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## **A Suffering Messiah? Messianic Expectations in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls: The Case of 1QISA 52:14**

Jenifer A. Manginelli

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A SUFFERING MESSIAH?  
MESSIANIC EXPECTATIONS IN LIGHT OF THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS:  
THE CASE OF 1QISA<sup>a</sup> 52:14

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO  
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MASTER OF ARTS (THEOLOGICAL STUDIES)

BY  
JENIFER A. MANGINELLI

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**Title:**            **A SUFFERING MESSIAH? MESSIANIC EXPECTATIONS IN  
LIGHT OF THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS: THE CASE OF 1QISA<sup>a</sup>  
52:14**

**Presented by:**    **JENIFER A. MANGINELLI**

**Date:**            **MARCH 31, 2008**

We, the undersigned, certify that we have read this thesis and approve it as adequate in scope and quality for the degree of Master of Arts in Theological Studies.

*(Stephen Delamarter)*

*(Kent L. Yinger)*



To my Dad, Ron Nevé (1950-2001),  
for believing in me

and to my husband, Chris,  
for making room for my dreams

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## ABSTRACT

This paper considers the possibility of an intended messianic reading at Isaiah 52:14 in the Great Isaiah Scroll (1QIsa<sup>a</sup>) in light of the New Testament's presentation of Jesus as the suffering Messiah. Such a reading may evince a connection on the part of the scribe between the vicarious suffering of the servant of the LORD and a messianic figure. The plausibility of a messianic reading is considered through analysis of the text, followed by an exploration of the likelihood that such a connection would have been made on the basis of what we can discern of the Qumran community's ideology. The findings are not definitive, however they do present the possibility that the servant of Isaiah 52:13-53:12 was connected with a messianic expectation in a segment of Judaism prior to the Christian interpretation.



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Jenifer Manginelli

Mill Creek, 2008

## CHAPTER ONE

### THE SCOPE OF THE QUESTION

#### A. The Problem

There is a widely held perception within Christianity that Jesus fulfilled the messianic expectations of the Jews. This perception has largely been borne out of inferring from the New Testament's presentation of Jesus as Messiah that there was a widespread messianic expectation within Judaism and that this expectation was part and parcel the expectation presented by the Gospel writers. The extant literature from the Second Temple period, however, does not provide us with such a homogenous picture.

Up until the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls the Jewish literature available for scholarly consideration from the Second Temple period was spotty.<sup>1</sup> This has proven difficult for scholars seeking to understand what was normative for Judaism during this period. On certain matters there are significant points of departure between the textual witnesses. One such matter, which is of particular interest to Christian scholarship, is that of messianic expectation. While the New Testament writers present the issue of messianic expectation within Judaism with great clarity, a messiah complex is conspicuously lacking in the remaining Jewish literature from this period. Not only is there no mention of a vicariously suffering messianic figure, but the alleged widespread messianic hope seems to be minimal at best.

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<sup>1</sup> Jewish texts belonging to this period include the works of Philo and Josephus, the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha, the early versions and the writings of the New Testament.

Thus there appears to be a serious discrepancy with the New Testament claim that Jesus is the awaited Messiah of the Jews. This discrepancy has called into question whether or not the New Testament's representation of Judaism is an accurate portrayal or simply a caricature influenced by the Christian perspective.<sup>2</sup>

With the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, scholars stumbled upon what was almost too good to be true: new Second Temple literature from Qumran. If indeed the fragmented Judaism of the Second Temple period is not comprehensively represented in the preserved literature previously at our disposal, an explanation for the discrepancy might be that other factions, whose writings were not perpetuated, *did* hold such messianic expectations. Thus the New Testament writers' preoccupation with messianic fulfillment might be explained by evidence of a more widespread messianic hope. But for years this scenario was merely a "what if," an argument from silence. And so, as the scrolls were unrolled, the stakes could not have been higher for the Christian claim of messianic fulfillment. Could messianic expectations within the scrolls provide precedent for the New Testament's presentation of the awaited Messiah?

In order to look for appropriate connections, we must first determine how the New Testament writers spoke to this messianic expectation and then turn to the scrolls to see if we find evidence of a similar expectation. With this in mind, the present work seeks to answer the question of whether or not we find evidence of an expectation of a messiah at Qumran that resembles the messianic expectation and fulfillment presented in the New Testament.

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<sup>2</sup> Byrne warns, "Scholars from a Christian background must be wary of attributing to Second Temple Judaism the existence of a pervasive Davidic messianism that is, in fact, largely the construct of Christian Imagination." Brendan S. J. Byrne, "Jesus as Messiah in Luke," *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 65 (2003): 81.

## **B. Aim of the Study**

The aim of the present study is five-fold: 1) to examine the portraits of messianism that have been hitherto available for scholarly consideration in the Second Temple sources of the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha as well as the writings from the same period preserved in the New Testament; 2) to show that the Gospel writers spoke to two messianic ideas, both the popular messianic expectation and the unexpected fulfillment in Jesus of Nazareth; 3) to examine the impact of Qumran studies on the messianic question and specifically investigate the variant reading in The Great Isaiah Scroll (1QIsa<sup>a</sup>) at 52:14 that may connect messianic expectation with vicarious suffering; 4) to consider the Qumran community's theological conception of atonement along with sociological factors that may inform the likelihood of a connection of a messiah with vicarious suffering; and 5) to make a judgment based on these investigations on whether or not what we find in Jewish literature from the Second Temple period, including the Qumran corpus, is at variance with the messianic expectation and fulfillment presented by the Gospel writers in the New Testament.

## **C. The Question that Stands Behind the Question**

Behind the inquiry of this study stands the larger theological question of whether or not there is validity to the claim that Jesus fulfilled the messianic expectations of the Jews. The title "Jesus Christ" carries within it an extraordinary claim regarding the relationship of Judaism and Christianity. It not only suggests continuity between the Jewish hope and the Christian faith, but also that the Jewish hope is culminated in the person and work of Jesus.

Therefore, the conclusion we reach about the relationship between the two words in the title “Jesus Christ” bears heavily on our understanding of the scope of the Christian corpus.

It is not surprising then, that one of the questions that has preoccupied Christian scholars since the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls is whether or not we find anticipated at Qumran the sort of messiah that we read about in the New Testament.<sup>3</sup> Since the redemptive suffering of Christ is the hallmark of the Christian faith, the crucial question is whether or not we find a conception of a vicariously suffering messiah within the scrolls that anticipates the New Testament’s presentation of Jesus.

#### **D. Significant Shifts within Scholarship in Approaching the Messianic Question**

In seeking to determine the nature of Jewish messianism in light of the Dead Sea Scrolls, it should be acknowledged that the question of what should be considered messianic and how that messianism should be measured has, in and of itself, proven problematic for scholars. In the last century a series of pendulum swings have occurred within scholarship in effort to determine the most appropriate approach to the messianic question.

Messianic wonderings of the first century BCE seemed to have developed out of the crisis and hope of the nonmessianic Maccabean wars of the second century BCE. Palestinian Jews longed for political deliverance from their oppressors. Some texts from this period show that hope was placed in a divinely anointed figure that would inaugurate the end of time and

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<sup>3</sup>In fact, messianic figures are not mentioned very often in the scrolls, but the topic has still generated much interest. In all, thirteen scrolls contain messianic material (fewer than two percent of the non-biblical scrolls), yet they are all produced by the sectarians. They are: D, 1QS, 1QSa, 1QSb, 1QM, 4Q161, 4Q174, 4Q175, 4Q252, 4Q285, 4Q376, 4Q458, and 4Q521. Craig A. Evans, “Qumran’s Messiah: How Important Is He?,” in *Religion in the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. John J. Collins and Robert A. Kugler, Studies in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Related Literature (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 137.

history: a messiah.<sup>4</sup> However, the question has been raised in the last century as to how widespread this expectation really was. Further, this description, insinuating that there was a coherent concept of either “the” or “a” messiah among Jews has been challenged.<sup>5</sup> As a result, there was a call for the messianic question to be reconsidered.<sup>6</sup>

### *The Need for the Messianic Question to be Reconsidered*

#### *Faulty Assumptions that Influenced Early Christian Scholarship*

Scholarship of the last thirty years has taken a closer look at Christological claims concerning the messianic expectations of the Jews. What has become clear as a result of this reevaluation is that many claims asserted by scholarship about the messianic expectations of the Jews were merely misinformed assumptions.<sup>7</sup> Collins in his influential work *The Scepter and the Star* summarizes the implications of these generalizations:

The traditional assumption, at least in Christian circles, has been that messianic expectation was ubiquitous and had a consistent form. Consequently, the question of whether Jesus was the messiah admitted a clearcut answer. There has been a growing recognition in recent years that this view of the matter is heavily influenced by Christian theology. The Gospels portrayed Jesus as the fulfillment of Old Testament Prophecy. Those who did not perceive the correspondences were “foolish and slow of

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<sup>4</sup> J. H. Charlesworth, "From Messianology to Christology: Problems and Prospects," in *The First Princeton Symposium on Judaism and Christian Origins the Messiah: Developments in Earliest Judaism and Christianity*, ed. J. H. Charlesworth (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), 3-4.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>6</sup> This reassessment reached its height with the publication of *Judaisms and their Messiahs*, edited by Jacob Neusner, William Scott Green, and Ernest Freireichs called into question the uniformity of a Jewish belief system during this period.

<sup>7</sup> In particular the influential conclusions of William Wrede in *The Messianic Secret* (the German version which was published in 1901) have been evaluated and found to be amazingly ignorant of Jewish sources by more recent scholarship. William Wrede, *The Messianic Secret*, ed. William Barclay, trans. J. Greig, Library of Theological Translations (Greenwood: Attic Press, 1971).

heart” (Luke 24:25). Traditionally, Christianity construed Judaism as a religion in waiting, and this construing of the relationship between Judaism and Christianity has had long-lasting repercussions in Christian scholarship.<sup>8</sup>

### *Simplistic Sociological Models that Required Reconsideration*

Part of the need for reconsidering the question of whether or not there was a common widespread expectation of a messiah in Judaism during this period was the realization that overgeneralizations were made in depicting the Judaism of the Second Temple Period.

Sociological models did not take into account the fragmented nature of Judaism at this time.

Charlesworth writes, “There is a deeply seated and widely assumed contention that the Jews during the time of Jesus were expecting a Messiah, and that they had some agreement on the basic functions he would perform. Yet this contention is assumed; it is not reached.”<sup>9</sup>

Neusner has suggested that in fact it is more accurate to refer to “Judaisms” rather than one, central “Judaism” during this tumultuous period.<sup>10</sup> Thus scholars have come to acknowledge that insight into the nature of messianic expectation is further clouded by the uncertainty of the sociological axis of the literature at our disposal. In other words, how are we to determine whether or not the texts available to us are representative of the thoughts and wonderings of the Jewish population as a whole? Horsley points out that:

Our evidence for what the ancient Jews were thinking about anything is almost exclusively literary. But nearly all literature from the past was produced by literate

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<sup>8</sup>The classic scholarly view of these matters is presented in the handbooks of Emil Schuerer *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ* and George Foot Moore *Judaism in the First Centuries of the Christian Era*. John J. Collins, *The Scepter and the Star: The Messiahs of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Other Ancient Literature* (New York: Doubleday, 1995), 3.

<sup>9</sup> Charlesworth quotes from Wikenhauser’s *New Testament Introduction* as well as Koester’s *Introduction to the New Testament* as examples of a fundamental misunderstanding in scholarship regarding Jewish messianic expectation. Charlesworth, 6.

<sup>10</sup> Jacob Neusner, *Judaisms and Their Messiahs* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).



people, and most people who were literate in antiquity worked for and were supported by the rulers or other wealthy patrons, and as we now recognize, literature reflects the interests of those who produced it.<sup>11</sup>

### ***Recognizing Overcorrection and Moving Towards a Centered Approach***

#### *The Problem with Defining “messianic” by Titles Alone*

The reconsideration of the messianic question turned out to be an overcorrection in two respects. In the first place, in response to the realization that what had been designated “messianic” was heavily influenced by a Christian perspective, messianic claims were pared down to only the most explicit references in Jewish writings. While this pruning was necessary, most scholars now agree that in an effort to bring correction, there was in fact an over compensation.<sup>12</sup> The strict criteria implemented to determine what is truly “messianic,” while helpful, have proved to be too rigid and simplistic.<sup>13</sup> The phenomenon of a messianic hope and expectation would certainly extend beyond what was explicitly stated by use the

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<sup>11</sup> R. A. Horsley, "'Messianic' Figures and Movements in First-Century Palestine," in *The Messiah: Developments in Earliest Judaism and Christianity*, ed. J H. Charlesworth, The First Princeton Symposium on Judaism and Christian Origins (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1987), 278.

<sup>12</sup> Evans critiques Neusner as having, “minimized and misunderstood the significance of the messianic idea in early Judaism. While it may be true that scholars have in the past created synthetic constructs of ‘the Messiah’ that may not reflect ideas that anyone at any time ever held – and Neusner’s criticism at this point is on target – his conclusion that the messianic idea played an unimportant role in formative Judaism cannot be sustained. Neusner has not studied the messiah idea ‘in context,’ as the title of his book claims. Until he has taken more serious into account the numerous apocryphal, pseudepigraphal, Qumranic, and early Christian writings, Neusner has not treated the eschatological Messiah in the context of early Judaism.” Craig A. Evans, "Mishna and Messiah 'In Context': Some Comments on Jacob Neusner's Proposals," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 112, no. 2 (1993): 282.

<sup>13</sup> J. A. Fitzmyer argues the opposite in *the Dead Sea Scrolls and Christian Origins* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 73-110.

title משיח “messiah” or Χριστός “Christ” by those writing at the time into a difficult-to-quantify movement within the hearts of the people. Most scholars now acknowledge that a collective hope or expectation within a community can be expressed by various images and terminology<sup>14</sup> without employing the title “Messiah” or “Christ.”<sup>15</sup>

*From Recognizing Diversity towards Acknowledging Commonality*

In the second place, the scholarly consensus swung from overgeneralizations about messianic expectations in Judaism to concluding that there was virtually no commonly-held messianic belief. Charlesworth concluded the 1987 Princeton Symposium on Judaism and Christian Origins by saying, “No member of the Princeton Symposium on the Messiah holds that a critical historian can refer to a common Jewish messianic hope during the time of Jesus.”<sup>16</sup> Collins cautions, however, that while we cannot return to the simplistic categories of messianism suggested by Schuerer and Moore, we must also realize that “the variation was limited, and that some forms of messianic expectation were widely shared.”<sup>17</sup> Talmon concurs, insisting that messianism is “deeply rooted in the ancient Israelites’ conceptual

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<sup>14</sup> There are less overt, yet thoroughly effective ways of making reference to a messiah complex other than the use of the title “Jesus the Christ/Messiah” alone. Among these are the use of other titles such as “Son of David,” key concepts in the collective memory of the Jewish people that conjure up hopes of messianic salvation, (such as any reference to the twelve tribes), and references to passages of scripture recognized as being infused with messianic expectation (Isaiah 11:1-10, Psalm 2 and Isaiah 49:1-9).

<sup>15</sup> Talmon notes that even in passages such as Zech. 4:1-3, 11-14, where an “anointed one” is not explicitly mentioned, there is dependence on imagery that leaves little doubt that a “messianic” future is being spoken of. Shemaryahu Talmon, “The Concepts of *Masiah* and Messianism in Early Judaism,” in *The First Princeton Symposium on Judaism and Christian Origins the Messiah: Developments in Earliest Judaism and Christianity*, ed. J. H. Charlesworth (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992), 114-115.

<sup>16</sup> Charlesworth, 5.

<sup>17</sup> Collins, 12.

universe, and that it is the only source out of which the various postbiblical formulations of messianism could have sprung.”<sup>18</sup>

The majority of scholars now recognize that while there was variation in messianic expectation, it was indeed present. What is quite clear, however, from even a cursory inquiry into the background of messianic expectation leading up to the time of Jesus, is that the notion that one can move smoothly from Jewish messianology to Christian Christology is erroneous.

### *Summary*

Having acknowledged the theologically-charged nature of our question as well as the presence of varied representations of Judaism during this period and the variety of terms available to speak to a messianic expectation, we now turn to take a closer look at two of the portraits of messianism within the Jewish literature that survived from the Second Temple period: 1) the apocryphal and pseudepigraphical writings; and 2) the writings of the New Testament. With these in mind, we will then turn to the scrolls to see if they offer up further evidence that messianic hope was a deeply rooted conception within Judaism at this time. Further, we will probe the portrait that emerges from the scrolls to see if it includes any conception of a vicariously suffering messiah that would anticipate the New Testament’s presentation of messianic fulfillment in Jesus.

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<sup>18</sup> Talmon, 83. Talmon believes that the diversity and apparent discrepancies within the messianic idea are due in part to the gradual development of that conception. He suggests that the messianic idea unfolded gradually from “an earthly anointed king” to “the inaugurator of the final and unending era” in three stages: 1) *historical realism* which prevailed in the age of the monarchies; 2) the *conceptualization* of the Second Temple Period; and 3) culminating in the *idealization* after 70 CE.

## CHAPTER TWO

### MESSIANIC PORTRAITS IN SECOND TEMPLE JUDAISM

Was there a common expectation of a messianic figure in Second Temple Judaism—and if so, what did it look like? In this chapter we will examine the portraits of messianism captured in writings from the Second Temple period, prior to the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls. First we will examine the apocryphal and pseudepigraphical writings. Secondly we will explore the New Testament’s presentation of a common messianic expectation and how the Gospel writers spoke to its fulfillment in Jesus.

#### A. Messianic Expectation in the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha

There are very few texts in either the Apocrypha<sup>19</sup> or the Pseudepigrapha<sup>20</sup> that mention a messiah, and, those that do see him primarily as a Davidic, kingly figure.<sup>21</sup> The

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<sup>19</sup> “Apocrypha” is the plural of the singular “apocryphon” denoting hidden or secret writings that were only to be read by initiates into a given Christian group. Eventually the term came to be used for works that were similar to biblical books, but were not accepted into a particular canon of Scripture. Both the terms “Apocrypha” and “Pseudepigrapha” have been used to refer to literature in various contexts. Thus, it can prove difficult to discern in which particular context (broad, narrow, or specialized) the terms are being used. Generally speaking, “Apocrypha” is used to refer to the books derived from the Septuagint, but were not accepted by the rabbis who finalized the Jewish canon, nor later the Protestant canon. James Vanderkam and Peter Flint, *The Meaning of the Dead Sea Scrolls: Their Significance for Understanding the Bible, Judaism, Jesus, and Christianity* (New York: HarperCollins, 2002), 186.

<sup>20</sup> The term “Pseudepigrapha” can be somewhat misleading. Coined by Serapion in the late second century the term literally means “false superscription,” which unfortunately carries a decidedly negative connotation. However, this title is used by scholars to refer to the fact that the authors of the writings in this collection placed their words in the mouths of

widespread silence of the Apocrypha on messianic expectation along with the handful of possibly “messianic” conceptions within the Pseudepigrapha has encouraged the view that a “messianic vacuum” can be identified in Jewish literature between the fifth and second centuries.<sup>22, 23, 24</sup> Evidence for belief in a messiah of any kind is contained in only five writings: *Psalms of Solomon* 17 and 18, *1 Enoch* 37-71, *4 Ezra*, *2 Baruch* and the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*. There is, in fact, only one clear witness to the expectation of a

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ideal figures in Israel’s past. The Pseudepigrapha contains Jewish writings that were written from 200 BCE to 200 CE that were, like the Apocrypha, completely lost from the transmitted Jewish heritage and strangely enough preserved and transmitted by Christians. James H. Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha: Apocalyptic Literature and Testaments*, 2 vols., The Anchor Bible Reference Library, vol. 1 (New York: Doubleday, 1983), xii.

<sup>21</sup> Both of these groups of literature originated from the same period and were produced by the same community and processes. Thus the line of demarcation was something imposed later. It just so happens that no occurrences of a messianic conception occur in what would later be labeled the Apocrypha.

<sup>22</sup> William Horbury, *Messianism among Jews and Christians: Twelve Biblical and Historical Studies* (London: T&T Clark, 2003), 39.

<sup>23</sup> It is generally agreed that the LXX Pentateuch was translated by Jews in the third century BCE during what has been called the “dark age” of Jewish messianism. Horbury claims that three passages in particular evince a messianic understanding but are often overlooked when it comes to assessing messianic expectation (Horbury, *Jewish Messianism*, 45). They are in the form of prophecy in the mouths of Jacob (Gen 49), Balaam (Num 24) and Moses (Deut 33). Collins, however, concludes, “Of the passages adduced by Horbury as evidence of Messianism in the LXX translation of the Pentateuch, the blessing of Jacob affirms a glorious future for Judah but fails conspicuously to associate that future with an individual ruler, while the blessing of Moses does not speak unambiguously about a human ruler at all. Only Balaam’s oracle enhances the role of an eschatological “man” in the Greek translation. This man has a kingdom, and may reasonably be understood as a messiah. Even in this case, however, the translators did not refer to this man as a king, and they never speak of anointed one who is to come.” Messianic hope was even more marginal in the Greek speaking Diaspora than it was in the land of Israel. John J. Collins, *Jewish Cult and Hellenistic Culture: Essays on the Jewish Encounter with Hellenism and Roman Rule*, ed. John J. Collins, Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism, vol. 100 (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 62-63.

<sup>24</sup> In the received Greek texts, which also belong to this period, Josephus does make use of the noun Χριστός. However, these passages are viewed with suspicion by scholars because of the likelihood that they were added later by a Christian scribe. Therefore, they will not be taken into consideration in this present study.

Davidic messiah in Jewish literature from the last two centuries BCE (apart from the Dead Sea Scrolls).<sup>25</sup> This is found in the Pseudepigraphical book of the *Psalms of Solomon*, a document composed in the middle of the first century BCE,<sup>26</sup> after the conquest of Jerusalem by Pompey.<sup>27</sup>

The author of the *Psalms of Solomon* presents Isaiah 11:1-5 as a polemic against the Hasmonean rule.<sup>28</sup> Looking back on this interval, which was neither Zadokite nor of the line of David, he suggests that the Jewish people's hopes had been misplaced and that they now need to return to a traditional kingship and priesthood. Thus the eschatological deliverer figure envisioned, who will bring an end to the present tribulation, is a royal Davidic Messiah. *Psalms of Solomon* 17:32 reads, "The king shall be the Lord Messiah." He is "king" (βασιλεα), a "son of David" (υιον Δαυιδ), who is raised up by the Lord to rule Israel (*Pss. Sol.* 17:18). As a righteous king he will be called "messiah of the Lord" (Χριστός κυριου) and

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<sup>25</sup> Collins, *The Scepter and the Star: The Messiahs of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Other Ancient Literature*, 49.

<sup>26</sup> It is agreed upon by almost all scholars that the *Psalms of Solomon* were written in the wake of Pompey's conquest of Jerusalem in 63 BCE. Brant Pitre, *Jesus, the Tribulation, and the End of the Exile: Restoration Eschatology and the Origin of the Atonement* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005), 79.

<sup>27</sup> In Charlesworth's study on the presence of messianic expectation around the turn of the era, he concluded that among the pseudepigraphical writings only five texts anticipated a messiah and of these only *Psalms of Solomon* could be dated to before the time of Christ. Another, the *Similitudes of Enoch* (1 *Enoch* 37-71), has not been dated with certainty, but probably originated sometime during the first century CE, before the destruction of the Temple in 70 CE. Two other texts *4 Ezra* and *2 Baruch* are messianic, but originated considerably later, around the end of the first century (contemporary with the book of Revelation). The fifth text, *3 Enoch*, is several centuries later and therefore not relevant for consideration for this period. However, it should be noted that in the course of this study Charlesworth used primarily the presence of the title "messiah" to sort out what was messianic – therefore other scholarly assessments of the material include other documents based on more comprehensive criteria. Charlesworth, "From Messianology to Christology: Problems and Prospects," 17.

<sup>28</sup> Randall Heskett, *Messianism within the Scriptural Scrolls of Isaiah*, ed. Claudia V. Camp and Andrew Mein, Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies, vol. 456 (New York: T&T Clark, 2007), 286-87.

will be the “king of Israel” (*Pss. Sol.* 17:32, 42).<sup>29</sup> So also, the *Psalms of Solomon* presents a priesthood that harkens back to the images of a Zadokite priest.<sup>30</sup> In the *Psalms of Solomon* not only the wicked, but also the righteous suffer during the period of tribulation. Pitre observes, “Presumably, God uses the oppression and disaster unleashed by the foreign tyrant to cleanse Jerusalem of its wickedness in order to prepare the way for a royal Messiah who will restore the glory of the Davidic covenant and the Temple cult, and the righteous along with them (cf. *Pss. Sol.* 17:30).”<sup>31</sup>

Several scriptural texts seem to serve as the base for the eschatology presented in *Psalms of Solomon*: God’s promise of a future Davidic dynasty as recorded in 2 Samuel 7 (cf. *Pss. Sol.* 17:4) as well as imagery from the royal psalms, specifically Psalm 2 and Psalm 98. Of particular interest for the present study is the fact that Isaiah 11:1-5,<sup>32</sup> which emerges as an often-quoted text in the Dead Sea Scrolls with regard to messianism, also seems to have been used as a base text, depicting the messianic king as “the shoot from the stump of Jesse.”<sup>33</sup>

While it is significant that a Davidic messiah is envisioned in *Psalms of Solomon*, as it is the only clear occurrence of a messianic expectation, scholars have taken the sparse and fragmentary evidence to mean that messianic expectations were not widespread. Horsley writes, “It is becoming increasingly evident that there was little interest in a Messiah, Davidic or otherwise, let alone a standard messianic expectation, in the diverse Palestinian Jewish

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<sup>29</sup> Pitre, 79.

<sup>30</sup> Regarding the Zadokite priesthood, see Ezekiel 43:19; 44:15.

<sup>31</sup> Pitre, 80-81.

<sup>32</sup> Collins has speculated that “the *Psalms of Solomon* are the first Jews to see in Isaiah 11 or Psalm 2 the promise of a glorious future glorious king Collins, *The Scepter and the Star: The Messiahs of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Other Ancient Literature*, 56.

<sup>33</sup> Pitre, 83.

literature of late Second Temple times.”<sup>34</sup> Thus, he concludes, “Hence the unavoidable conclusion remains that ideas or expectations of a “Messiah” of any sort were not only rare but unimportant among the literate groups in late Second Temple Jewish Palestine.”<sup>35</sup>

## **B. The Messianism of the New Testament: Expectation and Redefinition**

What is perplexing about this apparent “messianic vacuum,” is that the Gospels present a completely different picture of messianic expectation. Even taking into account the likelihood that the Gospel writers didn’t speak for the whole of Judaism, they clearly believed that they spoke to some strata of their people and felt compelled to address this issue of messianic expectation.

The central significance of the title “Messiah” or its Greek counterpart “Christ” in the minds of the authors of the New Testament is evident by the fact that “Jesus Christ” becomes all but a proper name on the pens of the writers of the New Testament.<sup>36</sup> Further, the fact that Christ-devotees came to be called “Christians” speaks to their understanding that the Jewish hope was fulfilled in the person of Jesus.<sup>37</sup> How closely this representation parallels what the Jewish expectations were at large during this period is debated.<sup>38</sup> Nevertheless, we see in the

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<sup>34</sup> Horsley, 295.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 280.

