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## **A Comparison of Ancient and Medieval Jewish Interpretations of the Suffering Servant in Isaiah**

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### **Introduction**

The mystique surrounding the identification of the Suffering Servant in Isaiah has produced a quantitative and qualitative labyrinth. Literature and theories on the subject have not only abounded but multiplied. Each nuance of method and aspect brought to bear upon the subject seems to have produced a new theory or at least a new twist to an old theory. As theories on the identity of the Servant have arisen and fallen, merged and mutated, the accompanying literature has multiplied to bludgeoning proportions. In this blizzard of articles and speculation unanimity and clarity have not been achieved; instead confusion and complexity have flourished. North notes in his introduction that a scholar of the stature of S.R. Driver "is said to have abandoned his projected commentary on Isaiah because this part of his subject overwhelmed him."<sup>1</sup> H.R. Minn confesses that "one rises from a survey of the academic scene with a vivid impression of a bewildering conflict of opinion, degenerating, at least in its radical phases, into a veritable witches' dance of gyrating theory."<sup>2</sup>

### **Aim**

A survey of the literature surrounding the Servant Songs of Isaiah is beyond the scope of this study. The aim of this study is limited to a two-fold endeavor. First, to compare Jewish identifications of Isaiah's Servant in the Ancient Period (before 1000 C.E.) and in the Middle Ages (ca. 1000-1500 C.E.). Second, to discover factors that may have been responsible for producing any difference. The scope of this presentation is primarily limited to the passages commonly known as the "Servant Songs." This limitation

will allow an adequate representation of the subject within the confines of this study.

In order to accomplish the aim of this study three basic steps will be followed. After an introductory section, to establish a background by briefly surveying the passages involved and tersely analyzing theories concerning the identity of the Servant, the development will survey, analyze, and compare theories from both the Ancient and Medieval Periods. The last section will attempt an explanation concerning the causes and reasons for any difference discovered between the two eras.

## Background

**A survey of the texts.** There is very little consensus concerning the identity, the nature or even the extent of the passages known as "Servant Songs" in Isaiah. Duhm in 1892 was the first to identify the passages by the inclusive title "Servant Songs." However, some would question whether either term *Servant* or *songs* applies to all four of these passages or necessarily only to these four passages. Scholars have questioned both the propriety and the restriction of the identification "Servant Songs" to these passages. While some propose that there are in reality only three Servant Songs, others advance the idea of more than four. Depending on one's view of context and the connection of each song to its own surroundings, scholars have proposed varying lengths to each of the songs. For the purpose of this study we will limit our investigation to the four passages traditionally identified as Servant Songs -- Isaiah 42:1-9; 49:1-13; 50:4-11; and 52:13-53:12.

The bond which unites the passages being considered is hardly organic since they are not only scattered throughout Isaiah but they also do not even share the term *servant* in common. While some see them as interruptions in the flow of context; others see them as integral parts, necessary to the flow of thought in Isaiah. McKenzie notes

it would be extremely difficult to find another four scattered passages which, when put together, would exhibit such a close community of topic and tone as the Servant Songs. . . . Yet it should be noticed that the four Songs do not form a single literary unit. They cannot be read together. They are detached not only from the context but even more obviously from each other.<sup>3</sup>

If they may be spoken of as a unit at all, it is because of their common mood and focus.<sup>4</sup> For the purpose of this investigation we will accept the Songs as they stand in context assuming a homogeneity of subject matter centering on the Servant.

**A survey of identifications.** It is perhaps an over-simplification to say that the views concerning the identity of the Servant generally fall into two major categories: the individualist and the collectivist. Each view has its own proponents and problems as well as its own modifications and spin-offs.

Individualist theories usually identify the Servant either with an historical figure, with the author himself or with a future eschatological figure. Among the historical figures proposed as the Servant have been Zerubbabel, Job, Jehoiachin, Moses, Uzziah, Ezekiel, Eleazer, Cyrus, an unidentified contemporary of the author and several others. Theories identifying the Servant with the author generally center on one of three individuals -- Isaiah himself, one of his disciples or some unknown individual. Eschatological views generally understand the Servant as either an unidentified Messiah or Jesus Christ the Messiah or an ideal figure.

Collectivist theories commonly center around the nation of Israel. Some propose that the Servant is the whole nation of Israel. Some suggest that the Servant is a portion of Israel, a faithful or righteous remnant. Others advance the idea that the Servant is an ideal representation of the nation.

**Summary.** North after surveying theories surrounding the identity of the Servant discerns four theories that predominate today. First, the historico-messianic view that the Servant was an anonymous contemporary of the author. Second, the autobiographical theory that the Servant was the author himself. Third, the collective theory that the Servant is Israel in whole or in part. Finally, the Messianic theory that the Servant is Christ or an unidentified eschatological figure.<sup>5</sup>

Theories concerning the identity of the Servant range far and wide. They include figures throughout time (past, contemporary and future), throughout society (prophets, priests, kings; individual and nation), and throughout the realm of reality (actual or ideal; real or symbolic). Our aim is to survey Jewish views concerning the identity of the Servant through the first fifteen centuries of the Common Era, compare them, and examine the reasons for any differences that they might exhibit.

## Jewish Views in the Ancient Period

References to the Messiah abound in Talmudic and Midrashic literature of the Ancient Period while specific references to Isaiah's Servant Songs are more limited. As in other ages there seems to be no consensus of opinion on the identification of the Servant. In this period the Messianic understanding of Isaiah's Servant is predominant, but identifications of the Messiah are varied. The difficulty is not a complexity due to dissimilar views, but a complexity due to the wealth and diversity of explanations.

### Ancient Jewish Literature

With the limited number of references to the Servant Songs of Isaiah in the literature of this period a survey of most of the occurrences can be made.

**Talmud.** Although the Isaiah passages are cited several times in the Talmud, only one reference occurs in a context dealing with identification of the Servant. In *Sanhedrin* 98-99 a reference is made to Isaiah 53:4. Several observations concerning the Messiah are made in the context surrounding this Isaianic reference. Messiah is identified as being of royal descent --- "the son of David." He is an eschatological figure who shall come in the last jubilee of the world<sup>6</sup> following "the war of Gog and Magog."<sup>7</sup> Messiah will come out of Zion<sup>8</sup> as "the hope" and "the Redeemer" of Israel<sup>9</sup> to "renew his world."<sup>10</sup> If Israel is worthy Messiah will come "like the son of man came with clouds of heaven"; however, if they are not worthy he will come "lowly, and riding upon an ass."<sup>11</sup>

The discussion in section 98b concerns the name of Messiah. Various Rabbis propose the names of Shiloh, Yinnon, Haninah, and Menahem. Finally the name "leper scholar" is proposed based on the following reading of Isaiah 53:4, "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him a leper, smitten of God and afflicted." The discussion continues by describing Messiah as a king.<sup>12</sup>

In summary, the Talmud presents the Servant as Messiah. He is an eschatological individual who will come at a future time following a period of great warfare and upheaval. He will function as king since he is a son of David and will bring to fruition Israel's hope and redemption. Within this seemingly unanimous description of an eschatological individual is found a note of discord. Twice in these sections Rabbi Hillel states, "There shall be no Messiah for Israel,

because they have already enjoyed him in the days of Hezekiah."<sup>13</sup> Hillel, thus though discounting an eschatological figure, identifies the Messiah as an individual.

