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<http://www.fbcweb.org/Doctrines/Jewish-Apologetics87.pdf>

JEWISH APOLOGETICS (87)

Answering Jewish Objections to Isaiah 53 as a Reference to Jesus

Objection #71: It is not true that the medieval rabbis were the first to apply Isaiah 53 to Israel instead of the Messiah. The Israel interpretation is actually very ancient.

Brown's short response to this objection:

You're partially correct. The earliest reference to this interpretation is found in a second-century Christian source recounting a discussion between a Gentile follower of Jesus and some Jewish teachers who did not believe in him. But aside from one passing reference in Midrash Rabbah (where part of one verse is interpreted with reference to the righteous), a specific identification of Isaiah 53 with Israel is not found in any Rabbinic literature until almost one thousand years after Jesus. (In other words, it is not found in Talmuds, the Targums, or in the midrashim.) Therefore, the view that Isaiah 53 spoke of Israel can hardly be considered a standard (or ancient) Rabbinic interpretation, and for the traditional Jew, that's what really matters.¹

Brown adds in his longer response, "There is really nothing puzzling here at all. The evidence is well known and has been fully accessible for centuries." Brown then documents the rabbinic data.

I have been asked by more than one FBC believer: 'How is it that Jews can reject Jesus Christ?' For a bit of insight, I have included a link to a 7 minute video clip of a rabbi in a *heated* debate with Michael Brown (this is part 2 of the one I sent in the last DDR; due to the fact that some of your mailboxes cannot hold large files, I decided to provide link instead of embedding the file) <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ssF0FDpWyfE&feature=related>.

¹Michael L. Brown, *Messianic Prophecy Objections —Volume 3*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2003), 58-62. In his book, Brown lists the objection and then gives a short response which is followed by a more developed response. This DDR series, for the most part, tracks the objection and his *short* response after which you will find my comments. I highly recommend his book if you are interested in his longer responses (there is far too much material to include in the DDRs).