

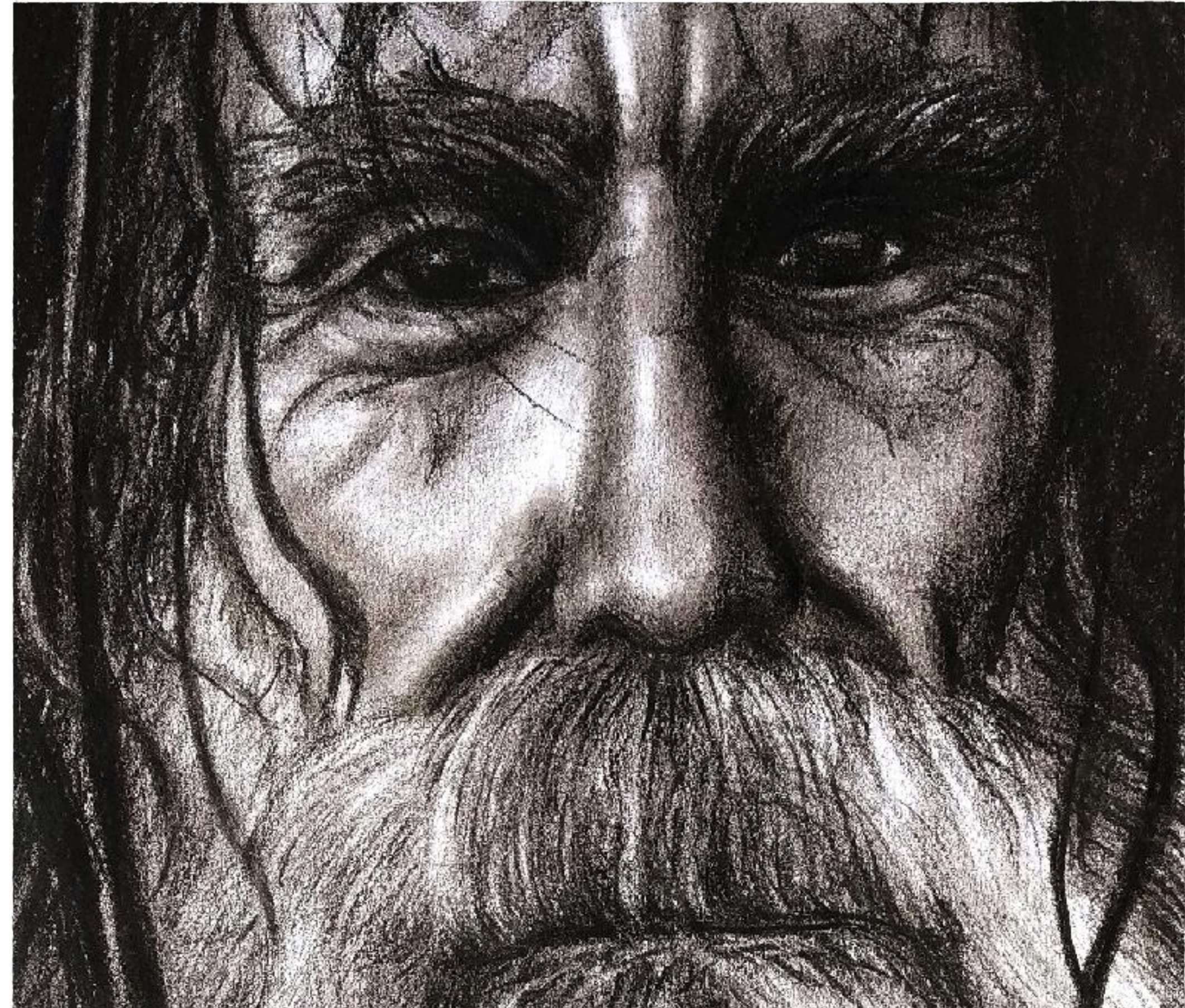
ISAIAH 53

A JEWISH INTERPRETATION



ISAIAH 52:12-53:13

MY SUFFERING SERVANT



CONTEXT IS EVERYTHING

ALL SERVANT SONGS REFER TO ISRAEL.

