of the third generation; also the children of Machir, the son of Menasheh, were brought up upon Joseph’s knees.**

The next case speaks of the righteous persons and their families experiencing the bliss in seeing their descendants:

**Psalms 128:6 – And you shall see your children’s children; peace be on Israel.**

In the next passage, Job, the righteous Gentile, experienced the bliss described in the previous example:

**Job 42:16 – And Job lived after this a hundred and forty years, and saw his sons and his grandsons, four generations.**

The idiomatic expressions for *seeing seed* or *seeing sons* or *seeing children*, as used in the Hebrew Bible, simply describe the experience of seeing one's own family propagate for one or more generations.

Another important fact is that זרע is also the Hebrew term for **semen/sperm**, which supports the notion that the term זרע in this verse refers exclusively to progeny, to physical descendants, and never to figurative (or spiritual) children.<sup>18</sup>

By contrast, the Hebrew term בָּנִים (banim/ben), **sons/a son**, commonly used when referring to (a) real son(s), is also used in a figurative sense. In the following passage, David asks the wealthy but selfish *Navai*, who is not his father, for food, using the term בָּנִים:

**1Samuel 25:8 - Ask your youths and they will tell you, and may the youths find favor in your eyes, for we have come on a festive day. Give now, what your hand will find, for your servants and for your son David.**

In the next example, using the term בָּנִים, King **Ahaz** asks the king of Assyria, who is obviously not his father, for help against the two warring armies besieging Jerusalem:

**2Kings 16:7 - And Ahaz sent messengers to Tiglath-Pileser the king of Assyria, saying, "I am your servant and your son. Come up and save me from the hand of the king of Aram and from the hand of the king of Israel who have risen up against me."**

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<sup>18</sup> It is interesting to note that the LXX uses the noun σπέρμα (*sperma*), which is #4690 in Strong's Lexicon, where it is defined as, "something sown, i.e. seed (including the male 'sperm'); by implication, offspring; specially, a remnant (figuratively, as if kept over for planting): -- issue, seed.

The same rule also applies to the Hebrew term בְּתוּבָנוֹת (*banotbat*), **daughters/a daughter**. In the following passage, the term used here for **women** is בְּנוֹת:

**Proverbs 31:29** - Many **women** have acquired wealth, but you surpass them all.

In the next example, the term used for **daughters** is בְּנוֹת:

**Song of Songs 6:9** - My dove, my perfect one, is but one; she is one to her mother, she is the pure one of she who bore her; **daughters** saw her and praised her, queens and concubines, and they lauded her;

Clearly, the Jewish understanding of the term זָרַע in Isaiah 53:10 is the correct one since, when used with regard to people, it refers to people who are natural descendants of their ancestors.

The second component of the servant's reward, though rendered essentially in the same way by both Jewish and Christian translators, "**... he shall prolong his days ...**", is understood differently by Jews and Christians. Christians generally view this phrase as being synonymous with *eternal life*, while Jews see it as a *long mortal lifetime*. Once again, these interpretations cannot both be valid.

The Hebrew idiomatic expression rendered as "**... he shall prolong his days ...**" is יִאָּרֶיךָ יָמִים (*ya'arich yamim*). This expression, in various conjugations and in several variations, is relatively common in the Hebrew Bible. In each case, the context makes it clear that the phrase refers to prolonging a person's lifetime on earth and not to eternal life. The identical form of the expression in Isaiah 53:10, יִאָּרֶיךָ יָמִים, is used in the Hebrew Bible on three additional occasions:

**Deuteronomy 17:20** – So that his heart will not be haughty over his brothers, and so that he will not turn away from the commandment, either to the right or to the left, in order that **he may prolong [his] days [יִאָּרֶיךָ יָמִים]** in his kingdom, he and his sons, among Israel.

**Proverbs 28:16** – A ruler who lacks understanding is a great oppressor, for he who hates unlawful gain **will prolong [his] days [יִאָּרֶיךָ יָמִים]**.

**Ecclesiastes 8:13** – But it will not be well with the wicked, **and he will not prolong [his] days [יִאָּרֶיךָ יָמִים]**, like a shadow, because he does not fear God.

