

Prophecy Fulfillment

- The Messiah would be God's servant.** (Isaiah 52:13a; John 9:4)
- The Messiah would be highly exalted.** (Isaiah 52:13b; Philippians 2:9-11)
- The Messiah's face would be disfigured from severe beatings.** (Isaiah 52:14; Matthew 26:67-68)
- The Messiah's blood would be shed to make atonement for all.** (Isaiah 52:15; Revelation 1:5)
- The Messiah's own people would not believe he was the Christ.** (Isaiah 53:1; John 12:37-38)
- The Messiah would grow up in a poor family.** (Isaiah 53:2a; Luke 2:7)
- The Messiah would have the appearance of an ordinary man.** (Isaiah 53:2b; Philippians 2:7-8)
- The Messiah would be despised.** (Isaiah 53:3a; Luke 4:28-29)
- The Messiah would be rejected.** (Isaiah 53:3b; Matthew 27:21-23)
- The Messiah would have great sorrow and grief.** (Isaiah 53:3c; Luke 19:41-42)
- Men would hide from being associated with the Messiah.** (Isaiah 53:3d; Mark 14:50-52)
- The Messiah would have a healing ministry.** (Isaiah 53:4a; Luke 6:17-19)
- The Messiah would bear and carry upon himself the sins of the world.** (Isaiah 53:4b; 1 Peter 2:24)
- The Messiah would be thought to be cursed by God.** (Isaiah 53:4c; Matthew 27:41-43)
- The Messiah would bear the penalty for mankind's transgressions.** (Isaiah 53:5a; Luke 23:33)
- The Messiah's sacrifice would provide peace between man and God.** (Isaiah 53:5b; Colossians 1:20)
- The Messiah's back would be whipped.** (Isaiah 53:5c; Matthew 27:26)
- The Messiah would be the sin-bearer for all mankind.** (Isaiah 53:6a; Galatians 1:4)
- It was God's will that the Messiah would be the sin-bearer for all mankind.**
(Isaiah 53:6b; 1 John 4:10)
- The Messiah would be oppressed and afflicted.** (Isaiah 53:7a; Matthew 27:27-31)
- The Messiah would be silent before his accusers.** (Isaiah 53:7b; Matthew 27:12-14)
- The Messiah would be as a sacrificial lamb.** (Isaiah 53:7c; John 1:29)
- The Messiah would be confined and persecuted.** (Isaiah 53:8a; Matthew 26:47-27:31)
- The Messiah would be judged.** (Isaiah 53:8b; John 18:13-22)
- The Messiah would be killed.** (Isaiah 53:8c; Matthew 27:35)
- The Messiah would die for the sins of the world.** (Isaiah 53:8d; 1 John 2:2)
- The Messiah would be buried in a rich man's grave.** (Isaiah 53:9a; Matthew 27:57)
- The Messiah would be innocent and had done no violence.** (Isaiah 53:9b; Mark 15:3)
- The Messiah would have no deceit in his mouth. (Isaiah 53:9c; John 18:38)**
- It was God's will that the Messiah would die for all mankind.** (Isaiah 53:10a; John 18:11)
- The Messiah would be an offering for sin.** (Isaiah 53:10b; Matthew 20:28)
- The Messiah would be resurrected and live forever.** (Isaiah 53:10c; Mark 16:16)
- The Messiah would prosper.** (Isaiah 53:10d; John 17:1-5)
- God would be fully satisfied with the suffering of the Messiah.** (Isaiah 53:11a; John 12:27)
- The Messiah would be God's servant.** (Isaiah 53:11b; Romans 5:18-19)
- The Messiah would justify man before God.** (Isaiah 53:11c; Romans 5:8-9)
- The Messiah would be the sin-bearer for all mankind.** (Isaiah 53:11d; Hebrews 9:28)
- Because of his sacrifice, the Messiah would be greatly exalted by God. (Isaiah 53:12a; Mt 28:18)**
- The Messiah would give up his life to save mankind.** (Isaiah 53:12b; Luke 23:46)
- The Messiah would be grouped with criminals.** (Isaiah 53:12c; Luke 23:32)
- The Messiah would be the sin-bearer for all mankind.** (Isaiah 53:12d; 2 Corinthians 5:21)
- The Messiah would intercede to God in behalf of mankind.** (Isaiah 53:12e; Luke 23:34)

