

THE CONCEPT OF ATONEMENT IN
THE FOURTH SERVANT SONG IN THE LXX

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We find in the New Testament that the messianic ministry of Jesus Christ is closely related to his atoning sacrifice for the sins of others (Mt. 26.26-29; Mk 10.45; 14.22-25; Lk. 22.15-20; Rom. 3.25; 1 Cor. 11.25; Heb. 1.3-4; 2.17; 9.13; 1 Pet. 1.18-19; 1 Jn 2.2, 12; 4.10, 14). As noted by the editors of Emil Schürer's *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ*, the question has been endlessly debated whether this idea of the suffering Messiah whose sufferings and death could have atoning value is to be found in pre-Christian and rabbinical Judaism.¹

In my earlier study on the concept of atonement in early rabbinic thought, I demonstrated that there is a certain level of continuity among the Old Testament, the Second Temple writings and rabbinic literature in their concept of vicarious atonement, and that there is an analogical connection between the concept of vicarious atonement in certain writings in rabbinic Judaism and that of the New Testament writings.² The concept was widespread among the rabbis, both temporally and geographically. By at least the first half of the second century AD, the concept of vicarious atonement was expressed in the traditions (*m. Neg.* 2.1; *Mekilta*; *Nez.* 10.151-181) ascribed to R. Ishmael (d. 135), who was one of the chief spokesmen among the sages of Jabneh. Some of the rabbinic traditions also agree with the New Testament in their paradigmatic applications of the Servant motif to the vicarious atonement of the exemplary figures (Moses in *b. Soṭ.* 14a; Phinehas in *Sifre Numbers* on Num. 25.13; Isaac in *b. Šab.* 89b). In my other work, I have also argued for the presence

1. E. Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ (175 B.C.–A.D. 135)* (ed. G. Vermes, F. Millar and M. Black; 4 vols.; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, rev. edn, 1973–87), II, pp. 547-48.

2. J. Kim, 'The Concept of Atonement in Early Rabbinic Thought and the New Testament Writings', *JGRChJ* 2 (2001–2005), pp. 117-45 (118).

of an ancient tradition that interpreted the messianic role of the Servant in terms of cultic atonement and consequent divine forgiveness behind these New Testament passages and *Targum Isaiah* 53.³

The messianic interpretation of the Servant of YHWH can also be found in the presence of a variant reading in 1QIsa^a 52.14: ‘As many were astonished at you—I so *anointed* (מִשְׁחַתִּי) his appearance beyond any one (else), and his form beyond that of (other) sons of men’.⁴ The MT, as rendered by the NRSV, reads: ‘Just as there were many who were astonished at him—so marred (מִשְׁחַתִּי)...’⁵ The variant involves a single letter and its pronunciation differs only slightly from the standard reading. Moreover, the concept of vicarious atonement seen in the Levitical sacrificial system is applied to the suffering and death of the Servant (מִשְׁחַתִּי in 53.10; also vv. 5-7, 11-12). Thus, if we accept the argument presented by Dominique Barthélemy and William H. Brownlee, we have here a clear example of the eschatologizing of the Old Testament sacrifices in the person and the roles of the Servant of YHWH at Qumran.

With reference to the messianic interpretation of the passage, we find a parallel in *Targ. Isa.* 52.13: ‘Behold, my Servant, the Messiah (מְשִׁיחִי)’. As argued by Chilton, the focus of *Targum Isaiah* is on the messianic vindication of Israel, and the association of the gathering of exile in *Targ. Isa.* 52.12 with a victorious Messiah indicates that we are dealing substantively with the work of the earlier, Tannaitic meturgeman.⁶ Since

3. J. Kim, ‘Targum Isaiah 53 and the New Testament Concept of Atonement’, *JGRChJ* 5 (2008), pp. 81-98 (97).

4. D. Barthélemy, ‘Le grand rouleau d’Isaïe trouvé près de la Mer Morte’, *RB* 57 (1950), pp. 546-49; W.H. Brownlee, ‘The Servant of the Lord in the Qumran Scrolls’, *BASOR* 132 (1953), pp. 8-14 (10); J. Kim, ‘The Concept of Atonement in the Qumran Literature and the New Covenant’, *JGRChJ* 7 (2010), pp. 98-111 (98-99).

