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**Proverbs-Malachi**

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# THE BOOK OF PROVERBS

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## INTRODUCTION

**1. The Nature And Use Of Proverbs.** — A proverb is a pithy sentence, concisely expressing some well-established truth susceptible of various illustrations and applications. The word is of Latin derivation, literally meaning *for a word, speech, or discourse*; that is, one expression for many. The *Hebrew* word for “proverb” (*mashal*) means a “comparison.” Many suppose it was used, because the form or matter of the proverb, or both, involved the idea of *comparison*. Most of the proverbs are in couplets or triplets, or some modifications of them, the members of which correspond in structure and length, as if arranged to be compared one with another. They illustrate the varieties of parallelism, a distinguishing feature of *Hebrew* poetry. Compare *Introduction* to Poetical Books. Many also clearly involve the idea of comparison in the sentiments expressed (compare <sup><1000></sup>Proverbs 12:1-10 25:10-15 26:1-9). Sometimes, however, the designed omission of one member of the comparison, exercising the reader’s sagacity or study for its supply, presents the proverb as a “riddle” or “dark saying” (compare <sup><1000></sup>Proverbs 30:15-33 1:6 <sup><9000></sup>Psalms 49:4). The sententious form of expression, which thus became a marked feature of the proverbial style, was also adopted for continuous discourse, even when not always preserving traces of comparison, either in form or matter (compare <sup><1000></sup>Proverbs 1:1-9:18). In <sup><25700></sup>Ezekiel 17:1 24:3, we find the same word properly translated “parable,” to designate an illustrative discourse. Then the *Greek* translators have used a word, *parabola* (“parable”), which the gospel writers (except John) employ for our Lord’s discourses of the same character, and which also seems to involve the idea of comparison, though that may not be its primary meaning. It might seem, therefore, that the proverbial and parabolic styles of writing were originally and essentially the same. The proverb is a “concentrated parable, and the parable an extension of the proverb by a full illustration.” The proverb is thus the moral or theme of a parable, which sometimes precedes it, as in <sup><10000></sup>Matthew 19:30 (compare <sup><10000></sup>Proverbs 20:1); or succeeds it, as in <sup><10000></sup>Matthew 22:1-16

☞ Luke 15:1-10. The style being poetical, and adapted to the expression of a high order of poetical sentiment, such as prophecy, we find the same term used to designate such compositions (compare ☞ Numbers 23:7 ☞ Micah 2:4 ☞ Habakkuk 2:6).

Though the *Hebrews* used the same term for proverb and parable, the *Greek* employs two, though the sacred writers have not always appeared to recognize a distinction. The term for proverb is, *paroimia*, which the *Greek* translators employ for the title of this book, evidently with special reference to the later definition of a proverb, as a trite, sententious form of speech, which appears to be the best meaning of the term. John uses the same term to designate our Savior's instructions, in view of their characteristic obscurity (compare ☞ Proverbs 16:25-29, *Greek*), and even for his illustrative discourses (☞ Proverbs 10:6), whose sense was not at once obvious to all his hearers. This form of instruction was well adapted to aid the learner. The parallel structure of sentences, the repetition, contrast, or comparison of thought, were all calculated to facilitate the efforts of memory; and precepts of practical wisdom which, extended into logical discourses, might have failed to make abiding impressions by reason of their length or complicated character, were thus compressed into pithy, and, for the most part, very plain statements. Such a mode of instruction has distinguished the written or traditional literature of all nations, and was, and still is, peculiarly current in the East.

In this book, however, we are supplied with a proverbial wisdom commended by the seal of divine inspiration. God has condescended to become our teacher on the practical affairs belonging to all the relations of life. He has adapted His instruction to the plain and unlettered, and presented, in this striking and impressive method, the great principles of duty to Him and to our fellow men. To the prime motive of all right conduct, the fear of God, are added all lawful and subordinate incentives, such as honor, interest, love, fear, and natural affection. Besides the terror excited by an apprehension of God's justly provoked judgments, we are warned against evil-doing by the exhibition of the inevitable temporal results of impiety, injustice, profligacy, idleness, laziness, indolence, drunkenness, and debauchery. To the rewards of true piety which follow in eternity, are promised the peace, security, love, and approbation of the good, and the comforts of a clear conscience, which render this life truly happy.

**2. Inspiration And Authorship.** — With no important exception, Jewish and Christian writers have received this book as the inspired production of Solomon. It is the first book of the Bible prefaced by the name of the author. The New Testament abounds with citations from the Proverbs. Its

intrinsic excellence commends it to us as the production of a higher authority than the apocryphal writings, such as Wisdom or Ecclesiasticus. Solomon lived five hundred years before the “seven wise men” of Greece, and seven hundred before the age of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle. It is thus very evident, whatever theory of his sources of knowledge be adopted, that he did not draw upon any heathen repositories with which we are acquainted. It is far more probable, that by the various migrations, captivities, and dispersions of the Jews, heathen philosophers drew from this inspired fountain many of those streams which continue to refresh mankind amid the otherwise barren and parched deserts of profane literature.

As, however, the Psalms are ascribed to David, because he was the leading author, so the ascription of this book to Solomon is entirely consistent with the titles of the thirtieth and thirty-first chapters, which assign those chapters to Agur and Lemuel respectively. Of these persons we know nothing. This is not the place for discussing the various speculations respecting them. By a slight change of reading some propose to translate <sup><300E></sup>Proverbs 30:1: “The words of Agur, the son of her who was obeyed Massa,” that is, “the queen of Massa”; and <sup><300E></sup>Proverbs 31:1: “The words of Lemuel, king of Massa”; but to this the earliest versions are contradictory, and nothing other than the strongest exegetical necessity ought to be allowed to justify a departure from a well-established reading and version when nothing useful to our knowledge is gained. It is better to confess ignorance than indulge in useless conjectures.

It is probable that out of the “three thousand proverbs” (<sup><100E></sup>1 Kings 4:32) which Solomon spoke, he selected and edited <sup><300E></sup>Proverbs 1:1-24:34 during his life. <sup><300E></sup>Proverbs 25:1-29:27 were also of his production, and copied out in the days of Hezekiah, by his “men,” perhaps the prophets Isaiah, Hosea, and Micah. Such a work was evidently in the spirit of this pious monarch, who set his heart so fully on a reformation of God’s worship. Learned men have endeavored to establish the theory that Solomon himself was only a collector; or that the other parts of the book, as these chapters, were also selections by later hands; but the reasons adduced to maintain these views have never appeared so satisfactory as to change the usual opinions on the subject, which have the sanction of the most ancient and reliable authorities.

**3. Divisions Of The Book.** — Such a work is, of course, not susceptible of any logical analysis. There are, however, some well-defined marks of division, so that very generally the book is divided into five or six parts.

**1.** The first contains nine chapters, in which are discussed and enforced by illustration, admonition, and encouragement the principles and blessings of

wisdom, and the pernicious schemes and practices of sinful persons. These chapters are introductory. With few specimens of the proper proverb, they are distinguished by its conciseness and terseness. The sentences follow very strictly the form of parallelism, and generally of the synonymous species, only forty of the synthetic and four (<sup><del>2182</del></sup>Proverbs 3:32-35) of the antithetic appearing. The style is ornate, the figures bolder and fuller, and the illustrations more striking and extended.

2. The antithetic and synthetic parallelism to the exclusion of the synonymous distinguish <sup><del>2182</del></sup>Proverbs 10:1-22:16, and the verses are entirely unconnected, each containing a complete sense in itself.
3. <sup><del>2126</del></sup>Proverbs 22:16-24:34 present a series of admonitions as if addressed to a pupil, and generally each topic occupies two or more verses.
4. <sup><del>2158</del></sup>Proverbs 25:1-29:27 are entitled to be regarded as a distinct portion, for the reason given above as to its origin. The style is very much mixed; of the peculiarities, compare parts two and three.
5. <sup><del>2181</del></sup>Proverbs 30:1-33 is peculiar not only for its authorship, but as a specimen of the kind of proverb which has been described as “dark sayings” or “riddles.”
6. To a few pregnant but concise admonitions, suitable for a king, is added a most inimitable portraiture of female character. In both parts five and six the distinctive peculiarity of the original proverbial style gives place to the modifications already mentioned as marking a later composition, though both retain the concise and nervous method of stating truth, equally valuable for its deep impression and permanent retention by the memory.

# CHAPTER 1

## ~~<1000>~~ PROVERBS 1:1-33.

After the title the writer defines the design and nature of the instructions of the book. He paternally invites attention to those instructions and warns his readers against the enticements of the wicked. In a beautiful personification, wisdom is then introduced in a most solemn and impressive manner, publicly inviting men to receive its teachings, warning those who reject, and encouraging those who accept, the proffered instructions.

**1-4.** (See *Introduction*, Part I).

**2.** *To know ... instruction* — literally, “for knowing,” that is, such is the design of these writings.

*wisdom* — or the use of the best means for the best ends, is generally employed in this book for true piety.

*instruction* — discipline, by which men are trained.

*to perceive* — literally, “for perceiving,” the design (as above)

*understanding* — that is, words which enable one to discern good and evil.

**3.** *To receive ... of wisdom* — For receiving that discipline which *discretion* imparts. The *Hebrew* for “wisdom” differs from that of ~~<1000>~~Proverbs 1:2, and denotes rather discreet counsel. Compare the opposite traits of the fool (~~<1002>~~Proverbs 16:22).

*justice ... equity* — all the attributes of one upright in all his relations to God and man.

**4.** *simple* — one easily led to good or evil; so the parallel.

*young man* — one inexperienced.

*subtilty* — or prudence (~~<1002>~~Proverbs 3:21 5:21).

*discretion* — literally, “device,” both qualities, either good or bad, according to their use. Here good, as they imply wariness by which to escape evil and find good.

**5, 6.** Such writings the wise, who pursue right ends by right means, will value.

*learning* — not the act, but matter of it.

*wise counsels* — or the art and principles of governing.

**6.** *To understand* — so as to ... such will be the result.

*interpretation* — (Compare *Margin*).

*words of the wise* — (Compare <sup><1002></sup>Proverbs 1:2).

*dark sayings* — (Compare <sup><9001></sup>Psalm 49:4 <sup><9165></sup>John 16:25; and see *Introduction*, Part I).

**7.** *The fear of the Lord* — the principle of true piety (compare <sup><1005></sup>Proverbs 2:5 14:26,27 <sup><8333></sup>Job 28:28 <sup><9341></sup>Psalm 34:11 111:10 <sup><4031></sup>Acts 9:31).

*beginning* — first part, foundation.

*fools* — the stupid and indifferent to God's character and government; hence the wicked.

**8.** *My son* — This paternal form denotes a tender regard for the reader. Filial sentiments rank next to piety towards God, and ensure most distinguished rewards (compare <sup><1067></sup>Proverbs 6:20 <sup><9002></sup>Ephesians 6:2,3).

**9.** On the figures of <sup><1009></sup>Proverbs 1:9, compare <sup><0440></sup>Genesis 41:42 <sup><2110></sup>Song of Solomon 1:10 4:9.

**10-19.** A solemn warning against temptation.

*entice* — literally, “open the way.”

*consent ... not* — Sin is in consenting or yielding to temptation, not in being tempted.

**11-14.** Murder and robbery are given as specific illustrations.

*lay wait ... lurk privily* — express an effort and hope for successful concealment.

*swallow ... grave* — utterly destroy the victim and traces of the crime (<sup><0463></sup>Numbers 16:33 <sup><9515></sup>Psalm 55:15). Abundant rewards of villainy are promised as the fruits of this easy and safe course.

**15, 16.** The society of the wicked (way or path) is dangerous. Avoid the beginnings of sin (<sup><1044></sup>Proverbs 4:14 <sup><9001></sup>Psalm 1:1 119:101).

**17-19.** Men warned ought to escape danger as birds instinctively avoid visibly spread nets. But stupid sinners rush to their own ruin (<sup><31916></sup>Psalm 9:16), and, greedy of gain, succeed in the very schemes which destroy them (<sup><51001></sup>1 Timothy 6:10), not only failing to catch others, but procuring their own destruction.

**20-33.** Some interpreters regard this address as the language of the Son of God under the name of Wisdom (compare <sup><2149></sup>Luke 11:49). Others think that wisdom, as the divine attribute specially employed in acts of counsel and admonition, is here personified, and represents God. In either case the address is a most solemn and divine admonition, whose matter and spirit are eminently evangelical and impressive (see on <sup><1081></sup>Proverbs 8:1).

**Wisdom** — literally, “Wisdoms,” the plural used either because of the unusual sense, or as indicative of the great excellency of wisdom (compare <sup><1081></sup>Proverbs 9:1).

**streets** — or most public places, not secretly.

**21.** The publicity further indicated by terms designating places of most common resort.

**22. simple ones** — (Compare <sup><1006></sup>Proverbs 1:4).

**simplicity** — implying ignorance.

**scorners** — (<sup><1900></sup>Psalm 1:1) — who despise, as well as reject, truth.

**fools** — Though a different word is used from that of <sup><1007></sup>Proverbs 1:7, yet it is of the same meaning.

**23. reproof** — implying conviction deserving it (compare <sup><6108></sup>John 16:8, *Margin*).

**pour out** — abundantly impart.

**my spirit** — whether of wisdom personified, or of Christ, a divine agent.

**24. stretched ... hand** — Earnestness, especially in beseeching, is denoted by the figure (compare <sup><18113></sup>Job 11:13 <sup><19681></sup>Psalm 68:31 88:9).

**25. set at naught** — rejected as of no value.

**would none of** — literally, “were not willing or inclined to it.”

**26, 27.** In their extreme distress He will not only refuse help, but aggravate it by derision.

**27. fear** — the object of it.

*desolation* — literally, “a tumultuous noise,” denoting their utter confusion.

*destruction* — or calamity (<sup><31026></sup>Proverbs 1:26) compared to a whirlwind, as to fatal rapidity.

*distress* — (<sup><39043></sup>Psalm 4:1 44:11).

*anguish* — a state of inextricable oppression, the deepest despair.

28. Now no prayers or most diligent seeking will avail (<sup><31877></sup>Proverbs 8:17).

29, 30. The sinner’s infatuated rejection brings his ruin.

31. *fruit ... way* — result of conduct (<sup><21800></sup>Isaiah 3:10 <sup><36129></sup>Ezekiel 11:21 <sup><45123></sup>Romans 6:21 <sup><48017></sup>Galatians 6:7,8).

*be filled* — even to repletion (<sup><39334></sup>Psalm 123:4).

32. *turning away* — that is, from the call of <sup><31023></sup>Proverbs 1:23.

*simple* — as in <sup><31023></sup>Proverbs 1:22.

*prosperity* — quiet, implying indifference.

33.  *dwell safely* — literally, “in confidence” (<sup><46200></sup>Deuteronomy 12:10).

*be quiet* — or at ease, in real prosperity.

*from fear* — without fear.

## CHAPTER 2

### PROVERBS 2:1-22.

Men are invited to seek wisdom because it teaches those principles by which they may obtain God's guidance and avoid the society and influence of the wicked, whose pernicious courses are described.

**1-5.** Diligence in hearing and praying for instruction must be used to secure the great principle of godliness, the fear of God.

*hide ... with thee* — lay up in store (compare <sup><2004></sup>Proverbs 7:1).

**2.** Listen attentively and reflect seriously (<sup><2004></sup>Proverbs 1:24 <sup><3901></sup>Psalms 130:2).

*understanding* — right perception of truth.

**3. Yea, if** — literally, "When if," that is, in such a case.

*knowledge* — or, "discrimination."

*understanding* — as in <sup><2004></sup>Proverbs 2:2.

**4.** There must be earnest prayer and effort.

**5. understand** — or, "perceive intelligently."

*find* — obtain.

**6. For** — God is ready (<sup><3005></sup>James 1:5 4:8).

*out of his mouth* — by revelation from Him.

**7. sound wisdom** — literally, "substance," opposed to what is fictitious. According to the context, this may be assistance, as here corresponding with

*buckler* — or safety, or wisdom, which procures it (compare <sup><2004></sup>Proverbs 3:21 8:14 18:1 <sup><3663></sup>Job 6:13 12:13).

*layeth up* — provides, ever ready.

**8. keepeth ... way** — God defends the right way, and those in it.

*saints* — objects of favor (compare <sup><3908></sup>Psalm 4:3, etc.). He guides and guards them.

9. *Then* — emphatic, in such a case.

*righteousness ... path* — all parts of duty to God and man.

10, 11. Idea of <sup><3189></sup>Proverbs 2:9, amplified; on terms, compare <sup><3182></sup>Proverbs 2:2 and <sup><3184></sup>Proverbs 2:4.

12-15. *To deliver* — as from great danger (<sup><3185></sup>Proverbs 6:5).

*way ... man* — (<sup><3908></sup>Psalm 1:1).

*froward things* — perversity (<sup><3184></sup>Proverbs 6:14 23:23), what is opposed to truth.

13. *paths of uprightness* — or, “plainness.”

*walk* — habitually act;

14. and that with pleasure, in ignorance of good and pursuit of evil.

*frowardness* — Not only their own perversity, but that of others is their delight. They love most the worst things.

15. *crooked* — tortuous, unprincipled.

*froward* — literally, (they) are going back, not only aside from right, but opposite to it.

16-19. Deliverance from another danger.

*the strange woman* — This term is often used for harlot, or loose woman (<sup><3710></sup>Judges 11:1,2), married (<sup><3108></sup>Proverbs 7:5,19) or not (<sup><3110></sup>1 Kings 11:1), so called, because such were, perhaps at first, foreigners, though “strange” may also denote whatever is opposed to right or proper, as “strange fire” (<sup><3488></sup>Numbers 3:4); “strange incense” (<sup><3319></sup>Exodus 30:9).

*flattereth* — literally, “smooths.”

*her words* — (<sup><3189></sup>Psalm 5:9).

17. *guide ... youth* — lawful husband (<sup><3488></sup>Jeremiah 3:4).

*covenant ... God* — of marriage made in God’s name.

18. *inclineth* — sinks down (compare <sup><3483></sup>Numbers 13:31).

*the dead* — or shades of the departed (<sup><3880></sup>Psalm 88:10).

19. that is, such as remain impenitent (compare <sup><391E></sup>Ecclesiastes 7:26).

*paths of life* — (<sup><391E></sup>Psalm 16:11), opposed to paths unto the dead.

20. *That ... way of good* — that is, Such is the object of these warnings.

21, 22. (Compare <sup><391E></sup>Psalm 37:3,9,22,27).

22. *transgressors* — or impious rebels (compare <sup><391E></sup>Jeremiah 9:2).

*rooted out* — utterly destroyed, as trees plucked up by the roots.

# CHAPTER 3

## PROVERBS 3:1-35.

The study of truth commended. God must be feared, honored, and trusted, and filial submission, under chastisement, exhibited. The excellence of wisdom urged and illustrated by its place in the divine counsels. Piety enforced by a contrast of the destiny of the righteous and the wicked.

1. **law** [and] **commandments** — all divine instructions (see on <sup>330F</sup>Psalm 119:1 and <sup>330F</sup>Psalm 119:4).

**let thine heart keep** — or sincerely observe (<sup>304S</sup>Proverbs 4:13 5:2).

2. **length ... life** — often promised as blessings (<sup>320F</sup>Psalm 21:4 91:16).

**peace** — includes prosperity (<sup>303F</sup>Psalm 125:5).

**add** — abound to thee.

3. **mercy and truth** — God's faithfulness to His promises is often expressed by these terms (<sup>325F</sup>Psalm 25:10 57:3). As attributes of men, they express integrity in a wide sense (<sup>306F</sup>Proverbs 16:6 20:28).

**bind ... write ... heart** — outwardly adorn and inwardly govern motives.

4. **favor** — grace, amiability (<sup>321F</sup>Proverbs 22:11 <sup>352F</sup>Psalm 45:2); united with this,

**a good understanding** — (Compare *Margin*), a discrimination, which secures success.

**in the sight ... man** — such as God and man approve.

5. **Trust ... heart** — This is the center and marrow of true wisdom (<sup>322F</sup>Proverbs 22:19 28:25). The positive duty has its corresponding negation in the admonition against self-confidence.

6. **ways** — (<sup>300F</sup>Psalm 1:1).

**acknowledge** — by seeking His wise aid (<sup>306F</sup>Proverbs 16:3 <sup>397F</sup>Psalm 37:5 <sup>302S</sup>Jeremiah 9:23,24).

**direct** — literally, "make plain" (compare <sup>382S</sup>Hebrews 12:13).

7. (Compare <sup><177></sup>Proverbs 27:2 <sup><526></sup>Romans 12:16).

*fear ... evil* — reverentially regarding His law.

8. *It* — This conduct.

*health* — (Compare *Margin*).

*to thy navel* — for all the organs of nourishment.

*marrow* — (Compare *Margin*).

*bones* — frame of body. True piety promotes bodily health.

9, 10. (Compare <sup><112></sup>Proverbs 11:25 <sup><123></sup>Exodus 23:19 <sup><580></sup>Deuteronomy 18:4 <sup><338></sup>Isaiah 32:8 <sup><703></sup>2 Corinthians 9:13).

10. *presses* — or wine fats (<sup><124></sup>Joel 2:24 3:13).

11, 12. The true intent of afflictions considered; they do not contradict the assertion of the blessed state of the pious (<sup><887></sup>Job 5:17 <sup><818></sup>Hebrews 12:5,6).

12. *he delighteth* — or receiveth as denoting reconciliation regarding the offense which produced chastisement.

13. *findeth* — literally, “reaches,” or “obtains by seeking.”

*getteth* — literally, “draws out,” as metals by digging.

14, 15. The figure of <sup><183></sup>Proverbs 3:13 carried out.

*it* — that is, wisdom.

*merchandise of silver* — acquisition by trading.

*fine gold* — dug gold, solid as a nugget.

15. *rubies* — gems, or pearls.

16, 17. Wisdom personified as bringing the best blessings (compare <sup><163></sup>Matthew 6:33 <sup><508></sup>1 Timothy 4:8).

17. *Her ways* — such as she directs us to take.

18. Wisdom allegorized as

*a tree of life* — (<sup><109></sup>Genesis 2:9 3:22) whose fruit preserves life, gives all that makes living a blessing.

19, 20. The place of wisdom in the economy of creation and providence commends it to men, who, in proportion to their finite powers, may

possess this invaluable attribute, and are thus encouraged by the divine example of its use to seek its possession.

**21. *sound wisdom*** — (compare <sup><3027></sup>Proverbs 2:7).

***let ... eyes*** — that is, these words of instruction.

**22-24.** assign reasons in their value for happiness and ornament, guidance and support in dangers, both when waking and sleeping.

**25. *Be not*** — or, “You shall not be.”

***sudden fear*** — what causes it (<sup><3027></sup>Proverbs 1:27), any unlooked-for evil (<sup><3043></sup>Psalms 46:3 91:12 <sup><3044></sup>1 Peter 3:14).

***desolation*** — (<sup><3027></sup>Proverbs 1:27).

**26.** The reason; such as are objects of God’s favor.

***be thy confidence*** — literally, “in thy confidence,” in the source of thy strength (compare Na 3:9, for the same construction, *Hebrew*).

**27, 28.** Promptly fulfill all obligations both of justice and charity (compare <sup><3025></sup>James 2:15,16).

**29, 30.** Do not abuse confidence and avoid litigation.

**31. *oppressor*** — or man of mischief. The destiny of successful evildoers warns against desiring their lot (<sup><3501></sup>Psalms 37:1,2,35,36).

**32-35.** Reasons for the warning.

***froward*** — (<sup><3025></sup>Proverbs 2:15).

***secret ... righteous*** — in their communion (<sup><3030></sup>Amos 3:7).

**33. *curse ... wicked*** — It abides with them, and will be manifested.

**34.** The retribution of sinners, as in <sup><3026></sup>Psalms 18:26.

**35. *inherit*** — as a portion.

***shame*** — or disgrace, as opposed to honor.

***promotion*** — (Compare *Margin*); as honor for well-doing makes men conspicuous, so fools are signalized by disgrace.

# CHAPTER 4

## PROVERBS 4:1-27.

To an earnest call for attention to his teachings, the writer adds a commendation of wisdom, preceded and enforced by the counsels of his father and teacher. To this he adds a caution (against the devices of the wicked), and a series of exhortations to docility, integrity, and uprightness.

1, 2. (Compare <sup><3008></sup>Proverbs 1:8).

*to know* — in order to know.

*doctrine* — the matter of learning (<sup><3005></sup>Proverbs 1:5), such as he had received (<sup><2884></sup>Lamentations 3:1).

3. *father's son* — emphatic, a son specially regarded, and so called tender, as an object of special care (compare <sup><3277></sup>1 Chronicles 22:7 29:1); an idea further expressed by

*only beloved* — or, “as an only son” (<sup><0220></sup>Genesis 22:2), though he had brothers (see on <sup><3385></sup>1 Chronicles 3:5).

4. *He taught* — or directed me.

*retain* — as well as receive.

*keep ... and live* — observe, that you may live (<sup><3002></sup>Proverbs 7:2).

5. *Get* — as a possession not to be given up.

*neither decline* — that is, from obeying my word.

6. Not only accept but love wisdom, who will keep thee from evil, and evil from thee.

7. (Compare <sup><1838></sup>Job 28:28).

*getting* — or possession; a desire for wisdom is wise.

8. As you highly esteem her, she will raise you to honor.

*embrace her* — with fond affection.

9. *ornament* — such as the chaplet or wreath of conquerors.

**deliver** — (Compare <sup><1140></sup>Genesis 14:20). The allusion to a shield, contained in the *Hebrew*, suggests protection as well as honor (compare <sup><3006></sup>Proverbs 4:6).

10. (Compare <sup><3006></sup>Proverbs 2:1 3:2).

11,12. **way of wisdom** — which it prescribes.

**led thee** — literally, “caused thee to tread,” as a path (<sup><19407></sup>Psalms 107:7).

**not be straitened** — have ample room (<sup><19386></sup>Psalms 18:36).

13. (Compare <sup><30185></sup>Proverbs 3:18). The figure of laying hold with the hand suggests earnest effort.

14. (Compare <sup><30016></sup>Psalms 1:1). Avoid all temptations to the beginning of evil.

16, 17. The reason is found in the character of sinners, whose zeal to do evil is forcibly depicted (<sup><30066></sup>Proverbs 6:4 <sup><19066></sup>Psalms 36:5). They live by flagrant vices (<sup><30113></sup>Proverbs 1:13). Some prefer to render, “Their bread is wickedness, their drink violence” (compare <sup><18161></sup>Job 15:16 34:7).

18, 19. As shining light increases from twilight to noonday splendor, so the course of the just increases in purity, but that of the wicked is as thickest darkness, in which one knows not on what he stumbles.

20-22. (Compare <sup><30410></sup>Proverbs 4:10,13 <sup><30185></sup>Proverbs 3:8, etc.).

22. **health ... flesh** — by preserving from vices destructive of health.

23. **with all diligence** — or, “above,” or “more than all,” *custody* (compare *Margin*), all that is kept (compare <sup><35071></sup>Ezekiel 38:7), because the heart is the depository of all wisdom and the source of whatever affects life and character (<sup><10235></sup>Matthew 12:35 15:19).

24. **a froward mouth** — that is, a mouth, or words of ill nature. The *Hebrew* word differs from that used (<sup><30113></sup>Proverbs 2:15 3:32).

**perverse** — or, “quarreling.”

**lips** — or, “words.”

25. **Let ... before thee** — that is, pursue a sincere and direct purpose, avoiding temptations.

26. **Ponder** — Consider well; a wise course results from wise forethought.

**27.** (Compare <sup><3025></sup>Proverbs 4:25). Avoid all by-paths of evil  
(<sup><4827></sup>Deuteronomy 2:27 17:11). A life of integrity requires attention to heart,  
speech, eyes, and conduct.

# CHAPTER 5

## PROVERBS 5:1-23.

A warning against the seductive arts of wicked women, enforced by considering the advantages of chastity, and the miserable end of the wicked.

1. This connection of *wisdom* and *understanding* is frequent (<sup><310P></sup>Proverbs 2:2 3:7); the first denotes the use of wise means for wise ends; the other, the exercise of a proper discrimination in their discovery.

2. *regard* — or, “observe.”

*keep* — preserve constantly.

3. (Compare <sup><310P></sup>Proverbs 2:16). Her enticing promises are deceitful.

4. *her end* — literally, “her future,” in sense of reward, what follows (compare <sup><357P></sup>Psalms 37:37 73:17). Its nature is evinced by the use of figures, opposite those of <sup><310P></sup>Proverbs 5:3. The physical and moral suffering of the deluded profligate are notoriously terrible.

5. *feet ... , steps* — that is, course of life ends in death.

6. *her ways ... know* — Some prefer, “that she may not ponder the path of life,” etc.; but perhaps a better sense is, “her ways are varied, so as to prevent your knowledge of her true character, and so of true happiness.”

8, 9. Avoid the slightest temptation.

9. *thine honor* — in whatever consisting, strength (<sup><310P></sup>Proverbs 3:13) or wealth.

*thy years* — by cutting them off in dissipation.

*unto the cruel* — for such the sensual are apt to become.

10. *wealth* — literally, “strength,” or the result of it.

*labors* — the fruit of thy painful exertions (<sup><357P></sup>Psalms 127:2). There may be a reference to slavery, a commuted punishment for death due the adulterer (<sup><357P></sup>Deuteronomy 22:22).

