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## Isaiah in Ancient, Medieval, and Modern Jewish Traditions

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## **Abstract**

The book of Isaiah has been the most important prophetic text in Jewish reception history since the Second Temple period. There is evidence from Sirach 48 that already then, the book was thought to have two different parts, Isa 1–39, containing Isaiah's "biography" and message for his own time, and Isa 40–66, referring to the prophet's eschatological message concerning Jerusalem. Later, Abraham ibn Ezra's medieval commentary shows that this understanding of a bipartite book was regarded as valid. Jewish midrashim, which were developed from the first part of the book, depict important encounters between the prophet and the kings of Judah, for example, the identification of Hezekiah with Immanuel and the royal figure in Isa 9:5–6, and the martyrdom of Isaiah during the reign of Manasseh. The comforting message to Jerusalem in the latter part of the book was a topic that fascinated Jewish interpreters after the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 CE. Many Haftarat texts of Isaiah in the sabbatical cycle of the Jewish liturgy illustrate this Jerusalem-centered focus. Some topics in the reception history of Isaiah have been developed in encounters and confrontations with Christian exegesis, such as the reception of Isa 53.

## **Keywords**

Abraham ibn Ezra, Hezekiah, Isaiah 53, Isaiah 9, Immanuel, Rabbinic interpretation, midrash, Isaiah's martyrdom, Jewish-Christian polemic

## Chapter 27

### Isaiah in Ancient, Medieval, and Modern Jewish Traditions

Antti Laato

#### 27.1. Introduction

In this chapter I shall concentrate on some important topics in the book of Isaiah and deal with their reception history mainly in ancient and Medieval Jewish tradition with some references to modern Judaism. There are good tools available to those who are interested in finding more examples of the Jewish reception of the book of Isaiah. Armin Lange and Matthias Weigold have edited useful lists of quotations, as well as allusions to biblical texts in early Jewish writings.<sup>1</sup> A. M. Hyman's reference book can be used to search for quotations of the book of Isaiah in rabbinical literature.<sup>2</sup> Another good source is Jacob Neusner's two-volume study on Isaiah in the Talmud and Midrash, though it also lacks some important sources such as Pesiqta Rabbati.<sup>3</sup> An easy collection of the early Jewish and rabbinical writings is available in Louis Ginsberg's *Legends of the Jews*, where references to Isaiah-related material concerning the Judean kings Hezekiah and Manasseh in Jewish sources are presented in the notes of Ginsberg's paraphrases.<sup>4</sup> Medieval Jewish commentators' comments have been collected in the rabbinical Bible Miqraot Gedolot, which gives easy access to Rashi, Abraham ibn Ezra,

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<sup>1</sup> Lange and Weigold, *Biblical Quotations*, 126–140, 356–359.

<sup>2</sup> Hyman, *Torah Hakethubah Vehammesurah*.

<sup>3</sup> Neusner, *Isaiah*.

<sup>4</sup> Ginsberg, *Legends*, vol. 2, 1045–1058.

David Kimhi, and Abarbanel's interpretations, among others.<sup>5</sup> In addition to these studies that introduce their readers to the primary sources, there are also some good recent surveys worthy of mention.<sup>6</sup>

## 27.2. Historical and Biographical Perspectives

The book of Isaiah contains several dates relating to the regnal years of the kings of Judah (Isa 6:1; 7:1; 14:28; 36:1). The book also refers to Isaiah's encounters with the kings of Judah (Ahaz in Isa 7 and Hezekiah in Isa 36–39). It is therefore no wonder that the biographical details of Isaiah were dealt with in later reception history.

### 27.2.1. Bipartite Book

In modern scholarly literature, the book of Isaiah is divided between Isa 1–39, which contains the message of the historical prophet, and Isa 40–66, which in its totality is from a period later than Isaiah. It is interesting that this bipartite division was already known in early Jewish understanding of the book of Isaiah, even though not in such a way as to think that the latter part of the book would not have been written by Isaiah. The earliest postbiblical Jewish description of the message of Isaiah is given in Sirach 48:17–25, where Ben Sira recounts the events that took place in the reign of Hezekiah.<sup>7</sup> According to Ben Sira, Isaiah prophesied that Jerusalem would be delivered in the time of Hezekiah (Isa 36–37). Through the prophet's words, Hezekiah's life was also lengthened and the sun moved backward as a sign (Isa 38–

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<sup>5</sup> See, e.g., Hebrew-English edition *Mikraoth Gedoloth: Isaiah*, vols. 1–2.

<sup>6</sup> See the recent articles on “Isaiah” and “Martyrdom and Ascension of Isaiah” published in the *EBR*.

See further, Wilk and Gemeinhardt, *Transmission*.

<sup>7</sup> For Sir 48:17–25 in the context of the Book of Sirach, see Wieringen, “Sirach 48:17–25,” 191–210.

39). Ben Sira also states that Isaiah prophesied about the future (Sir 48:24–25): “By the spirit of might he saw the last things, and comforted those who mourned in Zion. He revealed what was to occur to the end of time and the hidden things before they came to pass.” The formulation “the hidden things before they came to pass” is reminiscent of similar expressions in Isa 41:22; 42:9; 43:18–19; 46:10; 48:6. The expression “comforted those who mourned in Zion” is taken from Isa 61:2–3, indicating that Isaiah was seen as the mighty prophet who predicted the coming salvation plan of God, which would take place in Zion.<sup>8</sup> Ben Sira is not alone in emphasizing the centrality of Isa 61:1–3. Even in the eschatological expectations of the Qumran community, Isa 61:1–3 plays an important role (11QMelchizedek and 4Q521). This indicates that Ben Sira understood the book of Isaiah as containing a bipartite message. The first part dealt with the time of Isaiah (as the historical details in Isa 1–39 strongly indicate), and the last part of the book was particularly concerned with Isaiah’s (eschatological) visions of the Jewish people.

As Ben Sira so, too, does Josephus interpret the prophecies of Isaiah as concerning both the prophet’s own time and the future.<sup>9</sup> In *Ant.* 9.276 Josephus writes that during the Assyrian siege Hezekiah “gave no thought to” Assyrian threats, “for he had confidence in his piety toward God and in the prophet Isaiah, by whom he was accurately informed of future events.” The prophet also warned Hezekiah of the coming Babylonian captivity (*Ant.* 10.33–34) as accounted for in 2 Kgs 20 and Isa 39. According to *Ant.* 10.35, Isaiah “was acknowledged to be a man of God and marvellously possessed of truth, and, as he was confident of never having spoken what was false, he wrote down in books all that he had prophesied and left them to be recognized as true from the event by men of future ages.” This portrait explicitly

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<sup>8</sup> Beentjes, “Hezekiah,” 77–88.