These examples demonstrate that יִאָּרֶיךָ יָמִים refers to extending someone's mortal lifetime on earth. The notion of *eternal life* appears but once in the Hebrew Bible as the expression חַיֵּי עוֹלָם (*hayei olam*), which literally translates as **life of eternity**, i.e., **eternal life** (Daniel 12:2).

Finally, the two renditions of the third component of the servant's reward show a slight difference, but not a substantive divergence in context. The Jewish version has, "**... and God's purpose shall prosper in his hand ...**", and the KJV has, "**... and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand ...**". This phrase represents the



proverbial "icing on the cake" – *Israel* will be successful in carrying out its divinely ordained mission.

Relating this verse to the hypothesis, *Israel* = **servant**, God continues His response to the (Gentile) nations and affirms that some of *Israel's* suffering was, indeed, punishment for the nation's own sins. However, when *Israel*, as a nation, will acknowledge its iniquity by repenting, the Jewish people will be redeemed and rewarded with growth in numbers, prolonged life, and success as God's light unto the nations.

☆ **Question:** Does *Israel* (as God's servant) "fit" into Isaiah 53:10?  
 ☆ **Answer:** YES!

**ISAIAH 53:11**

Isaiah	King James Version Translation	Jewish Translation from the Hebrew	Hebrew Text	ישעיה
53:11	He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall <b>my righteous servant justify many</b> ; for he shall bear their iniquities.	From the toil of his soul he shall see [and he shall] be satisfied; with his knowledge <b>My servant will vindicate the righteous before the multitudes</b> , and their iniquities he shall carry.	מְעַמְל נַפְשׁוֹ יִרְאֶה יִשְׁבַּע בְּדַעְתּוֹ יִצְדִּיק צְדִיק עַבְדֵי לְרַבִּים וְעֹונָתָם הוּא יִסְבֵּל:	נג, יא

There is a discrepancy between the two translations of the highlighted Hebrew phrase. An explanation of the syntax of the Hebrew phrase will help determine which of the two translations is correct.

The Hebrew phrase is יִצְדִּיק צְדִיק עַבְדֵי לְרַבִּים (*yatsdiq tsadiq avdi larabim*). The first word, יִצְדִּיק, is the 3<sup>rd</sup>-person, masculine, singular, future tense conjugation in the *hif'il* stem of the root verb צדק. In this particular stem, the active causative form of the Hebrew verb, this verb is used in the Hebrew Bible in the context of **to vindicate**, **to declare innocent**, (e.g., Exodus 23:7, Job 27:5). The next word, צְדִיק, means **righteous**, which appears in the Hebrew Bible both as a collective noun and as an adjective. The next word, עַבְדֵי, means **my servant**. The last word, לְרַבִּים, is a combination of a preposition לְ- (*le-*), meaning **to, for**, the definite article הַ- (*ha-*), and the plural noun רַבִּים (*rabim*), meaning **many, multitudes**. An almost literal translation of the phrase is, "he, My servant, will justify the righteous (ones) to the many", which is consistent with the Jewish translation. It is not the servant who is described here as **righteous**. The phrase conveys the idea that the servant will vindicate the righteous.

According to the syntax of the Hebrew phrase, the term **righteous** is out of place in the KJV rendition "**my righteous servant**". The KJV rendition continues to associate the idea of a righteous ("sinless") individual bearing the iniquities of others as a way to justify those others via the vicarious atonement obtained

through his death. This is contrary to what the Hebrew Bible teaches, as was previously noted.

*Israel* will eventually discover and understand that God has had a special purpose in allowing such wickedness by the (Gentile) nations, and will not challenge God's actions. In the end, *Israel* will vindicate mankind through the knowledge of God and Torah, a theme often encountered in the Hebrew Bible in terms of *Israel* being a **light unto the** (Gentile) **nations** and teaching them (e.g., Exodus 19:5-6; Isaiah 42:6, 60:3, 61:6-9; Zechariah 8:13, 23). Also, as was noted in the analysis of Isaiah 53:4, *Israel* was the victim who unjustly bore the penalties from the iniquities of others. The (Gentile) nations' own misdeeds were what inflicted the excessive suffering on *Israel*. The Jewish people have been forced to carry ills and pains because of the direct actions of the (Gentile) nations throughout history, and they have suffered (and continue to suffer) the results of the (Gentile) nations' sickness. The (Gentile) nations have held that the Jews are cursed by God, and they were (and still are) determined to see that the Jews suffer the consequences of this supposed curse that is upon them.

