

# MIQDASH BETHEL COVENANT INSTITUTION

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**DOCTRINAL AUTHORITY — STANDING RULE OF MIQDASH BETHEL:** This document operates under the sole authority of the *Tanakh* — the Written Word of **Yahweh** (יהוה). Scholars, commentators, historians, and religious traditions are cited as historical witnesses only — never as binding authorities. All final determinations are governed by the Tanakh text alone, verified under the evidentiary standard of **Devarim (Deuteronomy) 19:15** — two or three independent witnesses.

## HOW TO READ THIS DOCUMENT

All Tanakh books are referenced by Hebrew name with English in parentheses. **Yahweh** (יהוה) and **Elohim** (אֱלֹהִים) are never replaced by 'God' or 'LORD.' Prophet names appear in **bold**. Hebrew lexical terms appear in ***bold italic*** with Strong's numbers in bold. All scripture quotations appear in ***bold italic***. The Devarim 19:15 two-or-three-witness evidentiary standard is applied throughout.

Hebrew Name	English Name	Abbreviation
Bereishit	Genesis	Gen
Shemot	Exodus	Ex
Vayikra	Leviticus	Lev
Bamidbar	Numbers	Num
Devarim	Deuteronomy	Deut
Yeshayahu	Isaiah	Isa
Yirmeyahu	Jeremiah	Jer
Tehillim	Psalms	Ps
Melakhim	Kings	Kings
Divrei HaYamim	Chronicles	Chr

DOCUMENT 128

## THE SERVANT AND THE NATIONS:

# A COVENANT DEEP DIVE STUDY OF YESHAYAHU (ISAIAH) 52:13–53:12

*Placing the Christian 'Suffering Servant = Jesus' Claim Under the Authority of the Tanakh*

Issued by Elder Kepha Arcemont, Founder

Miqdash Bethel Covenant Institution

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## PART I: OPENING COVENANT STATEMENT

The 53rd chapter of **Yeshayahu (Isaiah)** is the most contested passage in the history of religious dialogue between Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Christianity has used it — for two thousand years — as its single most powerful proof text for the person and atoning work of Jesus of Nazareth. It is quoted in the New Testament (NT) more than any other passage. It drives evangelistic literature, seminary courses, and missionary outreach into Jewish communities worldwide.

The covenant position of Miqdash Bethel is clear: **all doctrinal claims must answer to the Tanakh under the Devarim 19:15 two-or-three-witness evidentiary standard.** This study does not begin with the NT and work backward. It begins with the Tanakh text itself — in Hebrew — and asks: What does the passage actually say? Who does the text identify as the subject? Does the New Testament application survive Tanakh scrutiny?

The findings of this study are delivered to three audiences simultaneously: the Jewish reader who may not know the full depth of the covenant argument for Israel as the Servant; the Christian reader who has never had this passage examined before them verse by verse in Hebrew; and the Muslim reader for whom the corruption of the Scriptures is already a theological premise — this study provides specific, textual evidence for where and how the corruption occurred.

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## PART II: THE STRUCTURAL CONTEXT — THE FOUR SERVANT SONGS

### II.A. WHY CHAPTER 53 CANNOT BE READ IN ISOLATION

Christian evangelism almost universally presents Yeshayahu 53 as a self-contained unit. This is a fundamental hermeneutical error. **Yeshayahu 53 is the fourth and final of four consecutive poetic units scholars have called the 'Servant Songs.'** They are: (1) Yeshayahu 42:1–9; (2) Yeshayahu 49:1–13; (3) Yeshayahu 50:4–11; (4) Yeshayahu 52:13–53:12. To read Song Four without Songs One through Three is to cut a sentence out of a paragraph and claim it proves your point.

