

after time how God is going to deliver the people from exile. He is going to take them back. The nation is going to go on, and it will immediately change from that wonderful praise and blessing to denunciation for their sins which caused the exile. So the basic problem is this: God will deliver them from exile, yes. But if they continue in their sin, God will have to send them into exile again! Exile was the result of sin.

The sin problem is there even if you are delivered from its apparent results. There is nothing to be gained from deliverance from the results caused by sin unless you deal with the root of it, the problem of sin. We have had in these servant passages we looked at before the wonderful assurance the servant is going to accomplish his great work. He is going to prosper in doing God's work, not only for Israel but also for the nations. People will say: How could he ever do a work like that? We're sinners and subject to the results of our sin; how can we ever bring light to the nations? How can we ever accomplish this? God has a plan and this plan is going to be accomplished.

So we find: My servant is going to prosper. He is going to do something that will deal with this vital central problem. We are assured here the servant's work will accomplish. Then it goes on: "He will be great and lifted up and highly exalted." But then the next verse has marked contrast from this. He is going to be exalted, raised up, but "just as many were appalled at him, his appearance was so disfigured beyond that of any man, and his form marred beyond human likeness," --- that doesn't sound as if he is going to succeed, as if he is going to be raised up. As if he is going to accomplish a great deal.

The first line of that 14th verse unfortunately is not well translated in most versions. In KJV it says ~~it~~ ~~says~~ "just as many were astonished at him." "Astonied" an old English word. Nobody uses it today. It is easy for us to get the meaning of these old English words, and often we can tell from the context what it means in the KJV, but often we may make wrong guesses. I believe the translators of the RSV made such a wrong guess, because they translated it "just as many were astonished." "Astonied" does not mean "astonished". It means "astounded"-- the Heb. word here is not simply the word for surprise. It is the word for being astounded or amazed. The NIV at this point has made a very good translation: "just as there were many who were appalled." Appalled or astounded.

Here there is a very unfortunate thing at the end of this verse. In KJV it says "just as many were astonished at you."..... his appearance was so." There is a contrast there. Just as people saw Israel taken into exile, they seemed to have lost their identity as a nation. They are scattered through the Babylonian empire, many of them are in great suffering and misery. What has become of this nation? It has lost its identity. It has disappeared. Many were astounded at you, so is He to suffer, so is He..... Just as Israel seems no longer to be a nation, so is He. Not even to seem to be human. So is the great suffering and disfigurement that