<sup>36</sup> According to Acts 3:20 and Paul’s letters, “Christ” is a proper name for Jesus of Nazareth. In the gospels it is a proper name or title (Mt 1:1, Mk 1:1, Lk 2:11, Jn 1:17). Charlesworth, “From Messianology to Christology: Problems and Prospects,” 12.

<sup>37</sup> M. Hengel, “Christological Titles in Early Christianity,” in *The First Princeton Symposium on Judaism and Christian Origins the Messiah: Developments in Earliest Judaism and Christianity*, ed. J. H. Charlesworth (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), 444.

<sup>38</sup> Smith speaks to the variety of Jewish expectation: “To say nothing of mere differences in personnel and program, these expectations run the whole gamut of concepts, from ordinary kingdoms in the world, through forms of this world variously made over and improved, through worlds entirely new and different, to spiritual bliss without any world at all. But the point to be noted is that these contradictory theories evidently flourished side by



earliest writings of the Apostle Paul that Jesus is comfortably and repeatedly referred to with the title “Jesus Christ.” Even if it was not yet in Paul’s mind a proper name *per se*, it was certainly an established and accepted designation.<sup>39</sup> How can we account for this strong identification with the Jewish messianic hope in the Christian tradition?

### ***The New Testament’s Interaction with the First Century Understanding of a Messiah***

Scholars posit a two-fold understanding of the title “messiah” in the first century: 1) the Jewish understanding—one who would deliver Israel, whether understood as a thoroughly political figure or as a political as well as spiritual deliverer;<sup>40</sup> and 2) the Greco-Roman understanding—one who created political unrest. The Greco-Roman understanding is fairly one-dimensional. A messianic pretender posed a threat to civil order in the Roman province of Judea. The Jewish understanding, on the other hand, is not so easily identified.

This raises the question of what understanding the gospel writers and Paul came from when they spoke about Jesus the Messiah/Christ. Matthew’s emphasis seems to be that Jesus was the long-awaited Messiah, a Son of David, but more importantly the Son of God. Mark asserts that Jesus is indeed Messiah, but not the royal messiah they were expecting. Luke is careful to present Jesus as Messiah, but not the insurrectionist that Rome crucified. John calls attention to the priestly function, presenting Jesus as the Lamb of God. Paul, one the other

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side in the early rabbinic and Christian and Qumran communities.” Morton Smith, “What Is Implied by the Variety of Messianic Figures?,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 78 (1959): 69.

<sup>39</sup> Nils Alstrup Dahl, *Jesus Christ: The Historical Origins of Christological Doctrine*, ed. D. H. Juel (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), 15-16.

<sup>40</sup> Charlesworth’s definition of messianic expectation is helpful: “‘Messiah’ in its etymological sense, [denotes] Jewish ideas or beliefs in the Messiah. The adjective ‘messianic’ refers to ideas about the messiah. The noun ‘messianology’ denotes Jewish ideas or beliefs in the Messiah. Charlesworth, “From Messianology to Christology: Problems and Prospects,” 4.

hand, seems to be interested in messianic expectations only in so far as they play into his overall argument of the inclusion of the Gentiles.

Each of the Gospel writers and Paul present Jesus as Messiah. Just as it has been argued that Jesus took on the ambiguous title of “Son of Man” and loaded it with new meaning, so it seems the New Testament writers had to grapple with the *already loaded* title of Messiah/Christ. Thus, each of the evangelists seeks to unpack what and who “Jesus the Messiah/Christ” really is, addressing the perceived questions in the minds of their readers. In an attempt to come to terms with their explicit and implicit use of the designation “Messiah/Christ,” we will examine two components of the New Testament witness: 1) the gospel writers, particularly the synoptic writers; and 2) the undisputed writings of the Apostle Paul.

Each of the Synoptic Gospels and John speak to the messianic question. And yet, we possess only four instances in the Gospels where Jesus accepts the designation of the Messiah or confesses himself to be the Messiah: (1) Peter’s confession (Matthew 16:13-22; Mark 8:27-32; Luke 9:18-22); (2) Jesus’ encounter with the woman at the well (John 4:25-26); (3) Jesus’ response to Pilate (Matthew 27:2-14; Mark 15:1-5; John 18:22-27); and (4) Jesus’ response to the high priest (Matthew 26:62-65; Mark 14:61-63; Luke 22:67-71).<sup>41</sup> Even these four instances are not as explicit as we might like. The scarcity of Jesus’ self-identification with the title “messiah” has raised the question of whether or not Jesus in fact claimed to be Israel’s Messiah, or if this designation is merely a later interpretation of his disciples. Cullmann comments on Jesus’ silence: “The great success of the designation Messiah-Christ is all the more remarkable in light of the fact that Jesus himself always

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<sup>41</sup>Hengel argues that Jesus’ trial is the only clear reference we have of Jesus declaring himself to be the Messiah. Hengel, 446.

showed a peculiar reserve in accepting it as a description of his calling and person, although he did not fully reject it.”<sup>42</sup>

Although the gospel writers do not place the designation “messiah” on Jesus’ lips, they felt compelled to answer the messianic question with regard to Jesus. Byrne makes the observation that reading the gospels conveys the impression that this “messianic issue” was almost a confounded nuisance with which the authors had to deal rather than a helpful lens through which to view Jesus. He writes, “It was hard to reconcile the idea of Jesus as Messiah with the ignominious end of his public career. Moreover, it came loaded with dangerous political overtones, since messianic claims of a Davidic cast inevitably entailed royal status and authority.”<sup>43</sup>

### ***Addressing the Common Messianic Hope and Redefining It***

The Gospels speak to the messianic expectation on two levels: 1) Within the narrative accounts a common conception of a reigning Davidic messiah is presented on the lips of characters within the Gospels including the disciples; and 2) The messianic expectation is redefined in terms of Jesus’ fulfillment of it by the way the Gospel stories are masterfully told.

This twofold presentation of common messianic hope and Jesus’ fulfillment is apparent in the inconsistency that the same disciples who portray themselves as confused within the gospel narratives, later present with great clarity Jesus’ messiahship in their gospel accounts. For example, in Mark 9:31-32 we read of Jesus teaching his disciples about his

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<sup>42</sup> Oscar Cullmann, *The Christology of the New Testament*, trans. Shirley C. Guthrie and Charles A. M. Hall (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1959), 113.

<sup>43</sup> Byrne: 81.

suffering and death. It is clear that the while Jesus speaks of suffering, his disciples are envisioning ruling and reigning. Mark writes, “for he was teaching his disciples, saying to them, ‘The Son of Man is to be betrayed into human hands, and they will kill him, and three days after being killed, he will rise again.’ But they did not understand what he was saying and were afraid to ask him.” Then two verses later we read of the disciples arguing about who would be the greatest when Jesus came into his kingdom, clearly envisioning participating in a reigning messianic context. A second example is found in John 12:16 when John records that the disciples did not immediately understand the significance of Jesus’ triumphal entry into Jerusalem as a fulfillment of Zechariah 9:9. He writes, “His disciples did not understand these things at first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things had been written of him and had been done to him.”

Based on this, we can adduce that the gospel writers came to understand fully Jesus’ fulfillment of the messianic expectation upon later reflection. These two dimensions of messianic understanding are perhaps most apparent in the way each of the gospel writers records Jesus’ response to Peter’s confession. Their accounts of this interchange confirm two things: 1) that there was a royal and glorious messianic expectation however nuanced; and 2) that this was not the sort of messiah that Jesus claimed to be, but rather one who would usher in his kingdom by suffering. This redefinition shattered both the Jewish understanding of a triumphant deliverer and the Greco-Roman understanding of an insurrectionist. Jesus was neither.

Matthew and Luke parallel Mark closely in recounting Peter's confession.<sup>44</sup> It is unclear whether Jesus actually accepts the designation "Christ" in Mark 8:30-31 as he follows praising Peter's revelation by designating himself "The Son of Man." What is clear is that for Peter the ideas of suffering and messiahship are incongruous. Even in the midst of his epiphany it is evident that Peter cannot conceive of the sort of messiah Jesus is presenting himself to be. In this sense Peter's insistence that Jesus must not suffer shows that he cannot reconcile Jesus' foretelling of his suffering with his classical expectation of a royal messianic figure. In response to the question of whether or not Jesus accepted Peter's confession of Jesus as Messiah, Cullmann concludes, "In any case, it is important that according to the Gospel tradition Jesus saw the hand of Satan at work in the contemporary Jewish conception of the Messiah."<sup>45</sup> We will now take a look at each of the gospel presentations to see: 1) how they spoke to a common messianic expectation; and 2) how they present Jesus as fulfilling that expectation and thereby redefining it.

### *The Synoptic Gospels and the Messianic Question*

#### *Mark*

The fundamental category in Mark's view of Jesus is that of Messiah, although the title *Christos* appears only seven times. While Jesus' acceptance of the "confession of Peter" in 8:29 may be uncertain, his acceptance of the title of "Christ" from the high priest in 14:61-

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<sup>44</sup> Cf. Matthew 16:16-23; Luke 9:20-22. Scriptural quotations are taken from the NRSV unless otherwise noted.

<sup>45</sup> Cullmann, 124.

63 is unambiguous. Not only does Jesus clearly affirm that he is the Messiah, but the outrage of the high priest confirms that he understood Jesus to be making that claim.

But he was silent and did not answer. Again the high priest asked him, "Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One?" Jesus said, "I am; and 'you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of the Power,' and 'coming with the clouds of heaven.'" Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, "Why do we still need witnesses? You have heard his blasphemy! What is your decision?" All of them condemned him as deserving death.<sup>46</sup>

It is clear from Mark's perspective that this designation of Jesus as Christ is an accurate one. In his article, "The Origin of Mark's Christology," Juel proposes that the gospel writer is well aware that designating Jesus as a royal Messiah is absurd, but rather than minimizing it, he plays on it. Thus, in this respect Mark's gospel is deeply ironic.<sup>47</sup> The enemies of Jesus end up confessing what the readers know to be true. Both the Jewish and Roman characters do not understand the truth of their words. To the Jews the claim that Jesus is Messiah is blasphemous and absurd; to the Romans it is seditious and outrageous.<sup>48</sup>

Juel's argument is convincing. The irony of what people expect of a royal Messiah and who Jesus actually is makes no sense if Mark does not indeed present Jesus as Messiah. Although there are few explicit references to Jesus being the Messiah and only one instance where it can definitely be said that Jesus accepts the title, Mark's gospel presents Jesus as the Messiah by making use of literary methods. The royal language as well as the inherent irony of Jesus' enemies validating a messianic claim make clear that Mark's gospel as whole

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<sup>46</sup> Mark 14:61-63.

<sup>47</sup> D. H. Juel, "The Origin of Mark's Christology," in *The First Princeton Symposium on Judaism and Christian Origins the Messiah: Developments in Earliest Judaism and Christianity*, ed. J. H. Charlesworth (Minneapolis: Baker, 1992), 450-453.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

asserts that Jesus is indeed the Messiah. Thus the creativity of the gospel writer allows for more subtle ways of introducing Jesus as the Messiah than using title alone.<sup>49</sup>

### *Luke*

The third gospel also identifies Jesus as the Messiah, with the title *Christos* appearing twelve times. Luke, however is especially careful to clarify that Jesus was not an insurrectionist who posed a threat to civil order, and consequently, his crucifixion by the Roman authorities was a gross miscarriage of justice. The occasion of Luke's gospel is, at least in part, polemical, written to reassure Gentile believers of the validity of their faith as the explanation to Theophilus suggests in 1:3. Thus, Luke's gospel speaks to the Greco-Roman understanding of the title "Messiah/Christ" and seeks to defuse it. Byrne in his article, "Jesus as Messiah in the Gospel of Luke: Discerning a Pattern of Correction," notes that any reference to David in Luke's account of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem seems to be suppressed (Luke 19:28-38). He writes,

Where Matthew has the preceding and following crowds shouting, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" (Matt. 2:19), and Mark, "Blessed is the coming kingdom of our ancestor David!" (Mark 11:10), Luke has simply "Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest heaven!" (19:38). For Luke, the moment of Jesus' entry into the city of the Messiah is not the time to emphasize Davidic associations and the kind of hopes in a worldly, political rule that such associations, uncorrected, would raise.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Kingsbury notes that the gospel writer of Mark employs the titles "Messiah," "King of the Jews," "Son of David," and "Son of God" in order to interpret the title "Messiah." J. D. Kingsbury, *The Christology of Mark's Gospel* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), 55.

<sup>50</sup> Byrne: 88.

### *Matthew*

A key concept in Matthew's gospel is the concept of fulfillment. If Mark's gospel is the gospel of the secret Messiah and Luke's gospel is the Gentile's Messiah, then Matthew's gospel portrays Jesus as the Messiah of the scriptures.<sup>51</sup> The title *Christos* is used sixteen times – the most of the synoptics. At the outset, the gospel writer makes his intentions clear: Jesus is the Davidic Messiah. From the genealogy of Jesus in 1:1-17 as well as the circumstances surrounding the infancy narratives, Matthew demonstrates that both genealogically and geographically Jesus' birth is a fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies.<sup>52</sup> Matthew consistently makes his point by showing that Jesus fulfills what the scriptures foretold, introducing and concluding narrative episodes with the words, "This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet . . . ."

Matera notes that Matthew is also masterful at shattering conventional messianic expectations in the way he portrays Jesus' entry into Jerusalem. "Although Jesus arrives as Israel's king, he enters Jerusalem as the meek and humble king foretold by the prophet Zechariah: 'Look, your king is coming to you, humble, and mounted on a donkey, and on a colt, the foal of a donkey.' (Matt. 21:5, quoting Zech. 9:9)."<sup>53</sup> Thus Matthew also draws from an understood messianic expectation to introduce the unexpected Messiah.

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<sup>51</sup> Paula Fredriksen, *From Jesus to Christ*, 2nd ed. (London: Yale University Press, 2000), 36.

<sup>52</sup> W. Barnes Tatum, "The Origin of Jesus Messiah (Matt 1:1, 18a): Matthew's Use of the Infancy Traditions," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 94, no. 4 (1977): 524.

<sup>53</sup> Frank J. Matera, *New Testament Christology* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1999), 40.



### *The Gospel of John and the Messianic Question*

The Gospel of John was finalized last of the four Gospels, probably around 100 CE.<sup>54</sup> Because the Gospel of John differs from the Synoptic Gospels in style and presentation, we might suspect that it would present a distinctive Christology. However, this is largely not the case. The title *Christos* is used nineteen times, the most of any of the Gospels. John is also the only New Testament document to contain the actual transliteration in Greek, Μεσσίας, of the Hebrew, מָשִׁיחַ. John employs the term twice, both times with explanation (1:41, 4:25).<sup>55</sup> The second of these captures Jesus' self-disclosure with the woman at the well, one of the four instances in all the Gospels where Jesus accepts the designation of the Messiah or, in this case, confesses himself to be the Messiah (John 4:25-26).

Some Christological elements are emphasized in the Fourth Gospel. The divinity of Christ stands at the beginning and end of John. The account opens with the statement that, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God (*theos*).” This designation is only used one other time in the Gospel, at the end when Thomas declares his personal belief and faith in 20:28, "My Lord, and my God (*theos*)!" This is followed by stating the intention of the entire work, "But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name." (20:31)<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Paul N. Anderson, *The Fourth Gospel and the Quest for Jesus: Modern Foundations Reconsidered*, ed. Mark Goodacre, Library of New Testament Studies, vol. 321 (London: T&T Clark, 2006), 154-155.

<sup>55</sup> Craig L. Blomberg, "Messiah in the New Testament," in *Israel's Messiah In the Bible and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. Richard S Hess (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003), 120.

<sup>56</sup> M. Hengel, "Christological Titles in Early Christianity," in *The First Princeton Symposium on Judaism and Christian Origins the Messiah: Developments in Earliest Judaism and Christianity*, ed. J. H. Charlesworth (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992), 440-41.

There is also in John the presentation of outward happenings that carry deeper significance. In this sense, John's gospel also makes use of dramatic irony. By placing a political comment in the mouth of the high priest—that it would be better that one man die for the people than that a whole nation perish—without knowing it, the high priest speaks prophetically of the vicarious suffering of Jesus (John 11:49ff).<sup>57</sup> So also Pilate formulates the inscription above the cross to read in three languages and in so doing proclaims to all the world that the one crucified is the “King of the Jews.” Even after protests by the Jewish high priests, Pilate refuses to change it (John 19:19-22). In these instances John highlights the priestly function of Jesus' messiahship. This theme is set forth at the very beginning of the Fourth Gospel when John the Baptist declares that Jesus is the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world.<sup>58</sup>

We also see within John's Gospel the presentation of the common expectation of a Davidic king. John 7:42 reads, “Has not the scripture said that the Christ is descended from David, and comes from Bethlehem, the village where David was?” Trafton makes the observation that by placing such words upon the lips of the Jewish people, John's Gospel indicates that there was some general conception of a Davidic messiah. He writes, “If this passage is in any way reflective of Jewish attitudes around the time of Jesus, it attests to a well-known and continuing expectation of a Davidic Messiah among at least *some* of the populace.”<sup>59</sup> And so it is clear that the Fourth Gospel, despite its distinctive presentation of

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<sup>57</sup> Nils Alstrup Dahl, *The Crucified Messiah* (Minnesota: Augsburg Publishing House, 1974), 21.

<sup>58</sup> Anderson, 154-155.

<sup>59</sup> Joseph L. Trafton, “The Bible, the Psalms of Solomon, and Qumran,” in *The Bible and the Dead Sea Scrolls: The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Qumran Community*, ed. J. H. Charlesworth, The Second Princeton Symposium on Judaism and Christian Origins (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2006), 437.

the life of Jesus, underscores the witness of the Synoptics: that Jesus is the awaited messiah of the Jews.

### ***Paul and the Messianic Question***

*Christos* appears in Paul 270 times, half of the 531 occurrences in the NT. Paul's use of the title "Christ" shows that it has become so closely associated with Jesus, that even at points where Paul uses the title alone, it is clear that it is in reference to Jesus.<sup>60</sup> So saying, it also appears that Paul does not feel the burden of the Gospel writers to make the claim that Jesus *is* the Christ. *Christos* is never used as a predicate.<sup>61</sup> Rather, Paul's use of the title functions more as an affirmation of what has already been embraced as a central truth by the Christian community. In other words, *Christos* for Paul does not receive its meaning through the previously fixed conception of messiahship but through the person and work of Jesus Christ. In this sense, Paul's use seems more advanced.

Paul's emphasis on the Jewish background of the title is not always clear.<sup>62</sup> In Romans 9:5 however, the implications are unambiguous, "to them belong the patriarchs, and from them, according to the flesh, comes the Messiah, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen." *Christos* refers to none other than the Messiah of Israel. Why is it that Paul does not feel the burden to deal with the Messiah complex as the Gospel writers did? It was certainly not that the issue of Jesus being the Messiah was not of significance to the apostle, who was once a Pharisee and persecutor of Christ-devotees. In part, the difference in usage between

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<sup>60</sup> Larry W. Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 98.

<sup>61</sup> Dahl, *Jesus Christ: The Historical Origins of Christological Doctrine*, 15.

<sup>62</sup> Paul speaks clearly about the messiahship of Jesus in Romans 1:2-4, although what messianic emphasis is to be placed on *Christos* in "Jesus Christ our Lord" is not certain.

Paul and the Gospels may be accounted for on the basis that the “apostle to the Gentiles” wrote within the framework of his readers. To a Gentile audience, Christ could have initially been recognized as a name. Therefore the non-emphatic use of *Christos* by Paul may be explained by the simple explanation that *Christos* was already a part of the standard Christian vocabulary. Paul’s concern is, instead, to take the established designation of Jesus the Christ and unpack its significance. Dahl concludes, “Because Jesus is the Messiah, the ones who believe in him are the ‘saints’ of the end time, the *ekklesia* of God, the true children of Abraham, and part of the ‘Israel of God.’”<sup>63</sup> In this way, Paul’s use is pragmatic in nature, addressing especially the Jew/Gentile tensions within the church.<sup>64</sup> He employs the title Jesus Christ, not to say “Jesus is the Messiah,” but rather to say “these are the implications of Jesus being the Messiah.” This aim is perfectly at home within the genre of epistles.

### ***Summary***

From this brief survey we see that although the Gospel writers did not regularly employ the title “Jesus the Christ/Messiah” they did nevertheless make strong claims that Jesus was indeed the Messiah of Israel. Conversely, in Paul we find the prolific use of the title, but not for the purpose of arguing its validity. The creative means by which the gospel writers made their case for Jesus being the Messiah speaks to the availability of concepts within their culture to speak of messianism without actually using the title itself. Thus their

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<sup>63</sup> Dahl, *Jesus Christ: The Historical Origins of Christological Doctrine*, 21.

<sup>64</sup> Cullmann concludes that even though the early church took on certain aspects of the Jewish Messianic expectation, specifically that Jesus appeared on earth as the Son of David and that he exercised kingship over his Church and would appear as Messiah, at the end, that by the time “Christ” became a proper name, these ideas gave way to other Christological views, particularly in the Hellenistic church. Cullmann, 117.

tactics evidence a more widespread messianic expectation among Jews of the first century, than explicit references to the title itself would lead us to believe.

What is clear from this survey is that the New Testament writers did indeed present Jesus as the awaited Messiah of the Jews. Yet, it is also clear that while the entire New Testament canon makes the claim that Jesus is in fact the Messiah, the writers also take great pains to redefine the messianic hope in light of Jesus' fulfillment of it.

### CHAPTER THREE

#### THE SCROLLS WEIGH IN

##### A. The Messianic Question Reconsidered Once Again

Having examined the portraits of messianism previously available to scholarship prior to the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, we now turn the scrolls to see what light they might shed on our understanding of messianic expectation in Judaism during the Second Temple Period.

It is difficult to overestimate the significance of the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls—for Judaism, for Christianity, and for history in general. George Brooke comments on their significance:

Until the discoveries of the Dead Sea Scrolls the only writing from Hasmonean and Roman Palestine was to be found on coin inscriptions and ossuaries. The scrolls from Qumran have provided about 900 manuscripts in Aramaic, Hebrew and Greek from the place and time when Jesus and his followers lived. This alone means that the Judaism of the period, the Judaism of which Jesus was a part, has had to be reconsidered.<sup>65</sup>

In light of the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, the messianic question must once again be reconsidered. Although many of the scrolls have been available for over fifty years, the full corpus of Dead Sea Scrolls was only made generally available in 1991, and a number of important texts have been published since then. Collins notes that, “these could not be taken into account in such syntheses as the revision of Schuerer’s history, volume 2 (1979),

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<sup>65</sup> George J. Brooke, *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the New Testament* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2005), xvii.

or the Princeton symposium on the messiah (1987).”<sup>66</sup> Thus the conclusion of Charlesworth following the symposium that “no member of the Princeton Symposium on the Messiah holds that a critical historian can refer to a common Jewish messianic hope during the time of Jesus or in the sayings of Jesus”<sup>67</sup> needs to be reconsidered.

When the Dead Sea Scrolls are also taken into account the level of messianic expectation within Second Temple literature is heightened considerably, although still not overwhelming. What the scrolls do provide is evidence that messianic expectation was widespread. Collins writes, “More importantly, however, the Scrolls show something of the distribution of messianic beliefs in late Second Temple Judaism, specifically, that these beliefs were not peculiar to any one group, but are found across the boundaries of various sects and movements.”<sup>68</sup>

This realization has come into sharper focus over the last few years as scholarship has come to an increasing realization that many of the texts found at Qumran were brought there. Thus, these texts represent ideologies not peculiar to the sect, but which belong to a larger sphere of Jewish beliefs.<sup>69</sup> In this respect, the scrolls have been most illuminating. Collins

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<sup>66</sup> Collins, *The Scepter and the Star: The Messiahs of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Other Ancient Literature*, 5.

<sup>67</sup> Charlesworth, "From Messianology to Christology: Problems and Prospects," 5.

<sup>68</sup> John J. Collins, "Messianic Expectation at Qumran," in *The Bible and the Dead Sea Scrolls: The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Qumran Community*, ed. J H. Charlesworth, The Second Princeton Symposium on Judaism and Christian Origins (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2006), 73.

<sup>69</sup> Collins points out the wider issue of what the scrolls represent, “The failure to integrate the Scrolls into the discussion of Second Temple Judaism is bound up with a wider debate as to just what the Scrolls represent. Many scholars have regarded them as the writings of a secluded sect, which might then be deemed rather atypical of the Judaism of the time. This view, however, has become harder to maintain in view of the extent and diversity of the fragmentary remains from Qumran Cave 4, which have only recently come into public view.” Collins, *The Scepter and the Star: The Messiahs of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Other Ancient Literature*, 5.

notes that although the interpretation of several texts is disputed, “it is clear that messianism was a topic of significant interest, even if it was never as central in ancient Judaism as old Christian scholarship had claimed.”<sup>70</sup> Evans goes so far as to assert the following:

- (1) Qumran is not preoccupied with messianism; the community presupposes it and utilizes it as part of the community’s eschatology and hopes of restoration.
- (2) In comparison to Jewish messianism of late antiquity, Qumran’s messianism is not distinctive in any significant way. Qumran’s temple related concerns (calendar, matters of purity, and other halakick issues) are distinctive in aggregate, but their messianism is not.
- (3) If Qumranian messianism is not distinctive, that does not mean it was not important.<sup>71</sup>

Thus, based on the texts discovered at Qumran, it is now difficult to maintain that view that messianic expectation remained marginal throughout the Second Temple period.<sup>72</sup>

## **B. Pre-Christian Expectations Revealed**

The discovery of the scrolls has greatly illuminated our understanding of the Judaism represented in the New Testament. In some cases the scrolls have filled out the picture of Jewish society, groups and practices. In other instances, they have helped to bring into relief what about Jesus’ teaching was unique and what was common to Judaism. Perhaps most

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<sup>70</sup> Collins, "Messianic Expectation at Qumran," 73.

<sup>71</sup> Evans, "Qumran's Messiah: How Important Is He?," 148-49.

<sup>72</sup> Collins elaborates, “The Dead Sea Scrolls provide evidence of the messianic interpretation of several biblical texts which were also taken as messianic prophecies in other strands of Judaism. Isa 11:1-5, Balaam’s oracle in Numbers 24, Genesis 49, and 2 Samuel 7 are the most prominent examples. The use of these texts around the turn of the era provides a consistent picture of the character and role of the royal messiah . . . In the Dead Sea Scrolls he is often linked with a priestly messiah who would restore the legitimate priesthood, and sometimes with a prophet, who would herald the coming of the final deliverance. But the most basis and widespread expectation in this period was for a royal, Davidic messiah, who would restore the kingdom of Israel.” Collins, *Jewish Cult and Hellenistic Culture: Essays on the Jewish Encounter with Hellenism and Roman Rule*, 61-62.



significantly, the scrolls have clarified that certain passages, whose authenticity had been questioned, were indeed correctly recorded by the gospel writers, and not later Christian insertions. Two messianic conceptions that were thought to be thoroughly Christian have actually found representation within the scrolls.

### *IQS and the Damascus Document – One or Two Messiahs?*

Collins surmises that perhaps the most distinctive aspect of the messianic expectation of the Dead Sea Scrolls lies in the fact that the royal “messiah of Israel” is often linked with the priestly “messiah of Aaron.”<sup>73</sup> This is significant because for some time the prevailing scholarly assessment was that the Jewish expectation was not of one messiah, but rather two different figures: המשיח אהרן “the messiah of Aaron” and המשיח ישראל “the messiah of Israel” who functioned separately. Thus, the combined messianic figure presented in Jesus of Nazareth as both Davidic King and High Priest was thought to be a Christian invention. The Damascus Document [=CD], however, reveals that there was some expectation of a single messianic figure that was both king and priest, a משיח אהרן וישראל “messiah of Aaron and Israel.” It reads: “(18) This is the exact interpretation of the statutes in which they shall be judged (19) until the messiah of Aaron and Israel משיח אהרן וישראל takes *his* stand and *he* will pardon ויכפר their iniquity . . .” (CD 14:18-19)<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> John J. Collins, “He Shall Not Judge by What His Eyes See: Messianic Authority in the Dead Sea Scrolls,” *Dead Sea Discoveries* 2 (1995).