☆ **Question:** Does *Israel* (as God's servant) "fit" into Isaiah 53:11?  
 ☆ **Answer:** YES!

**ISAIAH 53:12**

Isaiah	King James Version Translation	Jewish Translation from the Hebrew	Hebrew Text	ישעיה
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.	Therefore, I will allot him a portion among the multitudes, and with the mighty he shall share booty, because he has bared his soul to death, and with transgressors he was counted; and he bore the sin of many, and he will [continue to] intercede for the transgressors.	לְכוּ אֶחְלַק-לוֹ בְּרַבִּים וְאֶת-עֲצוּמִים יְחַלַּק שָׁלַל תַּחַת אֲשֶׁר הָעֵרָה לַמָּוֶת נָפְשׁוֹ וְאֶת-פֹּשְׁעִים נִמְנָה וְהוּא חָטָא רַבִּים נִשְׂאָ וּלְפֹשְׁעִים יִפְגִּיעַ:	נג, יב

Apart from a change in tenses in the last phrase, the two translations are reasonably consistent. The Hebrew phrase תַּחַת אֲשֶׁר הָעֵרָה לַמָּוֶת נָפְשׁוֹ (*Tahat asher he'erah la'MAVet naphsho*), is generally rendered in two ways by Jewish sources, (a) "... because he has bared his soul to death ...", and (b) "... because he poured out his soul to death ...". The KJV renders it, "... because he hath poured out his soul unto death ...", which agrees with the latter of the common Jewish renditions. The somewhat subtle difference here does not significantly impact context. The latter of the two Jewish renditions is based on a single instance of the root verb עָרָה (*Ayin-RESH-HEH*) in a different conjugation at Genesis 24:20, where it is rendered as "... she poured out [her jug] ..." in reference to Rebecca (even here one can say that pouring out of a container is tantamount to exposing whatever was contained in it). In two other instances, at Leviticus 20:18,19,

where the verb appears exactly as in Isaiah 53:12, הִעָרָה, it is rendered as "... he has bared [her source] ..." and "... he would be baring [his flesh] ...", respectively. In every other application of this verb in the Hebrew Bible, a total of 16 cases excepting Genesis 24:20, particularly in the five other applications by Isaiah – Isaiah 3:17, 19:7, 22:6, 32:11,15 – the verb is used in the context of **baring** or **exposing** something. Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that the former of the above two Jewish renditions, "... because he has bared his soul to death ...", is more consistent with its general usage both by Isaiah and throughout the rest of the Hebrew Bible. This rendition also removes the subtlety built into the Christian interpretation aimed at advancing the concept of human vicarious atonement.

The last phrase in the verse, rendered as "... and he will [continue to] intercede for the transgressors." in the Jewish translation, and as "... and made intercession for the transgressors." in the KJV, requires comment. It was previously noted in the analysis of Isaiah 53:6, the root verb פָּגַע is used in the Hebrew in two different contexts. Both translations agree on its application here, in Isaiah 53:12, but they differ on the tenses. The verb used here is יַפְגִּיעַ (yafgi'a), the 3<sup>rd</sup>-person singular, masculine, future tense conjugation of the root verb פָּגַע in the *hif'il* stem (the active causative form of the Hebrew verb). The significance of the correct tense here is that, in His response to the (Gentile) nations, God expects *Israel* to continue in its role as intercessor on their behalf. This is, in fact, still the case today as well. Most Jewish congregations recite, usually in the vernacular, a prayer for the government. The text varies from congregation to congregation. As an example, consider the English translation of a liturgical passage from a commonly used prayer book titled, "*Prayer for the Welfare of the Government*", which is recited on every Sabbath and Holy Day:<sup>19</sup>

**He Who grants salvation to kings and dominion to rulers, Whose kingdom is a kingdom spanning all eternities; Who releases David, His servant, from the evil sword; Who places a road in the sea and a path in the mighty waters – may He bless the President, the Vice President, and all the constituted officers of government of the land.**

