

This Biblical Mystery Has Brought Countless Jews to Faith in Jesus

Countless Jewish people have accepted Yeshua as their Messiah as the result of a consideration of Isaiah's description of Messiah as Suffering Servant, and this passage which speaks so clearly of Yeshua is often used by believers in their witness to Jewish people. In fact, Isaiah 53 played a key role in my own testimony. When a group of believers first showed this passage to me, my thought was, "Nothing can be this clear!" I reasoned that they must have taken a portion "from their New Testament," and put it into "my side" of the Bible!

Yes, it is incredibly clear, and sadly, in a desire to protect their people from what they see as false teaching, many unbelieving rabbis today are training their congregations in ways to refute the idea that Yeshua is the Suffering Servant portrayed in Isaiah 53.

I have developed a four-part MP3 series in order to address this issue, which offers compelling evidence that Yeshua is indeed the Suffering Servant as portrayed in Isaiah 53. He is the only one in all of history who could have fulfilled Isaiah's words to the letter. The goal of this MP3 series is to equip believers to confidently share Messiah with Jewish friends; not to enter into debates when objections are brought up, but to lovingly point them to the Truth that will change their lives.

For centuries, Isaiah 53 was actually considered by the rabbis to be a description of the Messiah. However, in the 11th century A.D., a new interpretation developed which suggested the passage spoke not of the Messiah as the suffering Servant, but of the suffering of the Jewish people on behalf of the

sins of the Gentiles. Since that time, others have proposed further non-Messianic interpretations.

Through the series, I explain these claims and then teach why the actual text does not allow for such misinterpretations. A simple consideration of the grammar of Isaiah 53 sheds light on the fact that Isaiah cannot be speaking of Israel as the Suffering Servant. Throughout the chapter, the subject in question is always refers to "He" or "Him," not as "we" or "us." ("Surely he has borne our grief and carried our sorrows ...," v. 4) It's clear from the text that Isaiah is speaking of a single specific person, not a nation.

Another point that unbelieving Jewish people may bring up is the fact that in much of traditional Judaism, Messiah is thought of primarily as the Son of David, who will rule and reign as King. They therefore object to the idea that Messiah came as a "Suffering Servant." To address this issue, I point to Scripture, where the word "servant" is used to describe kings, even David himself (Ps. 89:20). Likewise, prophets (Is. 20:3), angels (Job 4:18) and Moses (Num. 12:7) are all described as "servants" in Scripture.

In addition, I highlight the fact that the thought of Messiah as a servant is historically a Jewish concept. When translating the Messianic prophecy of Zechariah 3:8 into Aramaic, the rabbis actually added the word, "Messiah" into this verse, paraphrasing it to say, "Behold... My Servant, the Messiah." (Targum Jonathon). They phrased it this way because this was the common understanding of the passage at the time. They did not question the fact that Messiah would be a servant, even a Suffering Servant.

Although the rabbinical writings are by no means inspired, they can be a powerful tool to use in witnessing. Religious Jewish people hold these historical writings in high regard, and sections like this can help them see that Messianic concepts are not foreign to Jewish thinking.

This compelling portion of Scripture is not only a tool to be used in witnessing, but it also has much to say to our lives as believers. The series concludes with a consideration of Isaiah 53's application for us. As we look at Yeshua's immense suffering on our behalf, we are humbled by His humility and realize there is no place for arrogance for those who understand Isaiah 53. As a humble people of God, may we respond to His sacrifice for us in service to Him, and sacrifice ourselves for the sake of those who do not yet accept Him.

Isaiah 53 is actually a prophecy not only of the Messiah's suffering, but also of Israel's future national confession of Him (see Is. 53:4-6, Zech. 12:10). May it be our "heart's desire and prayer to God is for Israel's salvation," (Rom. 10:1) and may the day come quickly when Israel as a nation will recognize Yeshua as their Messiah and make this very confession. Until then, may we be faithful to serve the Jewish people, even as our Savior did (Isaiah 53, Rom. 15:8), lovingly pointing them to the Living Truth.

The Isaiah 53 MP3 series is perfect for use in your Bible study or small group. {eoa}

Dr. Sam Nadler is a Jewish believer in Jesus who has been in Messianic ministry for over 40 years. Sam is the president of Word of Messiah Ministries, which is bringing the gospel to the Jew first but not to the Jew only, and planting Messianic congregations in Jewish communities worldwide. To encourage and equip the body of Messiah in our shared calling, Sam is invited to speak in churches across the country, and has written multiple books on Jewish evangelism, discipleship and the feasts of Israel. For more information and resources, to subscribe to Sam's podcast or to invite Sam to speak at your church, visit: .