11. *at the last* — the end, or reward (compare <sup><310P></sup>Proverbs 5:4).

***mourn*** — roar in pain.

***flesh and ... body*** — the whole person under incurable disease.

**12-14.** The ruined sinner vainly laments his neglect of warning and his sad fate in being brought to public disgrace.

**14. *evil*** — for affliction, as in <sup><0180></sup>Genesis 19:20 <sup><0181></sup>49:15.

**15-20.** By figures, in which *well*, *cistern*, and *fountain* (<sup><0185></sup>Proverbs 5:15,18) represent the wife, and *rivers of waters* (<sup><0186></sup>Proverbs 5:16) the children, men are exhorted to constancy and satisfaction in lawful conjugal enjoyments. In <sup><0186></sup>Proverbs 5:16, *fountains* (in the plural) rather denote the produce or waters of a spring, literally, “what is from a spring,” and corresponds with “rivers of waters.”

**17. *only thine own*** — harlots’ children have no known father.

**18. *wife ... youth*** — married in youth.

**19. *loving ... roe*** — other figures for a wife from the well-known beauty of these animals.

***breasts*** — (Compare <sup><0183></sup>Song of Solomon 1:13 <sup><0208></sup>Ezekiel 23:3,8).

***ravished*** — literally, “intoxicated,” that is, fully satisfied.

**21.** The reason, God’s eye is on you,

**22, 23.** and He will cause sin to bring its punishment.

**23. *without instruction*** — literally, “in want of instruction,” having refused it (compare <sup><01838></sup>Job 13:18 <sup><0124></sup>Hebrews 11:24).

***go astray*** — literally, “be drunken.” The word “ravished” (<sup><0189></sup>Proverbs 5:19) here denotes fullness of punishment.

# CHAPTER 6

## PROVERBS 6:1-35.

After admonitions against suretyship and sloth (compare <sup><306></sup>Proverbs 6:6-8), the character and fate of the wicked generally are set forth, and the writer (<sup><306></sup>Proverbs 6:20-35) resumes the warnings against incontinence, pointing out its certain and terrible results. This train of thought seems to intimate the kindred of these vices.

**1,2. *if*** — The condition extends through both verses.

***be surety*** — art pledged.

***stricken ... hand*** — bargained (compare <sup><377></sup>Job 17:3).

***with a stranger*** — that is, for a friend (compare <sup><315></sup>Proverbs 11:15 17:18).

**3. *come ... friend*** — in his power.

***humble ... sure thy friend*** — urge as a suppliant; that is, induce the friend to provide otherwise for his debt, or secure the surety.

**4, 5.** The danger requires promptness.

**6-8.** The improvident sluggards usually want sureties. Hence, such are advised to industry by the ant's example.

**9, 10.** Their conduct graphically described;

**11.** and the fruits of their self-indulgence and indolence presented.

***as ... travellerh*** — literally, "one who walks backwards and forwards," that is, a highwayman.

***armed man*** — that is, one prepared to destroy.

**12. *A naughty person*** — literally, "A man of Belial," or of worthlessness, that is, for good, and so depraved, or wicked (compare <sup><125></sup>1 Samuel 25:25 30:22, etc.). Idleness and vice are allied. Though indolent in acts, he actively and habitually (*walketh*) is ill-natured in speech (<sup><104></sup>Proverbs 4:24).

**13, 14.** If, for fear of detection, he does not speak, he uses signs to carry on his intrigues. These signs are still so used in the East.

**14. *Frowardness*** — as in <sup><1014></sup>Proverbs 2:14.

***deviseth*** — literally, “constructs, as an artisan.”

***mischief*** — evil to others.

***discord*** — especially litigation. Cunning is the talent of the weak and lazy.

**15. *Suddenness*** aggravates evil (compare <sup><1011></sup>Proverbs 6:11 <sup><1201></sup>Proverbs 29:1).

***calamity*** — literally, “a crushing weight.”

***broken*** — shattered as a potter’s vessel; utterly destroyed (<sup><1409></sup>Psalm 2:9).

**16-19. *six ... seven*** — a mode of speaking to arrest attention (<sup><1205></sup>Proverbs 30:15,18 <sup><1059></sup>Job 5:19).

**17. *proud look*** — literally, “eyes of loftiness” (<sup><1406></sup>Psalm 131:1). Eyes, tongue, etc., for persons.

**19. *speaketh*** — literally, “breathes out,” habitually speaks (<sup><1272></sup>Psalm 27:12 <sup><1401></sup>Acts 9:1).

**20-23.** (Compare <sup><1008></sup>Proverbs 1:8 3:3, etc.).

**22. *it*** — (compare <sup><1023></sup>Proverbs 6:23); denotes the instruction of parents (<sup><1021></sup>Proverbs 6:20), to which all the qualities of a safe guide and guard and ready teacher are ascribed. It prevents the ingress of evil by supplying good thoughts, even in dreams (<sup><1023></sup>Proverbs 3:21-23 <sup><1409></sup>Psalm 19:9 <sup><1019></sup>2 Peter 1:19).

**23. *reproofs*** — (<sup><1023></sup>Proverbs 1:23) the convictions of error produced by instruction.

**24.** A specimen of its benefit. By appreciating truth, men are not affected by lying flattery.

**25.** One of the cautions of this instruction, avoid alluring beauty.

***take*** — or, “ensnare.”

***eyelids*** — By painting the lashes, women enhanced beauty.

**26.** The supplied words give a better sense than the old version: “The price of a whore is a piece of bread.”

***adulteress*** — (Compare *Margin*), which the parallel and context (<sup><1029></sup>Proverbs 6:29-35) sustain. Of similar results of this sin, compare <sup><1009></sup>Proverbs 5:9-12.

***will hunt*** — alluding to the snares spread by harlots (compare <sup><3076></sup>Proverbs 7:6-8).

***precious life*** — more valuable than all else.

**27-29.** The guilt and danger most obvious.

**30, 31.** Such a thief is pitied, though heavily punished.

**31. *sevenfold*** — (compare <sup><0220E></sup>Exodus 22:1-4), for many, ample (compare <sup><0084></sup>Genesis 4:24 <sup><0820></sup>Matthew 18:21), even if all his wealth is taken.

**32. *lacketh understanding*** — or, “heart”; destitute of moral principle and prudence.

**33. *dishonor*** — or, “shame,” as well as hurt of body (<sup><3085></sup>Proverbs 3:35).

***reproach ... away*** — No restitution will suffice;

**34, 35.** nor any terms of reconciliation be admitted.

***regard*** — or, “accept” any ransom.

# CHAPTER 7

## ~~<200>~~PROVERBS 7:1-27.

The subject continued, by a delineation of the arts of strange women, as a caution to the unwary.

1-4. Similar calls (~~<200F>~~Proverbs 3:1-3 4:10, etc.).

2. *apple ... eye* — pupil of eye, a custody (~~<202B>~~Proverbs 4:23) of special value.

3. *Bind ... fingers* — as inscriptions on rings.

5. The design of the teaching (compare ~~<202G>~~Proverbs 2:16 6:24).

6. *For* — or, “Since,” introducing an example to illustrate the warning, which, whether a narrative or a parable, is equally pertinent.

*window* — or, “opening”

*looked* — literally, “watched earnestly” (~~<202B>~~Judges 5:28).

*casement* — or, “lattice.”

7. *simple* — as in ~~<200F>~~Proverbs 1:4.

*void of*, etc. — (Compare ~~<202B>~~Proverbs 6:32).

8. *her corner* — where she was usually found.

*went ... house* — implying, perhaps, confidence in himself by his manner, as denoted in the word

*went* — literally, “tread pompously.”

9. The time, twilight, ending in darkness.

*black ... night* — literally, “pupil,” or, “eye,” that is, middle of night.

10. *attire* — that of harlots was sometimes peculiar.

*subtile* — or, “wary,” “cunning.”

11, 12. *loud* — or, “noisy,” “bustling.”

**stubborn** — not submissive.

**without ... streets, ... corner** — (Compare <sup><5153></sup>1 Timothy 5:13 <sup><5155></sup>Titus 2:5).

**13-15.** The preparations for a feast do not necessarily imply peculiar religious professions. The offerer retained part of the victim for a feast (<sup><5157></sup>Leviticus 3:9, etc.). This feast she professes was prepared for him whom she boldly addresses as one sought specially to partake of it.

**16, 17. my bed** — or, “couch,” adorned in the costliest manner.

**17. bed** — a place for sleeping.

**18-20.** There is no fear of discovery.

**20. the day appointed** — perhaps, literally, “a full moon,” that is, a fortnight’s time (compare <sup><5175></sup>Proverbs 7:19).

**21. caused ... yield** — or, “inclines.”

**flattering** — (Compare <sup><5183></sup>Proverbs 5:3).

**forced him** — by persuasion overcoming his scruples.

**22. straightway** — quickly, either as ignorant of danger, or incapable of resistance.

**23. Till** — He is now caught (<sup><5185></sup>Proverbs 6:26).

**24.** The inferential admonition is followed (<sup><5187></sup>Proverbs 7:26,27), by a more general allegation of the evils of this vice.

**26, 27.** Even the mightiest fail to resist her deathly allurements.

# CHAPTER 8

## PROVERBS 8:1-36.

Contrasted with sensual allurements are the advantages of divine wisdom, which publicly invites men, offers the best principles of life, and the most valuable benefits resulting from receiving her counsels. Her relation to the divine plans and acts is introduced, as in <sup><1019></sup>Proverbs 3:19,20, though more fully, to commend her desirableness for men, and the whole is closed by an assurance that those finding her find God's favor, and those neglecting ruin themselves. Many regard the passage as a description of the Son of God by the title, Wisdom, which the older Jews used (and by which He is called in <sup><2149></sup>Luke 11:49), as <sup><1008></sup>John 1:1, etc., describes Him by that of *Logos*, the Word. But the passage may be taken as a personification of wisdom: for,

- (1) Though described as with God, wisdom is not asserted to be God.
- (2) The use of personal attributes is equally consistent with a *personification*, as with the description of a real person.
- (3) The personal pronouns used accord with the gender (feminine) of wisdom constantly, and are never changed to that of the person meant, as sometimes occurs in a corresponding use of *spirit*, which is neuter in *Greek*, but to which masculine pronouns are often applied (<sup><1304></sup>John 16:14), when the acts of the Holy Spirit are described.
- (4) Such a personification is agreeable to the style of this book (compare <sup><1029></sup>Proverbs 1:20 3:16,17 4:8 6:20-22 9:1-4), whereas no prophetic or other allusions to the Savior or the new dispensation are found among the quotations of this book in the New Testament, and unless this be such, none exist.
- (5) Nothing is lost as to the importance of this passage, which still remains a most ornate and also solemn and impressive teaching of inspiration on the value of wisdom.

**1-4.** The publicity and universality of the call contrast with the secrecy and intrigues of the wicked (<sup><1008></sup>Proverbs 7:8, etc.).

**5. *wisdom*** — literally, “subtilty” in a good sense, or, “prudence.”

***fools*** — as <sup><1022></sup>Proverbs 1:22.

6. *excellent things* — or, “plain,” “manifest.”

*opening ... things* — upright words.

7. *For ... truth* — literally, “My palate shall meditate,” or (as Orientals did) “mutter,” my thoughts expressed only to myself are truth.

*wickedness* — specially falsehood, as opposed to truth.

8. *in righteousness* — or, “righteous” (<sup>3908</sup>Psalm 9:8:11:7).

*froward* — literally, “twisted,” or contradictory, that is, to truth.

9. *plain ... understandeth* — easily seen by those who apply their minds.

*that find* — implying search.

10. *not silver* — preferable to it, so last clause implies comparison.

11. (Compare <sup>3184</sup>Proverbs 3:14,15).

12. *prudence* — as in <sup>3185</sup>Proverbs 8:5. The connection of “wisdom” and “prudence” is that of the dictates of sound wisdom and its application.

*find ... inventions* — or, “devices,” “discreet ways” (<sup>3100</sup>Proverbs 1:4).

13. For such is the effect of the fear of God, by which hatred to evil preserves from it.

*froward mouth* — or, “speech” (<sup>3102</sup>Proverbs 2:12 6:14).

14. It also gives the elements of good character in counsel.

*sound wisdom* — (<sup>3107</sup>Proverbs 2:7).

*I ... strength* — or, “As for me, understanding is strength to me,” the source of power (<sup>3196</sup>Ecclesiastes 9:16); good judgment gives more efficiency to actions;

15, 16. of which a wisely conducted government is an example.

17. *early* — or, “diligently,” which may include the usual sense of early in life.

18. *durable riches ... righteousness* — Such are the “riches,” enduring sources of happiness in moral possessions (compare <sup>3186</sup>Proverbs 3:16).

19. (Compare <sup>3181</sup>Proverbs 8:11,3:16).

20, 21. The courses in which wisdom leads conduct to a true present prosperity (<sup>3135</sup>Proverbs 23:5).

**22-31.** Strictly, God's attributes are part of Himself. Yet, to the poetical structure of the whole passage, this commendation of wisdom is entirely consonant. In order of time all His attributes are coincident and eternal as Himself. But to set forth the importance of wisdom as devising the products of benevolence and power, it is here assigned a precedence. As it has such in divine, so should it be desired in human, affairs (compare <sup><1089></sup>Proverbs 3:19).

*possessed* — or, “created”; in either sense, the idea of precedence.

*in the beginning* — or simply, “beginning,” in apposition with “me.”

*before ... of old* — preceding the most ancient deeds.

**23. *I was set up*** — ordained, or inaugurated (<sup><1006></sup>Psalm 2:6). The other terms carry out the idea of the earliest antiquity, and illustrate it by the details of creation (<sup><1084></sup>Proverbs 8:24-29).

**24. *brought forth*** — (Compare <sup><1002></sup>Psalm 90:2).

*abounding* — or, “laden with water.”

**25. *settled*** — that is, sunk in foundations.

**26. *fields*** — or, “out places,” “deserts,” as opposite to (habitable) “world.”

*highest part* — or, “sum,” all particles together,

**27. *when he set ... depth*** — marked out the circle, according to the popular idea of the earth, as circular, surrounded by depths on which the visible concave heavens rested.

**28. *established ... deep*** — that is, so as to sustain the waters above and repress those below the firmament (<sup><10007></sup>Genesis 1:7-11 <sup><10308></sup>Job 26:8).

**29. *commandment*** — better, the shore, that is, of the sea.

*foundations* — figuratively denotes the solid structure (<sup><10304></sup>Job 38:4 <sup><10242></sup>Psalm 24:2).

**30, 31. *one brought up*** — an object of special and pleasing regard. The bestowal of wisdom on men is represented by its finding a delightful residence and pleasing God.

**32-36.** Such an attribute men are urged to seek.

**34. *watching ... waiting*** — literally, “so as to watch”; wait, denoting a most sedulous attention.

35. (Compare <sup><0133></sup>Luke 13:23,24).

36. *sinneth ... me* — or better, “missing me,” as opposed to “finding” (<sup><0185></sup>Proverbs 8:35).

*love death* — act as if they did (compare <sup><0179></sup>Proverbs 17:9).

# CHAPTER 9

## PROVERBS 9:1-18.

The commendation of wisdom is continued, under the figure of a liberal host, and its provisions under that of a feast (compare <sup><2146></sup>Luke 14:16-24). The character of those who are invited is followed by a contrasted description of the rejectors of good counsel; and with the invitations of wisdom are contrasted the allurements of the wicked woman.

1. *house* — (compare <sup><2088></sup>Proverbs 8:34).

*her* — or, “its” (the house).

*seven pillars* — the number seven for many, or a sufficiency ( <sup><2088></sup>Proverbs 6:31).

2. *mingled* — to enhance the flavor ( <sup><2123></sup>Proverbs 23:30 <sup><2162></sup>Isaiah 5:22).

*furnished* — literally, “set out,” “arranged.”

3. *maidens* — servants to invite (compare <sup><2181></sup>Psalms 68:11 <sup><2309></sup>Isaiah 40:9).

*highest places* — ridges of heights, conspicuous places.

4-6. (Compare <sup><2008></sup>Proverbs 1:4 6:32). Wisdom not only supplies right but forbids wrong principles.

7, 8. *shame* — (Compare <sup><2088></sup>Proverbs 3:35).

*a blot* — or, “stain on character.” Both terms denote the evil done by others to one whose faithfulness secures a wise man’s love.

9. The more a wise man learns, the more he loves wisdom.

10. (Compare <sup><2007></sup>Proverbs 1:7).

*of the holy* — literally, “holies,” persons or things, or both. This knowledge gives right perception.

11. (Compare <sup><2086></sup>Proverbs 3:16-18 4:10).

12. You are mainly concerned in your own conduct.

**13. *foolish woman*** — or literally, “woman of folly,” specially manifested by such as are described.

***clamorous*** — or, “noisy” (<sup><31071></sup>Proverbs 7:11).

***knoweth nothing*** — literally, “knoweth not what,” that is, is right and proper.

**14. *on a seat*** — literally, “throne,” takes a prominent place, impudently and haughtily.

**15, 16.** to allure those who are right-minded, and who are addressed as in <sup><31004></sup>Proverbs 9:4, as

***simple*** — that is, easily led (<sup><31004></sup>Proverbs 1:4) and unsettled, though willing to do right.

**17.** The language of a proverb, meaning that forbidden delights are sweet and pleasant, as fruits of risk and danger.

**18.** (Compare <sup><31015></sup>Proverbs 2:18,19 7:27).

# CHAPTER 10

## PROVERBS 10:1-32.

Here begins the second part of the book, <sup><1001></sup>Proverbs 10:1-22:16, which, with the third, <sup><1216></sup>Proverbs 22:16-25:28, contains series of proverbs whose sense is complete in one or two verses, and which, having no logical connection, admit of no analysis. The parallelisms of <sup><1001></sup>Proverbs 10:1-15:33 are mostly antithetic; and those of <sup><1069></sup>Proverbs 16:1-22:16, synthetic. The evidences of art in the structure are very clear, and indicate, probably, a purpose of facilitating the labor of memorizing.

1. *wise* [and] *foolish* — as they follow or reject the precepts of wisdom.

*maketh ... father* — or, “gladdens a father.”

*heaviness* — or, “grief.”

2. *Treasures ... nothing* — that is, ill-gotten gains give no true happiness (compare <sup><1047></sup>Proverbs 4:17 <sup><1059></sup>Matthew 6:19).

*righteousness* — especially *beneficence* (<sup><1339></sup>Psalm 112:9).

*death* — the greatest of all evils.

3. (Compare <sup><1376></sup>Psalm 37:16-20). The last clause is better: “He will repel the greedy desires of the wicked.”

4. *slack* — literally, “deceitful,” failing of its purpose (compare <sup><1016></sup>Hosea 7:16).

*maketh rich* — (compare <sup><1002></sup>Proverbs 10:22).

5. *son* — as <sup><1008></sup>Proverbs 1:8,10, and often.

*sleepeth* — in indolence, and not for rest.

*causeth shame* — literally, “is base” (compare <sup><1435></sup>Proverbs 14:35 17:2).

6. *Blessings* — literally, “Praises.” The last clause is better: “The mouth of the wicked covereth (or concealeth) violence (or mischievous devices)” to be executed in due time (<sup><1599></sup>Psalm 5:9 10:7 <sup><1594></sup>Romans 3:14), and hence has no praises (compare <sup><1001></sup>Proverbs 10:11).

7. *blessed* — literally, “for a blessing,” or praise.

*shall rot* — literally, “be worm-eaten,” useless and disgusting.

8. *wise*, etc. — (compare <sup><1018></sup>Proverbs 9:8,9,16), opposed to

*prating fool* — or, “fool of lips of wicked language.”

*fall* — headlong, suddenly.

9. *perverteth his ways* — acts deceitfully.

*known* — discovered and punished.

10. Two vices contrasted; hypocrisy, or insinuating evil against one (<sup><1013></sup>Proverbs 6:13 <sup><1019></sup>Psalms 35:19), and rashness of speech. In each case, the results are on the evildoers.

11. *a well* — or, “source” of good to himself and others (<sup><1015></sup>John 7:37,38). On last clause, see on <sup><1016></sup>Proverbs 10:6.

12. *strifes* — or, “litigations.”

*covereth* — by forgiveness and forbearance.

13. *In the lips ... found* — hence, not beaten, as the wicked-speaking fool.

*void of understanding* — (<sup><1017></sup>Proverbs 6:32 7:7).

14. *lay up knowledge* — that is, as treasures for good use.

*mouth ... destruction* — or, “as to the mouth,” etc., destruction is near; they expose themselves to evil by prating.

15. Both by trusting in “uncertain riches” (<sup><1017></sup>1 Timothy 6:17), or by the evils of poverty (<sup><1019></sup>Proverbs 30:9), men, not fearing God, fall into dangers.

16. The industry of the righteous is alone truly successful, while the earnings of the wicked tempt and lead to sin.

17. *keepeth* — observes (<sup><1018></sup>Proverbs 3:18 4:22).

*refuseth* — or, “turns from reproof,” which might direct him aright.

18. Both vices must one day be known and punished, and hence their folly.

19. Much speech involves risk of sin; hence the wisdom of restraining the tongue (<sup><1011></sup>Psalms 39:1 <sup><1025></sup>James 1:26).

20. Right speech is the fruit of a good heart, but the wicked show theirs to be useless.

21. Fools not only fail to benefit others, as do the righteous, but procure their own ruin (compare <sup><3001></sup>Proverbs 10:11,17 <sup><3006></sup>Hosea 4:6).

22. *it maketh*, etc. — “it” is emphatic. Riches from God are without the sorrow of ill-gotten wealth (compare <sup><2021></sup>Ecclesiastes 2:21-23 <sup><5019></sup>1 Timothy 6:9,10,17).

23. Sin is the pleasure of the wicked; wisdom that of the good.

24. *it* — the very thing. The wicked get dreaded evil; the righteous, desired good.

25. (Compare <sup><3909></sup>Psalm 1:4 37:9,10,36).

*righteous ... foundation* — well laid and firm (<sup><4024></sup>Matthew 7:24,25).

26. that is, causes vexation.

27. (Compare <sup><3091></sup>Proverbs 9:11 <sup><3523></sup>Psalm 55:23).

28. *gladness* — in confidence of realizing it.

*expectation ... perish* — in disappointment.

29. *The way*, etc. — that is, God’s providence sustains the righteous and overthrows the wicked (<sup><3849></sup>Hosea 14:9).

30. (Compare <sup><3113></sup>Proverbs 12:3 <sup><3539></sup>Psalm 37:9-11 102:28).

*earth* — or, “land of promise.”

31. *bringeth forth* — literally, “germinates” as a plant.

*froward* — (Compare <sup><3022></sup>Proverbs 2:12,14).

*cut off* — as an unproductive plant.

32. *know* — regard and provide for (<sup><3906></sup>Psalm 1:6).

*frowardness* — all kinds of deceit and ill-nature. The word is plural.

# CHAPTER 11

## PROVERBS 11:1-31.

1. (Compare *Margin*). The Hebrews used stones for weights.

*just* — complete in measure.

2. Self-conceit is unteachable; the humble grow wise (compare <sup><2168></sup>Proverbs 16:18 18:12).

3. *guide* — to lead, as a shepherd (<sup><2107></sup>Proverbs 6:7 <sup><1982></sup>Psalms 78:52).

*perverseness* — ill-nature.

*destroy* — with violence.

4. (Compare <sup><2102></sup>Proverbs 10:2).

*wrath* — that is, of God.

5. *direct* — or, “make plain”; wicked ways are not plain (<sup><2137></sup>Proverbs 13:17).

6. *deliver them* — that is, from evil, which the wicked suffer by their own doings (<sup><2152></sup>Proverbs 5:22 <sup><1916></sup>Psalms 9:16).

7. *expectation ... perish* — for death cuts short all his plans (<sup><2165></sup>Luke 16:25).

*hope of unjust* — better, “hope of wealth,” or “power” (compare <sup><2119></sup>Isaiah 40:29, *Hebrew*). This gives an advance on the sentiment of the first clause. Even hopes of gain die with him.

8. Perhaps the *trouble* prepared by the wicked, and which he inherits (compare <sup><2106></sup>Proverbs 11:6).

9. (Compare <sup><1956></sup>Psalms 35:16 <sup><2112></sup>Daniel 11:32). The just is saved by superior discernment.

10, 11. The last may be a reason for the first. Together, they set forth the relative moral worth of good and bad men.

11. *By the blessing* — implying active benevolence.

12. *despiseth* — or, “reviles,” a course contrasted with the prudent silence of the wise.

*holdeth his peace* — as if neither hearing nor telling.

13. *tale-bearer* — (Compare *Margin*), one trading as a peddler in scandal, whose propensity to talk leads him to betray confidence.

14. *counsel* — the art of governing (<sup><3005></sup>Proverbs 1:5).

*counsellors* — literally, “one giving counsel”; the participle used as a collective.

15. (Compare <sup><3005></sup>Proverbs 6:1).

*suretiship* — (Compare *Margin*), the actors put for the action, which may be lawfully hated.

16. *retaineth* — or literally, “lay hold of as a support.” Honor is to a feeble woman thus as valuable as riches to men.

17. *merciful* — kind to others; opposed to cruel. Such benefit themselves by doing good to others (compare <sup><3015></sup>Proverbs 24:5), while the cruel injure themselves as well as others.

*flesh* — that is, his body, by penuriousness (<sup><5022></sup>Colossians 2:23).

18. *a deceitful work* — or, “wages,” which fail to satisfy, or flee away (<sup><3002></sup>Proverbs 10:2 23:5).

*sure reward* — or, “gain,” as from trading (<sup><3012></sup>Hosea 10:12 <sup><4008></sup>Galatians 6:8,9).

19. Inference from <sup><3018></sup>Proverbs 11:18 (compare <sup><3015></sup>Proverbs 11:5,6 <sup><3006></sup>Proverbs 10:16).

20. (Compare <sup><3005></sup>Proverbs 11:5).

*froward* — as in <sup><3015></sup>Proverbs 2:15, opposed to the simplicity and purity of the upright.

*in their way* — or, “conduct.”

21. The combined power of the wicked cannot free them from just punishment, while the unaided children of the righteous find deliverance by reason of their pious relationship (<sup><1372></sup>Psalm 37:25,26).

22. Jewels were often suspended from the nose (<sup><0247></sup>Genesis 24:47 <sup><2322></sup>Isaiah 3:21). Thus adorned, a hog disgusts less than a fair and indiscreet woman.

23. (Compare <sup><3008></sup>Proverbs 10:28).

*wrath* — is that of God.

24-31. The scope of the whole is a comment on <sup><3012></sup>Proverbs 11:23. Thus liberality, by God's blessing, secures increase, while penuriousness, instead of expected gain, procures poverty.

25. *liberal soul* — (Compare *Margin*).

*made fat* — prospers (<sup><3185></sup>Proverbs 28:25 <sup><6525></sup>Deuteronomy 32:15 <sup><4168></sup>Luke 6:38).

*watereth ... watered* — a common figure for blessing.

26. Another example of the truth of <sup><3012></sup>Proverbs 11:23; the miser loses reputation, though he saves corn.

*selleth it* — that is at a fair price.

27. *good* [and] *mischief* — that is, of others.

*procureth ... seeketh* — implying success.

28. (Compare <sup><3015></sup>Proverbs 10:15 <sup><9016></sup>Psalms 49:6 <sup><5067></sup>1 Timothy 6:17).

*righteous ... branch* — (<sup><5008></sup>Psalms 1:3 <sup><2478></sup>Jeremiah 17:8).

29. *troubleth* — as <sup><3157></sup>Proverbs 15:27 explains, by greediness for gain (compare <sup><3117></sup>Proverbs 11:17).

*inherit ... wind* — Even successful, his gains are of no real value. So the fool, thus acting, either comes to poverty, or heaps up for others.

30. *a tree of life* — Blessings to others proceed from the works of the righteous (<sup><3188></sup>Proverbs 3:18).

*winneth souls* — (Compare *Margin*) to do them good as opposed to <sup><3125></sup>Proverbs 6:25 <sup><2438></sup>Ezekiel 13:18 (compare <sup><4150></sup>Luke 5:10).

31. *Behold* — Thus calling attention to the illustrations (compare <sup><3012></sup>Proverbs 11:23), the sentiment of which is confirmed even in time, not excluding future rewards and punishments.

# CHAPTER 12

## PROVERBS 12:1-28.

1. *loveth knowledge* — as the fruit of instruction or training (<sup>2002</sup>Proverbs 1:2).

*hateth reproof* — (<sup>2007</sup>Proverbs 10:17).

*brutish* — stupid, regardless of his own welfare (<sup>990</sup>Psalms 49:10 73:22).

3. Wickedness cannot give permanent prosperity.

*root ... not be moved* — firm as a flourishing tree — (<sup>908</sup>Psalms 1:3 15:5 <sup>2178</sup>Jeremiah 17:8).

4. *A virtuous woman* — in the wide sense of well-disposed to all moral duties (<sup>2810</sup>Proverbs 31:10).

*maketh ashamed* — that is, by misconduct.

*rotteness* — an incurable evil.

5. *thoughts* — or, “purposes.”

*are right* — literally, “are judgment,” that is, true decisions.

*counsels* — (Compare <sup>2114</sup>Proverbs 11:14).

*deceit* — contrary to truth and honesty.