<sup>74</sup> There is also a reference in the Damascus Document (Geniza B) that supports an expectation of a combined priestly and kingly figure. It reads at Col. 20:1, “until the Messiah from Aaron and from Israel takes his stand.” The same grammatical analysis of a third masculine singular verb following the subject can be applied here as well.

The third person masculine singular pronouns make it clear that the author is making reference to a single figure. Martin Abegg Jr. remarks, "It is noteworthy that CD 14:19 clearly refers to the work of the personage indicated by the disputed form in the singular 'he will pardon their iniquity.'"<sup>75</sup> However, Abegg also acknowledges that there is one clear reference in the scrolls where it is clear that two separate figures were expected. 1QS or Manual of Discipline reads, "doing so until there come the Prophet and the Messiahs of Aaron and Israel וְמִשִּׁיחֵי אַהֲרֹן וְיִשְׂרָאֵל." The masculine plural construct form clearly reads "messiahs," indicating two figures.<sup>76</sup>

Even so, it remains significant that the in 1QS and the *Damascus Document* the scrolls provide evidence that a single messianic figure functioning as both king and priest can no longer be considered merely a Christian adaptation of Jewish messianism.<sup>77</sup>

#### **4Q521 - The Coming of the Messiah and the Resurrection**

Another messianic component that has been criticized as being a later Christian redaction is the idea that the messiah of Israel would raise the dead. The Messianic

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<sup>75</sup>Cross disagrees and believes that CD14:19 should be read "the messiah of Aaron and the one of Israel" and cites the example in 4Q246 "the king of Assyria and the one of Egypt." "The reference is obviously to the Ptolemies and the Seleucids." He notes that the plural pronouns "their rule" and the verb "they shall rule" make clear that two kings are meant. Applying the same logic in the case of CD 14:18-19, however would yield the opposite conclusion with the following third masculine singular as Abegg argues. However, both agree in the preeminence of the royal messiah - that it is implied when not otherwise specified. Martin Abegg Jr., "The Messiah at Qumran: Are We Still Seeing Double?," *Dead Sea Discoveries* 2 (1995): 130-131.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> Qumran's diarchic messianism has been defended in a study by William M. Schniedewind, "Structural Aspects of Qumran Messianism in the Damascus Document," in *The Provo International Conference on the Dead Sea Scrolls: Technological Innovations, New Texts, and Reformulated Issues*, ed. Donald W. Parry and Eugene Ulrich (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 523-36.

Apocalypse (4Q521) Col. 2:1-13 has turned up remarkable evidence that the expectation of the dead being raised was not a Christian invention, as the scroll in language reminiscent of Psalm 146:7-8 and Isaiah 61:1-2 (quoted by Luke in 4:18-19) reads, “for he shall heal the critically wounded, he shall revive the dead.”

Originating from the first century BCE, there is no evidence within the scroll to suggest that it was a purely sectarian document. This is significant because it may mean that the ideas it contains were widespread among Jews by the first century BCE.<sup>78</sup> For this reason 4Q521 is one of the most important Qumran texts for Jesus and his ministry. Within the scroll we find a “recipe” or list of characteristics that some Jews expected to be in play when the Messiah came.<sup>79</sup> Thus, it provides insight into Jewish messianism during the Second Temple period as well as fascinating parallels to Luke 4:16-21, where Luke captures Jesus’ words in Nazareth when he sat down in the synagogue and read from a scroll of Isaiah. The words Luke records Jesus reading contain a similar messianic recipe to what we find in 4Q521(Isaiah 58:6 and 61:1-2 ):

<sup>18</sup>The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,  
because he has anointed me  
to proclaim good news to the poor.  
He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives  
and recovery of sight to the blind,  
to let the oppressed go free,

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<sup>78</sup> Dr. Peter Flint has recently presented on this issue at the Second Princeton Prague Symposium on Jesus, Spring 2007. This material is from a handout made in preparation for that presentation.

<sup>79</sup> Émile Puech, "Messianism, Resurrection, and Eschatology," in *The Community of the Renewed Covenant*, ed. Eugene Ulrich and James Vanderkam, Christianity and Judaism in Antiquity Series (Notre Dame: Notre Dame Press, 1994), 244.

<sup>19</sup>to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.<sup>80</sup>

To these words Jesus adds, "This is being fulfilled today even as you listen."

Later in Luke 7:22 John the Baptist's disciples come and ask, "Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?" Jesus in his answer again draws upon language from Isaiah 61. It is clear that the evidence that Jesus instructs John's disciples to return with, "Go and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, the poor have good news brought to them," provided a definitive answer. Similar language is used in the parallel text of Matthew 11:5 where Jesus' instructions to John's disciples are also recorded, "the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them." Most of the elements in Jesus' response are present in other passages in Isaiah. Isaiah 35:5 speaks of the eyes of the blind being opened and the ears of the deaf being unstopped. Verse six continues with language reminiscent of Jesus' words to John, "then the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy." So also, Isaiah 42:18 commands the deaf to listen and the blind to look up and see.

An element is present in Jesus' response, however, that is foreign to the Isaiah 61 language: the raising of the dead. Thus the suggestion has been made that this idea of the resurrection of the dead may have been inserted into the Jewish concept of Messianic fulfillment by Christians. The discovery of 4Q521, however, has shown that this was not the case. At Col. 2:1 it reads, "[. . . For the hea]vens and the earth will listen to his Messiah (or, anointed one)" and goes on to read in Col. 2:11, "And the Lord will perform glorious things

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<sup>80</sup> Luke 4:18-19.

which have not existed, just as he s[aid]. For he will heal the wounded (lit. “pierced”), he will make the dead live, he will bring good news to the poor (cf. Isaiah 61:1).

## Summary

In summary, the discovery of 4Q521 reveals that (1) in the Gospel passages above, Jesus claimed to be the Messiah by referencing a recipe that already existed in Judaism, and (2) the reference to the raising of the dead as one sign that the Messiah had come (Luke 7:22), hitherto thought to be a Christian invention, may have been known in one other sect, at least, in Judaism in the first century BCE. So also from 1QS and the *Damascus Document* the scrolls provide evidence that a single messianic figure functioning as both king and priest can no longer be considered merely a Christian adaptation of Jewish messianism.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### IN SEARCH OF A SUFFERING MESSIAH

#### A. Clarifying the Question:

Since the redemptive suffering of Christ is the hallmark of the Christian faith, the question of messianism and the scrolls centers particularly around the aspect of redemptive suffering. It is not surprising then, that the question that has preoccupied Christians since the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls is whether or not we find the sort of messiah that we read about in the New Testament anticipated at Qumran. In fact, messianic figures are not mentioned very often in the scrolls, but the topic has still generated much interest.<sup>81</sup>

As we turn to the scrolls to determine whether or not they contain any expectation that mirrors the messianic portrait as the New Testament redefines it, it is helpful to clarify what we are looking for:

- 1) We are looking for something very specific: someone who suffers, but not just anyone—a messiah.
- 2) We are not just looking for a messiah who suffers in general, but a messiah who suffers vicariously for the sins of the people of Israel.
- 3) We are not looking for evidence of this suffering messiah to satisfy ourselves, but evidence that the community at Qumran had some sort of expectation and understanding of a messiah who would vicariously suffer for their sins.

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<sup>81</sup> Vanderkam and Flint, 267.

### *Coming to Terms*

When it comes to deciphering messianic allusions in the Dead Sea Scrolls, it becomes necessary at the outset of any discussion to come to terms with what is meant by the term “messianic.” The term we render “messiah” משיח means simply “anointed.” Since the term itself does not originate with Christianity, we must be careful not to project a purely Christian understanding of the term onto its broader context. This distinction is important because the answer to the question of whether or not we find a messiah or messiahs within the Qumran corpus would be decidedly “yes,” whereas the question of whether or not we find a *suffering* messiah is significantly more difficult to answer.

Collins suggests that, generally speaking, a messianic figure in the scrolls is “an agent of God in the end-time, who is said somewhere in the literature to be anointed, but who is not necessarily called “messiah” in every passage.”<sup>82</sup> The scrolls are concerned primarily with two messianic figures: the royal Davidic messiah and the priestly messiah, the messiah of Aaron. The Royal, Davidic messiah may also be referred to as the messiah of Israel, the Branch of David, the Prince of the Congregation, and even (although the matter is disputed) the Son of God. The priestly messiah is the messiah of Aaron, but he is also known as the Interpreter of the Law and may be described on occasion without the use of a specific title. It has also been argued that a third category should be assigned to a prophetic messianic figure, since prophets are sometimes called “anointed ones” in the scrolls, but the role of the eschatological prophet is somewhat difficult to define. Finally, a fourth category could be

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<sup>82</sup> Collins, “He Shall Not Judge by What His Eyes See: Messianic Authority in the Dead Sea Scrolls,” 146.

argued of a heavenly messiah, such as the heavenly judge who is called both messiah and Son of Man in the *Similitudes of Enoch*. Heavenly agents (Michael, Melchizedek, the Prince of Light) play a prominent part in some of the Scrolls, but they are not called messiah nor said to be anointed.<sup>83</sup>

### ***Establishing Parameters***

A second question we must ask is what kind of filters should be applied to our search. This involves determining the criteria for making a connection. In an effort to be comprehensive, a broad filter is applied at the outset, exploring all potential connections, anywhere from textual variants and actual citations of biblical text, to mere allusions to ideas within the text or language that is reminiscent of them. Once these initial gleanings are compiled, each case can be evaluated individually to determine the viability of the connection.

## **B. Great Expectations: A Half Century In Review**

### ***Dupont-Sommer – The Teacher of Righteousness and Jesus***

Over the course of the last 50 years several claims of finding a “Christian messiah” anticipated in the scrolls have been made. In 1950, only three years after the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, Dupont-Sommer claimed that the Teacher of Righteousness was held to be

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<sup>83</sup> Ibid. The above titles and categories of messianic figures in the scrolls belong to Collins. Their presentation here relies heavily on Collins’ description. They are treated in detail in John J. Collins “Messiahs in Context. Method in the Study of Messianism,” in *Methods of Investigation of the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Khirbet Qumran Site: Present Realities and Future Prospects* (ed. M. O. Wise, N. Golb, J. J. Collins and D. Pardee; New York: New York Academy of Sciences, 1994) 213-27.



a messiah and that he was persecuted, tortured and put to death. In many ways he was “the exact prototype of Jesus.”<sup>84</sup> His claim was based on a controversial reading of the pesher on Habakkuk, which speaks of a wicked priest swallowing up the Teacher of Righteousness in his fury. Dupont-Sommer took this “swallowing” to be of a fatal nature. His argument was not well received and has no followers in recent times. However, he did draw from the *Thanksgiving Hymns* for his interpretation of the teacher and so in a strange way anticipated the recent argument of Michael Wise.<sup>85</sup>

In the twenty-five years following the discoveries and first publication of the texts from Qumran, few topics were so widely discussed as messianic expectation. However, after the initial claims proved disappointing, interest in messianism waned for some time.<sup>86</sup>

### ***Robert Eisenman and the Slain Messiah***

In the 1990's, however, great excitement again broke out over 4Q285 (frag. 5) when Professor Robert Eisenman of California State University in a press release declared that he had found evidence of a suffering messiah. Eisenman read the text as referring to the execution of the messiah—a slain messiah. Not long afterwards, however, Geza Vermes,

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<sup>84</sup> He later clarified that his intention was in no way to deny the originality of Jesus. Dupont-Sommer, *The Esene Writings from Qumran*, trans. G. Vermes (Gloucester: Smith, 1973), 373.

<sup>85</sup> John J. Collins, "A Messiah before Jesus?," in *Christian Beginnings and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. John J. Collins and Craig A. Evans (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 16-17.

<sup>86</sup> Martínez notes the significance that the 1990 edition of Fitzmyer's bibliography, *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Major Publications and Tools for study*, adds only six titles to the list published in 1975. Florentino García Martínez, "Two Messianic Figures in the Qumran Texts," in *Current Research and Technological Developments on the Dead Sea Scrolls: Conference on the Texts from the Judean Desert, Jerusalem, 30 April 1995*, ed. Florentino García Martínez and A. S. Van Der Woude (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 14-15. See note in Evans, "Qumran's Messiah: How Important Is He?," 142.

Professor emeritus of Jewish Studies at Oxford University along with twenty-two other scholars concluded that  $\text{וְהַמִּיתוּ}$  should be read as an action of the Branch of David, “(he) will have him put to death,” rather than as an action done to the Branch of David, “and they shall put to death.” Depending on the supplied vocalization of the “*waw*” suffix, either reading is possible. However, the presence of the indicator of a definite direct object  $\text{אֵל}$  preserved in another line of the fragment greatly favors reading the Branch of David as the subject of the “putting to death.” The surrounding context makes this reading almost certain.

The vast majority of scholars agree with Vermes and have concluded the text refers to Isaiah 10:34-11:1.<sup>87</sup> And so, again, a reference that seemed to anticipate a suffering messianic figure turned out to be no such thing.

Two attempts to establish a connection between Qumran and a suffering messiah have been made more recently, one by Michael Wise and the other by Israel Knohl, both having to do with the *Thanksgiving Hymns*[=*Thanksgiving Psalms, Hodayot, 1QH<sup>a</sup>*] which contain language reminiscent of the suffering servant in Isaiah 53. Their theses raise two significant questions: First, was the servant in Isaiah regarded as messianic in Pre-Christian Judaism? And secondly, as the speaker of the hymns drew on the imagery of Isaiah 53 did he see himself as fulfilling that prophecy?

### ***Michael Wise and The First Messiah***

Michael Wise of Northwestern College in *The First Messiah: Investigating the Savior Before Jesus* identifies the Teacher of Righteousness as “Judah” and reads columns 10-17 of the *Thanksgiving Hymns* as chronological reflections from the Teacher’s point of view. Wise

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<sup>87</sup> Vanderkam and Flint, 341-342.

finds connections between the Teacher of Righteousness' conclusion that he was not appreciated by his contemporaries by the sovereign plan of God and the "servant of the Lord" in Isaiah 53. After Judah's death in 72 BCE, his followers developed a doctrine around his teachings, encompassing a belief in multiple messiahs, whereas in Judah's lifetime they believed him to be the one and only. After his death they added their own hymns to his collection. One of these Wise refers to as the *Hymn of the Exalted One* (cols. 25-26). In this poem the Teacher claims to have suffered as the servant in Isaiah 53, but also to have been exalted to God's right hand.<sup>88</sup> Wise believes that, "By quoting Isaiah 53, and applying it to himself, Judah [whom Wise believes to be the Teacher] was asserting that he was the Servant."<sup>89</sup> Wise also believes the character in the *Coming of Melchizedek* to be the Teacher and sees close parallels between Judah and Jesus, including their atoning suffering.

Wise's thesis has been scrutinized by scholars for the following reasons: 1) its assumption that the poems are chronological instead of various reflections with reoccurring themes; 2) the identification of the herald in the *Coming of Melchizedek* as the Teacher, which is not clear from the fragmentary text; and 3) the chronological problem with Wise's assertion that the Teacher's disciples composed the Manifesto in the *Rule of the Community* after his death in 72 BCE when one copy (1QS), likely written earlier, contains this material.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> The speaker in the hymn describes himself in language that is reminiscent of the "suffering servant": "Who has born[e] afflictions like me? Who compares to m[e] in endur[ing] evil?" 4Q491 frag. 11, col. 1:9. Translation by Israel Knohl. Israel Knohl, *The Messiah before Jesus: The Suffering Servant of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 25.

<sup>89</sup> Michael O. Wise, *The First Messiah: Investigating the Savior before Jesus* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1999), 92.

<sup>90</sup> This summary borrows heavily from *The Meaning of the Dead Sea Scrolls*. 268-270.

### *Israel Knohl and The Messiah Before Jesus*

Israel Knohl of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem has also found connections, albeit different ones, with the suffering servant of Isaiah.<sup>91</sup> He claims that the messiah was named Menahem, whom Josephus called an Essene, and that we find him in some, rather than all, of the *Thanksgiving Psalms*, particularly in the exaltation psalm.<sup>92</sup> Knohl points out that the speaker of the poem (the poem is attested to in several manuscripts) makes polarizing statements, sometimes equating himself with the gods and other times identifying with troubles like the suffering servant's.<sup>93</sup> Knohl concludes that these words of suffering are so out of place that they must have been inserted at a later date. However, he concludes:

In view of the close connection we find in the Dead Sea literature between the coming of the Messiah and the forgiveness of sins, one may suppose that the speaker in the first hymn who saw himself in terms of the “suffering servant” described by Isaiah, was regarded by his community as someone who through his sufferings had atoned for the sins of all the members of his sect.<sup>94</sup>

Knohl finds this identification with the “suffering servant” significant because the combination of divine status and suffering is “unknown in the history of the messianic idea prior to these hymns.”<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> Knohl introduces his work with the following: “To understand Christianity and its relationship to Judaism one must answer a profound and difficult question: What was the Jewish context of Jesus’ messianic career? With the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls there was great anticipation that the elusive answer to this question might be found within them. However, this hope has not been realized. While parallel language has been noted between the Dead Sea Scrolls and the New Testament, no direct connection to Jesus has been found—until, I believe, now.” Knohl, i.

<sup>92</sup> Knohl believes that the phrase “friend of the king” in the hymn could refer to this Menahem that Josephus records as being held in honor by King Herod. *Antiquities* 15.372-79.

<sup>93</sup> Of this dichotomy Knohl writes, “We see a very marked dichotomy in the self-image of the writer. He sees himself as possessing divine attributes, but at the same time views himself in the image of the “suffering servant’ in Isaiah 53.” Knohl, 15-16.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, 25.

Knohl's thesis has also met considerable criticism for the leaps it takes from fragmentary evidence to the character Menahem. There is a discrepancy between the chronology demanded by this scenario and the paleographic dating of the poem. His interpretation of the *Oracle of Hystaspes* and the book of Revelation has also proved to be unconvincing.<sup>96</sup>

It is perhaps unfortunate that the theses of Wise and Knohl are evaluated as a whole by the scholarly community, for most of the scholarly critique has found issue with their proposed historical figures, not their text critical observations. Setting aside Wise and Knohl's proposed historical figures, we must still consider if there is merit to their theses making a significant connection between the reflection of the Teacher of Righteousness in his Self-Glorification Hymn<sup>97</sup> and the Fourth Servant Song. The presence of a leader who identified (to a greater or lesser degree) with the servant who is mentioned in what modern scholarship has titled the "servant songs" may well be significant.<sup>98</sup> Their proposed antecedents (Judah and Menahem), however, are not convincing.

## Summary

Though the great expectations of finding a suffering messiah in the scrolls immediately following the discovery proved disappointing, the theses of Knohl and Wise fall in line with a recent resurgence in interest in messianism within the scrolls. In 1992 Émile Puech published several texts that brought new light to Qumran messianism. The following

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<sup>96</sup> John J. Collins, "An Essene Messiah? Comments on Israel Knohl, *the Messiah before Jesus*," in *Christian Beginnings and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. John J. Collins and Craig A. Evans (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 39, 43.

<sup>97</sup> The Hymn of Exaltation (Wise) = The Self-Glorification Hymn (Knohl).

<sup>98</sup> Collins, "A Messiah before Jesus?," 20-21.

year Florentino García Martínez wrote a long overview in *Jahrbuch für Biblische Theologie*. In 1993, two lengthy contributions dealing with messianism in the scrolls also appeared in the compilation of presentations given at the Notre Dame Symposium on the Dead Sea Scrolls. In 1995, John J. Collins published a book-length study on the topic *The Scepter and the Star*. So also, at the 2006 Second Princeton Symposium on Judaism and Christian Origins, three papers were presented on messianism.<sup>99</sup> The most recent theses of Knohl and Wise, while controversial, have raised some interesting questions about how the community at Qumran interpreted the Fourth Servant Song. They have also brought to light evidence that this passage, though not commented on directly, was nevertheless very familiar to the leader of the community. It is to this passage we now turn to consider another possible connection.

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<sup>99</sup> See Collins, "Messianic Expectation at Qumran." See also Paul Garnet, "Atonement: Qumran and the New Testament," in *The Bible and the Dead Sea Scrolls: The Scrolls and Christian Origins*, ed. J H. Charlesworth, The Second Princeton Symposium on Judaism and Christian Origins (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2006). See also "'The Coming of the Righteous One' in *1 Enoch*, Qumran, and the New Testament" in volume three by Gerbern S. Oegema.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### ANOTHER POSSIBLE CONNECTION: 1QISA<sup>a</sup> 52:14 AND מִשְׁחָחִי

#### A. The Significance of The Servant Passages for Christianity

There are four passages in the Book of Isaiah known as the “Servant Songs,” which are of great interest to Jews and Christians alike. The first three Servant Songs are found in Isa 42:1-4; Isa 49:1-6; and Isa 50:4-11. The Fourth Servant Song, found in Isa 52:13-53:12, has received the most attention.

In the Fourth Servant Song in Isaiah we are introduced to עֶבְרִי “my servant,” spoken of by the Lord. In 53:1, however, the speaker changes to the people who reflect on this servant who suffers and dies not for his own sin, but to atone for theirs according to the mandate of God. The traditional Jewish interpretation of this passage is that the servant is a holy remnant of Israel, not a messianic figure. However, for Christianity, this passage is celebrated as prophesying the vicarious suffering of Christ. In fact, the Fourth Servant Song is quoted more frequently in the New Testament than any other Old Testament passage.

For example in Acts 8:30-35, Philip’s encounter with an Ethiopian official is recorded as follows:

<sup>30</sup> So Philip ran up to it and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah. He asked, “Do you understand what you are reading?” <sup>31</sup> He replied, “How can I, unless someone guides me?” And he invited Philip to get in and sit beside him. <sup>32</sup> Now the passage of the scripture that he was reading was this:

“Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter, and like a lamb silent before its shearer, so he does not open his mouth.”<sup>33</sup> In his humiliation justice was denied him. Who can describe his generation? For his life is taken away from the earth.” (Isa 53:7-8)

<sup>34</sup> The eunuch asked Philip, “About whom, may I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?”<sup>35</sup> Then Philip began to speak, and starting with this scripture, he proclaimed to him the good news about Jesus.

From the Christian perspective looking backwards, the description of the servant of Lord in Isaiah 53 looks forward to Jesus. But would a Jewish reader during the Second Temple period have made a connection between the suffering servant spoken of in Isaiah and a messiah? Possibly.

## **B. The Variant Reading at 52:14 in 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>**

### *An Overview*

Although the text of the Fourth Servant Song is nowhere quoted in the non-biblical scrolls—including the five commentaries on Isaiah (4Q161-165)—there may be some potentially significant connections. The variants between the Isaiah texts from Qumran (1QIsa<sup>a</sup> being of special interest) and the traditional Masoretic Text (MT) are not overwhelming. However, one variant in particular may establish a possible connection between the servant and the messianic conception.



Isaiah 52:14 in the Great Isaiah scroll reads at col. 44 line 2, מִשְׁחָתִי “I have anointed” whereas the Masoretic Text reads, מִשְׁתָּת “disfigured of.”<sup>100</sup> The addition of the pronominal suffix 1<sup>st</sup> common singular in 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> changes the meaning significantly, indicating another root altogether. The question is whether or not this is the intended reading. In other words, was this additional *yod* rendering the messianic “anointed” something intentionally written? If so, should we read this version of the Fourth Servant Song as an increasingly messianic rendition by the community at Qumran, or possibly even a more ancient reading preserved in this text?

### ***Grammar and Word Analysis***

In the case of the MT’s reading מִשְׁתָּת “disfigured,” the difficulty lies in the fact that this word is a *hapax legomena*, occurring only once in this form in the biblical text. What is particularly difficult is that radicals of the root could belong to either of two stems—either (1) “disfigured” or (2) “to anoint.” The LXX translates מִשְׁתָּת as ἀδοξήσει “be without glory” and in doing so matches the MT’s rare Hebrew noun (found only here with this form and meaning in the entire MT) with an equally rare Greek verb (found only here in the entire LXX).<sup>101</sup> In Fitzmyer’s estimation, the grammatically anomalous Hebrew phrase מִרְאֵהוּ מִשְׁחָת מֵאִישׁ is an occurrence of a noun in the construct state followed by a prepositional

<sup>100</sup> 1QIsa<sup>b</sup> supports the Masoretic Text as does 4QIsa<sup>c</sup>.

<sup>101</sup> It would seem that in choosing a Greek word that only occurs once in the text of the LXX, that a conscious choice was being made to mirror the MT.

phrase. Thus he explains that *נִשְׁחַת* although a *hapax legomena*, occurring only once, should be understood as a *miqtal* derivative of the root *שָׁחַת* “to destroy/mutilate.”<sup>102</sup>

The case of a *hapax legomena* and an awkward reading in the MT, might be grounds for revisiting the text-critical issues in light of the variant reading in 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>, particularly in light of the recent scholarly recognition that the Great Isaiah Scroll may represent a more ancient textual tradition than the MT.<sup>103</sup> Eugene Ulrich and Peter Flint have recently suggested that the textual tradition of 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> may be more ancient than the proto Masoretic text, which is cleaned up. Others would argue that although all the copies of Isaiah found at Qumran are considered to be from the same edition, 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> is a clumsy version full of mistakes.<sup>104</sup> Peter Flint suggests that it may be more accurate to talk about “recensions” (revised editions of a text) in this instance. What remains unclear in the case of 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> and the proto Masoretic text is which is the recension and which is the edition.<sup>105</sup>

There is some question about how scholars have approached comparing the texts. The standard for comparison has always been the MT, but this approach is somewhat anachronistic, as it uses as a standard for comparison a form of the text that is later than the

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<sup>102</sup> Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The One Who Is to Come* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmanns, 2007), 40.

<sup>103</sup> Peter Flint and Eugene Ulrich now consider it quite possible that 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> may represent a text tradition that is more ancient than the proto-MT.

<sup>104</sup> Many errors and corrections are found in 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>. Based on Emanuel Tov’s analysis of the text, the corrections are thought to have been made both by the original scribe as well as that of a second hand. ‘of all the Qumran texts, this texts contains the relatively largest amount of corrections, viz. an average of one scribal intervention in every four lines of text.’ Emanuel Tov, “The Text of Isaiah at Qumran,” in *Writing and Reading the Scroll of Isaiah: Studies of an Interpretive Tradition*, ed. Craig Broyles and Craig A. Evans, Supplements to Vestus Testamentum: Formation and Interpretation of Old Testament Literature (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 502.

<sup>105</sup> Per a conversation with Dr. Peter Flint at Trinity Western University on December 20, 2007.

supposed “variant readings” of other texts. It may be more appropriate to call different readings “alternate” rather than “variant” as will be the practice in this paper.