The covenant standard of Devarim 19:15 requires context as evidence. A witness must be understood in the full field of testimony. The full field of testimony in **Yeshayahu 40–55** (Deutero-Isaiah / the Babylonian exile section) names the Servant explicitly nine times as Israel/Jacob/Yisra'el:

Reference	Hebrew Servant Name	Text Summary
41:8–9	Yisra'el / Ya'akov	'But you, Yisra'el, My servant; Ya'akov whom I have chosen' — Yahweh addresses the nation directly
43:10	Yisra'el	'You are My witnesses, declares Yahweh, and My servant whom I have chosen'
44:1	Ya'akov / Yisra'el	'Hear now, Ya'akov My servant; and Yisra'el whom I have chosen'
44:2	Ya'akov / Yisra'el	'Fear not, O Ya'akov My servant; and Yeshurun whom I have chosen'
44:21	Yisra'el	'Remember these things, O Ya'akov and Yisra'el, for you are My servant'
45:4	Yisra'el	'For the sake of My servant Ya'akov, and Yisra'el My chosen one'
48:20	Ya'akov	'Yahweh has redeemed His servant Ya'akov'
49:3	Yisra'el	'You are My servant, O Yisra'el, in whom I will be glorified' — The servant is named Yisra'el within Song Two itself

**Witness One:** Nine times in chapters 41–48, before the fourth Servant Song begins, **Yahweh** identifies the Servant by name as Yisra'el or Ya'akov. The fourth Song does not re-identify the Servant. It continues the same subject.

**Witness Two: Yeshayahu 49:3** — inside Song Two — explicitly names the Servant: *"You are My servant, O Yisra'el, in whom I will be glorified."* The Servant is not unnamed. The Servant is named. The name is Yisra'el.

**Witness Three:** The chapters immediately surrounding Yeshayahu 52–53 (chapters 51, 54, and 55) all address the nation of Yisra'el directly, speaking of her exile, her restoration, her covenant, and her future. The literary frame of the entire unit is national Israel, not an individual messianic figure.

## II.B. THE DEVARIM 19:15 VERDICT ON CONTEXT

Three independent Tanakh contextual witnesses identify the Servant as the nation of Yisra'el or the righteous remnant thereof. Under the **Devarim 19:15** standard, the Servant's identity is not ambiguous. Context is not an opinion — it is evidence.

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## PART III: THE HEBREW TEXT OF YESHAYAHU 52:13–53:12 — VERSE BY VERSE

### III.A. THE COMPLETE TEXT (JPS 1985 / WITH HEBREW TERMS RESTORED)

The pericope begins at 52:13, not 53:1. Christianity's chapter break obscures the opening declaration. The passage opens with

*52:13 — "Behold, My servant shall prosper, be exalted and raised and be very high."*

*52:14 — "Just as many were appalled at you — so marred was his appearance, unlike that of man, his form, beyond human semblance —"*

*52:15 — "Just so he shall startle many nations. Kings shall be silenced because of him, for they shall see what has not been told them, shall behold what they never have heard."*

*53:1 — "Who has believed our report? And upon whom has the arm of Yahweh been revealed?"*

*53:2 — "For he has grown, by His favor, like a tree crown, like a tree trunk out of arid ground. He had no form or beauty, that we should look at him: no charm, that we should find him pleasing."*

*53:3 — "He was despised, shunned by men, a man of suffering, familiar with disease. As one who hid his face from us, he was despised, we held him of no account."*

*53:4 — "Yet it was our sickness that he was bearing, our suffering that he endured. We accounted him plagued, smitten and afflicted by God;"*

*53:5 — "But he was wounded because of our sins, crushed because of our iniquities. He bore the chastisement that made us whole, and by his bruises we were healed."*

*53:6 — "We all went astray like sheep, each going his own way; and Yahweh visited upon him the guilt of all of us."*

*53:7 — "He was maltreated, yet he was submissive, he did not open his mouth; like a sheep being led to slaughter, like a ewe, dumb before those who shear her, he did not open his mouth."*

*53:8 — "By oppressive judgment he was taken away, and with his generation who did reason? For he was cut off from the land of the living through the sin of my people, who deserved the punishment."*

*53:9 — "And his grave was set among the wicked, and with the rich, in his deaths — though he had done no injustice and had spoken no falsehood."*

*53:10 — "But Yahweh chose to crush him by disease, that, if he made himself an offering for guilt, he might see offspring and have long life, and that through him Yahweh's purpose might prosper."*

*53:11 — "Out of his anguish he shall see it; he shall enjoy it to the full through his devotion. 'My righteous servant makes the many righteous, it is their punishment that he bears;'"*

*53:12 — "Assuredly, I will give him a portion among the great, and he shall share the spoil with the mighty, because he exposed himself to death and was numbered among the sinners, whereas he bore the guilt of the many and made intercession for sinners."*

