

Verse 21 declares the purpose of all this. The people whom God formed for Himself are to declare His praise. Thus the chapter has laid great stress on the responsibility of Israel to be God's witness. It should make Him known to the ends of the earth as part of its responsibility toward fulfilling the work assigned to the LORD's Servant.

At this point there is a sudden sharp transition, paralleling the one near the end of the previous chapter. The declaration of God's wonderful blessings to Israel, which bears responsibility to fulfill the work of the Servant of the LORD, leads to recognition of the inability of the nation to fulfill the task.

(22) But you have not called on me, O Jacob; but you have become weary of me, O Israel. (23) You have not brought me your sheep for burnt offering, or honored me with your sacrifices. I have not burdened you with offerings, nor wearied you with incense. (24) You have bought me no sweet cane with money. Neither have you filled me with the fat of your sacrifices. Instead you have burdened me with your sins; you have wearied me with your iniquities. (25) I, even I, am the one who blots out your transgressions for my own sake, and I will not remember your sins. (26) Put me in remembrance; let us argue together; state your case, that you may be proved right. (27) Your first forefather sinned, and your representatives have transgressed against me. (28) Therefore I will profane the princes of the sanctuary, and I will give over Jacob to the curse and Israel to reviling.

The first three verses in this passage are among the saddest in the Bible, as they show God's erring people failing to return His love, becoming weary of Him, and even burdening Him with their iniquities. The loving heart of God, saddened by the sin and waywardness of His people, never finds clearer expression than here. But the Christian should never consider this passage as merely an account of wayward Israel. All of us need to take these words to heart and realize how far short we come of showing true gratitude to God for all He has done for us.

Verse 25 must be taken as a prediction of the future. God promises that for His own sake He will blot out the transgressions