6. *The words* — or, “expressed designs” of the wicked are for evil purposes.

*the mouth* — or, “words” of the righteous delivering instead of ensnaring men.

7. Such conduct brings a proper return, by the destruction of the wicked and well-being of the righteous and his family.

8. *despised* — as opposed to *commended* (<sup>2112</sup>Proverbs 11:12).

*perverse heart* — or, “wicked principles,” as opposed to one of wisdom.

9. *despised* — held in little repute, obscure (<sup>9823</sup>1 Samuel 18:23 <sup>2385</sup>Isaiah 3:5).

*hath a servant* — implying some means of honest living.

*honoureth himself* — is self-conceited.

10. *regardeth* — literally, “knoweth” (<sup><3900></sup>Psalm 1:6).

*mercies ... cruel* — as acts of compassion ungraciously rendered to the needy. The righteous more regards a beast than the wicked a man.

11. The idler’s fate is the result of indolence and want of principle (<sup><2062></sup>Proverbs 6:32 7:7).

12. *the wicked ... evil* — They love the crafty arts of deception.

*the root ... fruit* — their own resources supply them; or, it may be rendered: “He (God) giveth, or, sets (<sup><3172></sup>Ezekiel 17:22) the root of the righteous,” and hence it is firm: or, the verb is impersonal; “As to the root ... it is firm” (<sup><3179></sup>Proverbs 17:19).

13, 14. *The wicked is snared*, etc. — The sentiment expanded. While the wicked, such as liars, flatterers, etc., fall by their own words, the righteous are unhurt. Their good conduct makes friends, and God rewards them.

15. *The way ... eyes* — The fool is self-conceited (compare <sup><3100></sup>Proverbs 12:1 1:32 10:17 <sup><3187></sup>James 3:17).

16. *prudent ... shame* — He is slow to denounce his insulters (<sup><3019></sup>James 1:19).

18. *speaketh* — literally, “speaketh hastily,” or indiscreetly (<sup><3963></sup>Psalm 106:33), as an angry man retorts harsh and provoking invectives.

*tongue ... health* — by soothing and gentle language.

19. Words of truth are consistent, and stand all tests, while lies are soon discovered and exposed.

20. *that imagine* — or, “plan” (<sup><3189></sup>Proverbs 3:29). They design a deceitful course, to which, with all its evils and dangers to others and themselves, the happiness of peace-makers is opposed (compare <sup><3189></sup>Matthew 5:9 <sup><3128></sup>Romans 12:18).

21. *no evil* — (as in <sup><3910></sup>Psalm 91:10), under God’s wise limitations (<sup><3188></sup>Romans 8:28).

*mischief* — as penal evil.

22. *deal truly* — or, “faithfully,” that is, according to promises (compare <sup><3121></sup>John 3:21).

23. **concealeth** — by his modesty (<sup><1004></sup>Proverbs 10:14 11:13).

**heart ... proclaimeth** — as his lips speak his thoughts (compare <sup><2108></sup>Ecclesiastes 10:3).

24. **slothful** — (Compare *Margin*), so called because he fails to meet his promises.

**under tribute** — not denoting legal taxes, but the obligation of dependence.

25. **a good word** — one of comfort.

26. **more excellent** — (Compare *Margin*); or, “more successful,” while the wicked fail; or, we may read it: “The righteous guides his friend, but,” etc., that is, The ability of the righteous to aid others is contrasted with the ruin to which the way of the wicked leads themselves.

27. (Compare <sup><3124></sup>Proverbs 12:24).

**took in hunting** — or, “his venison.” He does not improve his advantages.

**the substance ... precious** — or, “the wealth of a man of honor is being diligent,” or “diligence.”

**precious** — literally, “honor” (<sup><2101></sup>Ecclesiastes 10:1).

28. (Compare <sup><3088></sup>Proverbs 8:8,20, etc.). A sentiment often stated; here first affirmatively, then negatively.

# CHAPTER 13

## PROVERBS 13:1-25.

1. (Compare <sup><3161></sup>Proverbs 6:1-5 10:1,17).

2. *shall eat* — that is, obtain (<sup><3124></sup>Proverbs 12:14).

*transgressors* — as in <sup><3122></sup>Proverbs 2:22.

*violence* — or, “mischief” to themselves.

3. *He ... mouth ... life* — because evil speeches may provoke violence from others.

*he that openeth wide his lips shall have destruction* — On last clause, compare <sup><3104></sup>Proverbs 10:14.

4. (Compare <sup><3121></sup>Proverbs 12:11,27).

5. *loathsome ... shame* — better, causeth shame and reproach (compare <sup><3193></sup>Proverbs 19:26), by slander, etc., which the righteous hates.

6. A sentiment of frequent recurrence, that piety benefits and sin injures.

7. In opposite ways men act hypocritically for gain of honor or wealth.

8. Riches save some from punishment, while others suffer because they will not heed the rebuke of sloth, which makes and keeps them poor.

9. *light ... lamp* — prosperity; the first, the greater, and it

*rejoiceth* — burns brightly, or continues, while the other, at best small, soon fails.

10. The obstinacy which attends self-conceit, produces contention, which the well-advised, thus evincing modesty, avoid.

11. *by vanity* — or, “nothingness,” that is, which is vain or useless to the public (as card playing or similar vices).

*gathereth ... labor* — (Compare *Margin*), little by little, laboriously.

12. *desire cometh* — is realized.

*a tree of life* — or, “cause of happiness.”

13. *the word* — that is, of advice, or, instruction (compare <sup><3027></sup>Proverbs 10:27 11:31).

14. (Compare <sup><3011></sup>Proverbs 10:11).

*fountain* — or, “source of life.”

*to depart* — (compare <sup><3002></sup>Proverbs 1:2-4), or, “for departing,” etc., and so gives life.

15. Right perception and action secure good will, while evil ways are difficult as a stony road. The wicked left of God find punishment of sin in sinning.

*hard* — or, “harsh” (compare *Hebrew*: <sup><1214></sup>Deuteronomy 21:4 <sup><2455></sup>Jeremiah 5:15).

16. *dealeth* — acts with foresight.

*a fool ... folly* — for want of caution.

17. *A wicked* — or, “unfaithful”

*messenger falleth into mischief* — or, “by mischief,” or “evil,” and so his errand fails. Contrasted is the character of the faithful, whose faithfulness benefits others.

18. (Compare <sup><3007></sup>Proverbs 10:17 12:1).

19. Self-denial, which fools will not endure, is essential to success.

20. The benefits of good and evil of bad society are contrasted.

21. (Compare <sup><3113></sup>Proverbs 11:31).

*good ... repaid* — or, “He (God) will repay good.”

22. *wealth ... just* — While good men’s estates remain in their families, God so orders that the gains of sinners enure to the just (compare <sup><3108></sup>Proverbs 28:8 <sup><1578></sup>Psalms 37:18,22,26, etc.).

23. The laboring poor prosper more than those who injudiciously or wickedly strive, by fraud and violence, to supersede the necessity of lawful labor.

24. *spareth* — or, “withholds.”

*rod* — of correction.

*hateth* — or, acts as if he hated him (compare <sup><1082></sup>Proverbs 3:12 8:36).

*chasteneth ... betimes* — or, “diligently seeks for him all useful discipline.”

**25.** The comparative temporal prosperity of the righteous and wicked, rather than contentment and discontent, is noted.

# CHAPTER 14

## PROVERBS 14:1-35.

1. **Every wise**, etc. — literally, “The wisdoms” (compare <sup><2100></sup>Proverbs 9:1) “of women,” plural, a distributive form of speech.

**buildeth ... house** — increases wealth, which the foolish, by mismanagement, lessen.

2. **uprightness** — is the fruit of fearing God, as falsehood and ill-nature (<sup><2105></sup>Proverbs 2:15 3:32) of despising Him and His law.

3. **rod of pride** — that is, the punishment of pride, which they evince by their words. The words of the wise procure good to them.

4. **crib is clean** — empty; so “cleanness of teeth” denotes want of food (compare <sup><2106></sup>Amos 4:6). Men get the proper fruit of their doings (<sup><2107></sup>Galatians 6:7).

5. **A faithful witness**, etc. — one tested to be such.

**utter lies** — or, “breathe out lies” — that is, habitually lies (<sup><2108></sup>Proverbs 6:19; compare <sup><2109></sup>Acts 9:1). Or the sense is, that habitual truthfulness, or lying, will be evinced in witness-bearing.

6. An humble, teachable spirit succeeds in seeking (<sup><2109></sup>Proverbs 8:9 <sup><2110></sup>John 7:17 <sup><2111></sup>James 1:5,6).

7. Avoid the society of those who cannot teach you.

8. Appearances deceive the thoughtless, but the prudent discriminate.

9. **Fools make a mock at sin** — or, “Sin deludes fools.”

**righteous ... favor** — that is, of God, instead of the punishment of sin.

10. Each one best knows his own sorrows or joys.

11. (Compare <sup><2112></sup>Proverbs 12:7). The contrast of the whole is enhanced by that of *house* and *tabernacle*, a permanent and a temporary dwelling.

12. **end thereof** — or, “reward,” what results (compare <sup><2113></sup>Proverbs 5:4).

**ways of death** — leading to it.

13. The preceding sentiment illustrated by the disappointments of a wicked or untimely joy.

14. *filled ... ways* — receive retribution (<sup><313></sup>Proverbs 1:31).

*a good man ... himself* — literally, “is away from such,” will not associate with him.

15. *The simple ... word* — He is credulous, not from love, but heedlessness (<sup><313></sup>Proverbs 13:16).

16. (Compare <sup><313></sup>Proverbs 3:7 28:14).

*rageth* — acts proudly and conceitedly.

17. *He ... angry* — literally, “short of anger” (compare <sup><314></sup>Proverbs 14:29, opposite idea).

*man ... hated* — that is, the deliberate evildoer is more hated than the rash.

18. *inherit* — as a portion (compare <sup><315></sup>Proverbs 3:35).

*are crowned* — literally, “are surrounded with it,” abound in it.

19. Describes the humbling of the wicked by the punishment their sins incur.

20. This sad but true picture of human nature is not given approvingly, but only as a fact.

21. For such contempt of the poor is contrasted as sinful with the virtuous compassion of the good.

22. As usual, the interrogative negative strengthens the affirmative.

*mercy and truth* — that is, God’s (<sup><316></sup>Psalms 57:3 61:7).

23. *labor* — painful diligence.

*talk ... penury* — idle and vain promises and plans.

24. (Compare <sup><316></sup>Proverbs 3:16).

*foolishness ... folly* — Folly remains, or produces folly; it has no benefit.

25. *Life* often depends on truth-telling.

*a deceitful ... lies* — He that breathes out lies is deceit, not to be trusted (<sup><317></sup>Proverbs 14:5).

26. The blessings of piety descend to children (<sup><1332></sup>Proverbs 13:22 20:7 <sup><1216></sup>Exodus 20:6).

27. (Compare <sup><1334></sup>Proverbs 13:14).

*fear of the Lord* — or, “law of the wise,” is wisdom (<sup><9810></sup>Psalm 111:10).

28. The teaching of a true political economy.

29. *slow ... understanding* — (Compare <sup><1447></sup>Proverbs 14:17).

*hasty* — (Compare <sup><1447></sup>Proverbs 14:17).

*exalteth folly* — makes it conspicuous, as if delighting to honor it.

30. *A sound heart* — both literally and figuratively, a source of health; in the latter sense, opposed to the known effect of evil passions on health.

31. *reproacheth his Maker* — who is the God of such, as well as of the rich (<sup><1212></sup>Proverbs 22:2 <sup><3815></sup>Job 31:15; and specially <sup><1008></sup>1 Samuel 2:8 <sup><4317></sup>Psalm 113:7).

32. *driven* — thrust out violently (compare <sup><4385></sup>Psalm 35:5,6).

*hath hope* — trusteth (<sup><1002></sup>Proverbs 10:2 11:4 <sup><4122></sup>Psalm 2:12), implying assurance of help.

33. *resteth* — preserved in quietness for use, while fools blazon their folly (<sup><1223></sup>Proverbs 12:23 13:16).

34. *Righteousness* — just principles and actions.

*exalteth* — raises to honor.

*is a reproach* — brings on them the ill-will of others (compare <sup><1336></sup>Proverbs 13:6).

35. *wise* — discreet or prudent.

*causeth shame* — (<sup><1005></sup>Proverbs 10:5 12:4) acts basely.

# CHAPTER 15

## PROVERBS 15:1-33.

1. *soft* — tender or gentle.

*turneth ... wrath* — from any one.

*stir up* — as a smouldering fire is excited.

2. *useth ... aright* — commends knowledge by its proper use.

*poureth out* — utters abundantly (<sup><31223></sup>Proverbs 12:23), and so disgusts others.

3. *beholding* — watching (compare <sup><31621></sup>Proverbs 5:21 <sup><3617></sup>Psalms 66:7).

4. *A wholesome tongue* — (Compare *Margin*), pacifying and soothing language.

*tree of life* — (<sup><3188></sup>Proverbs 3:18 11:30).

*perverseness therein* — cross, ill-natured language.

*breach ... spirit* — (compare <sup><2614></sup>Isaiah 65:14, *Hebrew*), grieves, instead of appeasing.

5. (Compare <sup><3101></sup>Proverbs 4:1 10:17 13:1-18).

*is prudent* — acts discreetly.

6. *treasure* — implying utility.

*trouble* — vexation and affliction.

7. (Compare <sup><3101></sup>Proverbs 10:20,21).

*heart ... not so* — not right, or vain.

8, 9. *The sacrifice* [and] *prayer* — are acts of worship.

*way ... followeth ... righteousness* — denote conduct. God's regard for the worship and deeds of the righteous and wicked respectively, so stated in <sup><3617></sup>Psalms 50:17 <sup><2111></sup>Isaiah 1:11.

10. (Compare <sup><3101></sup>Proverbs 10:17).

*the way* — that in which God would have him to go (<sup><2103></sup>Proverbs 2:13 <sup><4311></sup>Psalms 119:1).

11. *Hell* — (<sup><2160></sup>Psalms 16:10).

*destruction* — or, “Abaddon,” the place of the destroyer. All the unseen world is open to God, much more men’s hearts.

12. (Compare <sup><3108></sup>Proverbs 9:8).

*go unto the wise* — to be instructed.

13. *maketh ... countenance* — or, “benefits the countenance.”

*spirit is broken* — and so the countenance is sad.

14. (Compare <sup><3121></sup>Proverbs 10:21,22). The wise grow wiser, the fools more foolish (<sup><1109></sup>Proverbs 9:9).

15. The state of the heart governs the outward condition.

*evil* — sad, contrasted with the cheerfulness of a feast.

16. *trouble* — agitation, implying the anxieties and perplexities attending wealth held by worldlings (<sup><2168></sup>Proverbs 16:18 <sup><5106></sup>1 Timothy 6:6).

17. *dinner* — or, “allowance” (<sup><1230></sup>2 Kings 25:30) —

*of herbs* — and that the plainest.

*and hatred* — (compare <sup><1002></sup>Proverbs 10:12,18).

18. (Compare <sup><1129></sup>Proverbs 14:29 16:32).

19. The difficulties of the slothful result from want of energy; the righteous find a

*plain* [and open] *way* — literally, “a highway,” by diligence (<sup><1901></sup>1 Samuel 10:7 <sup><4003></sup>Psalms 1:3).

20. (Compare <sup><3101></sup>Proverbs 10:1).

21. *walketh uprightly* — and so finds his joy (<sup><3106></sup>Proverbs 3:6 10:23).

22. *Without counsel* — or, “deliberation,” implying a wise deference to the opinions of the wise and good, contrasted with rashness.

23. Good advice blesses the giver and receiver.

24. (Compare <sup><5102></sup>Colossians 3:2). Holy purposes prevent sinning, and so its evils.

25. The most desolate who have God's aid have more permanent good than the self-reliant sinner (<sup><3122></sup>Proverbs 2:22 12:7).

*border* — or, “boundary for possessions” (<sup><3785></sup>Psalm 78:54).

26. *are pleasant words* — that is, pleasing to God (<sup><3188></sup>Proverbs 8:8,9).

27. (Compare <sup><3117></sup>Proverbs 11:17). Avarice brings trouble to him and his.

*hateth gifts* — or, “bribes” (<sup><0238></sup>Exodus 23:8 <sup><3955></sup>Psalm 15:5), and is not avaricious.

28. (Compare <sup><3154></sup>Proverbs 15:14 <sup><3101></sup>Proverbs 10:11). Caution is the fruit of wisdom; rashness of folly.

29. *far ... wicked* — in His love and favor (<sup><3221></sup>Psalm 22:11 119:155).

30. *light of the eyes* — (<sup><3139></sup>Proverbs 13:9). What gives light rejoiceth the heart, by relieving from anxiety as to our course; so

*good report* — or, “doctrine” (<sup><2309></sup>Isaiah 28:9 53:1),

*maketh ... fat* — or, “gives prosperity” (<sup><3183></sup>Proverbs 3:13-17 9:11). The last clause is illustrated by the first.

31, 32. (Compare <sup><3107></sup>Proverbs 10:17).

*reproof of life* — which leads to life.

*abideth ... wise* — is numbered among them.

32. *refuseth* — or, “neglects,” “passes by” (<sup><3125></sup>Proverbs 1:25 4:15).

*despiseth ... soul* — so acts as if esteeming its interests of no value.

33. *The fear ... wisdom* — Wisdom instructs in true piety.

*before ... humility* — (compare <sup><0226></sup>Luke 24:26 <sup><3111></sup>1 Peter 1:11); opposite (compare <sup><3168></sup>Proverbs 16:18).

# CHAPTER 16

## PROVERBS 16:1-33.

1. *preparations* — schemes.

*in man* — or literally, “to man,” belonging, or pertaining to him.

*the answer ... Lord* — The efficient ordering is from God: “Man proposes; God disposes.”

2. *clean* — or, “faultless.”

*weigheth* — or, “tries,” “judges,” implying that they are faulty  
(<sup>21:2</sup>Proverbs 21:2 <sup>24:12</sup>24:12).

3. (Compare *Margin*). Rely on God for success to your lawful purposes.

4. *for himself* — “for its answer,” or “purpose,” that is, according to God’s plan; the wicked are for the day of evil (<sup>49:5</sup>Psalm 49:5 <sup>24:78</sup>Jeremiah 17:18); sinning and suffering answer to each other, are indissolubly united.

5. (Compare <sup>3:32</sup>Proverbs 3:32).

6. *By mercy and truth* — that is, God’s (<sup>85:10</sup>Psalm 85:10); He effects the atonement, or covering of sin; and the principles of true piety incline men to depart from evil; or, “mercy” and “truth” may be man’s, indicative of the gracious tempers which work instrumentally in procuring pardon.

*purged* — expiated (as in <sup>16:33</sup>Leviticus 16:33 <sup>27:9</sup>Isaiah 27:9, *Hebrew*).

7. Persecutions, of course, excepted.

8. (Compare <sup>15:6,16,17</sup>Proverbs 15:6,16,17).

9. (Compare <sup>16:3</sup>Proverbs 16:3).

*directeth* — establisheth.

10. The last clause depends on the first, expressing the importance of equity in decisions, so authoritative.

11. *are the Lord’s ... his work* — that is, what He has ordered, and hence should be observed by men.

12. Rulers are rightly expected, by their position, to hate evil; for their power is sustained by righteousness.

13. A specification of the general sentiment of <sup><3162></sup>Proverbs 16:12.

14. This wrath, so terrible and certain, like *messengers of death* (<sup><1125></sup>1 Kings 2:25), can be appeased by the wise.

15. *light of ... countenance* — favor (<sup><4006></sup>Psalm 4:6).

*life* — preserves it, or gives blessings which make it valuable.

*the latter rain* — fell just before harvest and matured the crop; hence specially valuable (<sup><6114></sup>Deuteronomy 11:14).

16. (Compare <sup><3166></sup>Proverbs 3:16 4:5).

17. *The highway* — A common, plain road represents the habitual course of the righteous in departing from evil.

*keepeth* — observes.

18, 19. (Compare <sup><1533></sup>Proverbs 15:33). Haughtiness and pride imply self-confidence which produces carelessness, and hence

*a fall* — literally, “sliding.”

19. *divide the spoil* — that is, conquer. Avoid the society of the proud (<sup><3006></sup>James 4:6).

20. *handleth a matter* — wisely considers “the word,” that is, of God (compare <sup><1533></sup>Proverbs 13:13).

*trusteth* — (Compare <sup><1912></sup>Psalm 2:12 118:8,9).

21. *wise in heart* — who rightly consider duty.

*sweetness of the lips* — eloquent discourse, persuades and instructs others.

22. *Understanding* — or, “discretion,” is a constant source of blessing (<sup><1334></sup>Proverbs 13:14), benefiting others; but fools’ best efforts are folly.

23. The heart is the source of wisdom flowing from the mouth.

24. (Compare <sup><1533></sup>Proverbs 15:26). Gentle, kind words, by soothing the mind, give the body health.

25. (Compare <sup><3142></sup>Proverbs 14:2).

26. Diligence is a duty due to one’s self, for his wants require labor.

27. **ungodly man** — (Compare <sup><3162></sup>Proverbs 6:12).

**diggeth up evil** — labors for it.

**in his lips ... fire** — His words are calumniating (<sup><3016></sup>James 3:6).

28. (Compare <sup><3164></sup>Proverbs 6:14 10:31).

**whisperer** — prater, talebearer (<sup><3038></sup>Proverbs 18:8 26:20).

29. **violent man** — or, “man of mischief” (<sup><3183></sup>Proverbs 3:31).

**enticeth** — (<sup><3110></sup>Proverbs 1:10).

30. **He shutteth his eyes** — denoting deep thought (<sup><3606></sup>Psalm 64:6).

**moving his lips** — or, “biting his lips” — a determined purpose (<sup><3183></sup>Proverbs 6:13).

31. (Compare <sup><3119></sup>Proverbs 20:29).

**if** — or, which may be supplied properly, or without it the sense is as in <sup><3186></sup>Proverbs 3:16 4:10, that piety is blessed with long life.

32. (Compare <sup><3149></sup>Proverbs 14:29).

**taketh a city** — that is, by fighting.

33. Seemingly the most fortuitous events are ordered by God.

# CHAPTER 17

## PROVERBS 17:1-28.

1. **sacrifices** — or, “feasts” made with part of them (compare <sup><2074></sup>Proverbs 7:14 <sup><1808></sup>Leviticus 2:3 7:31).
- with** — literally, “of.”
- strife** — its product, or attendant.
2. (Compare <sup><2045></sup>Proverbs 14:35).
- causeth shame** — (<sup><2005></sup>Proverbs 10:5).
- shall ... inheritance** — that is, share a brother’s part (compare <sup><10704></sup>Numbers 27:4,7).
3. God only knows, as He tries (<sup><19116></sup>Psalms 12:6 66:10) the heart.
4. Wicked doers and speakers alike delight in calumny.
5. (Compare <sup><2045></sup>Proverbs 14:31).
- glad at calamities** — rejoicing in others’ evil. Such are rightly punished by God, who knows their hearts.
6. Prolonged posterity is a blessing, its cutting off a curse (<sup><2132></sup>Proverbs 13:22 <sup><19493></sup>Psalms 109:13-15), hence children may glory in virtuous ancestry.
7. **Excellent speech** — (Compare *Margin*). Such language as ill suits a fool, as lying (ought to suit) a prince (<sup><21622></sup>Proverbs 16:12,13).
8. One so corrupt as to take a bribe evinces his high estimate of it by subjection to its influence (<sup><20866></sup>Proverbs 18:16 19:6).
9. **seeketh love** — (Compare *Margin*). The contrast is between the peace-maker and tale-bearer.
10. Reproof more affects the wise than severe scourging, fools.
11. Such meet just retribution (<sup><10251></sup>1 Kings 2:25).
- a cruel messenger** — one to inflict it.
12. They are less rational in anger than wild beasts.

13. (Compare <sup><300F></sup>Psalm 7:4 35:12).

*evil* — injury to another (<sup><316F></sup>Proverbs 13:21).

14. *letteth ... water* — as a breach in a dam.

*before ... meddled with* — before strife has become sharp, or, by an explanation better suiting the figure, before it *rolls on*, or increases.

15. *abomination ... Lord* — as reversing His method of acting (<sup><308F></sup>Proverbs 3:32 12:2).

16. Though wealth cannot buy wisdom for those who do not love it, yet wisdom procures wealth (<sup><316F></sup>Proverbs 3:16 14:24).

17. To the second of these parallel clauses, there is an accession of meaning, that is, that a brother's love is specially seen in adversity.

18. (Compare <sup><306F></sup>Proverbs 6:1-5 11:15).

*in the presence*, etc. — that is, he either fails to consult his friend, or to follow his advice.

19. *strife* — contention is, and leads to, sin.

*he that exalteth his gate* — gratifies a vain love of costly building.

*seeketh* — or, “findeth,” as if he sought (compare “loveth death,” <sup><308F></sup>Proverbs 8:36).

20. The second clause advances on the first. The ill-natured fail of good, and the cavilling and fault-finding incur evil.

21. (Compare <sup><316F></sup>Proverbs 23:24). Different words are rendered by “fool,” both denoting stupidity and impiety.

22. (Compare <sup><308F></sup>Proverbs 14:30 15:13). The effect of the mind on the body is well known.

*medicine* — or, “body,” which better corresponds with “bone.”

*drieth* — as if the marrow were exhausted.

23. *a gift ... bosom* — Money and other valuables were borne in a fold of the garment, called the bosom.

*to pervert* — that is, by bribery.

24. *Wisdom ... him* — ever an object of regard, while a fool's affections are unsettled.

**25. *a grief*** — or cross, vexation (compare <sup>3172</sup>Proverbs 17:21 <sup>3103</sup>Proverbs 10:1).

**26. *Also*** — that is, Equally to be avoided are other sins: punishing good subjects, or resisting good rulers.

**27, 28.** Prudence of speech is commended as is an excellent or calm spirit, not excited to vain conversation.

# CHAPTER 18

## PROVERBS 18:1-24.

1. **Through desire ... seeketh** — that is, seeks selfish gratification.

**intermeddleth ... wisdom** — or, “rushes on” (<sup>3174</sup>Proverbs 17:14) against all wisdom, or what is valuable (<sup>3117</sup>Proverbs 2:7).

2. **that his heart ... itself** — that is, takes pleasure in revealing his folly (<sup>3123</sup>Proverbs 12:23 15:2).

3. So surely are sin and punishment connected (<sup>3164</sup>Proverbs 16:4).

**wicked**, for “wickedness,” answers to

**ignominy**, or the state of such; and

**contempt**, the feeling of others to them; and to

**reproach**, a manifestation of contempt.

4. Wise speech is like an exhaustless stream of benefit.

5. **accept the person** — (Compare <sup>3302</sup>Psalms 82:2). “It is not good” is to be supplied before “to overthrow.”

6, 7. The quarrelsome bring trouble on themselves. Their rash language ensnares them (<sup>3102</sup>Proverbs 6:2).

8. (Compare <sup>3163</sup>Proverbs 16:28).

**as wounds** — not sustained by the *Hebrew*; better, as “sweet morsels,” which men gladly swallow.

**innermost ... belly** — the mind, or heart (compare <sup>3117</sup>Proverbs 20:27-30 <sup>3124</sup>Psalms 22:14).

9. One by failing to get, the other by wasting wealth, grows poor.

**waster** — literally, “master of washing,” a prodigal.

10. **name of the Lord** — manifested perfections (<sup>3302</sup>Psalms 8:1 20:2), as faithfulness, power, mercy, etc., on which men rely.

**is safe** — literally, “set on high, out of danger” (<sup>3302</sup>Psalms 18:2 91:4).

11. contrasts with <sup><180F</sup>Proverbs 18:10 (compare <sup><1005</sup>Proverbs 10:15). Such is a vain trust (compare <sup><936</sup>Psalms 73:6).

12. (Compare <sup><1539</sup>Proverbs 15:33 16:18).

13. Hasty speech evinces self-conceit, and ensures shame (<sup><1812</sup>Proverbs 26:12).

14. *infirmity* — bodily sickness, or outward evil. The *spirit*, which sustains, being *wounded*, no support is left, except, as implied, in God.

15. (Compare <sup><1005</sup>Proverbs 1:5,15,31).

16. (Compare <sup><1008</sup>Proverbs 17:8,23). Disapproval of the fact stated is implied.

17. One-sided statements are not reliable.

*searcheth* — thoroughly (<sup><1009</sup>Proverbs 17:9,19).

18. *The lot* — whose disposal is of God (<sup><1063</sup>Proverbs 16:13), may, properly used, be a right mode of settling disputes.

19. No feuds so difficult of adjustment as those of relatives; hence great care should be used to avoid them.

20. (Compare <sup><124</sup>Proverbs 12:14 13:2). Men's words are the *fruit*, or, *increase of his lips*, and when good, benefit them.

*satisfied with* — (Compare <sup><1013</sup>Proverbs 1:31 14:14).

21. *Death and life* — or, the greatest evil and good.

*that love it* — that is, the tongue, or its use for good or evil.

*eat ... fruit* — (Compare <sup><1889</sup>Proverbs 18:19 <sup><1019</sup>James 1:19).

22. The old versions supply "good" before the "wife," as the last clause and <sup><1094</sup>Proverbs 19:14 imply (compare <sup><1810</sup>Proverbs 31:10).