Perhaps one of the most compelling reasons to consider the reading in 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> lies in the inconsistencies that exist between sources that have sought to identify from which root(s) both מִשְׁחָתִי and מִשְׁחָתָה are derived. In the case of the reading at 52:14 in 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>, *Accordance* software tags מִשְׁחָתִי as a first common singular verb from the root מִשַׁח “to anoint.” *The Dead Sea Scrolls Bible*, however, whose translators Ulrich and Flint worked in conjunction with Abegg (who assigned the grammatical tagging for the Dead Sea Scrolls *Accordance* module) translate “he marred” with a footnote indicating the possibility of a reading of “my marring,” which follows the first common singular ending more closely.<sup>106</sup> Commenting on the difficulty of translating this word, Abegg acknowledges that this is evidenced by the fact that the translating committee did not follow the established “rules” for translating the DSSB, first bringing in the LXX (at note 1151) and then attempting a solution to the problem in the translation that is not represented in any of the manuscripts (third person at 1152 while 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> clearly has a *yod*).<sup>107</sup>

Similar discrepancies exist within the identifications of the MT’s reading at Isaiah 52:14. Brown Driver and Briggs identify מִשְׁחָתָה as being from the verbal root שָׁחַת “to

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<sup>106</sup> *The Dead Sea Scrolls Bible* notes this discrepancy in note 1152 as “Possibly, *my marring* 1QIsaiah<sup>a</sup>. Literally, *marring of MT*.” The translation reads, “so was *he marred*.” *The Dead Sea Scrolls Bible: The Oldest Known Bible Translated for the First Time into English*, trans. Martin Abegg, Peter Flint, and Eugene Ulrich (New York: HarperCollins, 1999), 359.

<sup>107</sup> Per email correspondence with Dr. Martin Abegg Jr., ed. Jenifer Manginelli (2007).

destroy.”<sup>108</sup> *Accordance* software, however, following Koehler-Baumgartner, tags מִשְׁחַת as a derivative of the root מִשַׁח, III, which is glossed with a question mark (the same verbal root suggested for the reading מִשְׁחַתִּי in IQIsa<sup>a</sup>). The entry in Koehler-Baumgartner for מִשְׁחַת at 52:14 suggests the possibility of a mixed formation from a nif. and hof. participle. Thus, the inconsistencies presented here speak to the difficulties that are present in not only identifying the intended meaning of מִשְׁחַתִּי in IQIsa<sup>a</sup>, but also that of מִשְׁחַת in the MT.

Isaiah 52:14 in IQIsa<sup>a</sup>, the MT, and the LXX.

	1QIsa <sup>a</sup>	MT	LXX
Isaiah 52:14 Accordance	מִשְׁחַתִּי “I have anointed”  from root מִשַׁח “to anoint” v. qal perf. 1 <sup>st</sup> com sing.	מִשְׁחַת “disfigured of”  from מִשַׁח (yet translates) “disfigured” n. masc. sing. const.	ἀδοξήσει “be without glory” <sup>109</sup>  from ἀδοξέω “to hold in low esteem”  from δοκεω “he seems, appears” + prep α “not” v. 3 <sup>rd</sup> sing. fut. act. indic.
BDB		From שָׁחַת “to destroy”	
Translations	DSSB “he marred”	KJV, ASV, NRSV “so marred”	Brenton “be without glory”

This difficulty justifies further inquiry. As a starting point, we might probe the question of whether or not we can determine if the variant in IQIsa<sup>a</sup> is the intended reading, or if another grammatical explanation can account for this form. Secondly, we might consider whether this additional *yod* rendering the messianic “anointed” was something added by the scribe reflecting a particularly sectarian understanding of the text, or something

<sup>108</sup> F. Brown, S. R. Driver, and C. A. Briggs, "A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament," ed. J. M. Roberts (Electronic text corrected, formatted, and hypertexted by OakTree Software, Inc., 2001).

<sup>109</sup> Lancelot C. L. Brenton, "The Septuagint in English," (Samuel Bagster & Sons, Ltd., 1851).

that was already present in the *Vorlage*. In Collins' estimation the variant at IQIsa<sup>a</sup> 52:14 might be adduced as evidence in favor of a messianic understanding of the servant in pre-Christian Judaism. He writes:

It is possible that this reading, which dates to the third century BCE, originated either as a scribal error or as a conflated reading, but it lent itself inevitably to a messianic reading, especially if it was read in conjunction with Isaiah 61, where the prophet says that God has anointed him.<sup>110</sup>

So also Hengel concludes, "I do believe that this interesting variant in 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> could be based on a conscious interpretation of Isaiah 52:14 at Qumran."<sup>111</sup>

However, even if we determine that the intended reading in 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> at 52:14 is that the servant of the Lord is anointed, we have yet to determine *whom* is responsible for this reading. Brooke in his analysis of the text cautions that although the responsibility of the variant at 52:14 may very well lie with the scribe, we have no evidence that the reading is itself sectarian. He writes:

Although many of the biblical manuscripts at Qumran were probably copied elsewhere and brought to Qumran for one reason or another, some have the full orthography that has come to be recognized as a hall-mark of the scribal tradition in which those sectarian texts were written, probably at Qumran itself. Thus, there is a small group of biblical manuscripts that we may associate more directly with the Qumran community. Like the other biblical manuscripts, these display nonsectarian variants of several kinds: One famous example must suffice: in 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> in Isa 52:14 instead of the MT's מִשְׁחָהּ, "marred," 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> reads מִשְׁחָהּי, "I anointed." This provides a positive reading for the verse as a whole and better fits the context in describing the status and role of the servant. The reading is not directly attested to anywhere else, so it would appear to be a secondary improvement of a difficult text, perhaps the responsibility of a Qumran exegete, though the reading is not sectarian.<sup>112</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> Collins, "A Messiah before Jesus?," 30.

<sup>111</sup> M. Hengel and D. Bailey, "The Effective History of Isaiah 53 in the Pre-Christian Period," in *The Suffering Servant: Isaiah 53 in Jewish and Christian Sources*, ed. Bernd Janowski and Peter Stuhlmacher (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 101-105.

<sup>112</sup> George J. Brooke, "Biblical Interpretation at Qumran," in *The Bible and the Dead Sea Scrolls: Scripture and the Scrolls*, ed. J H. Charlesworth (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2006), 302-3.

Thus, Brooke does not categorize this reading with those readings in which “a clear adjustment has been made to facilitate the use of a particular text in a new context,” yet on the basis of orthography characteristic of the Qumran scribal practice, he considers it likely that the Qumran exegete is responsible for the reading.<sup>113</sup>

One might suggest on the basis of *difficilior lectio potior* that although syntactically the messianic reading of 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> at this point in the text is more difficult, that it is indeed the intended reading. This approach suggests taking the present form מִשְׁחָתִי to render its usual meaning “I have anointed” instead of suggesting other grammatical possibilities by way of explanation. Interestingly, on the variant reading מִשְׁחָתִי in 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> Fitzmyer writes, “Although this looks like the 1<sup>st</sup> sing. perf. qal of מִשַׁח, ‘I have anointed,’ the form is anomalous in this context.”<sup>114</sup>

The argument for an intentional messianic reading is strengthened by the fact that the text in the Great Isaiah Scroll is so clear.<sup>115</sup> There is no evidence of an erasure nor that the text has been inserted by a second hand.<sup>116</sup> Yet the other witnesses from Qumran that contain 52:14 support the Masoretic Text reading מִשְׁחָתִי, lacking the *yod* (1Q8 [=1QIsa<sup>b</sup>] 23:7; 4Q57 [=4QIsa<sup>c</sup>] f36 38:7 reconstructed), showing that while the reading in 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> is clear, it does not appear to have been the popular reading.

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<sup>113</sup> Ibid., 303.

<sup>114</sup> Fitzmyer, 40. See note 29.

<sup>115</sup> See Appendix of the Great Isaiah scroll at column 44, line 2 for the clarity of the text. Photographed by Ardon Bar Hama © The Israel Museum, Jerusalem, 1995 - 2006.

<sup>116</sup> Donald W. Parry and Elisha Qimron, *The Great Isaiah Scroll (1QIsa<sup>a</sup>)*, ed. Florentino García Martínez and A. S. Van Der Woude, *Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah*, vol. 32 (Leiden: Brill, 1999).

However, even if 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> does not reflect the popular reading, the question still remains as to whether or not the text reflects the intended reading. Was this additional *yod* rendering the messianic “anointed” something intentionally written? If so, should we read this version of the Fourth Servant Song as making a connection between the messianic expectation and the vicarious sufferings of the servant? Since we know that the discovered texts were contemporaries of one another at Qumran (presumably some were brought there and others copied there), we must assume that at the very least the scribes at Qumran were aware of such textual discrepancies.

### ***A Messianic Reading in Combination with the Priestly Office***

The plot thickens when we consider the impact the messianic reading “I have anointed” would have on another difficult reading in this passage: the verb הִפִּיץ (hif imperf 3<sup>rd</sup> masc sing) in Isaiah 52:15. The RSV translates this verb here in Isaiah “startle,” while the KJV and the ASV translate “sprinkle.”<sup>117</sup> The ASV and the RSV translate this word the same throughout the Old Testament “sprinkle” except for two instances 2 Kings 9:33 and here in Isaiah 52:15.<sup>118</sup> *The Dead Sea Scrolls Bible* notes the alternate translation of “sprinkle” yet chooses to render הִפִּיץ “startle” in the translation. Reider notes that the JPSV (Jewish Publication Society Standard Version) renders הִפִּיץ “to startle,”<sup>119</sup> however, he does not

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<sup>117</sup> Brown Driver and Briggs render הִפִּיץ in the hif as “sprinkle” of blood, oil, or water. *The Theological Word Book of the Old Testament* has two entries for this root (1335 and 1336, “sprinkle” being the primary meaning, “spring” or “leap” being secondary). Interestingly, under both entries Isaiah 52:15 is specifically cited.

<sup>118</sup> E. J. Young considers the ASV translation “sprinkle” to be superior. E. J. Young, *The Book of Isaiah*, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1954), 199-206

<sup>119</sup> Joseph Reider, “On MSHTY in the Qumran Scrolls,” *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 134 (1954): 27-28.

mention that both the JPS and the RSV translations include a footnote reading, “meaning of Hebrew uncertain.”<sup>120</sup> *Accordance* software, however, tags this word as being from the root נָזַח and renders it “to sprinkle.” Thus, again, inconsistency in translation evinces the difficulty of assigning to this word its intending meaning.

The translation of this verb is significant because “sprinkle” would be laden with connotations to the priestly office and the imbedded concept of redemption through the blood of an offering. Hengel comments that the “messianic” reading of 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> 52:14 as discussed above would impact the plausibility of translating נָזַח as “sprinkle” here in Isaiah:

Such a (priestly) anointing would also make more understandable the equally mysterious נָזַח גּוֹיִם רַבִּים in 52:15 (KJV: “So shall he *sprinkle* many nations,” cf. NASB), which Aquila and Theodotian translate ραντίσει, “he will sprinkle.” Like a priest, the servant will sprinkle “many nations” to purify them from sin.<sup>121</sup>

### **Summary**

In this case (and in many cases besides this one) it is difficult, if not impossible, to definitively rule on what “intending meaning” the author assigned to a word within a passage. Often we are left with a range of possibilities. The variant reading at 52:14 in 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> presents just such a possible “intended reading” of this passage – one that may impact subsequent translation choices within the passage (as noted above) and influence our overall understanding of the context. It is the present author’s belief that 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> makes room for the possibility that the servant of Isaiah 52:13-53:12 was understood as a vicariously suffering

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<sup>120</sup> *JPS Hebrew-English TANAKH: The Traditional Hebrew Text and the New JPS Translation*, Second ed. (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 2003).

<sup>121</sup> M. Hengel and D. Bailey, “The Effective History of Isaiah 53 in the Pre-Christian Period,” in *The Suffering Servant: Isaiah 53 in Jewish and Christian Sources*, ed. Bernd Janowski and Peter Stuhlmacher (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004).



priestly messiah within at least a segment of Judaism. However, a case cannot be made based on analysis of this text alone.

**C. Determining a Comprehensive Approach: Textual Considerations and Beyond**

When it comes to analyzing and weighing a “variant,” arguably the most prudent course of action is to first take a step back and ask ourselves whether or not we are even asking the appropriate questions. Our presuppositions about the nature of the text and those who transmitted the copy under our consideration will greatly influence the significance we assign to the particulars of a variant reading. In effort to avoid a myopic view of the situation of the variant in 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> 52:14, the following will be taken into consideration.

**Textual Considerations:**

- A. The Book of Isaiah at Qumran: What was significant about the *Book of Isaiah* at Qumran? Why did the words of this particular prophet speak to the community so deeply?
- B. Contextual considerations: How are we to read Isaiah 52:14 within its surrounding *context*? Does the context favor one interpretation over another?

- C. Grammatical Possibilities and Precedents: From what we know of biblical Hebrew and what we can learn from the grammatical, orthographical and linguistic styles of the scrolls, what *significance* should be assigned to this variant?
- D. Scribal Practice: How did the community view the *transmission* of their texts? Does 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> show patterns of orthography that would cause us to group it with the texts that were generated by the community at Qumran, i.e. the sectarian texts?
- E. Relationship of the Texts: How did the community at Qumran *hold* their texts? What is the relationship between the texts discovered at Qumran? We know that they preserved different versions of texts, which causes us to wonder if they were equally concerned with “an original authoritative text” as mainstream Judaism came to be.
- F. Interpretive Framework: How did the community at Qumran *read* their texts, and the words of Isaiah in particular? What can we learn from the *Pesharim* on Isaiah as well as allusions to Isaiah within other texts?

#### Beyond the Text:

- A. Theological Conceptions: How did the community at Qumran *conceive of themselves* in relationship to God? How did they understand atonement within their present situation and compensate for their break with the Temple in Jerusalem? How did they envision atonement being made in the future?

- B. Sociological Considerations: What *forces* and *factors* came to bear on the community that contributed to their present situation and shaped their expectation of what was to come?

It is to these questions that we now turn our attention.

## CHAPTER SIX

### TEXTUAL CONSIDERATIONS

#### A. The Significance of Isaiah at Qumran

In approaching the question of how much should be made of our particular variant, it is important to gain the perspective of the significance of the book of Isaiah at Qumran.

Much attention has been paid to the book of Isaiah because of its central role at Qumran, both in the *foreground* of the discovery itself and in the *background* of the revered place it held within the community so many years ago. This continuum of significance has made the text of Isaiah in many respects an “ideal text” for study – as evidenced by the flurry of scholarly publication.<sup>122</sup>

#### *The Significance of Isaiah at Qumran for Scholarship*

In respect to the foreground, the quantity, quality and commonality of the Isaiah texts combined with the presence of commentary on those texts has provided a goldmine for recent scholarship. It just so happened that the Great Isaiah Scroll, known as 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>, was among the first scrolls discovered from Cave 1 in 1947. It would turn out to be not only the oldest

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<sup>122</sup> The Great Isaiah scroll in particular has been published in several preliminary editions and has dominated research of the text of Isaiah at Qumran. Around one hundred scholarly articles or monographs have been written. Peter Flint, "The Book of Isaiah in the Dead Sea Scrolls," in *The Bible as Book: The Hebrew Bible and the Judaean Desert Discoveries*, ed. Edward D. Herbert and Emanuel Tov (New Castle: The British Library & Oak Knoll Press in association with The Scriptorium: Center for Christian Antiquities, 2002), 230.

biblical text discovered at Qumran, but also the most complete and best preserved of the extant texts.<sup>123</sup> It is the longest biblical scroll that has been excavated (7.34 m).<sup>124</sup> All 66 chapters of Isaiah are preserved in its 54 columns, with only small lacunae (notably in cols. I-IX) resulting from leather damage.<sup>125</sup> Further excavations of caves 2 through 11 yielded 21 more fragments from the book of Isaiah,<sup>126</sup> making Isaiah one of the three most popular books at Qumran.<sup>127</sup>

Although not every word of the book of Isaiah is preserved in any one of the twenty-two texts, collectively the Isaiah materials provide substantial data for analysis: 1) Both the beginning of the book (1:1) and the end (66:24) are preserved in three scrolls. 2) Analysis shows that these manuscripts were copied over the course of nearly two centuries ranging from around 125 BCE (1QIsa<sup>a</sup>) to around 60 CE (4QIsa<sup>c</sup>).<sup>128</sup> 3) Although the Isaiah scrolls (particularly 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>) contain hundreds of variants from the traditional Masoretic Text (to a greater or lesser degree), all evidence points to the scrolls originating from only one edition of the book.<sup>129</sup> 4) Some of these variants provide improved readings, while others,

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<sup>123</sup> Paleographic analysis dates the manuscript to about 150-125 BCE, while radiocarbon analysis suggests a possibly earlier date of 335-122 BCE. Ibid.

<sup>124</sup> Only the *Temple Scroll* (11QT<sup>a</sup>) at 8.148 m is longer. Peter Flint, "Isaiah in the Scriptures and Isaiah at Qumran," in *The Adventure of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 3.

<sup>125</sup> Other Isaiah scrolls that are in relatively well preserved are—in descending order of contents—1QIsa<sup>b</sup>, 4QIsa<sup>b</sup>, 4QIsa<sup>c</sup>, 4QIsa<sup>a</sup>, and 4QIsa<sup>f</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>126</sup> Two scrolls were discovered in Cave 1, eighteen in Cave 4, one in Cave 5, and one at Murabba'at. Ibid.

<sup>127</sup> Only Psalms (thirty-six scrolls) and Deuteronomy (thirty scrolls) are more popular. Ibid.

<sup>128</sup> *The Dead Sea Scrolls Bible: The Oldest Known Bible Translated for the First Time into English*, 267.

<sup>129</sup> Unlike Jeremiah and 1 Samuel of which there are large-scale variant editions.

determined to be scribal errors and corrections, provide information about the book's composition.<sup>130</sup>

The prevalence of Isaiah material at Qumran is not limited to the 22 manuscripts alone, however. Fragments from five commentaries on the Isaiah text from Cave 4 (called *pesharim*) further establish a broad base for scholarly inquiry. These commentaries serve as a bridge, allowing us to connect our study of the transcription and origin of the text to deeper questions of the text's inherent value within the community.<sup>131</sup>

### ***The Significance of Isaiah within the Qumran Community***

The factors of quantity, quality, commonality and commentary that have generated such scholarly interest in the Isaiah material are indications that the book of Isaiah held great significance for the community at Qumran. In fact, it is likely that the reason we have so much material to draw upon for our present study is the important place the book of Isaiah held within the Qumran community in the past. Our questions, then, have to do with the background of the community. What about the Isaiah material inspired the community to copy and quote it regularly? The quotations and commentary on the Isaiah texts provide a porthole through which we are able to see why Isaiah's words spoke to the Qumran community so deeply.

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<sup>130</sup> *The Dead Sea Scrolls Bible: The Oldest Known Bible Translated for the First Time into English*, 267-268.

<sup>131</sup> The five commentaries on Isaiah are 4Q161, 4Q162, 4Q163, 4Q164, and 4Q165. 3Q4 could also be described as a commentary. *The Dead Sea Scrolls: A New Translation*, trans. Michael Wise, Martin Abegg Jr., and Edward Cook, Revised Edition ed. (New York: HarperCollins, 1996, 2005), 236.

By taking a closer look at some passages in Isaiah, we can see 1) how different categories of variants affect translation, and 2) how certain themes in Isaiah spoke to the Qumran community in their own time.

### ***Variant Readings***

Variants between 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> and the Masoretic Text (which 1QIsa<sup>b</sup> resembles closely) vary in significance. Some variants can be attributed to a different textual base or *Vorlage*. Many others are simply scribal errors that occurred during transcription. Still others are insignificant for understanding and interpretation such as differences in word order, the use of the plural instead of the singular, and differences in spelling systems. However, some variant readings are significant involving one or more verses that are present in some texts and absent in others.

#### **Example (1) - 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> 4:5-6**

In some instances, a variant reading should not be attributed to a different textual base or *Vorlage*, because it is evident that it is simply an error or correction on the part of the scribe, by another hand, or by the scribe of the archetype of the scroll.<sup>132</sup> One such instance occurs at 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> 4:5-6. Here the shorter reading in 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> is not evidence of a shorter text, but rather the result of the scribe, or the scribe of the archetype of the scroll, skipping from יומם “by day”, in verse 5 to יומם in verse 6.

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<sup>132</sup> Flint, "The Book of Isaiah in the Dead Sea Scrolls," 235.

Isaiah 4:5-6 – *A Variant Reading Attributed to Scribal Error*

1QIsa <sup>a</sup>	MT
<p><sup>5</sup> ויברא יהוה על כול מכון הר ציון ועל מקראה ענן יומם</p> <p><sup>6</sup> מהרב ולמחסה ולמסתור מזרם וממטר</p>	<p><sup>5</sup> וברא יהוה על כל-הר ציון ועל מקראה ענן יומם ועשן ונגה אש להבה לילה כי על כל כבוד חפה <sup>6</sup> וסכה תהיה לצל יומם מחרב ולמחסה ולמסתור מזרם וממטר פ</p>

**Example (2) - 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> 1:15**

An example of a significant variant reading that affects translation is found in Isaiah 1:15. In describing the Lord's revulsion of people who commit murder and oppression and then come to bring him offerings, the Masoretic Text ends verse 15 with "your hands are filled with blood," whereas 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> adds the phrase "your fingers with iniquity." In this case the addition has been considered a better reading because the added phrase reflects the parallelism that is characteristic of this passage. It should be noted, however, that the meaning of the passage is essentially the same in both readings.

Isaiah 1:15 – *A Variant Reading that is Now Considered a Preferred Reading*

1QIsa <sup>a</sup>	MT
<p><sup>15</sup> ובפרשכם כפיכם אעלים עיני מכם גם כי הרבו תפלה אינני שומע ידיכמה דמים מלאו אצבעותיכם בעאון</p>	<p><sup>15</sup> ובפרשכם כפיכם אעלים עיני מכם גם כי תפלה אינני שומע ידיכם דמים מלא</p>



### Example (3) - 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> 53:11

In the case of Isaiah 53:11 the difficult reading of יראה “he will see” in the MT, also attested to in the Syriac and the Vulgate, has been thought possibly to be a form of ירוה “he will be satisfied.” The Masoretic Text reads rather difficultly, “He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied,” while 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> reads, “Out of the suffering of his soul he will see *light*, and find satisfaction.”<sup>133</sup> 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> provides the additional word אור “light”, which could either be an addition by the scribe or already present in the scribe’s *Vorlage*. Since 1QIsa<sup>b</sup> and 4QIsa<sup>d</sup> also contain “light” as well as the LXX (δείξει αὐτῷ φῶς), the reading in 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> is almost certainly the preferred reading.<sup>134</sup> This reading has impacted several modern English translations.<sup>135</sup>

#### Isaiah 53:11- A Variant Reading that has been Incorporated into English Translations

1QIsa <sup>a</sup>	MT
<p>11 מעמל נפשוה יראה אור וישבע ובדעתו יצדיק צדיק עבדו לרבים ועונותם הוא יסבול</p>	<p>11 מעמל נפשו יראה ישבע בדעתו יצדיק צדיק עבדי לרבים ועונתם הוא יסבל</p>

From the above examples we see that some variant (or alternate) readings in *The Great Isaiah Scroll* can be relegated to obvious scribal error, others encompass differences of word order and spelling systems and are relatively insignificant in terms of the meaning of

<sup>133</sup> Martin Abegg Jr., "The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Stories They Tell," in *Discovering the Dead Sea Scrolls: Distinguished Lecture Series* (Seattle: 2006).

<sup>134</sup> Flint, "Isaiah in the Scriptures and Isaiah at Qumran," 4.

<sup>135</sup> English translations that have taken the 1QIsaiah<sup>a</sup> reading include the *NRSV*, *NIV*, *NEB*, *REB*, *JB* and *NAB*. Peter Flint, *Isaiah in the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Biblical Archeology Review), Video Recording.

the text. Yet, in some cases, the alternate reading significantly impacts the meaning of the text. In some cases *The Great Isaiah Scroll* has produced readings that have been judged superior. When the revised Standard Version (RSV) was completed in the 1950's, thirteen readings were incorporated from 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> that were not in the MT. Peter Flint has predicted that, "As the variants of the scrolls are explored more carefully, many more readings will be incorporated, thus helping us to recover a more authentic version of this biblical book."<sup>136</sup>

### ***Resounding Themes***

The six *pesharim* or commentaries on Isaiah found at Qumran as well as quotations of Isaiah that appear in other Qumran documents provide valuable insight into the way in which the community interpreted the words of Isaiah within their particular context. Eugene Ulrich points out that in the Qumran literature the focus is not on Isaiah as a character as we see with Enoch and Moses, but rather on God's message of deliverance and judgment, which was pertinent to their current situation.<sup>137</sup> Peter Flint suggests four aspects in which the members of the community at Qumran felt that the text of Isaiah spoke of their situation in specific terms: 1) Authoritative Status, 2) Faithfulness to the Covenant, 3) A Separate and Righteous People, and 4) An Eschatological Emphasis.<sup>138</sup>

One area that has been of particular interest to Christianity is the eschatological themes that have parallels in the New Testament. In 4Q161 of the Isaiah *pesharim* the interpreter makes specific reference to the Messiah as the "Branch of David" in his interpretation of Isaiah 11:1-5. It reads, "[This saying refers to the Branch of] David, who will

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<sup>136</sup> Ibid.

<sup>137</sup> Eugene Ulrich and James Vanderkam, *Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 2 vols., vol. 1 (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 387.

<sup>138</sup> Flint, "Isaiah in the Scriptures and Isaiah at Qumran," 5-8.

appear in the lat[ter days, ...” Interestingly enough, he later goes on to say that he (the Branch of David) will be advised by the Zadokite priests and “as they instruct him so shall he rule.”<sup>139</sup> It is clear from this interpretation that the Messianic interpretation at Qumran differed from that of Evangelists.

Another example of a parallel theme but different interpretation is the way in which 1QS interprets Isaiah 40:3 to reference those who went “to the wilderness, there to prepare the way of truth, as it is written, ‘In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord . . .’”<sup>140</sup> Here the community at Qumran takes Isaiah’s words which the Evangelists see fulfilled in John the Baptist to reference their retreat into the desert to prepare the way for their God.

### ***Summary***

The book of Isaiah has played a central role at Qumran, both in the *foreground* of the discovery itself and in the *background* of the community at Qumran. Careful examination of the texts has revealed overwhelming agreement between the Masoretic Text and the Isaiah scrolls at Qumran. In several instances the Qumran texts have shed light on the history of the text of Isaiah, and in some instances even enhanced our understanding through better readings. Investigating the Qumran community’s preoccupation with and interpretation of the book of Isaiah continues to inform our own study of this biblical book.

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<sup>139</sup> 4Q161 III 18-25.

<sup>140</sup> Flint, "The Book of Isaiah in the Dead Sea Scrolls," 242.

## B. Contextual Considerations: Isaiah 52:13-53:12

Having explored the significance of the book of Isaiah in the context of Qumran, we will now consider Isaiah 52:14 within its literary and historical context. Does the context of the Fourth Servant Song favor one interpretive reading over another? Our task within this section is to examine the overall nature and function of Isaiah 52:13-53:12 as a basis for considering the directing influence of a possible messianic reading at 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> 52:14.

### *Theme*

The key notion in Isaiah's fourth servant poem is that the sufferings of the righteous can bear the sin of others. Even taking into account the varied opinions on redaction, we can safely generalize that the social world that Isaiah spoke into was exile, whether threat, current experience, or post trauma. Certainly the second half of Isaiah is set in the context of God's prevailing purposes after the experience of exile. For this reason this poetic passage about griefs being borne, sorrows being carried and wounds being healed is most appropriate.