“Me, Isaiah, and Jesus”—Jay Sekulow

Glenn [Sekulow’s friend at Atlanta Baptist College, now Mercer] suggested I read [Isaiah 53](#). My mind was boggled by the description of the “suffering servant” who sounded so much like Jesus. I had to be misreading the text. I realized with relief that I was reading from a “King James” Bible, and after all, that’s a “Christian” translation. So the first thing I said to Glenn after I read it was “Okay, now give me a real Bible.” I grabbed the Jewish text, but the description seemed just as clear. Even though this caught my attention, I wasn’t too worried. It still sounded like Jesus in the “Jewish Bible,” but there had to be a logical explanation.

I began to research the passage and I started to look for rabbinic interpretations. That’s when I began to worry. If I read the passage once, I’m sure I read it 500 times. I looked for as many traditional Jewish interpretations as I could find. A number of them, especially the earlier ones, described the text as a messianic prophecy. Other interpretations claimed the suffering servant was Isaiah himself, or even the nation of Israel, but those explanations were an embarrassment to me. The details in the text obviously don’t add up to the prophet Isaiah or the nation of Israel. Did I ask the rabbis? No, I didn’t ask the rabbis. I read what the rabbis had written over the years, beginning with ancient times, but frankly, I hadn’t been too impressed with anyone I’d met lately. My last impression of what to expect from the Jewish religious establishment had been in a service where, when somebody sneezed the rabbi said, “God bless you.” Then he said, “What am I saying? I don’t believe in God.”

I kept looking for a traditional Jewish explanation that would satisfy, but found none. The only plausible explanation seemed to be Jesus. My Christian friends were suggesting other passages for me to read, such as [Daniel 9](#). As I read, my suspicion that Jesus might really be the Messiah was confirmed. That decision however, was strictly intellectual. I’d been struggling to resolve this question for about a year, and I was glad to have finally arrived at a decision.

The Turning Point

How did I feel about believing that Jesus was the Messiah? Actually, I was half relieved. Once I’d gotten past the point of not wanting to know, once I took out my paper and pencil and began my lists of why Jesus was the Messiah on one side and why he wasn’t on the other—I realized something. I had never felt the need for a Messiah before, but now that I was studying the prophecies and reading about what the Messiah was supposed to do, it sounded pretty good. I’d always thought my cultural Judaism was sufficient, but in the course of studying about the Messiah who would die as a sin bearer, I realized that I needed a Messiah to do that for me. When I concluded that Jesus was that Messiah, I was grateful. It didn’t occur to me that I needed to do anything about it.

A few days later, one of my Christian friends invited me to hear Jews for Jesus’ singing group, The Liberated Wailing Wall. You have no idea what a relief it was to see other Jews who believed that Jesus is the Messiah. Their presentation of “Jewish gospel music” and some of the things they said helped me realize that if I really believed in Jesus, I needed to make a commitment to him. At the end of the program, they sang a song called “I Am Not Ashamed of the Gospel” and they invited people who wanted to commit their life to Jesus to come up the aisle to meet with them at the front of the church. I responded to that invitation. It was February, 1976.

Well, morning came, and he [Dad] didn’t say a word about it. Neither did I. My parents knew I believed in Jesus; they knew I was getting literature from Jews for Jesus because I was living at home and they saw it. In fact, I know they read some of it out of curiosity. Sometimes I’d find it in the “reading room” (the bathroom)—not in the trash—just out where it was obvious that my dad had been looking over it. Since I was living under their roof, I felt if they didn’t want to discuss it, I should leave well enough alone. Our relationship didn’t change and I have always been grateful that whatever my parents might think of my beliefs, they love and respect me enough to prevent any disagreement from tearing us apart.