<sup>9</sup> See Feldman, “Josephus’ Portrait,” 583–608; Begg, “Isaiah in Josephus,” 233–243.

states that the book of Isaiah contains prophecies pertaining to the future, from the viewpoint of Isaiah (and perhaps even of Josephus). According to *Ant.* 11.5–6, Isaiah prophesied that the Persian king would allow the Jews to return home and rebuild the Temple 210 years before the time of Cyrus and 140 years before the destruction of the First Temple. Josephus's text here is reminiscent of the Septuagint translation of Isa 44:28, and it is probably a free quotation. According to Josephus, Cyrus read this prophecy in the book of Isaiah, but this statement was part of Josephus's argument that the biblical prophets were able to predict future events (see, e.g., *Contra Apion* 1.37; cf. also *Contra Apion* 1.15–27). An interesting fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecies is mentioned in *War* 7.432 and *Ant.* 13.64, 68, 71, according to which the statement in Isa 19:19 (about an altar for the Lord in the midst of the land of Egypt) was fulfilled when the Temple of Onias was erected in Leontopolis. Josephus states that this prophecy of Isaiah was made about six hundred years before the actual event (170 BCE). This temple was in use until the Jewish revolt in 70 CE.

This idea of the bipartite book was also followed later in medieval Judaism. A good example is Abraham ibn Ezra who, in his commentary, made a clear-cut division of the book of Isaiah into two parts. The first, Isa 1–39, contained the prophet's message to his contemporaries; in the latter, Isa 40–66, the prophet formulated his message related to the rebuilding of the Temple in the time of Zerubbabel to future generations.<sup>10</sup>

### **27.2.2. Midrashic Development of Isaiah's Encounters with Kings**

According to Isa 1:1, Isaiah was active during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah. However, only dialogues between the last two and Isaiah are extant in the biblical

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<sup>10</sup> Friedländer, *Commentary of Ibn Ezra*, 169–171. See further, Simon, “Ibn Ezra between Medievalism and Modernism,” 257–271; “Abraham Ibn Ezra,” 377–387.

tradition. This apparently explains why the rabbinical exegesis is not concerned with the contacts between Uzziah and Isaiah and Jotham and Isaiah but concentrates on the relations between the prophet and the two kings, Ahaz and Hezekiah. In addition, there are traditions concerning the martyrdom of Isaiah during the reign of Manasseh (see sec. 27.2.3). These contacts were developed in the rabbinical interpretations so that the biblical accounts were set “into an imaginary context or by specifying the actual dialogue between Isaiah and the kings.”<sup>11</sup>

According to the rabbinical exegesis Isaiah was descended from the House of David. Amoz, the father of Isaiah, was regarded as the brother of Amaziah, the king of Judah (Seder °Olam 10; bMegillah 10b; bSotah 10b). This explains why the prophet participated in the discussions with the Judean kings. Rabbinical midrashim were often based on rabbis’ sophisticated interpretive rules. A good example of this is how rabbis consider Ahaz. From the books of Kings they learned that Ahaz was described as a contrast to his righteous father Jotham and grandfather Uzziah. The name Ahaz is interpreted in GenR 42:3 as deriving from the verb with same root meaning “seize”: “R. Huna in the name of R. Eleazar: why was he called Ahaz? Because he seized synagogues and Schools.” This led the prophet Isaiah to utter the words in Isa 8:17: “R. Jacob in the name of R. Aha: ‘Isaiah said, I will wait for the Lord, who is hiding his face from the house of Jacob, and I will hope in him.’”<sup>12</sup> A similar tradition concerning Ahaz’s seizure of synagogues and schoolhouses is transmitted in ySanh 10:2. In bSanh 103b, reference is made to Isa 8:16 and there it is argued that “Ahaz annulled the

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<sup>11</sup> Porton, “Isaiah,” 693–716.

<sup>12</sup> Translation is taken from Neusner, *Genesis Rabbah*, 102–103.

sacrificial service and sealed the Torah.” However, in bSanh 104a it is argued that Ahaz will nevertheless receive an inheritance in the World to Come.<sup>13</sup>

The dialogue between Isaiah and Hezekiah is focused on the Assyrian invasion of Judah as narrated in Isa 36–39 and 2 Kgs 18–20. An important detail in the rabbinical discourses is the question of whether Hezekiah fulfills the status of the Messiah. The relevant rabbinical texts have been discussed in detail earlier, both in Kronholm’s and Laato’s studies, and therefore only a summary is given here.<sup>14</sup> Hezekiah is given the name Immanuel (Isa 7:14)<sup>15</sup> by Isaiah after Sennacherib’s army has been destroyed in front of Jerusalem (ExR 18:5; cf. 2 Chron 32:7–8; LXX of Isa 7:14; Justin, *Dialogue with Tryphon a Jew*, secs. 43, 68, 71, and 77). Even the messianic prophecy of Isa 9:1–6 has been interpreted as referring to Hezekiah (bSanh 94a; RuthR 7:2; GenR 97). The interpretation of Isa 9 as referring to Hezekiah led, however, to a new problem: what was the connection between Hezekiah and the Messiah? Verse 6 clearly describes a messianic period: unbroken peace, a reign wherein judgment and righteousness would prevail, and so on. Such hopes befit only the messianic period.

Discussion in the rabbinical literature indicates how seriously the Jews came to regard the

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<sup>13</sup> See further, LevR 36:3.

<sup>14</sup> Kronholm, *Der kommende Hiskia*; “Den kommende Hiskia,” 109–117; Laato, *Who Is Immanuel; About Zion*; “Hezekiah,” 111–138; “Understanding Zion Theology,” 22–46.

<sup>15</sup> It is possible to detect a long Jewish-Christian confrontation concerning the translation of the word ‘*almā*’ in Isa 7:14 as to whether it should be rendered as “virgin” (*Parthenos*, so Septuagint) or “young girl” (*neanis*, so Symmachos, Aquila, and Theodotion). Concerning the univocal interpretation of *parthenos* as “virgin,” see the discussion in Kamesar, “Virgin of Isaiah 7:14,” 51–75; Weren, “Quotations from Isaiah,” 447–465; Troxel, “Isaiah 7,14–16,” 1–22; Oswalt, *Holy One of Israel*, 121–133. Concerning the Jewish-Christian confrontation on the interpretation of Isa 7:14, see Skarsaune, “Jewish and Christian Interpretations,” 25–45.



question, Was Hezekiah the Messiah after all? An interesting discussion is found in bSanh 94, where God wished to appoint Hezekiah as the Messiah, and Sennacherib as Gog and Magog. The problem, however, was that Hezekiah did not utter hymns to God even though God had saved him from the Assyrian army. Therefore, it is argued in bSanh 94 that the closed letter *mem* was written in the middle of the word למרבה (Isa 9:6) even though the open form would have been expected (cf. also RuthR 7:2). This indicates that God had intended to name Hezekiah as the Messiah but that this title was not granted because he did not sing a psalm of praise to the Lord. It is important to note that Hezekiah's messianic character is abrogated precisely on the basis of verses 5–6, which most clearly refer to a messianic period. However, some rabbis, such as Hillel (brother of Juda II), seem to have believed that Hezekiah was the Messiah, but such a view is refuted (see bSanh 99a; see further CantR 4:8,3). One might indeed speak of the Messiah as a kind of Hezekiah Redivivus in the rabbinical literature. This idea also seems to be present in R. Johanan b. Zakkai's last words in bBer 28b: "At the moment of his departure he said to them: Remove the vessels so that they shall not become unclean, and prepare a throne for Hezekiah the king of Judah who is coming."<sup>16</sup> The issue of Hezekiah's messianic status seems to have been solved in the rabbinical literature by regarding him as a kind of model for the coming Messiah. One interesting problem is the way in which the interpretations of the Immanuel prophecy and Isa 9:1–6 as referring to Hezekiah date back to the historical prophet.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> The same statement is also preserved in the name of R. Jacob b. Idi and R. Joshua b. Levi (ySot IX, 16). It is also found in Abot de Rabbi Nathan XXV.