23. *the rich ... roughly* — He is tolerated because rich, implying that the estimate of men by wealth is wrong.

24. *A man ... friendly* — better, "A man ... (is) to, or, may triumph (<sup><1989</sup>Psalms 108:9), or, shout for joy (<sup><1951</sup>Psalms 5:11), that is, may congratulate himself." Indeed, there is a Friend who is better than a brother; such is the "Friend of sinners" [<sup><1019</sup>Matthew 11:19 <sup><1034</sup>Luke 7:34], who may have been before the writer's mind.

# CHAPTER 19

## PROVERBS 19:1-29.

1. (Compare <sup><2186></sup>Proverbs 28:6). “Rich” for *fool* here. Integrity is better than riches (<sup><2156></sup>Proverbs 15:16,17 16:8).

2. The last illustrates the first clause. Rashness, the result of ignorance, brings trouble.

3. *perverteth ... way* — turns him back from right (<sup><2136></sup>Proverbs 13:6 <sup><3013></sup>James 1:13); and he blames God for his failures.

4. (Compare <sup><2140></sup>Proverbs 14:20). Such facts are often adduced with implied disapprobation.

5. Compare <sup><2169></sup>Proverbs 19:9, where *perish* explains *not escape* here (compare <sup><4809></sup>Psalms 88:9,10).

8. (Compare *Margin*; <sup><2152></sup>Proverbs 15:32).

*loveth ... soul* — or, “himself,” which he evinces by regarding his best interests.

*keepeth* — or, “regards.”

10. (Compare <sup><2170></sup>Proverbs 17:7). The fool is incapable of properly using pleasure as knowledge, yet for him to have it is less incongruous than the undue elevation of servants. Let each abide in his calling (<sup><4171></sup>1 Corinthians 7:20).

11. (Compare <sup><2142></sup>Proverbs 14:29 16:32). This inculcation of a forgiving spirit shows that true religion is always the same (<sup><4182></sup>Matthew 5:22-24).

12. (Compare <sup><2164></sup>Proverbs 16:14,15 20:2). A motive to submission to lawful authority.

13. *calamity* — literally, “calamities,” varied and many.

*continual dropping* — a perpetual annoyance, wearing out patience.

14. A contrast of men’s gifts and God’s, who, though author of both blessings, confers the latter by His more special providence.

**and** — or, “but,” implying that the evils of <sup><3193></sup>Proverbs 19:13 are only avoided by His care.

**15. a deep sleep** — a state of utter indifference.

**idle soul** — or, “person” (compare <sup><3104></sup>Proverbs 10:4 12:24).

**16.** (Compare <sup><3107></sup>Proverbs 10:17 13:13).

**despiset** ... **ways** — opposed to keeping or observing, neglects (<sup><3167></sup>Proverbs 16:17) (as unworthy of regard) his moral conduct.

**17.** (Compare <sup><3121></sup>Proverbs 14:21 <sup><4576></sup>Psalms 37:26).

**hath pity** — shown by acts (compare *Margin*).

**18.** (Compare <sup><3133></sup>Proverbs 13:24 23:13).

**let not ... spare** — literally, “do not lift up thy soul” (<sup><4246></sup>Psalms 24:4 25:1), that is, do not desire to his death; a caution to passionate parents against angry chastisement.

**19.** Repeated efforts of kindness are lost on ill-natured persons.

**20.** (Compare <sup><3135></sup>Proverbs 13:18-20).

**latter end** — (<sup><3151></sup>Proverbs 5:11). In youth prepare for age.

**21.** (Compare <sup><3161></sup>Proverbs 16:1,9 <sup><4330></sup>Psalms 33:10,11). The failure of man’s devices is implied.

**22. desire** — that is, to do good, indicates a kind disposition (<sup><3123></sup>Proverbs 11:23); and the poor thus affected are better than liars, who say and do not.

**23. The fear ... life** — (Compare <sup><3182></sup>Proverbs 3:2).

**abide** — or, “remain contented” (<sup><5008></sup>1 Timothy 4:8).

**not visited with evil** — (<sup><3108></sup>Proverbs 10:3 <sup><4575></sup>Psalms 37:25), as a judgment, in which sense *visit* is often used (<sup><4982></sup>Psalms 89:32 <sup><2165></sup>Jeremiah 6:15).

**24. bosom** — literally, a wide dish in which the hand was plunged in eating (<sup><4123></sup>Matthew 26:23). Compare <sup><3185></sup>Proverbs 26:15, the sentiment expressed with equal irony and less exaggeration.

**25.** Such is the benefit of reproof; even the simple profit, much more the wise.

**26.** Unfilial conduct often condemned (<sup><3172></sup>Proverbs 17:21-25 20:20 <sup><6218></sup>Deuteronomy 21:18,21).

27. Avoid whatever leads from truth.

28. *ungodly witness* — (Compare *Margin*), one false by bad principles (compare <sup>4162</sup>Proverbs 6:12).

*scorneth judgment* — sets at naught the dictates of justice.

*devoureth* — literally, “swalloweth,” as something delightful.

29. Their punishment is sure, fixed, and ready (compare <sup>4184</sup>Proverbs 3:34 10:13).

# CHAPTER 20

## PROVERBS 20:1-30.

1. *mockers* — scorner. Such men are made by wine.

*strong drink* — made by spicing wine (compare <sup><2151></sup>Isaiah 5:11,22); and it may include wine.

*raging* — or boisterous as a drunkard.

*deceived* — literally, “erring,” or reeling.

2. (Compare <sup><2092></sup>Proverbs 19:12). Men who resist authority injure themselves ( <sup><5132></sup>Romans 13:2).

3. *to cease from strife* — or, better, “to dwell from or without strife,” denoting the habit of life.

*fool ... meddling* — ( <sup><2074></sup>Proverbs 17:14).

4. *shall ... beg* — literally, “ask” (in this sense, <sup><1990></sup>Psalms 109:10).

5. *Counsel ... water* — that is, deeply hidden ( <sup><2084></sup>Proverbs 18:4 <sup><1932></sup>Psalms 13:2). The wise can discern well.

6. Boasters are unreliable.

*goodness* — or, “kind disposition.”

7. The conduct of good men proclaims their sound principles. God’s covenant and their good example secure blessing to their children ( <sup><2092></sup>Proverbs 4:26 <sup><1911></sup>Psalms 112:1,2).

8. As in <sup><2045></sup>Proverbs 14:35 16:10,15, this is the character of a good king, not of all kings.

9. The interrogation in the affirmative strengthens the implied negation (compare <sup><1854></sup>Job 15:14 <sup><2071></sup>Ecclesiastes 7:20).

10. Various measures, implying that some are wrong (compare <sup><2011></sup>Proverbs 11:1 16:11).

11. The conduct of children even is the best test of principle (compare <sup><2076></sup>Matthew 7:16).

12. Hence, of course, God will know all you do (<sup><1949></sup>Psalm 94:9).

13. Activity and diligence contrasted with sloth (<sup><1069></sup>Proverbs 6:9 10:11).

*lest ... poverty* — literally, “be deprived of inheritance.”

14. *when ... his way* — implying that he goes about boasting of his bargains.

15. The contrast denotes the greater value of knowledge (compare <sup><1184></sup>Proverbs 3:14-16).

16. *Take his garment* — implies severe exaction, justified by the surety’s rashness.

*a strange woman* — by some readings “strangers,” but the former here, and in <sup><1713></sup>Proverbs 27:13, is allowable, and strengthens the sense. The debauchee is less reliable than the merely careless.

17. *Bread ... sweet* — either as unlawfully (<sup><1197></sup>Proverbs 9:17) or easily obtained.

*mouth ... gravel* — well expresses the pain and grief given at last.

18. (Compare <sup><1522></sup>Proverbs 15:22). Be careful and considerate in important plans.

19. Those who love to tell news will hardly keep secrets.

*flattereth ... lips* — (compare *Margin*; <sup><1010></sup>Proverbs 1:10).

*meddle ... him* — literally, “join,” or “associate with.”

20. *his lamp* — (Compare <sup><1339></sup>Proverbs 13:9 24:20).

21. *gotten hastily* — contrary to God’s providence (<sup><1830></sup>Proverbs 28:20), implying its unjust or easy attainment; hence the man is punished, or spends freely what he got easily (compare <sup><1117></sup>Proverbs 20:17).

22. (Compare <sup><1274></sup>Psalm 27:14 <sup><527></sup>Romans 12:17-19).

23. (Compare <sup><1107></sup>Proverbs 20:10 <sup><1111></sup>Proverbs 11:1).

24. *Man’s goings* — literally, “Stately steppings of a strong man.”

*a man* — any common man.

*understand* — or, “perceive.”

25. *devoureth ... holy* — or, better, “who rashly speaks promises,” or “devotes what is holy,” consecrating any thing. This suits better the last clause, which expresses a similar view of the results of rashly vowing.

26. (Compare <sup><1008></sup>Proverbs 20:8).

*bringeth ... over them* — The wheel was used for threshing grain. The figure denotes severity (compare Amos 1:3).

27. *The spirit ... Lord* — Men’s minds are God’s gifts, and thus able to search one another (compare <sup><1005></sup>Proverbs 20:5 <sup><1008></sup>Proverbs 18:8,17 <sup><1011></sup>1 Corinthians 2:11).

28. (Compare <sup><1008></sup>Proverbs 3:3 16:6,12).

29. *The glory of young men ... the beauty of old men* — Each age has its peculiar excellence (<sup><1068></sup>Proverbs 16:31).

30. *blueness* — literally, “joining,” the process of uniting the edges of a wound throws off purulent matter.

*stripes ... belly* — So punishment provides healing of soul (<sup><1008></sup>Proverbs 18:8), by deterring from evil courses.

# CHAPTER 21

## PROVERBS 21:1-31.

1. **rivers** — irrigating channels (<sup><490B></sup>Psalm 1:3), whose course was easily turned (compare <sup><6110></sup>Deuteronomy 11:10). God disposes even kings as He pleases (<sup><2169></sup>Proverbs 16:9 <sup><4935></sup>Psalm 33:15).

2. (Compare <sup><2142></sup>Proverbs 14:2 16:2-25).

3. (Compare <sup><4907></sup>Psalm 50:7-15 <sup><2111></sup>Isaiah 1:11,17).

4. **high look** — (Compare *Margin*; <sup><4900></sup>Psalm 131:1).

**proud heart** — or, “heart of breadth,” one that is swollen (compare <sup><9A05></sup>Psalm 101:5).

**ploughing** — better “lamp,” a frequent figure for prosperity (<sup><2107></sup>Proverbs 20:20); hence joy or delight.

5. The contrast is between steady industry and rashness (compare <sup><2162></sup>Proverbs 19:2).

6. **The getting** — or, “what is obtained” (compare <sup><8107></sup>Job 7:2 <sup><2213></sup>Jeremiah 22:13, *Hebrew*).

**vanity ... to and fro** — as fleeting as chaff or stubble in the wind (compare <sup><2107></sup>Proverbs 20:17-21 <sup><4920></sup>Psalm 62:10). Such gettings are unsatisfactory.

**them ... death** — act as if they did (<sup><2186></sup>Proverbs 8:36 17:19).

7. **robbery** — or, “destruction,” especially oppression, of which they are authors.

**shall destroy** — literally, “cut with a saw” (<sup><1079></sup>1 Kings 7:9), that is, utterly ruin them. Their sins shall be visited on them in kind.

**to do judgment** — what is just and right.

8. **of man** — any one; his way is opposed to truth, and also estranged from it. The pure proves himself such by his right conduct.

9. **corner** — a turret or arbor on the roof.

**brawling** — or contentious.

**wide house** — literally, “house of fellowship,” large enough for several families.

10. So strongly does he desire to do evil (<sup><4910B></sup>Psalm 10:3 <sup><2081I></sup>Ecclesiastes 8:11), that he will not even spare his friend if in his way.

11. (Compare <sup><3192S></sup>Proverbs 19:25). That which the simple learn by the terrors of punishment, the wise learn by teaching.

12. (Compare <sup><4973S></sup>Psalm 37:35-38 73:17,20).

**house** — family or interests.

**overthroweth** — either supply “God” (compare <sup><300B></sup>Proverbs 10:24), or the word is used impersonally.

13. The principles of retribution, often taught (compare <sup><4983P></sup>Psalm 18:26 <sup><400B></sup>Matthew 7:1-12).

14. The effect of bribery (<sup><3172S></sup>Proverbs 17:23) is enhanced by secrecy, as the bribed person does not wish his motives made known.

15. But the just love right and need no bribes. The wicked at last meet destruction, though for a time happy in concealing corruption.

16. **the way of understanding** — (Compare <sup><3122S></sup>Proverbs 12:26 14:22).

**remain** — that is, rest as at a journey’s end; death will be his unchanging home.

17. Costly luxuries impoverish.

18. (Compare <sup><3108S></sup>Proverbs 11:8). By suffering what they had devised for the righteous, or brought on them, the wicked became their ransom, in the usual sense of substitutes (compare <sup><0672S></sup>Joshua 7:26 <sup><700B></sup>Esther 7:9).

19. (Compare <sup><3109S></sup>Proverbs 21:9).

**wilderness** — pasture, though uninhabitable ground (<sup><4952P></sup>Psalm 65:12).

20. The wise, by diligence and care, lay up and increase wealth, while fools

**spend** — literally, “swallow it up,” greedily.

21. He who tries to act justly and kindly (<sup><4944P></sup>Psalm 34:14) will prosper and obtain justice and honor.

22. “Wisdom is better than strength” (<sup><2079I></sup>Ecclesiastes 7:19 9:15).

**strength ... thereof** — that in which they confide.

23. (Compare <sup><113></sup>Proverbs 13:2,3 <sup><113></sup>James 3:6-10).

24. The reproachful name is deserved by those who treat others with anger and contempt.

25. *desire* — that is of ease and idleness brings him to starvation.

26. The sin of covetousness marks the sluggard, as the virtue of benevolence the righteous.

27. God regards the heart, and hypocrisy is more odious than open inconsistency.

*wicked mind* — or, “design” (<sup><110></sup>Proverbs 1:4).

28. (Compare <sup><115></sup>Proverbs 19:5).

*that heareth* — or heeds instruction, and so grows wise.

*speakech constantly* — or sincerely (compare <sup><115></sup>Habakkuk 1:5), and hence is believed (<sup><119></sup>Proverbs 12:19 <sup><119></sup>James 1:19).

29. *hardeneth his face* — is obstinate.

*directeth ... way* — considers it, and acts advisedly.

30, 31. Men’s best devices and reliances are vain compared with God’s, or without His aid (<sup><121></sup>Proverbs 19:21 <sup><117></sup>Psalms 20:7 33:17).

# CHAPTER 22

## PROVERBS 22:1-29.

1. **A good name** — (<sup><1808></sup>Job 30:8, *Hebrew*); “good” is supplied here from <sup><2008></sup>Ecclesiastes 7:1.

**loving favor** — kind regard, that is, of the wise and good.

2. Before God all are on the same footing (<sup><2148></sup>Proverbs 14:31 17:5).

3. **are punished** — that is, for their temerity; for the evil is not necessarily punitive, as the *prudent* might otherwise be its objects.

4. **humility and the fear of the Lord** — are in apposition; one produces the other. On the results, compare <sup><2186></sup>Proverbs 3:16 8:18.

5. **he that ... them** — Those who properly watch over their own souls are thus preserved from the dangers which attend the way of perverse men (<sup><2167></sup>Proverbs 16:17).

6. **Train** — initiate, or early instruct.

**the way** — literally, “his way,” that selected for him in which he should go; for early training secures habitual walking in it.

7. The influence of wealth sets aside moral distinctions is implied, and, of course, disapproved (compare <sup><2096></sup>Proverbs 19:6 21:14, etc.).

8. (Compare <sup><2118></sup>Proverbs 11:18 <sup><1949></sup>Psalms 109:16-20 <sup><1807></sup>Galatians 6:7,8).

**the rod ... fail** — His power to do evil will be destroyed.

9. **a bountiful eye** — that is, a beneficent disposition.

**for he giveth ... poor** — His acts prove it.

10. **Cast out** — or drive away. Scorners foster strife by taunts and revilings.

11. (Compare *Margin*).

**pureness of heart** — and gentle, kind words win favor, even from kings.

12. **preserve** — or guard.

**knowledge** — its principles and possessors.

**overthroweth** — utterly confounds and destroys the wicked.

13. Frivolous excuses satisfy the indolent man's conscience.

14. **The mouth** — or flattering speeches (<sup><318B></sup>Proverbs 5:3 7:5) ensnare man, *as pits*, beasts. God makes their own sin their punishment.

15. **is bound** — or firmly fixed. Chastisement deters from crime and so leads to reformation of principle.

16. These two vices pertain to the same selfish feeling. Both are deservedly odious to God and incur punishment.

17. Here begins another division of the book, marked by those encouragements to the pursuit of wisdom, which are found in the earlier chapters. It will be observed that at <sup><322></sup>Proverbs 22:22-24:12, the proverbs are generally expressed in two verses instead of one (see *Introduction*).

18. These lessons must be laid up in the mind, and

**fitted** — or better, "fixed" in the lips so as to be ever ready.

19. **That ... Lord** — This is the design of the instruction.

20. **excellent things** — or probably of former times.

**counsels and knowledge** — both advice and instruction.

21. Specially he desires to secure accuracy, so that his pupil may teach others.

22, 23. Here follow ten precepts of two verses each. Though men fail to defend the poor, God will (<sup><317B></sup>Proverbs 17:5 <sup><312B></sup>Psalm 12:5).

**in the gate** — place of public gathering (<sup><388A></sup>Job 5:4 <sup><392></sup>Psalm 69:12).

24, 25. (Compare <sup><312></sup>Proverbs 2:12-15 4:14).

25. **a snare ... soul** — The unsuspecting are often misled by bad company.

26, 27. (Compare <sup><318B></sup>Proverbs 6:1 17:18).

27. **should he take**, etc. — that is, the creditor.

28. (Compare <sup><323></sup>Proverbs 23:10). Do not entrench on others (<sup><354></sup>Deuteronomy 19:14 27:17).

29. Success rewards diligence (<sup><310A></sup>Proverbs 10:4 21:5).

# CHAPTER 23

## PROVERBS 23:1-35.

1. Avoid the dangers of gluttony.

2. *put a knife* — an Eastern figure for putting restraint on the appetite.

3. *are deceitful meat* — though well tasted, injurious.

4, 5. (Compare <sup><5409></sup>1 Timothy 6:9,10).

*thine own wisdom* — which regards riches intrinsically as a blessing.

5. *Wilt ... eyes* — As the eyes fly after or seek riches, they are not, that is, either become transitory or unsatisfying; fully expressed by their flying away.

6-8. Beware of deceitful men, whose courtesies even you will repent of having accepted.

*evil eye* — or purpose (<sup><3129></sup>Proverbs 22:9 <sup><6519></sup>Deuteronomy 15:9 <sup><4163></sup>Matthew 6:23).

8. *The morsel ... words* — that is, disgusted with his true character, all pleasant intercourse will be destroyed.

9. (Compare <sup><3198></sup>Proverbs 9:8). “Cast not your pearls before swine” (<sup><4106></sup>Matthew 7:6).

10, 11. (Compare <sup><3122></sup>Proverbs 22:22,23).

11. *redeemer* — or avenger (<sup><0225></sup>Leviticus 25:25,26 <sup><0652></sup>Numbers 35:12), hence advocate (<sup><3825></sup>Job 19:25).

*plead ... thee* — (Compare <sup><3321></sup>Job 31:21 <sup><6810></sup>Psalms 35:1 68:5).

12. Here begins another series of precepts.

13, 14. While there is little danger that the use of the “divine ordinance of the rod” will produce bodily harm, there is great hope of spiritual good.

15, 16. The pleasure afforded the teacher by the pupil’s progress is a motive to diligence.

16. *my reins* — (Compare <sup><3009></sup>Psalm 7:9).

17, 18. (Compare *Margin*). The prosperity of the wicked is short.

18. *an end* — or, “hereafter,” another time, when apparent inequalities shall be adjusted (compare <sup><3028></sup>Psalm 37:28-38).

19-21. *guide ... way* — or direct thy thoughts to a right course of conduct (compare <sup><3004></sup>Proverbs 4:4 9:6).

20. *riotous ... flesh* — prodigal, or eating more than necessary. Instead of “their flesh” (compare *Margin*), better, “flesh to them,” that is, used for pleasure.

21. *drowsiness* — the dreamy sleep of the slothful.

22. *Hearken* — that is, obey (<sup><3008></sup>Proverbs 1:8 <sup><3004></sup>Ephesians 6:1).

*despise ... old* — Adults revere the parents whom, as children, they once obeyed.

23. *Buy* — literally, “get” (<sup><3005></sup>Proverbs 4:5).

*truth* — generally and specially as opposed to errors of all kinds.

24, 25. (Compare <sup><3001></sup>Proverbs 10:1 17:21,25).

26-35. A solemn warning against whoredom and drunkenness (<sup><3041></sup>Hosea 4:11).

*give me* — This is the address of that divine wisdom so often presented (<sup><3001></sup>Proverbs 8:1 9:3, etc.).

*heart* — confidence.

*observe* — keep.

*my ways* — such as I teach you (<sup><3007></sup>Proverbs 3:17 9:6).

27, 28. *deep ditch* — a narrow pit, out of which it is hard to climb.

*lieth in wait* — to ensnare men into the pit, as hunters entrap game (compare <sup><3024></sup>Proverbs 22:14).

28. *increaseth ... transgressors* — (<sup><3008></sup>Proverbs 5:8-10). The vice alluded to is peculiarly hardening to the heart.

29, 30. This picture is often sadly realized now.

*mixed wine* — (Compare <sup><3001></sup>Proverbs 9:2 <sup><3051></sup>Isaiah 5:11).

**31. *when ... red*** — the color denoting greater strength (compare <sup><0491></sup>Genesis 49:11 <sup><6324></sup>Deuteronomy 32:14).

***giveth ... cup*** — literally, “gives its eye,” that is, sparkles.

***moveth ... aright*** — Perhaps its foaming is meant.

**32.** The acute miseries resulting from drunkenness contrasted with the temptations.

**33, 34.** The moral effects: it inflames passion (<sup><0181></sup>Genesis 19:31,35), lays open the heart, produces insensibility to the greatest dangers, and debars from reformation, under the severest sufferings.

**35. *awake*** — that is, from drunkenness (<sup><0024></sup>Genesis 9:24). This is the language rather of acts than of the tongue.

# CHAPTER 24

## PROVERBS 24:1-34.

1, 2. (Compare <sup><1338></sup>Proverbs 23:3,17 <sup><1508></sup>Psalm 37:1).

2. *studieth* — meditateth.

*talk ... mischief* — Their expressed purposes are to do evil.

3, 4. (Compare <sup><1408></sup>Proverbs 14:1 <sup><2544></sup>Isaiah 54:14).

*house* — including the family.

4. *by knowledge ... riches* — (<sup><1088></sup>Proverbs 8:18 21:20).

5, 6. The general statement (<sup><2096></sup>Ecclesiastes 9:16,18) is specially illustrated (compare <sup><1222></sup>Proverbs 21:22 <sup><1548></sup>Psalm 144:1).

7. (Compare <sup><1446></sup>Proverbs 14:16).

*in the gate* — (Compare <sup><1222></sup>Proverbs 22:22).

8. So called even if he fails *to do evil*.

9. Same thought varied.

10. Literally, “If thou fail in the day of straits (*adversity*), strait (or, small) is thy strength,” which is then truly tested.

11, 12. Neglect of known duty is sin (<sup><5047></sup>James 4:17).

*ready* — literally, “bowing down”

*to be slain* — that is, unjustly. God’s retributive justice cannot be avoided by professed ignorance.

13, 14. As delicious food whets the appetite, so should the rewards of wisdom excite us to seek it.

14. *reward* — literally, “after part,” the proper result (compare <sup><1238></sup>Proverbs 23:18 <sup><1575></sup>Psalm 37:37,38).

15, 16. The plots of the wicked against the good, though partially, shall not be fully successful (<sup><1372></sup>Psalm 37:24); while the wicked, falling under penal evil, find no help.

**16. *seven times*** — often, or many (<sup><2186></sup>Proverbs 6:16,31 9:1).

**17, 18.** Yet let none rejoice over the fate of evildoers, lest God punish their wrong spirit by relieving the sufferer (compare <sup><2176></sup>Proverbs 17:5 <sup><4812></sup>Job 31:29).

**19, 20.** (<sup><4501></sup>Psalm 37:1,38 18:28).

**20. *candle*** — or, “prosperity”; it shall come to an end (<sup><2139></sup>Proverbs 13:9 20:20).

**21, 22.** A warning against impiety and resistance to lawful rule (<sup><6114></sup>Romans 13:1-7 <sup><6127></sup>1 Peter 2:17).

***meddle ... change*** — (Compare *Margin*), literally, “mingle not yourself,” avoid the society of restless persons.

**22. *their calamity***, etc. — either what God and the king inflict, or what *changers* and their company suffer; better the first.

**23. *These ... wise*** — literally, “are of the wise,” as authors (compare “Psalms of David,” *Hebrew*). “These” refers to the verses following, <sup><1124></sup>Proverbs 24:24-34.

***to have respect*** — literally, “to discern faces,” show partiality,

**24, 25.** of which an example is justifying the wicked, to which is opposed, rebuking him, which has a blessing.

**26. *kiss his lips*** — love and obey, do homage (<sup><4122></sup>Psalm 2:12 <sup><2181></sup>Song of Solomon 8:1).

***right answer*** — literally, “plain words” (compare <sup><2189></sup>Proverbs 8:9), opposed to deceptive, or obscure.

**27. *Prepare ... in the field*** — Secure, by diligence, a proper support, and then build; provide necessaries, then comforts, to which a house rather pertained, in a mild climate, permitting the use of tents.

**28.** Do not speak even truth needlessly against any, and never falsehood.

**29.** Especially avoid retaliation (<sup><4168></sup>Matthew 5:43-45 <sup><6127></sup>Romans 12:17).

**30, 31.** A striking picture of the effects of sloth.

**32-34.** From the folly of the sluggard learn wisdom (<sup><2160></sup>Proverbs 6:10,11).

# CHAPTER 25

## PROVERBS 25:1-28.

1. The character of these proverbs sustains the title (see *Introduction*).

*also* — refers to the former part of the book.

*copied out* — literally, “transferred,” that is, from some other book to this; not given from memory.

2. God’s unsearchableness impresses us with awe (compare <sup>23615</sup>Isaiah 45:15 <sup>61133</sup>Romans 11:33). But kings, being finite, should confer with wise counsellors;

3. Ye wisely keeping state secrets, which to common men are as inaccessible heights and depths.

4, 5. As separating impurities from ore leaves pure silver, so taking from a king wicked counsellors leaves a wise and beneficent government.

5. *before* — or, “in presence of,” as courtiers stood about a king.

6, 7. Do not intrude into the presence of the king, for the elevation of the humble is honorable, but the humbling of the proud disgraceful (<sup>24435</sup>Luke 14:8-10).

8. (Compare <sup>21833</sup>Proverbs 3:30).

*lest ... shame* — lest you do what you ought not, when shamed by defeat, or “lest thou art shut out from doing any thing.”

9, 10. (Compare <sup>41625</sup>Matthew 5:25, *Margin*).

*secret* — that is, of your opponent, for his disadvantage, and so you be disgraced, not having discussed your difficulties with him.

11. *a word fitly* — literally, “quickly,” as wheels roll, just in time. The comparison *as apples ... silver* gives a like sense.

*apples*, etc. — either real apples of golden color, in a silver network basket, or imitations on silver embroidery.

**12.** Those who desire to know and do rightly, most highly esteem good counsel (<sup><3199></sup>Proverbs 9:9 15:31). The listening ear is better than one hung with gold.

**13.** Snow from mountains was used to cool drinks; so refreshing is a faithful messenger (<sup><3137></sup>Proverbs 13:17).

**14. *clouds*** — literally, “vapors” (<sup><2103></sup>Jeremiah 10:13), clouds only in appearance.

***a false gift*** — promised, but not given.

**15.** Gentleness and kindness overcome the most powerful and obstinate.

***long forbearing*** — or, “slowness to anger” (<sup><3142></sup>Proverbs 14:29 15:18).

**16, 17.** A comparison, as a surfeit of honey produces physical disgust, so your company, however agreeable in moderation, may, if excessive, lead your friend to hate you.

**18.** A *false witness* is as destructive to reputation, as such weapons to the body (<sup><3133></sup>Proverbs 24:28).

***beareth ... witness*** — literally, “answereth questions,” as before a judge, against his neighbor.

**19.** *Treachery* annoys as well as deceives.

**20.** Not only is the incongruity of songs (that is, joyful) and sadness meant, but an accession of sadness, by want of sympathy, is implied.

**21, 22.** (Compare <sup><4154></sup>Matthew 5:44 <sup><5121></sup>Romans 12:20). As metals are melted by heaping coals upon them, so is the heart softened by kindness.

**23.** Better, “As the north wind bringeth forth (<sup><3911></sup>Psalms 90:2) or produces rain, so does a concealed or slandering tongue produce anger.”