The language used in this passage conjures up images of the Israelite cultic practice of sacrifice, particularly the idea of atonement personified through the scapegoat as prescribed in Leviticus 16. It is debated by scholarship, however, whether or not the connection between the sufferings endured by the servant and atonement is warranted. Questions have been raised regarding whether or not the servant in the poem really dies and also whether or not the renderings of certain words should prefer a cultic context.<sup>141</sup>

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<sup>141</sup> Hermann Spieckermann suggests that the NRSV's reading of "an offering for sin" in 53:10 is misleading because *זָשַׁח* denotes the "wiping of guilt" not from a cultic context, but rather

### *Literary Context*

This passage begins and concludes with the assertion that Yahweh's servant, once humiliated and abused, will be exalted; once counted among criminals, will be in the company of the great and powerful. The introductory formula "Behold" makes the beginning of a new section at verse 13 almost certain. So also the imperative command "Sing, O barren one" of 54:1 marks a clear separation from the previous passage with a switch from Yahweh talking about the servant with third person pronouns to direct address, in addition to the change of subject matter. Though the literary sections are related in that both speak of God's restoration, there is clearly a change in addressee as 54:1 addresses a woman. Thus, Isaiah 52:13-53:12 can be considered a self-contained unit. However, this is not to say that this passage about Yahweh's servant is not deliberately placed between what comes before and after it.<sup>142</sup>

In this passage the primary clues to structure come by discerning what perspective is being given, which is apparent from the pronouns that are used. Verses 13-15 present a first person perspective, presumably Yahweh, "Behold, my servant." In 53:1 there is a switch to a third person, "Who has believed what they heard from us" or "what we have heard." Who the "we" or "us" is, is not explicitly stated within the text, but 53:4 clarifies that they are

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the legal context. Hermann Spieckermann. "The Conception and Prehistory of the Idea of Vicarious Suffering in the Old Testament." Hermann Spieckermann, "The Conception and Prehistory of the Idea of Vicarious Suffering in the Old Testament," in *The Suffering Servant: Isaiah 53 in Jewish and Christian Sources*, ed. Bernd Janowski and Peter Stuhlmacher (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans 2004), 3.

<sup>142</sup> Blenkinsopp notes, "The address of a servant of Yahweh in 49:1-6 and the present passage, in which the Servant does not speak but is spoken about, both rather abruptly follow exhortations to depart from the place of exile (48:20-22; 52:11-12). The contextual isolation of 52:13-53:12 is also emphasized by the apostrophe to Zion that precedes and follows it (52:1-2, 7-10; 54:1-17). Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40-55: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, The Anchor Bible, vol. 19A (New York: Anchor Bible, 2002), 349.

those whose griefs have been borne and whose sorrows have been carried. 53:7 returns to a first person perspective, which becomes clear by “stricken for the transgression of my people” in 53:8. Thus the “they” who make his grave with the wicked in 53:9 may very well be “my people” of verse 8. In 53:10 again a third person account is presented making the claim that it was Yahweh’s will to crush him. 53:11 returns again to first person with “my servant” being again mentioned and apparently continues through verse 12 with the first person, “Therefore I will divide.” The mention of the servant at the beginning in 52:13 as well as the end in 53:12 provides a balance and also speaks to a complete literary unit.

### *Immediate Context*

Isaiah 52:13-15 (MT)<sup>143</sup>

(13) Behold my servant shall be wise, he shall be exalted and be lifted up, and be very high.

(14) As many were astonished at him, *so disfigured* from a man, his appearance and his form from the sons of men.

(15a) So he shall *sprinkle* many nations.

(15b) Over him kings will shut their mouths, because that which was not recounted to them, they will see and that which they have not heard they shall understand.

In addition to the difficult reading of מִשְׁחָת at 52:14 and the question of the correct rendering of מִן as “startle” or “sprinkle,” there is also the question of whether or not 52:15a, “So shall he sprinkle many nations” should be read in the context of verse 14 (in which the rendering “sprinkle” seems more likely) or with the context of the rest of verse 15 with the

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<sup>143</sup> Translation by Jenifer Manginelli, 2007.

amazement of the nations, where “startle” seems to fit nicely.<sup>144</sup> We might ask whether or not we observe language and imagery not only in, but also surrounding Isaiah 52:13-53:12 that reflects the priestly context that would support a reading of “sprinkle” in verse 15 and interpreting the rest of the passage with the motif of vicarious suffering in mind.

On this point Ekblad in his analysis of the servant poems within the LXX has made an interesting observation, suggesting that the interpretation of this word aside, it may be appropriate on the basis of the immediate literary context to read this passage with a priestly idea in mind. In 52:11 the Lord presents his servant before those who bear the vessels of the Lord. These vessel bearers were likely understood by the LXX translator as having a special vocation, and were probably associated with or identified as priests. The association between vessel bearers and priests is common in the Greek Pentateuch (Num 3:5-9, 31-32; 4:15-16, 25-26; 7:8).<sup>145</sup> Thus, the association here between the vessel bearers, priests and the servant of the Lord may provide grounds from the immediate literary context to import priestly ideas and images.

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<sup>144</sup> Although this element is also present in 14a if שִׁמְמוֹ is read “astonished” rather than “appalled.”

<sup>145</sup> Eugene Robert Ekblad Jr., *Isaiah's Servant Poems According to the Septuagint: An Exegetical and Theological Study*, Contributions to Biblical Exegesis & Theology, vol. 23 (Leuven: Peeters, 1999), 169.

### ***Structure of Isaiah 52:13-15***

- I. 52:13 Prediction of the servant's ultimate exaltation.
  - A. 52:14 Reflection on the servant's lowly estate that precedes his exaltation.
  - B. 52:15a The servant's action towards (or affect on) the nations – either *sprinkling* or *startling*
    - (1) 52:15b The response of kings (leaders of the nations)
    - (2) 52:15c The reason for their response
      - (a) They will see what has not been told to them
      - (b) They will understand that which they have not heard

### ***Compositional History***

Throughout much of the interpretive history of the book of Isaiah, the book has been attributed to Isaiah ben Amoz as is stated in 1:1 of the book, who lived in Jerusalem from roughly 742 until 689 BCE. However most scholars consider the book of Isaiah to be a product beyond the personality of Isaiah himself and likely an expansion of his prophetic tradition. J. D. Doderlein in 1775—possibly anticipated by the Jewish scholar Ibn Ezra (1100)—proposed that chapters 40-66 belong to the time of the exile and following, the material of which comes from an unknown prophet who has been designated Deutero-Isaiah.<sup>146</sup> A century later Bernard Duhm suggested that actually only chapters 40-55

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<sup>146</sup> Jim W. Adams, *The Performative Nature and Function of Isaiah 40-55*, ed. Claudia V. Camp and Andrew Mein, Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies, vol. 448 (New York: T & T Clark, 2006), 9-10.



belonged to Deutero-Isaiah and the remaining chapters 56-66 to yet another author.<sup>147</sup>

Thus he proposed a tripartite Isaiah: Proto-/First Isaiah 1-39, Deutero-/Second Isaiah 40-55, and Trito-/Third Isaiah 56-66. This view gained widespread popularity. However recent trends in scholarship have determined Duhm's schematic difficult to maintain and have instead focused on elements of the text that speak to its unity.<sup>148</sup> Brevard Child's canonical reading in particular has provoked much discussion among critical scholars. What scholarship is agreed upon is the presence of a major division at chapter 39. It is also apparent that there are clear literary connections between chapters 40-55 along with central themes.

Thus, for the purpose of our text of Isaiah 52:13-53:12, the question of authorship will be suspended on the basis that even though a diachronic dimension is not ruled out, its relation to the present text is subtle and indirect.<sup>149</sup>

### ***Genre, Mood and Perspective***

Isaiah 52:13-53:12 belongs to the larger genre of prophetic poetry, but it seems to also possess qualities that could be described as making use of poetic imagination. Like many of the psalms, its referents seem to be open-ended, inviting those who are reading or hearing the words to identify with them and thus in some way experience what is being

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<sup>147</sup> Bernhard Duhm wrote a commentary in 1892 observing a distinct origin of chapters 56-66 and thus a tripartite division. Joseph Blenkinsopp, "The Servant and the Servants in Isaiah and the Formation of the Book," in *Writing and Reading the Scroll of Isaiah: Studies In Interpretive Tradition*, ed. Craig Broyles and Craig A. Evans, Formation and Interpretation of Old Testament Literature (Leiden: Brill), 155.

<sup>148</sup> See Walter Brueggemann, *An Introduction to the Old Testament: The Canon and Christian Imagination* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2003), 160.

<sup>149</sup> Brevard S. Childs, *Isaiah*, ed. James L. Mays, Carol A. Newsom, and David L. Petersen, The Old Testament Library (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001), 410.

spoken of.<sup>150</sup> We might also ask the question of what the horizon of this particular passage is within the scope of Isaiah. While the passages that precedes and follow 52:13-53:12 fit comfortably within the scope of restoration following exile, these verses seem to reach further, perhaps anticipating a restoration even beyond what God promised in the aftermath of the exile. Thus, whereas what precedes and follows this passage speak to a future that is ready to be realized, the restoration spoken of here seems to be of a quality that also transcends the most immediate context of exile—something farther way, or still about to be.<sup>151</sup>

This should be considered in the numerous and varied antecedents that have been assigned to Yahweh's servant. The traditional Jewish interpretation (though not without exception) conceives of the servant as Israel (as is elsewhere mentioned in Isaiah and almost always named) or perhaps a particular remnant of the nation.<sup>152</sup> So also figures from the past have been revisited such as one like Moses as well as historical figures of the time.

When we seek to make such a definite designation, we do so on the grounds of assuming that the original readers would have a determined conception of who the servant was, when in fact, it may be very likely that the identity of the servant of this passage was intentionally enigmatic from the beginning. David Clines anticipates this openness in his significant study on Isaiah 52:13-53:12. He writes, "The impasses of historical-critical

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<sup>150</sup> Jim W. Adams notes that Goldingay points to this phenomenon with his notion of "hearer-involving" and his observation that a "feature of Isaiah 40-55 is a running ambiguity regarding its audience." Adams, 88.

<sup>151</sup> C. S. Lewis in his autobiography, *Surprised By Joy* describes a sense of longing in this way.

<sup>152</sup> The term "servant" is used by the author of so-called Second Isaiah in two series of texts. The first series features the people as servant, almost always Israel and clearly identified. But the author also speaks to a second in four poems, the servant passages (identified as 42:1-4; 49:1-6; 50:4-9; and 52:13-53:12).

scholarship in the face of the enigmas of the poem can function heuristically in directing our attention away from a sense of 'the poem as problem' to the poem as language-event."<sup>153</sup> Thus, it may be truest to the genre of this passage to acknowledge that the servant's identity might be intentionally enigmatic, inviting interpretation and participation.

Eugene Robert Ekblad Jr. concurs, suggesting that,

It is the vagueness of the servant addressees (52:13-15) and speakers (53:1-7) and their distinction from a servant who is differentiated and yet identified with them which permits others to join the collective servant in the servant's mission at whatever moment in history they find themselves.<sup>154</sup>

### *Interpretive Tradition*

Recent shifts in hermeneutical thinking have proposed that we should not assume that meaning can be derived solely from our historical-grammatical attempts to recover the author's intending meaning. The first range of this overlaps with intertextuality as we look for other places within the biblical text itself. The next sphere is to look for interpretive traditions proceeding from earliest to latest that show how this passage of scripture was interpreted within communities that considered it authoritative.

Until the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, our opportunity was somewhat limited, but the Qumran Community's possession of numerous copies of the book Isaiah, and in particular the Great Isaiah Scroll which contains all sixty-six chapters of Isaiah, provides an excellent opportunity to probe the question of how a believing community in the 1<sup>st</sup> century BCE conceived of this passage and weighted its significance.

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<sup>153</sup> David J. A. Clines, *I, He, We, and They: A Literary Approach to Isaiah 53*, JSOTsup, vol. 1 (Sheffield: JSOT, 1976), 59.

<sup>154</sup> Ekblad Jr., 169.

It is also interesting to note that although mainstream Judaism has by and large interpreted the servant of Isaiah 52:13-53:12 to be Israel, there are voices that read the passage more messianically. For example, the *Targum Jonathan ben Uzziel* (first century CE), a paraphrase of the prophets, recognized in Babylonia as early as the third century and generally acknowledge as ancient authority a century later, opens up the prophecy in Isaiah 52:13-53:13, “Behold, my servant, the Messiah, prospers.” Yet the treatment of the passage has striking inconsistencies, on the one hand identifying the exaltation with the Messiah and the suffering to Israel. Nevertheless, it leaves no doubt that the Messiah gave his life for the redemption of Israel.<sup>155</sup>

The Musaph service for the Day of Atonement also contains a remarkable ancient prayer:<sup>156</sup> “Messiah Our Righteous has departed from us. We shudder; for there is not one to justify us. He bears our load of transgression and the burden of our guilt and is verily pierced for our rebellion. He carries our guilt on His shoulder, to effect forgiveness of sins.” From these two instances we see that certain voices within Judaism conceived of messianic elements or priestly elements (or both) within this passage.

### C. Grammatical Analysis: Possibilities and Precedents for Isaiah 52:14

From what we know of biblical Hebrew and what we can learn from the grammatical, orthographical and linguistic style of the scrolls, what *significance* should be assigned to this variant?

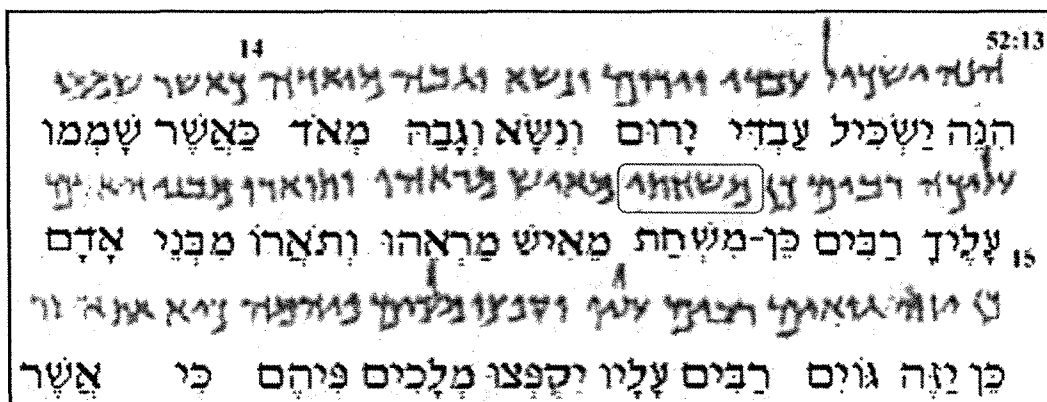
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<sup>155</sup> Frederick Alfred Aston, *The Challenge of the Ages: New Light on Isaiah 53*, 23rd ed. (New York: Research Press, 1972), 15.

<sup>156</sup> See note 22 in Aston, *The Challenge of the Ages: New Light on Isaiah 53*, 16.

### *Clarity of the Text at 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> 52:14*

Interlinear of The Great Isaiah Scroll [=1QIsa<sup>a</sup>] and the MT



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Parry and Qimron in their critical edition of 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> note two instances in the first three lines Col. XLIV (Isaiah 52:13-15a) where letters seem to have been added by another hand. The case of the additional “yod” on *מִשְׁחָתִי* is not one of them, however.<sup>157</sup> In fact, the text is clear,<sup>158</sup> receiving no additional designation in the transcription such as “probable” or “uncertain.” This alternate reading is certain. What we are to make of it, however, has generated a flurry of discussion in secondary literature, to which we now turn.

### *The Difficulty Provided By a “hapax legomena”*

What makes the two renditions of this particular reading at 52:14 especially interesting is that the text that would eventually become the standard text for the Jews, the

<sup>157</sup> See note 2a where an additional ה is thought to have been added to *עליו* to read *עליכה* as well as note 3a – originally thought to read *יז הגואים*, reading *יזה* – again with an addition ה being added. Parry and Qimron, 88-89.

<sup>158</sup> See Appendix for the clarity of this reading within *The Great Isaiah Scroll*.

MT, has a difficult reading at this point – a *hapax legomena*. What proves difficult in the case of a *hapax legomena* is that the ordinary path of the exegete of interpreting a word by its usage in other texts is not available. The appropriate methodology in treating these forms is not agreed upon. Two opposite approaches have been employed. On the one hand, the precept *lectio difficilior praeferenda est* suggests that the more difficult reading is to be preferred, relegating all attempts at leveling to be evidence of corruption. On the other hand, these difficult forms are themselves thought to be errors occurring during the course of transmission.<sup>159</sup> Concerning the problem of assigning significance to variants, Talmon writes:

It must be conceded that erroneous readings due to failings of the copyists are more numerous in the scroll than in the MT. The same holds true for the number of attempts at correcting obviously faulty readings. But it should be stressed, on the other hand, that this process of textual revision is far from being complete. Many cases of a *crux interpretum* in the Hebrew Isaiah were left to stand unchanged in 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>, as they are in the MT. Statistically speaking we may say that only a minority of difficult passages in the book were smoothed over in 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>, while the great majority were transmitted in their unsatisfactory wording. In those cases where 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> presents a better reading than the MT, it is difficult to determine whether this is due to a secondary attempt at improvement or whether it is due to the scroll's occasional preservation of an original, straightforward text. The maxim that the *lectio difficilior* should usually be given preference over a parallel smooth reading is a valid safeguard against hasty textual emendation. But it should not be considered an inviolable rule by which to decide the relative value of variants.<sup>160</sup>

### *The Enigma of A Sectarian Reading*

As noted in chapter five, Brooke suggests that 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> is one of the biblical manuscripts that we may associate more directly with the Qumran community. However, in

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<sup>159</sup> Frederick E. Greenspahn, *Hapax Legomena In Biblical Hebrew: A Study of the Phenomenon and Its Treatment since Antiquity with Special Reference to Verbal Forms*, ed. Robert Wilson, Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series (Chico: Scholars Press, 1984), 194.

<sup>160</sup> S. Talmon, *The World of Qumran from Within: Collected Studies* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1989), 133.

the same breath, he also mentions that he does not categorize the variant reading of מִשְׁחָתִי at 52:14 in 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> with those readings in which “a clear adjustment has been made to facilitate the use of a particular text in a new context.”<sup>161</sup>

Pulikottil has determined that herein lies the crux of the matter: the way in which the variant readings within the scrolls are to be approached. This is certainly the case with our variant at 52:14 in 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> as a brief survey of the scholarly discussion will show.<sup>162</sup>

### *A History of Approaching the Variant Reading of 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> 52:14*

In 1950 Barthélemy made the proposition that *The Great Isaiah Scroll* was actually more original than the MT, assigning the difference in 51:5 to later *sopherim*. He attributed the fact that the scroll contains third person suffixes at this point, rather than first person, to be evidence that the original reading was the third person suffixes, which he saw as personalizing צִדִּיק “righteousness” and יִשְׁע “salvation” and concluded that a later scribe made changes to suppress a messianic reading. Barthélemy writes,

This personalization of salvation-justice in a being distinct from Yahweh and invested with the right to judge the nations might have embarrassed the *sopherim*. Moreover, it provided the pretext of temporal messianic hopes, a pet aversion of the scribes as well as the priesthood. It was sufficient, in order to get rid of this reading, to make slight changes to the suffixes.<sup>163</sup>

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<sup>161</sup> Brooke, “Biblical Interpretation at Qumran,” 302-3.

<sup>162</sup> The following overview is heavily reliant on Pulikottil’s summary in Paulson Pulikottil, *Transmission of Biblical Texts in Qumran: The Case of the Large Isaiah Scroll 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>*, ed. Lester L. Grabbe and James H. Charlesworth, Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha Supplement Series, vol. 34 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 24-28.

<sup>163</sup> Quotation and translations by Pulikottil from D. Barthelemy, “Le Grand Rouleau d’Isaie trouve pres de la Mer Morte,” RB 57 (1950), pp. 530-49 (548). Ibid., 24.

Barthélemy's proposition stimulated quite a discussion among scholars because he was challenging the accuracy of the MT. In response, the scribes of the scroll were assigned responsibility for the changes. And so the question of interpretive concerns reflected in the scroll came to the fore.

In 1955, Chamberlain supported Barthélemy's proposition in part, that is, that the effect of the scroll readings is indeed to personalize the divine attributes of God and personalize them as messianic titles. He refrained, however, from commenting on which readings were original and which were interpretive.<sup>164</sup> In the same year, Rubinstein joined the conversation, contesting Barthélemy's proposition that the scroll was the original and that the scroll introduced interpretive readings such as 51:11. In 1964 Brownlee also concluded that the interpretive readings were introduced by the scribes of the scroll and therefore not original. Van der Kooij in *Alten Textzeugen* built on Chamberlain's suggestion. His work attempted to account for the scroll's variation from the MT in light of the community's history and ideology.<sup>165</sup>

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<sup>164</sup> Chamberlain believes that there are indications within *The Great Isaiah Scroll* that some passages of Isaiah were conceived of messianically by the community. (He assumes that the community produced the Great Isaiah scroll, taking the variations from the proto MT to be editorial by the community, rather than believing the text tradition of *The Great Isaiah Scroll* to possibly be more ancient than the proto MT.) Although he does not discuss Isaiah 52:14, he sees a more messianic reading in *The Great Isaiah Scroll* evidenced by the use of third person pronouns as opposed to first person pronouns in portions of chapter fifty-one and chapter one. He writes, "We conclude, then, that the sect was apocalyptically and messianically sensitive to a degree which caused the warping of their text of Isaiah, or at least this example of their text (for 1QIsa<sup>b</sup> displays a text almost incredibly close to the MT). This warping was in the interest of oracles which portray the Messiah as the personified qualities of God." John V. Chamberlain, "The Functions of God as Messianic Titles in the Complete Qumran Isaiah Scroll," 372.

<sup>165</sup> Pulikottil takes issue with van der Kooij's assumption that a hermeneutical technique present in some Qumran manuscripts is also present in *The Great Isaiah Scroll*. In particular, van der Kooij makes much of the proposed Qumran hermeneutic of "fulfillment



According to Pulikottil, whose 2001 publication *Transmission of Biblical Texts in Qumran: The Case of the Large Isaiah Scroll 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>* focuses on precisely this issue, this response by scholarship to Barthélemy's suggestion of explaining away variants in the scroll as merely interpretive measures on the part of the scribe, "illustrates the wrong tracks taken by earlier studies on the scroll in dealing with the interpretative readings of the scroll."<sup>166</sup> He reasons, "the fact that there is a difference between the MT and the scroll does not mean that the Qumran scribe has made these corrections, and this cannot be used automatically to discuss the interpretative contribution that the scribe may have made."<sup>167</sup>

Thus, Pulikottil summarizes the history of approaches to the textual variants of 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> and the faulty assumptions that were present concerning the points of variation from the proto Mastoretic Text. That being said, it cannot be denied that the interpretive interest of the scribe plays a crucial role in the transmission of texts. Rather, Pulikottil's point of contention is that the assumptions scholars have made in going about the process of determining the interpretive interest of the scribe have been presumptuous.

### ***Grammatical Possibilities for מִשְׁחָתִי***

Both Kutscher and Barthélemy<sup>168</sup> parse this reading as מִשְׁחָתִי, "I have anointed," with the idea that it could be understood of priestly anointing or even in a messianic sense,<sup>169</sup>

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interpretation" that is seen in the *pesharim* though he never proves that these variants are the result of such "fulfillment interpretation." Pulikottil, 26.

<sup>166</sup> Ibid.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid., 28.

<sup>168</sup> D. Barthélemy and J. T. Milik, *Discoveries In the Judaean Desert 1: Qumran Cave 1* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1955), 547.

<sup>169</sup> 137. מִשְׁחָתִי - מִשְׁחָתִי "substitution of roots," Kutscher considers Reider's proposal of and extra *yod* "far fetched." He writes, "There does not seem to be a single sure instance of

thus positing that the reading מִשְׁחַתִּי meant to some “I anointed” rather than the generally accepted “marred.” Reider, however, questions what meaning is to be derived from the reading “I anointed his appearance,” suggesting that a person rather than a person’s appearance would be anointed. He finds much more fitting the marring of one’s appearance. Instead he suggests that the additional *yod* could be a *hireq compaginis* (GKC §90 l).<sup>170</sup>

Reider criticized an essay by Brownlee which proposed a comparative *mem* (a verb followed by the object before the particle of comparison) rendering the text, “beyond the appearance of a man.” Reider also takes issue with Brownlee’s argument that the reading “anoint” makes *yazzeḥ* “sprinkle” in Isa 52:15 more intelligible. In this instance, Reider prefers BDB’s *nazah II*, “to startle” derived presumably from the Arabic *naza* “to leap, to spring” and translates *yazzeḥ* “startle” instead citing the translations of the JPSV and the RSV. Although he admits that the MT’s מִשְׁחַתִּי is problematic, he nevertheless believes that it “undoubtedly is derived from שָׁחַת ‘to mar.’” So saying, while he acknowledges that the form מִשְׁחַתִּי is incongruous, he suggests it be read either *moshat* (Part. Hophal), or else as *nishat* (Perf. or Part. Niphal) and explains the *mem* as the product of the meeting of two *nuns*. Instead he offers what he

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such a *yod* in the Scr.” He does point to Skehan who thinks this is an example of an atomistic explanation, because the copyist did not understand מִשְׁחַתִּי. He also references I. L. Seeligmann who thinks, like Brownlee, that we have here a composite reading (שָׁחַתִּי + מִשְׁחַתִּי). Eduard Yechezkel Kutscher, *The Language and Linguistic Background of the Isaiah Scroll (1QIsa<sup>a</sup>)*, ed. J. Van Der Ploeg, *Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah*, vol. VI (Leiden: Brill, 1974), 262.

<sup>170</sup> Gesenius § 90 (l-m) addresses cases in which *hireq yod* is attached to independent words in the OT. The *Hireq compaginis* is found with certain particles which are really also nouns in the *constr. st.* To the same category belong the rather numerous cases, in which a preposition is inserted between the *construct state* and its genitive, without actually abolishing the dependent relations. (Ho 10:11) Otherwise than in the *constr. st.* the *Hireq compaginis* is only found in participle forms. Gesenius, *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar*, ed. E. Kautzsch, trans. A. E. Cowley, second ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1909), 253.

feels is the more likely explanation of the form מִשְׁחָתִי: “the fondness of the copyist for vowel letters, in which he luxuriates.” Thus, Reider relegates the form מִשְׁחָתִי to either the copyist’s affinity for vowel letters or perhaps an archaic use of *yod* as in Hosea 10:11 with אֶהְבֵּתִי “to love.”<sup>171</sup> Brownlee responds to Reider’s criticism:

As regards *yazzeḥ* in Is. 52:15, it is not a question as to whether this word *must* mean “sprinkle,” though this is the constant meaning elsewhere in the Old Testament, but whether the word was so interpreted by the Essenes. The semantic nearness of “anoint” and “sprinke” would favor this interpretation. The crux of the issue is whether MSHTY is to be vocalized *masahti*. It is not characteristic practice in any of the Scrolls to invent syllables without precedent; nor moving to Prof. Reider’s next point, was it their practice to add a *yodh* in this alleged manner to participles. A mere luxuriating in vowel letters would readily have produced MYSHT (with *yodh* for *hireq*), or MWSHT (with *waw* for *qames hatuph*), if the sense “marring,” or “marred,” had been desired. Thus the easiest and most natural interpretation of the *yodh* here is to recognize that it gives us the form *masahti* (“I anointed”)!<sup>172</sup>

Kutscher also rejects Reider’s comment, that this is an extra *yod* added in the manner of Hos. 10.11 אֶהְבֵּתִי, as “far-fetched,” and proposes that this is a case where the scribe has been influenced by the idea עֶבֶד יְהוָה of “Servant of the Lord,” which is the concern of the passage. The reading is thus emphasizing an עֶבֶד who is anointed by God. Pulikottil concurs, finding this reading to be in line with the general Jewish idea in the Bible that the Servant of God is anointed. He postulates, “The reading of the MT being difficult, the scribe was probably tempted to render it in line with the popular understanding of the Servant of the Lord/God in Jewish literature.”<sup>173</sup>

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<sup>171</sup> Reider.