## PART IV: LEXICAL DEEP DIVE — KEY HEBREW TERMS

### IV.A. PRIMARY LEXICAL TABLE

Hebrew Term	Strong's	Root	BDB/HA LOT Gloss	Covenant Significance
עֶבֶד (eved)	H5650	עבד	servant, slave, worshiper	Used throughout Isaiah 40–55 to identify Israel/Ya'akov as Yahweh's servant. Collective noun applicable to individual or nation.
לָמוֹ (lamo)	—	ל + הם	to them / to him (ambiguous)	Appears in 53:8. Debated: can be singular or plural. Isaiah uses lamo for singular referent in 44:15. Ambiguity does not resolve to 'individual messianic person.'
בְּמוֹתָיו (bemotav)	H4194+	מות	in his deaths (intensive plural)	53:9 — plural of mavet. BDB: intensive plural of majesty/violence. Not necessarily multiple deaths. Israel has suffered collective 'deaths' through exile and massacre across generations.
אָשָׁם (asham)	H817	אשם	guilt offering, reparation offering	53:10 — the Vayikra 5 guilt/reparation offering. Applied in the Tanakh to the nation (Ezra 10:19; Bamidbar 5:7). Not exclusively messianic.
חַבְּבוּרָה (chabburah)	H2250	חבר	bruise, stripe,	53:5 — singular collective noun. BDB: 'stripe, blow that produces a welt.' Rendered plural in many

Hebrew Term	Strong's	Root	BDB/HA LOT Gloss	Covenant Significance
			wound (singular)	Christian translations (wounds), departing from the Hebrew singular.
נִגְזַר (nigzar)	H1504	גזר	cut off, separated	53:8 — 'cut off from the land of the living.' Applied to the nation of Israel in exile (Yechezkel/Ezekiel 37:11: 'Our bones are dried up, our hope is lost; we are cut off').
זֶרַע (zera)	H2233	זרע	seed, offspring, descendant	53:10 — 'he will see his seed.' A dead and resurrected individual has no natural seed. The nation of Israel collectively has seed. This word is a national/covenant term throughout the Tanakh.
יִצְלַח (yatzliach)	H6743	צלה	prosper, succeed, advance	52:13 — 'My servant shall prosper.' This is the opening word of the pericope. It is present tense and future oriented — a declaration of success, not death-and-resurrection theology.

#### IV.B. THE 'MY PEOPLE' PROBLEM IN VERSE 8

Verse 8 contains one of the most critical evidentiary sentences in the passage:

***53:8 — '...for he was cut off from the land of the living through the sin of MY PEOPLE (ammi), who deserved the punishment.'***

If the Servant is Israel, then who is speaking? The nations — the Gentile kings who are described in 52:15 as being astonished. They confess: 'We thought he was punished by Elohim, but he was wounded because of our sins.' **The 'my people' in 53:8 is the voice of the Gentile nations confessing that the suffering of Israel was actually caused by the nations' own sins.** This is a profound covenant insight — the nations are making a confession. Their 'people' who sinned are themselves.

Alternatively, if 'my people' is **Yahweh** speaking, then 'my people' = Israel — which means the Servant is someone other than Israel who was cut off for Israel's sins. Under either reading, the Servant's identification requires careful textual analysis, not simple NT citation.

## PART V: THE VOICES IN THE TEXT — WHO IS SPEAKING AND TO WHOM?

**Yeshayahu 52:13–53:12** contains multiple distinct voices. Christian reading typically collapses them into one continuous narrative about Jesus. The Tanakh structure reveals a more complex and covenantally significant pattern.

Verses	Speaker	Audience	Content
52:13–15	Yahweh	The nations / kings of the earth	Yahweh announces His servant will be exalted. Kings who were appalled will be silenced.
53:1–9	The nations / Gentile kings	One another / confession	'We' and 'our' — the nations confess they despised the servant, misjudged his suffering. 'Our sickness,' 'our suffering,' 'our sins.'
53:10–12	Yahweh (returning)	The servant / all hearers	Yahweh declares the outcome: the servant will see offspring, have long life, be given a portion among the great.