<sup>17</sup> For this, see two different possibilities. According to Antti Laato, *Who Is Immanuel; About Zion*; and "Understanding Zion theology," the Hezekiah-interpretation is secondary as a consequence of failed prophecy, though according to Young, *Hezekiah*, Isaiah regarded Hezekiah as an ideal king.

The Christian counterargument to the Jewish interpretation that Isa 7:14–16 refers to Hezekiah was a chronological problem that can be derived from the Second Book of Kings. Hezekiah was twenty-five years old when he became king (2 Kgs 18:2), but Ahaz ruled for only sixteen years (2 Kgs 16:2). Therefore, Hezekiah was born before Ahaz became king, and because Isa 7 presupposes that Ahaz was king when Isaiah delivered his Immanuel prophecy, Hezekiah cannot be identified with Immanuel.<sup>18</sup> This counterargument, which Jews themselves might also have found, was so convincing that the Medieval Jewish interpreters Rashi and Ibn Ezra did not follow the rabbinical exegesis by identifying Hezekiah with Immanuel.<sup>19</sup> Instead, both of them refer to the chronological problem and regard Immanuel as being Isaiah's own son (Isa 8:3). On the other hand, Rashi and ibn Ezra follow the rabbinical exegesis by identifying the king of Isa 9:5–6 with Hezekiah because that Isaianic passage contains no chronological problem that would nullify the interpretation in terms of Hezekiah. This does not mean that these medieval interpreters would not have been enthusiastic opponents of Christian exegesis. Rashi, ibn Ezra, and David Kimhi refuted the Christian interpretation by noting that the birth of Immanuel is linked with the promise in Isa 7:16, according to which Ahaz's enemies would be destroyed, and that it made no sense if the prophecy referred to events that would take place many hundred years after Ahaz.

### 27.2.3. Isaiah's Martyrdom

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<sup>18</sup> This Christian counterexegesis can be found in Justin Martyr's *Dialogue* and in Cyril's of Jerusalem Catechesis sermon number 12.

<sup>19</sup> It is, however, worth noting that Joseph Kimhi, in *Book of the Covenant*, 54–58, still maintained the early rabbinical view that Immanuel should be identified with Hezekiah.

The Martyrdom and Ascension of Isaiah (MAI) is a Christian text that contains older Jewish legends about Isaiah, as well as Christian reinterpretations based on them.<sup>20</sup> Scholars seem to agree that the MAI contains an older Jewish core, mainly in 1:1–3:13a + 5:1–16, concerning Isaiah's martyrdom in the reign of Manasseh (also mentioned in Heb 11:37).<sup>21</sup> For example, Origen (Comm. Matthaei 10,18) refers to Isaiah's martyrdom by noting that it is a part of the Apocryphon of Isaiah, and in this context, Origen mentions that this story is “dishonoured in their own country among the Jews,” which probably indicates that Origen regarded the story as being of Jewish origin. The conclusion that Isaiah's martyrdom was originally of Jewish origin is supported by the rabbinical traditions that contain similar descriptions of Isaiah's death to that attested in the MAI.

According to Isa 1:1, Isaiah did not prophesy during the reign of Manasseh. Nevertheless, there are some Isaianic texts that have been used in the MAI to indicate that some prophecies were uttered *de facto* or, at least, became actualized in the reign of Manasseh. The contrast between Hezekiah and Manasseh, so obvious in the MAI, is apparently based on 2 Kgs 18–21 (cf., MAI 2:6, which refers to “the book of the Kings of Judah and Israel”). At the beginning of the MAI Hezekiah gives “words of righteousness” to his son. This explains why Manasseh, after rejecting his father's instructions, later came into conflict with Isaiah, who represented the “words of righteousness.” In MAI 3:6–10, the accusation of Isaiah by Belkira, the evil prophet of Manasseh (and of Samaritan origin), contains references to various prophecies that are preserved in the book of Isaiah (Isa 1:7; Isa 6; Isa 1:10 respectively):

Isaiah and the prophets who (are) with him prophesy against Jerusalem and against the cities of Judah, that they will be laid waste . . .

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<sup>20</sup> See Knight, *Ascension; Disciples*.

<sup>21</sup> Hall, “Ascension of Isaiah,” 289–306; Knibb, “Isaianic Traditions,” 633–650, esp. 636–645.

And Isaiah himself has said, “I see more than Moses the prophet.” Moses said, “There is no man who can see the Lord and live.” But Isaiah has said, “I have seen the Lord, and behold I am alive.” Know therefore, O king, that they (are) false prophets.

And he has called Jerusalem Sodom, and the princes of Judah and Jerusalem he has declared (to be) the people of Gomorrah. (MAI 3:6–10)

The quotations from Isa 1:7 and Isa 1:10 suit well in the development of the midrashic motif concerning Isaiah’s martyrdom in the reign of Manasseh because an early Jewish interpreter (who regarded Hezekiah as an ideal king; see sec. 27.2.2) may have related them to the period after the invasion of Sennacherib—that is, the period of Manasseh. These wordings of Isaiah are interpreted in such a way that the prophet attacked the king and his elite in Jerusalem. Isa 6, in turn, seems to contain a typical motif on how the righteous man is falsely accused of having delivered arrogant speech against God (cf. 1 Kgs 21:9–10, where the central motif is that Naboth “has cursed both God and the king”). Isaiah was executed by being sawn in half with a wooden saw. This torture is reflected in slightly different versions in the rabbinical traditions, in ySanh 28c, bYeb 49b, and Pesiqta Rabbati 4.3, and all provide parallels to MAI.<sup>22</sup>

It is worth noting that the chronological framework of 2 Kings indicates that Manasseh was not yet born when Hezekiah fell ill in his fourteenth regnal year. Manasseh was twelve years old when he became king and Hezekiah received fifteen extra years of life after his recovery from illness. The passage of ySanh 28c is preceded by an account of the illness of Hezekiah, which is explained as a punishment because he had not been willing to beget children (ySanh 28bc).<sup>23</sup> Hezekiah excused himself by saying to Isaiah that “I saw that I would produce an evil son.” Finally, Hezekiah married the daughter of Isaiah, thereby hoping

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<sup>22</sup> Porton, “Isaiah,” 702–716.

