

(THIRD EDITION)

## ISAIAH 52

Many commentators think that ISAIAH 52:13-15 and ISAIAH 53 are about the same servant, but I think that ISAIAH 52:13-15 is about Israel and ISAIAH 53 is about King Hezekiah. King Hezekiah was a king of Judah, and his life and rule are discussed in 2 KINGS 18-20, ISAIAH 36-39, and in 2 CHRONICLES 29-32.

ISAIAH 52:13

USUAL TRANSLATION

"Behold, My servant will prosper  
(will be wise or will act wisely) י ש כ י ל,  
he will be high י ר ו ם,  
and he will be lifted up ו נ ש א,  
and he will be very high ג ב ה."

ISAIAH 52:13 could be about Israel, because Israel was called G-d's servant in ISAIAH 41:8-9, 43:10, 44:1, 2, 21, 45:4, 48:20, and 49:3, but it could also be about King Hezekiah because he was called G-d's servant in 2 CHRONICLES 32:16. Also, 2 CHRONICLES 32:23 and 27-29 say that Hezekiah was exalted in the eyes of all of the nations and that he prospered a lot.

HIGH AND LIFTED UP

ISAIAH 52:13 says that the servant will be high  $\text{יָרֹם}$  and lifted up  $\text{נִשְׁאָר}$ , and he will be high  $\text{וְגָבַהּ$ . The verb  $\text{יָרֹם}$  means “to be high”, the verb  $\text{נִשְׁאָר}$  means “to lift up”, and the verb  $\text{וְגָבַהּ}$  means “to be high.” The verb in ISAIAH 52:13 is the passive form of “to lift up”, so it means “to be lifted up.”

I think that “high” and “lifted up” are often used together because there are other quotes that use similar words. For example, ISAIAH 57:15 calls G-d “a high  $\text{יָרֹם}$  and lifted up one  $\text{נִשְׁאָר}$ .” Also, ISAIAH 6:1 says that Isaiah saw G-d sitting on a throne high and lifted up.

ISAIAH 2:5-21 mentions a day that G-d will punish the people who are rich and proud and who are worshiping idols. ISAIAH 2:11 and ISAIAH 2:17 say that they will be made low and only G-d will be exalted (high) in that day.

ISAIAH 2:12 says that G-d will punish all who are proud (high)  $\text{גָּאֵר}$  and lofty (high)  $\text{רָם}$  and all that are lifted up  $\text{נִשְׁאָר}$ . ISAIAH 2:12 uses the verb  $\text{הָרָם}$  instead of  $\text{וְגָבַהּ}$  like in ISAIAH 52:13.

Also, ISAIAH 2:13-14 says that G-d will be against the cedar trees of Lebanon that are high and lifted up and all of the mountains that are high and all of the hills that are lifted up.

Also, see ISAIAH 30:25 and ISAIAH 57:7 about mountains and hills that are high and lifted up.

Some commentators say that ISAIAH 2:11 and ISAIAH 2:17 contradict ISAIAH 52:13 because it says G-d’s servant will be very high and lifted up, but those two quotes say that only G-d will be exalted in that day. I think ISAIAH 2:11 and ISAIAH 2:17 are

about a future day of punishment, but after that day, I think G-d will make the servant, Israel, very high and lifted up. For details about how G-d will make Zion great in the future, see ISAIAH 60-62, and for details about the great future of the people of Zion, see ISAIAH 60:21-22, ISAIAH 61:3-9, and ISAIAH 62:11-12.

“High” and “lifted up” are used about G-d, mountains, hills, cedar trees, people, and the servant. There is another word that is used about G-d and people in a similar way. That word is “highest יוֹלָם.” G-d is called the Most High G-d or the Highest G-d using the word יוֹלָם.” For examples of G-d called this, see GENESIS 14:18-20.

The same word is used in DEUTERONOMY 26:18-19 and DEUTERONOMY 28:1, which say that G-d will make Israel the highest יוֹלָם over all of the nations of the earth and in PSALM 89:28, where G-d is quoted as saying that He will make David His first-born son, and David will be the highest יוֹלָם to the kings of earth (of a land).

ISAIAH 52:14

USUAL TRANSLATION

“IS MARRED”

"Like were shocked (appalled)  
about you (Israel) multitudes,  
thus **is marred** תִּשְׁמַם  
from a man his image,  
and from sons of man his form,  
thus he will he will sprinkle תִּזְרֹק

many nations..."

Or: "Like were shocked (appalled)

about you (Israel) multitudes,

thus **is marred**

**(is a corruption)** ת ח ש מ

from a man his image,

and from sons of man his form,

thus he will he will sprinkle ה ז י

(or he will startle) many nations..."