- Isaiah 41:8-9

But you, Israel, My servant, Jacob, whom I have chosen, Seed of Abraham My friend
You whom I drew from the ends of the earth And called from its far corners, To whom I said:
You are My servant; I chose you, I have not rejected you—

- Isaiah 44:1

But hear, now, O Jacob My servant, Israel whom I have chosen!

- Isaiah 44:2

Keep these matters in mind, Ya'akov, for you, Isra'el, are my servant.
I formed you, you are my own servant; Isra'el, don't forget me.

- Isaiah 45:4

It is for the sake of Ya'akov my servant,
yes, for Isra'el my elect,
that I call you by your name
and give you a title, although you don't know me.

- Isaiah 48:20

Get out of Bavel! Flee the Kasdim!
With shouts of joy announce it, proclaim it!
Send the news out to the ends of the earth!
Say, "*Adonai* has redeemed his servant Ya'akov."

- Isaiah 49:3

He said to me, "You are my servant,
Isra'el, through whom I will show my glory."

CONTEXT IS EVERYTHING

WHO IS THE SPEAKER?

- Stunned Kings of Nations bearing witness to Messianic age and vindication of Israel.
- Unexpected salvation, sheltering, and deliverance of Israel
- Jewish Suffering caused by the hatred of the Nations not Israel's stubbornness. (Nations proven wrong by innocent suffering of Jews.
- Nation suffering as an individual at the hands of Gentile nations.
- The Christian church exchanged the suffering of the Jews with the suffering of Jesus. (Doesn't apply to 'liberal' Christians)



"I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey"
Because the Israelites poured out their soul
to die in captivity, as it is said, "Because he
poured out his soul to death.

Midrash Rabba Isaiah 33:12

He formerly grew like a sapling or root from dry ground; he had neither form nor beauty. We saw him, but without a desirable appearance.

