

of His people. This verse presents the central problem dealt with in this entire section. How can the terrible denunciation of sin in so many parts of the prophetic books, and even in the verses immediately before and after the present verse, be reconciled with such a promise? How can a just God, who loves holiness, forget sin? Some factor must intervene to make this possible. This factor is to be the climax of our present section of Isaiah. God intends to blot out transgression for His own sake. Yet He also intends to maintain His unsullied holiness. The importance of this problem is stressed more and more as we go through these chapters. God's solution will be revealed in the great climactic prediction in chapter 53, toward which all of this section is leading.

After the great declaration, in verse 25, of God's ultimate intention, He again points to His great sorrow over sin. He calls on His people to show any proper cause of complaint against Him. The implied answer, of course, is that man has nothing truly to declare against God. All our excuses for not doing God's will are flimsy and will not bear examination. God calls on us to try to express them clearly and thus to see how unreasonable they are.

In verse 27 He pronounces strong condemnation of the sin of Israel: "Your first father sinned, and your representatives have transgressed against me." Every part of the nation is implicated in its terrible sin.

Verse 28 declares the inevitable results. Like every calamity that can come into the life of one professing to be a follower of God, the Exile is no accident. it is God who gives Jacob to the curse.

Such statements of strong denunciation occur comparatively seldom in this section of Isaiah. They are always introduced with declarations of His great love, and usually, as in this case, they are immediately followed by passages telling of His intention to bring great blessing to His people.