

the Messiah is clearly superior to the model constructed by the men of Qumran.

The Work of the Messiah

Since the Messiah is a king, we would naturally expect part of his work to be ruling. This is confirmed by a large number of Old Testament passages which refer to the reign of the Messiah.

We have also seen from Psalm 110 that the Messiah is a priest. This seems to be confirmed in the rather difficult revelation found in Zech. 6:12-15. Speaking of someone called "the Branch," it says:

He shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne.

Though there are few passages which speak of the Messiah acting as priest, there are a number of Old Testament prophecies which speak of some figure who is to suffer, and whose suffering will produce spectacular results. Psalm 22 pictures one who suffers unto death, but who is delivered. The story of what has happened is to go throughout the world and down to future generations. Isa. 52:13-53:12 speaks of a despised sufferer who bears the sins of others to the grave, but then is delivered and exalted. Zech. 12:10-13:9 shows us one who is pierced, as a result of which Israel will mourn and then be cleansed from their sin.

These passages are all given Messianic application by the Rabbis (4), but not as we might expect. Indeed, in what may represent an earlier view of the Rabbis, the Messiah is named "'the leper scholar,' as it is written, 'Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him a leper, smitten of God and afflicted'"(5).

From the 2nd century A.D. onward, however, the Rabbinic model of the Messianic prophecies involves two people -- not a king and a priest as at Qumran, but a king and a general. The latter is called Messiah ben Joseph (or Messiah ben Ephraim). He is to come before the king Messiah (called Messiah ben David), lead the return of Israel to their land, set up a government and temple worship, and then suffer and die in battle (6). The suffering passages of the Old Testament Messianic prophecy are usually assigned to him.

The New Testament model of the Messiah applies the two types of prophetic material to one person, Jesus of Nazareth. Isa. 53 is associated with Him about forty times and Psalm 22