5. Unless otherwise specified, the Scripture quotations are from the NRSV for English translation, the *UBSGNT*⁴ for the New Testament Greek text, Rahlfs’ edition of the LXX, Brenton’s translation for the English translation of the LXX, and *BHS* for the Hebrew text. The consonantal text of *Targum Isaiah* hereinafter is quoted from Codex Orientalis 2211 of the British Museum as shown in J.F. Stenning, *The Targum of Isaiah* (London: Oxford University Press, 1953) and the English translation of *Targum Isaiah* is quoted from B. Chilton, *The Isaiah Targum* (Aramaic Bible, 11; Wilmington, DE: Glazier, 1987). As far as the text of *Targum Isaiah* 53 is concerned, both Stenning and A. Sperber (ed.), *The Bible in Aramaic* (5 vols.; Leiden: Brill, 1959–73) III, depend primarily upon Codex Orientalis 2211 of the British Museum; thus, their texts are virtually the same.

6. B. Chilton, *The Glory of Israel* (JSOTSup, 23; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1983), pp. 91-96; B. Chilton, *Targumic Approaches to the Gospels* (New York: University

Targum Isaiah 52–53 is not attested in the Qumran literature, it is difficult to say whether there was a link between the messianic interpretation in 1QIsa^a 52.14 and *Targ. Isa.* 52.13, but they probably reflect a common tradition that interpreted Isa. 52.13–53.12 messianically. In the former case, a single letter is added, while in the latter the whole word מְשִׁיחַ is added.

I would like to suggest that the common tradition found in *Targum Isaiah* and a variant reading in 1QIsa^a 52.14 may also lie behind the Fourth Servant Song of the LXX. The LXX (Isa. 52.13–53.12) eschatologizes the Old Testament sacrifices by identifying the Servant with a messianic figure who will suffer and die vicariously for the sins of others. The same idea was implicit in the Hebrew text of Isaiah 53 and is now made explicit in the translator's interpretive rendering of the Hebrew text. In this paper, we will examine primarily the Fourth Servant Song in the LXX and demonstrate its eschatological interpretation of the Old Testament sacrifices. Before examining the passages, a few words are in order concerning the Hebrew text behind LXX Isaiah and its interpretive tendency.

It is very difficult to establish the Hebrew text that the LXX translator had before him, but, as van der Kooij says, 'it is generally assumed that the *Vorlage* of LXX Isaiah does not differ much from MT'.⁷ The Qumran Isaiah scroll proved the authenticity of the MT. The text of Isaiah in 1QIsa^a is identical to the MT except for minor differences in orthography and the use of certain consonants as vowel letters.⁸ Thus, our chief source of knowledge regarding the LXX translator's tendency will be the discrepancies between the LXX and the MT.

The LXX Isaiah is known for its tendency to contemporize the old biblical text and revive it by instilling it with the religious conceptions of a new age in which the translator thought he was living.⁹ Seeligmann

Press of America, 1986), p. 53; Chilton, *Isaiah Targum*, p. 103.

7. A. van der Kooij, 'Isaiah in the Septuagint', in his *Writing and Reading the Scroll of Isaiah: Studies of an Interpretive Tradition* (VTSup LXX, 2; Leiden: Brill, 1997), pp. 513-29 (517).

8. M. Burrows, 'Variant Readings in the Isaiah Manuscript', *BASOR* 111 (1948), pp. 16-24 (16-17); Shemaryahu Talmon, *The World of Qumran from Within* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1989), pp. 131-32; Eugene C. Ulrich, 'The Qumran Biblical Scrolls—The Scriptures of Late Second Temple Judaism', in Timothy H. Lim et al. (eds.), *The Dead Sea Scrolls in their Historical Context* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 2000), pp. 67-87 (77).

9. I.L. Seeligmann, *The Septuagint Version of Isaiah* (Leiden: Brill, 1948), p.

goes so far as to say that ‘he combined freedom amounting to license towards his text, with a tendency to put his own interpretation upon it’.¹⁰ Seeligmann supports Ziegler’s view that

the translation gives free renderings of Hebrew parables and figures of speech; the license which the translator has taken in some cases goes so far that he allows himself to be carried away by some notion of his own, and under its spell to formulate a version not based upon the words of the Hebrew text at all. It is partly on account of this that, in a number of passages which in the Hebrew text are completely different from each other, the translator has used the same wording in the Greek translation.¹¹

Some of the characteristics pointed out by Ziegler are found more prominently in the Servant Songs in the LXX Isaiah. By using a variety of variants in the Servant Songs, the LXX eschatologizes the Old Testament sacrifices by describing the Servant as a messianic figure who is called to restore the fortunes of Israel, as well as a person who will die vicariously for the sins of others.¹² Thus, according to the LXX, the Old Testament sacrifices, the sin offering in particular, point to the Servant-Messiah whose ministry involves his vicarious suffering and death. There are four lines of evidence that support this argument.

