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### **Brit Hadasha: Affliction of the Messiah**

Not surprisingly there are many different allegations laid out by anti-missionaries to discount Yeshua being the Messiah. One of the questions we have seen posed by the anti-missionary group is this:

"Why are there many clear prophecies which state that Israel is despised and afflicted, but none which say this about the messiah?"

It's a valid question...or is it?

#### **Isaiah 53 (ESV)**

Who has believed what he has heard from us?  
And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?  
For he grew up before him like a young plant,  
and like a root out of dry ground;  
he had no form or majesty that we should look at him,  
and no beauty that we should desire him.  
He was despised and rejected by men;  
a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief;  
and as one from whom men hide their faces  
he was despised, and we esteemed him not.  
Surely he has borne our griefs  
and carried our sorrows;  
yet we esteemed him stricken,  
smitten by God, and afflicted.  
But he was pierced for our transgressions;  
he was crushed for our iniquities;  
upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace,  
and with his wounds we are healed.  
All we like sheep have gone astray;  
we have turned—every one—to his own way;  
and the Lord has laid on him  
the iniquity of us all.  
He was oppressed, and he was afflicted,  
yet he opened not his mouth;

like a lamb that is led to the slaughter,  
and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent,  
so he opened not his mouth.

By oppression and judgment he was taken away;  
and as for his generation, who considered  
that he was cut off out of the land of the living,  
stricken for the transgression of my people?  
And they made his grave with the wicked  
and with a rich man in his death,  
although he had done no violence,  
and there was no deceit in his mouth.  
Yet it was the will of the Lord to crush him;  
he has put him to grief;  
when his soul makes an offering for guilt,  
he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days;  
the will of the Lord shall prosper in his hand.

Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied;  
by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant,  
make many to be accounted righteous,  
and he shall bear their iniquities.  
Therefore I will divide him a portion with the many,  
and he shall divide the spoil with the strong,  
because he poured out his soul to death  
and was numbered with the transgressors;  
yet he bore the sin of many,  
and makes intercession for the transgressors.

Let's look at this again, does it say the Messiah will be despised and afflicted?

Verse 3

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

Verse 4

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

Verse 5

But he was pierced for our transgressions;  
he was crushed for our iniquities;  
upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace,  
and with his wounds we are healed.

pierced, crushed, chastisement –

Those are just some of words used to describe what happens to the Messiah aside from the specific references to him being despised in Isaiah 53.

Are those not types of affliction?

Is it possible we are misunderstanding what it means to be afflicted?

Let's look up the words used in the Hebrew and in the Greek from the Septuagint to find out what is being intended. First, the Hebrew.

**Strong's H6031 - anah (or ani)**

This form of the word means to be afflicted or to be humbled

Thayer's Lexicon defines it as to be oppressed or afflicted.

(taken from <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strong's=H6031&t=KJV>)

Here is the word from the Septuagint from various Lexicon's and dictionaries – G2561

**LSJ Glossary:**

κάκωσις

ill-treatment

**Dodson:**

κάκωσις

affliction, ill-treatment

affliction, ill-treatment, oppression, misery.

**Strong's:**

κάκωσις

maltreatment

It's a derivation: from G2559;

KJV Usage: affliction.

**G2559**

**Thayer:**

1) ill treatment, ill usage

(taken from [http://studybible.info/LXX\\_WH/Isaiah%2053:4](http://studybible.info/LXX_WH/Isaiah%2053:4) and <http://studybible.info/strongs/G2561>)

The word in Greek is directly related to, or corresponds with H6030 and H6031 in the Hebrew.

From what we've just seen, unless the word afflict does not mean afflict, and words like: rejected, stricken, smitten by God, pierced, crushed, wounded, oppressed, cut off from the land of the living, and having anguish of his soul don't count as ill treatment or affliction, then we simply cannot see the argument made that Scripture never says that the Messiah is despised or afflicted as it says about Israel.

Now there are some that would say that Isaiah 53 is not a Messianic prophecy at all, but instead applies to Israel itself. We disagree with that understanding for a variety of reasons.

One of the arguments is that the "servant" found in Isaiah 53 is Israel because in the preceding chapters of Isaiah, Israel is referred to as a servant multiple times such as:

**Isaiah 41:8 (ESV)**

But you, Israel, my **servant**,  
Jacob, whom I have chosen,

**Isaiah 42:1 (ESV)**

Behold my **servant**, whom I uphold,  
my chosen, in whom my soul delights;

**Isaiah 44:1 (ESV)**

“But now hear, O Jacob my **servant**,  
Israel whom I have chosen!