<sup>23</sup> For further, discussion of this topic, see Rothstein, “Hezekiah’s Prayer,” 267–283.

that he would beget a righteous son, but instead he received an evil one. The point of the story is that Manasseh killed his own grandfather, Isaiah. The second tradition about Isaiah's martyrdom in bYeb 49b contains an interesting parallel to MAI 3:9, which combines Moses's sayings with those by Isaiah, and relates Moses's seeing of God in particular to Isaiah's vision in Isa 6.<sup>24</sup>

### 27.3. Isaiah's Eschatological Message

The future expectation and eschatological expectations have been used quite flexibly in the biblical studies. When exactly in the post-exilic period the future expectations were interpreted in terms of end-time eschatology is not easy to evaluate. The book of Ezra—

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Said Raba, He brought him [= Isaiah] to trial and then killed him. He said to him, Your lord, Moses, said, For men shall not see me and live (Exod 33:20), but you have said I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up (Isa 6:1). Your lord, Moses, said, For what great nation is there that has God so near to them, as the Lord our God is whenever we call upon him (Deut 4:7), and you have said, Seek [only] the Lord when he may be found [which is not always] (Isa 55:6). Your lord, Moses, said, The number of your days I will fulfil (Ex 23:26), but you said, And I will add to your days fifteen years (2 Kgs 20:6 = Isa 38:5). Isaiah said, I know that he will not accept anything I say to him, and if I reply, I will turn him into a deliberate murderer. He therefore pronounced the Divine Name and was swallowed up by a cedar. So they brought the cedar and sawed it in half. When the saw reached his mouth he died, for having said, And I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips (Isa 6:5). (translation from Porton, "Isaiah," 704)

Nehemiah contains some interesting references to the themes of the book of Isaiah, indicating that the adherents of Ezra and Nehemiah apparently belonged to religious groups who studied the Isaiah material and interpreted it.<sup>25</sup> Chronicles contains references to Isaianic themes which apparently were understood as future expectations.<sup>26</sup> A more difficult case is the Septuagint translation of the book of Isaiah.<sup>27</sup> Sirach 48:17–25 (already referred to) seems to contain some eschatological aspects even though it may be safest to speak about Isaiah's future message. The future scenario of the book of Isaiah was interpreted in the terms of Jewish eschatology and apocalyptic in a clearer way in the book of Daniel,<sup>28</sup> in the Dead Sea scrolls,<sup>29</sup> and in the Animal Apocalypse in 1 Enoch 85–90.<sup>30</sup> Therefore, it is understandable that the book of Isaiah became an important resource for Jewish eschatological speculation—one branch being visible in the New Testament through which a Christian reception history

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<sup>25</sup> For this, see Laato, “Isaianic Texts.” Note also the articles published in Häusl, *Denkt nich mehr an das Frühere!*

<sup>26</sup> Beentjes, “Isaiah,” 15–24, and the literature referred to in the chapter.

<sup>27</sup> For general discussion of the Septuagint translation, see Seeligman, *Septuagint Version*, 119–294; van der Kooij, *Textzeugen*. The eschatological message of the Septuagint Isaiah is discussed in de Sousa, *Eschatology*, where he cannot find any clear-cut eschatological translation tendency.

<sup>28</sup> See, e.g., Blenkinsopp, *Opening*, 14–27; Lester, *Daniel Evokes Isaiah*.

<sup>29</sup> See, e.g., Blenkinsopp, *Opening*, 89–128; Mezenthin, *Jesaja-Auslegung*; Tzoref, “Textuality and Identity,” 133–165. See further, the contribution XXX in this volume.

<sup>30</sup> Laato, “Rewriting,” 28–51. In this article, I argued that the author of the Animal Apocalypse used many texts of the Book of Isaiah when he rewrote Israel's history.

was developed.<sup>31</sup> Some significant examples illustrate what potentiality the book of Isaiah gave for Jewish reception history.

### 27.3.1. The Messiah

As noted in section 27.2.2 above, the Immanuel prophecy, as well as Isa 9:1–6, was interpreted as referring to Hezekiah in the rabbinical writings, and there is much evidence that this interpretation was already established in the redaction of the book of Isaiah. It is therefore no wonder that there is no clear evidence in early Jewish reception history that these texts would have been interpreted in terms of the Messiah.<sup>32</sup> The situation is different regarding Isa 11. There are many examples from the Second Temple period that this Isaianic text inspired Jewish interpreters in their messianic speculations.<sup>33</sup>

This same interpretive tendency continued in rabbinical writings in which Isa 11 was regarded as a messianic text and Hezekiah (the figure of Isa 7:14 and 9:5–6) was one of his type, as was David (see, e.g., GenR 97; RuthR 7.2).<sup>34</sup> Medieval Jewish commentators regarded Isa 11 as a messianic text. Rashi notes *expressis verbis* that this text was uttered to Hezekiah as consolation and that the Messiah would be one of Hezekiah's offspring. Ibn Ezra discusses, with two alternatives, the Messianic interpretation and Rabbi Moshe Hakohen's

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<sup>31</sup> The book of Isaiah was called as “fifth gospel” in the early church—a term that illustrates its centrality.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. Feldman, “Josephus’ Portrait,” 582–608, esp. 602–603. Feldman argues that bSanh 94a shows that Isa 9:5–6 was interpreted in terms of the Messiah. However, the rabbinic text states that God intended to make Hezekiah the Messiah, not that Hezekiah was the Messiah.

<sup>33</sup> See, e.g., Collins, *Scepter*, 49–73.

<sup>34</sup> Concerning rabbinical Messianic exegesis, note esp. Neusner, *Messiah in Context*.

interpretation that the Shoot is Hezekiah himself.<sup>35</sup> Hezekiah as the Shoot of Isa 11 was provided as the right interpretation in the medieval anti-Christian text *Nizzahon Vetus*.<sup>36</sup> In his commentary on Lev 26:6, Nachmanides maintains that Isa 11:6–9 was to have been fulfilled during the reign of Hezekiah, but because the Jewish people had not merited the Messianic age, the fulfillment of the prophecy was moved into the future.<sup>37</sup>

The messianic peace in Isa 11:6–9 became one of the most characteristic signs of the messianic time in Judaism and even today is still one of the most central biblical texts considered to illustrate the messianic era.<sup>38</sup>

### 27.3.2. Inclusive Universalism

“Universalism” and the opposite term “particularism” have been used in problematic ways, especially because the universalism is often related to Christianity and contrasted with “particularistic” Judaism.<sup>39</sup> In Jewish tradition both aspects—universalism and particularism—have existed.<sup>40</sup> Universalism was an important reception historical theme already in the Second Temple Jewish texts where it was related to the book of Isaiah.

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<sup>35</sup> Concerning ibn Ezra’s interpretation, see in Friedländer, *Commentary of Ibn Ezra*, 59–63 (the Hebrew text in 24\*–25\*).

<sup>36</sup> See Berger, *Jewish-Christian Debate*, 60–62, 106–109.

<sup>37</sup> Rabbi Chavel, *Ramban Nachmanides, Leviticus*, 456–457. The possibility of Hezekiah becoming the Messiah Nachmanides apparently relates his statement to bSanh 94a.