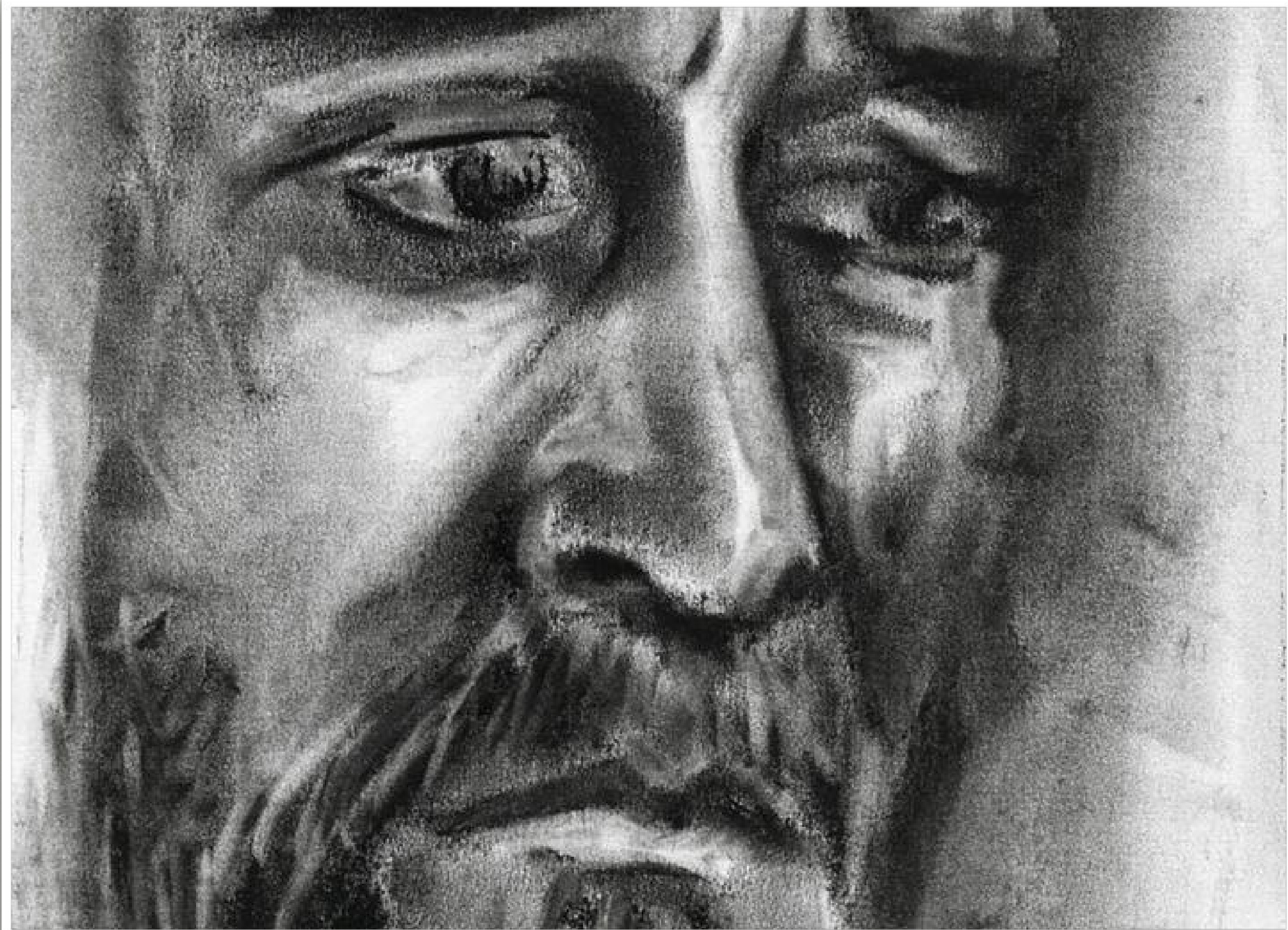


He was despised and rejected of men, a man of pains and accustomed to sickness.
As one from whom we would hide our faces, he was despised, and we had no regard
for him.



Indeed, he bore our illnesses and carried our pains – but we regarded him as diseased, stricken by God and afflicted.