Maybe like they were shocked about Israel, they were shocked about King Hezekiah because they were both possibly scarred by illnesses. Israel was covered with wounds in ISAIAH 1:5-6, and maybe King Hezekiah had a boil on his face. (ISAIAH 38:21 says he had a boil, but it does not say where).

Some translators say the word translated as "is marred" or "is corrupted" ת ח ש מ is really the noun "corruption" from the hophal form of the verb. They also say LEVITICUS 22:25, PROVERBS 25:26, and MALACHI 1:14 use hophal verb forms of the same verb root. I think all of these might be pual forms which might look the same. (I don't think it really matters which form they are based on, except that I think the hophal form is used for a different possible meaning that I will explain later.)

## TO SPRINKLE

The verb translated as "to startle" in ISAIAH 52:15 really means "to sprinkle" in Hebrew and "to startle" in Arabic. This quote is the only time the

word is translated as "to startle" in the Hebrew Bible, and I think it is because the translators are just guessing the meaning of the quote.

ISAIAH 52:14-15

ALTERNATIVE TRANSLATIONS

“DESTROYER”

"Like were shocked (appalled)  
about you multitudes,  
so is a **destroyer** ת ה ש מ.  
From a man is His image  
(the destroyer's image)  
and from sons of man His form.  
Thus He will sprinkle ה ז י  
(He will cause to sprinkle)  
many nations..."

I think this quote is about G-d as the destroyer who is shocked like the multitudes were shocked about Israel. ISAIAH 63:1-6 mentions G-d looking like a man covered in blood from a winepress where He trampled the nations, and their blood was sprinkled on Him. ISAIAH 63:5 and ISAIAH 59:16 say G-d was shocked that there was no person to do anything, so He did something.

WINE PRESS

JOEL 4:9-16 mentions a wine press and a valley of judgment where G-d will judge the nations, but it does not mention if the people will see a vision of G-d trampling the nations there.

## VISION OF G-D?

ISAIAH 52:14-15 could mean that G-d will be seen looking like a man trampling the nations in a vision, although ISAIAH 63 does not say that G-d will be seen in a vision.

EXODUS 33:20 says people can't see G-d's face and live, although Moses was allowed to see G-d's back, but not His face, in EXODUS 33:23. For this reason, I think that ISAIAH 52:14-15 is about G-d being seen trampling the nations in a vision. I think that G-d could be seen in visions and dreams because you are not actually seeing G-d in visions or dreams.

## THE ANGEL OF G-D'S PRESENCE

ISAIAH 52:14-15 could also be about the angel of G-d's presence trampling the nations because G-d's name (His presence) is in that angel and that angel looks like a man. If the angel of G-d's presence will trample the nations, then the people could see it happen in a vision or in reality because they can see that angel without dying.

EXODUS 23:20-22 mentions an angel that has G-d's name in it and that the people should listen to it's voice and do all that G-d will speak. I think that G-d's name in the angel was really His presence in the angel, so G-d could speak to people through the angel's mouth if He wanted to. It probably sounded like the angel was talking, but really G-d was talking through it to people. I think the person would hear the angel's voice, but G-d would be speaking.

DEUTERONOMY 12:5, 11, and 21 and

DEUTERONOMY 14:23-24 and some more quotes mention that G-d will put His name a certain place. This could mean He will put His presence in a certain place, but the Hebrew Bible does not really explain what G-d meant by this.

ISAIAH 30:27 says that the name of the L-rd is coming from far away. This quote could be about the angel with G-d's name in it coming to punish the nations.

I think G-d put His spirit on prophets who spoke for Him, but He put His name (or His presence) in the angel that He spoke through. The Hebrew Bible does not say if only one angel spoke as G-d or if more than one angel did it.

ISAIAH 63:9 also mentions the angel of G-d's presence which might be the same angel mentioned in EXODUS 23:20-22.

I discuss the different ways G-d could appear to people and the angel of G-d's presence in more detail in the first volume of these books.

## “DESTROYER” FROM THE PIEL FORM OF THE VERB

The verb with the root letters **ת נ ש** can mean "to destroy" in the piel form of the verb. I think the present tense of the piel form **ת נ ש ך** might be used as "destroyer" in ISAIAH 52:14 and JEREMIAH 22:7, but I can't prove it.

The hiphil form of the verb is used more often than the piel form to mean "to destroy", and the hiphil form of the verb is used for the word "destroyer." I don't think there is enough proof to

show that the present tense of the piel form was also used as "destroyer", but it might be true.

ISAIAH 52:14 might use the piel form as "destroyer" תחשם because it does not have an extra letter ך in the middle of it like the hiphil form תיחשם. A plural form of the word without the extra letter ך is also used in JEREMIAH 22:7 and is translated as "destroyers."