**The Midrash Rabbah.** Although the Servant Songs are referred to well over thirty times in this midrash only three references are in contexts dealing with the Servant's identification.

The first reference, Isaiah 42:5, is found in the comments on Genesis 31:3. The midrash uses this passage to present the idea of a resurrection occurring in the days of the Messiah.<sup>14</sup>

In the notes on Leviticus 1:1, Isaiah 49:3 is quoted to vindicate God's praise of the nation of Israel.<sup>15</sup> The connection at this point is ambiguous. The midrash does not appear to be equating Israel with Messiah, although that might be implied. Just as likely, in view of the context's repeated reference to a "king," it might be suggested that the king, i.e. Messiah, is the ornamentation that will bring praise to Israel, the nation. The passage is inconclusive.

Perhaps the clearest Messianic application in this midrash is found in the remarks on Ruth 2:6. Several characteristics of the Messiah are pointed out. He partakes of both royalty and suffering. Apparently during the time of his suffering he is "deprived of his sovereignty" but only for a time because he "will be restored to his throne." In connection with his appearance Israel will go through a time of hardship from which the Messiah will rescue them as their "future Redeemer." In some sense Israel's rescue is dependent on individual faith since it is said that "he who believes in him will live, and he who does not believe will depart to the Gentile nations and they will put him to death."<sup>16</sup> According to this midrash Messiah is an individual distinct from the nation. He both suffers for and reigns over the nation, serving as their Redeemer and king.

**Pesikta Rabbati.** In these discourses most of the references from Isaiah's Servant Songs are found in Messianic contexts. The first reference is found in *Piska* 36.1 where Isaiah 42:1 is quoted. This section provides numerous references to the Messiah's character and identification. He is called "God's light." He is said to have been told at the time of creation that "the sins of souls as yet unborn would bend him down under a yoke of iron." He endured his suffering "so that no one in Israel would perish." He is called "Ephraim" and is said to be a king. This Messiah will be instrumental in delivering Israel from a time of trouble. Messiah will proclaim redemption for Israel in connection with their deliverance.<sup>17</sup> In summary, the Messiah is seen as an individual distinct from the nation not only because he provides their

redemption but also because he is from before the creation of the world. He is an individual within the nation as indicated by his name Ephraim, by Israel's description as 'his people,' and by his position of king. His actions will include both suffering for sin, apparently to make redemption possible, and reigning as king.

A second reference is found in *Piska* 31 where Isaiah 49:8-13 is mentioned. This section deals with God's promise of redemption. The initial nine paragraphs discuss the need for and justification of redemption. The final paragraph contains God's plan of redemption through the Messiah. In this context Messiah is described as a future king. He is "afflicted . . . in keeping with the sins of the generation." Messiah's activity will bring restoration to Israel to the extent that even the "Ten Tribes who were separated long ago" will be returned to Jerusalem.<sup>18</sup> Thus Messiah is viewed as an eschatological individual who will not only serve as king but also as Redeemer of Israel.

**The Midrash on Psalms.** A number of references are made to Isaiah's Servant Songs in this work. In two of the occurrences allusion is made so as to identify the Servant.

In Psalm 2:9 reference to both Isaiah 42:1 and 52:13 is found. In remarking on the phrase "Thou art My son," the midrash quotes Exodus 4:22 to establish a parallel between the terms *son* and *Israel*. Next the Isaiah passages are used to connect the idea of servant with Israel. Having equated the Psalmist's *son* and Isaiah's *servant* with Israel, the midrash distinguishes between the King who fulfills all this and Messiah who "occupies himself with the Torah."<sup>19</sup> Again the Messiah is presented as an individual distinct from the nation. However, in this midrash he is not identified as a king.

Reference is found in Psalm 42/43:5 to Isaiah 42:1 in connection with redemption. Past redemption from Egypt is used to introduce the concept of future redemption. The midrash envisions a parallel between the two redemptions. Two redeemers, Moses and Aaron, were used in the past. Consequently, two redeemers are to be expected in the future. One future redeemer is identified as Elijah who was of the house of Aaron. The second is "Messiah, son of David" as is evident from Isaiah 42:1.<sup>20</sup> Once again the Messiah is presented as a future individual of royal descent who will be instrumental in Israel's redemption.

**Targum.** Levey points out that references to the Servant as the Messiah in the Targumim are far from being ambiguous. He observes

the Targumist never did have any doubt or uncertainty as to what he meant in his interpretations; if he felt that a text carried a Messianic meaning he said so unmistakably. . . . The Targum . . . mentions the Messiah without restraint where the interpreter feels that a Messianic meaning is present or implied in the text.<sup>21</sup>

Levey summarizes the Messianic teaching of the Targumim as follows. In the Pentateuch Messiah is "a symbol of security, culture and refinement" as well as "a leader who will restore the political and military strength of Israel."<sup>22</sup> In the Prophets Messiah is not only a "symbol of peace and harmony in the world, as a righteous judge" but also

a glorious Messiah, who is not only the champion of justice, righteousness, and the Torah, but who is a warrior who despoils the enemies of his people and restores Jewish sovereignty. He also intercedes with God for the sins of his people, and brings them back to the right path, for he has the power to dispense personal reward and punishment.<sup>23</sup>

He further notes that

the Messiah will be the symbol and/or the active agent of the deliverance of Israel. He will be of Davidic lineage, though he may have a non-Davidic predecessor, the Ephraimite Messiah, who will die in battle . . . The Messiah will bring an end to the wandering of Israel, and the Jewish people will be gathered in from their Dispersion to their own land. . . . The Messiah will live eternally. He will restore the Temple and rebuild Jerusalem . . . The Messiah will be a righteous judge, dispensing justice and equity, the champion of the poor and the oppressed, the personification of social justice.<sup>24</sup>

According to Levey the Messianism of the Targumim involves a future time centered in "a king primarily of Davidic lineage appointed by God" who will "mete out reward and punishment in truth and in justice."<sup>25</sup>

### **An Alternate Perspective**

Zimmerli and Jeremias present an alternate perspective of the Jewish interpretation of Isaiah's Servant Songs during the Ancient Period. They consider the question in view from a contrast between



Hellenistic and Palestinian Jewish interpretations. They limit their discussion to the phrase "servant of God" in Isaiah 41-53.<sup>26</sup>

**Palestinian Judaism.** Jeremias observes that

in Palestinian Judaism of the first millennium three distinct interpretations of the Deutero-Isaiah servant are found. . . . these three interpretations do not overlap but each of them is limited to certain of the nineteen passages referring to the servant.<sup>27</sup>

First, a collective interpretation existed. According to this interpretation the Servant referred to the people of Israel. However, this interpretation is limited to nine of the nineteen passages including only two Servant Songs and neither of these in totality (Isaiah 49:3, 5f and 50:10). Of the two Servant Song passages only one verse (Isaiah 49:3) is regarded as a certain reference to the nation. Jeremias further notes that "the collective application to Israel was strictly confined to those passages and their context where the Hebrew text demanded it."<sup>28</sup>