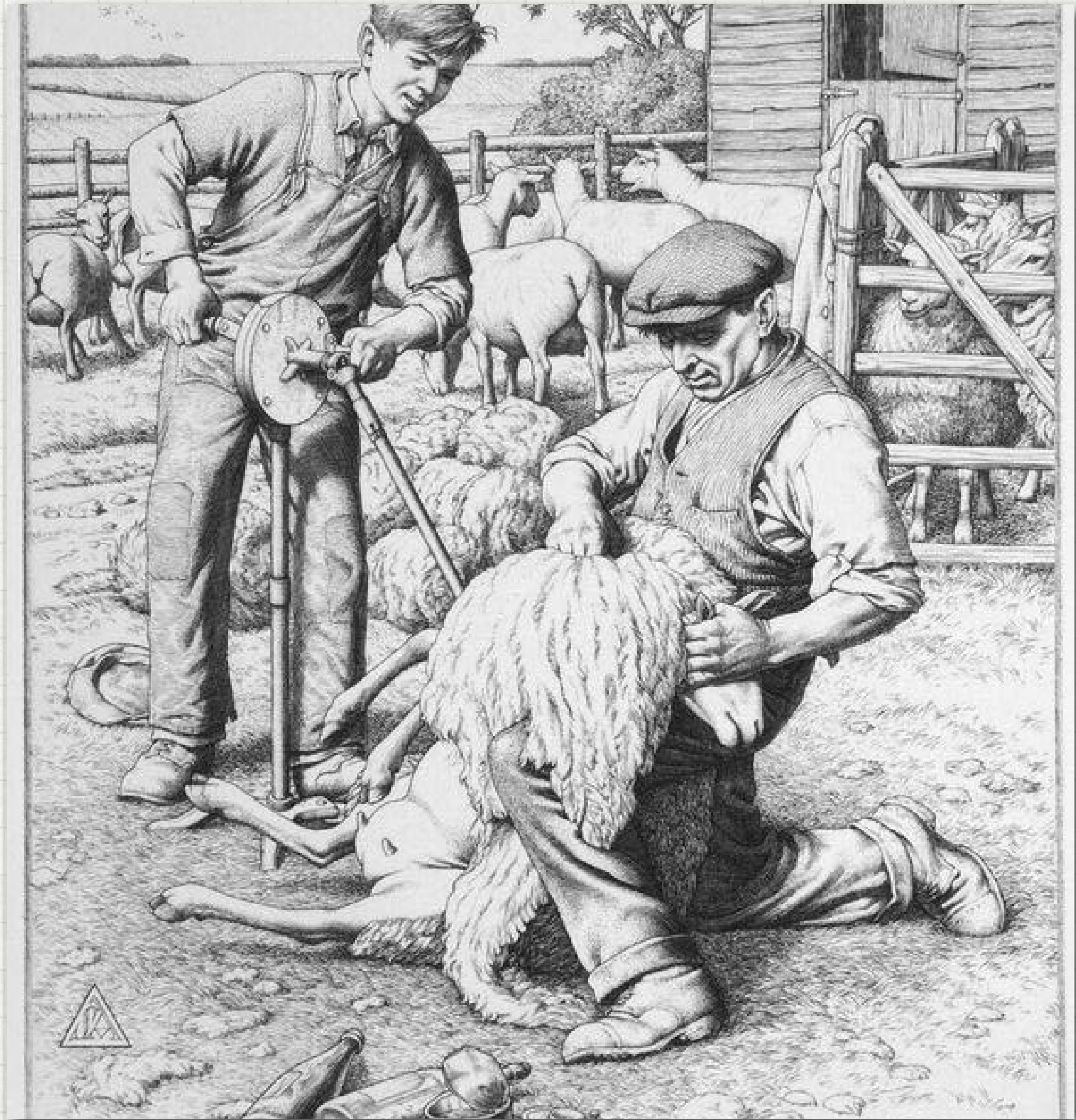


He was wounded as a result of our transgressions, and crushed as a result of our iniquities. The chastisement upon him was for our benefit; and through his wounds we were healed.