<sup>38</sup> See, e.g., Ravitzky, *Messianism, Zionism*, 1; Andersson-Löf, *May He Speedily Come*, 237–276.

<sup>39</sup> Runesson, “Particularistic Judaism,” 55–75.

<sup>40</sup> There is a long discussion pertaining to the ways in which, for example, the Deutero-Isaianic material should be read in terms of universalism or Jewish internationalism supporting



The book of Isaiah contains many texts that have been stamped with the pattern “eschatological pilgrimage of the nations” (e.g., Isa 2:2–4; 60:1–22; 66:18–21) in scholarly discussion. This pattern is present in several second Temple Jewish writings, and scholars discuss the ways in which the idea of proselytism and the concept of “righteous Gentiles”<sup>41</sup> are relevant in them.<sup>42</sup> It seems clear that the strong criticism of mixed marriages in the book of Ezra-Nehemiah led to discussions concerning the ways in which marriages to foreign women were possible. These discussions, in turn, raised the question of proselytism, as indicated in the book of Ruth and in the story of Joseph and Aseneth. There are texts in the book of Isaiah which were possible to use in argumentation for proselytism. Isa 56:1–8, for example, refers to the inclusion of foreigners into the people of God,<sup>43</sup> and the Septuagint translation of Isa 54:15 uses the word “proselytes.” Aspects of universalism have also been related to the title of the Servant, “a light for the Gentiles” (Isa 42:6; 49:6).

### 27.3.3. Torah Studies for Gentiles in Jerusalem

Isa 2:2–4 is a programmatic passage in the book of Isaiah. It contains a utopian vision that one day all nations would come to Jerusalem to learn to know the Torah of YHWH. Many texts in

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particularistic thinking. This discussion has continued in different ways in Jewish tradition until modern times. For this, see Lundgren, *Particularism*.

<sup>41</sup> In later rabbinical writings, the concept of “righteous gentiles” became important when the relations of Jews to pagans were discussed (earliest reference is t.Sanh 13.2). Beside this concept of “righteous gentiles,” reference is made also to “seven precepts,” which are binding for all the sons of Noah (t.Abod.Zar. 8.4).

<sup>42</sup> See discussion and the texts in Jeremias, *Jesus* **Y** *Promise*, 55–62; Donaldson, “Proselytes,” 3–27.

<sup>43</sup> Gosse, “Sabbath,” 359–370.

Isa 40–66 relate to this programmatic text. The Hebrew word *tōrā* in Isa 2:3 is open to multiple interpretations (e.g., the prophetic instruction), but in Jewish reception history Isa 2:2–4 was understood as the nations being willing to learn the Mosaic Torah. This becomes apparent in rabbinical exegesis. For example, in b.AvodahZarah 24a Eliezer ben Hyrcanus refers to Isa 60 and interprets it as referring to those gentiles who would become proselytes in times to come.

In Medieval Jewish exegesis, Isa 2:2–4 was self-evidently related to the Messianic era. Ibn Ezra, who often seeks historical interpretations on Isaiah's texts, argues that this text cannot refer to any known historical period in the past because there have always been wars. Isa 2:2–4, in turn, presupposes that nations would destroy their weapons and come to learn Torah. Both Rashi and ibn Ezra argued that the Temple Mount would not become physically higher than other mounts. The expression “it shall be raised above the hills” had to be understood metaphorically. Rashi compares the events in Isa 2:2–4 with the miracles that took place on other mounts: in Sinai (giving of the Torah), in Carmel (fire from God), and in Tabor (victory over Sisera), and regards the coming eschatological event in Zion as being even more wonderful than these.

### **27.3.4. New Exodus**

A new exodus to the Land of Israel from foreign lands is one significant event in the Messianic era. It is attested already in the Second Temple Jewish texts (e.g., PsSol 17:26–28; cf. also 4 Ezra 13:39–50), and then also in rabbinical writings (e.g., mSanh 10:3; bMeg 29a). The new exodus is also a central theme in Jewish liturgical tradition. It appears in the tenth prayer of Amidah, formulated with the aid of two Isaiah-passages, Isa 11:12 (the signal to be raised for nations), and 27:13 (the sounding of shofar that summoned all dispersed Jews). The

prayer is rendered as follows: “Sound a great horn for our freedom and quickly raise a signal to gather us. Blessed are you, Lord, who gathers the outcasts of your people Israel.”

### **27.3.5. Longevity and Paradise**

Isa 65:17–25 is an interesting text that refers to the longevity of human beings in the new eschatological period in Jerusalem and the Holy Land. Echoes of longevity in the eschatological future are visible in many Jewish texts from the Second Temple period onwards (1 Enoch 25:5–7; Jubilees 23; Josephus: Ant. 1.107; 2 Bar 73:2–4) and all these texts are related in some way to this Isaianic text.<sup>44</sup> The author of the book of Jubilees argues that when the Jewish people learn to live according to the Torah of YHWH once more, they will begin to live longer.

In Medieval Jewish commentaries Isa 65:17–25 was related to the Messianic era even though there was a lack of agreement as to whether the new heavens and the new earth that would be created should be taken figuratively or literally. According to ibn Ezra, they are figurative expressions, while Rashi regards them as literal expressions because another passage in Isa 66:22 refers to this same promise.

## **27.4. Isaiah 53 in Jewish Tradition**

The interpretation of Isa 53 has played an important role in Jewish-Christian confrontation and dialogue for centuries, and both sides have also presented the other's viewpoints to Isa 53

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<sup>44</sup> See Koskenniemi, “When the Sin Is Gone,” 111–130.

in problematic ways.<sup>45</sup> There are different misunderstandings that have developed in Christian exegesis and theology, and that—in different variants—still prevail today in scholarly discourses.

### 27.4.1. Isaiah 53 and Haftarah

The *first* misunderstanding based on which reading Isa 53 was avoided in the synagogue liturgy because it was not part of Haftarah texts is often repeated among nonexperts in theology. During the time of the formation of rabbinical Judaism, it was established that the whole Torah was to have been read in synagogues in an annual (Babylonian) or triennial (Palestinian) cycle. At this time the prophetic Haftarot had not yet been established, but it was possible, nonetheless, to read different texts from **Nebi'im** that illustrated the Torah text of the Sabbath (see, e.g., Megillah 4:4). There were also some early traditions that certain prophetic texts (e.g., Ezek 1; 10; 16) were not to be used as Haftarah texts (Megillah 4:10). Nevertheless, Isa 53 was never mentioned as a text that could not be read as Haftarah.

In the centuries that followed the formation of the Talmud, the Haftarot were established.<sup>46</sup> In the light of the Haftarot lists, it becomes clear that many other texts from the book of Isaiah were not read. Because Isa 53 is not among these Haftarot texts, this indicates convincingly that it is impossible to conclude that it was intentionally avoided.<sup>47</sup>

### 27.4.2. The Servant as Israel

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<sup>45</sup> I have discussed these different interpretations in Laato, *Servant of the Lord*. A good source for Jewish interpretation of Isa 53 can be found in the text book of Neubauer, *Fifty-Third Chapter*, and their translations can be found in Neubauer and Driver, *Suffering Servant*.

