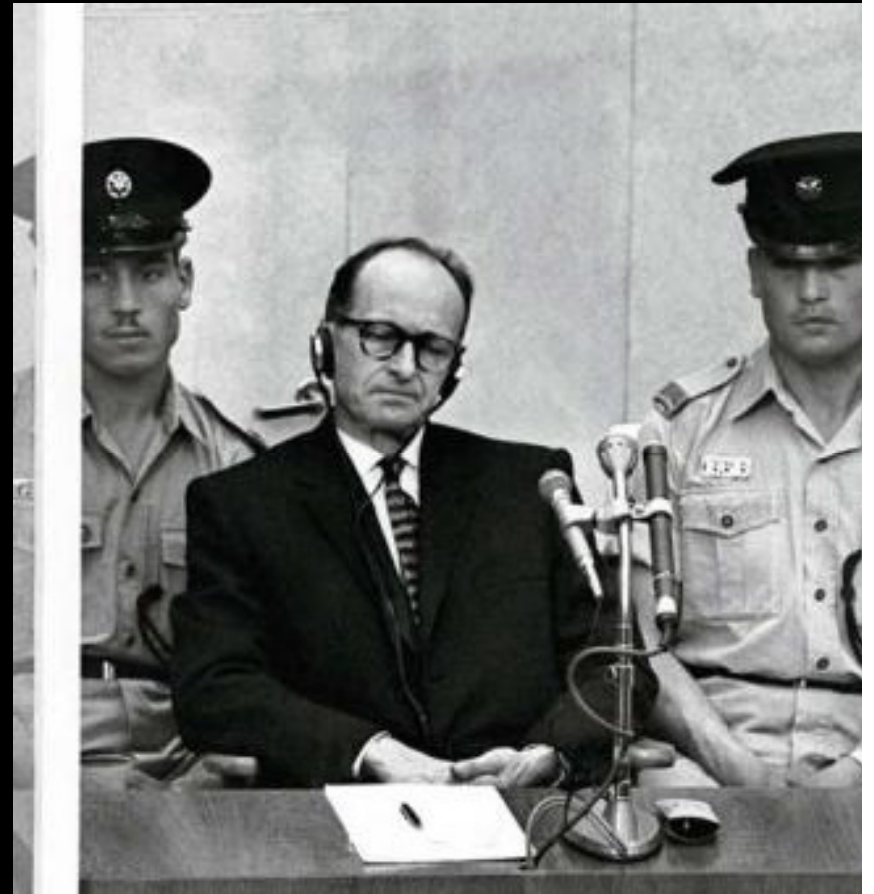


The Gospel According to Isaiah 53



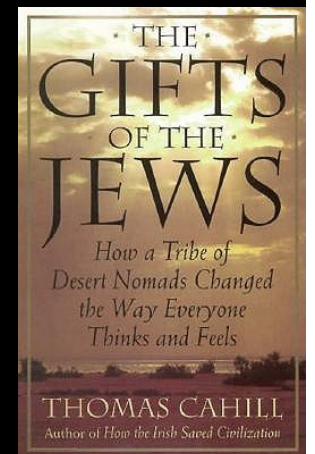
Hard Evidence That Jesus
Is Fairly Amazing

Yehiel Dinur and Adolf Eichmann



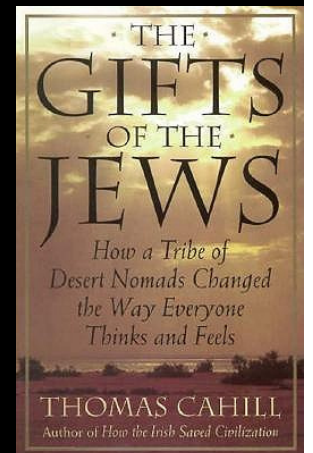
The Hope for a Happy Ending

‘All evidence points to there having been, in the earliest religious thought, a vision of the cosmos that was profoundly cyclical... The Jews were the first people to break out of this circle, to find a new way of thinking and experiencing, a new way of understanding and feeling the world, so much that it may be said with some justice that theirs is the only new idea that human beings have ever had.’