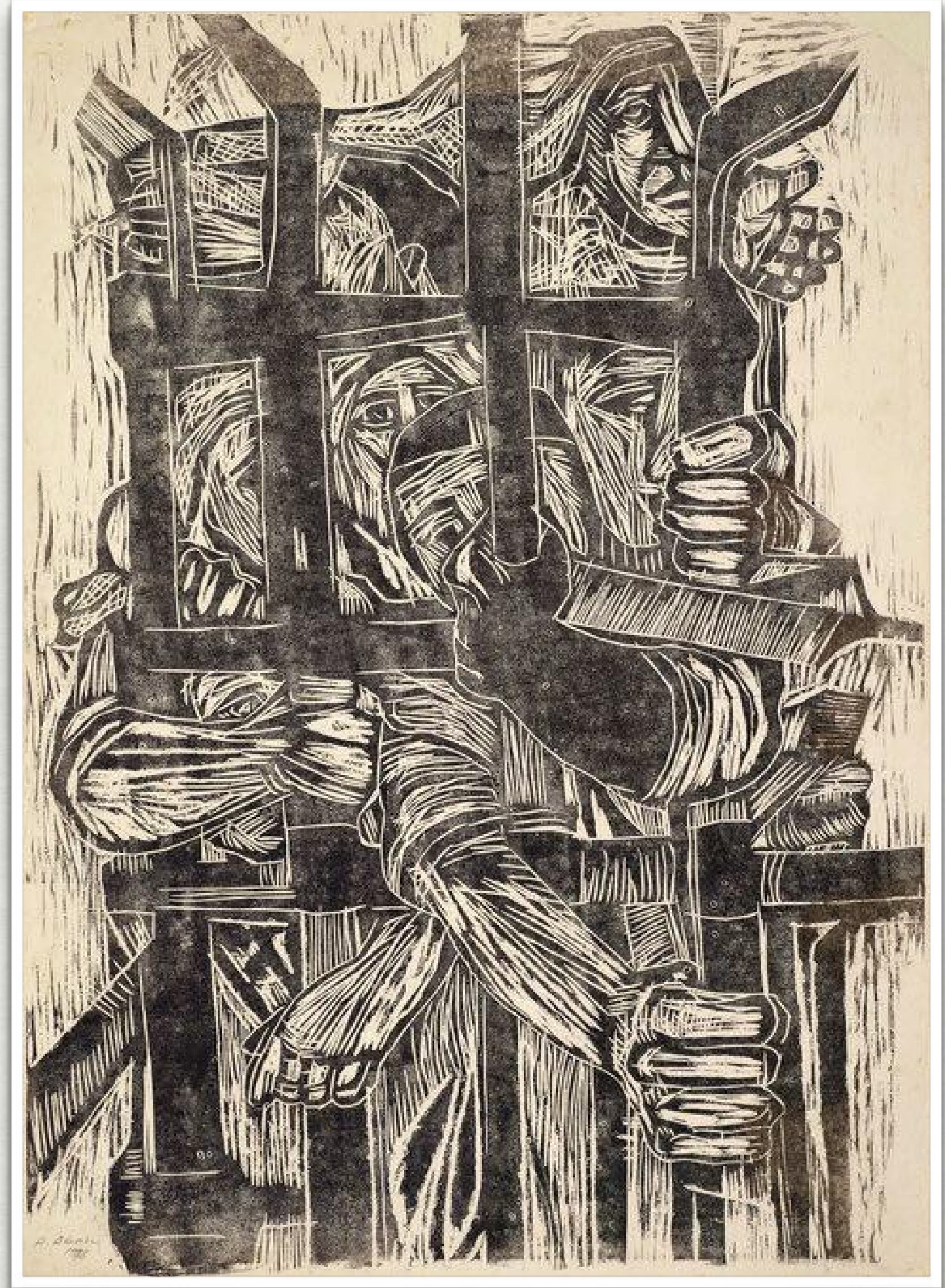
We have all strayed like sheep, each of us turning his own way, and God inflicted upon him [Israel] the iniquity of us all.