Second, an interpretation existed that understood the Servant to be the prophet Isaiah himself. This interpretation is primarily used in reference to Isaiah 49:5 and 50:10. Jeremias points out that "it must have seemed obvious to interpret some of the servant passages as self-expressions of the prophet; this is true especially of the description of suffering given in the first person."<sup>29</sup>

Third, a Messianic interpretation also existed. Jeremias provides a somewhat extensive discussion of evidence supporting Messianic interpretations of Isaiah in pre-Christian times.<sup>30</sup> On the basis of this discussion Jeremias concludes: 1) that the interpretation of Isaiah 42:1ff; 49:1ff, 6ff; and 52:13ff was exclusively Messianic in Palestinian Judaism; 2) that Isaiah 42:1ff and 52:13-15 are consistently Messianically interpreted from pre-Christian times; and 3) that the Messianic interpretation about suffering in Isaiah 53:1-12 can be traced to pre-Christian times "with some probability."<sup>31</sup> Baron arrives at the same conclusion. Baron notes that "from most ancient times there have not been wanting authoritative teachers who interpreted the chapter [Isaiah 53] of the Messiah."<sup>32</sup>

Thus in Palestinian Judaism of the first millennium C.E. the Messianic interpretation of the Servant in Isaiah was the predominant view, the only exception being Isaiah 49:3 for grammatical reasons.

**Hellenistic Judaism.** The prevailing interpretation in Hellenistic Judaism, however, was the collective interpretation which considered the Servant to be the people of Israel. The single factor that most affected the interpretation of Isaiah's Servant outside of Palestine according to Jeremias is the LXX.<sup>33</sup> He observes that

the further the distance from the original Hebrew text the more the second conception ('child of God') prevailed in the Jewish Hellenistic understanding of Isa. 40ff . . . the LXX had extended the collective interpretation which the Heb. text gave in nine places to other passages. Thus in Isa. 42:19 the LXX rendered the singular of the Heb. text twice as a plural. Especially far-reaching in consequence was the fact that the LXX understood the phrase 'my servant' as collective also in Isa 42:1, and expressed this sense by the addition of the word '*iakob* . . .'<sup>34</sup>

This collective sense was also extended in the LXX to include Isaiah 52:13-53:12.<sup>35</sup> One might conclude that even though the collective interpretation did exist during the Ancient Period it was primarily popular in the Jewish dispersion and its foundation was somewhat artificial being based on the Septuagint's deviations from the Hebrew text.

### Summary

Rembaum notes that although "most of the ancient Jewish sources treat selected segments of Isaiah 53 and reflect no interest in seeking a unifying concept for the entire passage," still "the servant as messiah is the dominant theme in the rabbinic sources."<sup>36</sup>

Driver and Neubauer conclude that "before the destruction of Jerusalem, the Jews looked for the coming of a Messiah to save it; afterwards, to restore it."<sup>37</sup> They further note that this interpretation did not die in the second century when conflict and controversy with Christians arose.<sup>38</sup> In fact, it continued apparently unchallenged until the time of Rashi in the beginning of the eleventh century C.E.<sup>39</sup>

Baron resorts to several ancient authorities and sources to detail the Messianic interpretation of the Ancient Period. He quotes Rabbi Mosheh el Sheikh, from the later half of the sixteenth century, as stating, "Our Rabbis with one voice accept and affirm the opinion that the prophet is speaking of the King Messiah."<sup>40</sup> Baron's conclusion is that "until Rashi applied it to the Jewish nation, the Messianic interpretation of this chapter [Isaiah 53] was almost

universally adopted by Jews."<sup>41</sup> Jeremias' claim is even stronger. He asserts that "there is not to be found a definitely non-messianic exegesis of Isa. 53 in the rabbinic literature of the first millennium."<sup>42</sup>

The Servant Messiah of ancient Jewish literature is understood to be an individual. He appears to be an eschatological figure distinct from the nation in which his lineage is found. He is presented as a son of David, a king who will sit upon a throne. At the same time he suffers in connection with the sins of mankind and/or in conjunction with the redemption of the nation of Israel. While being Israel's king he is also its Redeemer. His coming is connected to resurrection and to times of hardship and trouble for Israel from which he delivers them by restoring them to the Promised Land.

### **Jewish Views in the Medieval Period**

During the Middle Ages a drastic shift occurred in Jewish interpretation of the Servant of Isaiah. The individual, Messianic interpretation which had been predominant in Ancient times, particularly in Palestinian Judaism, was almost completely replaced by a collective interpretation which viewed the nation of Israel as the Servant. Rembaum points out that "in the Middle Ages, Jewish exegetes tended to view the Servant as the Jewish people suffering in exile."<sup>43</sup>

#### **Rashi -- Herald of Change**

**Influence.** Essentially the rise of the collective interpretation in the Middle Ages was due to one man --- Rashi.<sup>44</sup> Through his extensive writings and the school he founded, his ability to sway and to mold Jewish thought extended not only to medieval Europe but also into modern times. His influence was not only extensive but has been enduring.<sup>45</sup>

Katz observes that Rashi's commentary on the Pentateuch "was the text universally used, even by beginners."<sup>46</sup> Shereshevsky notes that "no other medieval commentary on Bible or Talmud enjoyed such a wide readership or had such a notable influence as that of Rashi."<sup>47</sup> He adds further that until the end of his life "Rashi remained in contact with the Jewish communities which turned to him for spiritual guidance . . ."<sup>48</sup>

Respect for Rashi among medieval Jews was unquestioned. His influence was extensive. The whole of the Jewish community in

medieval Europe was familiar both with the writings and also with the reputation of Rashi. In times of peace they looked to him for wisdom and instruction. In times of distress they looked to him for answers and comfort. Rashi's influence helped to mold Jewish thought from medieval times into the present.

**Identification.** The first Jewish commentator of stature to apply these passages to the Jewish nation was Rashi.<sup>49</sup> Rashi's initial comments on Isaiah 52:13, like the LXX translation of Isaiah 42:1, insert the term *Jacob*. To be sure that the application to the nation of Israel is not missed, Rashi first asserts that "Jacob" refers to "the righteous who are in him," that is, not to an individual but to the individuals that compose the nation. Next he places the comments beginning in 53:1 into the mouths of the nations [Gentiles]. Finally when Isaiah's description becomes more appropriate of an individual, Rashi comments, "This prophet speaks constantly of the whole people as one man." He goes on to explain that Israel's suffering "was not merely a consequence of their own depression: Israel suffered in order that by his sufferings atonement might be made for all other nations."<sup>50</sup>

In his discussion concerning the possibility of debate between Rashi and Christian clergy, Shereshevsky notes

a favorite subject for discussion was the Christological interpretation of the "suffering servant," on "despised and forsaken of men, a man of pains and acquainted with disease . . . wounded because of our transgressions," described in the fifty-third chapter of the Book of Isaiah (Verses 3-5). In his comment on Verse 3, Rashi explains that the suffering servant is not one individual but the entire people of Israel.<sup>51</sup>

According to Rashi, Israel is not simply the Servant but the Suffering Servant who makes atonement for the nations. Israel is the Redeemer of the Gentiles.

### **Subsequent Witnesses**

A brief survey of representative Jewish interpreters throughout the Medieval Period will help to indicate the domination of the collective view in this era.