First, the LXX makes it more explicit that the role of the Servant is primarily to restore the remnant of Israel. This is obvious in the Second Servant Song (Isa. 49.1-6) in particular:

7; R. Hanhart, ‘Die Septuaginta als Interpretation und Aktualisierung’, in A. Rofé and Y. Zakovitch (eds.), *Isac Leo Seeligmann Volume: Essays on the Bible and the Ancient World* (3 vols.; Jerusalem: Rubinstein’s, 1983), III, pp. 331-46; R.L. Troxel, ‘Eschatology in the Septuagint of Isaiah’, unpublished PhD diss., University of Wisconsin, Madison, 1989, p. xi; S.E. Porter and B.W.R. Pearson, ‘Isaiah through Greek Eyes: The Septuagint of Isaiah’, in C.C. Boyles and C.A. Evans (eds.), *Writing and Reading the Scroll of Isaiah: Studies of an Interpretive Tradition* (VTSup LXX, 2; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1997), pp. 532-46 (545); J.M. Dines, *The Septuagint* (London: T. & T. Clark, 2004). p. 22; A. van der Kooij, ‘The Septuagint of Isaiah and the Mode of Reading Prophecies’, in M. Karrer, W. Kraus and M. Meiser (eds.), *Die Septuaginta—Texte, Kontexte, Lebenswelten: Internationale Fachtagung veranstaltet von Septuaginta Deutsch (LXX.D), Wuppertal 20.-23. Juli 2006* (WUNT, 219; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), pp. 597-611 (610).

10. Seeligmann, *Septuagint Version of Isaiah*, p. 95.

11. Seeligmann, *Septuagint Version of Isaiah*, p. 7; J. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen zur Septuaginta des Buches Isaias* (Münster: Aschendorf, 1934), p. 80.

12. E.R. Ekblad, *Isaiah’s Servant Poems according to the Septuagint* (Leuven: Peeters, 1999), pp. 281-82.

MT of Isa. 49.6

He says, ‘It is too light a thing (נִקְלָ) that you should be my Servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the survivors of Israel; I will give you as a light to the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth.’

LXX of Isa. 49.6

And he said to me, ‘It is a great thing for thee to be called my Servant, to establish the tribes of Jacob, and to recover the dispersion of Israel: behold I have given thee for the covenant of a race (εἰς διαθήκην γένους), for a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation (τοῦ εἶναί σε εἰς σωτηρίαν) to the end of the earth.’

Anton Scholz argues that the translator heard נִקְלָ as גִּדְלָ.¹³ However, it is difficult to accept Scholz’s hypothesis because its acceptance involves changing two Hebrew consonants.¹⁴ Rather than approaching this variant from the issue of *Vorlage*, Grelot argues that this reading reflects the translator’s distinct interpretation of the Servant’s task ‘to establish the tribes’ as ‘great’ by virtue of the fact that the gathering of the dispersion leads to the Servant being a ‘light of the nations’.¹⁵ It is more probable, however, that the translator may have read אִם־נִקְלָ in place of the MT נִקְלָ. The Targum reads נִקְלָ in an interrogative sense: הֲזַעִיר לְכוּן, ‘Is it a small thing to you...?’ Thus, both the LXX and the Targum agree in reading אִם־נִקְלָ in place of the MT נִקְלָ.

We find here that the primary emphasis is on the role of the Servant in restoring the fortunes of Israel, which the LXX makes more explicit than the MT. Two observations are in order from the interpretive paraphrase of the LXX: (1) The LXX reverses the emphasis of the Servant’s ministry from his mission to the Gentiles to his mission to Israel by adding εἰς διαθήκην γένους (‘the covenant of a race’).¹⁶ The LXX translates the

13. R.R. Ottley, *The Book of Isaiah according to the Septuagint (Codex Alexandrinus)*. II. *Text and Notes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1906), p. 333.

