

its first portion and its last portion. At the beginning of the chapter we see the ideal servant pictured, and learn of the wonderful objective that God set before Israel, the work for the doing of which they are responsible. He is going to deliver them because they are his servant to fulfill his purpose. Now, we find him looking at them in exile and asking the very questions which we found ourselves asking at the end of the first section of the chapter. How can Israel which is in bondage and in suffering fulfill this great ideal?

There is quite an interesting progress of thought through this section. ~~God~~ It is interesting to notice the tact of the Holy Spirit, how God starts in chapter 40 with the theme of comfort, goes on to stress deliverance, to stress assurance that they will be free from Babylon, certainty that he is powerful, able to accomplish his work, evidence of his power from prediction which he has given and which has been fulfilled, ~~only~~ now does he begin to bring in these points of dissatisfaction with his people. The great ideal has been presented in the first part of the chapter. Now, however, he addresses the people in very startling language. Hear, ye deaf; and look, ye blind, that ye may see. Who that he is addressing? The question is answered in the next verse: Who is blind, but my servant? or deaf, as my messenger that I sent? who is blind as he that is perfect, and blind as the Lord's servant?

The next to the last phrase is one which has caused commentators endless difficulty. The word perfect seems out of place here. Various guesses have been made for a substitute but most of them are quite unsatisfactory.

The verb form should mean one who is made perfect or one who is made complete, or made at peace, made to be at peace. The ~~perfect~~ precise form does not occur elsewhere in the Scripture and so it is difficult to be certain as to the exact sense that it should have. However, it is a participial form and the participle does not express time. Probably the best interpretation is that the words that the English supplies, "he that is," which supply a present idea with the participle should be replaced by words substituting a future idea with it. He that is to be perfect, or that is to be made to be at peace. This would be entirely proper use of the participle and would make perfect sense in the context. Israel has been called with the responsibility that this work of the shepherd is to be performed.