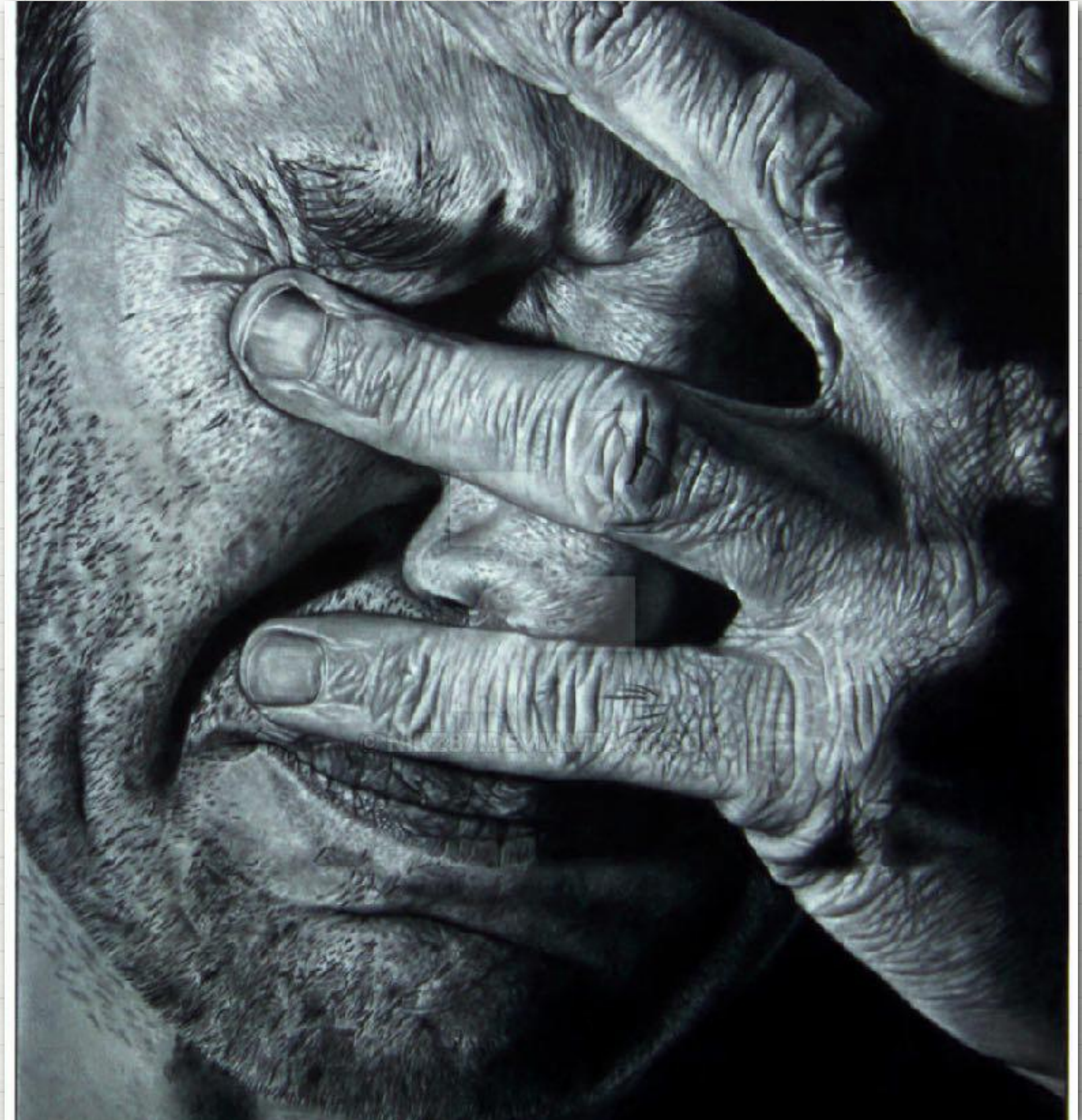
He was persecuted and afflicted, but he did not open his mouth. Like a sheep being led to the slaughter or a lamb that is silent before her shearers, he did not open his mouth.