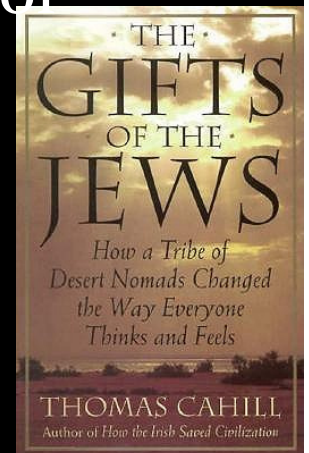
The Hope for a Happy Ending

‘On every continent, in every society, Avram would have been given the same advice that wise men as diverse as Heraclitus, Lao-Tsu, and Siddhartha would one day give their followers: do not journey but sit; compose yourself by the river of life, meditate on its ceaseless and meaningless flow – on all that is past or passing or to come – until you have absorbed the pattern and have come to peace with the Great Wheel and with your own death and the death of all things in the corruptible sphere.’



The Hope for a Happy Ending

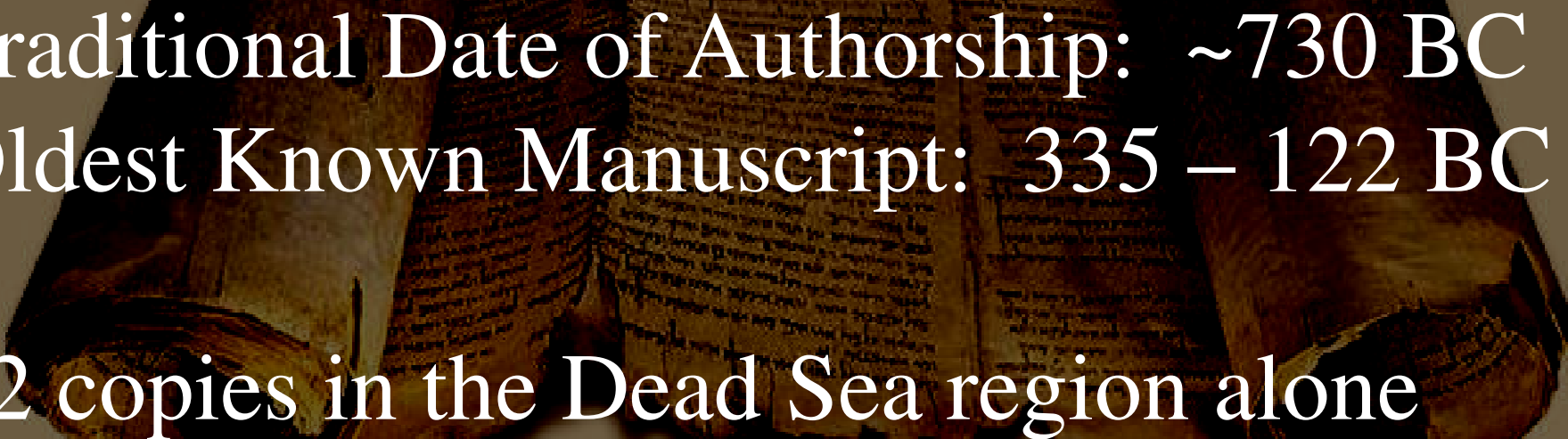
‘The God of Avraham, Yitzhak, and Yaakov – no longer your typical ancient divinity, no longer the archetypal gesturer – is a real personality who has intervened in real history, changing its course and robbing it of predictability.’ ‘For the Jews, history will be...always something new: a process unfolding through time, whose direction and end we cannot know, except insofar as God gives us some hint of what is to come.’



The Prophecy of Isaiah



The Prophecy of Isaiah



Traditional Date of Authorship: ~730 BC
Oldest Known Manuscript: 335 – 122 BC
22 copies in the Dead Sea region alone

The 'Suffering Servant' of Isaiah

^{52:13} Behold, My servant will prosper,

He will be high and lifted up and greatly exalted.

¹⁴ Just as many were astonished at you, My people,

So His appearance was marred more than any man,

And His form more than the sons of men.

¹⁵ Thus He will sprinkle many nations;

Kings will shut their mouths on account of Him;

For what had not been told them they will see,

And what they had not heard they will understand.

The 'Suffering Servant' of Isaiah

^{53:1} Who has believed our message?

And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?

