

the time of Christ seemed to most nations to be parched and barren, desolate of hope for the future. Who would have thought that from this nation--and in fact from one of the less prominent sections of the nation--One would come who would bring deliverance to the whole world. Even one of His own countrymen said, when told of Him: "Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?" (John 1:46). Out of what was apparently a dry ground there grew up a tender plant!

The last half of verse two--"he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him" -- is not speaking of the character of Christ, but solely of that aspect of His life which is most vital to the salvation which He brings. The character of Christ indeed, had a fascination surpassing that of all others. Men said of Him, "Never man spake like this man." (John 7:46). Great crowds followed Him and were impressed with the wonder of His teaching and with the glory of His miracles. This verse refers not to His character of His life but to His death. Who would have thought that from One who died a criminal death on the humiliating cross salvation would come to the whole world? When men see His cruel death there is no beauty that they should desire Him. The Redeemer did not come as a great general leading a mighty army to conquer nations and to establish peace and righteousness by force. One who died a tragic death became thereby the source of salvation to the whole world. It would hardly have been expected that the news of such an event would have conquered great nations and led whole peoples to come to the foot of His cross. Yet that is exactly what has occurred.

Verse three continues to describe the sorrow and misery connected with His death. Cast out and rejected -- even His disciples fleeing -- no one standing by Him -- He was conspired against by men of His own nation, and subjected to cruel torture and death at the hands of brutal foreigners. "He was despised and we esteemed Him not."

The first half of verse four is often misunderstood and was most probably not correctly interpreted by the translators of our Authorized Version. The words rendered "griefs" and "sorrows" are in the Hebrew much narrower words than this translation would suggest. They do not indicate sorrow or grief in general, but specifically physical injury or sickness. It would be more literal to translate it: "Surely He has borne our infirmities and carried our sicknesses."