14. Ekblad, *Isaiah’s Servant Poems*, p. 108.

15. P. Grelot, *Les poèmes du Serviteur: De la lecture critique à l’herméneutique* (LD, 103; Paris: Cerf, 1981), pp. 91-92.

16. Against the majority reading, both Codex Alexandrinus (A) and Codex Marchalianus (Q) do not have this phrase; thus agreeing with the MT. Ziegler argues that this insertion came from Isa. 42.6. According to Ekblad, these variants in LXX Isa. 49.6 show that the first Servant song (42.1-8) and the second Servant song (49.1-9) were read and interpreted together by the translator (Ekblad, *Isaiah’s Servant Poems*, p. 112).

same Hebrew phrase **עַם בְּרִית** differently in 49.8 as εἰς διαθήκην ἔθνων, which clearly indicates that the LXX translator identified **עַם** with the nations, but in Isa. 42.6, the LXX translator deliberately chose εἰς διαθήκην γένους, which indicates that he identified **עַם** with the people of Israel (or more probably the remnant). According to Ziegler, there is a reciprocal relationship between Isa. 42.6 and 49.6-8 in the LXX as well as in the MT.¹⁷ In my view, this interpretive addition reflects the translator's particular emphasis: the Servant's mission starts from Israel. The LXX translator's top priority was the restoration of Israel. (2) The LXX makes a stylistic change in the last clause: τοῦ εἶναί σε εἰς σωτηρίαν ἕως ἑσχάτου τῆς γῆς. Thus, the LXX makes it clearer by attributing all three salvific roles to the Servant: the covenant of a race, a light to the Gentiles, and salvation to the end of the earth.

Secondly, in his rendering of the Hebrew text, the LXX translator seems to have deliberately chosen Greek words with a messianic connotation, such as δόξα (52.13; 53.2) and παιδίον (53.2).¹⁸ Compare the LXX text with the MT:¹⁹

Verse	LXX	MT
52.13	καὶ δοξασθήσεται σφόδρα	וגבה מאד
52.14	ὄν τρόπον ἐκστήσονται οὕτως ἀδοξήσει ἀπὸ ἀνθρώπων τὸ εἶδος σου καὶ ἡ δόξα σου ἀπὸ τῶν ἀνθρώπων	כאשר שממו בן־משחת מאיש מראהו ותארו מבני אדם
53.2	ὡς παιδίον ὡς ρίζα ἐν γῆ διψώση οὐκ ἔστιν εἶδος αὐτῶ οὐδὲ δόξα	כיונק לפני וכשרש מארץ ציה לא־תאר לו ולא הדר

Zimmerli identifies two key words that bear the fundamental mark of

17. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, p. 76.

18. W. Zimmerli, 'Παῖς Θεοῦ', *TDNT*, V, pp. 676-77; M. Hengel, 'Zur Wirkungsgeschichte von Jes 53 in vorchristlicher Zeit', in B. Janowski and P. Stuhlmacher (eds.), *Der leidende Gottesknecht: Jesaja 53 und seine Wirkungsgeschichte* (Forschungen zum Alten Testament, 14; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1996), pp. 49-92 (84).

19. Refer to Ziegler's list for the variants in the LXX text of the Fourth Servant Song (Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, pp. 24-25).

messianic interpretation. The first is the recurring key word δόξα (52.13, 14b, c; 53.2), for which we do not find a real Hebrew equivalent in the passages. The phrase καὶ δοξασθήσεται (52.13) is used to match וַנְבָרָא only here in the entire LXX. Setting aside the possibility of a different Hebrew *Vorlage* behind this variant, Ekblad presents two possible explanations for the variant.²⁰ The LXX translator could have skipped over וַנְשִׁיב to וַנְבָרָא because the first two consonants of each of these verbs are so similar in appearance. The better explanation, however, is that the LXX translator arbitrarily omitted one Hebrew verb for stylistic reasons, to avoid what might have seemed unnecessarily redundant.