**Joseph Kara (ca. 1100).** Kara saw Israel as "a righteous nation . . . created by God to bear all the sins of the world so that the world would be at peace and continue to exist."<sup>52</sup> In his paraphrase of

Isaiah 52:13 he inserts the word *Israel* to make the verse read, "My servant Israel will be high and lifted up."<sup>53</sup> He places the comments in Isaiah 53:1ff into the mouths of the nations [Gentiles] who are forced to admit that Israel "had served the faithful God, and kept the law of Moses, and observed justice and right, and that they [Israel] have been carrying sicknesses and pains which for our [Gentile] iniquities should have been borne by us."<sup>54</sup> Thus Israel becomes the sin bearer of the world, "which carried on itself all iniquities in order that the whole world might be preserved."<sup>55</sup> According to Kara, Isaiah's Servant is the nation Israel who not only suffers at the hand of the Gentiles but also suffers on behalf of the Gentiles in order to provide their forgiveness.

**Ibn Ezra (ca. 1150).** Of Ibn Ezra, "throughout his interpretation of Isaiah 53 he relates the personality and experiences of the Suffering Servant to either an individual Jew in exile or, *more emphatically*, to the entire people Israel in exile." [emphasis added]<sup>56</sup> He specifically identifies the Servant as "each individual belonging to Israel, and consequently God's servant who is in context."<sup>57</sup> At the same time he attempts to discount the Messianic interpretation.

By deemphasizing his preferred understanding of the Servant as an *individual*, a concept that is essential for Christian exegesis, and by stressing the collective interpretation, Ibn Ezra appears to be negating the Christological meaning of the passage to which he first alludes. This is another example of the Jewish tendency to avoid or de-emphasize certain interpretations of Isaiah 53 so as not to lend any credence to the Christian understanding of the prophecy.<sup>58</sup>

**Joseph Albo (ca. 1400).** In commenting on Isaiah 52:13ff Albo notes that it is "all to be referred to Israel (who is here called 'my servant,' as Is. xli.2, xli.8)."<sup>59</sup> Consequently it appears that Albo understands that only a righteous portion of Israel suffers for the whole. He states, "misfortunes light upon the righteous not as a punishment, but for the sake of a whole nation, that atonement may be made for it."<sup>60</sup> Thus he allowed for a modification in the collective interpretation which made the Servant a righteous portion of the nation.

After identifying the Servant as Israel . . . Albo does not clarify whether the atonement which was afforded by the Suffering Servant is due to the sufferings of the entire people of Israel as a righteous collective or as a group of righteous within Israel.<sup>61</sup>

**Abraham Fairssol (ca. 1500).** Fairssol argued "in favor of the collective-national interpretation . . . that Israel did not warrant such suffering and that the Jews suffered for the sake of the nations, bearing the punishment due the Gentiles for their transgressions."<sup>62</sup> He makes the following comment in the beginning of his commentary on Isaiah 52:13ff which clearly presents his collective view.

I have found . . . others who apply it confidently to the King Messiah . . . an opinion shared by our Rabbis in the Midrash . . . We shall ourselves, however, with no less confidence, suppose that it refers properly to the congregation of Israel, which the prophet addresses by the term *servant*, in the singular number, exactly as we find him doing, by habit and preference, in many of his previous prophecies.<sup>63</sup>

**Isaac ben Abraham (ca. 1550).** Isaac ben Abraham of Troki sought "to demonstrate that the prophets often call the Jewish people God's servant and that the Isaianic references to the Servant's illness can be understood as allusions to Israel's suffering in exile."<sup>64</sup> In his somewhat extensive comments on Isaiah 52:13ff, Isaac essentially offers a polemic against the Nazarene sect and their Christological interpretation. In opposition to a Messianic understanding, Isaac presents the nation of Israel as the Servant. "The truth is, the whole *Parashah*, down to liii. 12, was spoken prophetically to Isaiah with reference to the people of Israel, who were enduring the yoke of exile, and who are called 'my servant,' in the singular, as frequently elsewhere."<sup>65</sup>

**Manasseh-ben-Israel (ca. 1600).** Although not technically part of the Medieval witnesses, Manasseh provides a competent summary of the Medieval collective view in his work *Reconciliation*, a commentary on Isaiah 52:13-53:12. His position and method are quickly evident in his paraphrase of the passage. He renders the first two verses as follows:

Behold, my servant *Israel* shall understand; he shall be exalted, extolled, and raised very high, *at the coming of the Messiah*. As many of the nations were astonished at thee, *O Israel*, saying at the time of the captivity, Truly he is disfigured above all mankind in his countenance and form.[emphasis added]<sup>66</sup>

His insertion of the terms *Israel*, *nations*, and *Messiah* at the appropriate points, not only has equated Israel with Messiah but

also has distinguished the Gentiles as those in need of Israel's redemption. He later reinforces his collective view by placing the words of verses 4-7 into the mouths of the Gentiles where they are made to say, "we unbelievers more justly merited the troubles and calamities which this innocent people suffered in their captivity."<sup>67</sup> Thus Israel is the Servant which both suffers at the hands of and in behalf of the nations.

## **Summary**

This view that Isaiah's Servant refers to the nation of Israel in whole or in part dominated the Medieval Period. However, this view did not spring up entirely within the Middle Ages; it did have forerunners in the Ancient Period. As Jeremias points out, though a minority view, the collective view did exist in Palestinian and Hellenistic Judaism.<sup>68</sup> Also Origen gives early testimony to the collective interpretation when he states:

I remember once having used these prophecies in disquisition with those called wise among the Jews, whereon the Jews said that these things were prophesied of the whole people as one which was both dispersed abroad and smitten.<sup>69</sup>

It should also be understood that the collective view did not entirely replace the Messianic view during the Middle Ages. Driver and Neubauer note that throughout the Middle Ages

there are those who still interpreted the section of the Messiah; and among them it is remarkable, that Maimonides retained herein the simple faith of his forefathers, interpreting of the Messiah the words, 'He came up as a sucker,' &c. as well as the glories, 'at Him kings will shut their mouths'.<sup>70</sup>

Ibn Ezra also gives testimony to the existence of the Messianic interpretation in the Middle Ages. He observes, " 'Many explain it of the Messiah,' on the authority of a traditional saying of the Rabbis." <sup>71</sup>

The principal interpretation of Isaiah's Servant in and following the Middle Ages is the collective view.<sup>72</sup> Fostered and expounded by Rashi, expanded and proliferated by those who followed him, the collectivist view of the Servant displaced the Messianic view of the Ancient Period and still holds sway within Jewish interpretation.

## Reasons Behind the Rise of the Collective View

Although Rashi gave impetus to the collectivist view in medieval times, his personal influence does not fully explain the rise of this view. His championing of this view was in the context of a number of factors which dominated the times and environment in which he lived. To a large degree the collectivist view became prominent because of the environment of medieval political, intellectual, and social influences; particularly as they affected Rashi.

Rembaum mentions four justifications of the collective interpretation of Isaiah's Servant. Three are proposed by A. Funkenstein and the fourth by Ibn Ezra.

Funkenstein has suggested that, in their attempts to find meaning in their suffering in exile, Jews developed three different interpretations of their experience: (1) the 'cathartic'; (2) the 'missionary'; and (3) the 'soteriological'. According to the 'cathartic' . . . the suffering is a means to expiating Israel's own transgressions. The missionary understanding defines the exilic dispersion as a necessary step in God's plan to bring *Torah* to the nations. The 'soteriological' . . . conceives of Israel's suffering as affording atonement for the very nations who are Israel's persecutors.

