

1. SUMMARY OF THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE SERVANT

(13) Behold, my servant will prosper [or, deal wisely]. He will be high and lifted up and very high. (14) Just as many were astounded at you, so marred is his appearance from that of a man, and his form from the sons of men, (15a) so he will sprinkle many nations.

The paragraph begins by saying that the Servant's work will succeed. There is no exact equivalent in English for this first verb, ^{^33a} which contains two ideas: (1) the work will be wisely done; and (2) it will be successfully done. The same problem of translating this word occurs at many other places in the Bible (e.g., Josh 1:7; 1 Sam 18:5, 30; Jer 23:5).

The general statement of the effective accomplishment of the great work of the Servant of the LORD is followed by a description of the exaltation that would naturally result. The three verbs with almost identical meaning in the latter part of verse 13 stress the supreme nature of this exaltation and present a marked contrast to what follows.

The remainder of this paragraph shows how the work of the Servant will be done and what it will accomplish. In contrast to the Servant's exaltation, verse 14 describes His humiliation. This idea might seem very strange if it had not already been introduced in the earlier Servant passages. It will be recalled that the humiliation of the Servant was touched upon in 49:4,7 and was extensively developed in 50:6. Here it is introduced by a comparison that is brought out much better in the Hebrew than in most translations. The verse begins with a Hebrew word that means "just as." Then the second part of verse 14 and the first part of verse 15 begin with a Hebrew particle that can express either a comparison or a result. The structure of the passage may be represented thus: "Just as ----, so (similarly), ---- so (as a result) ----."

Thus the statement consists of three parts. It begins with a reference to the condition of Israel in exile. Dragged away from its homeland and scattered among alien peoples, it would hardly seem any longer to be a nation. In similar circumstances many another nation has altogether lost its identity.