<sup>172</sup> Brownlee, “Certainly Masahti!,” *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 134 (1954).

<sup>173</sup> Pulikottil, 153.

## **Summary**

This survey of the scholarly discussion concerning the reading מִשְׁחָתִי at 52:14 in *The Great Isaiah Scroll* confirms that presuppositions about the text and those who copied it greatly influence the significance that is assigned to a particular variant reading. It has also shown that in considering the variant at 52:14 scholars have had in view the debated reading of “startle” or “sprinkle” in 52:15. While the case of a *hapax legomena* in the MT makes this case particularly difficult, the weight of scholarly opinion is on the side of reading the variant מִשְׁחָתִי as “I have anointed.” Where the responsibility for this reading lies, however, is disputed.

## **D. Determining the Nature of Scribal Practice at Qumran**

### ***Deciphering Scribal Values***

Kutscher in approaching the scribal practice, starts by placing himself in the setting of the scribe. He writes:

To begin with, let us put ourselves for a moment in the place of the scribe of our Scroll. Before him lay a classical Hebrew text, which had been written hundreds of years earlier, and during the intervening centuries a linguistic development of no small proportions had occurred. As a result its language frequently seemed strange to him, and at times he did not understand it properly. Hence he emended the text which was before him—sometimes aware of what he was doing, but frequently unconsciously—to bring it into closer accord with the language as he knew it. In this he was only doing what every copyist does unless his particular object is to produce and exact facsimile of the text before him.<sup>174</sup>

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<sup>174</sup> Eduard Yechezkel Kutscher, *A History of the Hebrew Language* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1982), 17-18.

It is important that we rid ourselves of certain preconceived ideas about the aims of scribal practice at Qumran. All too easily we may project the rabbinic and medieval periods' developments back onto the scribal culture at Qumran. During the rabbinic and medieval periods two significant developments occurred in the history of the biblical text: the canonization and standardization of the Hebrew Bible. In fact, it is precisely this gravitation towards uniformity and conformity that is distinctive of the rabbinic period. The plurality of sects within Judaism during this period called for a move towards uniformity to solidify the Jewish faith. What came about was the dominance of the Pharisaic ideology. Scribal practice reflected these same values of standardization and uniformity. Thus the aim of the copyist was replication of the text. Diversity was trimmed away towards the formation of a coherent whole that could be entrusted to future generations. This meticulous copying ethic was epitomized by the Massoretes.<sup>175</sup> We must be careful not to project this developed ideology backwards onto the situation at Qumran. However, the nascent forms of this ideology may have influenced the group of texts at Qumran that appear to be related to the textual tradition that would eventually produce the Masoretic Text.<sup>176</sup>

It shouldn't come as a surprise to us in light of the fact that the community of Qumran covenanters moved out into the desert in reaction to the dominant authority on spiritual matters, that the governing values of their scribal practice might be somewhat different. And,

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<sup>175</sup> Pulikottil, 34-35.

<sup>176</sup> Martin Abegg Jr., "1QIsa<sup>a</sup> and 1QIsa<sup>b</sup>: A Rematch," in *The Bible as Book: The Hebrew Bible and the Judaean Desert Discoveries*, ed. Edward D. Herbert and Emanuel Tov (London: The British Library, 2002), 227. Though 1QIsa<sup>b</sup> is close to the MT, Abegg on the basis of comparing orthographical variants and non-orthographical variants notes, "On the basis of the orthographic practice used, it is not likely that 1QIsa<sup>b</sup> is a direct descendant or ancestor of the scrolls whose offspring survives in MT. . . MT is simply another representative of the main stream for the book of Isaiah at Qumran: MT-like texts, siblings and cousins of the manuscript which survived in the collection know as the Masoretic Text."

in fact, they seem to have been. That the move towards standardization had yet to be embraced at Qumran is evidenced by the plurality of biblical texts found side-by-side as was the case with 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> and 1QIsa<sup>b</sup>. Though these two texts almost certainly originated from different communities, they were both carefully preserved alongside one another in the same jar. Talmon postulates that the Qumran community,

. . . did not subscribe to the idea that the biblical era had been terminated, nor did they accept the concomitant notion that 'biblical' literature and literary standards had been superseded or replaced by new conceptions. It appears that the very concept of 'canon of biblical writings' never took root in their world of ideas, whatever way the term 'canon' is defined.<sup>177</sup>

Therefore, unlike the scribal practice emerging in what would become mainstream rabbinical Judaism, the community at Qumran saw themselves as ongoing participants in the process of creating scripture.

### *On the Orthography of 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>, 1QIsa<sup>b</sup> and 4QIsa<sup>c</sup>*

One of the characteristics that has fascinated scholars about the scrolls is the varying styles of orthography represented among them. Most scholars now agree that the Qumran scribes wrote with a distinctive orthographical style, designated by Emanuel Tov as "Qumran Scribal Practice."<sup>178</sup> Three scrolls of the twenty-two copies of Isaiah discovered contain Isaiah 52:14-15: 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>, 1QIsa<sup>b</sup> and 4QIsa<sup>c</sup>, each evincing various orthographic tendencies. Peter Flint describes the various types of orthography represented in them as follows with these guidelines:

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<sup>177</sup> S. Talmon, "The Textual Study of the Bible: A New Outlook," *QHB*: 379.

<sup>178</sup> Emanuel Tov, *Scribal Practices and Approaches Reflected in the Texts Found in the Judean Desert*, ed. Florentino García Martínez, Peter W. Flint, and Eibert J. C. Tigchelaar, *Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah*, vol. 54 (Leiden: Brill, 2004).

Orthography described as “sparing” indicates the scribe’s use of relatively few *matres lectiones* [letters such as *waw* or *yod* used for vowels]. Orthography described as “full” indicates the scribe’s extensive use of *matres*. Orthography described as “mixed” indicates some use of *matres*.

### 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>:

Orthography is full, with liberal use of *matres lectiones*. The scribe uses the letter ו in words like לוֹא, כּוֹל, זֶאֱוֹת, and so on. לוֹ and בּוֹ are vocalized as לוֹא and בּוֹא respectively, in addition to the unusual pronominal suffix forms -כֶּה, -כֶּה, and the pronoun הוּאֵה written as הוֹאֵה.

It should be noted that there is a marked difference in the orthographic style of chapters 1-33 and that of 34-66. It has been suggested that the scroll may have been written by two or more scribes, however the more probable explanation, since the change from longer to shorter spellings is very gradual, is that the scribe became increasingly familiar and comfortable with the shorter spelling. Kutscher writes,

Therefore, it appears to me that we are dealing with one scribe here, who, as he wrote, changed from one mode of spelling to the other, common in his day. This assumption is likely to seem strange to a scholar who was brought up on the consistent spelling of England, France and Germany. It is more likely to be understood by a writer of modern Hebrew. We see daily how the systems of spelling tend to change.<sup>179</sup>

Pulikotttil and Kutscher agree that the text is the work of one single scribe who throughout the course of copying struggled to adjust to a new system of orthography.<sup>180</sup> The scroll it appears has been corrected by the original scribe as well as potentially two other

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<sup>179</sup> Kutscher, *The Language and Linguistic Background of the Isaiah Scroll (1QIsa<sup>a</sup>)*, 565.

<sup>180</sup> Pulikotttil, 19.

hands. Ulrich has proposed that one of these correctors may be the same scribe who copied 1QS and 4QSam<sup>c</sup>.<sup>181</sup> According to paleographic analysis, the manuscript was copied in about 100 BCE. While the text is mostly in agreement with the MT, it does contain variant readings beyond orthographic differences in style.<sup>182</sup>

### **1QIsa<sup>b</sup>:**

Orthography is rather sparing and close to the MT, and less full than that of 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>. Although 1QIsa<sup>b</sup> has received less attention than the Great Isaiah Scroll, it is significant because it also preserves large portions of the text of Isaiah.<sup>183</sup>

### **4QIsa<sup>c</sup> (4Q57):**

Orthography is quite “quite full” in comparison to the MT and 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>. Dated to the middle third of the first century CE, much later than 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>, which is dated as early as 150-125 BCE. Tov and others have grouped 4QIsa<sup>c</sup> with 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> based on the fact that the high percentage of orthographic variants seen in both is a characteristic of Qumran Practice.<sup>184</sup>

## ***Recognizing Distinctive Sectarian Orthography***

Scrolls that are designated sectarian also share linguistic features such as lengthened pronominal suffixes as noted concerning 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>. Emanuel Tov has classified textual

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<sup>181</sup> Ibid., 17.

<sup>182</sup> Peter Flint, "The Isaiah Scrolls from the Judean Desert," in *Writing and Reading the Scroll of Isaiah: Studies of an Interpretive Tradition*, ed. Craig A. Evans and Craig C. Broyles, Supplements to Vetus Testamentum: Formation and Interpretation of Old Testament Literature (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 481-482.

<sup>183</sup> Initially published in Barthélemy and Milik, 66-68 + pl. XII.

<sup>184</sup> Abegg Jr., "1QIsa<sup>a</sup> and 1QIsa<sup>b</sup>: A Rematch," 224.



traditions at Qumran into two groups based on their distinctive orthography: 1) those employing the particular “Qumran orthography,” which is *plene*, and those written in the defective non-Qumran orthography. On the basis of these features he has determined the first group to be texts that are local to Qumran and the second group to be texts that were brought there.<sup>185</sup>

Pulikottil finds Tov’s categorization convincing particularly since it has not been attested to elsewhere. It has even been suggested that the particular orthographical style evidenced by the “sectarian” texts was a hallmark of their texts.<sup>186</sup> In so saying, however, we must be careful to make clear that this does not mean that the text tradition itself originated at Qumran, but rather the copying of it. Talmon cautions that just because a manuscript evinces Qumran scribal characteristics, does not mean that the nature of the material itself is sectarian.<sup>187</sup> He writes:

However, we should bear in mind that many, possibly most Qumran manuscripts, such as the copies of biblical books, prayer, compilations and wisdom writings, are not marked by the Covenanters’ idiosyncratic concepts, but rather represent what may

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<sup>185</sup> Ulrich, however is not so confident in making these designations concluding, “there is generally no detectable difference in the scrolls copied outside Qumran from those possibly copied at Qumran. Moreover, the variety in the text of the Scriptures quoted during the late-first century by the New Testament authors and by the Jewish historian Josephus reflects the same character as that found in the Scriptures at Qumran.” *The Dead Sea Scrolls Bible: The Oldest Known Bible Translated for the First Time into English*, 99.

<sup>186</sup> This suggestion has been made by Rabin, ‘Historical Background’. See footnote number 18 in Pulikottil, 19.

<sup>187</sup> Eugene Ulrich shares this perspective. He writes, “But the biblical texts from Qumran, just as most of the nonbiblical, are general Jewish texts, representative of the shape of the Scriptures elsewhere. There are certain nonbiblical works which do reflect the theology of a specific group within Judaism which probably had one of its centers at Khirbet Qumran, but a number of the works are clearly a part of the general Jewish literature of the day, and it is arguable that the majority of them were probably representative of general Jewish literature.” Eugene Ulrich, *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Origins of the Bible* (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 8-9.

be considered the literary *Gemeingut* of Judaism at the height of the Second Temple period.<sup>188</sup>

Collins concurs stating:

The failure to integrate the Scrolls into the discussion of Second Temple Judaism is bound up with a wider debate as to just what the Scrolls represent. Many scholars have regarded them as the writings of a secluded sect, which might then be deemed rather atypical of the Judaism of the time. This view, however, has become harder to maintain in view of the extent and diversity of the fragmentary remains from Qumran Cave 4, which have only recently come into public view.<sup>189</sup>

Of special interest for the present study is that 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> displays this distinctive “Qumran orthography,” making it more than likely that the text was copied at Qumran. What we are to make of this “Qumran orthography” has yet to be determined. 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> is not the only scroll among the Qumran finds that displays this particular orthographic feature. All texts usually designated as “sectarian” (1QS, the *pesharim*, 11QT, 1QM, 4Qfl etc.) and some biblical scrolls also employ this orthographic system (e.g. 1QDeut<sup>a</sup>, 2QJer, 4QDeut<sup>k</sup>, 4QSam<sup>c</sup>, 4QIsa<sup>c</sup>, 4QPs<sup>e,n,s</sup>, 4QLam<sup>a</sup>).

#### **D. Towards Determining a Relationship between the Texts**

##### ***Old Categories Reconsidered***

The Dead Sea Scrolls have filled in a number of missing blanks in the field of biblical scholarship. In some cases the treasured fragments have confirmed long held hypotheses, in

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<sup>188</sup> Shemaryahu Talmon, "The Covenanters' Calendar in Context," in *The Bible and the Dead Sea Scrolls: The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Qumran Community*, ed. J H. Charlesworth, The Second Princeton Symposium on Judaism and Christian Origins (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2006), 26.

<sup>189</sup> Collins, *The Scepter and the Star: The Messiahs of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Other Ancient Literature*, 5.

others they have caused us to go back and rethink our conclusions altogether. This has proven especially true concerning our understanding of the origin and transmission of the biblical text. The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls at Qumran, at the very least, has caused scholars to reevaluate the relationship of ancient texts to one another. In particular, the scrolls have shown that at least two versions of the biblical text were contemporaries of one another during the Second Temple Period, thereby disproving the theory that all texts that differ from the preferred Proto-Masoretic Text are inferior, or less original.

What is not clear are the reasons that one text was preferred by rabbinic circles, while the other was adopted as authoritative by the Samaritans.<sup>190</sup> It is particularly interesting that texts found at Qumran, in some instances even in the same cave, show evidence of different origins. This raises questions about how the community at Qumran held their scriptures. Though both were preserved, was one text tradition considered authoritative and the other supplemental? Can we infer from the fact that both were preserved that the community at Qumran did not feel the same need to suppress one text to insure the dominance and proliferation of the other?

Before the modern discovery of the scrolls in 1947 and thereafter, the primary sources concerning the text of the Hebrew Bible came from three main sources: the Masoretic Text (MT), the Samaritan Pentateuch (SP), and the Septuagint (LXX). The Targum, Peshitta, and

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<sup>190</sup> The discovery of the scrolls at Qumran has shed new light on the role of the Samaritan Pentateuch and affirmed the existence of a pre-Samaritan text. Of particular significance is the fact that the pre-Samaritan form of the biblical text represented in these scrolls dates back to the second century BCE or earlier, but does not include the “sectarian readings” that were later inserted into the Samaritan Pentateuch for the purpose of validating the distinctive views of the Samaritan community. 4QpaleoExod<sup>m</sup>, 4QExod-Lev<sup>f</sup>, and 4QNum<sup>b</sup> each contain readings that follow the textual form of the Samaritan Pentateuch. Thus, the scrolls would seem to indicate that while the “sectarian readings” were insertions, other variations reflect readings of original texts and should not be so easily dismissed.

Vulgate were also available, but they are more or less literal translations of texts close to the MT, and therefore did not offer up much in the way of textual analysis that shed light on preferable early readings relative to the MT. The Old Latin, however, preserves readings from an early form of the LXX: the OG, which preserves early Greek readings that were lost when the LXX was “corrected” toward the MT on the assumption that the MT was the “original” Hebrew. Ulrich points out that the “prevailing mentality was that of an ‘*Urtext*,’ a single original Hebrew text that no longer existed in its purity, but with it witnesses eventually emerging in the MT, the SP, and the LXX in discoverably modified ways.”<sup>191</sup>

The discovery of the two hundred biblical manuscripts in the Judean Desert has caused scholarship to reconsider this approach to the biblical text and has brought to the fore faulty assumptions in this traditional approach to the ancient text. Ulrich points out that “epistemologically, we assess new data according to already-established concepts and categories that have been formed from previous knowledge. Thus the evidence offered by the scrolls was at first classified according to the old categories.”<sup>192</sup>

As many more biblical manuscripts came to light, however, two phenomena continued to appear: On the one hand, many texts showed intriguing variants, documenting a certain pluriformity in the text in antiquity, while on the other hand many other texts showed close affinity with the corresponding books of the MT. In fact, texts in general agreement

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<sup>191</sup> Eugene Ulrich, “The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Hebrew Scriptural Texts,” in *The Bible and the Dead Sea Scroll: Scripture and the Scrolls*, ed. J H. Charlesworth (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2006), 77.

<sup>192</sup> *The Dead Sea Scrolls Bible: The Oldest Known Bible Translated for the First Time into English*, 79.

with the MT were originally classified by Tov to “comprise some 60 percent of the Qumran biblical texts” though that number was subsequently reduced to 35 percent.<sup>193</sup>

As scholarship in Qumran studies has progressed, however, it has become clear that the traditional assumptions<sup>194</sup> about the relationships of the text must be reconsidered. Before the turn of the era we have no evidence of any text type being compared to the “proto-MT” and the “proto-MT” being judged preferable. Rather it would seem that the text tradition that the rabbis determined to be the standard Hebrew text was arrived at “with apparently no specifically text-critical judgment.” In many cases the majority text was preserved, while in other cases what appear to be clearly inferior readings were preserved and rendered authoritative and meticulously copied thereafter.<sup>195</sup>

Thus, the scholarly understanding of how to navigate the relationship between the scriptural texts at Qumran has had to evolve over the last fifteen years since Emanuel Tov designated which textual traditions he saw the scriptural manuscripts from Qumran to be aligned with. This didactic approach enforces the MT – and so we have an anachronism. In 2002 Martin Abegg Jr. quoted Tov’s comments on his current understanding of the relationship of the biblical texts, “. . . the more I consult the Qumran biblical manuscripts and evidence of the Greek LXX in my work, the less I feel drawn to consider MT the central text.”<sup>196</sup> Abegg notes that his reflections are anticipated by earlier sentiments of S. Talmon

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<sup>193</sup> Ulrich references Emanuel Tov’s work, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1992), for the original percentage and the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of the same work for the revised percentage (2001), 115. Ibid., 80.

<sup>194</sup> Ulrich argues that this is not the best way to categorize the texts because of the fact that it assumes that the MT, the SP, and the LXX are identifiable “text-types” to which we may compare other texts and accordingly classify them.

<sup>195</sup> *The Dead Sea Scrolls Bible: The Oldest Known Bible Translated for the First Time into English*, 81.

<sup>196</sup> Abegg Jr., “1QIsa<sup>a</sup> and 1QIsa<sup>b</sup>: A Rematch,” 221.

who in 1971 wrote, “[I]n the Qumran material coalesce the phase of creative authoring of biblical literature with the ancillary phase of text transmission . . . in ancient Hebrew literature no hard and fast lines can be drawn between authors’ conventions of style and tradents’ and copyists’ rule of reproduction and transmission.”<sup>197</sup>

### *Assigning a Point of Variance*

In seeking to determine whether or not a variant reading is an error by the scribe, the introduction of interpretive measures, or in fact a careful reproduction of the scribe’s *Vorlage*, certain phenomena should be observed in the SP and LXX alongside our examination of the Isaiah scrolls. It has long been thought that the MT represented the authoritative textual tradition and variant readings in the SP and LXX deviant. However, it is now recognized that not all of what were thought to be deviant readings in the SP are in fact alterations of the text in order to present a certain ideology. To be sure, some do in fact seem to belong to this category. For instance the reading of the perfect בחר “choose” instead of יבחר in the phrase יהוה המקים “the place which the Lord will choose” in its nineteen occurrences in Deuteronomy, promoting the Samaritan belief that Shechem was the place that God had chosen for centralized worship (as opposed to Jerusalem). In Deuteronomy 11:30 the phrase מול שכם is added. So also the SP designates Mount Gerizim as the place to build a sanctuary in Exodus 20:17.<sup>198</sup> In the case of the Great Isaiah Scroll, we must exercise caution in making the assumption that “variant” or rather “alternate” readings are merely evidence of scribal error or a sectarian conflation. On the other hand, although in

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<sup>197</sup> Abegg quoting Shemaryahu Talmon in “The Textual Study of the Bible—A New Outlook”, in QHBT, pp. 380-81.

<sup>198</sup> Pulikottil, 37.

a number of cases the scroll and LXX agree against the MT,<sup>199</sup> this does not mean that the LXX and 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> had similar *Vorlagen*.<sup>200</sup>

Pulikotill believes that the contribution of the scribe to the text is best ascertained by carefully examining the unique readings of the scroll, however, he notes that trying to determine a unique reading by consideration of its disagreements with the MT alone is not enough. Readings (as noted above) where 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> disagrees with the MT, but is supported by the LXX must also be ruled out – since their representation in another text means they in all probability existed in the *Vorlage* of the LXX. Flint also believes that such common readings between 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> and the LXX, though not an indication of a connection between the two, may evince that they did exist in the *Vorlage* of the translator of the LXX. He writes,

But the fact that some of the readings I shall propose are supported by 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> or 4QIs<sup>c</sup> indicates that they did actually exist in ancient Hebrew scrolls and are not merely conjecture of modern scholarship. This does not imply that LXX Isaiah is dependent up these particular scrolls, but indicates that texts slightly different from the MT were to be found in antiquity . . .<sup>201</sup>

Thus readings that are considered “unique” to the Isaiah scroll are those that are represented neither in the MT nor the LXX. There are cases where 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> disagrees with the MT and the reading of the LXX cannot be determined to necessarily support one over the other. This occurrence is of particular interest in our study of 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> 52:14, as the LXX’s

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<sup>199</sup> Pulikotill agrees along with Kutscher that, “it is possible to postulate that 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> (or its predecessors) is descended from a text identical (or at least very similar) to that of the Masoretic Text, but by no means can we assume the converse – i.e. that the Masoretic Text is descended from a text of the type of 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>. Kutscher, *The Language and Linguistic Background of the Isaiah Scroll (1QIsa<sup>a</sup>)*, 3.

<sup>200</sup> Albright also writes, “The complete Isaiah scroll (1QIsa), now in Israel, is written in a text which belongs to the proto-Masoretic type . . .” For more on Albright’s understanding of the relationship of 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> and the MT see W.F. Albright, “New light on Early Recensions of the Hebrew Bible,” in QHBT, pp. 140-46 (142).

<sup>201</sup> See P.W. Flint, ‘The Septuagint Version of Isaiah 23:1-14 and the Massoretic Text’, *BIOSCS* 21 (1988), pp. 35-54 (40).

rendering of the text shares elements with both the scroll and the MT, agreeing with the scroll in translating a verbal idea at 52:14, but siding with the MT in the actual idea expressed.<sup>202</sup> However in this instance, the fact that 4QIsa<sup>c</sup>, which is also considered to evidence a Qumran scribal practice follows the MT, may make the likelihood of a unique scribal contribution at 52:14 more probable. However, as Pulikottil points out, it should also be considered that even readings that are considered “unique” by the above criteria could very well have been unique readings in the *Vorlage* that the scribe was copying from and therefore should not necessarily be assumed to be considered interpretive moves by the scribe.<sup>203</sup> However, he also brings up the point that in this situation whom the interpretive license was taken by cannot be investigated.

On the basis of Kutscher’s linguistic analysis, the vocabulary of the scroll is very late and its language very much that of Jerusalem, however since the scroll was written by a scribe who probably naturally updated the language and lexical aspects of this text,<sup>204</sup> this also does not prove to be an adequate indicator that variants within the scroll should be attributed to scribal invention. So also Pulikottil points out that the linguistic tendencies of the scroll do not account for “the fact that there is no other manuscript of Isaiah that contains most of the unique readings of the scroll.”<sup>205</sup> The variant list for 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> in the forthcoming DJD critical edition reads at 52:14:

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<sup>202</sup> The Septuagint, interesting enough, reads ἁδοξήσει a verb 3<sup>rd</sup> sing fut act indic “it/he shall hold in low esteem” translated by Brenton as “so shall thy face *be without glory*.” So, while the Septuagint uses a verb which would initially seem to support the 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> reading, the verb it chooses actually mirrors the reading of the MT and 1QIsa<sup>b</sup> more closely in meaning.

<sup>203</sup> Pulikottil, 40.

<sup>204</sup> Ibid.

<sup>205</sup> Ibid.



52:14 (2)      1QIsa<sup>a</sup> ] מִשְׁחַתִּי 1QIsa<sup>b</sup> 20

showing that 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> reads מִשְׁחַתִּי while 1QIsa<sup>b</sup> and the MT read מִשְׁחַת. No mention is made of the LXX reading [ἀδοξήσει] nor 4QIsa<sup>c</sup> (which follows the MT and 1QIsa<sup>b</sup> at this point, but whose scribal character indicates Qumran scribal practice).<sup>206</sup>

### *Establishing a Quorum*

It is now also recognized that not all of the deviations of the LXX from the MT can be relegated to idiosyncrasies of the translator, and may in fact have been present in the Hebrew text that was copied. Pulikottil underscores J. Ziegler's proposition that some readings that are common to the LXX and 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> must have come from the same Hebrew tradition.<sup>207</sup> Thus making the point again that we should be careful of prejudice, jumping to the assumption that a different reading is merely sloppy scribal practice. For example, Peter Flint points out the call of Isaiah in Isaiah 40:6-8 where 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> and the LXX are in agreement on a shorter version of the text over the MT's longer text. He writes,

It may be argued that the scribe's eye skipped from צִיץ נָבֵל צִיץ, 'The grass withers, the flowers fade' in verse 7 to the same colon in verse 8, resulting in the loss of the intervening text. However, it is far more likely that 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> copied a text with the earlier, shorter form since it makes better sense than the longer (expansionistic?) form found in the Masoretic Text, towards which the later scribe of 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> corrected the manuscript. This likelihood is enhanced by the fact that the Septuagint has the identical short form, which indicates that for verses 7-8 the Greek translator had before him a Hebrew text like 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>, and not one like the Masoretic Text.<sup>208</sup>

Such examples call for caution in assigning alternate readings in 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> to the category of "deviant" or "variant" readings. We must remain open to the possibility that in

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<sup>206</sup> The Vulgate and the Targum are also not referenced.

<sup>207</sup> Pulikottil, 37.

<sup>208</sup> Flint, "The Book of Isaiah in the Dead Sea Scrolls," 237-238.

some cases, the text of the Great Isaiah Scroll may represent a textual tradition that is more ancient than that of the MT. Lim points out this is often overlooked because of conventional ways of approaching the texts:

It is no longer possible to posit the proto-MT as the standard from which all others varied. In the context of textual diversity, the proto-MT text is one text type, albeit an important and well-attested witness, among many. However, the description of a reading as “a variant” is for heuristic purposes only. It is meant to describe formally the relationship of one reading to an arbitrary textual standard, which by convention is the MT, Septuagint, or Samaritan Pentateuch. There is no good reason why a reading from the Isaiah pesharim should not be characterized as a variant vis-à-vis the Great Isaiah Scroll, but this is not done by convention.<sup>209</sup>

Thus, in approaching the variant reading that occurs at Isaiah 52:14, it is helpful to recognize the complex relationship between the texts at this time in Judaism along with the fact that on several occasions the Great Isaiah Scroll has actually produced readings that have proven to be superior to the MT. In trying to discern the origin of a variant, the former understanding of the relationships between the ancient texts must be set aside. Brooke suggests that in light of the variety of the evidence itself, going forward, Qumran studies might do best by giving up the pursuit of the original text. He writes:

By the suitable appreciation of the variety of the evidence itself . . . in many cases it is simply no longer appropriate to embark on the quest of the original form of the text, and especially no longer apt to consider the MT as representing some form of Ur-text. Attention to the individual manuscripts and their scribes implies that the starting point of the modern discussion of the text should be the artefactual evidence itself.<sup>210</sup>

With all of this in mind, we very carefully ask the question of how the community at Qumran held their scriptures. It is widely assumed that one of the dominant issues for the

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<sup>209</sup> Timothy H. Lim, "The Qumran Scrolls, Multilingualism, and Bilical Interpretation," in *Religion in the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. John J. Collins and Robert A. Kugler (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 66.