Ibn Ezra refers to yet a fourth meaning that he and others find in the Jews' suffering at the hands of the nations: the nations' inflicting pain on the Jews is a transgression that justifies their being punished by God. We can term this view of the exilic suffering 'retaliatory'.<sup>73</sup>

Rembaum's justifications for the collective view suggest a number of possible causes that might have affected medieval understanding of the Servant Songs. Three areas need to be investigated concerning the rise of the collective view to a position of dominance.

### Hermeneutics

It should be pointed out from the beginning that Rashi's departure from the Messianic view was not exegetically based. Early in his career and in his writings Rashi held to the Messianic view. Baron points out that when Rashi "wrote his Commentary on the



Talmud --- [he] actually followed the older interpretation, which applied Isaiah liii. to the Messiah."<sup>74</sup> Bernard Weinryb seems to suggest that Rashi synthesized a hermeneutical method of his own which at least allowed him to substantiate his collectivist view in spite of ancient Jewish interpretations.<sup>75</sup> Rembaum in a footnote apparently allows for such an understanding. He observes:

One might be inclined to suggest that Rashi's unique interpretation simply flowed out of the plain meaning of the Isaianic passage . . . . However, the language of Isaiah 53 is sufficiently obscure so as to lend itself to a variety of interpretations, and, in fact, most Jewish commentators who, like Rashi, were sensitive to the *peshat* of the Bible, chose *not* to understand the Servant's suffering as vicariously providing universal atonement . . . Thus, the language of Isaiah 53, per se, cannot be said to be the determining factor in Rashi's interpretation.<sup>76</sup>

Rashi's collectivist position thus did not arise from previous instruction or previously accepted exegetical methods. Apparently it did not arise from an uninfluenced study of Isaiah's Servant Songs. The implication is that Rashi's methods were subservient to Rashi's view of Isaiah's Servant in light of the political and social influences around him.

### **Apologetics**

If the reason for Rashi's abandonment of the Messianic view was not exegetical, then other reasons must be discerned. One hypothesis offered for the shift is apologetical. This hypothesis involves an interesting circularity. Rembaum posits that the trial and crucifixion of Jesus presented severe problems to the early Christian community. Early Christian apologists were faced with questions such as, "How could Jesus as God allow himself to go through such suffering and humiliation?" And, "If Jesus were the true Messiah should he not have reigned in glory rather than having been treated as a lowly criminal?"<sup>77</sup> Isaiah 53 provided a useful Christian rebuttal.

This prophecy was understood as indicating that Jesus' death represented the fulfillment of the will of God and served a divinely ordained and necessary purpose. . . . [It] was also viewed as a vehicle for comprehending that Jesus' human nature, and not his divinity, experienced the anguish of the passion.<sup>78</sup>

In turn during medieval times Jewish apologists, following Rashi's lead, used the same passage against Christian polemics. The Jewish apologetical reaction was in response to a two-pronged attack.

**Anti-Jewish propaganda.** First, was a reply to anti-Jewish propaganda. This attack not only consisted of an affirmation that God had abandoned Israel but also that God had replaced Israel in their covenantal relationship with Him. Christian polemicists pointed to the Jewish exile

as proof of God's punishment and abandonment of the Jewish people. Confronting such challenges, Jews had to rationalize their status and affirm their covenantal relationship with God. In the process certain Jews came to view the Jewish people as the Suffering Servant of God functioning in exile as "a light unto the nations."<sup>79</sup>

Rashi and others found their answer in the Servant Songs of Isaiah. Isaiah 53 specifically provided hope for the Jewish people. According to Rashi it taught them that God was afflicting the people "to give them an opportunity to make amends before him" and "to atone for the sins of all humanity."<sup>80</sup>

Thus, according to Rashi, the Jews, and not Jesus, suffered as a sacrifice to God and atoned for humanity. It was the Servant-nation Israel that maintained its guiltless qualities in the face of great pain, and not the Christian messiah. And it was the Jewish people who would be rewarded for accepting God's death decree. Rashi presents the Jewish people as a human sacrifice necessary for the maintenance of the world. . . . With these ideas Rashi blunts the force of contemporary Christian ideology.<sup>81</sup>

Baron points out that the collectivist view in effect flattered the nation and inflated its self-esteem.<sup>82</sup> It not only restored a sense of value to a nation suffering in exile but it in effect made them the source of blessing for all nations. Israel the nation maintained their covenantal position as God's chosen people while at the same time they realized evidence of God's present workings and future blessings.

**Christological interpretation.** Second, it was a reply to a Messianic-Christological understanding of the Servant. Jews of medieval Europe found themselves increasingly confronted by a

stronger, more zealous form of Christianity that sought to win converts by the claim for the legitimacy of the Christological interpretation of OT messianic passages, especially the Servant Songs. Rembaum notes:

Jews also found themselves responding to --- what had become by then --- the standard Christian understanding of Isaiah 53. Given the fervor of medieval Christian preachers and controversialists and the frequency of disputation among scholars in general during this period, Jews were often confronted by Christians who were trying to convince them of the legitimacy of the Christological meaning of the Servant prophecy. Most Jews responded by avoiding the messianic interpretation altogether, so as not to give their adversaries even the slightest pretext for arguing their point. Instead they developed a collective-national understanding of the passage that, in essence, contradicted the Christological interpretation and provided the Jews of the medieval Christian world with answers for certain very profound questions.<sup>83</sup>

The Jewish response extended beyond mere answers to Christian polemics into efforts to rob the Christians of the very texts they were using in their arguments. Katz notes that the

Jewish polemic appears to have possessed an apologetic function. The defenders of the Jewish faith, however, were not content with repelling Christian attacks; at times they counterattacked, and some of their remarks were directed against the central dogmas of Christianity. Jesus' Messiahship is either directly contested, or refuted by inference . . .<sup>84</sup>

Jeremias suggests that the translation by Aquila was "designed to replace the LXX, as the latter offered Christians too much scope for the production of christological proof-texts."<sup>85</sup> On the other hand, some suggest that the effort to rob Christians of proof texts extended also to the Hebrew texts of the OT. Jeremias points out that

in the light of the severity with which Judaism opposed the Christian interpretation of the passion texts of Isa. 53, we must reckon with the possibility of a textual excision, especially since the messianic interpretation of Isa. 53 seems elsewhere to have been suppressed.<sup>86</sup>

He further states that

from the second century A.D. the history of Jewish exegesis of Isa. 53 is shaped increasingly by the opposition to Christianity. . . . From the end of the second century the apologetic method of changing the text and of tendentious interpretation was seized upon in translating Isa. 53, in order to dispose of passages which were of use to Christians in their proof texts. . . . it seems that messianic interpretations of Isa. 53 were at times excised; in several instances there is at least a suspicion of this sort. . . . The widespread conclusion, that the relative infrequency of messianic interpretations of Isa. 53 in late Judaism shows that the latter was not acquainted with the idea of the suffering Messiah, does not do justice to the sources; for it ignores the great part which . . . the debate with Christianity played in this question.<sup>87</sup>

