

directly to two groups of individuals. First He turns to those who are truly following the LORD but who, nevertheless, feel that they are walking in darkness and tend to fall into despondency. He urges such people to trust in the name of the LORD and to rely on God.

Then the Servant turns to those who are unfaithful and describes them by a unique but rather apt figure of speech. In contrast to the true followers of God, who sometimes experience difficulty in finding the light they need, He designates the faithless as "you who kindle a fire, who encircle yourselves with firebrands." Thus He points to all who trust their own wisdom instead of looking for the light that only God and His Servant can provide. Such people are ironically told that all they can do is to walk in the light of the little fires that they have kindled. Apart from what God has revealed, man can see only a short distance in any direction. An individual with unusual mental ability may be able, through research and investigation, to peer much further into the darkness than the ordinary person. Yet even he has no basis for deciding the meaning of life or for fashioning his life in such a way that it will count for eternity.

In the final sentence the Servant of the LORD gives a more direct statement of condemnation: "This you will have from my hand; you will lie down in sorrow." To the Christian, death means only a further step in the working out of God's perfect plan. The unbeliever has no solid ground for hope beyond the grave. Death, to him, can mean nothing better than "lying down in torment."