**24.** (Compare <sup><3119></sup>Proverbs 21:9,19).

**25.** (Compare <sup><3153></sup>Proverbs 25:13).

***good news*** — that is, of some loved interest or absent friend, the more grateful as coming from afar.

**26.** From troubled fountains and corrupt springs no healthy water is to be had, so when the righteous are oppressed by the wicked, their power for good is lessened or destroyed.

**27.** Satiety surfeits (<sup>1256</sup>Proverbs 25:16); so men who are self-glorious find shame.

*is not glory* — “not” is supplied from the first clause, or “is grievous,” in which sense a similar word is used (<sup>1270</sup>Proverbs 27:2).

**28.** Such are exposed to the incursions of evil thoughts and successful temptations.

# CHAPTER 26

## PROVERBS 26:1-28.

1. The incongruities of nature illustrate also those of the moral world. The fool's unworthiness is also implied (<sup><2077></sup>Proverbs 17:7 19:10).
2. Though not obvious to us,  
*the bird* — literally, “sparrow” — and  
*swallow* — have an object in their motions, so penal evil falls on none without a reason.
3. The rod is as much needed by fools and as well suited to them, as whips and bridles are for beasts.
- 4, 5. *Answer not* — that is, approvingly by like folly.
5. *Answer* — by reproof.
6. A fool fails by folly as surely as if he were maimed.  
*drinketh damage* — that is, gets it abundantly (<sup><3856></sup>Job 15:16 34:7).
7. *legs ... equal* — or, “take away the legs,” or “the legs ... are weak.” In any case the idea is that they are the occasion of an awkwardness, such as the fool shows in using a parable or proverb (see *Introduction*; <sup><2177></sup>Proverbs 17:7).
8. A stone, bound in a sling, is useless; so honor, conferred on a fool, is thrown away.
9. As vexatious and unmanageable as a thorn in a drunkard's hand is a parable to a fool. He will be as apt to misuse is as to use it rightly.
10. Various versions of this are proposed (Compare *Margin*). Better perhaps — “Much He injures (or literally, “wounds”) all who reward,” etc., that is, society is injured by encouraging evil men.
- transgressors* — may be rendered “vagrants.” The word “God” is improperly supplied.
11. *returneth ... folly* — Though disgusting to others, the fool delights in his folly.

12. The self-conceited are taught with more difficulty than the stupid.

13. (Compare <sup><1213></sup>Proverbs 22:13).

14. (Compare <sup><1160></sup>Proverbs 6:10 24:33).

15. (Compare <sup><1124></sup>Proverbs 19:24).

16. The thoughtless being ignorant of their ignorance are conceited.

17. *meddleth* — as in <sup><1119></sup>Proverbs 20:19 24:21; as either holding a dog by the ears or letting him go involves danger, so success in another man's strife or failure involves a useless risk of reputation, does no good, and may do us harm.

18, 19. Such are reckless of results.

20, 21. The talebearers foster (<sup><1163></sup>Proverbs 16:28), and the contentious excite, strife.

22. (Compare <sup><1138></sup>Proverbs 18:8).

23. *Warm professions* can no more give value to insincerity than silver coating to rude earthenware.

24. *dissembleth* — though an unusual sense of the word (compare *Margin*), is allowable, and better suits the context, which sets forth hypocrisy.

25. Sentiment of <sup><1134></sup>Proverbs 26:24 carried out.

*seven abominations in his heart* — that is, very many (compare <sup><1146></sup>Proverbs 24:16).

26, 27. Deceit will at last be exposed, and the wicked by their own arts often bring on retribution (compare <sup><1123></sup>Proverbs 12:13 <sup><1176></sup>Psalms 7:16 9:17, etc.).

28. Men hate those they injure.

*A lying tongue* — “lips” for the persons (compare <sup><1124></sup>Proverbs 4:24 <sup><1113></sup>Psalms 12:3).

# CHAPTER 27

## PROVERBS 27:1-27.

1. Do not confide implicitly in your plans (<sup>2169</sup>Proverbs 16:9 19:21 <sup>3043</sup>James 4:13-15).

2. Avoid self-praise.

3. *heavy* — The literal sense of “heavy,” applied to material subjects, illustrates its figurative, “grievous,” applied to moral.

*a fool’s wrath* — is unreasonable and excessive.

4. *envy* — or, “jealousy” (compare *Margin*; <sup>2168</sup>Proverbs 6:34), is more unappeasable than the simpler bad passions.

5, 6. *secret love* — not manifested in acts is useless; and even, if its exhibition by rebukes wounds us, such love is preferable to the frequent (compare *Margin*), and hence deceitful, kisses of an enemy.

7. The luxury of wealth confers less happiness than the healthy appetite of labor.

8. Such are not only out of place, but out of duty and in danger.

9. *rejoice the heart* — the organ of perceiving what pleases the senses.

*sweetness ... counsel* — or, “wise counsel is also pleasing.”

10. Adhere to tried friends. The ties of blood may be less reliable than those of genuine friendship.

11. The wisdom of children both reflects credit on parents and contributes to their aid in difficulties.

12, 13. (Compare <sup>2167</sup>Proverbs 20:16 22:3).

14. Excessive zeal in praising raises suspicions of selfishness.

15. (Compare <sup>2163</sup>Proverbs 19:13).

*very ... day* — literally “a day of showers.”

**16. *hideth*** — or, “restrains” (that is, tries to do it); is as fruitless an effort, as that of holding the wind.

***the ointment of his right hand*** — the organ of power (<sup><4970P></sup>Psalm 17:7 18:35). His right hand endeavors to repress perfume, but vainly. Some prefer: “His right hand comes on oil,” that is, “cannot take hold.” Such a woman cannot be tamed.

**17. *a man sharpeneth ... friend*** — that is, conversation promotes intelligence, which the face exhibits.

**18.** Diligence secures a reward, even for the humble servant.

**19.** We may see our characters in the developed tempers of others.

**20.** Men’s cupidity is as insatiable as the grave.

**21.** Praise tests character.

***a man to his praise*** — according to his praise, as he bears it. Thus vain men seek it, weak men are inflated by it, wise men disregard it, etc.

**22.** The obstinate wickedness of such is incurable by the heaviest inflictions.

**23, 24. *flocks*** — constituted the staple of wealth. It is only by care and diligence that the most solid possessions can be perpetuated (<sup><4938P></sup>Proverbs 23:5).

**25-27.** The fact that providential arrangements furnish the means of competence to those who properly use them is another motive to diligence (compare <sup><4969P></sup>Psalm 65:9-13).

***The hay appeareth*** — literally, “Grass appeareth” (<sup><805J></sup>Job 40:15 <sup><49A4P></sup>Psalm 104:14).

**27. *household*** — literally, “house,” the family (<sup><4165></sup>Acts 16:15 <sup><4016></sup>1 Corinthians 1:16).

# CHAPTER 28

## PROVERBS 28:1-28.

1. A bad conscience makes men timid; the righteous are alone truly bold (<sup><3140></sup>Proverbs 14:26 <sup><4970></sup>Psalm 27:1).
2. Anarchy producing contending rulers shortens the reign of each.  
*but by a man ... prolonged* — or, “by a man of understanding — that is, a good ruler — he who knows or regards the right, that is, a good citizen, shall prolong (his days).” Good rulers are a blessing to the people. Bad government as a punishment for evil is contrasted with good as blessing to the good.
3. *A poor man*, etc. — Such, in power, exact more severely, and so leave subjects bare.
4. *They that forsake ... wicked* — Wrongdoers encourage one another.
5. (Compare <sup><4377></sup>John 7:17). Ignorance of moral truth is due to unwillingness to know it.
6. (Compare <sup><3006></sup>Proverbs 10:6). Riches cannot compensate for sin, nor the want of them affect integrity.
7. (Compare <sup><3075></sup>Proverbs 17:25).  
*riotous men* — or, “gluttons” (<sup><1230></sup>Proverbs 23:20,21).
8. *usury ... unjust gain* — (Compare *Margin*). The two terms, meaning nearly the same, may denote excessive interest. God’s providence directs the proper use of wealth.
9. (Compare <sup><3158></sup>Proverbs 15:8 21:27).
- hearing* — that is, obeying. God requires sincere worshippers (<sup><4968></sup>Psalm 66:18 <sup><4024></sup>John 4:24).
10. (Compare <sup><3157></sup>Proverbs 26:27).
11. A poor but wise man can discover (and expose) the rich and self-conceited.

12. *great glory* — or, cause for it to a people, for the righteous rejoice in good, and righteousness exalts a nation (<sup><3148></sup>Proverbs 14:34).

*a man ... hidden* — that is, the good retire, or all kinds try to escape a wicked rule.

13. (Compare <sup><3938></sup>Psalms 32:3-5). Concealment of sin delivers none from God's wrath, but He shows mercy to the humble penitent (<sup><3510></sup>Psalms 51:4).

14. *feareth* — that is, God, and so repents.

*hardeneth his heart* — makes himself insensible to sin, and so will not repent (<sup><3146></sup>Proverbs 14:16 <sup><2911></sup>Psalm 1:1).

15. The rapacity and cruelty of such beasts well represent some wicked men (compare <sup><3932></sup>Psalms 7:2 <sup><3112></sup>Proverbs 17:12).

16. *The prince ... understanding* — that is, He does not perceive that oppression jeopardizes his success. Covetousness often produces oppression, hence the contrast.

17. *doeth violence ... blood*, etc. — or, that is oppressed by the blood of *life* (<sup><3007></sup>Genesis 9:6), which he has taken.

*to the pit* — the grave or destruction (<sup><3112></sup>Proverbs 1:12 <sup><3538></sup>Job 33:18-24 <sup><3517></sup>Psalms 143:7).

*stay him* — sustain or deliver him.

18. (Compare <sup><3108></sup>Proverbs 10:9 <sup><3120></sup>Proverbs 17:20). Double dealing is eventually fatal.

19. (Compare <sup><3108></sup>Proverbs 10:4 <sup><3120></sup>Proverbs 20:4).

*vain persons* — idle, useless drones, implying that they are also wicked (<sup><3121></sup>Proverbs 12:11 <sup><3936></sup>Psalms 26:4).

20. *maketh haste ... rich* — implying deceit or fraud (<sup><3119></sup>Proverbs 20:21), and so opposed to "faithful" or reliable.

21. *respect of persons* — (<sup><3123></sup>Proverbs 24:23). Such are led to evil by the slightest motive.

22. (Compare <sup><3137></sup>Proverbs 28:20).

*evil eye* — in the general sense of <sup><3136></sup>Proverbs 23:6, here more specific for covetousness (compare <sup><3129></sup>Proverbs 22:9 <sup><3115></sup>Matthew 20:15).

*poverty ... him* — by God's providence.

23. (Compare <sup><3108></sup>Proverbs 9:8,9 27:5). Those benefited by reproof will love their monitors.

24. (Compare <sup><3154></sup>Matthew 15:4-6). Such, though heirs, are virtually thieves, to be ranked with highwaymen.

25. *of a proud heart* — literally, “puffed up of soul” — that is, self-confident, and hence overbearing and litigious.

*made fat* — or, “prosperous” (<sup><3125></sup>Proverbs 11:25 16:20).

26. (Compare <sup><3106></sup>Proverbs 3:6-8).

*walketh wisely* — that is, trusting in God (<sup><3127></sup>Proverbs 22:17-19).

27. (Compare <sup><3112></sup>Proverbs 11:24-26).

*hideth his eyes* — as the face (<sup><3279></sup>Psalms 27:9 69:17), denotes inattention.

28. The elevation of the wicked to power drives men to seek refuge from tyranny (compare <sup><3132></sup>Proverbs 28:12 <sup><3110></sup>Proverbs 11:10 <sup><3118></sup>Psalms 12:8).

# CHAPTER 29

## PROVERBS 29:1-27.

1. **hardeneth ... neck** — obstinately refuses counsel (<sup><2714></sup>2 Kings 17:14 <sup><4196></sup>Nehemiah 9:16).

**destroyed** — literally, “shivered” or “utterly broken to pieces.”

**without remedy** — literally, “without healing” or repairing.

2. (Compare <sup><3111></sup>Proverbs 11:10 28:28).

**in authority** — (Compare *Margin*), increased in power.

3. (Compare <sup><3106></sup>Proverbs 4:6,7 10:1, etc.).

4. **by judgment** — that is, righteous decisions, opposed to those procured by gifts (compare <sup><3121></sup>Proverbs 28:21), by which good government is perverted.

**land** — for nation.

5. (Compare <sup><3133></sup>Proverbs 26:28).

**spreadeth ... feet** — By misleading him as to his real character, the flatterer brings him to evil, prepared by himself or others.

6. **In** — or, “By”

**the transgression** — he is brought into difficulty (<sup><3123></sup>Proverbs 12:13), but the righteous go on prospering, and so sing or rejoice.

7. **considereth** — literally, “knows,” as <sup><4100></sup>Psalms 1:6.

**the cause** — that is, in courts of justice (compare <sup><3194></sup>Proverbs 29:14). The voluntary neglect of it by the wicked (<sup><3127></sup>Proverbs 28:27) occasions oppression.

8. **Scornful men** — those who contemptuously disregard God’s law.

**bring** — (Compare *Margin*), kindle strife.

**turn away wrath** — that is, “abate wrath.”

9. **contendeth** — that is, in law.

**whether ... laugh** — The fool, whether angry or good-humored, is unsettled; or referring the words to the wise man, the sense is, that all his efforts, severe or gentle, are unavailing to pacify the fool.

**10. bloodthirsty** — (Compare *Margin*), murderers (<sup><4186></sup>Psalm 5:6 26:9).

**hate**, etc. — (<sup><2011></sup>Proverbs 1:11 <sup><0604></sup>Genesis 3:4).

**seek ... soul** — that is, to preserve it.

**11.** (Compare <sup><3126></sup>Proverbs 12:16 16:32).

**mind** — or, “spirit,” for anger or any ill passion which the righteous restrain.

**12.** His servants imitate him.

**13.** (Compare <sup><3127></sup>Proverbs 22:2).

**deceitful man** — literally, “man of vexations,” an exactor.

**the Lord ... their eyes** — sustains their lives (<sup><0427></sup>1 Samuel 14:27 <sup><5133></sup>Psalm 13:3); that is, both depend on Him, and He will do justice.

**14.** (Compare <sup><3128></sup>Proverbs 20:28 25:5). Such is the character of the King of kings (<sup><3724></sup>Psalm 72:4,12).

**15.** (Compare <sup><3133></sup>Proverbs 13:24 23:13).

**16.** (Compare <sup><3142></sup>Proverbs 29:2,12 <sup><5117></sup>Psalm 12:1-8).

**shall see ... fall** — and triumph in it (<sup><4574></sup>Psalm 37:34-38 58:10,11).

**17.** (Compare <sup><3143></sup>Proverbs 29:3,15 <sup><3198></sup>Proverbs 19:18).

**give thee rest** — peace and quiet (compare <sup><3149></sup>Proverbs 29:9).

**18. no vision** — instruction in God’s truth, which was by prophets, through visions (<sup><0601></sup>1 Samuel 3:1).

**people perish** — (Compare *Margin*), are deprived of moral restraints.

**keepeth the law** — has, and observes, instruction (<sup><3141></sup>Proverbs 14:11,34 <sup><5111></sup>Psalm 19:11).

**19. A servant** — who lacks good principle.

**corrected** — or discovered.

**will not answer** — that is, will not obey.

20. (Compare <sup><3116></sup>Proverbs 21:5).

*hasty in ... words?* — implying self-conceit (<sup><3182></sup>Proverbs 26:12).

21. *become his son* — assume the place and privileges of one.

22. (Compare <sup><3158></sup>Proverbs 15:18). Such are delighted by discord and violence.

23. (Compare <sup><3168></sup>Proverbs 16:18 18:12).

*honor ... spirit* — or, “such shall lay hold on honor” (<sup><3116></sup>Proverbs 11:16).

24. *hateth ... soul* — (Compare <sup><3188></sup>Proverbs 8:36).

*heareth cursing* — (<sup><3188></sup>Leviticus 5:1), risks the punishment, rather than reveal truth.

25. *The fear ... snare* — involves men in difficulty (compare <sup><3196></sup>Proverbs 29:6).

*shall be safe* — (Compare *Margin*; <sup><3180></sup>Proverbs 18:10).

26. (Compare *Margin*; <sup><3278></sup>Psalms 27:8). God alone will and can do exact justice.

27. (Compare <sup><3182></sup>Proverbs 3:32). On last clause, compare <sup><3196></sup>Proverbs 29:16 <sup><3372></sup>Psalms 37:12.

# CHAPTER 30

## PROVERBS 30:1-33.

1. This is the title of this chapter (see *Introduction*).

**the prophecy** — literally, “the burden” (compare <sup><301></sup>Isaiah 13:1 <sup><3015></sup>Zechariah 9:1), used for any divine instruction; not necessarily a prediction, which was only a kind of prophecy (<sup><1357></sup>1 Chronicles 15:27, “a song”). Prophets were inspired men, who spoke for God to man, or for man to God (<sup><1017></sup>Genesis 20:7 <sup><1074></sup>Exodus 7:14,15,16). Such, also, were the New Testament prophets. In a general sense, Gad, Nathan, and others were such, who were divine teachers, though we do not learn that they ever predicted.

**the man spake** — literally, “the saying of the man”; an expression used to denote any solemn and important announcement (compare <sup><1212></sup>2 Samuel 23:1 <sup><1211></sup>Psalms 36:1 110:1 <sup><2124></sup>Isaiah 1:24, etc.). Ithiel and Ucal were perhaps pupils.

2-4. **brutish** — stupid, a strong term to denote his lowly self-estimation; or he may speak of such as his natural condition, as contrasted with God’s all-seeing comprehensive knowledge and almighty power. The questions of this clause emphatically deny the attributes mentioned to be those of any creature, thus impressively strengthening the implied reference of the former to God (compare <sup><1512></sup>Deuteronomy 30:12-14 <sup><3012></sup>Isaiah 40:12 <sup><4018></sup>Ephesians 4:8).

5. (Compare <sup><9116></sup>Psalms 12:6 119:140).

6. **Add ... words** — implying that his sole reliance was on God’s all-sufficient teaching.

**reprove thee** — or, “convict thee” — and so the falsehood will appear.

7-9. A prayer for exemption from wickedness, and the extremes of poverty and riches, the *two things* mentioned. Contentment is implied as desired.

8. **vanity** — all sorts of sinful acts (<sup><8111></sup>Job 11:11 <sup><2688></sup>Isaiah 5:18).

9. **be full ... deny** — that is, puffed up by the pride of prosperity.

**take the name ... vain** — This is not (*Hebrew*) the form (compare <sup><207></sup>Exodus 20:7), but “take” rather denotes laying violent hold on any thing; that is lest I assail God’s name or attributes, as justice, mercy, etc., which the poor are tempted to do.

**10. Accuse not** — Slander not (<sup><107></sup>Psalms 10:7).

**curse ... guilty** — lest, however lowly, he be exasperated to turn on thee, and your guilt be made to appear.

**11-14.** Four kinds of hateful persons —

(1) graceless children,

(2) hypocrites,

(3) the proud,

(4) cruel oppressors (compare on <sup><104></sup>Proverbs 30:14 <sup><104></sup>Psalms 14:4 52:2)

— are now illustrated;

(1) <sup><105></sup>Proverbs 30:15,16, the insatiability of prodigal children and their fate;

(2) <sup><106></sup>Proverbs 30:17, hypocrisy, or the concealment of real character;

(3 and 4) <sup><108></sup>Proverbs 30:18-20, various examples of pride and oppression.

**15, 16. horse leech** — supposed by some to be the vampire (a fabulous creature), as being literally insatiable; but the other subjects mentioned must be taken as this, comparatively insatiable. The use of a fabulous creature agreeably to popular notions is not inconsistent with inspiration.

**There are three ... yea, four** — (Compare <sup><109></sup>Proverbs 6:16).

**17. The eye** — for the person, with reference to the use of the organ to express mockery and contempt, and also as that by which punishment is received.

**the ravens ... eagles ... eat** — either as dying unnaturally, or being left unburied, or both.

**18-20.** Hypocrisy is illustrated by four examples of the concealment of all methods or traces of action, and a pertinent example of double dealing in actual vice is added, that is, the *adulterous woman*.

20. *she eateth ... mouth* — that is, she hides the evidences of her shame and professes innocence.

21-23. Pride and cruelty, the undue exaltation of those unfit to hold power, produce those vices which disquiet society (compare <sup><1890></sup>Proverbs 19:10 28:3).

23. *heir ... mistress* — that is, takes her place as a wife (<sup><1100></sup>Genesis 16:4).

24-31. These verses provide two classes of apt illustrations of various aspects of the moral world, which the reader is left to apply. By the first (<sup><1815></sup>Proverbs 30:25-28), diligence and providence are commended; the success of these insignificant animals being due to their instinctive sagacity and activity, rather than strength. The other class (<sup><1810></sup>Proverbs 30:30,31) provides similes for whatever is majestic or comely, uniting efficiency with gracefulness.

26. *conies* — mountain mice, or rabbits.

28. *spider* — tolerated, even in palaces, to destroy flies.

*taketh ... hands* — or, uses with activity the limbs provided for taking prey.

32. As none can hope, successfully, to resist such a king, suppress even the thought of an attempt.

*lay ... hand upon thy mouth* — “lay” is well supplied (<sup><1715></sup>Judges 18:19 <sup><1810></sup>Job 29:9 40:4).

33. or other ills, as surely arise from devising evil as natural effects from natural causes.

# CHAPTER 31

## PROVERBS 31:1-31.

1. On the title of this, the sixth part of the book, see *Introduction*.

*prophecy* — (See on <sup><1808></sup>Proverbs 30:1).

2. *What, my son?* — that is, What shall I say? Repetitions denote earnestness.

*son of my womb* — as our phrase, “my own son,” a term of special affection.

*son of my vows* — as one dedicated to God; so the word “Lemuel” may mean.

3-9. Succinct but solemn warnings against vices to which kings are peculiarly tempted, as carnal pleasures and oppressive and unrighteous government are used to sustain sensual indulgence.

*strength* — mental and bodily resources for health and comfort.

*thy ways* — or course of life.

*to that ... kings* — literally, “to the destroying of kings,” avoid destructive pleasures (compare <sup><1089></sup>Proverbs 5:9 7:22,27 <sup><3011></sup>Hosea 4:11).

4, 5. Stimulants enfeeble reason, pervert the heart, and do not suit rulers, who need clear and steady minds, and well-governed affections (compare <sup><1089></sup>Proverbs 20:1 22:29).

*pervert ... afflicted* — They give unrighteous decisions against the poor.

6, 7. The proper use of such drinks is to restore tone to feeble bodies and depressed minds (compare <sup><1945></sup>Psalms 104:15).

8, 9. *Open ... cause* — Plead for those who cannot plead for themselves, as the orphan, stranger, etc. (compare <sup><1922></sup>Psalms 72:12 <sup><2017></sup>Isaiah 1:17).

*appointed to destruction* — who are otherwise ruined by their oppressors (compare <sup><1944></sup>Proverbs 29:14,16).

10-31. This exquisite picture of a truly lovely wife is conceived and drawn in accordance with the customs of Eastern nations, but its moral teachings

suit all climes. In *Hebrew* the verses begin with the letters of the *Hebrew* alphabet in order (compare *Introduction* to Poetical Books).

**Who ... woman** — The question implies that such are rare, though not entirely wanting (compare <sup><1822></sup>Proverbs 18:22 19:14).

**virtuous** — literally, “of strength,” that is, moral courage (compare <sup><1205></sup>Proverbs 12:4 <sup><1811></sup>Ruth 3:11).

**her price**, etc. — (compare <sup><1818></sup>Proverbs 3:15).

**11. heart ... trust in her** — He relies on her prudence and skill.

**no need of spoil** — does not lack profit or gain, especially, that obtained by the risk of war.

**12. do ... good** — contribute good to him.

**13, 14.** Ancient women of rank thus wrought with their hands; and such, indeed, were the customs of Western women a few centuries since. In the East also, the fabrics were articles of merchandise.

**15.** She diligently attends to expending as well as gathering wealth;

**16.** and hence has means to purchase property.

**17, 18.** To energy she adds a watchfulness in bargains, and a protracted and painful industry. The last clause may figuratively denote that her prosperity (compare <sup><1243></sup>Proverbs 24:20) is not short lived.

**19.** No work, however mean, if honest, is disdained.

**20.** Industry enables her to be charitable.

**21. scarlet** — or, “purple,” by reason of the dyes used, the best fabrics; as a matter of taste also; the color suits cold.

**22. coverings of tapestry** — or, “coverlets,” that is, for beds.

**silk** — or, “linen” (compare <sup><1261></sup>Exodus 26:1 27:9)

**and purple** — that is, the most costly goods.

**23. in the gates** — (compare <sup><1222></sup>Proverbs 22:22). His domestic comfort promotes his advancement in public dignity.

**24. fine linen** — or, “linen shirts,” or the material for them.

**girdles** — were often costly and highly valued (<sup><1881></sup>2 Samuel 18:11).

*delivereth* — or, “giveth as a present” or “to sell.”

**25. *Strength and honor*** — *Strong* and *beautiful* is her clothing; or, figuratively, for moral character, vigorous and honorable.

*shall rejoice ... come* — in confidence of certain maintenance.

**26.** Her conversation is wise and gentle.

**27.** (Compare <sup><5154></sup>1 Timothy 5:14 <sup><5117></sup>Titus 2:5). She adds to her example a wise management of those under her control.

**28.** She is honored by those who best know her.

**29.** The words are those of her husband, praising her.

*virtuously* — (Compare <sup><3111></sup>Proverbs 31:10).

**30. *Favour*** — or, “Grace” of personal manner.

*beauty* — of face, or form (compare <sup><3112></sup>Proverbs 11:22). True piety alone commands permanent respect and affection (<sup><3133></sup>1 Peter 3:3).

**31.** The result of her labor is her best eulogy. Nothing can add to the simple beauty of this admirable portrait. On the measure of its realization in the daughters of our own day rest untold results, in the domestic, and, therefore, the civil and religious, welfare of the people.

# ECCLESIASTES;

## OR THE PREACHER.

Commentary by **A. R. FAUSSETT**

### INTRODUCTION

The Hebrew *title* is *Koheleth*, which the speaker in it applies to himself (<sup><2012></sup>Ecclesiastes 1:12), “I, *Koheleth*, was king over Israel.” It means an *Assembler* or *Convener of a meeting* and a *Preacher* to such a meeting. The feminine form of the Hebrew noun, and its construction once (<sup><2072></sup>Ecclesiastes 7:27) with a feminine verb, show that it not only signifies *Solomon*, the Preacher to assemblies (in which case it is construed with the verb or noun masculine), but also *Divine Wisdom* (feminine in *Hebrew*) speaking by the mouth of the inspired king. In six cases out of seven it is construed with the masculine. Solomon was endowed with inspired wisdom (<sup><1035></sup>1 Kings 3:5-14 6:11,12 9:1-9 11:9-11), specially fitting him for the task. The Orientals delight in such meetings for grave discourse. Thus the Arabs formerly had an assembly yearly, at *Ocadh*, for hearing and reciting poems. Compare “Masters of assemblies” (see on <sup><2121></sup>Ecclesiastes 12:11). “The Preacher taught the people knowledge,” probably *viva voce* (“orally”); <sup><1064></sup>1 Kings 4:34 10:2,8,24 <sup><4002></sup>2 Chronicles 9:1,7,23, plainly refer to a somewhat public *divan* met for literary discussion. So “spake,” thrice repeated (<sup><1062></sup>1 Kings 4:32,33), refers not to *written* compositions, but to addresses *spoken* in assemblies convened for the purpose. The Holy Ghost, no doubt, signifies also by the term that Solomon’s doctrine is intended for the “great congregation,” the Church of all places and ages (<sup><4925></sup>Psalms 22:25:49:2-4).

Solomon was plainly *the author* (<sup><2012></sup>Ecclesiastes 1:12,16 2:15 12:9). That the Rabbins attribute it to Isaiah or Hezekiah is explicable by supposing that one or the other inserted it *in the canon*. The difference of its style, as compared with Proverbs and Song of Solomon, is due to the difference of subjects, and the different period of his life in which each was written; the Song, in the fervor of his first love to God; Proverbs, about the same time, or somewhat later; but Ecclesiastes in late old age, as the seal and testimony of repentance of his apostasy in the intervening period: <sup><4881></sup>Psalms 89:30,33

proves his penitence. The substitution of the title *Koheleth* for Solomon (that is, *peace*), may imply that, having *troubled* Israel, meantime he forfeited his name of peace (<sup>41114</sup>1 Kings 11:14,23); but now, having repented, he wishes to be henceforth a *Preacher* of righteousness. The alleged foreign expressions in the *Hebrew* may have been easily imported, through the great intercourse there was with other nations during his long reign. Moreover, supposed Chaldaisms may be fragments preserved from the common tongue of which *Hebrew*, *Syriac*, *Chaldee*, and *Arabic* were offshoots.