² For He grew up before Him like a tender shoot,

And like a root out of parched ground;

He has no stately form or majesty that we should look upon Him,

Nor appearance that we should be attracted to Him.

³ He was despised and forsaken of men,

A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief;

And like one from whom men hide their face,

He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.

The 'Suffering Servant' of Isaiah

- ⁴ Surely our griefs He Himself bore,
 And our sorrows He carried;
Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken,
 Smitten of God, and afflicted.
- ⁵ But He was pierced through for our transgressions,
 He was crushed for our iniquities;
The chastening for our well-being fell upon Him,
 And by His wounding we are healed.
- ⁶ All of us like sheep have gone astray,
 Each of us has turned to his own way;
But the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all
 To fall on Him

The 'Suffering Servant' of Isaiah

⁷ He was oppressed and He was afflicted,

Yet He did not open His mouth;

Like a lamb that is led to slaughter,

And like a sheep that is silent before its shearers,

So He did not open His mouth.

⁸ By oppression and judgment He was taken away;

And as for His generation, who considered that He was
cut off out of the land of the living

For the transgression of my people,

To whom the stroke was due?

⁹ His grave was assigned with wicked men,

Yet He was with a rich man in His death,

Because He had done no violence,

Nor was there any deceit in His mouth.

The 'Suffering Servant' of Isaiah

¹⁰ But the LORD was pleased to crush Him, putting Him to grief;

If He would render Himself as a guilt offering,

He will see His offspring, He will prolong His days,

The good pleasure of the LORD will prosper in His hand.

¹¹ As a result of the anguish of His soul,

He will see it and be satisfied;

By His knowledge the Righteous One, My Servant,

Will justify the many, as He will bear their iniquities.

¹² Therefore, I will allot Him a portion with the great,

And He will divide the booty with the strong;

Because He poured out Himself to death,

And was numbered with the transgressors;

Yet He Himself bore the sin of many,

And interceded for the transgressors.

The 'Suffering Servant' of Isaiah

Poetic Structure of Isaiah 52:13 – 53:12

A. Messiah's Reign (52:13 – 15)

B. Messiah's Rejection (53:1 – 3)

C. The Reason: To Heal Others (53:4 – 6)

B'. Messiah's Rejection and Death (53:7 – 9)

A'. Messiah's Resurrection and Reign (53:10 – 12)

Jewish Readings of Isaiah 53

- ‘Behold, My Servant *the Messiah* shall prosper.’
 - *Targum Jonathan* on Isaiah 52:13
- ‘We know that messianic homilies based on Joseph's career (his saving role preceded by suffering), and using Isaiah 53 as the prophetic portion, were preached in certain old synagogues which used the triennial cycle...’
 - Rav Asher Soloff, *The Fifty Third Chapter of Isaiah According to the Jewish Commentators, to the Sixteenth Century* (Ph.D. Thesis, Drew University, 1967), p. 146

Jewish Readings of Isaiah 53

- What is to be the manner of Messiah's advent, and where will be the place of his appearance?... Isaiah speaks similarly of the time when he will appear... as a root out of the dry earth, etc... in the words of Isaiah, when describing the manner in which the kings will hearken to him, At him kings will shut their mouth; for that which had not been told them have they seen, and that which they had not heard they have perceived.
 - Maimonides, Letter to Yemen, 12th century, quoted by S. R. Driver and A. Neubauer, editors, *The Fifty-third Chapter of Isaiah According to the Jewish Interpreters* (2 volumes; New York: Ktav, 1969), p.322



Jewish Readings of Isaiah 53

- The right view respecting this Parashah is to suppose that by the phrase 'my servant' the whole of Israel is meant... As a different opinion, however, is adopted by the Midrash, which refers it to the Messiah... 'And by his stripes we were healed' – because the stripes by which he is vexed and distressed will heal us; God will pardon us for his righteousness, and we shall be healed both from our own transgressions and from the iniquities of our fathers.
 - Nachmanides, 13th century, quoted by S. R. Driver and A. Neubauer, editors, *The Fifty-third Chapter of Isaiah According to the Jewish Interpreters* (2 volumes; New York: Ktav, 1969), p.78ff.



The Poetic Center: Isaiah 53:5

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