<sup>46</sup> See Mann, *Bible as Read*.

<sup>47</sup> See further, Langer, "Frieden," 293–314, esp. 295–298.

The *second* misunderstanding is that the famous medieval Jewish exegete Rashi was the first to establish the collective interpretation (i.e., Israel) in Isa 53.<sup>48</sup> Before Rashi, Jewish exegetes would have interpreted Isa 53 mainly as referring to the Messiah. However, the Talmud and Midrashim contain different ways of identifying the Servant: he could be a righteous man (bBer 5a), an ill person (GenR 20:10), Rabbi Akiba (yShek 5:1), the Messiah (bSanh 98b; RuthR 5:6), or Moses (bSot 14a). Saadiah Gaon interpreted the Servant as referring to the prophet Jeremiah.<sup>49</sup> Saadiah's interpretation of Isa 53 is not restricted merely to Jeremiah. He writes that the suffering servant could, in a general way, be seen as reflecting the fates of the prophets, and then argues that the text fit the life of Jeremiah. Saadiah's interpretation is reminiscent of modern interpretations in which the suffering servant is identified with the prophet. In these interpretations the Servant of Isa 53 is often compared to the picture given of Jeremiah in the Hebrew Bible.

It is also impossible to claim that Rashi was the first to interpret Isa 53 as referring to Israel. His interpretation became popular in the Middle Ages and can be seen in many Jewish commentaries on the book of Isaiah; nonetheless, this "collective" interpretation is of ancient origin. In his work *Contra Celsum* 1.54–55, Origen notes that his Jewish opponent interpreted Isa 53 as "reference to the whole people, regarded as one individual, and as being in a state of dispersion and suffering, in order that many proselytes might be gained, on account of the

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<sup>48</sup> Rashi's famous interpretation was connected with the massacre of Jews at the time of the First Crusade. See Chazan, *European Jewry; God*; "Anti-Jewish Violence," 21–43.

<sup>49</sup> Alobaidi, *Messiah*, 12–17. A much stronger argument, which Alobaidi has overlooked, is that Abraham Ibn Ezra presents five details for Saadiah's Jeremiah interpretation. All these five details mentioned by Ibn Ezra can be found in the text edited by Alobaidi, which is regarded as having been written by Saadiah. See Friedländer, *Commentary of Ibn Ezra*, 240–241 (the Hebrew text pp. 90–91). See further, Laato, *Servant of the Lord*, 309–315.

dispersion of the Jews among numerous heathen nations.” This being the case, we have solid evidence that already in the beginning of the third century CE some Jews interpreted Isa 53 as referring to the whole people of Israel. That such collective interpretation received support even from Second Temple texts is clear from Dan 12:3–4. Moreover, that Dan 12:3–4 may be connected with Isa 53 receives support from the Second Maccabean books, which contain Jewish martyr theology according to which the sufferings of the Jewish martyrs are of benefit to the whole people (2 Macc 7:32–38).<sup>50</sup>

### **27.4.3. Avoiding Vicarious Interpretation in Isaiah 53**

The *third* kind of misunderstanding is the way of characterizing Targum Jonathan's translation of Isa 53 in simple lines as anti-Christian. Scholars have emphasized that the Targumic translation has consequently downplayed all expressions that refer to the Servant having died vicariously. This tendency has been interpreted as a consequence of anti-Christian efforts.

Even though I do regard it as possible that the translation of Isa 53 may have been made with an eye to Christian interpretation, it is nevertheless difficult to say that the vicarious suffering and death of the servant was avoided for this reason. Indeed, the Wisdom of Solomon is a pre-Christian Jewish text and contains a reception of Isa 53 where the vicarious suffering of the Servant was avoided. Many words and expressions in Wisd 2–5 parallel words and expressions found in Isa 52–54 (the Septuagint). At the final judgment sinners would finally realize what they had done. “They shall come, when their sins are reckoned up,

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<sup>50</sup> In this connection it can also be mentioned that the collective dimension is also an important aspect in Christian martyr theology and in the New Testament parenetic texts: Phil 2:6–11 and 1 Pet 2:18–25. The Christ is the typos for Christians who, too, should follow the way of suffering described in Isa 53. In Christian martyr theology, however, the vicarious aspect was not dominant.

with cowardly fear; and their lawless deeds shall convict them to their face” (Wisd 4:20).

There is no mention of the righteous one atoning for the sins of the sinners by his innocent suffering. This being the case, Wisd 2–5 indicates that the vicarious dimension of Isa 53 could be avoided in Jewish interpretations without any anti-Christian polemics. It is also worth noting that the way in which Wisd 2–5 interprets Isa 53 is open to collective interpretation (cf. 3.2).

#### 27.4.4. Jewish Messianic Interpretation of Isaiah 53

Finally, in Christian circles it is often emphasized that the presence of the messianic interpretation of Isa 53 in the Jewish texts implies that even Jews believed in the suffering and dying Messiah who had to atone for the sins of the people by his own death. This misunderstanding is based on a problematic reading of the rabbinical sources, and such a misunderstanding is well documented in the medieval sources as, for example, in the Barcelona disputation of 1263.<sup>51</sup> Pablo Christiani, a Jewish converter, had chosen a new aggressive mission strategy against the Jews. He attempted to convince Jews that the rabbinical literature in fact supported all elementary Christian doctrines about the Messiah.<sup>52</sup> In particular, Pablo Christiani wanted to show that the rabbinical sources gave support to the

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<sup>51</sup> There are two accounts of the Barcelona disputation: the shorter Christian version (in Latin, the author of which is unknown) and Nahmanides’s (1194–1270) own account in Hebrew. See Nahmanides’s *Vichuah* in Chavel, *Kitvei Moses ben Nahman*, 1:302–320. A good English translation can be found in Maccoby, *Judaism on Trial*. Quotations below are from Maccoby’s translation. A good introduction to the Barcelona disputation is Chazan, *Barcelona and Beyond*.

<sup>52</sup> We know from Raymundus Martini’s *Pugio fidei* that Nahmanides gives a reliable picture of the Christian attempt to argue that rabbinical documents supported Christian doctrines. See Cohen, *Friars*, 103–169; Chazan, *Daggers of Faith*, 67–158.

Christian view that Isa 53 referred to the Messiah who had to suffer and die for the people of Israel.

Pablo Christiani provided typical examples of *eisegesis* where some ideas in the rabbinical documents were taken out of their context and compared with Christian ideas. He managed to cause confusion among Jews that later forced Nahmanides to present his own account of this disputation to the Jews. In particular, the messianic interpretation of Isa 53 was regarded as actual. After the disputation, Nahmanides dealt with how Jews could interpret Isa 53 in the terms of the Messiah, even though he regarded the identification between Israel and the Servant as assured.<sup>53</sup>

Pablo and Nahmanides's discussion in Barcelona provides a clear illustration that the messianic interpretation of Isa 53 does not imply that the Messiah would suffer and die vicariously. In *Pesikta Rabbati*, and later also in the *Zohar*, the preexistence of the Messiah is presupposed, and he is described as waiting in the presence of God and asking when he can appear in the world and save his people from all their struggles. God's time, however, has not yet come. This waiting for the time to appear is the Messiah's suffering for his people, and it is this time that has been interpreted vicariously: the delay of the Messiah's appearance atones for the sins of the people. It is, however, clear that this interpretation radically differs from the Christian way of reading Isa 53.

