

the slaughter which has come to groups of God's erring people during the ages from the rebellion of Bar Cochba to the mass murders of Hitler is included in the fulfillment of this phrase, "the Lord GOD shall slay thee."

Verse 16

One possible interpretation of verse 16 would be to consider it as giving the reason for the turning of God's favor to the Gentiles. In this case it means that His inscrutable providence is intended to result in the widespread knowledge of Himself, so that throughout the earth He shall be recognized in all phases of life, since the troubles due to sin shall have passed away and been hidden from the eye of God. If that interpretation of the verse should be taken, then the first word of verse 17 should be rendered "But," rather than "For" -- a possible, though less usual rendering -- since the verses following clearly deal with a different phase of God's plan than those preceding it.

Yet there are a number of reasons for thinking that such an interpretation of verse 16 is probably wrong. In the first place, verse 17 seems to be closely connected with verse 16, and this makes the usual translation, "For," seem more natural. In the second place, verse 16 seems to describe a condition much too universal to fit our present age. In the third place, even though the Christian knows that his sins are under the blood of Christ, the words "because the former troubles are forgotten" do not seem exactly to fit this great fact but to require some other element for their explanation. In the fourth place, the Hebrew word with which the verse begins is rarely if ever used to indicate simple purpose. Normally it introduces clauses quite similar to our English relative clauses. It is thus not precisely similar to our English word "that," which is often used as a shortened form of "in order that." The beginning of the verse might possibly be rendered: "Whoever is the one blessing himself in the earth shall," or one might simply translate, "The one who blesses himself in the earth shall," as is done by the Septuagint.

Consequently, it seems better to consider verse 16 as beginning the second part of the chapter. Verses 16-25 are