<sup>210</sup> George J. Brooke, "The Qumran Scrolls and the Demise of the Distinction between Higher and Lower Criticism," in *New Directions in Qumran Studies*, ed. Jonathan G. Cambell, William John Lyons, and Lloyd K. Pietersen, Library of Second Temple Studies (London: T&T Clark, 2005), 33.

community at Qumran, a scribal community, was to determine which biblical text among the texts in their possession was to be considered authoritative.<sup>211</sup> We perhaps need to rethink what is meant by “authoritative.” In all probability, this idea was comprehended differently for the community that believed they stood on the edge of the eschaton. This raises the question of whether or not in the interest of this present study it is necessary that we prove that 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> was authoritative for the community, or whether we should be satisfied that it continued to exist – without harmonization with the MT. Perhaps our inquiry into further questions will help us answer this one.

#### **E. Interpretive Framework: Examining Quotations and Allusions**

Next we come to the question of how the Qumran community interpreted scripture, and specifically, the book of Isaiah. The Qumran covenanters thought of themselves as participating in the process of revelation itself – imitating the divine initiative.<sup>212</sup> Accordingly, as Brooke surmises, “The Qumran community considered that the prophecies, promises, and blessings were being completed in their own experiences, and as such, those experiences form a major part of the starting point for the interpretation of the texts.”<sup>213</sup>

The most logical place to start is in the scripture quotations of the *pesharim*. Although our particular passage, Isaiah 52:14, is not commentated on, we can still glean much of the interpretive hermeneutic that was applied to the prophecies of Isaiah in order to inform our understanding of how the community might have approached this particular passage.

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<sup>211</sup> George Brooke writes, “The majority of compositions from the Qumran caves are concerned one way or another with the transmission of scriptural traditions. The dominant issue is the transmission and interpretation of authoritative Scriptures. Brooke, *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the New Testament*, xvii.

<sup>212</sup> Ibid., 314.

<sup>213</sup> Brooke, “Biblical Interpretation at Qumran,” 312.

Secondly, we will consider the sectarian literature, since most scholars agree that these texts were not imported by the community, but had their genesis at Qumran. These documents are the most informative on what values were held dear by the community and which texts resonated with them. Thus, upon careful study of them, we might see connections through textual allusions that provide an idea of what filters they would have used in determining meaning and significance.

This brings up an important issue in the case of the alternate reading *מהשתי* in 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> 52:14: We do not know if this “variant” reading was preserved because of its significance, or if it was not necessarily “preserved,” but not “corrected” for precisely the opposite reason—its insignificance.

### ***The Pesharim: Quotations in 4Q161-4Q165***

Although none of the five *pesharim* on Isaiah commentate on Isaiah 52:14 specifically, they provide the most appropriate starting point in determining the interpretive tendencies of the community at Qumran towards Isaiah’s prophecies. In particular by examining them, we can see that the community read the words of Isaiah as prophetically speaking to their own time, which they considered to be the dawn of the eschatological age. Further we might inquire as to whether or not in the interpretations preserved in the *pesharim* show a tendency towards kingly, priestly, or otherwise messianic figures. Such tendencies might show precedent for a future messianic interpretation of our passage as well. And, although preoccupation with such themes elsewhere in Isaiah does not necessarily prescribe these same tendencies for other passages, it may show that such an interpretation would not be unlikely or uncharacteristic. A brief survey of the texts will serve as a starting point.

#### 4QpIsa<sup>a</sup> (4Q161):

Though much of the commentary has been mutilated of the ten preserved fragments, Isaiah 10:22-11:5 is interpreted eschatologically “as regard to the end of days” frags. 2-6, col. 2.26). The battle against the Kittim is envisioned, the leader of which is “the Prince of the Congregation” who is mentioned in frags. 2-6, col. 2.19 and elsewhere in the Qumran scrolls. According to Lim, he seems to have been identified messianically with “[the scion of] David” (frags. 7-10, col. 3.22). There is also a reference to “one of the priests of repute” (frags. 7-10, col. 3.29). Lim further notes the similarities of this pesher with *Sefer Ha-Milhamah* (4Q285), better known by the misleading title as ‘the slain messiah’ text, and the *Rule of the Congregation* (1QSa), “both in the way that they have used Isaiah 10-11 as a proof text and also the figures who appear in their exposition.”<sup>214</sup>

4Q161 Co. 1 (Frag 2-6) reads, “only a remnant would return; for] des[truction is as]sured, righ[teous judgement] is out to overflow,” [this refers to] [. . . to de]struction in the da[y of slaugh]ter, and many shall per[ish . . .]” It is apparent from this fragment that the community at Qumran did envision a future that would involve suffering: a day of slaughter (though reconstructed). The verses that follow are taken to be talking about the “Leader of the Nation,” a title in the scrolls which is thought to reference the Davidic messiah.<sup>215</sup>

Although it is clear from the commentary that suffering is envisioned in the future, it is also clear that the “Leader of the Nation,” thought to be a reference to the Davidic Messiah, is not

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<sup>214</sup> Timothy H. Lim, *Pesharim*, Companion to the Qumran Scrolls, vol. 3 (London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 28.

<sup>215</sup> *The Dead Sea Scrolls: A New Translation*, 236.

of the Lord. Therefore, the suffering being envisioned may not have been envisioned as touching the community of Qumran at all, and only Jerusalem.

#### **4QpIsa<sup>c</sup> (4Q163):**

Dated palaeographically to c. 100 BCE, this is the oldest copy of the pesharim. Also distinctive is that it is written on papyrus. Though the reconstruction of the columns is tentative, it presumably quotes from 22 chapters on Isaiah (chs. 8-30). In its original form, this peshar was likely very long. Interestingly, it also contains quotations from other biblical texts, possibly a passage from Jeremiah (frag. 1.4), Zech 11:11 (frag. 21.7), and possibly Hos. 6:9a (frag. 23, col. 2.14).

*4Q163*, although extremely fragmentary – fifty-seven pieces—portions of Isaiah 5:29-30 are quoted with some intermittent interpretation. It is clear that the commentator envisions these words of Isaiah as futuristic, “This passage is for the Last [Days . . .].” In frag. 21 the “The Teacher of [Righteousness . . .]” is mentioned, but the immediate context is not preserved. Frag. 23 col. 2 also speaks to judgment by the Lord and is interpreted by the commentator as: “The meaning of this passage is for the Last Days and refers to the company of Flattery-S[EEKERS] who are in Jerusalem.” Thus, here again, Isaiah’s words are taken in the context of the future judgment. The recipients are once again those in power in Jerusalem. There is a supralinear quotation of Hosea 6:9 (interpreting Isaiah 30:15-18). What is interesting is that the link between Hosea 6:9 and Isaiah 30:18 seems to be the common use of חָשַׁב “wait.” So also there is a quotation from Zechariah 11:1-14 (probably interpreting the end of Isaiah 29). They are both oracles concerning Lebanon. In other words, the

commentator seemed to have made connections between texts based on common themes and phrases.

#### **4QpIsa<sup>d</sup> (4Q164):**

This fourth pesher also evinces eschatological tendencies, commenting on the post-exilic passage of Isaiah 54:11-12 concerning the new Jerusalem. This pesher, unlike the others, quotes less scripture in proportion to commentary.

4Q164 is particularly interesting for this study because it speaks to the conception of the *Yahad* being founded on the priests: "This passage means] [th]at they founded the party of the *Yahad* on the priests." It would seem that the community had a self-conception of functioning as a sort of priesthood. However, their conception of the priesthood apart from the temple seems to have to do with pronouncing judgment. George Brooke notes that similar language is used in 1QS 8:1 (twelve men and three priests), 4Q159 2-4 3-4 (twelve: ten men and two priests), 1QM 2:1-3 (twelve priests, twelve Levites, twelve heads of tribes), and 11QT<sup>a</sup> 57:11-13 (twelve priest, twelve Levites, twelve princes).<sup>217</sup> The phrase עֲדָתָא in line 3 may also be significant as it is applied as an epithet for the Teacher of Righteousness in 1QpHab 9:9-12 and so Baumgarten suggests, "it seems preferable to take it in the singular as a 'messianic' title for the Elect One, for which we have parallels in 1 Enoch and the NT."<sup>218</sup>

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<sup>217</sup> George J. Brooke, "Isaiah in the Pesharim and Other Qumran Texts," in *Writing and Reading the Scroll of Isaiah: Studies of an Interpretive Tradition*, ed. Craig Broyles and Craig A. Evans, Supplements to Vestus Testamentum (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 629.

<sup>218</sup> Brooke quotes J. M. Baumgarten, *Studies in Qumran Law*, SJLA, vol. 24 (Leiden: Brill, 1977), 147-48. The New Testament references are Luke 23:35 and John 1:34 in  $\aleph^*$  and a few other manuscripts.

### 4QpIsa<sup>e</sup> (4Q165):

Five of the eleven fragments as they are presented in DJD 5, pl. IX quote from Isaiah, though they appear to be out of order. Frags 1-2 quote from Isaiah 40:11-12; frag. 3 from Isaiah 14:19; frag. 4 from Isaiah 15:4-5; frag. 5 from Isaiah 21:10-15; frag. 6 from Isaiah 32:5 and 32:6-7; and frag. 11 from Isaiah 11:11-12a. Commentary is minimal and sparsely preserved.

*4Q165 frags. 1-2* may be significant for its mention of the “Teacher of Righteousness” who is the one of whom Isaiah says, “Like a shepherd he will graze his flock” (40:11). He is also said to have revealed the “Law of righteousness.”<sup>219</sup> Since the mention of the Teacher of Righteousness is dependent on a reconstruction of the text, however, this reference is not certain.

### *Other Texts that may Contain Quotations from Isaiah*

**3Q4** also quotes a few lines from Isaiah chapter one, but is very fragmentary and no commentary is preserved. The restoration in line 6 of [י] הַמְשַׁפֵּן suggests that this interpretation also had an eschatological bent.<sup>220</sup> Noteworthy for our purposes is that in quoting Isaiah 1:1, the pesher spells the name of the prophet יְשַׁעְיָה over against the MT’s יִשְׁעָהוּ. 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> usually has יְשַׁעְיָה, but at 1:1 and 38:21 has יִשְׁעָהוּ. Thus in this single fragment the usual spelling of the prophet’s name in 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> is employed. But, ironically, in the particular passage being quoted (1:1), 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> goes with the normative spelling of the MT,

<sup>219</sup> *The Dead Sea Scrolls: A New Translation*, 239-241.

<sup>220</sup> Brooke, “Isaiah in the Pesharim and Other Qumran Texts,” 620.



which it does at only one other point in the scroll (38:21).<sup>221</sup> Therefore, in this case our findings are inconclusive. The text tradition that the scriptural quotation was drawn from may have been neither proto MT nor 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>.

**4Q176**, an anthology of scripture, frags. 1-11 all contain quotes from the words of Isaiah. It seems in this case that the words of comfort spoke for themselves as little to no commentary is given.

**4Q174** 1, 21, 2 iii 14-16 contains an interpretation about Psalm 1:1: “the real interpretation of the matter concerns those who turn aside from the way of **מַדְרֵךְ** [sinners concerning] whom it is written in the book of Isaiah the prophet for the latter days, ‘And it will be that as with a strong [hand he will cause us to turn away from walking in the way of **בְּדֵרֶךְ**] his people’”<sup>222</sup> The point of interest being that the two texts of Isaiah 8:11 and Psalm 1:1 are linked on the basis of their analogical use of **דֶּרֶךְ**.

### *Isaiah in the Sectarian Scrolls at Qumran: Allusions*

The words of Isaiah are also alluded to in several poetic texts found at Qumran. Though not direct quotations, a connection through the distinct imagery of the language is almost certain. The case of 1QH 12 is particularly relevant for consideration for this study. Here in an individual lament, language from Isaiah 42:1-6 and Isaiah 52:13-53:12 (both

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<sup>221</sup> See foot note 47. Ibid.

<sup>222</sup> Translation by George Brooke, *Exegesis at Qumran*, 92-93.

servant passages in Isaiah) is used extensively, drawing from the text of Isaiah not only thematically, but also structurally.<sup>223</sup>

On this point, Brooke writes:

Just as some of the opening lines appear modeled especially on Isa 42:6, so the initial lament, “they do not esteem me,” recalls Isa 53:3 (ולא חבשנהו) at 1QH 12:8 (יחשבוני ולא), a motif which is repeated in the opening of the statement of hope in 1QH 12:22-23 (כול בוזי כיא לא יחשבוני) which also uses a form of בזה (cf. Isa 53:3). The poet views himself as despised and of no esteem like the servant figure.<sup>224</sup>

The “Thanksgiving Hymns” (1QH<sup>a</sup>) also known as the *Hodayot* have been recognized by most scholars as containing two types of hymns: those written by the community, the Community Hymns, and those written by the teacher referred to as the Teacher Hymns. The Teacher Hymns are captured in cols. X to XVI or XVII and speak of an individual undergoing suffering, rejection and exile. It should be noted, however, that this designation is not certain.

The most compelling similarity between the hymn of exaltation and the Fourth Servant Song comes in the shared language of suffering and humiliation. Both compositions make use of the verbal stem (*bzh*) “despised.” So also both used the paired verbs (*ns’*, *sbl*) to describe their acceptance of that suffering. The question is whether the Teacher of Righteous in the glorification hymn drew from the language and imagery of the Fourth Servant Song.

Blenkinsopp makes the following observations:

1. The glorification claimed by the writer (*kabod*, “glory,” occurs four times in our text) recalls the assurance that the Servant will be “highly honored, raised up, and greatly exalted” (Isaiah 52:13)
2. The theme of the subordination of kings and rulers is common to both the last of the Servant passages (52:15) and the exaltation text (line 5-6).

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<sup>223</sup> Brooke, “Isaiah in the Pesharim and Other Qumran Texts,” 615.

<sup>224</sup> Ibid., 615-616.

3. The Isaianic Servant is taught by God and fulfils his mission by teaching (Isa 53:11a; cf. 49:2; 50:4), and the exalted one of the Qumran text boasts of his incomparable gift as a teacher (lines 9-10).

He concludes that while there is “no suggestion that contempt and lack of esteem, and the catalogue of miseries in XVI 27-36, were thought to have redemptive value for others, there are solid grounds for the conclusion that the profile of the Isaianic Servant formed a significant aspect of the self-image of the author of the hymns.”<sup>225</sup> Yet, while there is not the *explicit* element of “self-sacrificing atoning quality” the text is also lacunous. Line 9 can be reconstructed to read “Who bears all afflictions like me? And who bears the burden of evil to compare with me?” In Blenkinsopp’s assessment this reconstruction renders “as sense close to the language in which the atoning function of the Isaianic Servant is expressed.”<sup>226</sup>

It would also seem that the Teacher of Righteousness saw connections between the some of the language and imagery of the Servant Songs. In some tongue and cheek, Blenkinsopp notes the following:

In appealing to Servant passages other than Isa 52:13-53:12, I am aware that whoever wrote the exaltation text was not familiar with historical-critical work on the book of Isaiah and had not read Bernhard Duhn’s commentary.<sup>227</sup> But the practice of reading a text like Isaiah as an integrated whole with interconnected parts, and the demonstrated exegetical skill in picking out and exploiting linguistic similarities demonstrated by Qumran authors, would have sharpened his eye to note the close connections between Servant passages with distinctive individual traits.<sup>228</sup>

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<sup>225</sup> Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Opening the Sealed Book: Interpretations of Isaiah in Late Antiquity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 269-271. John J. Collins assesses the evidence in detail in “Teacher and Servant,” *RHPR* 80 (2000): 37-50.

<sup>226</sup> *Ibid.*, 279.

<sup>227</sup> In 1892 Bernard Duhn suggested that actually only chapters 40-55 belonged to Deutero-Isaiah and the remaining chapters 56-66 to yet another author. Thus he proposed a tripartite Isaiah: Proto/First Isaiah 1-39, Deutero-/Second Isaiah 40-55, and Trito-/Third Isaiah. Blenkinsopp, “The Servant and the Servants in Isaiah and the Formation of the Book,” 155.

<sup>228</sup> Blenkinsopp, *Opening the Sealed Book: Interpretations of Isaiah in Late Antiquity*, 278-79.

Thus it would seem from such connections that although the Teacher of Righteousness makes no direct quotations, he did nevertheless find comfort in the experience of the Servant of the Lord as depicted in the Fourth Servant Song as well as hope of future glorification. In doing so, he drew from various portions of Isaiah, including more than one Servant Song and made connections and associations on the basis of shared language and imagery. This is especially interesting considering that the author of the *Thanksgiving Hymns*, who identified with the servant of Isaiah 53, was in possession of 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>. Wise has shown that the *Thanksgiving Hymns* are dependant on both the Masoretic Text as well as 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>. Whether the Teacher read the text this way is an open question. Wise argues that the author of the Teacher Hymns depends on 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> at several points, but admits that the hymnist did not always follow this text of Isaiah and does not cite this specific passage as an instance where dependence on 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> can be shown. However, he does see a broad correspondence between the Teacher's ideas and the *Great Isaiah Scroll*, citing Isaiah 57:17 and Isaiah 40:13-14 as two of at least ten instances where it can be shown that the Teacher quoted 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> as opposed to another copy of Isaiah.<sup>229</sup>

### 11Q13 [=11QMelch]

It is also clear from 11Q13 that the community at Qumran interpreted Isaiah 61 eschatologically and, it could be argued, messianically. There is also a peshier-like interpretation of Isaiah 52:7 in 11Q13 which identifies the herald who brings good tidings with the one anointed with the spirit in 61:1. Blenkinsopp comments, "The prophetic-authorial voice heard in Isa 61:1-4 has enough in common with the Servant passages,

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<sup>229</sup> Wise, 94. Readings common to the *Thanksgiving Hymns* and 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> are listed by Wise on pages 291-92.

especially 42:14, to justify putting it in the same category, as indeed several commentators in the modern period have done.”<sup>230</sup> So also, 4Q521 uses these same words of Isaiah to speak to the age of the messiah, as discussed in chapter three.

#### **4Q541 - A Testament of Levi?**

4Q541, an Aramaic composition, probably a Testament of Levi, gives particular exhortation as to how the priesthood is to be viewed. Part of the composition centers on the past and part of it looks towards the future, envisioning a future priest who though faithful, undergoes persecution. It reads, “he will atone for all of the sons of his generation . . . they will utter many words against him and an abundance of lies” (4Q541 9 I 1, 5-6). There appears to be several allusions to the text of Isaiah. Frag 6 3 contains the Hebraism *מכאבונה* which seems to be borrowed from Isaiah 53:3 *מכאבונה* and 4 *ומכאבינו*, much of frag. 9 3-5 seems to be a development of Isa 60:2-3, and frag. 24 6 “you will see . . . light” corresponds with Isaiah 53:11 in 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> and 1QIsa<sup>b</sup>. Brooke concludes, “When all the allusions to Isaiah in 4Q541 are collected together, it seems as if there is a deliberate attempt to model the persecuted priest on the Isaianic servant figure.”<sup>231</sup>

Thus we see that the Community at Qumran interpreted the words of Isaiah into their immediate context, that is: eschatologically and sometimes messianically. We also see that in

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<sup>230</sup> Blenkinsopp, *Opening the Sealed Book: Interpretations of Isaiah in Late Antiquity*, 269.

<sup>231</sup> Allusions to Isaiah have been catalogued in G. J. Brooke, “4Qtestament of Levi (?) and the Messianic Servant High Priest,” in M. C. de Boer (ed.) *From Jesus to John: Essays on Jesus and New Testament Christology in Honor of Marinus de Jonge* (JSNTSup 84; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993) 83-100.

interpreting the text, they made connections through the use of quotations, but also on the basis of allusions from imagery within the text.

### Summary of Textual Considerations

In the case of the variant מִשְׁחָתִי in 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> 52:14 (and in many cases besides this one) it is difficult to definitely rule on what “intended meaning” the author assigned to a word within a passage. Often we are left with a range of possibilities. The present author would argue that in this case “I have anointed” should be considered a possible intended reading of this passage – and one that may impact subsequent translation choices within the passage.

Whether this “variant” reading is a result of the scribe who copied the text at Qumran or the scribe of the *Vorlage* of his text is almost indiscernible from our perspective. The flurry of scholarly discussion on the grammatical viability of this variant reading has come down on the side of the messianic rendering being a likely intentional reading of the text. So also, the *pesharim* show that at almost every opportunity the community at Qumran interpreted Isaiah’s word immediately into their present context, which almost always resulted in an eschatological understanding and at times a messianic one. Further, the hermeneutical practice of drawing from imagery within the text and making allusions and connections with other Isaianic passages on the basis of those allusions, strengthens the case for the fourth servant poem of Isaiah 52:13-53:12 being interpreted messianically. It would seem that the Teacher of Righteousness made connections between this Servant Song and other Servant Songs and thereby may have made connections between the servant of the Lord in the Fourth Servant Song and a messianic figure.

Thus we can no longer say, as Joseph Fitzmeyer suggests in his recent book, *The One Who Is To Come*, that “משׁיח is not found in any of the Servant Songs; nor is the verb משח used in any of them.”<sup>232</sup> The variant in 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> 52:14 (especially if it influences a preferred reading of “sprinkled” at 52:15) leaves the door open for the possibility that a Jewish community identified “the servant of the Lord” with their messianic expectations.

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<sup>232</sup> Fitzmeyer acknowledges the reading in 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> 44:2 (=MT 52:14), but relegates משחתי “to a form anomalous in this text” even though “it looks like a 1<sup>st</sup> sing. perf. Qal of משח, ‘I have anointed.’”

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### BEYOND THE TEXT

#### A. Theological Conceptions

In an effort to determine the plausibility of a messianic reading at 52:14, and specifically a suffering and atoning messianic reading, we must also consider the theological conceptions of the community at Qumran. Perhaps we should take a step back even further, to consider whether or not such careful examination of an alternate reading in the Great Isaiah scroll at 52:14, which might be of keen interest for Christianity's connection to Judaism, is warranted if that particular text did not occupy a place of equal importance within the community that preserved it. Was vicarious suffering something that was even in view for the community at Qumran? So also we must wrestle with the community's conception of atonement within their present situation and how they envisioned atonement beyond their exile. Was the traditional sacrificial system something they had completely discarded, or did they envision the reinstitution of a pure sacrifice.

#### *Sacrifice and Atonement*

The Qumran community's decision to move out into the desert had profound implications on their practice of worship. Because the community was separated from the temple and sacrificial system, a theological crisis arose. Dorothy Peters summarized their predicament:



For centuries, the *Yahad*'s forefathers had atoned for sin by offering the sacrifices at the prescribed times, which included the most important festival, the Day of Atonement, during which blood rites cleansed the priests, the people, and the Tent of Meeting from the pollution of Israel's sins (Lev 16). Their lives had been ordered by the calendar and the feast days to be celebrated at the temple. What would happen now that the sectarians were separated from the temple? What would replace the sacrifices? What would replace the all-important Day of Atonement?<sup>233</sup>

We must keep in mind that the community at Qumran moved out into the desert because of their abhorrence for the corruption that they believed to be associated with the Jerusalem Temple. Thus, it was their high view of the sanctity of sacrifice on the Day of Atonement that caused them to opt for abstention from, rather than participation in, a corrupt sacrificial system.<sup>234</sup> But just how did the community from their vantage point of the desert conceive of atonement?

The means of atonement in the Dead Sea Scrolls is similar to what we find in the OT, but other conceptions of atonement are also emphasized that, while not being completely foreign to the OT understanding, certainly were not the primary conception. For one thing, there is an emphasis on a "spirit of holiness" within the community as a foundation for future members as well as an increased emphasis on the guilty being punished, though we also see this in the OT in passages such as Numbers 25:13; 35:33. It would also seem that forgiveness of individuals (as opposed to corporate forgiveness) receives greater emphasis in the scrolls. The concept of atoning for the land, *כפר ארץ*, which comes to the fore. However, this atonement is carried out through slaughtering all the wicked, a concept we don't see in the OT, although

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<sup>233</sup> Dorothy Peters, "The Story of the *Yahad*, an Acceptable Sacrifice Atoning for the Land: The Day of Atonement Reinterpreted" (Trinity Western University, 2002), 23.

<sup>234</sup> Collins also points out that the Teacher of Righteousness was clearly a priest, explicitly identified so in the *peshar* on Psalm 37 (4Q171 4.15). While we have no evidence to suggest that he ever served as the high priest in Jerusalem, his followers may have regarded him as a legitimate high priest Collins, "Messianic Expectation at Qumran," 87.

Num 35:33 prescribes atonement by slaughtering the murderer.<sup>235</sup> Garnet makes the following assessment concerning cultic atonement in the scrolls:

Except for the *Temple Scroll*, cultic atonement is rare in the DSS. When the term is metaphorical, atonement is usually brought about by a holy spirit from God, a pious influence in the community, the community's discipline, or the slaying of the wicked. What we do not find in the DSS is a substitutionary or vicarious atonement on the part of the community. Their general theology precluded any idea of works of supererogation or any merit that could be transferred to others. Isaiah 53 was not an important passage for them. Isaiah 43 was more attractive in the Judaism of the time. There was, therefore, no vicariously atoning role for the community in its thinking, and this cannot form the background for the NT conception of the saving efficacy of the death of Christ.<sup>236</sup>

Garnet does recognize that the term (*kipper*) is used in the scrolls in connection with a messianic figures, referencing CD 14.18-19 which reads, "And this is the clarification of the judgments in which [they shall walk, until there arises the Messi]ah of Aaron and Israel and he will atone for וִיכַפֵּר their iniquities." Garnet translates *expiate* and points to a possible Dan 9:24-25 background and a context of seventy weeks. He writes, "It seems that our passage here links the coming of the Messiah with the passage of time required for Israel to receive its exilic punishment."<sup>237</sup>

While it is true that the Messiah's actions are set in the immediate context of a completed timeframe: "they shall be governed in the age of wickedness until the appearance

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<sup>235</sup> Garnet, 366.

<sup>236</sup> Ibid., 367. Garnet clarifies that some of the misconception about atonement in the scrolls stems from scholar's tendency to translate the Hebrew phrase (רָצָה עוֹוֹן) *rasa awon* by "atone for sin" instead of "accept the punishment for iniquity" –the identical phrase used in Lev 26: 41, where it is in the context of "accepting the punishment for one's own iniquity." Lev. 26:41-42 reads, "I also walked contrary unto them, and brought them into the land of their enemies: if then their uncircumcised heart be humbled, and they then accept of the punishment of their iniquity; then will I remember my covenant with Jacob; and also my covenant with Isaac, and also my covenant with Abraham will I remember; and I will remember the land."