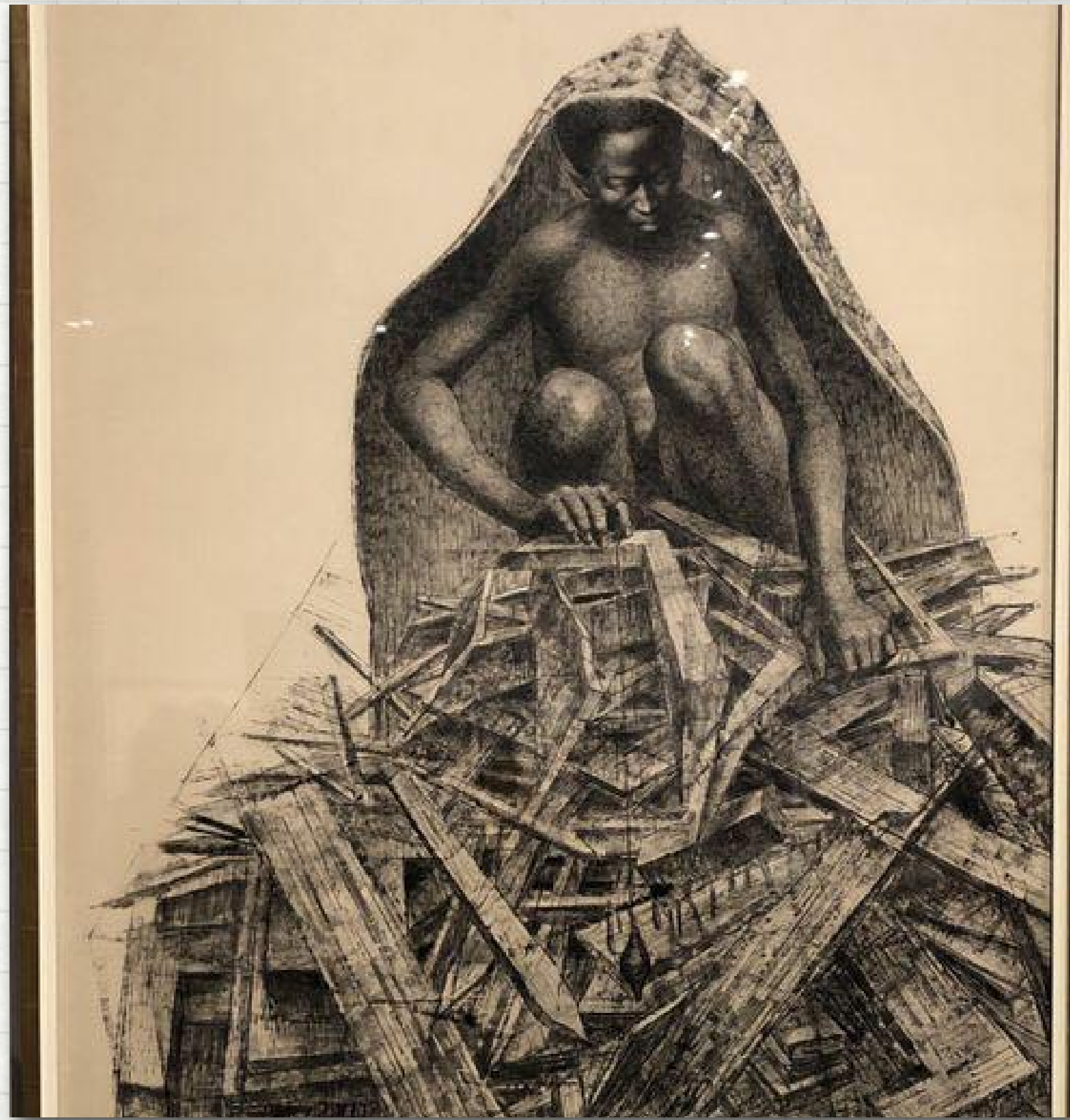
He was released from captivity and judgment;
who could have imagined such a generation?
For he was removed from the land of the living;
because of my people's sin they were afflicted.