THE SCOPE of Ecclesiastes is to *show the vanity of all mere human pursuits, when made the chief end, as contrasted with the real blessedness of true wisdom*, that is, religion. The immortality of the soul is dwelt on incidentally, as subsidiary to the main scope. Moses' law took this truth for granted but drew its sanctions of rewards and punishments in accordance with the theocracy, which was under a special providence of God as the *temporal* King of Israel, from the *present life*, rather than the future. But after Israel chose an earthly king, God withdrew, in part, His extraordinary providence, so that under Solomon, temporal rewards did not invariably follow virtue, and punishments vice (compare <sup>21219</sup>Ecclesiastes 2:16 3:19 4:1 5:8 7:15 8:14 9:2,11). Hence the need arises to show that these anomalies will be rectified hereafter, and this is the grand "conclusion," therefore, of the "whole" book, that, seeing there is a coming judgment, and seeing that present goods do not satisfy the soul, "man's whole duty is to fear God and keep his commandments" (<sup>21213</sup>Ecclesiastes 12:13,14), and meanwhile, to use, in joyful and serene sobriety, and not abuse, the present life (<sup>21212</sup>Ecclesiastes 3:12,13).

It is objected that sensual epicurism seems to be inculcated (<sup>21212</sup>Ecclesiastes 3:12,13,22, etc.); but it is a contented, thankful enjoyment of God's present gifts that is taught, as opposed to a murmuring, anxious, avaricious spirit, as is proved by <sup>21218</sup>Ecclesiastes 5:18, compare with <sup>21211</sup>Ecclesiastes 5:11-15, not making them the *chief end* of life; not the joy of levity and folly; a misunderstanding which he guards against in <sup>21210</sup>Ecclesiastes 7:2-6 11:9 12:1. Again, <sup>21216</sup>Ecclesiastes 7:16 9:2-10, might seem to teach fatalism and skepticism. But these are words put in the mouth of an objector; or rather, they were the language of Solomon himself during his apostasy, finding an echo in the heart of every sensualist, who *wishes* to be an unbeliever, and, who, therefore, sees difficulties enough in the world around wherewith to prop up his wilful unbelief. The answer is given (<sup>21217</sup>Ecclesiastes 7:17,18 9:11,12 11:1,6 12:13). Even if these passages be taken as words of Solomon, they are to be understood as forbidding a self-made "righteousness," which tries to constrain God to grant salvation to

imaginary good works and external strictness with which it wearies itself; also, that speculation which tries to fathom all God's inscrutable counsels (<sup>2087</sup>Ecclesiastes 8:17), and that carefulness about the future forbidden in <sup>4025</sup>Matthew 6:25.

THE CHIEF GOOD is that the possession of that which makes us happy, is to be sought as the *end*, for its own sake; whereas, all other things are but *means* towards it. Philosophers, who made it the great subject of inquiry, restricted it to the present life, treating the eternal as unreal, and only useful to awe the multitude with. But Solomon shows the vanity of all human things (so-called philosophy included) to satisfy the soul, and that heavenly wisdom alone is the chief good. He had taught so when young (<sup>2003</sup>Proverbs 1:20 8:1); so also; in Song of Solomon, he had spiritualized the subject in an allegory; and now, after having long personally tried the manifold ways in which the worldly seek to reach happiness, he gives the fruit of his experience in old age.

It is divided into two parts — <sup>2000</sup>Ecclesiastes 1:1-6:10 showing the vanity of earthly things; <sup>2060</sup>Ecclesiastes 6:10-12:14, the excellence of heavenly wisdom. Deviations from strict logical methods occur in these divisions, but in the main they are observed. The deviations make it the less stiff and artificial, and the more suited to all capacities. It is in poetry; the hemistichal division is mostly observed, but occasionally not so. The choice of epithets, imagery, inverted order of words, ellipses, parallelism, or, in its absence, similarity of diction, mark versification.

# CHAPTER 1

## ~~2100~~ ECCLESIASTES 1:1-18.

### INTRODUCTION.

1. **the Preacher** — and *Convener of assemblies* for the purpose. See my Preface. *Koheleth* in *Hebrew*, a symbolical name for *Solomon*, and of *Heavenly Wisdom* speaking through and identified with him.

~~2012~~ Ecclesiastes 1:12 shows that “king of Jerusalem” is in apposition, not with “David,” but “Preacher.”

**of Jerusalem** — rather, “*in Jerusalem*,” for it was merely his metropolis, not his whole kingdom.

2. The theme proposed of the first part of his discourse.

**Vanity of vanities** — Hebraism for the most utter vanity. So “holy of holies” (~~1268~~ Exodus 26:33); “servant of servants” (~~1005~~ Genesis 9:25). The repetition increases the force.

**all** — *Hebrew*, “*the all*”; all without exception, namely, earthly things.

**vanity** — not in themselves, for God maketh nothing in vain (~~5004~~ 1 Timothy 4:4,5), but vain when put in the place of God and made the *end*, instead of the *means* (~~1916~~ Psalm 39:5,6 62:9 ~~1063~~ Matthew 6:33); vain, also, because of the “vanity” to which they are “subjected” by the fall (~~4830~~ Romans 8:20).

3. **What profit ... labor** — that is, “What profit” as to the chief good (~~1165~~ Matthew 16:26). Labor is profitable *in its proper place* (~~1015~~ Genesis 2:15 3:19 ~~1143~~ Proverbs 14:23).

**under the sun** — that is, *in this life*, as opposed to the future world. The phrase often recurs, but only in Ecclesiastes.

4. **earth ... for ever** — (~~1946~~ Psalm 104:5). While the *earth* remains the same, the generations of *men* are ever changing; what lasting profit, then, can there be from the toils of one whose sojourn on earth, as an individual, is so brief? The “for ever” is comparative, not absolute (~~1923~~ Psalm 102:26).

5. (~~1916~~ Psalm 19:5,6). “Panting” as the *Hebrew* for “hasteth”; metaphor, from a runner (~~1916~~ Psalm 19:5, “a strong man”) in a “race.” It applies rather to the *rising* sun, which seems *laboriously* to mount up to the meridian,

than to the setting sun; the accents too favor MAURER, “And (that too, returning) to his place, where panting he riseth.”

**6. according to his circuits** — that is, it returns afresh to its former circuits, however many be its previous veerings about. The north and south winds are the two prevailing winds in Palestine and Egypt.

**7.** By subterraneous cavities, and by evaporation forming rain clouds, the fountains and rivers are supplied from the sea, into which they then flow back. The connection is: *Individual* men are continually changing, while the *succession of the race* continues; just as the sun, wind, and rivers are ever shifting about, while the cycle in which they move is invariable; they return to the point whence they set out. Hence is man, as in these objects of nature which are his analogue, with all the seeming changes “there is no new thing” (<sup><2009></sup>Ecclesiastes 1:9).

**8.** MAURER translates, “All *words* are wearied out,” that is, are inadequate, as also, “man cannot express” all the things in the world which undergo this ceaseless, changeless cycle of vicissitudes: “The eye is not satisfied with seeing them,” etc. But it is plainly a return to the idea (<sup><2009></sup>Ecclesiastes 1:3) as to *man’s* “labor,” which is only wearisome and profitless; “no new” good can accrue from it (<sup><2009></sup>Ecclesiastes 1:9); for as the sun, etc., so man’s laborious works move in a changeless cycle. The *eye* and *ear* are two of the taskmasters for which man toils. But these are never “satisfied” (<sup><2009></sup>Ecclesiastes 6:7 <sup><1720></sup>Proverbs 27:20). Nor can they be so hereafter, for there will be nothing “new.” Not so the chief good, Jesus Christ (<sup><0413></sup>John 4:13,14 <sup><6215></sup>Revelation 21:5).

**9.** Rather, “no new thing *at all*”; as in <sup><0416></sup>Numbers 11:6. This is not meant in a general sense; but there is no new source of happiness (the subject in question) which can be devised; the same round of petty pleasures, cares, business, study, wars, etc., being repeated over and over again [HOLDEN].

**10. old time** — *Hebrew*, “ages.”

**which was** — The *Hebrew plural* cannot be joined to the verb *singular*. Therefore translate: “It hath been in the ages before; certainly it hath been before us” [HOLDEN]. Or, as MAURER: “That which has been (done) before us (in our presence, <sup><1363></sup>1 Chronicles 16:33), has been (done) already in the old times.”

**11.** The reason why some things are thought “new,” which are not really so, is the imperfect record that exists of preceding ages among their successors.

*those that ... come after* — that is, those that live *still later* than the “things, rather the *persons* or generations, <sup>(2004)</sup>Ecclesiastes 1:4, with which this verse is connected, the six intermediate verses being merely illustrations of <sup>(2006)</sup>Ecclesiastes 1:4 [WEISS], that are to come” (<sup>(2016)</sup>Ecclesiastes 2:16 9:5).

**12.** Resumption of <sup>(2000)</sup>Ecclesiastes 1:1, the intermediate verses being the introductory statement of his thesis. Therefore, “the Preacher” (*Koheleth*) is repeated.

*was king* — instead of “am,” because he is about to give the results of his *past* experience during his long reign.

*in Jerusalem* — specified, as opposed to David, who reigned both in Hebron and Jerusalem; whereas Solomon reigned only in Jerusalem. “King of Israel in Jerusalem,” implies that he reigned over *Israel and Judah combined*; whereas David, at Hebron, reigned only over *Judah*, and not, until he was settled in Jerusalem, over both Israel and Judah.

**13.** *this sore travail* — namely, that of “searching” out all things done under heaven.” Not human wisdom in general, which comes afterwards (<sup>(2002)</sup>Ecclesiastes 2:12, etc.), but laborious enquiries into, and speculations about, the works of men; for example, political science. As man is doomed to get his bread, so his knowledge, by the sweat of his brow (<sup>(0019)</sup>Genesis 3:19) [GILL].

*exercised* — that is, disciplined; literally, “that they may thereby *chastise*, or *humble* themselves.”

**14.** The reason is here given why investigation into man’s “works” is only “sore travail” (<sup>(2013)</sup>Ecclesiastes 1:13); namely, because all man’s ways are vain (<sup>(2018)</sup>Ecclesiastes 1:18) and cannot be mended (<sup>(2015)</sup>Ecclesiastes 1:15).

*vexation of* — “a preying upon”

*the Spirit* — MAURER translates; “the pursuit of wind,” as in <sup>(2016)</sup>Ecclesiastes 5:16 <sup>(2011)</sup>Hosea 12:1, “Ephraim feedeth on wind.” But old versions support the *English Version*.

**15.** Investigation (<sup>(2013)</sup>Ecclesiastes 1:13) into human ways is vain labor, for they are hopelessly “crooked” and “cannot be made straight” by it (<sup>(2013)</sup>Ecclesiastes 7:13). God, the chief good, alone can do this (<sup>(2010)</sup>Isaiah 40:4 45:2).

*wanting* — (<sup>(2012)</sup>Daniel 5:27).

*numbered* — so as to make a complete number; so equivalent to “supplied” [MAURER]. Or, rather, man’s state is *utterly wanting*; and that

which is wholly defective cannot be numbered or calculated. The investigator thinks he can draw up, in accurate *numbers*, statistics of man's wants; but these, including the defects in the investigator's labor, are not partial, but total.

**16. *communed with ... heart*** — (<sup>0245</sup>Genesis 24:45).

***come to great estate*** — Rather, “I *have magnified* and gotten” (literally, “added,” increased), etc.

***all ... before me in Jerusalem*** — namely, the priests, judges, and two kings that preceded Solomon. His wisdom exceeded that of all before Jesus Christ, the antitypical *Koheleth*, or “*Gatherer* of men,” (<sup>0134</sup>Luke 13:34), and “Wisdom” incarnate (<sup>0119</sup>Matthew 11:19 12:42).

***had ... experience*** — literally, “had *seen*” (<sup>0131</sup>Jeremiah 2:31). Contrast with this glorying in worldly wisdom (<sup>0123</sup>Jeremiah 9:23,24).

**17. *wisdom ... madness*** — that is, their effects, the works of human wisdom and folly respectively. “Madness,” literally, “vaunting extravagance”; <sup>0112</sup>Ecclesiastes 2:12 7:25, etc., support *English Version* rather than DATHE, “splendid matters.” “Folly” is read by *English Version* with some manuscripts, instead of the present *Hebrew* text, “prudence.” If *Hebrew* be retained, understand “prudence,” *falsely so called* (<sup>0401</sup>1 Timothy 6:20), “craft” (<sup>0125</sup>Daniel 8:25).

**18. *wisdom ... knowledge*** — not in general, for wisdom, etc., are most excellent in their place; but *speculative knowledge of man's ways* (<sup>0113</sup>Ecclesiastes 1:13,17), which, the farther it goes, gives one the more pain to find how “crooked” and “wanting” they are (<sup>0115</sup>Ecclesiastes 1:15 12:12).

## CHAPTER 2

### 2:1-26. ECCLESIASTES 2:1-26.

He next tries pleasure and luxury, retaining however, his worldly “wisdom” (<sup>2089</sup>Ecclesiastes 3:9), but all proves “vanity” in respect to the chief good.

1. ***I said ... heart*** — (<sup>929</sup>Luke 12:19).

***thee*** — my heart, I will test whether thou canst find that solid good in pleasure which was not in “worldly wisdom.” But this also proves to be “vanity” (<sup>2811</sup>Isaiah 50:11).

2. ***laughter*** — including *prosperity*, and joy in general (<sup>882</sup>Job 8:21).

***mad*** — that is, *when made the chief good*; it is harmless in its proper place.

***What doeth it?*** — Of what avail is it in giving solid good? (<sup>2006</sup>Ecclesiastes 7:6 <sup>1043</sup>Proverbs 14:13).

3-11. Illustration more at large of <sup>2001</sup>Ecclesiastes 2:1,2.

***I sought*** — I resolved, after search into many plans.

***give myself unto wine*** — literally, “to draw my flesh,” or “body to wine” (including all banquetings). Image from a captive drawn after a chariot in triumph (<sup>816</sup>Romans 6:16,19 <sup>411</sup>1 Corinthians 12:2); or, one “allured” (<sup>628</sup>2 Peter 2:18,19).

***yet acquainting ... wisdom*** — literally, “and my heart (still) *was behaving, or guiding itself*,” with wisdom [GESENIUS]. MAURER translates: “*was weary of* (worldly) wisdom.” But the end of <sup>2089</sup>Ecclesiastes 2:9 confirms *English Version*.

***folly*** — namely, pleasures of the flesh, termed “mad,” <sup>2001</sup>Ecclesiastes 2:2.

***all the days***, etc. — (See *Margin* and <sup>2062</sup>Ecclesiastes 6:12 <sup>850</sup>Job 15:20).

4. (<sup>1001</sup>1 Kings 7:1-8 9:1,19 10:18, etc.).

***vineyards*** — (So 8:11).

5. ***gardens*** — *Hebrew*, “paradises,” a foreign word; *Sanskrit*, “a place enclosed with a wall”; *Armenian* and *Arabic*, “a pleasure ground with

flowers and shrubs near the king's house, or castle." An earthly paradise can never make up for the want of the heavenly (<sup><6137></sup>Revelation 2:7).

**6. *pools*** — artificial, for irrigating the soil (<sup><1020></sup>Genesis 2:10 <sup><1624></sup>Nehemiah 2:14 <sup><3039></sup>Isaiah 1:30). Three such reservoirs are still found, called Solomon's cisterns, a mile and a half from Jerusalem.

***wood that bringeth forth*** — rather, "the grove that *flourisheth with trees*" [LOWTH].

**7. *born in my house*** — These were esteemed more trustworthy servants than those bought (<sup><1144></sup>Genesis 14:14 15:2,3 17:12,13,27 <sup><2424></sup>Jeremiah 2:14), called "*songs of one's handmaid*" (<sup><0232></sup>Exodus 23:12; compare <sup><1126></sup>Genesis 12:16 <sup><3003></sup>Job 1:3).

**8.** (<sup><1107></sup>1 Kings 10:27 <sup><4115></sup>2 Chronicles 1:15 9:20).

***peculiar treasure of kings and ... provinces*** — contributed by them, as tributary to him (<sup><1021></sup>1 Kings 4:21,24) a poor substitute for the wisdom whose "gain is better than fine gold" (<sup><1184></sup>Proverbs 3:14,15).

***singers*** — so David (<sup><1095></sup>2 Samuel 19:35).

***musical instruments ... of all sorts*** — introduced at banquets (<sup><2562></sup>Isaiah 5:12 <sup><3065></sup>Amos 6:5,6); rather, "a princess and princesses," from an *Arabic* root. One regular wife, or queen (<sup><1009></sup>Esther 1:9); Pharaoh's daughter (<sup><1103></sup>1 Kings 3:1); other secondary wives, "princesses," distinct from the "concubines" (<sup><1113></sup>1 Kings 11:3 <sup><0510></sup>Psalms 45:10 <sup><2168></sup>Song of Solomon 6:8) [WEISS, GESENIUS]. Had these been omitted, the enumeration would be incomplete.

**9. *great*** — opulent (<sup><1025></sup>Genesis 24:35 <sup><3003></sup>Job 1:3; see <sup><1103></sup>1 Kings 10:23).

***remained*** — (<sup><2118></sup>Ecclesiastes 2:3).

**10. *my labor*** — in procuring pleasures.

***this*** — evanescent "joy" was my only "portion out of all my labor" (<sup><2102></sup>Ecclesiastes 3:22 5:18 9:9 <sup><1103></sup>1 Kings 10:5).

**11.** But all these I felt were only "vanity," and of "no profit" as to the chief good. "Wisdom" (worldly *common sense*, sagacity), which still "remained with me" (<sup><2118></sup>Ecclesiastes 2:9), showed me that these could not give solid happiness.

**12.** He had tried (worldly) wisdom (<sup><2112></sup>Ecclesiastes 1:12-18) and folly (foolish pleasure) (<sup><2118></sup>Ecclesiastes 2:1-11); he now compares them (<sup><2112></sup>Ecclesiastes 2:12) and finds that while (worldly)

*wisdom excelleth folly* (<sup><2013></sup>Ecclesiastes 2:13,14), yet the one event, death, befalls both (<sup><2014></sup>Ecclesiastes 2:14-16), and that thus the wealth acquired by the wise man's "labor" may descend to a "fool" that hath not labored (<sup><2018></sup>Ecclesiastes 2:18,19,21); therefore all his labor is vanity (<sup><2022></sup>Ecclesiastes 2:22,23).

*what can the man do ... already done* — (<sup><2009></sup>Ecclesiastes 1:9).

Parenthetical. A future investigator can strike nothing out "new," so as to draw a different conclusion from what I draw by comparing "wisdom and madness." HOLDEN, with less ellipsis, translates, "What, O man, shall come after the king?" etc. Better, GROTIUS, "What man can come after (compete with) the king in the things which are done?" None ever can have the same means of testing what all earthly things can do towards satisfying the soul; namely, worldly wisdom, science, riches, power, longevity, all combined.

**13, 14.** (<sup><1074></sup>Proverbs 17:24). The worldly "wise" man has *good sense* in managing his affairs, *skill* and *taste* in building and planting, and keeps within *safe* and *respectable* bounds in pleasure, while the "fool" is wanting in these respects ("darkness," equivalent to *fatal error, blind infatuation*), yet one event, death, happens to both (<sup><3225></sup>Job 21:26).

**15. why was I** — so anxious to become, etc. (<sup><4002></sup>2 Chronicles 1:10).

*Then* — Since such is the case.

*this* — namely, pursuit of (worldly) wisdom; it can never fill the place of the true wisdom (<sup><3333></sup>Job 28:28 <sup><3439></sup>Jeremiah 8:9).

**16. remembrance** — a great aim of the worldly (<sup><1104></sup>Genesis 11:4). The righteous alone attain it (<sup><3616></sup>Psalms 112:6 <sup><3007></sup>Proverbs 10:7).

*for ever* — no *perpetual* memorial.

*that which now is* — MAURER, "In the days to come all things shall be now long ago forgotten."

**17.** Disappointed in one experiment after another, he is weary of life. The backslider ought to have rather reasoned as the prodigal (<sup><3016></sup>Hosea 2:6,7 <sup><2577></sup>Luke 15:17,18).

*grievous unto me* — (<sup><3015></sup>Job 10:1).

**18, 19.** One hope alone was left to the disappointed worldling, the perpetuation of his name and riches, laboriously gathered, through his successor. For selfishness is mostly at the root of worldly parents' alleged providence for their children. But now the remembrance of how he himself,

the piously reared child of David, had disregarded his father's dying charge (<sup><330></sup>1 Chronicles 28:9), suggested the sad misgivings as to what Rehoboam, his son by an idolatrous Ammonitess, Naamah, should prove to be; a foreboding too fully realized (1 Kings 12 14:21-31).

20. *I gave up as desperate all hope of solid fruit from my labor.*

21. Suppose "there is a man," etc.

**equity** — rather "with success," as the *Hebrew* is rendered (<sup><2106></sup>Ecclesiastes 11:6), "prosper," though *Margin* gives "right" [HOLDEN and MAURER].

**evil** — not in itself, for this is the ordinary course of things, but "evil," as regards the chief good, that one should have toiled so fruitlessly.

22. Same sentiment as in <sup><2121></sup>Ecclesiastes 2:21, interrogatively.

23. The only fruit he has is, not only sorrows *in* his days, but *all* his days are sorrows, and his travail (not only *has* griefs connected with it, but is itself), grief.

24. *English Version* gives a seemingly Epicurean sense, contrary to the general scope. The *Hebrew*, literally is, "It is *not good* for man that he should eat," etc., "and should make his soul see good" (or "*show* his soul, that is, himself, happy"), etc. [WEISS]. According to HOLDEN and WEISS, <sup><2182></sup>Ecclesiastes 3:12,22 differ from this verse in the text and meaning; here he means, "It is not good that a man should feast himself, and falsely make as though his soul were happy"; he thus refers to a false *pretending* of happiness *acquired by and for one's self*; in <sup><2182></sup>Ecclesiastes 3:12,22 5:18,19, to *real seeing*, or *finding* pleasure *when God gives it*. There it is said to be *good* for a man to enjoy with satisfaction and thankfulness the blessings which God gives; here it is said *not* to be *good* to take an unreal pleasure to one's self by feasting, etc.

**This also I saw** — I perceived by experience that good (real pleasure) is not to be taken at will, but comes only from the hand of God [WEISS] (<sup><3904></sup>Psalms 4:6 <sup><2579></sup>Isaiah 57:19-21). Or as HOLDEN, "It is the appointment from the hand of God, that the sensualist has no solid satisfaction" (good).

25. **hasten** — after indulgences (<sup><4023></sup>Proverbs 7:23 19:2), *eagerly pursue* such enjoyments. None can compete with me in this. If I, then, with all my opportunities of enjoyment, failed utterly to obtain solid pleasure of my own making, apart from God, who else can? God mercifully spares His children the sad experiment which Solomon made, by denying them the goods which they often desire. He gives them the fruits of Solomon's experience, without their paying the dear price at which Solomon bought it.

**26.** True, literally, in the Jewish theocracy; and in some measure in all ages (<sup><3276></sup>Job 27:16,17 <sup><332></sup>Proverbs 13:22,28:8). Though the retribution be not so visible and immediate now as then, it is no less real. Happiness even here is more truly the portion of the godly (<sup><3811></sup>Psalm 84:11 <sup><1085></sup>Matthew 5:5 <sup><4129></sup>Mark 10:29,30 <sup><4838></sup>Romans 8:28 <sup><5008></sup>1 Timothy 4:8).

*that he* — the sinner

*may give* — that is, unconsciously and in spite of himself. The godly Solomon had satisfaction in his riches and wisdom, when God gave them (<sup><4011></sup>2 Chronicles 1:11,12). The backsliding Solomon had no happiness when he sought it in them apart from God; and the riches which he heaped up became the prey of Shishak (<sup><4420></sup>2 Chronicles 12:9).

# CHAPTER 3

## ECCLESIASTES 3:1-22.

Earthly pursuits are no doubt lawful in their proper time and order (<sup><2088></sup>Ecclesiastes 3:1-8), but unprofitable when out of time and place; as for instance, when pursued as the solid and chief good (<sup><2089></sup>Ecclesiastes 3:9,10); whereas God makes everything beautiful in its season, which man obscurely comprehends (<sup><2090></sup>Ecclesiastes 3:11). God allows man to enjoy moderately and virtuously His earthly gifts (<sup><2091></sup>Ecclesiastes 3:12,13). What consoles us amidst the instability of earthly blessings is, God's counsels are immutable (<sup><2092></sup>Ecclesiastes 3:14).

1. Man has his appointed cycle of seasons and vicissitudes, as the sun, wind, and water (<sup><2093></sup>Ecclesiastes 1:5-7).

**purpose** — as there is a fixed “season” in God’s “purposes” (for example, He has fixed the “time” when man is “to be born,” and “to die,” <sup><2094></sup>Ecclesiastes 3:2), so there is a lawful “time” for man to carry out his “purposes” and inclinations. God does not condemn, but approves of, the *use* of earthly blessings (<sup><2095></sup>Ecclesiastes 3:12); it is the *abuse* that He condemns, the making them the chief end (<sup><4075></sup>1 Corinthians 7:31). The earth, without human desires, love, taste, joy, sorrow, would be a dreary waste, without water; but, on the other hand, the misplacing and excess of them, as of a flood, need control. Reason and revelation are given to control them.

2. **time to die** — (<sup><4815></sup>Psalms 31:15 <sup><5027></sup>Hebrews 9:27).

**plant** — A man can no more reverse the times and order of “planting,” and of “digging up,” and transplanting, than he can alter the times fixed for his “birth” and “death.” To try to “plant” *out of season* is vanity, however good *in season*; so to make earthly things *the chief end* is vanity, however good they be in order and season. GILL takes it, not so well, figuratively (<sup><2487></sup>Jeremiah 18:7,9 <sup><3095></sup>Amos 9:15 <sup><4053></sup>Matthew 15:13).

3. **time to kill** — namely, judicially, criminals; or, in wars of self-defense; not in malice. Out of this time and order, killing is murder.

**to heal** — God has His times for “healing” (literally, <sup><2385></sup>Isaiah 38:5,21; figuratively, <sup><1529></sup>Deuteronomy 32:39 <sup><2001></sup>Hosea 6:1; spiritually, <sup><4908></sup>Psalms

147:3 <sup><2579></sup>Isaiah 57:19). To *heal* spiritually, before the sinner feels his *wound*, would be “out of time,” and so injurious.

**time to break down** — cities, as Jerusalem, by Nebuchadnezzar.

**build up** — as Jerusalem, in the time of Zerubbabel; spiritually (<sup><3091></sup>Amos 9:11), “the set time” (<sup><4921></sup>Psalms 102:13-16).

**4. mourn** — namely, for the dead (<sup><0210></sup>Genesis 23:2).

**dance** — as David before the ark (<sup><0062></sup>2 Samuel 6:12-14 <sup><3801></sup>Psalms 30:11); spiritually (<sup><0195></sup>Matthew 9:15 <sup><0161></sup>Luke 6:21 15:25). The Pharisees, by requiring sadness *out of time*, erred seriously.

**5. cast away stones** — as out of a garden or vineyard (<sup><2382></sup>Isaiah 5:2).

**gather** — for building; figuratively, the Gentiles, once castaway stones, were in due time made parts of the spiritual building (<sup><0029></sup>Ephesians 2:19,20), and children of Abraham (<sup><0039></sup>Matthew 3:9); so the restored Jews hereafter (<sup><0921></sup>Psalms 102:13,14 <sup><3016></sup>Zechariah 9:16).

**refrain ... embracing** — (<sup><2016></sup>Joel 2:16 <sup><0071></sup>1 Corinthians 7:5,6).

**6. time to get** — for example, to gain honestly a livelihood (<sup><0023></sup>Ephesians 4:23).

**lose** — When God wills losses to us, then is our time to be content.

**keep** — not to give to the idle beggar (<sup><3010></sup>2 Thessalonians 3:10).

**cast away** — in charity (<sup><0124></sup>Proverbs 11:24); or to part with the dearest object, rather than the soul (<sup><0043></sup>Mark 9:43). To be careful is right in its place, but not when it comes between us and Jesus Christ (<sup><2004></sup>Luke 10:40-42).

**7. rend** — garments, in mourning (<sup><2013></sup>Joel 2:13); figuratively, nations, as Israel from Judah, already foretold, in Solomon’s time (<sup><0113></sup>1 Kings 11:30,31), to be “sewed” together hereafter (<sup><2575></sup>Ezekiel 37:15,22).

**silence** — (<sup><0113></sup>Amos 5:13), in a national calamity, or that of a friend (<sup><0813></sup>Job 2:13); also not to murmur under God’s visitation (<sup><0008></sup>Leviticus 10:3 <sup><0301></sup>Psalms 39:1,2,9).

**8. hate** — for example, sin, lusts (<sup><2426></sup>Luke 14:26); that is, to love *God* so much more as to seem in comparison to *hate* “father or mother,” when coming between us and God.

**a time of war ... peace** — (<sup><2431></sup>Luke 14:31).

9. But these earthly pursuits, while lawful in their season, are “unprofitable” when made by man, what God never intended them to be, the chief good. Solomon had tried to create an artificial forced joy, at times when he ought rather to have been serious; the result, therefore, of his labor to be happy, out of God’s order, was disappointment. “A time to plant” (<sup>2018</sup>Ecclesiastes 3:2) refers to his *planting* (<sup>2018</sup>Ecclesiastes 2:5); “laugh” (<sup>2018</sup>Ecclesiastes 3:4), to <sup>2018</sup>Ecclesiastes 2:1,2. “his mirth,” “laughter”; “build up,” “gather stones” (<sup>2018</sup>Ecclesiastes 3:3,5), to his “building” (<sup>2018</sup>Ecclesiastes 2:4); “embrace,” “love,” to his “princess” (see on <sup>2018</sup>Ecclesiastes 2:8); “get” (perhaps also “gather,” <sup>2018</sup>Ecclesiastes 3:5,6), to his “gathering” (<sup>2018</sup>Ecclesiastes 2:8). All these were of “no profit,” because not in God’s time and order of bestowing happiness.