The second is the rendering of Hebrew וַיִּנֶּק of 53.2 with παιδίον, a word that is familiar from the messianic statement in 9.5.²¹ Hebrew וַיִּנֶּק is rendered only here with παιδίον in the entire LXX. Grelot argues that παιδίον reflects a literal rather than metaphoric understanding of וַיִּנֶּק.²² The MT's וַיִּנֶּק does come from the verb נָקַח 'suck' and can be translated 'suckling' or 'little child'.²³ The suggestion made by Grelot and Ekblad makes good sense when considered along with the identification of the Servant with a root in thirsty ground. The image pictures the Servant as leading a vulnerable, threatened and lonely life.²⁴ One may find an intertextual connection between Isa. 53.2 and 11.1-2, which links the vulnerable Servant figure to imagery of the Davidic dynasty.²⁵ The unique use of παιδίον for rendering וַיִּנֶּק along with the correctly rendered ῥίζα, also reminiscent of the messianic 11.1, lends support to a messianic interpretation of the Servant present in the LXX.²⁶ This tendency of the LXX translator is corroborated by the evidence from *Targum Isaiah*. In *Targ. Isa.* 52.13, the Servant is expressly identified with the Messiah—'Behold, my Servant, the Messiah, shall prosper'. Moreover, the Targum

20. Ekblad, *Isaiah's Servant Poems*, p. 181.

21. E.R. Ekblad, 'God Is Not to Blame: The Servant's Atoning Suffering according to the LXX of Isaiah 53', in B. Jersak and M. Hardin (eds.), *Stricken by God? Nonviolent Identification and the Victory of Christ* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), pp. 180-204 (185).

22. Grelot, *Les poèmes du Serviteur*, p. 104.

23. Ekblad, *Isaiah's Servant Poems*, p. 201 n. 112.

24. J.C. Bastiaens, *Interpretaties van Jesaja 53: Een intertextueel onderzoek naar de lijdende knecht in Jes 53 (MT/LXX) en in Lk 22:14-38, Hand 3:12-26, Hand 4:23 en Hand 8:26-40* (TFT Studies, 22; Tilburg, Netherlands: Tilburg University Press, 1993), p. 130.

25. Ekblad, *Isaiah's Servant Poems*, pp. 202-203.

26. Hengel, 'Wirkungsgeschichte', p. 84; Ekblad, *Isaiah's Servant Poems*, p. 203.

identifies the Servant in 53.1 with the Messiah, as does 53.10. It is clear that the Targum understands the whole of 52.13–53.12 to relate to the Messiah.²⁷

Thirdly, the LXX translator makes it clear that the Fourth Servant Song is a divine prophecy of eschatological restoration by shifting the tense of verbs in 52.14 to the future (ὄν τρόπον ἔκστήσονται... οὕτως ἀδοξήσει), which plainly deviates from the Hebrew perfect tense of the MT (כַּאֲשֶׁר שָׁמְמוּ... כִּי־מִשְׁחַחַת).²⁸ The disdainful rejection of the Servant (v. 14) is to happen in the future, as well as the astounded turning to him of many nations and kings (v. 15). The same tendency is observed in *Targum Isaiah*, in which the ministry of the Servant is described as happening primarily in the future.

Fourthly, the LXX translator emphasizes the vicarious nature of the Servant's suffering for 'our sins' by his interpretive choice of the Greek words and phrases:

Verse	LXX	MT
53.4	τὰς ἀμαρτίας...φέρει	חל ינו...נשא
53.11	τὰς ἀμαρτίας...ἀνοίσει	ועונתם יסבל
53.12	ἀμαρτίας...ἀνήνεγκεν	חטא...נשא

The Greek word ἀμαρτία is used here to render three different Hebrew words.²⁹ Of particular importance to us is the fact that חל ינו