Jewish apologists thus opposed Christian doctrine not only in the arena of interpretation but also in the arena of texts seeking both to answer the Christian attack and to rob it of its very substance. At the same time the collectivist view allowed Jews to reconcile the supposed conflict between a suffering and reigning Messiah; a Messiah who was both Redeemer through his suffering and King upon a throne.<sup>88</sup> It afforded them the latitude to not only include their concepts but also to maintain a literal view of the text where it suited them.<sup>89</sup>

Shereshevsky advances the apologetic hypothesis to explain Rashi's collectivist views. Several times he notes the possibility of and evidence for the assumption that Rashi was familiar with Christian arguments for Christological interpretation afforded by the Messianic view. He states

it is generally assumed that Rashi was not unaware of the interpretations which the Church Fathers gave to Biblical texts. He reacted to many of these interpretations with vigorous opposition. . . . Given the close proximity in which Jews and Christians lived in Rashi's Troyes, it may well be surmised that Rashi himself engaged in discussions with members of the Christian clergy. . . . Numerous statements in Rashi's commentaries on the Bible . . . attest to his knowledge of Latin Bible commentaries written by early Christian theologians.<sup>90</sup>

Katz observes that "Rashi's contemporaries, themselves combatively inclined towards Christianity, had no difficulty in grasping his controversial intention against that religion in particular."<sup>91</sup>

The collective interpretation allowed medieval Judaism to defend itself against the polemical attacks of Christianity. By understanding the Servant to be the nation of Israel, Jewish apologists were afforded great comfort. They could not only answer Christian propaganda and Christological interpretations but also were able in the process to rob it of its very heart -- a Messianic Servant.

### **Persecution**

Another factor that led Rashi, along with other medieval interpreters, to abandon the Messianic view was the persecution associated with the first Crusade. The first Crusade, initiated and sanctioned by Pope Urban, found its appeal popular among the common preachers and the poor masses who responded with a fervor that far exceeded religious and at times civil control. Preachers such as Peter the Hermit instilled the crusader spirit into the masses and motivated them to enlist in the noble cause.

Unfortunately the conduct of numerous crusader "armies" did not match the respectability of their cause. Mayer likens their conduct to that of the "hordes of barbarians" who had invaded Europe earlier.<sup>92</sup> Atrocities and horrors were common as the "armies" moved across Europe to mass at Constantinople for an attack designed to free Jerusalem from the Moslem. The Muslims, though a prime target, were not the exclusive focus of this misguided crusader fervor which produced a degree of persecution never before experienced in the Middle Ages. Mayer notes that the Crusaders "inflamed by irresponsible preachers and attracted by the wealth of the important Jewish communities of the Rhineland . . . indulged themselves in pogroms on a scale hitherto unprecedented in the Middle Ages."<sup>93</sup> In spite of attempts by civil and religious leaders to protect Jews within their jurisdictions the persecution spread.

They plundered and killed the Jews in one Rhineland town after another: Speyer, Worms, Mainz, Trier, and Cologne. Other groups attacked the Jews in Neuss, Xanten, and even Prague. The extant Jewish accounts of these events make grim reading.<sup>94</sup>

In Mainz and Worms, both university towns where Rashi had spent years studying, well over a thousand Jews met their death at the hands of the Crusaders. Included in the number of those who perished at this time were many of Rashi's friends and relatives.<sup>95</sup>

Far from a religious motive, the leading cause of the persecutions seems to have been pure greed. "As in the persecutions of the later Middle Ages, the argument that the Jews, as the enemies of Christ, deserved to be punished was merely a feeble attempt to conceal the real motive: greed."<sup>96</sup> Runciman expands on this economic cause.

The peasants and poorer townspeople, increasingly in need of money as a cash economy replaced the older economics of services, fell more and more into their [the Jews] debt and in consequence felt more and more resentment against them; while the Jews, lacking legal security, charged high rates of interest and extracted exorbitant profits wherever the benevolence of the local ruler supported them.

. . . the beginnings of the Crusading movement added to it. It was expensive for a knight to equip himself for a Crusade . . . But was it right that in order to go and fight for Christendom he must fall into the clutches of members of the race that crucified Christ?<sup>97</sup>

Thus persecution of the Jews provided a solution to two problems. It, first of all, provided financing which enabled one to carry out his Christian obligations by joining in the Crusade. It also eliminated any debts to Jewish financiers that may have been accrued over the course of time. The persecutors were debt free and in pursuit of their Christian duty.

The persecution associated with this Crusade fueled the fires of the collective interpretation. As Rembaum observes

the First Crusade symbolizes a confluence of two significant and interrelated trends in Western Europe: first, a heightened religious zeal affecting Jew and Christian alike; and, second, an expression of belligerent intolerance toward the non-believer that also manifested itself in adherents of the two faiths. . . . when the caldron of religious and social tensions boiled over in 1096, Jewish communities felt the blows of the Christians' "first-strike capability" but could not retaliate in kind. This one-sided struggle, resulting in the loss of many hundreds of Jewish lives, left Jews searching for explanations for their predicament. . . . Refusing to ascribe any qualities of injustice to God and seeking to refute the Christian claim that the covenant between the "Old Israel" and God was no longer in force, the Jews formulated other solutions. . . . For the present their deaths and their clinging to their faith in the face of adversity demonstrated to their assailants that the bond of God, Torah, and Israel was not only extant but also the highest

expression of religious truth. For the future, they believed that their martyrdom, their dying "for the sanctification of The Name," guaranteed them a place in the 'World to Come' and enabled them to participate in cosmic processes which were the expressions of the will of God.<sup>98</sup>

Several authors imply that Rashi's collectivist interpretation grew directly out of this persecution. Rashi's purpose was not simply to explain the meaning of the events, but to offer comfort to those who grieved. His purpose was to give answers and to provide spiritual guidance, hope, and comfort.

Driver and Neubauer support the conclusion that Rashi's collectivist view was the apparent result of "the hideous massacre of Jews in Spire, Worms, Mainz, Cologne, by the wild profligate swarm which gathered, after the first Crusaders were gone."<sup>99</sup> Weinryb notes that

in Rashi's writings there is also to be found an echo of the political events of his time, or even a reaction to such events. His reaction to the distress of the Jews during the first Crusade (1096) is apparent not only in the composition of a few *selihot* and certain points in his commentary on the Bible but also in the decisions he gave.<sup>100</sup>

However, according to Weinryb the Crusade question raised a much more dramatic concern than simply that of persecution for Rashi. The Crusader issue involved primarily the Holy Land and the future. "It may also be assumed that Rashi knew the background of the crusade idea and its relation to the question of property rights in the Holy Land."<sup>101</sup> Thus his solution of advocating the collective nation-Servant view provided an answer to the immediate circumstances involving persecution and an assurance of eternal claim to the Holy City and the Promised Land.

### **Other Later Causes**

Other factors that did not directly affect Rashi have fueled the collectivist view in the later Middle Ages and beyond. Even though they had little or no effect on the rise of the collective interpretation in the Medieval Period, two do merit mention.

One of those factors was the rise of Naturalism. With the rise of Naturalism, views based on a prophetic understanding of the

Servant Songs such as the Messianic view lost ground. Critical methodologies also added to the decline of the Messianic view.