There are others, but those are 3 of them. However, it’s worth noting that Israel isn’t the only “servant” presented in the chapters leading up to Isaiah 53. For example:

**Isaiah 49:3 (ESV)**

And he said to me, “You are my **servant**,  
Israel, in whom I will be glorified.”

**Isaiah 50:10 (ESV)**

Who among you fears the Lord  
and obeys the voice of his **servant**?

In those verses the “servant” being referred to is Isaiah, not Israel. So we can see that just because a servant is mentioned in Isaiah 53 it does not necessitate that the servant is Israel. Beyond that though, we see additional proof that the suffering servant of Isaiah 53 is not Israel at the end of chapter 52.

The famous Isaiah 53 passage actually begins in Isaiah 52 in the last 3 verses, 13 through 15. So let’s review them briefly.

**Isaiah 52:13-15 (ESV)**

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

14 As many were astonished at you—  
his appearance was so marred, beyond human semblance,  
and his form beyond that of the children of mankind—

15 so shall he sprinkle many nations;  
kings shall shut their mouths because of him;  
for that which has not been told them they see,  
and that which they have not heard they understand.

Earlier in chapter 52 we can see that YHWH is speaking to Israel. Israel is the “you” found in verse 14. This means that the “he”, the “servant” referred to in those verses and those that follow, is NOT Israel. Israel cannot both be the “you” to whom YHWH is speaking and the “servant” being spoken of.

This is just one of the reasons we believe Isaiah 53 is Messianic. For more on our understanding of this, please see our teaching titled, “[The 4<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Day: Messiah ben David](#)”.

So in response to anti-missionary question:

*"Why are there many clear prophecies which state that Israel is despised and afflicted, but none which say this about the messiah?"*

We would simply respond with, read Isaiah 53.

However, in case that isn't enough, there are some other verses that refer to the Messiah being afflicted.

**Psalm 22:1 (ESV)**

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?  
Why are you so far from saving me, from the words of my groaning?

**Psalm 22:6-8 (ESV)**

But I am a worm and not a man,  
scorned by mankind and despised by the people.  
All who see me mock me;  
they make mouths at me; they wag their heads;  
"He trusts in the LORD; let him deliver him;  
let him rescue him, for he delights in him!"

**Psalm 22:16-18 (ESV)**

For dogs encompass me;  
a company of evildoers encircles me;  
they have pierced my hands and feet—  
I can count all my bones—  
they stare and gloat over me;  
they divide my garments among them,  
and for my clothing they cast lots.

**Psalm 69:9 (ESV)**

For zeal for your house has consumed me,  
and the reproaches of those who reproach you have fallen on me.

**Psalm 118:22 (ESV)**

The stone that the builders rejected  
has become the cornerstone.

And finally,

**Zechariah 12:10 (ESV)**

"And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy, so that, when they look on me, **on him whom they have pierced**, they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a firstborn.

There are additional Messianic prophecies, but these are some of the more prevalent ones describing affliction he was to endure. Hopefully you can see that there are other verses relating to the Messiah that indicate he will suffer; and that the "he" is not Israel.

A final thought, the Messiah is a prophet likened unto Moses according to Deuteronomy 18:15. What is Israel's history with the prophets of YHWH? Are the prophets always well thought of, well respected, and lived an easy life? Or, were they despised or afflicted even unto death?

**1 Kings 19:10 (ESV)**

He said, "I have been very jealous for the Lord, the God of hosts. For the people of Israel have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and **killed your prophets** with the sword, and I, even I only, am left, and they seek my life, to take it away.

**Nehemiah 9:26 (ESV)**

"Nevertheless, they were disobedient and rebelled against you and cast your law behind their back and **killed your prophets**, who had warned them in order to turn them back to you, and they committed great blasphemies.

**Jeremiah 38:4 (ESV)**

Then the officials said to the king, "Now **let this man be put to death**, inasmuch as he is discouraging the men of war who are left in this city and all the people, by speaking such words to them; for this man is not seeking the well-being of this people but rather their harm."

Again, there are additional verses to indicate how Israel killed the prophets, but these three should be sufficient to show that in general the prophets of Israel were not living easy carefree lives, but instead were despised or afflicted, even unto their death.

So, if Isaiah 53 isn't sufficient and additional Messianic prophecies are not sufficient to show that the Messiah was despised and afflicted, then simply by the nature of being the prophet of YHWH, he would be despised and afflicted. It's true, not every single person would despise or afflict them; the Messiah will be loved as well, but he would face his own afflictions.

We hope that this teaching has blessed you.

Remember, continue to test everything.

Shalom

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

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