27. Chilton, *Isaiah Targum*, p. 103; Kim, 'Targum Isaiah 53'.

28. Zimmerli, 'Παῖς Θεοῦ', p. 677; Ekblad, *Isaiah's Servant Poems*, p. 184.

29. As far as the terms for sin are concerned, ἀμαρτία and ἀνομία are the two dominant Greek nouns. In Isaiah 53, ἀμαρτία is used to render a variety of Hebrew nouns, such as עוֹן (vv. 6, 11), פֶּשַׁע (v. 5), חַל י (v. 4), and אֲשָׁם (v. 10), and ἀνομία is used for עוֹן (v. 5), פֶּשַׁע (vv. 8, 12), and חַמַּס (v. 9). The term ἀμαρτία is the primary noun used in Isaiah to translate עוֹן (1.4; 5.18; 13.11; 22.14; 30.13; 33.24; 50.1; 53.5, 6, 11; 59.3; 64.6, 8; 65.7) and חַמַּס (1.18; 38.17; 43.24; 44.22; 59.2, 12), while ἀνομία is used for פֶּשַׁע (24.20; 43.25; 44.22; 50.1; 59.12), but the two Greek nouns are used for a variety of terms, thus blurring the boundary between them. Four observations are in order regarding the LXX Isaiah's use of the terms for sin: (1) The word ἀμαρτία became the favorite term for sin, translating a variety of Hebrew nouns whose precise connotations are no longer preserved in the LXX. The word ἀμαρτία seems to have gained popularity in the early church as a substitute for other Greek nouns for sin, such as ἀνομία (1 Pet. 2.22). (2) The LXX renders

is rendered as τὰς ἁμαρτίας ἡμῶν (v. 4) only here in the LXX of Isaiah, which indicates that the LXX translator understood sickness in v. 4 as a metaphor for sin.³⁰ This is important because, as Ekblad says, ‘with the exception of the Servant’s work in Isa 53:4-12 it is the Lord alone who responds to sin through pardon or recompensation’.³¹ From this observation, Ekblad concludes, ‘The LXX of Isaiah 53:4-12 quite possibly presents the servant as one through whom the Lord deals with human sins. This happens through the servant’s voluntary suffering and dying for people’s sins.’

Williams, following Euler, tries to deny the authenticity of this reading based upon the deviational reading in Mt. 8.17.³² This so-called deviational reading presupposes that Matthew is quoting strictly from the LXX. This argument, however, ignores the textual diversity in Matthew, as argued by Allison:³³ (1) Matthew makes the Markan allusion closer to the LXX in some passages (3.16; 17.11; 26.3-4, 64; 27.35, 46b). (2) Matthew is closer to the MT against the LXX in passages such as 24.21, 29, 31; 26.28. (3) In some cases, Matthew is closer to targumic or other Jewish traditions (22.24; 24.31). This phenomenon leads Allison to conclude that Matthew could read the Scriptures in their original language. As argued by Gundry, therefore, Mt. 8.17 may be the result of Matthew’s independent translation from the Hebrew text in order to make the quotation apply to Jesus healing physical maladies.³⁴

The phrase τὰς ἁμαρτίας ἡμῶν (Isa. 53.4) is clearly an interpretive rendering because words from the same Hebrew root, לָחַץ in v. 3 and לָחַץ in v. 10, are rendered literally as μαλακίαν and τῆς πληγῆς.

לָחַץ with περὶ ἁμαρτίας (53.10). (3) The two nouns ἁμαρτία and ἀνομία are used interchangeably in Isaiah 53, and either of the two can render the same Hebrew nouns. (4) The word ἁμαρτία is used to render לָחַץ (53.4).

30. J.J. Stamm, *Erlösen und vergeben im Alten Testament* (Bern: A. Francke, 1940), pp. 83-84; Ekblad, ‘God Is Not to Blame’, p. 186.

31. Ekblad, ‘God Is Not to Blame’, pp. 186-87.

32. K.F. Euler, *Die Verkündigung vom leidenden Gottesknecht aus Jes. 53 in der griechischen Bibel* (BWANT, 66; Stuttgart-Berlin: W. Kohlhammer Verlag, 1934), pp. 59-62; S.K. Williams, *Jesus’ Death as Saving Event: The Background and Origin of a Concept* (HDR, 2; Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1975), p. 113.

33. W.D. Davies and D.C. Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel according to Saint Matthew. I. Introduction and Commentary on Matthew I-VII* (ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1988), p. 45.

34. R.H. Gundry, *Matthew: A Commentary on his Literary and Theological Art* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), p. 150.

The LXX agrees with *Targum Isaiah* in its handling of illnesses as transgressions:

Isa. 53.4a MT	<i>Targ. Isa. 53.4^a</i>
אֲכַן חָלֵינוּ הוּא נִשָּׂא	בְּכִין עַל חוֹבֵנָא הוּא יִבְעִי
‘and carried our diseases.’	‘Then he will beseech concerning our sins’
וּמִכְאֲבוֹנוֹ סָבַלְהֶם	וְעוֹיְתָנָא בְּדִיל יְהִי יִשְׁתַּבְּקָן
‘Surely he has borne our infirmities’	‘and our iniquities for his sake will be forgiven.’