**The King Who reigns over kings, in His mercy may He sustain them and protect them; from every trouble, woe and injury, may He rescue them; and put into their heart and into the heart of all their counselors compassion to do good with us and with all Israel, our brethren. In their days and in ours, may Judah be saved and may Israel dwell securely, and may the Redeemer come to Zion. So may it be His will. Now let us respond: Amen.**

Isaiah 53:12 foretells that the people of *Israel*, as God's servant, will be compensated for having had to carry the ills afflicted on them throughout the ages, and will be rewarded for choosing this fate rather than abandon the Jewish faith and follow other gods their forefathers had not known. As was previously noted, the idea that *Israel* has borne the results of the wicked acts of others is not a new concept, neither is the fact that exiled Jews have interceded and prayed on behalf of those who ruled over them. The Jewish people will finally be vindicated, a vision that Ezekiel expresses so eloquently:

<sup>19</sup> *The ArtScroll Siddur [Kol Yaakov]*, p. 451, Published by Mesorah Publications, Ltd. (1997).

**Ezekiel 34:27-30** – (27) "And the tree of the field will give forth its fruit and the land will give forth its produce, and they will know that I am the Lord **when I break the bars of their yoke and rescue them from those who enslave them.** (28) And **they will no longer be a prey to the nations,** and the beasts of the earth will not devour them, **and they will dwell securely, with no one frightening them.** (29) And I shall establish for them a plantation for renown, and they will no longer be hidden because of hunger in the land, **and they will no longer bear the disgrace of the nations.** (30) And they will know that I, the Lord their God, am with them, and they are My people, the house of Israel," says the Lord God.

☆ **Question:** Does *Israel* (as God's servant) "fit" into Isaiah 53:12?  
☆ **Answer:** YES!

### C. Interim Summary – Isaiah 53:9-12

Using a verse-by-verse analysis of the Hebrew text and with the help of a correct translation from the Hebrew, testing of the hypothesis formulated in Section III.B continued as part of the *Verification* stage of the *Scientific Method*.

In this final passage of the *Fourth Servant Song*, God responds to the (Gentile) nations with a description of what happened to *Israel* because of their sins, and then switches to a description of the rewards that await *Israel* for the suffering the people experienced at their hands. Based on its consistency with what the Hebrew Bible teaches and the witness of the historical record, this segment continues to confirm the validity of the hypothesis that *Israel*, as God's servant, is the subject in the *Fourth Servant Song*.

The results obtained from the analysis of Isaiah 53:9-12 are included in the summary of the entire *Fourth Servant Song* in Section VII.

## VII. SUMMARY OF THE FOURTH SERVANT SONG – ISAIAH 52:13 - 53:12

The process of the *Scientific Method* was applied to the study of the *Fourth Servant Song* of Isaiah, Isaiah 52:13-53:12, for the purpose of identifying the entity to which the prophet twice refers as עַבְדִּי.

In the *Observation* stage, the desired fair sample of "data" was collected, and it consisted of the following three data elements:

**Data Element #1:** "My servant" is a reference by God to one of His servants.

**Data Element #2:** Nine instances located within the part of the Book of Isaiah that includes the four Servant Songs – Isaiah 41:8,9, 43:10, 44:1,2,21(2x), 45:4, 49:3 – positively identify the servant as *Israel*.

**Data Element #3:** *Israel* is the subject of the two chapters which surround the Fourth Servant Song.

In the *Generalization* stage, this "data" led to the formulation of the following hypothesis:

☆ **Hypothesis:** *Israel* is the servant in the Fourth Servant Song.