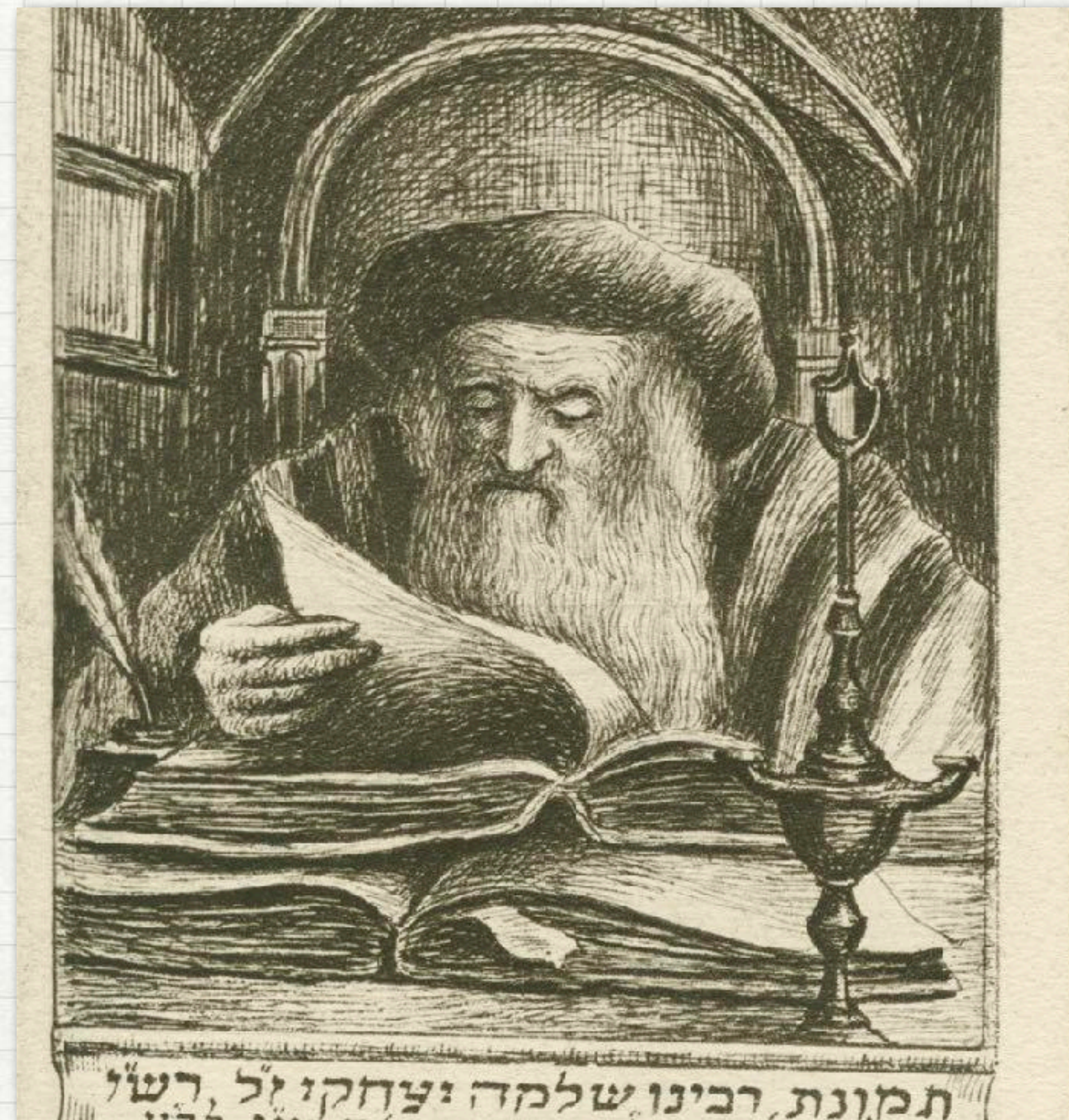
He submitted his grave to evil people; and the wealthy submitted to his executions,
for committing no crime, and with no deceit in his mouth.



God desired to oppress him and He afflicted him. If his soul would acknowledge guilt, he would see offspring and live long days, and God's purpose would succeed in his hand.



He would see the purpose and be satisfied with his soul's distress. With his knowledge
My servant will cause the masses to be righteous; and he will bear their sins.



Therefore, I will assign him a portion in public and he will divide the mighty as spoils – in return for having poured out his soul for death and being counted among the wicked, for he bore the sin of the many, and prayed for the wicked.



WHY IT MATTERS

A JEWISH POINT OF VIEW



When all the verses have been parsed, and all the proofs have been presented, one still might wonder: What difference does it make who is right?

The theological gap between Judaism and Christianity is not limited to the question: "Who is the Messiah," or a debate over the translation of a few biblical verses. Judaism and Christianity are two different belief systems, differing over core issues such as the existential nature of man, the role of our relationship with God, and the path to genuine spiritual fulfillment.

Jews have held steadfast to their beliefs for thousands of years, amidst all forms of persecution and hardship. They have done so in the belief that the Jewish people – as bearers of God's message of morality and justice – have a unique and crucial role to play in human history. As the prophet Isaiah predicts, this will become eminently clear when the Messiah, the King of Israel, arrives. May it be speedily in our day.