The Targum treats infirmities and diseases in the Hebrew text as sins and iniquities, which seems to reflect an old Jewish tradition that is probably pre-Christian. This understanding of illness as sin is also found in Mk 4.12, which follows *Targ. Isa. 6.10*, which implies the antiquity of the tradition.³⁵ The last clause of Mk 4.12 has ἀφεθῆ ἑαυτοῖς against the LXX ἰάσομαι αὐτούς. The Markan rendering is an exact translation of *Targum Isaiah*’s וְיִשְׁתַּבְּקָן לְהוֹן. This interpretation of illnesses as sins in the early church may underlie 1 Pet. 2.24, ὅς τὰς ἁμαρτίας ἡμῶν αὐτὸς ἀνήνεγκεν ἐν τῷ σώματι αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τὸ ξύλον, ἵνα ταῖς ἁμαρτίαις ἀπογενόμενοι τῇ δικαιοσύνῃ ζήσωμεν, οὐ τῷ μῶλωπι ἰάθητε.³⁶ The Targum tends to give an explanatory paraphrase for the passages, which it understands are figurative, but are not explicitly expressed as figurative by expressions such as ‘like’ or ‘as’.³⁷

Similarly, the LXX translator makes more explicit the idea of the vicarious suffering that is already presented in figurative language in the MT.³⁸ The combination of ἁμαρτία with φέρω occurs in several places in Leviticus in relation to the sin-offering or the guilt-offering

35. T.W. Manson, *The Teaching of Jesus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), p. 78; M. Black, *An Aramaic Approach to the Gospels and Acts* (Clarendon: Oxford University Press, 3rd edn, 1967), pp. 213-14; B. Chilton, ‘Four Types of Comparison between the Targumim and the New Testament’, *Journal for the Aramaic Bible* 2 (2000), pp. 163-88. For a recent assessment, see C.A. Evans, *To See and Not Perceive: Isaiah 6.9-10 in Early Jewish and Christian Interpretation* (JSOTSup, 64; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1989), pp. 91-106.

36. P. Seidelin, ‘Der Ebed Jahwe und die Messiasgestalt im Jesajatargum’, *ZNW* 35 (1936), pp. 194-231 (212 n. 55).

37. Stenning, *Targum of Isaiah*, p. xiii.

38. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, pp. 80-81; Ekblad, *Isaiah’s Servant Poems*, p. 213.

(Lev. 4.28; 5.6, 7, 8, 11, 12; 14.19-20; 15.14-15, 29-30; 16.15; also in Num. 6.10-11), which indicates the possible link between the Servant's vicarious suffering and the atoning sacrifices in Leviticus. As pointed out by Ekblad, Isaiah 53 is the first place in the entire Old Testament where a human being is described as carrying/bearing sin on behalf of others.³⁹ The LXX goes even further by interpretive rendering of **וּמְכַאֲבֵנוּ סַבְלָם** of the MT with **περὶ ἡμῶν ὀδυνᾶται** in 53.4. Thus, according to the LXX, the Servant not only bears 'our sins' (53.4, 11, 12), but also suffers on behalf of 'us' (**περὶ ἡμῶν ὀδυνᾶται** in 53.4) as our atoning sacrifice.

Fourthly, the LXX translator makes it clear that the suffering of the Servant involves his death, choosing the interpretive **παρέδωκεν αὐτόν** for the Hebrew **וַיַּפְגִּיעַ בּוֹ** in 53.6.⁴⁰ The emphasis of the LXX on the death of the Servant can be detected in other verses too:

Verse	LXX	MT
53:6	παρέδωκεν αὐτόν	וַיַּפְגִּיעַ בּוֹ
53:12	παρεδόθη εἰς θάνατον...παρεδόθη	וַיַּפְגִּיעַ לְמוֹתָיו...וַיַּפְגִּיעַ
53:7	ἐπὶ σφαγῆν ἤχθη	וַיַּפְגִּיעַ בְּיַד יוֹבֵל
53:8	ἤχθη εἰς θάνατον	וַיַּפְגִּיעַ בְּיַד יוֹבֵל

In 53.6, the Hebrew verb **וַיַּפְגִּיעַ** is rendered with the Greek verb **παρέδωκεν**. This Hebrew verb is rendered with **παραδίδωμι** only here and in Isa. 47.3 and 53.12 in the entire LXX.⁴¹ By using the same verb **παραδίδωμι** for two different Hebrew verbs in 53.6 and 53.12, the translator clearly interprets v. 6 in relation to v. 12, indicating that the vicarious suffering of the Servant involves his death. Ekblad rightly argues:

Through contextual exegetical editing, the LXX's variant **παρέδωκεν αὐτόν ταῖς ἁμαρτίαις ἡμῶν** [in 53.6] is also more clearly associated with Isaiah 53:5 and 53:12 (and 64:7[6]) than in the MT. In Isaiah 53:12 the Servant is described as inheriting many and dividing the spoils precisely because his soul was delivered over to death (**παρεδόθη εἰς θάνατον ἡ ψυχὴ αὐτοῦ**) because of our sins (**διὰ τὰς ἁμαρτίας αὐτῶν παρεδόθη**).⁴²

39. Ekblad, 'God Is Not to Blame', p. 187.

40. Ekblad, *Isaiah's Servant Poems*, pp. 226-27.

41. Ekblad, 'God Is Not to Blame', p. 195.

42. Ekblad, *Isaiah's Servant Poems*, pp. 226-27.

The death of the Servant is also indicated in the use of σφαγή (53.7) for rendering Hebrew טָבַח (slaughter). In the LXX σφαγή is linked to numerous texts that describe ritual sacrifice of a πρόβατον through σφάγιον in a way that is absent in the MT (Exod. 12.3-6; 22.1 [21.37]; Lev. 1.10-11; 4.29-35; 17.3; 22.28; Num. 11.22; Deut. 28.31).⁴³ This interpretation is supported by the translator's rendering of the Hebrew phrase נָגַע לְמוֹ (blow to him) with ἤχθη εἰς θάνατον in 53.8. The translator employs contextual exegesis by using ἤχθη in both v. 7 and v. 8.⁴⁴ The translator may well have mistakenly read נָגַע (blow) as the perfect of נָהַג (was led).⁴⁵ However, considering the repeated use of intertextual exegesis in LXX Isaiah, it would be more probable to see it as the result of deliberate paraphrasing.⁴⁶ Thus, the translator makes it clear that ὡς πρόβατον ἐπὶ σφαγὴν ἤχθη in Isa. 53.7 refers to the death of the Servant.

This interpretation is supported further by the use of the phrase εἰς θάνατον (to death) for rendering Hebrew לְמוֹ (to him). Jan de Waard suggests that the LXX presupposes a *Vorlage* with נָגַע לְמוֹת (stricken to death).⁴⁷ However, nowhere in the LXX is ἤχθη, or any form of ἄγω, used to render any form of Hebrew נָגַע. While acknowledging the possibility that the translator may have read לְמוֹת in place of לְמוֹ, in view of the translator's repeated use of contextual or intertextual exegesis, I would rather see this variant as the deliberate attempt by the translator to link εἰς θάνατον in Isa. 53.8b more clearly than in the MT to τοῦ θάνατου αὐτοῦ of the next verse.

Summary and Conclusion

Our examination of the LXX text has demonstrated that the LXX eschatologizes the Old Testament sacrifices by identifying the Servant with a messianic figure who will suffer and die vicariously for the sins

43. Ekblad, *Isaiah's Servant Poems*, p. 228.

44. By the term 'contextual exegesis' I mean 'the ancient translation techniques that bring the changes based on scriptural borrowings from the immediate literary context' (Ekblad, *Isaiah's Servant Poems*, p. 28).

45. Ekblad, *Isaiah's Servant Poems*, pp. 235-36.

46. By the term 'intertextual exegesis' I mean 'the ancient translation techniques that bring the changes based on scriptural borrowings from the broader literary context' (Ekblad, *Isaiah's Servant Poems*, p. 28).

47. Jan de Waard, *A Handbook on Isaiah* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1997), p. 194.

of others. This picture of the servant in the LXX closely parallels that of the servant of YHWH in 1QIsa^a 52.14 and *the Targum Isaiah*. Our findings indicate that (1) first century Jews not uncommonly understood that the Servant would effect eschatological forgiveness for Israel; and (2) a common ancient tradition that interpreted the messianic role of the Servant in terms of cultic atonement and consequent divine forgiveness may lie behind these New Testament passages, the variant reading in 1QIsa^a 52.14, *Targum Isaiah* 53, and the fourth Servant Song of the LXX Isaiah.