<sup>237</sup> Ibid.

of the Messiah of Aaron and of Israel,” the atonement that is made is clearly enacted by the Messiah and not, as Garnet proposes, the completion of a time frame. So also, the text immediately following, though partially reconstructed, is clearly cultic: “Cereal [offering and sin-offering ...].”

Garnet’s assessment of a new expanded conception of atonement at Qumran of atonement happening by various means as discussed above, apart from a cultic setting, can be substantiated. As Garnet acknowledges, this is not completely unprecedented in the Old Testament, but it is certainly not the primary understanding.

It could be said, though, that this pulling away from ritual connected with temple worship increases incrementally as exile to Babylon becomes imminent. This preference of sincerity of heart over empty ritual is well-attested in the prophets.<sup>238</sup> However, it would seem that the burden of proof should be to show that a different conception of atonement is in view, and the context of this text seems to be set within a cultic understanding.

So also we see in two other sectarian documents, the *Rule of the Community* and the *War Scroll* atonement envisioned in the traditional cultic sense. *Rule of the Community* IX, 4-5 reads, “To expiate the guilt of the transgression and the waywardness of the offense, to (obtain God’s) good will for the land through the flesh of burnt offerings, the fats of sacrifice

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<sup>238</sup> See Jer. 7:22 “For I did not speak to our fathers, or command them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings and sacrifices.” Hosea 6:6 “For I delight in loyalty rather than sacrifice, and in the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings.” Also Amos 5:21-22 “I hate, I reject your festivals, nor do I delight in you solemn assemblies. Even though you offer up to me burnt offerings and your grain offerings, I will not accept them; and I will not even look at the peace offering of your fatlings.” So also Psalm 50:13-14 “Shall I eat the flesh of bulls or drink the blood of male goats? Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving.”

and the offering of the lips.”<sup>239</sup> Likewise the *War Scroll* at II, 5-6 reads, “They shall be appointed to the burnt offerings and the sacrifices, to prepare a fragrant incense for God’s good pleasure, to make atonement for all His congregation.”<sup>240</sup>

Kugler argues that the *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice* provide “perhaps the most compelling evidence for the group’s tendency towards imaginative reflection of something resembling the temple cult.”<sup>241</sup>

In his summary, Garnet describes atonement at Qumran as:

The DSS, being in the same language as the OT, strongly manifest the influences of OT expressions and idea in connection with atonement, though there are some distinctive developments, the most important being the thought that a holy spirit from God, active in the separated community, can be a means atonement, so that the holiness of present members acts as an atonement for the members who are later to join.<sup>242</sup>

So it would seem that, even within his withholding of assigning a vicarious element, Garnet recognizes that within the conception of community, the actions of some made atonement for others.

Garnet’s essay has established that this expanded conception of atonement by the community is set within their belief that they were in exile. Exile, of course, was a time in Israel’s history where they could not practice the sacrificial system, the center of their concept of worship. The present author is hesitant, however, to rescind all elements of the “vicarious” from even this augmented view of atonement. It would still seem that the idea of

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<sup>239</sup> Here we may see both the traditional conception of atonement envisioned alongside the Qumran community’s augmented practice of atonement as “the offering of the lips” is mentioned alongside the cultic practice.

<sup>240</sup> Jean Carmignac, *Christ and the Teacher of Righteousness: The Evidence of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, trans. Katharine Greenleaf Pedley (Baltimore: Helicon, 1962), 107.

<sup>241</sup> Robert A. Kugler, “Rewriting Rubrics: Sacrifice and the Religion of Qumran,” in *Religion in the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. John J. Collins and Robert A. Kugler, Studies in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Related Literature (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 91.

<sup>242</sup> Garnet, 377.

doing or offering something “on behalf” of someone else remained at the center of the semantic range of (*kipper*). And, even if it was not their primary conception of the term in their present context, the significance of the central motif of the sacrificial system can hardly be dismissed. Surely it was deeply embedded in their religious understanding, even if it was not presently practiced.

For example, there is a priestly figure described in 4Q541 who is said to atone for the children of his generation. The obvious implication is that he is a priest. The Words of Levi 4Q541 Frag. 9 1.2-4 reads:

He will atone for all the children of his generation and he will be sent to all the children of his [pe]ople. His word is like a word of heaven and his teaching is in accordance with the will of God . . . They will speak many words against him, and they will invent many [lie]s and fictions against him and speak shameful things about him.

Here we find a priestly figure making atonement, but he does so presumably in the traditional way. There is nothing to suggest that he atones by his own suffering and death, as in the case of the servant in Isaiah 53. And, while the figure in this passage undergoes suffering, Collins notes that the suffering here involves only slander and cannot be equated with the physical suffering described in Isaiah 53.<sup>243</sup>

However, George Brooke proposes that it may be possible to construe 4Q541 24 as speaking of the death of this eschatological figure, even as Isaiah 53 could itself be construed, possibly even a death by crucifixion. This priest is to make expiation for the sons of his generation. What is not completely clear is in just what sense this is to be enacted. Several kinds of sacrifice could be envisioned.

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<sup>243</sup> Collins, *The Scepter and the Star: The Messiahs of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Other Ancient Literature*, 125.

Brooke notes that it may be most likely to refer to the eschatological Day of Atonement envisioned in *Gk. T. Levi 3.5* and *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice*. Thus, there is an earthly atonement even as Melchizedek presides over the heavenly atonement (11Melch II, 7-8). Brooke argues that several other portions that make use of priestly language such as 4Q541 92 II, 4 where “and I will bless you” is corrected by the scribe to instead read, “and I will bless the burnt-offering of.” So also if “your blood” is the correct reading of the remaining letters in 4Q541 9 II, 5 when understood as “seven rams” and in 4Q541 9 II, 7 if “burnt offering” should be restored there. Brooke also points out that priestly activity seems to be involved in the rebuilding of the temple (4Q540 1, 5).<sup>244</sup>

Despite the conclusion reached by M. de Jonge and others that Isaiah 52:13-53:12 had little if any influence on Jesus’ self-understanding or that of his early followers,<sup>245</sup> the evidence may have to be reconsidered. Brooke concludes that,

4Q541 must now be taken into account by all future generations of scholars who wish to consider the issue. On the one hand, it now seems that there is a Jewish text whose author used the Servant passages of Isaiah to support the understanding that there was to be an eschatological priest who would suffer, possibly even that the suffering involved death, death that would lead to joyous benefits for others.<sup>246</sup>

It should also be acknowledged that the cultic, priestly terms that are used to describe Jesus, and, that Jesus used of himself, may need to be reevaluated in light of the possibility

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<sup>244</sup> This overview is heavily dependent on George Brooke’s investigation into possible priestly atonement language in his essay “The *Apocryphon of Levi*? and the Messianic Servant High Priest” in Brooke, *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the New Testament*, 151.

<sup>245</sup> M. de Jonge concludes, “On close inspection there is little unequivocal evidence for either a close connection between Isaiah 53 and the Markan passages [Mark 10:45; 14:24] or the theory of Jesus’ inspiration by this aspect of Deutero-Isaiah’s teaching. More likely is the influence of the Greek translation of 53:12 on the use of the verb ‘to deliver up’ (*paradidonai*) in ancient formulas, and elsewhere, in connection with Jesus’ death.” M. de Jonge, *Christianity in Context: The Earliest Christian Response to Jesus* (Philadelphia: Westminster Pres, 1988), 180-1.

<sup>246</sup> Brooke, *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the New Testament*, 153.

that there was a Jewish understanding that the Servant texts were associated with the eschatological figure of Levi.

### ***Eschatological Ideals and Temple Worship***

Another important theological element to consider for the covenanters at Qumran is how they envisioned the future. Talmon characterizes mainstream Judaism during the Second Temple period as looking over their shoulder as they envision their future. In other words, they looked to past ideals in hope of the future realization of those ideals. The Jewish sect that would later come to be known as Christianity, on the other hand, felt that the messianic age had been realized and their conceptions of sacrifice were “once and for all” fulfilled and redefined. In Talmon’s assessment, the community at Qumran lived in a certain amount of tension. He even suggests that there might very well have been a progression in their conception of where they found themselves on the timeline culminating in the eschaton, in the beginning envisioning a future that would eclipse at any moment, and later having to adjust to a more patient approach to their ideology.

We might also wonder about the horizon of the community’s understanding of this expanded understanding of atonement. Did the community see their present form and practice of atonement to be a progression, or only a temporary adjustment? There are passages in the scrolls that would point to the community’s firm expectation of the reinstatement of pure temple worship that would include the sacrificial system prescribed for God’s people from the beginning. Paul Swarup in his 2006 publication *The Self-Understanding of the Dead Sea Scrolls Community*, cautions that even though the practice of

obedience and truth in the community's conception of atonement is surely a critique of the Jerusalem priests and the sacrificial system. He writes:

It is not as though the DSS community did not believe in sacrifices or that these had lost their validity, but rather that they were against the corrupt leadership of Jerusalem who continued with the sacrifices without any ethical improvement on their part. Just as the prophetic protests were against those who would bring sacrifices in order to cover over evil and injustice, so also the DSS community critique the Jerusalem priests and the sacrificial system. Obedience, truth, and doing justice and righteousness were more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifices. This was in line with the character of God and expected of the eternal plant—the community. But this did not mean that they rejected the cult or the sacrificial system, as is seen in the existence of the Temple Scroll which contains laws for the life of the people centered around the temple and its sacrifices. Even if the Temple Scroll is not sectarian, its preservation may be seen to indicate a high estimation of the cult.<sup>247</sup>

Craig Evans suggests that this speaks to the community's restorative orientation. He writes: "Qumran's eschatology seems to have been primarily restorative, that is, it was focused on the restoration of Israel. A righteous, 'anointed' high priest serving in the temple according to proper interpretation of Scripture, a restored Davidic monarchy, a purified and holy remnant of Israel . . . ."<sup>248</sup> Schiffman also, in noting the community's restorative eschatological tendencies mentions this priestly offering, "The sacrificial worship would be conducted according to the law as envisaged by the sectarian leaders. In essence, the messianic vision was to include the reaching of a level of purity and perfection in the observance of Jewish law impossible in the present age."<sup>249</sup>

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<sup>247</sup> The Jerusalem priesthood was seen by the DSS community as both religiously and morally corrupt. Cf. 1QpHab IX:4; 1QpMic 11:1; 4QpNah Frags. 3-4 I:11, II:9. Paul Swarup, *The Self-Understanding of the Dead Sea Scrolls Community*, ed. Lester L. Grabbe, Library of Second Temple Studies (London: T&T Clark, 2006), 177.

<sup>248</sup> Evans, "Qumran's Messiah: How Important Is He?," 138.

<sup>249</sup> Lawrence Schiffman, *The Eschatological Community of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. Adela Yarbro Collins, Society of Biblical Literature Monograph Series (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989), 7.



But it could also be argued that the community foresaw a return to pure Temple worship short of the dawn of a new age. Whether or not this intermediate hope arose out of disillusionment we cannot be certain. However Kugler suggests that the innovative means by which the community made atonement while in exile, should not necessarily lead us to believe that they had displaced the idea of the prescribed priestly sacrifices. He writes, "So in fact, the community prayer, praise, study, and priestly-cultic self-definition *did not* replace the act of sacrifice; at best they mimicked or mirrored it."<sup>250</sup>

Initially the community envisioned that they were living on the edge of the eschaton, as Schiffman describes it, "with one foot, as it were, in the present age and one foot in the future age."<sup>251</sup> From CD 20:14 we know that they anticipated that forty years after the death of the Teacher of Righteousness (occurring possibly in 60 BCE shortly after Roman occupation of Jerusalem) that the end would come. Evans notes that some of the Pesharim seem to have been written before this event, while others were written, or possibly even rewritten, after it. However, the end did not come in the time frame that the covenanters expected, yet they seemed to hold out for the culmination of all things right up until the great war with Rome in 66-10 CE.<sup>252</sup> How this re-framing of their eschatological expectations affected their outlook on the future is worthy of exploration. Talmon writes:

The biblical real-historical vision of the future aeon, was adopted by the *Yahad* in almost its original purity. Initially they expected the onset of that age to occur at a tangibly near juncture in history. The member of the 'New Covenant', believed that they were standing on the threshold of the 'Kingdom to Come', the good tidings already ringing in their ears. Only at a later stage of development was the expectance

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<sup>250</sup> Kugler, 92.

<sup>251</sup> Schiffman, 7.

<sup>252</sup> Evans, "Qumran's Messiah: How Important Is He?," 138.

of that great event shifted to a not anymore datable juncture in history, as will yet be shown.<sup>253</sup>

With these questions in mind, we turn to other questions of a socio-religious nature. Having asked the question of how the community held and interpreted their scriptures and in turn how they conceived of themselves before God and within their present world, we now turn to the most practical of every day life forces that, no doubt, also impacted their self-understanding as well as their perspective on and expectation of their present world.

## B. Sociological Considerations

James Charlesworth opens the three volume *The Bible And the Dead Sea Scrolls: The Princeton Symposium on the Dead Sea Scrolls* with his own wonderings about the people behind these precious documents. His preface follows several pages of pictures of the site of Qumran. Together they seem to serve as a reminder at the outset of all of the essays to follow, that real people lived at Qumran and handled these documents; people in many respects, not unlike ourselves. He writes:

Many of the Qumran scrolls containing portions of the Hebrew Scriptures may have been read liturgically in the Jerusalem Temple. Many of the Qumran Scrolls were certainly the focus of intense study when the Temple was the center of Jewish worship and sacrifice (note the edges of the rolled *Isaiah Scroll* with stains left by hands of those who held and read aloud from it). Sometimes when I hold a Dead Sea Scroll – or fragment of one that is all but lost—I pause and try to imagine the Jew who held it before me. What was his life like about two thousand years ago? What were his fears? What were his dreams? Were they so different from my own?<sup>254</sup>

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<sup>253</sup> S. Talmon, *King, Cult and Calendar in Ancient Israel* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1986), 215.

<sup>254</sup> James H. Charlesworth, *The Bible and the Dead Sea Scrolls: Scripture and the Scrolls*, 3 vols., *The Second Princeton Symposium on Judaism and Christian Origins*, vol. 1 (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2006), xxiii.

George Brooke also, taking a page from Talmon's approach, acknowledges that certain natural forces also influenced the Qumran community's self understanding. He writes:

For long scholars have admitted that factors other than Scripture itself contributed to the worldview of the Qumran covenanters. The historical circumstances of the last two centuries before the fall of the temple in 70 CE contributed much. The eschatological sensitivities of those centuries were especially significant in motivating a particular reading of scripture. The attitude of a predominantly priestly group to sacred space and its accompanying view of purity were also significant.<sup>255</sup>

However, Davies also acknowledges that there is great difficulty in determining the sociology at Qumran because of the continuing realization that our categories for determining what is sectarian from the scrolls have become increasingly inadequate. He writes:

But in face, the wealth of manuscript evidence now at our disposal has turned out to be incredibly difficult to evaluate. Whatever its faults, Golb's theory (N. Golb, *Who Wrote the Dead Sea Scrolls? The Search for the Secret of Qumran* (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1994) that there was no "Qumran sect" forced many scholars to re-examine basic assumptions and realize how fragile some of them are. Even if, as seems almost certain, the Scrolls do represent a particular segment of Jewish society and belief, rather than a cross-section of Judaism at the time, it is still unclear how many groups the writings represent, and their precise relationship. How coherent are the Scrolls and their writers, socially and ideologically? What is their origin and history? What were the issues that fundamentally defined the writers of the Scrolls over against other Jews? Anyone who has followed Qumran studies will know how often the answers to these questions have change, especially in recent years.<sup>256</sup>

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<sup>255</sup> Brooke, "Biblical Interpretation at Qumran," 299.

<sup>256</sup> Davies considers Dimant's proposal (D. Dimant, "The Qumran Manuscripts: Contents and Significance," in D. Dimant and L. H. Schiffman (eds), *Time to Prepare the Way in the Wilderness* (Leiden: Brill, 1995), pp. 23-58) of key terms and vocabulary to identify "sectarian" from "non-sectarian" text inadequate on the basis of the following observations: (1) A text may have no overt indications of vocabulary characteristic of a sect yet function with a sectarian interpretation. (2) There may also be texts favored by a sect yet not originating with them, as in the case of the books of *Enoch* or *Jubilees* at Qumran. (3) The process of identifying characteristic "sectarian" terms or ideas is rather circular. (4) Sects may inherit beliefs from elsewhere; they may also share beliefs, borrow and develop beliefs during their history. (5) If one analyses documents independently, one discovers

### *From Outward to Inward*

There are, however, certain ideas and ideals that seem to be characteristic of the community that we may reasonably account for as arising out of the forces and factors of their current situation. One central theme that was of great importance to the community at Qumran was faithfulness to the covenant. What is somewhat remarkable is how the *Yahad* conceived of being faithful to the covenant by keeping the commands of God, while ceasing to participate in the provision of the cultic practice of the sacrificial system.

Did they find precedent for this radical departure in the words of the prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah? In the course of proclaiming the impending judgment of Yahweh, the Lord indicts his people with their practice of empty rituals.<sup>257</sup> The focus of the prophets from this period was on the motivations of the heart and the practical outworking of mercy and justice for the oppressed. Thus, the motif of cultic practice is diminished. This shift was also practical. As God's people were taken into exile, their worship could no longer center around

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different ideologies; indeed, perhaps different sects, as I have realized myself in comparing 1QS and CD. "Sectarian" then begs the question, "which sect"?

Philip R. Davies, "Sects from Texts: On the Problems of Doing Sociology of the Qumran Literature," in *New Directions in Qumran Studies*, ed. Jonathan Campbell, William John Lyons, and Lloyd K. Pietersen, Library of Second Temple Studies (London: T&T Clark International, 2005), 70.

<sup>257</sup> Again, see also: Jer. 7:22, "For I did not speak to our fathers, or command them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings and sacrifices." Hosea 6:6, "For I delight in loyalty rather than sacrifice, And in the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings." Also see Amos 5:21-22, "I hate, I reject your festivals, nor do I delight in you solemn assemblies. Even though you offer up to me burnt offerings and your grain offerings, I will not accept them; and I will not even look at the peace offering of your fatlings." So also Psalm 50:13-14 "Shall I eat the flesh of bulls or drink the blood of male goats? Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving."

the cultic practice of sacrifice. As a result, there is a move towards the inward. M.

Douglas writes concerning this trend of outward to inward:

We are able to see that alienation from the current social values usually takes a set form: a denunciation not only of irrelevant rituals, but of ritualism as such; exaltation of the inner experience and denigration of its standardized expressions; preference for intuitive and instant forms of knowledge; rejection of mediating institutions, rejection of any tendency to allow habit to provide the basis of a new symbolic system.<sup>258</sup>

So also John Barton "The Prophets and the Cult," in *Temple and Worship in Biblical Israel* observes that:

Anti-ritualism in religion . . . is by no means a product only of a modern, secularized culture, but occurs equally in . . . primitive societies. It is not in the least unusual to find groups living within, or alongside, a highly ritualized society that reject virtually all ritual activities or religious expression.<sup>259</sup>

### ***Forces and Factors***

The community at Qumran also saw themselves as a separate and righteous people.<sup>260</sup>

One of the questions we must ask is what were the community's societal and religious aims.

What was it about the proto-Pharisaism that so deeply violated their values that they retreated to the caves of the desert to practice their faith in purity? What was their "biblical ethos"?

Talmon proposes that the prerequisite building stones for tracing the *yahad's* peculiar socio-religious profile "from within" can only be won from "Foundation Documents" which directly address the membership of the *yahad*, and detail the main tenets of its theology and

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<sup>258</sup> M. Douglas, *Natural Symbols: Explorations in Cosmology* (London: Routledge, 1996), 21.

<sup>259</sup> John Barton, "The Prophets and the Cult," in *Oxford Old Testament Seminar: Temple and Worship in Biblical Israel*, ed. J. Day (London: T&T Clark, 2005), 117.

<sup>260</sup> For an overview of the distinctive aspects of the Qumran community's sociological profiles, see Hillel Newman, *Proximity to Power and Jewish Sectarian Groups of the Ancient Period*, ed. Ruth Ludlam, Brill Reference Library of Judaism, vol. 25 (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 99-120.

communal structure. These documents were mostly found in Cave 1, painstakingly secured in covered jars, with additional fragments recovered from Cave 4: the *Rule of the Community* (1QS) and the *Rule of the Congregation* (1Q28a) and the *Messianic Rule* (or *Blessings* – 1Q28b), in conjunction with fragments of the *Damascus Document* (CD); the *Pesher Habakkuk* (1QpHab); the *War Scroll* (1QM) and to some extent the *Thanksgiving Hymns* – formerly called the *Hodayot* (1QH). To these extensive manuscripts must be added the *Temple Scroll* (4Q524, 11Q19-20 [= 11QT]), the numerous fragments of calendrical documents, and occasional other calendar-related references in other works.

Column V of the Community Rule (1QS), which outlines general rules and values for entering the community at Qumran's New Covenant does so after the quotation of Isaiah 2:22, "Turn away from mortals, who have only breath in their nostrils, for of what account are they?" The text stresses the need for those entering the community to be set apart from those outside of it.

So also 1QS VIII, 11-14, quoting Isaiah 40:3 reads, "they shall be set apart as holy in the midst of the men of the *Yahad*. No biblical doctrine concealed from Israel but discovered by the Interpreter is to be hidden from these men out of fear that they might backslide. When such men as these come to be in Israel, conforming to these doctrines, they shall separate from the session of perverse men to go to the wilderness, there to prepare the way of truth, as it is written, 'In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.'"

Talmon points out that the covenanters believed themselves to be "the youngest link in the generation chain of ancient Israel that had snapped in 587 BCE in the wake of the Babylonians' conquest of Judah and the destruction of the Temple of Jerusalem, and the

deportation to Mesopotamia of large segments of the Judean population.”<sup>261</sup> The covenanters present themselves as “the people who returned from the exile,” with whom God reestablished his covenant of old with Israel (CD 1.1-1.11), as foretold by the prophet Jeremiah:

The time is coming, says YHWH, when I will renew (literally: make a new) my covenant with Israel and Judah . . . I will (again) set my law within them and write it on their hearts. I will become their God and they shall become my people. (Jer 31:31-33).<sup>262</sup>

This self-identification is shown in their vicarious re-experience of biblical Israel’s “three-stage” past history: exile—as in Egypt and Babylonia; sojourn and wanderings in the desert—as after the Exodus from Egypt; conquest of the land—as in the days of Joshua.

It is Talmon’s belief that the rift between the two factions initially arose from a dissent on matters of an internal “ideation” nature and ritual prescriptions, triggered by the covenanters’ adherence to a solar calendar of 364 days per annum, rather than the lunar 354-day calendar to which mainstream Judaism held. Talmon writes, “The theological-cultic dissent ultimately hardened into a ‘socioreligious schism.’ The community’s failure to adhere to the sanctioned calendrical system resulted in their designation by what would become mainstream Judaism as a socioreligious *corpus separatum*.”<sup>263</sup> In the face of Judaism’s felt need to move towards unity and conformity, this failure to submit to authority was considered seditious. “The community’s failure to conform was taken as challenging the prerogative of the Sanhedrin, the High Court, to determine dates of the annual sacred seasons—which essentially regulated all facets of Jewish life.”<sup>264</sup>

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<sup>261</sup> Talmon, “The Concepts of *Masiah* and Messianism in Early Judaism,” 32.

<sup>262</sup> Translation by S. Talmon.

<sup>263</sup> Talmon, “The Covenanters’ Calendar in Context,” 27-28.

<sup>264</sup> Talmon, “The Concepts of *Masiah* and Messianism in Early Judaism,” 32.

This is significant because the *Yahad's* calendrical works are concerned with “holy seasons,” Sabbaths and festivals. In other words, the significance of the calendar in this context had everything to do with the cultic practice of worship. That is to say, the nature of the rift was especially concerned with legitimate priestly functions.<sup>265</sup>

Talmon points out that the community saw their abstention from participation in the Temple cult as only a temporary, and in fact, fervently awaited the day when a new temple “in which their own priesthood would conduct the holy service in accord with their solar calendar and their ritual rulings, as foreseen in the *Temple Scroll* and in a work entitled *New Jerusalem* (2Q24; 4Q554; 4Q555, 11Q18).”<sup>266</sup>

### ***Summary***

Moving beyond our particular text, in this section we have taken into consideration what can be determined of the Qumran community’s theological ideology as well as the sociological forces and factors that, no doubt, shaped their view of their present situation as well as their vision of the future. What we have found is that although the community’s current situation of separation from the Temple had augmented their conception of atonement significantly, they nevertheless looked towards a time when ritual sacrifice would again be pure. Therefore atonement through sacrifice, while not presently practiced, was not a discarded ritual for the community. Thus, we can reasonably assume that the deeply embedded ritual of sacrifice was not outside the scope of their theology and ideology.

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<sup>265</sup> Ibid.

<sup>266</sup> Ibid.



## CHAPTER EIGHT

### ANSWERING THE QUESTION

#### Concluding Thoughts and Lingering Questions

It is difficult to provide a decisive “yes” or “no” answer to the question of whether or not we find a suffering messiah at Qumran, for a “yes” indicates certainty, while “no” dismisses the possibility altogether. In reality, our answer should be nuanced. To date, evidence of the expectation of a suffering messiah at Qumran *is not compelling*, but that does not mean that we do not see glimmerings. The concept of suffering servant, while never explicitly tied to the messiah complex elsewhere, nevertheless occurs in 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> 52:14. At minimum we have to wonder what connection the author(s) of this text foresaw, even if we cannot define it definitively.

On the basis of this present study we can determine that there remains the possibility that the variant reading at 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> 52:14 may have been an intentional rendering of the text.

In the first place, the text is perfectly clear. In the second place, the variant has to do with a much-disputed word in the MT. In the third place, it would seem that in every instance in which the community interpreted the words of Isaiah, they interpreted them to speak to their own situation, which often encompassed eschatological deliverance at times ushered in by a messianic figure. In the fourth place, we know from the *Thanksgiving Hymns* as well as other sectarian documents that passages in Isaiah were used together in interpretation on the basis of allusions within the imagery of the text. In the fifth place, the Teacher of

Righteousness identified with the servant of the Lord in Isaiah, showing his familiarity with the text, despite the fact that no *pesharim* on this passage were either written or survived. In the sixth place, the author of 4Q541 also made use of the servant passages in view of an eschatological priest who would suffer. In the seventh place, it would seem that although the community's conception of atonement had been augmented significantly by separation from the Temple, that they nevertheless looked towards a time when ritual sacrifice would again be pure. Therefore atonement through sacrifice was not a discarded ritual.

Thus, in conclusion, while we do not find in the scrolls a definitive expectation of a suffering Messiah, neither do we find, on the basis of this study, anything that would lead us to believe that the community at Qumran would not have envisioned such a figure. In fact, the combination of the factors outlined above, and specifically the variant reading at Isaiah 52:14, would lead us to believe that there may have been some conception of one who would be anointed by God, suffer, and thereby atone for the sins of the people of Israel. However, what emerges from the text are glimmerings and we cannot assert this definitively.

But then it should be acknowledged that neither do we find a conception of suffering messiah in the conception of Jesus' disciples within the New Testament narratives. Even as the gospels writers present Jesus as the awaited Messiah, the way they record their own responses within those narratives just as assuredly tells us that they were not expecting a suffering messiah. From this we can conclude that the fulfillment of the messianic hope through suffering is a later revelation for the gospel writers.

Thus while the Qumran witness does not definitively identify an expectation of a suffering Messiah within Judaism, the overall witness of messianic expectation within the





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