10. (See on <sup>2013</sup>Ecclesiastes 1:13).

11. *his time* — that is *in its proper season* (<sup>3018</sup>Psalms 1:3), opposed to worldlings putting earthly pursuits *out of their proper time and place* (see on <sup>2019</sup>Ecclesiastes 3:9).

*set the world in their heart* — given them capacities to understand *the world* of nature as reflecting God’s wisdom in its beautiful order and times (<sup>6019</sup>Romans 1:19,20). “Everything” answers to “world,” in the parallelism.

*so that* — that is, but in such a manner that man only sees a portion, not the whole “from beginning to end” (<sup>2017</sup>Ecclesiastes 8:17 <sup>8314</sup>Job 26:14 <sup>6113</sup>Romans 11:33 <sup>6654</sup>Revelation 15:4). PARKHURST, for “world,” translates: “Yet He hath put *obscurity in the midst of them*,” literally, “a secret,” so man’s mental *dimness of sight* as to the full mystery of God’s works. So HOLDEN and WEISS. This incapacity for “finding out” (comprehending) God’s work is chiefly the fruit of the fall. The worldling ever since, not knowing God’s time and order, labors in vain, because out of time and place.

12. *in them* — in God’s works (<sup>2018</sup>Ecclesiastes 3:11), as far as relates to man’s duty. Man cannot fully comprehend them, but he ought joyfully to receive (“rejoice in”) God’s gifts, and “do good” with them to himself and to others. This is never out of season (<sup>8119</sup>Galatians 6:9,10). Not sensual joy and self-indulgence (<sup>3004</sup>Philippians 4:4 <sup>5016</sup>James 4:16,17).

13. Literally, “And also as to every man who eats ... this is the gift of God” (<sup>2012</sup>Ecclesiastes 3:22 <sup>2018</sup>Ecclesiastes 5:18). When received as God’s gifts, and to God’s glory, the good things of life are enjoyed in their due time and order (<sup>4016</sup>Acts 2:46 <sup>4011</sup>1 Corinthians 10:31 <sup>5013</sup>1 Timothy 4:3,4).

14. (<sup><082></sup>1 Samuel 3:12 <sup><025></sup>2 Samuel 23:5 <sup><088></sup>Psalm 89:34 <sup><025></sup>Matthew 24:35 <sup><017></sup>James 1:17).

*for ever* — as opposed to man’s perishing labors (<sup><025></sup>Ecclesiastes 2:15-18).

*any thing taken from it* — opposed to man’s “crooked and wanting” works (<sup><015></sup>Ecclesiastes 1:15 7:13). The event of man’s labors depends wholly on God’s immutable purpose. Man’s part, therefore, is to do and enjoy every earthly thing *in its proper season* (<sup><022></sup>Ecclesiastes 3:12,13), not setting aside God’s order, but observing deep reverence towards God; for the mysteriousness and unchangeableness of God’s purposes are designed to lead “man to fear before Him.” Man knows not the event of each act: otherwise he would think himself independent of God.

15. Resumption of <sup><009></sup>Ecclesiastes 1:9. Whatever changes there be, the succession of events is ordered by God’s “everlasting” laws (<sup><034></sup>Ecclesiastes 3:14), and returns in a fixed cycle.

*requireth that ... past* — After many changes, God’s law *requires* the return of the same cycle of events, as in *the past*, literally, “that which is driven on.” The *Septuagint* and *Syriac* translate: “God requireth (that is, avengeth) the *persecuted* man”; a transition to <sup><016></sup>Ecclesiastes 3:16,17. The parallel clauses of the verse support *English Version*.

16. Here a difficulty is suggested. If God “requires” events to move in their perpetual cycle, why are the wicked allowed to deal unrighteously in the place where injustice ought least of all to be; namely, “the place of judgment” (<sup><011></sup>Jeremiah 12:1)?

17. Solution of it. There is a coming judgment in which God will vindicate His righteous ways. The sinner’s “time” of his unrighteous “work” is short. God also has His “time” and “work” of judgment; and, meanwhile, is overruling, for good at last, what seems now dark. Man cannot now “find out” the plan of God’s ways (<sup><011></sup>Ecclesiastes 3:11 <sup><072></sup>Psalm 97:2). If judgment instantly followed every sin, there would be no scope for free will, faith, and perseverance of saints in spite of difficulties. The previous darkness will make the light at last the more glorious.

*there* — (<sup><017></sup>Job 3:17-19) in eternity, in the presence of the Divine Judge, opposed to the “there,” in the human place of judgment (<sup><016></sup>Ecclesiastes 3:16): so “from *thence*” (<sup><044></sup>Genesis 49:24).

18. *estate* — The estate of fallen man is so ordered (these wrongs are permitted), that God might “manifest,” that is, thereby *prove* them, and that they might themselves see their mortal frailty, like that of the beasts.

**sons of men** — rather, “sons of Adam,” a phrase used for “fallen men.” The toleration of injustice until the judgment is designed to “manifest” men’s characters in their fallen state, to see whether the oppressed will bear themselves aright amidst their wrongs, knowing that the time is short, and there is a coming judgment. The oppressed share in death, but the comparison to “beasts” applies especially to *the ungodly oppressors* (<sup>4912</sup>Psalm 49:12,20). They too need to be “manifested” (“proved”), whether, considering that they must soon die as the “beasts,” and fearing the judgment to come, they will repent (<sup>2027</sup>Daniel 4:27).

**19.** Literally, “For the sons of men (Adam) *are a mere chance*, as also the beast is a mere chance.” These words can only be the sentiments of the skeptical oppressors. God’s delay in judgment gives scope for the “manifestation” of their infidelity (<sup>2081</sup>Ecclesiastes 8:11 <sup>4959</sup>Psalm 55:19 <sup>6002</sup>Peter 3:3,4). They *are* “brute beasts,” morally (<sup>2088</sup>Ecclesiastes 3:18 <sup>6110</sup>Jude 1:10); and they end by maintaining that man, physically, has no pre-eminence over the beast, both alike being “fortuities.” Probably this was the language of Solomon himself in his apostasy. He answers it in <sup>2182</sup>Ecclesiastes 3:21. If <sup>2189</sup>Ecclesiastes 3:19,20 be *his* words, they express only that *as regards liability to death*, excluding the future judgment, as the skeptic oppressors do, man is on a level with the beast. Life is “vanity,” if regarded independently of religion. But <sup>2020</sup>Ecclesiastes 3:21 points out the vast difference between them in respect to the future destiny; also (<sup>2087</sup>Ecclesiastes 3:17) beasts have no “judgment” to come.

**breath** — vitality.

**21. Who knoweth** — Not *doubt* of the destination of man’s spirit (<sup>2107</sup>Ecclesiastes 12:7); but “*how few*, by reason of the outward mortality to which man is as liable as the beast and which is the ground of the skeptic’s argument, comprehend the wide difference between man and the beast” (<sup>2810</sup>Isaiah 53:1). The *Hebrew* expresses the difference strongly, “The spirit of man that ascends, it belongeth to on high; but the spirit of the beast that descends, it belongeth to below, even to the earth.” Their destinations and proper element differ utterly [WEISS].

**22.** (Compare <sup>2082</sup>Ecclesiastes 3:12 <sup>2058</sup>Ecclesiastes 5:18). Inculcating a thankful enjoyment of God’s gifts, and a cheerful discharge of man’s duties, founded on fear of God; not as the sensualist (<sup>2109</sup>Ecclesiastes 11:9); not as the anxious money-seeker (<sup>2023</sup>Ecclesiastes 2:23 5:10-17).

**his portion** — in the present life. If it were made his *main* portion, it would be “vanity” (<sup>2001</sup>Ecclesiastes 2:1 <sup>2025</sup>Luke 16:25).

*for who*, etc. — Our ignorance as to the future, which is God’s “time” (<sup>2018</sup>Ecclesiastes 3:11), should lead us to use the present time in the best sense and leave the future to His infinite wisdom (<sup>4018</sup>Matthew 6:20,25,31-34).

# CHAPTER 4

## ECCLESIASTES 4:1-16.

1. **returned** — namely, to the thought set forth (<sup>2186</sup>Ecclesiastes 3:16 <sup>4889</sup>Job 35:9).

**power** — MAURER, not so well, “violence.”

**no comforter** — twice said to express *continued* suffering without any to give comfort (<sup>2530</sup>Isaiah 53:7).

2. A profane sentiment if severed from its connection; but just in its bearing on Solomon’s scope. If religion were not taken into account (<sup>2187</sup>Ecclesiastes 3:17,19), to die as soon as possible would be desirable, so as not to suffer or witness “oppressions”; and still more so, not to be born at all (<sup>2100</sup>Ecclesiastes 7:1). Job (<sup>4882</sup>Job 3:12 21:7), David (<sup>4938</sup>Psalms 73:3, etc.), Jeremiah (<sup>2420</sup>Jeremiah 12:1), Habakkuk (<sup>3813</sup>Habakkuk 1:13), all passed through the same perplexity, until they went into the sanctuary, and looked beyond the present to the “judgment” (<sup>4937</sup>Psalms 73:17 <sup>3813</sup>Habakkuk 2:20 3:17,18). Then they saw the need of delay, before completely punishing the wicked, to give space for repentance, or else for accumulation of wrath (<sup>4815</sup>Romans 2:15); and before completely rewarding the godly, to give room for faith and perseverance in tribulation (<sup>4917</sup>Psalms 92:7-12). Earnests, however, are often even now given, by partial judgments of the future, to assure us, in spite of difficulties, that God governs the earth.

3. **not seen** — nor *experienced*.

4. **right** — rather, “prosperous” (see on <sup>2102</sup>Ecclesiastes 2:21). Prosperity, which men so much covet, is the very source of provoking oppression (<sup>2100</sup>Ecclesiastes 4:1) and “envy,” so far is it from constituting the chief good.

5. Still the

**fool**, the *wicked* oppressor who “folds his hands together” (<sup>2160</sup>Proverbs 6:10 24:33), *in idleness*, living on the means he wrongfully wrests from others, is not to be envied even in this life; for such a one

**eatheth his own flesh** — that is, is a *self-tormentor*, never satisfied, his spirit preying on itself (<sup>2100</sup>Isaiah 9:20 49:26).

6. *Hebrew*; “One open hand (*palm*) full of quietness, than both closed hands full of travail.” “Quietness” (mental tranquillity flowing from honest labor), opposed to “eating one’s own flesh” (<sup>2005</sup>Ecclesiastes 4:5), also opposed to anxious labor to gain (<sup>2008</sup>Ecclesiastes 4:8 <sup>2156</sup>Proverbs 15:16,17 16:8).

7. A vanity described in <sup>2008</sup>Ecclesiastes 4:8.

8. *not a second* — no partner.

*child* — “son or brother,” put for any heir (<sup>0236</sup>Deuteronomy 25:5-10).

*eye* — (<sup>2008</sup>Ecclesiastes 1:8). The miser would not be able to give an account of his infatuation.

9. *Two* — opposed to “one” (<sup>2008</sup>Ecclesiastes 4:8). Ties of union, marriage, friendship, religious communion, are better than the selfish solitariness of the miser (<sup>0008</sup>Genesis 2:18).

*reward* — Advantage accrues from their efforts being conjoined. The *Talmud* says, “A man without a companion is like a left hand without the right.

10. *if they fall* — if *the one or other* fall, as may happen to *both*, namely, into any distress of body, mind, or soul.

11. (See on <sup>1000</sup>1 Kings 1:1). The image is taken from man and wife, but applies universally to the *warm* sympathy derived from social ties. So Christian ties (<sup>0203</sup>Luke 24:32 <sup>0205</sup>Acts 28:15).

12. *one* — enemy.

*threefold cord* — proverbial for a *combination of many* — for example, husband, wife, and children (<sup>2014</sup>Proverbs 11:14); so Christians (<sup>2001</sup>Luke 10:1 <sup>5002</sup>Colossians 2:2,19). Untwist the cord, and the separate threads are easily “broken.”

13. The “threefold cord” (<sup>2012</sup>Ecclesiastes 4:12) of social ties suggests the subject of *civil government*. In this case too, he concludes that kingly power confers no lasting happiness. The “wise” child, though a supposed case of Solomon, answers, in the event foreseen by the Holy Ghost, to Jeroboam, then a poor but valiant youth, once a “servant” of Solomon, and (<sup>1125</sup>1 Kings 11:26-40) appointed by God through the prophet Ahijah to be heir of the kingdom of the ten tribes about to be rent from Rehoboam. The “old and foolish king” answers to Solomon himself, who had lost his wisdom, when, in defiance of two warnings of God (<sup>1034</sup>1 Kings 3:14 9:2-9), he forsook God.

***will no more be admonished*** — knows not yet how to take warning (see *Margin*) God had by Ahijah already intimated the judgment coming on Solomon (<sup>11:11-13</sup>1 Kings 11:11-13).

**14. *out of prison*** — Solomon uses this phrase of a supposed case; for example, Joseph raised from a dungeon to be lord of Egypt. His words are at the same time so framed by the Holy Ghost that they answer virtually to Jeroboam, who fled to escape a “prison” and death from Solomon, to Shishak of Egypt (<sup>11:40</sup>1 Kings 11:40). This unconscious presaging of his own doom, and that of Rehoboam, constitutes the irony. David’s elevation from poverty and exile, under Saul (which may have been before Solomon’s mind), had so far their counterpart in that of Jeroboam.

***whereas ... becometh poor*** — rather, “though he (the youth) was born poor in his kingdom” (in the land where afterwards he was to reign).

**15.** “I considered all the living,” the present generation, in relation to (“with”) the “*second* youth” (the “*legitimate* successor” of the “old king,” as opposed to the “poor youth,” the one *first* spoken of, about to be raised from poverty to a throne), that is, Rehoboam.

***in his stead*** — the old king’s.

**16.** Notwithstanding their now worshipping the rising sun, the heir-apparent, I reflected that “there were no bounds, no stability (<sup>15:6 20:1</sup>2 Samuel 15:6 20:1), no check on the love of innovation, of all that have been before them,” that is, the past generation; so

***also they that come after*** — that is, the next generation,

***shall not rejoice in him*** — namely, Rehoboam. The parallel, “shall not rejoice,” fixes the sense of “no bounds,” *no permanent adherence*, though now men *rejoice* in *him*.

# CHAPTER 5

## ECCLESIASTES 5:1-20.

1. From vanity connected with kings, he passes to vanities (<sup>2180E</sup>Ecclesiastes 5:7) which may be fallen into convinced of the vanity of the creature, wish to worship the Creator.

**Keep thy foot** — In going to worship, go with considerate, circumspect, reverent feeling. The allusion is to the taking off the shoes, or sandals, in entering a temple (<sup>1088E</sup>Exodus 3:5 <sup>1065E</sup>Joshua 5:15, which passages perhaps gave rise to the custom). WEISS needlessly reads, “Keep thy *feast days*” (<sup>1224E</sup>Exodus 23:14,17; the three great feasts).

**hear** — rather, “To be ready (to draw nigh with the desire) to hear (obey) is a better sacrifice than the offering of fools” [HOLDEN]. (*Vulgate; Syriac*). (<sup>1516E</sup>Psalms 51:16,17 <sup>1088E</sup>Proverbs 21:3 <sup>1065E</sup>Jeremiah 6:20 7:21-23 14:12 <sup>1062E</sup>Amos 5:21-24). The warning is against mere ceremonial self-righteousness, as in <sup>1072E</sup>Ecclesiastes 7:12. *Obedience* is the spirit of the law’s requirements (<sup>1062E</sup>Deuteronomy 10:12). Solomon sorrowfully looks back on his own neglect of this (compare <sup>1083E</sup>1 Kings 8:63 with <sup>1104E</sup>Ecclesiastes 11:4,6). *Positive* precepts of God must be kept, but will not stand instead of obedience to His *moral* precepts. The last provided no sacrifice for *wilful* sin (<sup>1053E</sup>Numbers 15:30,31 <sup>1089E</sup>Hebrews 10:26-29).

2. **rash** — opposed to the *considerate reverence* (“keep thy foot,” <sup>1080E</sup>Ecclesiastes 5:1). This verse illustrates <sup>1080E</sup>Ecclesiastes 5:1, as to *prayer* in the house of God (“before God,” <sup>1012E</sup>Isaiah 1:12); so <sup>1064E</sup>Ecclesiastes 5:4-6 as to *vows*. The remedy to such vanities is stated (<sup>1080E</sup>Ecclesiastes 5:6). “Fear thou God.”

**God is in heaven** — Therefore He ought to be approached with carefully weighed words, by thee, a frail creature of earth.

3. As much “business,” engrossing the mind, gives birth to incoherent “dreams,” so many words, uttered inconsiderately in prayer, give birth to and betray “a fool’s speech” (<sup>1104E</sup>Ecclesiastes 10:14), [HOLDEN and WEISS]. But <sup>1080E</sup>Ecclesiastes 5:7 implies that the “dream” is not a comparison, but the *vain thoughts of the fool* (sinner, <sup>1073E</sup>Psalms 73:20), arising from multiplicity of (worldly) “business.” His “dream” is that God hears him

for his much speaking (<sup><4087></sup>Matthew 6:7), independently of the frame of mind [*English Version* and MAURER].

**fool's voice** — answers to “dream” in the parallel; it comes by the many “words” flowing from the fool’s “dream.”

**4. When thou vowest a vow unto God** — Hasty words in *prayer* (<sup><2182></sup>Ecclesiastes 5:2,3) suggest the subject of hasty *vows*. A vow should not be hastily made (<sup><4013></sup>Judges 11:35 <sup><4944></sup>1 Samuel 14:24). When made, it must be kept (<sup><4761></sup>Psalms 76:11), even as God keeps His word to us (<sup><4234></sup>Exodus 12:41,51 <sup><4626></sup>Joshua 21:45).

**5.** (<sup><4221></sup>Deuteronomy 23:21,23).

**6. thy flesh** — Vow not with “thy mouth” a vow (for example, fasting), which the lusts of the flesh (“body,” <sup><2182></sup>Ecclesiastes 2:3, *Margin*) may tempt thee to break (<sup><4115></sup>Proverbs 20:25).

**angel** — the “messenger” of God (<sup><4833></sup>Job 33:23); minister (<sup><4633></sup>Revelation 1:20); that is, the priest (<sup><3107></sup>Malachi 2:7) “before” whom a breach of a vow was to be confessed (<sup><4884></sup>Leviticus 5:4,5). We, Christians, in our vows (for example, at baptism, the Lord’s Supper, etc.) vow in the presence of Jesus Christ, “the angel of the covenant” (<sup><3107></sup>Malachi 3:1), and of ministering angels as witnesses (<sup><4110></sup>1 Corinthians 11:10 <sup><5421></sup>1 Timothy 5:21). Extenuate not any breach of them as a slight error.

**7.** (See on <sup><2182></sup>Ecclesiastes 5:3). God’s service, which ought to be our chief good, becomes by “dreams” (foolish fancies as of God’s requirements of us in worship), and random “words,” positive “vanity.” The remedy is, whatever fools may do, “Fear *thou* God” (<sup><2123></sup>Ecclesiastes 12:13).

**8.** As in <sup><2182></sup>Ecclesiastes 3:16, so here the difficulty suggests itself. If God is so exact in even punishing hasty words (<sup><2182></sup>Ecclesiastes 5:1-6), why does He allow gross injustice? In the remote “provinces,” the “poor” often had to put themselves for protection from the inroads of Philistines, etc., under chieftains, who oppressed them even in Solomon’s reign (<sup><4110></sup>1 Kings 12:4).

**the matter** — literally, “the pleasure,” or purpose (<sup><2510></sup>Isaiah 53:10). Marvel not at this *dispensation of God’s will*, as if He had abandoned the world. Nay, there is coming a capital judgment at last, and an earnest of it in partial punishments of in serving the King of kings, even by those who, sinners meanwhile. higher than the highest — (<sup><2078></sup>Daniel 7:18).

**regardeth** — (<sup><4402></sup>2 Chronicles 16:9).

**there be higher** — plural, that is, the three persons of the Godhead, or else, “regardeth not only the ‘highest’ kings, than whom He ‘is higher,’ but even the petty tyrants of the provinces, namely, the high ones who are above them” (the poor) [WEISS].

9. “The profit (produce) of the earth is (ordained) for (the common good of) all: even the king himself is served by (the fruits of) the field” (<sup>4400</sup>2 Chronicles 26:10). Therefore the common Lord of all, high and low, will punish at last those who rob the “poor” of their share in it (<sup>3122</sup>Proverbs 22:22,23 <sup>3109</sup>Amos 8:4-7).

10. Not only will God punish at last, but meanwhile the oppressive gainers of “silver” find no solid “satisfaction” in it.

**shall not be satisfied** — so the oppressor “eateth his own flesh” (see on <sup>2100</sup>Ecclesiastes 4:1 and <sup>2105</sup>Ecclesiastes 4:5).

**with increase** — is not satisfied with the gain that he makes.

11. **they ... that eat them** — the rich man’s dependents (<sup>4925</sup>Psalm 23:5).

12. Another argument against anxiety to gain riches. “Sleep ... sweet” answers to “quietness” (<sup>2100</sup>Ecclesiastes 4:6); “not suffer ... sleep,” to “vexation of spirit.” Fears for his wealth, and an overloaded stomach without “laboring” (compare <sup>2105</sup>Ecclesiastes 4:5), will not suffer the rich oppressor to sleep.

13, 14. Proofs of God’s judgments even in this world (<sup>3113</sup>Proverbs 11:31). The rich oppressor’s wealth provokes enemies, robbers, etc. Then, after having kept it for an expected son, he loses it beforehand by misfortune (“by evil travail”), and the son is born to be heir of poverty. <sup>2109</sup>Ecclesiastes 2:19,23 gives another aspect of the same subject.

16. Even supposing that he loses not his wealth before death, *then* at last he must go stripped of it all (<sup>3907</sup>Psalm 49:17).

**labored for the wind** — (<sup>3211</sup>Hosea 12:1 <sup>4125</sup>1 Corinthians 9:26).

17. **eateth** — appropriately put for “liveth” in general, as connected with <sup>2105</sup>Ecclesiastes 5:11,12,18.

**darkness** — opposed to “light (joy) of countenance” (<sup>2100</sup>Ecclesiastes 8:1 <sup>3105</sup>Proverbs 16:15).

**wrath** — fretfulness, literally, “His sorrow is much, and his infirmity (of body) and wrath.”

18. Returns to the sentiment (<sup>2082</sup>Ecclesiastes 3:12,13,22); translate: “Behold the good which I have seen, and which is becoming” (in a man).

*which God giveth* — namely, both the good of his labor and his life.

*his portion* — legitimately. It is God’s gift that makes it so when regarded as such. Such a one will use, not abuse, earthly things (<sup>4073</sup>1 Corinthians 7:31). Opposed to the anxious life of the covetous (<sup>2050</sup>Ecclesiastes 5:10,17).

19. As <sup>2058</sup>Ecclesiastes 5:18 refers to the “laboring” man (<sup>2052</sup>Ecclesiastes 5:12), so <sup>2059</sup>Ecclesiastes 5:19 to the “rich” man, who gets wealth not by “oppression” (<sup>2058</sup>Ecclesiastes 5:8), but by “God’s gift.” He is distinguished also from the “rich” man (<sup>2060</sup>Ecclesiastes 6:2) in having received by God’s gift not only “wealth,” but also “power to eat thereof,” which that one has not.

*to take his portion* — limits him to the lawful use of wealth, not keeping back from God *His* portion while enjoying his own.

20. He will not remember much, looking back with disappointment, as the ungodly do (<sup>2011</sup>Ecclesiastes 2:11), on the days of his life.

*answereth ... in the joy* — God *answers* his prayers in giving him “power” to *enjoy* his blessings. GESENIUS and *Vulgate* translate, “For God (so) occupies him with joy,” etc., that he thinks not much of the shortness and sorrows of life. HOLDEN, “Though God gives not much (as to real enjoyment), yet he remembers (with thankfulness) the days; for (he knows) God *exercises* him by the joy,” etc. (tries him by prosperity), so *Margin*, but *English Version* is simplest.

# CHAPTER 6

## ~~2108~~ ECCLESIASTES 6:1-12.

1. **common** — or else more literally, — “great upon man,” falls heavily upon man.

2. **for his soul** — that is, his enjoyment.

**God giveth him not power to eat** — This distinguishes him from the “rich” man in ~~2169~~ Ecclesiastes 5:19. “God hath given” distinguishes him also from the man who got his wealth by “oppression” (~~2188~~ Ecclesiastes 5:8,10).

**stranger** — those not akin, nay, even hostile to him (~~2653~~ Jeremiah 51:51 ~~2892~~ Lamentations 5:2 ~~2908~~ Hosea 7:9). He seems to have it in his “power” to do as he will with his wealth, but an unseen power gives him up to his own avarice: God wills that he should toil for “a stranger” (~~2122~~ Ecclesiastes 2:26), who has found favor in God’s sight.

3. Even if a man (of this character) have very many (equivalent to “a hundred,” ~~2101~~ 2 Kings 10:1) children, and not have a “stranger” as his heir (~~2102~~ Ecclesiastes 6:2), and live long (“days of years” express the *brevity* of life *at its best*, ~~0470~~ Genesis 47:9), yet enjoy no real “good” in life, and lie unhonored, without “burial,” at death (~~1192~~ 2 Kings 9:26,35), the embryo is better than he. In the East to be without burial is the greatest degradation. “Better the fruit that drops from the tree before it is ripe than that left to hang on till rotten” [HENRY].

4. **he** — rather “it,” “the untimely birth.” So “its,” not “*his* name.”

**with vanity** — to no purpose; a type of the driftless existence of him who makes riches the chief good.

**darkness** — of the abortive; a type of the unhonored death and dark future beyond the grave of the avaricious.

5. **this** — yet “it has more rest than” the toiling, gloomy miser.

6. If the miser’s length of “life” be thought to raise him above the abortive, Solomon answers that long life, without enjoying real good, is but lengthened misery, and riches cannot exempt him from going whither “all go.” He is fit neither for life, nor death, nor eternity.

**7. *man*** — rather, “the man,” namely, the miser (<sup>2068</sup>Ecclesiastes 6:3-6). For not *all* men labor for the mouth, that is, for selfish gratification.

***appetite*** — *Hebrew*, “the soul.” The insatiability of the desire prevents that which is the only end proposed in toils, namely, self-gratification; “the man” thus gets no “good” out of his wealth (<sup>2068</sup>Ecclesiastes 6:3).

**8. *For*** — “However” [MAURER]. The “for” means (in contrast to the insatiability of the miser), *For what* else is the advantage which *the wise man hath above the fool?*”

***What*** — advantage, that is, superiority, above him who knows not how to walk uprightly

***hath the poor who knoweth to walk before the living?*** — that is, to use and enjoy life aright (<sup>2158</sup>Ecclesiastes 5:18,19), a cheerful, thankful, godly “walk” (<sup>4809</sup>Psalms 116:9).

**9.** Answer to the question in <sup>2068</sup>Ecclesiastes 6:8. This is the advantage:

***Better is the sight of the eyes*** — the wise man’s godly enjoyment of present *seen* blessings

***than the*** (fool’s) ***wandering*** — literally, *walking* (<sup>4974</sup>Psalms 73:9), of the desire, that is, vague, insatiable desires for what he has not (<sup>2068</sup>Ecclesiastes 6:7 <sup>816</sup>Hebrews 13:5).

***this*** — restless wandering of desire, and not enjoying contentedly the present (<sup>5066</sup>1 Timothy 6:6,8).

**10.** Part II begins here. Since man’s toils are vain, what is the chief good? (<sup>2062</sup>Ecclesiastes 6:12). The answer is contained in the rest of the book.

***That which hath been*** — man’s various circumstances

***is named already*** — not only has existed, <sup>2009</sup>Ecclesiastes 1:9 3:15, but has received its just name, “vanity,” long ago,

***and it is known that it*** — vanity

***is man*** — *Hebrew*, “Adam,” equivalent to man “of *red* dust,” as his Creator appropriately named him from his frailty.

***neither may he contend***, etc. — (<sup>4920</sup>Romans 9:20).

**11.** “Seeing” that man cannot escape from the “vanity,” which by God’s “mighty” will is inherent in earthly things, and cannot *call in question* God’s wisdom in these dispensations (equivalent to “contend,” etc.),

*what is man the better* — of these vain things as regards the chief good? None whatever.

**12. *For who knoweth***, etc. — The ungodly know not what is really “good” during life, nor “what shall be after them,” that is, what will be the event of their undertakings (<sup>2032</sup>Ecclesiastes 3:22 8:7). The godly might be tempted to “contend with God” (<sup>2060</sup>Ecclesiastes 6:10) as to His dispensations; but they cannot fully know the wise purposes served by them now and hereafter. Their sufferings from the oppressors are more really good for them than cloudless prosperity; sinners are being allowed to fill up their measure of guilt. Retribution in part vindicates God’s ways even now. The judgment shall make all clear. In <sup>2000</sup>Ecclesiastes 7:1-29, he states what is good, in answer to this verse.