**This is the covenant key:** The 'we' in verses 1–9 are the Gentile nations of 52:15 who 'had not been told' and 'had not heard.' They are confessing. Israel (the Servant) did not confess its own guilt in third person. The nations confessed their misunderstanding of Israel's suffering on behalf of covenant truth. This structure — Yahweh announcing the Servant's exaltation, the nations confessing their past contempt, Yahweh restoring the Servant — is a national-restoration pattern repeated throughout **Yeshayahu, Yirmeyahu, Yechezkel, and Zekhariah**. It is never, in the Tanakh, the pattern of an individual messiah dying and rising.

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## PART VI: FIVE COVENANT PROBLEMS WITH THE JESUS APPLICATION

### PROBLEM ONE: THE SERVANT SEES HIS SEED AND PROLONGS HIS DAYS (53:10)

Verse 10 declares:

*'...he will see his offspring (zera) and have long life, and that through him Yahweh's purpose might prosper.'*

The Hebrew *zera* (**H2233**) is the covenant seed word used throughout the Tanakh for literal descendants and national continuity. **This is not metaphorical in the Tanakh.** Yahweh promised Avraham (Genesis 12, 15, 17) that his *zera* would inherit the land. He promised Dawid (David) that his *zera* would sit on the throne. The Servant of Yeshayahu 53:10 sees his *zera* — as a result of his

suffering, not after a resurrection. Jesus of Nazareth left no biological descendants. The Christian response — that 'spiritual children' fulfill this — is an interpretation without Tanakh lexical support. The nation of Israel, on the other hand, has zera — biological descendants — who survive exile, endure persecution, and continue. The 53:10 promise is fulfilled covenantally in national Israel's survival and restoration.

### PROBLEM TWO: THE SERVANT LIVES LONG AFTER HIS SUFFERING (53:10B)

'He will prolong his days' (*ya'arik yamim*) — this is life after suffering, not resurrection. The plain Tanakh reading is that the Servant survives, lives long, and sees the fruit of his ordeal. Jesus was crucified at approximately 33 years of age. His life was not prolonged. The NT resolves this through resurrection theology — but **resurrection is not stated or implied in Yeshayahu 53**. The word *techiyat hameitim* (resurrection of the dead) does not appear in this text.

### PROBLEM THREE: THE SERVANT PROSPERS AND IS EXALTED (52:13; 53:11–12)

The passage opens with *yaskil avdi* — 'My servant shall prosper/act wisely.' It closes with **Yahweh** declaring the Servant will divide spoil with the mighty. **The Servant is ultimately a conqueror, not a sacrifice.** The arc of the passage is suffering → vindication → triumph. This is Israel's covenant arc as declared throughout Yeshayahu 40–66: exile, suffering, return, restoration, triumph before the nations. Even Maimonides, who disagreed with Rashi's collective interpretation, argued that the Servant-Messiah would be **victorious and exalted** — not dead on a Roman cross. In his *Iggeret Teiman*, Maimonides explicitly stated that the Christian application of this chapter to Jesus was an error and that its true fulfillment would be in a future Messiah who succeeds and reigns — not one who dies in Roman custody.

### PROBLEM FOUR: 'CUT OFF FROM THE LAND OF THE LIVING' — ISRAEL ALREADY HAS THIS PATTERN

Verse 8 says the Servant was *nigzar* (**H1504**) — cut off from the land of the living. Christian exegesis reads this as crucifixion. But this exact phrase — being cut off, as if dead — is applied to the nation of Israel in exile in **Yechezkel (Ezekiel) 37:11**:

*"Then He said to me: Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They say, "Our bones are dried up, our hope is gone; we are doomed (nigzarnu — the same root)."*

The nation of Israel collectively described itself as 'cut off' during the Babylonian exile — using the same root as Yeshayahu 53:8. This is not a prophecy of one man's death. It is a description of national death-in-exile that **Yahweh** reverses through restoration.

### PROBLEM FIVE: THE NT APPLICATION VIOLATES THE TANAKH'S OWN INTERPRETIVE CONTEXT

The New Testament quotes or alludes to **Yeshayahu 53** approximately a dozen times. This is not Tanakh proof — it is an NT assertion. The NT writers were making an **interpretive claim**, not reporting a Tanakh finding. Under the Devarim 19:15 standard, the NT is a secondary source — a historical record of how early followers of Jesus read the text. It is not a primary authority that overrides the Tanakh's own internal evidence.

