

of the great victory over sin presented in the early verses of the chapter. Much of it is equally relevant to the immediate situation of the Israelites, with the inhabitants of the Northern Kingdom already in foreign exile and Isaiah's followers in the south knowing that their own kingdom will eventually suffer the same fate.

Beginning with verse 27, the LORD quotes and then answers the imagined complaint of the exiles, who are longing to be freed.

(27) Why do you say, O Jacob, and declare, O Israel, My way is hidden from the LORD, and the justice due me is disregarded by my God? (28) Do you not know? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God. The Creator of the ends of the earth does not faint or grow tired. There is no searching of his understanding. (29) He gives power to the weary, and for those without vigor he increases strength. (30) Even youths may grow weary and tired, and young men may fall exhausted, but those who wait for the LORD will renew their strength; they will mount up with wings like eagles; they will run and not be weary; they will walk and not faint.

In verse 27 the LORD introduces the despairing cry of the exiles with the words, "Why do you say...?" Thus He suggests one of the basic questions of this whole section. Why should those who belong to so powerful a God complain? How can they even think that He would forget His people? He is the omniscient God, who needs no advice from human counselors. All wisdom, as well as all power, belongs to Him. We have surveyed the long statement of God's ability to destroy the ungodly forces that hold His people in subjection. Now He responds to Israel's complaint by renewed assurance that His great power can never fail and that His wisdom goes far beyond all human understanding.

We may pity the Israelites for needing such reassurance. Yet most Christians have similar times of doubt, and every believer can benefit from reading this passage.

Here, for the first time in the chapter, God calls Himself the Creator. Hitherto the emphasis has been mainly on His present