

Prophets -20-

have a discussion back and forth in which they were denying His accusation against them. That is not impossible, but if that were the case we would have definite evidence of it. We wouldn't expect to simply deduce it from one verse alone, and so v. 5 if it is Israel sharply contradicts v. 1. V. 6 seems to describe the condition of Israel in exile, doesn't it? I gave my back to the smiters and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair. I hid not my face from shame and spitting. Is this a description of Israel's suffering in the exile? Surely they went through much of that sort of misery as the Israelites have through the ages ever since, but is that verse satisfactory as a description of Israel's suffering? Mr.---. do you think so? (Student) Yes. That is another possibility, which would be very good for us to look into, but before we do, let's answer this question. Could it be Israel as far as v. 6 is concerned? Is there any objection in v. 6 to it's being Israel. Surely Israel was spat upon and Israel was subject to shame and spitting, and the plucking off of the hair. Now those may be literal; they be not strictly literal. They may express in figurative terminology the extent of humiliation and suffering, but surely they are not too strong to describe what Israel goes through in exile. Yes, Mr.---? (Student) Yes. That's right. It is voluntary, and there is nothing voluntary about the Babylon exile. The Israelites fought as hard as they could not to go into Babylon into exile. There is no voluntary humiliation on Israel's part. There is an involuntary humiliation which led many of them to cry out in misery, "Why has God put us into this situation?" There is no voluntary humiliation on the part of Israel. And this says, "I gave my back to the smiters. I hid not my face from shame and spitting." There is voluntary humiliation there, and why should Israel speak of that. That would fit Isaiah much better than it would fit Israel, if Isaiah had had a great deal of persecution in his life. Now as far as we know he had none except at the very end of his life. He was looked on with dis favor by the king in the beginning of his life, but not persecuted. And then in the middle part of his life,