Furthermore, several NT applications of **Yeshayahu 53** materially alter the Hebrew. The Septuagint (LXX) — the Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures used by NT writers — contains textual variants from the Masoretic Text at key points in **Isaiah 53**. For example, the Dead Sea Scrolls Great Isaiah Scroll (1QIsa<sup>a</sup>) adds

'*or*' (**light**) in verse 11 — 'he will see *the light* and be satisfied' — a reading absent from the Masoretic Text, which many Christian translations have adopted selectively when it supports the resurrection reading.

## PART VII: THREE POSITIONS ON THE SERVANT — COVENANT EVIDENTIARY TABLE

Position	Proponents	Core Argument	Tanakh Strength
Israel / Righteous Remnant (Collective)	Rashi, Ibn Ezra, Radak, Talmud (Rava/Rav Huna), Outreach Judaism, Aish.com	9 prior identifications of Israel as Servant in context; 49:3 names Servant 'Yisra'el'; nations' confession in 53:1-9; zera = national continuity; nigzar parallels Yechezkel 37:11	STRONGEST — most internal Tanakh witnesses
Future Individual Messiah (Not Jesus)	Maimonides (Iggeret Teiman), Rabbi Alshich, Times of Israel analysis, Targum Jonathan (partial)	Talmud Sanhedrin 98b names Messiah via Isa 53:4; singular grammar; Messiah suffers then is victorious — but NOT Jesus who died and failed the Tanakh criteria	MODERATE — ancient support, but requires future fulfillment not yet seen
Jesus of Nazareth (Christian)	NT writers, Church Fathers, evangelical scholarship, Jews for Jesus	Singular grammar; NT application; early Jewish-Christian readings; Dead Sea Scroll 4Q471b self-glorification hymn	WEAKEST in Tanakh terms — NT is not primary authority; zera/yamim problems unsolved; Jesus did not match

Position	Proponents	Core Argument	Tanakh Strength
			messianic criteria of Devarim 17/18

## VII.A. DEVARIM 19:15 VERDICT

Under the two-or-three-witness standard, three independent Tanakh witnesses support the collective Israel interpretation: (1) the nine prior identifications; (2) the explicit naming in 49:3; (3) the parallel language of Yechezkel 37:11. Two witnesses support a future messianic individual (Talmud Sanhedrin 98b; Maimonides' framing) — but neither identifies this individual as Jesus, and both require Tanakh-criteria fulfillment (build the Temple, gather all Israel, establish world peace) that Jesus of Nazareth demonstrably did not fulfill.

**The verdict: The strongest Tanakh-internal evidentiary position is Israel as the Servant. The second-strongest is a future individual Messiah not yet identifiable. The weakest is Jesus of Nazareth — because it depends on NT authority, not Tanakh authority.**

## PART VIII: THREE-RELIGION AUDIT

Tradition	Position on Yeshayahu 53	Covenant Assessment
Judaism	Dominant view: Israel/righteous remnant as Servant. Minority view: future Messiah. Virtually no mainstream Jewish authority identifies the Servant as Jesus.	Aligned with the strongest Tanakh-internal witnesses. The national-Israel reading is coherent with the covenant framework of Yeshayahu 40–66 as a whole.
Christianity	Jesus of Nazareth is the Suffering Servant who died for the sins of all humanity, fulfilling this passage in his crucifixion and resurrection.	Must be tested against the Tanakh. Key problems: (1) NT is not primary authority; (2) 53:10 zera/yamim promises unresolved by crucifixion-resurrection; (3) Jesus did not fulfill Devarim 17:14–20 / 18:15–19 messianic criteria in the Tanakh.
Islam	Quran denies the crucifixion (Surah 4:157). Jesus (Isa) was not killed — another was made to appear like him. Some Muslim scholars cite Yeshayahu 53's silence on resurrection as supporting the Quranic position.	Partially aligned in that the Quran denies the death at the center of the Christian application. However, Islamic tradition does not follow the Tanakh-authority framework of this study. The covenant witness is that the

Tradition	Position on Yeshayahu 53	Covenant Assessment
		Tanakh text itself does not describe resurrection.

## PART IX: THE TANAKH'S OWN MESSIANIC CRITERIA — DID JESUS QUALIFY?

Even setting aside the Servant identity question, Christianity claims Jesus is the Messiah. The Tanakh gives specific, testable criteria for the Messiah in **Devarim 17:14–20; 18:15–19; Yeshayahu 2:1–4; 11:1–9; Yirmeyahu 23:5–6; Yechezkel 37:24–28; Zekhariah 14**. These criteria are not negotiable. **Yahweh** does not set tests He intends to redefine. Under Devarim 19:15, each criterion is a witness.