The validity of this hypothesis was tested in the *Verification* stage using a verse-by-verse examination of the Hebrew text of the *Fourth Servant Song*. This consisted of detailed grammatical analysis, demonstration of contextual consistency with the teachings of the Hebrew Bible, and validation against the historical record. The cumulative results obtained in the *Verification* stage are summarized in Table VII-1:

**Table VII-1 – Summary of results from Verification stage: Isaiah 52:13-53:12**

Isaiah	Jewish Translation from the Hebrew	Who Is The "Speaker"?	Does Hypothesis " <i>Israel</i> = Servant" Fit?
52:13	Behold, My servant shall prosper; he shall be exalted and lifted up, and he shall be very high.	God	YES
52:14	As many wondered about you, "How marred his appearance is from that of a man, and his features from that of people!"	God	YES
52:15	So shall he cause many nations to be startled; kings shall shut their mouths because of him, because that which had not been told to them they saw, and that which they had not heard they perceived.	God	YES
53:1	Who would have believed our report, and to whom was the arm of the Lord revealed?	The (Gentile) Nations	YES
53:2	And he came up like a sapling before it, and like a root out from dry ground; he had no features and no splendor; and we saw him that he had no appearance; and how could we desire him?	The (Gentile) Nations	YES
53:3	He was despised and forsaken by men; a man of pains, and accustomed to illness, and as one from whom we would hide our faces; he was despised, and we had no regard for him.	The (Gentile) Nations	YES
53:4	Indeed, he bore our illnesses, and our pains – he has carried them, yet we had regarded him plagued, smitten by God, and oppressed.	The (Gentile) Nations	YES
53:5	But he was pained because of our transgressions, crushed because of our iniquities; the chastisement of our welfare was upon him, and with his wounds we were healed.	The (Gentile) Nations	YES
53:6	We all went astray like sheep, we have turned, each one on his way, and the Lord inflicted upon him [or, accepted his prayers for] the iniquity of all of us.	The (Gentile) Nations	YES
53:7	He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he would not open his mouth; like a lamb to the slaughter he would be brought, and like a ewe that is mute before her shearers, and he would not open his mouth.	The (Gentile) Nations	YES

53:8	From imprisonment and from judgment he was taken, and his generation who shall tell? For he was cut off from the land of the living; because of the transgression of my people, a plague came upon them.	The (Gentile) Nations	YES
53:9	And he gave his grave to the wicked, and to the wealthy in his deaths, because he committed no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth.	God	YES
53:10	And the Lord wished to crush him, He made him ill; if his soul would acknowledge guilt, he shall have descendant [or, he shall see progeny], he shall prolong his days, and God's purpose shall prosper in his hand.	God	YES
53:11	From the toil of his soul he shall see [and he shall] be satisfied; with his knowledge My servant will vindicate the righteous before the multitudes, and their iniquities he shall carry.	God	YES
53:12	Therefore, I will allot him a portion among the multitudes, and with the mighty he shall share booty, because he has bared his soul to death, and with transgressors he was counted; and he bore the sin of many, and he will [continue to] interceded for the transgressors.	God	YES

These results confirm the validity of the hypothesis that was tested. Consequently, the hypothesis becomes a "rule" or "law", which, for the case of the *Fourth Servant Song* of Isaiah, manifests itself as the definitive conclusion about the identity of the servant – *Israel* – and, thereby, it validates the Jewish interpretation.

Moreover, it has been demonstrated here and elsewhere that a thorough knowledge and understanding of the Hebrew language and of the Hebrew Bible are necessary, not optional, resources when attempting to develop a correct interpretation of a passage. Without these tools, it is likely that gross misinterpretations will result.

☆ **Conclusion: The servant in Isaiah's Fourth Servant Song is (the righteous remnant of) *Israel*.**

## VIII. WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

Is the job complete? In a sense, the answer is yes. The entity that is referred to as עֶבְדִי in Isaiah's *Fourth Servant Song* has been positively identified, which was the stated goal of this analysis. However, since the Jewish perspective on Isaiah's *Fourth Servant Song* is not the only interpretation around, it is fair to consider the Christian perspective and see how it holds up when subjected to the same analytical process as was the Jewish interpretation.

The common, though not universal, Christian perspective has the Messiah as the subject of Isaiah's *Fourth Servant Song*, who, according to Christianity, is Jesus. In other words, the claim is that the passage, Isaiah 52:13-53:12, is about the Messiah (Judaism holds that the passage is about the messianic era, not specifically about the Messiah). The question is: "*Can both perspectives be simultaneously valid?*"

To help answer this question, the common Christian interpretation will be analyzed via the *Scientific Method* in a separate essay. The format of that analysis will generally parallel the format that was used in the present essay.