### **27.4.5. Isaiah 53 and Chabad-Lubavitch**

The treatment of Isa 53 in the Jewish interpretive tradition would be incomplete without mentioning the Chabad-Lubavitch movement. Rabbi Menachem Schneerson was regarded as

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<sup>53</sup> See this interpretation of Nahmanides in Chavel, *Kitvei Moses ben Nahman*, 1:321–326. The text is also given in Neubauer, *Fifty-third Chapter of Isaiah*, 75–81; its translation is in Neubauer and Driver, *Suffering Servant*, 78–85.



a messianic figure in the movement based on the expectations of the Hasidic work Tanya, and these expectations did not founder after he died in 1994.<sup>54</sup> Schneerson's illness and death actualized Isa 53 in Jewish reception history in a new way, which had not been seen since the rise of Christianity.<sup>55</sup> Isa 53 provided a biblical background for understanding why Schneerson had to die before his messianic status was publicly demonstrated. This treatment of Jewish messianic expectations has received harsh criticism among Jewish circles.<sup>56</sup>

## 27.5. Some Individual Topics and Themes

At the end of this survey some important individual topics and themes will be discussed. They indicate how the Book of Isaiah has always been an important biblical source for theological reflection and reasoning in Jewish thinking. In some cases it is also important to note how Jewish reception history interprets some Isaianic keytexts otherwise than Christian reception.

### 27.5.1. Fallen Morning Star

There is a long interpretive tradition, particularly in the Christian texts, that the fallen Morning Star in Ezek 14:12–17, as well as in Ezek 28, depicts Satan (see Luke 10:17). When one attempts to find early examples of such “Satanic” interpretation of Isa 14 and Ezek 28 in Jewish tradition, however, the results are surprisingly scanty. For example, the rabbinic

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<sup>54</sup>To understand Chabad-Lubavitch messianic expectations, one has to read the Hasidic work the Tanya, written by Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi, the founder of Chabad Hasidism, published in 1797. See, e.g., *Likkutei Amarim; Lessons in Tanya*, vols. 1–5. For this analysis of Chabad-Lubavitch messianism and the Tanya, see Rosengard, *We Want Moshiach Now!*

<sup>55</sup>Marcus, “Once and Future Messiah,” 381–401.

<sup>56</sup>See, e.g., Berger, *The Rebbe*.

exegesis insisted that both passages should be interpreted as referring to human beings: Isa 14 to the Babylonian king and Ezek 28 to Hiram or to Adam.<sup>57</sup> This same tendency to interpret Isa 14 as referring to the Babylonian king (Nebuchadnezzar) is presented in the Medieval Jewish commentaries (Rashi, ibn Ezra, David Kimhi following his father Joseph Kimhi).

As far as I know, the earliest interpretations of Isa 14 as referring to Satan can be found in the Life of Adam and Eve<sup>58</sup> and in the Slavonic Enoch (29:4–5; 31:4).<sup>59</sup> It is difficult to argue in which ways these texts originated from the time before Christ, however, and whether the theme of fallen (Satan) angel is of Jewish origin or a Christian innovation.

An inner-biblical link, even though quite sophisticated, exists between Isa 14 and Gen 6:1–4. Gen 6:4 refers to Nephilim, which are related to Anakim (Num 13:33). Anakim, in turn, are related to Rephaim, which are mentioned in Isa 14:9 as the ones who wait the fallen morning star to join to their group (Isa 14:12; n.b. the use of the verb נפל). Even though this link may be regarded as too sophisticated, it is worth noting that Ugaritic material may provide evidence that Nephilim and Rephaim were both related to the Netherworld.<sup>60</sup> Therefore, the myth of cosmic rebellion attested in the book of Jubilees and 1 Enoch with

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<sup>57</sup> See references in Hyman, *Torah Hakethubah Vehammesurah*. Concerning Isa 14, see further, Halperin, “Ascension or Invasion,” 47–67; and concerning Ezek 28, see Patmore, *Adam*, 16–40.

<sup>58</sup> It is worth noting that the Greek version of the Life of Adam and Eve does not contain this reference, it is attested only in later non-Greek versions of the Life of Adam and Eve. See the evidence in Anderson and Stone, *Synopsis*.

<sup>59</sup> It is difficult to prove that the mythological rebellion in the heaven according to 1 Enoch 6–11 would contain an interpretation of Isa 14. Cf. Hanson, “Rebellion in Heaven,” 195–223. See further, Youngblood, “Fallen Star,” 22–31, 47.

<sup>60</sup> See Kvanvig, *Primeval History*, 274–310.

reference to Gen 6:1–4 may have received inspiration from Isa 14.<sup>61</sup> The problem is that such an influence is difficult to prove in early Jewish writings.<sup>62</sup>

## 27.5.2. Solid Stone Foundation

Isa 28:16 contains an enigmatic expression *'eben bōḥan* which, in the context, has been characterized by means of several Hebrew expressions.<sup>63</sup> The verse has inspired Jewish interpreters to understand this expression as reference to *'eben šetīyya* the solid rock foundation in the Temple of Solomon on which the Ark of Covenant was once placed (mYoma 5:2).

The expression has also inspired many Jewish authors to call their writings *'eben bōḥan*. Many examples of writings with this name can be found with the aid of the electronic version of the *Encyclopaedia Judaica*. For example, Kalonymus ben Kalonymus (Ben Meir ha-Nasi; 1286–after 1328) wrote a rhymed satire of the moral and religious abuses of his contemporaries, which he called *'eben bōḥan*. Shem-Tob ben Isaac Shaprut of Tudela wrote his *'eben bōḥan* sometime between 1380 and 1385. The work was a polemic tractate against baptized Jews, followed the literary form of the first known polemical anti-Christian tractate *Sefer Milhamot HaShem* (by Jacob ben Reuben), and was written in the form of a dialogue. It contained fourteen chapters (or Gates) and was much broader in its treatment of anti-Christian themes than was Jacob ben Reuben's work.

## 27.5.3. Lilith

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<sup>61</sup> See, e.g., Rowland Page, *Myth*.

<sup>62</sup> There is no proof that Isa 14:12–15 would be behind Sir 16:7 and 17:32, an idea argued for in Argall, *I Enoch*, 137; Jensen, “Helel Ben Shahar,” 339–356, esp. 346–347.

<sup>63</sup> Dekker, *Zion's Rock-Solid Foundations*.