Tanakh Criteria for Mashiach	Reference	Did Jesus of Nazareth Fulfill This?
Rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem	Yechezkel 37:26–28; Zekhariah 6:12–13	No. The Temple was destroyed in 70 CE, 40 years after his death. No rebuilding.
Gather all of Israel back to the Land	Yeshayahu 11:12; Yirmeyahu 23:8; Yechezkel 37:21	No. The Jewish diaspora continued and intensified for 2,000 years after Jesus.
Usher in world peace — nations beat swords into plowshares	Yeshayahu 2:4; Micah 4:3	No. Two thousand years of war, including wars in the name of Christianity.
Cause all nations to know Yahweh	Zekhariah 14:9; Yeshayahu 11:9	No. The majority of humanity does not acknowledge Yahweh by that covenant name.
Reign on the throne of David	Yirmeyahu 23:5; 2 Shemuel 7:12–16	No. Jesus did not reign as a political king. He was executed by Rome.
If he dies before completing the work — he is not the Messiah	Maimonides, Mishneh Torah; Devarim 18:22 (false prophet test)	Died without completing any of the above. Maimonides: 'if he is killed, it is known that he is not the one promised.'

The Christian response to every one of these failures is: **'Second Coming.'** But this is a doctrine invented to explain prophetic non-fulfillment. The Tanakh gives no 'first coming / second coming' framework. There is one Messiah, one coming, one set of criteria. Under **Devarim 18:22** — the

Tanakh's own false-prophet test — if a prophetic word does not come to pass, it was not from **Yahweh**. The Messianic era has not arrived. Therefore the Messiah has not yet come.

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## PART X: THE HISTORICAL RECORD — HOW THE CHRISTIAN READING DEVELOPED

The Harvard Theological Review (Cambridge University Press, 2011) documents that the collective-Israel interpretation of the Servant is attested in ancient rabbinic sources and that Rashi's well-known collective commentary — often dismissed by Christian apologists as a medieval polemical development — was consistent with a stream of interpretation present in the Talmudic period.

The Talmud (**Sanhedrin 98b**) does cite Isaiah 53:4 in the context of the Messiah — identifying the Messiah as 'the leper of the house of Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi.' This is a suffering Messiah figure, but: (1) the Talmud does not name this figure as Jesus; (2) the Talmud was not written to validate Christian theology; (3) the Targum Jonathan, the Aramaic translation of the Prophets (~2nd century CE), identifies the Servant as the Messiah but applies the *suffering* to the nation and the *victory* to the Messiah — the reverse of the Christian reading.

Rashi's collective interpretation gained prominence in the 11th–12th centuries CE, partly in response to Christian missionary pressure following the First Crusade (1096) and its attendant massacres of Jewish communities. The Harvard Theological Review notes that Rashi's own Talmud commentary on Sanhedrin 98a associates the Messiah with Isaiah 53 — only his Bible commentary presents the collective reading. This discrepancy suggests the collective reading was a considered theological and pastoral response to anti-Jewish persecution, not an abandonment of ancient tradition.

The covenant position: **the internal Tanakh evidence for the collective reading is stronger than the interpretive tradition of any single period.** Whether the impetus for championing it was apologetic or not, the textual arguments stand on their own merits.

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## PART XI: DEVARIM 19:15 FINAL COVENANT VERDICT

Question	Witnesses (Tanakh-Internal)	Verdict
Who is the Servant?	W1: 9 explicit identifications of Yisra'el/Ya'akov in Isa 41–48; W2: Isa 49:3 names Servant 'Yisra'el'; W3: Yechezkel 37:11 parallel language	Israel / Righteous Remnant — CONFIRMED under two-witness standard

Question	Witnesses (Tanakh-Internal)	Verdict
Does the Servant die?	The passage uses language of national suffering; nigzar parallels Yechezkel 37; zera and yamim require survival; no resurrection vocabulary present	National death-in-exile followed by restoration — NOT individual crucifixion-resurrection
Is this a messianic prophecy?	Talmud Sanhedrin 98b; Targum Jonathan — both invoke a Messiah figure, but neither identifies him as Jesus and both require future messianic criteria	Possible future Messiah application — but zero Tanakh witnesses identify that Messiah as Jesus
Did Jesus fulfill the Tanakh messianic criteria?	Yeshayahu 2:4; 11:1–9; Yirmeyahu 23:5–6; Yechezkel 37:24–28; Zekhariah 14 — six testable criteria	NONE fulfilled in Jesus' lifetime. 'Second Coming' is a NT doctrine with no Tanakh basis.