As long as the 'unity' of Isaiah was accepted by scholars, enquiry moved within a comparatively restricted compass. But as the analytical disintegration attained momentum with the successive emergence of Deutero-, Trito-, and 'Anthology'- Isaiahs, in harmony with the possibilities of progressively later dating, the range of academic hypothesis was correspondingly enlarged. Hence, as dealt with in the standard critical text-books and Old Testament Introductions, the problem of the 'Servant' is full of intricacies, and bristles with difficulties of major and minor significance and importance.<sup>102</sup>

A glimmer of these trends is evident during the Medieval Period. Rembaum mentions that Joseph Albo's collective idea particularly regarding the atoning activity of the nation "penetrated the circles of the philosophically oriented Jews of fourteenth- and fifteenth-century Spain."<sup>103</sup> Driver and Neubauer note that Ibn Kaspi (A.D. 1280-1340) " 'a gifted fanatic for philosophic thought,' . . . said 'that those who expounded the section of the Messiah gave occasion to the heretics to interpret it of Jesus.'<sup>104</sup> Philosophic thought of the Middle Ages found itself more comfortable with the collective view.

## Summary

Following over a thousand years of domination, the Messianic view of Isaiah's servant was displaced in the Medieval Period. The collective view, support for which had been found outside of Palestinian Judaism and based on textual deviation in the Ancient Period, supplanted the individualistic view in a relatively short period of time. With Rashi the foundation for supremacy was laid and the momentum toward prominence was begun. Other interpreters of the period found Rashi's example easy to follow since they were inspired and motivated by the same influences.

Three areas were involved in the rise of the collective view to a position of dominance. First in the area of hermeneutics, Rashi, after espousing the Messianic interpretation early in his ministry, evidently abandoned traditional methods to propagate the collective view. His position does not appear to be derived from an unbiased study of the Songs. But it results from a synthesized method that serves to justify conclusions brought about by other influences.



Another influence that led Rashi and other medieval interpreters to a collective view of the Servant is found in the area of apologetics. Rashi and the Jews of his time found themselves under attack by Christian polemicists using their own Bible against them. On the one hand, their privileged position as the children of God was not only challenged but disavowed. They had been replaced. On the other hand, ancient Jewish Messianic interpretations were given a Christological refinement. The Christ of the Gentiles was the Messiah. By viewing Isaiah's Servant as the nation, Jewish apologists were able to answer the Christian claims, to rob critics of their very weapons --- the Servant Songs, and to reaffirm their own standing in covenant with God.

A third influence that led Rashi and other medieval interpreters to a collective view of the Servant is found in the area of persecution. The suffering and agony experienced in connection with the first Crusade seemed to justify the Christian claim that God had abandoned Israel. Even more significant, the Crusader ideal threatened their claim to the Holy Land and the concepts of future blessedness. Once again the nation-Servant interpretation provided answers in many areas. As the Servant, Israel could expect to suffer. As the Servant, Israel could suffer as part of God's plan and not as punishment. As the Servant, the nation of Israel could achieve atonement not only for itself but also for the very Gentiles that brought about the suffering.

Persecution and polemics raised many questions that Rashi and other medieval interpreters found answers to in Isaiah's Servant Songs. The answers, however, were not found in the traditional interpretation of the Songs. The answers were found in a collective understanding achieved by means of a modified method.

## **Conclusion**

The mystique surrounding the identification of the Suffering Servant in Isaiah has produced a quantitative and qualitative labyrinth. That labyrinth together with the blizzard of articles and speculation that surround it provides numerous paths for the researcher to follow. In this study we have sought to compare Jewish interpretations of Isaiah's Servant in the Ancient and Medieval Periods. The aim has been to establish the view of each period and then to discover the reasons for any difference that might exist.

## **Ancient Jewish Interpretations**

In surveying the Ancient Period the individualistic interpretation particularly as it applied to Messiah dominates. The Servant is Messiah. He is an eschatological figure whose coming is connected to a time of trouble and suffering for the nation from which he will deliver them. He is of the lineage of David, a king who will reign on a throne. At the same time he will suffer as the Redeemer of Israel.

The Messianic view is not the exclusive view of this period. During this period the collective view was also held. It is found primarily in Hellenistic Judaism and is mainly based upon the Septuagintal version of the Songs.

## **Medieval Jewish Interpretations**

A survey of medieval evidence shows a drastic shift in prominence of interpretations. The Messianic view is replaced by the collective view. The Servant is understood as being the nation of Israel. Redemption becomes the purpose and work of the nation. Ancient eschatological understandings of the Servant are given contemporary meaning.

The collective view became the predominant view of Jewish interpreters in the Medieval Period and maintains that position to the present. The Messianic view was never fully replaced, finding support among medieval Jewish interpreters of the stature of Maimonides. This shift finds its source in the teachings of Rashi and its cause in the political, intellectual, and social influences of the times.

## **Reasons for the Shift**

With the growth of Christian polemical attacks challenging not only the contemporary standing but also the future hope of the nation and persecution which seemed to reinforce the Christian claim, Judaism found itself in need of explanation, reassurance and comfort. The Messianic view of the Servant promised a hope that seemed both remote and removed from the circumstances in which medieval Judaism found itself.

Rashi and subsequent interpreters found the necessary explanation, reassurance and comfort in a collective understanding

of Isaiah's Servant. By viewing Israel as the Servant suffering at the hands of the Gentiles according to the eternal plan of God, Judaism was provided with both contemporary explanation and comfort as well as assurance of future hope.

### Summary

After more than a thousand years as the predominant view of Jewish interpreters, the Messianic view of Isaiah's Servant was replaced by the collective view in the Middle Ages. The source of this rise and fall finds its impetus in one man --- Rashi. The cause of this rise and fall was not exegetical. The cause of this rise and fall is found in the nature of the times. Polemics and persecution led Rashi and others to seek immediate answers, assurances and comfort for contemporary questions as well as solace in ageless traditions. These were found in the collective view. The collective view continues as the predominant view not because of the influences that led to its rise but because of modern intellectual and philosophical methods.

### Notes:

<sup>1</sup> Christopher North, *The Suffering Servant in Deutero-Isaiah* (London: Oxford University Press, 1969) 1

<sup>2</sup> H R Minn, *The Servant Songs* (New Zealand: Presbyterian Bookroom, 1966) ii-iii

<sup>3</sup> McKenzie, xxxix

<sup>4</sup> Minn, iii, "The 'Songs' are marked by restraint, are 'fringed in melancholy,' are finally charged with deep pathos. Linked with this feature is a perceptible shift of emphasis with regard to the conception of salvation in general and the method of its realisation. The political, external, deliverance mediated by Cyrus as a 'messiah', or God-chosen agent for the radical reconstruction of the international status quo, is progressively overshadowed and ultimately completely displaced by an internal, spiritual, emancipation secured through the mysterious figure referred to as 'My servant'."