Isa 34:14 contains an unclear reference to Lilith (לילית). The word is apparently a loan from the Akkadian *lilitu*, a demon-like figure associated with stormy winds.<sup>64</sup> Lilith was developed in the Jewish interpretive tradition. Earliest evidence refers to her as a female demon (4Q510; the Testament of Solomon under the name Obizoth) and Talmudic passages continue to describe her as a demon with wings and long hair (Erubin 100b; Nidda 24b). The most interesting passage in the Babylonian Talmud is Shabbat 151b, where man is warned not to sleep alone because Lilith may visit him. The precise meaning of this is not clear, but in later Jewish writings Lilith was regarded as Adam's first wife, with whom he copulated and from whom many demons were born (Alphabet of Ben Sira 23, 33). Their unhappy "marriage" ended with desperate hate and Lilith became a demonic opponent to Adam and Eve, as well as to their children. In later Kabbalah literature Lilith was a well-known female demon who threatened to kill children and seduce men.<sup>65</sup>

## 27.6. Jewish Liturgy

The Book of Isaiah has always been important to Jewish liturgy. In the following some examples will be given. They show that the texts of Isaiah have been used in various ways in Jewish liturgical contexts.

### 27.6.1. Trishagion

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<sup>64</sup> Hutter, "Lilith," 520–521.

<sup>65</sup> Krebs, "Lilith—Adams erste Frau," 141–152; Scholem, "Lilith," 17–19.

Isa 6:3 has been an important liturgical text not only in Christian tradition but also especially in Jewish reception history.<sup>66</sup> The reference to Trishagion is visible already in Jewish apocryphal and pseudepigraphic literature (Apocalypse of Abraham 17:7; 1 Enoch 39:12; 2 Enoch 20; Testament of Adam 1:4; Testament of Isaac 8:3); and Qumran writings support the conclusion that angelic liturgy was already fully developed in pre-Christian Judaism.<sup>67</sup> In the Jewish Morning Prayer, the angelic liturgy can be found in the third prayer of ‘Amida (The Eighteen) which is called Qedushah, the “sanctification” of God’s great Name. In this prayer both Isa 6:3 and Ezek 3:12 are quoted. When the precentor repeats ‘Amida, he says: “We will sanctify Your Name in the world even as they sanctify it in the highest heavens, as it is written by the hand of Your prophet: and they called one unto the other and said . . . .” The congregation responds by quoting the saying of the seraphim in Isa 6:3 verbatim: “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory.”<sup>68</sup> The same two biblical texts also appear in the passage where God’s Great Name is praised (before *Ahavo rabo* prayer).

### 27.6.2. The Festival of Sukkot

In the Mishnah tractate Sukkah 4:9–10, a Jewish water ritual during the Festival of Sukkot is described. The Gemara in the Babylonian Talmud 48b explains this Simchat Beit HaSho’evah (“Rejoicing at the Place of the Water-Drawing”) with a reference to Isa 12:3: “And you will joyfully (*běšāsôn*) draw (*ûšē’abtem*) water from the wells of salvation.” The connection of this water ritual in the Festival of Sukkot to Isa 12:3 was made early on. In mSukkah 5:1, it is argued that “anyone who has not seen the rejoicing (*šimḥat*) of *bēt haššô’ăbâ* in his life has

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<sup>66</sup> Concerning the background of the Trishagion in the Hebrew Bible and its appearance in early Jewish writings, see esp. Werner, “Genesis,” 19–32; Williamson, *Holy*.

<sup>67</sup> Frennesson, *Common Rejoicing*.

<sup>68</sup> See more closely Heinemann, *Jewish Liturgy*, 54–62.

never seen rejoicing.” The name of the ritual in mSukkah 5:1 is given as *bēt haššō’ābā*, which is apparently an allusion to the verb *šā’ab* in Isa 12:3. In addition, rejoicing (*šimhā*) is an essential part of the ritual corresponding to the content of Isa 12:3.<sup>69</sup>

### 27.6.3. Jewish Qaddish Prayer

According to Isa 29:23, the people of Israel will sanctify the Name of God in the coming time of salvation: *yaqdīšū šēmi wēhiqdīšū ’et qēdōš Ya’āqōb*, ‘they will sanctify my name and they will sanctify the Holy One of Jacob.’ This promise is echoed in the Jewish prayer book Siddur, where the sanctification of the Name of God is an essential prayer. The Jewish Qaddish prayer in Aramaic begins *yitgaddal wēyitqaddaš šēmeh rabbā*’ (“exalted and sanctified is the Great Name”) and its essential nucleus is “May His great Name be blessed forever and ever,” which is an echo from Dan 2:20 (and the Hebrew equivalent in Ps 113:2).

### 27.6.4. Pilgrimage to Zion

In the Temple area of Jerusalem, many graffiti left behind by Jewish pilgrims have been found. One of the most famous is the text of Isa 66:14 written on the Western Wall: “And when you see this, your heart shall rejoice, and your bones shall flourish like an herb.” Scholars have discussed the time period in which this particular inscription might have been made, and opinions vary between the reign of the Emperor Julian (361–363), when the hopes were running high that the Temple could be rebuilt, and the Umayyad period, when the Jews had the possibility of settling in the city of Jerusalem again. The third proposal has been the

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<sup>69</sup> See Bornhäuser, *Mischna: Sukka*, 139–140. Bornhäuser also argues that the *bēt* in the name of the water ritual should be understood as “place,” not as “temple.”

reign of the Empress Eudocia in the middle of the fifth century, since it was she who permitted Jews to make pilgrimage to Jerusalem.<sup>70</sup>

### 27.6.5. Haftarah Texts

Liturgical readings of weekly Haftarot consist of several Isaiah passages.<sup>71</sup> The texts were chosen to support the Torah reading, or alternatively were related to the themes in the Jewish festivals. Tisha b<sup>7</sup>Av, in particular when Jews mourn the destruction of the temple, contains an interesting selection of Isaianic passages. This liturgical election probably goes back to the period when the sermons were compiled in Pesiqta de Rab Kahana. In these sermons ten Isaiah passages are used as Haftarot for the Sabbats around Tisha b<sup>7</sup>Av.<sup>72</sup> Isa 1:1–27 begins the cycle of eight Haftarah passages that parallel the readings from Devarim. The Isaianic passage was read on the Shabbat immediately preceding Tisha b<sup>7</sup>Av. The theme of Isa 1:1–27 is related to the criticism of the inhabitants of Zion. The city had once been the city of righteousness but was now full of sin, and in need of purification. On the other hand, Isa 40:1–26 opened the seven comforting passages selected from Isa 40–66 and was read on the Shabbat immediately after Tisha b<sup>7</sup>Av. The content of the text is a comforting message for those who live in exile and hope to be able to return to Zion. Other texts in this cycle are Isa 49:14–51:2; 54:11–55:5; 51:12–52:12; 54:1–10; 60:1–22, and 61:10–63:9.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> For these alternatives, see Bahat, *Illustrated Atlas*, 75.

<sup>71</sup> See these texts in Fishbane, *Haftarot*, vii–xii.

<sup>72</sup> Teugels, “Rabbinic Homily,” 433–446.

<sup>73</sup> See Neusner, *Beyond Catastrophe*.

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