

has created all things. What is the duty of His servant? Verses 6 and 7 declare that God's servant is to be a covenant of the people and a light of the Gentiles. His servant is to open blind eyes and to bring out prisoners from the prison. How can Israel do this when she is herself a prisoner?

In verses 8-18 the theme of the greatness of God as compared with the futility of the idols is constantly in mind. It is God who will accomplish the deliverance and bring mighty things to pass. Those who trust in idols will be greatly ashamed.

A Perplexing Problem

The misgivings we have mentioned as inevitably occurring in the mind of Israel in relation to the wonderful picture of the ideal servant are clearly expressed in verse 19 and following. The Lord says, "Who is blind but my servant, or deaf, as my messenger that I sent?" Verse 21 tells us that the Lord will indeed magnify His righteousness, but in verse 22 we are again brought face to face with the great difficulty. How can Israel fulfill the demands of the work of the servant of the Lord when "this is a people robbed and spoiled; they are all of them snared in holes, and they are hid in prison houses?"

It is a problem which seems unanswerable. However, there is an additional note that deserves to be stressed. Verse 24 points out the reason why Israel has come into this condition. "Who gave Jacob for a spoil, and Israel to the robbers? did not the Lord, he against whom we have sinned? for they would not walk in his ways, neither were they obedient unto his law." It is for this reason that God has had to send His people into exile and suffering, because they had sinned against Him. The servant of the Lord is to bring light and deliverance to the nations. Israel is God's servant, but how can Israel do this when Israel is itself in bondage and in darkness? Israel itself needs a deliverer. A deliverer from exile is a necessity, but far more important is a deliverer from the sin that has caused the exile and has made it unthinkable that Israel should be able to fulfill the great world-wide ministry of the servant of the Lord. Thus the problem has been clearly set before us in this chapter.