<sup>5</sup> North, 3-5

<sup>6</sup> *The Babylonian Talmud*, (I Epstein, ed; London: Soncino Press, 1935) 20:658. Compare footnote #2.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, 20:663

<sup>9</sup> Ibid. Note the use of the third person singular pronoun to describe the Messiah as Israel's hope. Also note the reference to Isaiah 59:19.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, 20:658

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, 20:663

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, 20:669

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, 20:667, 669

<sup>14</sup> *The Midrash Rabbah*, H Freedman, transl (London: Soncino Press, 1977) 1:676

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, 2:24

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, 4:64-65

<sup>17</sup> *Pesikta Rabbati*, W G Braude, transl, *Yale Judaica Series*, Leon Nimoy ed, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968) 1:676-683

<sup>18</sup> Ibid, 2:598-619

<sup>19</sup> *The Midrash on Psalms*, W G Braude ed, *Yale Judaica Series*, Leon Nimoy, ed (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976) 1:40-41

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, 1:445

<sup>21</sup> Samson H Levey, *The Messiah: An Aramaic Interpretation*, Monographs of the Hebrew Union College, No 2 (USA: Hebrew Union College Press, 1974) xviii-xx

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, 31

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, 102

<sup>24</sup> Ibid, 142-143

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, xix

<sup>26</sup> W Zimmerli and J Jeremias, *The Servant of God, Studies in Biblical Theology* #20 (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1965) 52. Their discussion is limited to nineteen passages where the phrase occurs in the singular.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid, 55

<sup>28</sup> Ibid, 56

<sup>29</sup> Ibid, 57

<sup>30</sup> Ibid, 59-79

<sup>31</sup> Ibid, 78-79

<sup>32</sup> David Baron, *The Servant of Jehovah* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, nd) 10

<sup>33</sup> Zimmerli and Jeremias, 53

<sup>34</sup> Ibid. Also compare R R Ottley, *The Book of Isaiah According to the Septuagint* (Cambridge: University Press, 1906) 306 and Zimmerli and Jeremias, 42-43, 49 fn 175.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid, 54-55, "Hellenistic Judaism . . . interprets the suffering servant in a generic or collective sense, as distinct from its messianic interpretation in Palestinian Judaism. The generic interpretation we find first in Wisd., which describes the just man, called *pais kuriou* . . . in close connexion with Isa. 52:13ff. . . . In trait after trait, there is allusion to Isa. 52:13ff . . . the *pais theou* of Isa. 52:13ff. is thus for Wisdom the type of the just man. Obviously then this writer was familiar with the generic interpretation of Isa. 53. . . . [Origen] says that Jewish rabbis with whom he came into contact interpreted Isa. 53 'of the people considered as a person who had been scattered and tormented.' For Palestinian

Judaism of the first millennium A.D. this collective application of the servant to isa. 53 to Israel is completely unknown. . . . We must therefore assume that the informants of Origen were Hellenistic Jews."

<sup>36</sup> Joel E Rembaum, "The Development of a Jewish Exegetical Tradition Regarding Isaiah 53," *HTR* 75:3 (1982) 291

<sup>37</sup> S R Driver and Adolf Neubauer transl, *The "Suffering Servant" of Isaiah According to the Jewish Interpreters* (New York: Hermon Press, 1969) xl

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid*, xli

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid*, xliv

<sup>40</sup> Baron, 12-13

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid*, 13

<sup>42</sup> Zimmerli and Jeremias, 76

<sup>43</sup> Rembaum, 292

<sup>44</sup> Compare Rembaum, 294; Driver and Neubauer, xiv, and Baron, 18.

<sup>45</sup> Note Ezra Shereshevsky, *Rashi the Man and His World* (New York: Sepher-Hermon Press, 1982) 243-244, "No monument has ever been erected in Rashi's memory. There was no need for it. He attained immortality by virtue of his life work. . . . The true touchstone of a man's greatness is the extent to which his work survives his death and continues to live among his posterity. Rashi's luster did not grow dim with his passing. Instead . . . his brilliance has illuminated the farthest corners of the Jewish diaspora until our present day."

<sup>46</sup> Jacob Katz, *Exclusiveness and Tolerance, Scripta Judaica III* (Oxford University Press, 1961) 137

<sup>47</sup> Shereshevsky, 5

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid*, 243

<sup>49</sup> Baron, 18

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid*, 37-39

<sup>51</sup> Shereshevsky, 120

<sup>52</sup> Rembaum, 303

<sup>53</sup> Baron, 41

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid*, 42

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>56</sup> Rembaum, 303

<sup>57</sup> Baron, 43

<sup>58</sup> Rembaum, 303

<sup>59</sup> Baron, 384

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>61</sup> Rembaum, 304

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>63</sup> Baron, 221-222

<sup>64</sup> Rembaum, 307

<sup>65</sup> Baron, 244

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid*, 22

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid*, 26

<sup>68</sup> Zimmerli and Jeremias, 53-55. It should be noted that the collective interpretation existed in Hellenistic Judaism due to the affect of the LXX and in Paestinian Judaism due to strict grammatical interpretation particularly as applied to only one Servant Song, Isaiah 49:3.

<sup>69</sup> Baron, 18

<sup>70</sup> Driver and Neubauer, lxi

<sup>71</sup> Ibid, xlii

<sup>72</sup> Rembaum states on page 289, "Medieval and modern Jewish exegetes saw in this prophecy an explanation for the tragedies which the Jews experienced in the exile." Baron states on page 18, "The most generally accepted modern Jewish interpretation of this prophecy is that which makes it apply to the Jewish nation."

<sup>73</sup> Rembaum, 299-300

<sup>74</sup> Baron, 20. Also compare Driver and Neubauer, xiv.

<sup>75</sup> Bernard D. Weinryb, "Rashi Against the Background of His Epoch," *Rashi Anniversary Volume* (New York: American Academy for Jewish Research, 1941) 42-43

<sup>76</sup> Rembaum, 297-298

<sup>77</sup> Ibid, 289

<sup>78</sup> Ibid, 290

<sup>79</sup> Ibid, 292

<sup>80</sup> Ibid, 296

<sup>81</sup> Ibid, 298

<sup>82</sup> Baron, 19

<sup>83</sup> Rembaum, 292-3

<sup>84</sup> Katz, 18

<sup>85</sup> Zimmerli and Jeremias, 63

<sup>86</sup> Ibid, 73

<sup>87</sup> Ibid, 76

<sup>88</sup> Baron, 19

<sup>89</sup> Compare Driver and Neubauer, xvi.

<sup>90</sup> Shereshevsky, 119-120

<sup>91</sup> Katz, 137

<sup>92</sup> H E Mayer, *The Crusades* (London: Oxford University Press, 1972) 43

<sup>93</sup> Ibid, 43

<sup>94</sup> Ibid. Also compare Shalom Spiegel, *The Last Trial* (New York: Schocken Books, 1967) 17-27 and K M Setton, *A History of the Crusades* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1958) 262-266.

<sup>95</sup> Aaron Rothkoff, "Rashi" *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House, 1972) 13:1559

<sup>96</sup> Mayer, 44

<sup>97</sup> Steven Runciman, *A History of the Crusades* (Cambridge: University Press, 1951) 134-35

<sup>98</sup> Rembaum, 293-294

- <sup>99</sup> Driver and Neubauer, xlv. Also compare Baron, 20.
- <sup>100</sup> Weinryb, 41
- <sup>101</sup> *Ibid*, 42
- <sup>102</sup> Minn, iv
- <sup>103</sup> Rembaum, 305
- <sup>104</sup> Driver and Neubauer, xliii-xliv