**COVENANT FINDING: Yeshayahu 52:13–53:12, read in its full Tanakh context under the Devarim 19:15 evidentiary standard, does not support the Christian claim that Jesus of Nazareth is the Suffering Servant. The strongest Tanakh-internal evidence identifies the Servant as the nation of Yisra'el — despised, exiled, and suffering on account of the nations' sins — ultimately to be restored, exalted, and vindicated by Yahweh. This finding does not diminish Jesus as a historical figure or a teacher within the Jewish tradition of his time. It does require that his messianic status be evaluated against the Tanakh's own criteria — criteria he did not fulfill.**

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## PART XII: COVENANT WITNESS TO CURRENT EVENTS

The question of **Yeshayahu 53's** meaning is not merely academic. It drives geopolitics. Christian Zionism — the dominant political theology among evangelical Christians in the United States — is grounded in a theology that includes the NT application of Isaiah 53. The belief that Jesus fulfilled Isaiah's Servant passages has led to a corresponding belief that the 'new covenant' replaces the Mosaic covenant, that the Church is the 'new Israel,' and paradoxically that ethnic Israel must be supported and gathered into the Land to trigger Jesus' Second Coming.

**The covenant plumb line of Miqdash Bethel finds:** the misidentification of the Servant has produced a theological architecture that: (1) replaced Israel as the covenant people with the Church (supersessionism); (2) misread Yeshayahu 53 as individual atonement theology rather than national restoration history; (3) produced a geopolitical theology that supports the modern State of Israel for

NT-prophetic reasons, while simultaneously ignoring the covenant rights of the Palestinian people who — as established in Documents 111–116 of the Miqdash Bethel library — share descent from the twelve tribes.

The servant — Yisra'el — has suffered. The nations — as Yeshayahu 53 says — have watched and misunderstood. The covenant call of Miqdash Bethel to all three religious traditions is: return to the Tanakh, apply the two-witness standard, and receive the full covenant truth that Yahweh embedded in His servant's story.

## SCRIPTURE INDEX

Reference	Subject
Bereishit 12, 15, 17	Covenant zera promises to Avraham — seed is literal and national
Devarim 17:14–20	King criteria — Messiah must be a Tanakh-observant king
Devarim 18:15–22	Prophet criteria; false prophet test — unfulfilled word = not from Yahweh
Devarim 19:15	Two-or-three-witness evidentiary standard — foundational to all study
Yeshayahu 41:8–9; 43:10; 44:1,2,21; 45:4; 48:20	Yahweh names Yisra'el/Ya'akov as His Servant — nine times before Isa 52
Yeshayahu 49:3	Servant named explicitly as 'Yisra'el' inside Song Two
Yeshayahu 52:13–53:12	The Fourth Servant Song — subject of this entire study
Yechezkel 37:11	Nation of Israel describes itself as 'cut off' (nigzarnu) — same root as 53:8
Yeshayahu 2:1–4; 11:1–9	Messianic era criteria — world peace, universal knowledge of Yahweh
Yirmeyahu 23:5–6	Dawid's righteous branch criteria — reign and justice in the land
Yechezkel 37:24–28	Davidic covenant king; Temple rebuilt; Israel gathered — messianic criteria
Zekhariah 14:9	'Yahweh shall be King over all the earth; on that day Yahweh shall be One'

## COVENANT CLOSING DECLARATION

The covenant of **Yahweh** is not ambiguous. He named His servant. He gave His criteria. He set His standard. The Tanakh stands as its own witness. Miqdash Bethel does not come to condemn any

tradition — it comes bearing the plumb line. Every tradition that fears **Yahweh** will welcome the plumb line, however difficult the finding.

**MIQDASH BETHEL COVENANT INSTITUTION**

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*Devarim 19:15 — Two or Three Witnesses*