If the word in JEREMIAH 22:7 can be translated as "destroyers" without the ך, then maybe ISAIAH 52:14 could also have the word "destroyer" written without the ך. The Dead Sea scrolls version of ISAIAH 52:14 also does not have the ך in this word.

## **“DESTROYER” FROM THE HIPHIL FORM OF THE VERB**

The verb with the root letters תחש can also mean "to destroy" in the hiphil form. The word "destroyer" is written in the present tense hiphil form תיחשם around eight times in the Hebrew Bible.

ISAIAH 52:14 has the word תחשם which is spelled a little differently. It does not have the extra ך like the hiphil form of "destroyer" תיחשם, but it might not need that letter to be the hiphil form.

A plural form of the same word without the extra letter ך is also used in JEREMIAH 22:7 and is translated as "destroyers." I think that experts consider JEREMIAH 22:7 to really be the hiphil form written without the ך because there are other examples of hiphil verbs being written without the extra ך in the Hebrew Bible.

If the word in JEREMIAH 22:7 can be



translated as "destroyers" without the ך, then maybe ISAIAH 52:14 could also have the hiphil form of the word "destroyer" written without the ך. The Dead Sea scrolls version of ISAIAH 52:14 also does not have the ך in this word.

## ALTERNATIVE TRANSLATION HOPHAL FORM “ONE CAUSED TO DESTROY”

"Like were shocked about you multitudes,  
so is **one caused to destroy**  
(present tense hophal).  
From a man is His (his) form,  
and from sons of man His (his) image.  
Thus He (he) will sprinkle  
(He will cause to sprinkle)  
many nations."

Maybe JEREMIAH 22:7 does not say that G-d has appointed "destroyers" (present tense hiphil) without the ך, but that G-d has appointed "ones caused to destroy" (present tense hophal) without the ך (which is normal for the hophal form).

The hiphil form of the verb is usually translated as "to destroy", but the hiphil is often used to mean to cause to do something, so maybe it can also mean "to cause to destroy", and the hophal form could mean "to be caused to destroy" in this quote. Maybe G-d wanted to say that He was caused to destroy and this word is the best way to say that.

In ISAIAH 63:1-6, G-d says that He was caused to trample the nations because of what He

saw, so maybe He could be called "one caused to destroy" in ISAIAH 52:14-15.

## OTHER HIPHIL VERBS

I found two verbs in the hiphil form that mean "to do something" and "to cause to do something." I think there are more verbs like this. The verb with the root letters ך ם ן can mean "to understand" in the hiphil form in MICAH 4:12, DANIEL 1:4, PROVERBS 17:10 and 24 or "to cause to understand" in the hiphil form in PSALM 119:27, 34, and 73. The verb with the root letters ש ן ם can mean "to become dry" in the hiphil form in JOEL 1:10, 12, and 17, or "to cause to dry up" in the hiphil form in JOSHUA 2:10 and 4:23.

This could show that the hiphil form of the verb "to destroy" in ISAIAH 52:14-15 might mean "to destroy" or "to cause to destroy", and the hophal might mean "to be destroyed" or "to be caused to destroy."

## ISRAEL AS SERVANT

Some commentators say that the servant in ISAIAH 52:13-15 is Israel. If this is true, then ISAIAH 52:14 would say:

"Like were shocked (appalled)  
about **you** (Israel) multitudes,  
thus is marred ת ן ש ם  
from a man **his** image (Israel's image),  
and from sons of man **his** form

(Israel's form).  
Thus **he** will sprinkle  
(or **he** will startle) ה ז י  
many nations..."

The servant would be referred to with the words "you", "his", and "he" in one or two sentences. ISAIAH 42:20 also uses "you" and "he" about the servant, but I don't think ISAIAH 52:14 sounds right this way.

G-D'S BLOODY FEET?  
ISAIAH 52:7

ISAIAH 52:7 says the bearer of good news has beautiful feet. Maybe G-d is the bearer of good news. ISAIAH 30:30-31 says G-d will speak, and ISAIAH 52:6 says "because (that) I am He who is saying 'Behold Me'." Maybe G-d also says "your G-d rules" in ISAIAH 52:7.

ISAIAH 52:7  
USUAL TRANSLATION

"How beautiful upon the mountains  
are **feet** י ל ג ר  
**of a bearer of good news** ר ש ב מ."

ISAIAH 52:7  
ALTERNATIVE TRANSLATION

"How beautiful upon the mountains  
are **My feet** י ל ג ר

**from flesh מן בשר."**

Maybe His feet are beautiful from blood on them from trampling the nations in the winepress in the valley.

(This is an excerpt from the book "Hebrew Bible Quotes that Have Been Misunderstood for Thousands of Years, Third Edition, Volume 3, © 2021 by Kenneth Greifer.)