# CHAPTER 7

## ECCLESIASTES 7:1-29.

1. (See see on <sup><2162></sup>Ecclesiastes 6:12).

**name** — character; a godly mind and life; not mere reputation with man, but what a man *is* in the eyes of God, with whom the *name* and *reality* are one thing (<sup><2106></sup>Isaiah 9:6). This alone is “good,” while all else is “vanity” when made the chief end.

**ointment** — used lavishly at costly banquets and peculiarly refreshing in the sultry East. The *Hebrew* for “name” and for “ointment,” have a happy paronomasia, *Sheem* and *Shemen*. “Ointment” is fragrant only in the place where the person is whose head and garment are scented, and only for a time. The “name” given by God to His child (<sup><4182></sup>Revelation 3:12) is for ever and in all lands. So in the case of the woman who received an everlasting name from Jesus Christ, in reward for her precious ointment (<sup><2568></sup>Isaiah 56:5 <sup><4148></sup>Mark 14:3-9). Jesus Christ Himself hath such a name, as the Messiah, equivalent to Anointed (So 1:3).

**and the day of [his] death**, etc. — not a general censure upon God for creating man; but, connected with the previous clause, death is to him, who hath a godly name, “better” than the day of his birth; “far better,” as <sup><3023></sup>Philippians 1:23 has it.

2. Proving that it is not a *sensual* enjoyment of earthly goods which is meant in <sup><2013></sup>Ecclesiastes 3:13 5:18. A thankful use of these is right, but frequent feasting Solomon had found dangerous to piety in his own case. So Job’s fear (<sup><2100></sup>Ecclesiastes 1:4,5). The house of feasting often shuts out thoughts of God and eternity. The sight of the dead in the “house of mourning” causes “the living” to think of their own “end.”

3. **Sorrow** — such as arises from serious thoughts of eternity.

**laughter** — reckless mirth (<sup><2012></sup>Ecclesiastes 2:2).

**by the sadness ... better** — (<sup><1305></sup>Psalm 126:5,6 <sup><4047></sup>2 Corinthians 4:17 <sup><3820></sup>Hebrews 12:10,11). MAURER translates: “In sadness of countenance there is (may be) a good (*cheerful*) heart.” So *Hebrew*, for “good,” equivalent to “cheerful” (<sup><2100></sup>Ecclesiastes 11:19); but the parallel clause supports *English Version*.

5. (<sup><3E04></sup>Psalm 141:4,5). Godly reproof offends the flesh, but benefits the spirit. Fools' songs in the house of mirth please the flesh, but injure the soul.

6. *crackling* — answers to the loud merriment of fools. It is the very fire consuming them which produces the seeming merry noise (<sup><2116></sup>Joel 2:5). Their light soon goes out in the black darkness. There is a paronomasia in the *Hebrew*, *Sirim* (“thorns”), *Sir* (“pot”). The wicked are often compared to “thorns” (<sup><1016></sup>2 Samuel 23:6 <sup><110></sup>Na 1:10). Dried cow-dung was the common fuel in Palestine; its slowness in burning makes the quickness of a fire of thorns the more graphic, as an image of the sudden end of fools (<sup><4822></sup>Psalm 118:12).

7. *oppression* — recurring to the idea (<sup><2016></sup>Ecclesiastes 3:16 5:8). Its connection with <sup><2008></sup>Ecclesiastes 7:4-6 is, the sight of “oppression” perpetrated by “fools” might tempt the “wise” to call in question God’s dispensations, and imitate the folly (equivalent to “madness”) described (<sup><2008></sup>Ecclesiastes 7:5:6). WEISS, for “oppression,” translates, “distraction,” produced by merriment. But <sup><2118></sup>Ecclesiastes 5:8 favors *English Version*.

*a gift* — that is, the sight of *bribery* in “places of judgment” (<sup><2116></sup>Ecclesiastes 3:16) might cause the wise to lose their wisdom (equivalent to “heart”), (<sup><8126></sup>Job 12:6 21:6,7 24:1, etc.). This suits the parallelism better than “a heart of gifts”; a benevolent heart, as WEISS.

8. connected with <sup><2007></sup>Ecclesiastes 7:7. Let the “wise” wait for “the end,” and the “oppressions” which now (in “the beginning”) perplex their faith, will be found by God’s working to be overruled to their good. “Tribulation worketh *patience*” (<sup><6118></sup>Romans 5:3), which is infinitely better than “the proud spirit” that prosperity might have generated in them, as it has in fools (<sup><5712></sup>Psalm 73:2,3,12-14,17-26 <sup><4111></sup>James 5:11).

9. *angry* — impatient at adversity befalling thee, as Job was (<sup><2112></sup>Ecclesiastes 5:2 <sup><2120></sup>Proverbs 12:16).

10. Do not call in question God’s ways in making thy former days better than thy present, as Job did (<sup><8202></sup>Job 29:2-5). The very putting of the question argues that heavenly “wisdom” (*Margin*) is not as much as it ought made the chief good with thee.

11. Rather, “Wisdom, *as compared* with an inheritance, is good,” that is, is as good as an inheritance; “yea, better (literally, and a profit) to them that see the sun” (that is, *the living*, <sup><21107></sup>Ecclesiastes 11:7 <sup><8118></sup>Job 3:16 <sup><9019></sup>Psalm 49:19).

**12.** Literally, (To be) in (that is, under) the *shadow* (<sup><2301></sup>Isaiah 30:2) of wisdom (is the same as to be) in (under) the *shadow* of money; wisdom no less *shields* one from the ills of life than money does.

*is, that* — rather, “the excellency of the knowledge of wisdom giveth life,” that is, life in the highest sense, here and hereafter (<sup><2168></sup>Proverbs 3:18 <sup><3173></sup>John 17:3 <sup><6102></sup>2 Peter 1:3). Wisdom (religion) cannot be lost as money can. It *shields* one in adversity, as well as prosperity; money, only in prosperity. The question in <sup><2170></sup>Ecclesiastes 7:10 implies a want of it.

**13.** Consider as to God’s work, that it is impossible to alter His dispensations; *for who can*, etc.

*straight ... crooked* — Man cannot amend what God wills to be “wanting” and “adverse” (<sup><2115></sup>Ecclesiastes 1:15 <sup><1824></sup>Job 12:14).

**14. consider** — resumed from <sup><2173></sup>Ecclesiastes 7:13. “Consider,” that is, regard it as “the work of God”; for “God has made (*Hebrew*, for ‘set’) this (adversity) also as well as the other (prosperity).” “Adversity” is one of the things which “God has made crooked,” and which man cannot “make straight.” He ought therefore to be “patient” (<sup><2108></sup>Ecclesiastes 7:8).

*after him* — equivalent to “that man may not find anything (to blame) after God” (that is, *after* “considering God’s work,” <sup><2173></sup>Ecclesiastes 7:13). *Vulgate* and *Syriac*, “against Him” (compare <sup><2170></sup>Ecclesiastes 7:10 <sup><3104></sup>Romans 3:4).

**15.** An objection entertained by Solomon

*in the days of his vanity* — his apostasy (<sup><2184></sup>Ecclesiastes 8:14 <sup><3217></sup>Job 21:7).

*just ... perisheth* — (<sup><1213></sup>1 Kings 21:13). *Temporal* not eternal death (<sup><3108></sup>John 10:28). But see on <sup><2176></sup>Ecclesiastes 7:16; “*just*” is probably a *self-justiciary*.

*wicked ... prolongeth* — See the antidote to the abuse of this statement in <sup><2182></sup>Ecclesiastes 8:12.

**16.** HOLDEN makes <sup><2176></sup>Ecclesiastes 7:16 the scoffing inference of the objector, and <sup><2177></sup>Ecclesiastes 7:17 the answer of Solomon, now repentant. So (<sup><4152></sup>1 Corinthians 15:32) the skeptic’s objection; (<sup><4153></sup>1 Corinthians 15:33) the answer. However, “Be not righteous over much,” may be taken as Solomon’s words, forbidding a *self-made* righteousness of outward performances, which would wrest salvation from God, instead of receiving it as the gift of His *grace*. It is a fanatical, pharisaical righteousness, separated from God; for the “fear of God” is in antithesis to it

(<sup>2075</sup>Ecclesiastes 7:18 <sup>2185</sup>Ecclesiastes 5:3,7 <sup>4065</sup>Matthew 6:1-7 9:14 23:23,24  
<sup>6005</sup>Romans 10:3 <sup>5005</sup>1 Timothy 4:3).

**over wise** — (<sup>8812</sup>Job 11:12 <sup>6005</sup>Romans 12:3,16), presumptuously self-sufficient, as if acquainted with the whole of divine truth.

**destroy thyself** — expose thyself to needless persecution, austerities and the wrath of God; hence to an untimely death. “Destroy thyself” answers to “perisheth” (<sup>2075</sup>Ecclesiastes 7:15); “righteous over much,” to “a just man.” Therefore in <sup>2075</sup>Ecclesiastes 7:15 it is *self-justiciary*, not a truly righteous man, that is meant.

**17. over much wicked** — so worded, to answer to “righteous *over much*.” For if not taken thus, it would seem to imply that we *may* be wicked a *little*. “Wicked” refers to “wicked man” (<sup>2075</sup>Ecclesiastes 7:15); “die before thy time,” to “prolongeth his life,” antithetically. There may be a wicked man spared to “live long,” owing to his avoiding gross excesses (<sup>2075</sup>Ecclesiastes 7:15). Solomon says, therefore, Be not so foolish (answering antithetically to “over wise,” <sup>2075</sup>Ecclesiastes 7:16), as to run to such excess of riot, that God will be provoked to cut off prematurely thy day of grace (<sup>6005</sup>Romans 2:5). The precept is addressed to a *sinner*. Beware of aggravating thy sin, so as to make thy case desperate. It refers to the days of Solomon’s “vanity” (apostasy, <sup>2075</sup>Ecclesiastes 7:15), when only such a precept would be applicable. By litotes it includes, “Be not wicked *at all*.”

**18. this ... this** — the two opposite excesses (<sup>2075</sup>Ecclesiastes 7:16,17), fanatical, self-wise righteousness, and presumptuous, foolhardy wickedness.

**he that feareth God shall come forth of them all** — shall escape all such extremes (<sup>2187</sup>Proverbs 3:7).

**19. Hebrew**, “The wisdom,” that is, the true wisdom, religion (<sup>5815</sup>2 Timothy 3:15).

**than ten mighty** — that is, able and valiant generals (<sup>2072</sup>Ecclesiastes 7:12 9:13-18 <sup>4022</sup>Proverbs 21:22 24:5). These “watchmen wake in vain, except the Lord keep the city” (<sup>8005</sup>Psalms 127:1).

**20.** Referring to <sup>2075</sup>Ecclesiastes 7:16. Be not “self-righteous,” seek not to make thyself “*just*” before God by a superabundance of self-imposed performances; “for true ‘wisdom, or ‘righteousness,’ shows that there is not a *just* man,” etc.

**21.** As therefore thou being far from perfectly “*just*” thyself, hast much to be forgiven by God, do not take too strict account, as the *self-righteous* do

(<sup>2076</sup>Ecclesiastes 7:16 <sup>2081</sup>Luke 18:9,11), and thereby shorten their lives (<sup>2075</sup>Ecclesiastes 7:15,16), of words spoken against thee by others, for example, thy servant: Thou art their “fellow servant” before God (<sup>2082</sup>Matthew 18:32-35).

22. (<sup>2084</sup>1 Kings 2:44).

23. **All this** — resuming the “all” in <sup>2075</sup>Ecclesiastes 7:15 <sup>2075</sup>Ecclesiastes 7:15-22 is therefore the fruit of his dearly bought experience in the days of his “vanity.”

**I will be wise** — I tried to “be wise,” independently of God. But true wisdom was then “far from him,” in spite of his *human* wisdom, which he retained by God’s gift. So “over wise” (<sup>2076</sup>Ecclesiastes 7:16).

24. **That ... far off ... deep** — True wisdom is so when sought independently of “fear of God” (<sup>2078</sup>Ecclesiastes 7:18 <sup>2082</sup>Deuteronomy 30:12,13 <sup>2081</sup>Job 11:7,8 28:12-20,28 <sup>2086</sup>Psalms 64:6 <sup>2086</sup>Romans 10:6,7).

25. Literally, “I turned myself and mine heart to.” A phrase peculiar to Ecclesiastes, and appropriate to the penitent *turning* back to *commune with his heart* on his past life.

**wickedness of folly** — He is now a step further on the path of penitence than in <sup>2017</sup>Ecclesiastes 1:17 2:12, where “folly” is put without “wickedness” prefixed.

**reason** — rather, “the right estimation” of things. HOLDEN translates also “foolishness (that is, sinful folly, answering to ‘wickedness’ in the parallel) of madness” (that is, of man’s mad pursuits).

26. “I find” that, of all my sinful follies, none has been so ruinous a snare in seducing me from God as idolatrous women (<sup>2083</sup>1 Kings 11:3,4 <sup>2083</sup>Proverbs 5:3,4 22:14). As “God’s favor is better than life,” she who seduces from God is “more bitter than death.”

**whoso pleaseth God** — as Joseph (<sup>2087</sup>Genesis 39:2,3,9). It is God’s *grace* alone that keeps any from falling.

27. **this** — namely, what follows in <sup>2072</sup>Ecclesiastes 7:28.

**counting one by one** — by comparing one thing with another [HOLDEN and MAURER].

**account** — a right estimate. But <sup>2072</sup>Ecclesiastes 7:28 more favors GESENIUS. “Considering *women one by one*.”

28. Rather, referring to his past experience, “Which my soul *sought* further, but I *found* not.”

**one man** — that is, worthy of the name, “man,” “upright”; not more than one in a thousand of my courtiers (<sup><1833></sup>Job 33:23 <sup><1911></sup>Psalms 12:1). Jesus Christ alone of men fully realizes the perfect ideal of “man.” “Chiefest among ten thousand” (So 5:10). No *perfect* “woman has ever existed, not even the Virgin Mary. Solomon, in the word “thousand,” alludes to his three hundred wives and seven hundred concubines. Among these it was not likely that he should find the fidelity which *one* true wife pays to *one* husband. Connected with <sup><1072></sup>Ecclesiastes 7:26, not an unqualified condemnation of the sex, as <sup><1104></sup>Proverbs 12:4 31:10, etc., prove.

29. The “only” way of accounting for the scarcity of even comparatively upright men and women is that, whereas God made man upright, they (men) have, etc. The only account to be “found” of the origin of evil, the great mystery of theology, is that given in Holy Writ (<sup><1001></sup>Genesis 2:1-3:24). Among man’s “inventions” was the one especially referred to in <sup><1072></sup>Ecclesiastes 7:26, the bitter fruits of which Solomon experienced, the breaking of God’s primeval marriage law, joining one man to “one” woman (<sup><1104></sup>Matthew 19:4,5,6). “Man” is *singular*, namely, Adam; “they,” *plural*, Adam, Eve, and their posterity.

# CHAPTER 8

## ECCLESIASTES 8:1-17.

1. Praise of true wisdom continued (<sup><2071></sup>Ecclesiastes 7:11, etc.). “Who” is to be accounted “equal to the wise man? ... Who (like him) knoweth the interpretation” of God’s providences (for example, <sup><2008></sup>Ecclesiastes 7:8,13,14), and God’s word (for example, see on <sup><2072></sup>Ecclesiastes 7:29; <sup><2006></sup>Proverbs 1:6)?

**face to shine** — (<sup><2074></sup>Ecclesiastes 7:14 <sup><4185></sup>Acts 6:15). A *sunny countenance*, the reflection of a tranquil conscience and serene mind. Communion with God gives it (<sup><4349></sup>Exodus 34:29,30).

**boldness** — austerity.

**changed** — into a benign expression by true wisdom (religion) (<sup><5087></sup>James 3:17). MAURER translates, “The *shining* (brightness) of his face is doubled,” arguing that the *Hebrew* noun for “boldness” is never used in a bad sense (<sup><2048></sup>Proverbs 4:18). Or as *Margin*, “strength” (<sup><2079></sup>Ecclesiastes 7:19 <sup><3081></sup>Isaiah 40:31 <sup><4082></sup>2 Corinthians 3:18). But the adjective is used in a bad sense (<sup><6250></sup>Deuteronomy 28:50).

2. **the king’s** — Jehovah, peculiarly the king of Israel in the theocracy; <sup><2088></sup>Ecclesiastes 8:3,4, prove it is not the earthly king who is meant.

**the oath of God** — the covenant which God made with Abraham and renewed with David; Solomon remembered <sup><4985></sup>Psalm 89:35, “I have *sworn*,” etc. (<sup><4986></sup>Psalm 89:36), and the penalties if David’s children should forsake it (<sup><4981></sup>Psalm 89:30-32); inflicted on Solomon himself; yet God not “utterly” forsaking him (<sup><4983></sup>Psalm 89:33,34).

3. **hasty** — rather, “Be not *terror-struck* so as to go out of His sight.” Slavishly “terror-struck” is characteristic of the sinner’s feeling toward God; he vainly tries to flee out of His sight (<sup><4907></sup>Psalm 139:7); opposed to the “shining face” of filial confidence (<sup><2080></sup>Ecclesiastes 8:1 <sup><4883></sup>John 8:33-36 <sup><4882></sup>Romans 8:2 <sup><4948></sup>1 John 4:18).

**stand not** — persist not.

**for he doeth** — God inflicts what punishment He pleases on persisting sinners (<sup><4253></sup>Job 23:13 <sup><4483></sup>Psalm 115:3). True of none save God.

4. God's very "word" is "power." So the gospel word ( <sup><4016></sup>Romans 1:16 <sup><3042></sup>Hebrews 4:12).

*who may say*, etc. — ( <sup><3892></sup>Job 9:12 33:13 <sup><2389></sup>Isaiah 45:9 <sup><2045></sup>Daniel 4:35). Scripture does not ascribe such arbitrary power to earthly kings.

5. *feel* — experience.

*time* — the neglect of the right "times" causes much of the sinful folly of the spiritually unwise ( <sup><2101></sup>Ecclesiastes 3:1-11).

*judgment* — the right manner [HOLDEN]. But as God's future "judgment" is connected with the "time for every purpose" in <sup><2107></sup>Ecclesiastes 3:17, so it is here. The punishment of persisting sinners ( <sup><2108></sup>Ecclesiastes 8:3) suggests it. The wise man realizes the fact, that as there is a fit "time" for every purpose, so for the "judgment." This thought cheers him in adversity ( <sup><2104></sup>Ecclesiastes 7:14 8:1).

6. *therefore the misery*, etc. — because the foolish sinner does not think of the right "times" and the "judgment."

7. *he* — the sinner, by neglecting times (for example, "the accepted *time*, and the day of salvation, <sup><4002></sup>2 Corinthians 6:2), is taken by surprise by the judgment ( <sup><2102></sup>Ecclesiastes 3:22 6:12 9:12). The godly wise observe the due times of things ( <sup><2101></sup>Ecclesiastes 3:1), and so, looking for the judgment, are not taken by surprise, though not knowing the precise "when" ( <sup><3101></sup>1 Thessalonians 5:2-4); they "know the time" to all saving purposes ( <sup><5131></sup>Romans 13:11).

8. *spirit* — "breath of life" ( <sup><2109></sup>Ecclesiastes 3:19), as the words following require. Not "wind," as WEISS thinks ( <sup><3104></sup>Proverbs 30:4). This verse naturally follows the subject of "times" and "judgment" ( <sup><2106></sup>Ecclesiastes 8:6,7).

*discharge* — alluding to the liability to military service of all above twenty years old ( <sup><0003></sup>Numbers 1:3), yet many were exempted ( <sup><4105></sup>Deuteronomy 20:5-8). But in *that war* (death) there is no exemption.

*those ... given to* — literally, the *master* of it. Wickedness can get money for the sinner, but cannot deliver him from the death, temporal and eternal, which is its penalty ( <sup><2385></sup>Isaiah 28:15,18).

9. *his own hurt* — The tyrannical ruler "hurts" not merely his subjects, but *himself*; so Rehoboam ( <sup><1101></sup>1 Kings 12:1-33); but the "time" of "hurt" chiefly refers to eternal ruin, incurred by "wickedness," at "the *day* of

death” (<sup>2088</sup>Ecclesiastes 8:8), and the “*time*” of “judgment” (<sup>2086</sup>Ecclesiastes 8:6 <sup>2085</sup>Proverbs 8:36).

**10. *the wicked*** — namely, rulers (<sup>2089</sup>Ecclesiastes 8:9).

***buried*** — with funeral pomp by man, though little meriting it (<sup>2029</sup>Jeremiah 22:19); but this only formed the more awful contrast to their death, temporal and eternal, inflicted by God (<sup>2023</sup>Luke 16:22,23).

***come and gone from the place of the holy*** — went to and came from *the place of judicature*, where they sat as *God’s representatives* (<sup>2031</sup>Psalms 82:1-6), with pomp [HOLDEN]. WEISS translates, “Buried and gone (utterly), even from the holy place they departed.” As Joab, by Solomon’s command, was sent to the grave from the “holy place” *in the temple*, which was not a sanctuary to murderers (<sup>2014</sup>Exodus 21:14 <sup>2028</sup>1 Kings 2:28,31). The use of the very word “bury” there makes this view likely; still “who had come and gone” may be retained. Joab *came* to the altar, but had to go from it; so the “wicked rulers” (<sup>2089</sup>Ecclesiastes 8:9) (including *high priests*) came to, and went from, *the temple*, on occasions of solemn worship, but did not thereby escape their doom.

***forgotten*** — (<sup>2007</sup>Proverbs 10:7).

**11.** The reason why the wicked persevere in sin: God’s delay in judgment (<sup>2048</sup>Matthew 24:48-51 <sup>2082</sup>2 Peter 3:8,9). “They see not the smoke of the pit, therefore they dread not the fire” [SOUTH], (<sup>2059</sup>Psalms 55:19). Joab’s escape from the punishment of his murder of Abner, so far from “leading him to repentance,” as it ought (<sup>2004</sup>Romans 2:4), led him to the additional murder of Amasa.

**12.** He says this, lest the sinner should abuse the statement “A wicked man *prolongeth* his life” (<sup>2075</sup>Ecclesiastes 7:15).

***before him*** — literally, “at His presence”; reverently serve Him, realizing His continual presence.

**13. *neither shall lie prolong*** — not a contradiction to <sup>2082</sup>Ecclesiastes 8:12. The “prolonging” of his days there is only *seeming*, not *real*. Taking into account his eternal existence, his present days, however seemingly long, are really short. God’s delay (<sup>2081</sup>Ecclesiastes 8:11) exists only in man’s short-sighted view. It gives scope to the sinner to repent, or else to fill up his full measure of guilt; and so, in either case, tends to the final vindication of God’s ways. It gives exercise to the faith, patience, and perseverance of saints.

***shadow*** — (<sup>2062</sup>Ecclesiastes 6:12 <sup>2088</sup>Job 8:9).

**14.** An objection is here started (entertained by Solomon in his apostasy), as in <sup><2086></sup>Ecclesiastes 3:16 7:15, to the truth of retributive justice, from the fact of the just and the wicked not now receiving always according to their respective deserts; a cavil, which would seem the more weighty to men living under the Mosaic covenant of temporal sanctions. The objector adds, as Solomon had said, that the worldling's pursuits are "vanity" (<sup><2080></sup>Ecclesiastes 8:10), "I say (not 'said') *this* also is vanity. Then I commend mirth," etc. [HOLDEN]. <sup><2084></sup>Ecclesiastes 8:14,15 may, however, be explained as teaching a cheerful, thankful use of God's gifts "under the sun," that is, not making them the *chief* good, as sensualists do, which <sup><2088></sup>Ecclesiastes 2:2 7:2, forbid; but in "the fear of God," as <sup><2082></sup>Ecclesiastes 3:12 5:18 7:18 9:7, opposed to the abstinence of the self-righteous ascetic (<sup><2076></sup>Ecclesiastes 7:16), and of the miser (<sup><2077></sup>Ecclesiastes 5:17).

**15. *no better thing*,** etc. — namely, for the "just" man, whose *chief* good is religion, not for the worldly.

***abide*** — *Hebrew*, "adhere"; not *for ever*, but it is the only sure good to be enjoyed from *earthly labors* (equivalent to "of his labor the days of his life"). Still, the language resembles the skeptical precept (<sup><4352></sup>1 Corinthians 15:32), introduced only to be refuted; and "abide" is too strong language, perhaps, for a religious man to apply to "eating" and "mirth."

**16.** Reply to <sup><2084></sup>Ecclesiastes 8:14,15. When I applied myself to observe man's toils after happiness (some of them so incessant as not to allow sufficient time for "sleep"), then (<sup><2087></sup>Ecclesiastes 8:17, the apodosis) I saw that man cannot find out (the reason of) God's inscrutable dealings with the "just" and with the "wicked" here (<sup><2084></sup>Ecclesiastes 8:14 <sup><2081></sup>Ecclesiastes 3:11 <sup><8789></sup>Job 5:9 <sup><6133></sup>Romans 11:33); his duty is to acquiesce in them as good, because they are *God's*, though he *sees* not all the reasons for them (<sup><4736></sup>Psalms 73:16). It is enough to know "the righteous are in God's hand" (<sup><2000></sup>Ecclesiastes 9:1). "Over wise" (<sup><2076></sup>Ecclesiastes 7:16); that is, Speculations above what is written are vain.

# CHAPTER 9

## ~~2108~~ ECCLESIASTES 9:1-18.

1. **declare** — rather, explore; the result of my exploring is this, that “the righteous, etc., are in the hand of God. No man knoweth either the love or hatred (of God to them) by all that is before them,” that is, by what is *outwardly* seen in His present dealings (~~2104~~Ecclesiastes 8:14,17). However, from the sense of the same words, in ~~2109~~Ecclesiastes 9:6, “love and hatred” seem to be the feelings *of the wicked towards the righteous*, whereby they caused to the latter comfort or sorrow. Translate: “Even the love and hatred” (exhibited towards the righteous, are in God’s hand) (~~1950~~Psalm 76:10 ~~2106~~Proverbs 16:7). “No man knoweth all that is before them.”

2. **All things ... alike** — not universally; but as to *death*. ~~2109~~Ecclesiastes 9:2-10 are made by HOLDEN the objection of a skeptical sensualist. However, they may be explained as Solomon’s language. He repeats the sentiment already implied in ~~2104~~Ecclesiastes 2:14 3:20 8:14.

**one event** — not eternally; but *death* is common to all.

**good** — morally.

**clean** — ceremonially.

**sacrificeth** — alike to. Josiah who sacrificed to God, and to Ahab who made sacrifice to Him cease.

**sweareth** — rashly and falsely.

3. Translate, “There is an evil above all (evils) that are done,” etc., namely, that not only “there is one event to all,” but “also the heart of the sons of men” makes this fact a reason for “madly” persisting in “evil while they live, and after that,” etc., sin is “madness.”

**the dead** — (~~2105~~Proverbs 2:18 9:18).

4. **For** — rather, “Nevertheless.” *English Version* rightly reads as the *Margin, Hebrew*, “that is joined,” instead of the text, “who is to be chosen?”

**hope** — not of mere temporal good (~~3847~~Job 14:7); but of yet repenting and being saved.

**dog** — metaphor for the vilest persons (<sup>2044</sup>1 Samuel 24:14).

**lion** — the noblest of animals (<sup>2183</sup>Proverbs 30:30).

**better** — as to hope of salvation; the noblest who die unconverted have no hope; the vilest, so long as they have life, have hope.

**5. know that they shall die** — and may thereby be led “so to number their days, that they may apply their hearts to wisdom” (<sup>2700</sup>Ecclesiastes 7:1-4 <sup>4912</sup>Psalms 90:12).

**dead know not anything** — that is so far as their *bodily* senses and *worldly* affairs are concerned (<sup>3842</sup>Job 14:21 <sup>2366</sup>Isaiah 63:16); also, they know no door of repentance open to them, such as is to all on earth.

**neither ... reward** — no advantage from their worldly labors (<sup>2028</sup>Ecclesiastes 2:18-22 4:9).

**memory** — not of the righteous (<sup>4936</sup>Psalms 112:6 <sup>3186</sup>Malachi 3:16), but *the wicked*, who with all the pains to perpetuate their names (<sup>4911</sup>Psalms 49:11) are soon “forgotten” (<sup>2180</sup>Ecclesiastes 8:10).

**6. love, and ... hatred**, etc. — (referring to <sup>2100</sup>Ecclesiastes 9:1; see on <sup>2100</sup>Ecclesiastes 9:1). Not that these cease in a future world absolutely (<sup>3327</sup>Ezekiel 32:27 <sup>6211</sup>Revelation 22:11); but as the end of this verse shows, relatively to persons and things in this world. Man’s love and hatred can no longer be exercised for good or evil in the same way as here; but the fruits of them remain. What he is at death he remains for ever. “Envy,” too, marks the wicked as referred to, since it was therewith that they assailed the righteous (see on <sup>2100</sup>Ecclesiastes 9:1).

**portion** — Their “portion” was “in this life” (<sup>3974</sup>Psalms 17:14), that they now “cannot have any more.”

**7.** Addressed to the “righteous wise,” spoken of in <sup>2100</sup>Ecclesiastes 9:1. Being “in the hand of God,” who now accepteth “thy works” in His service, as He has previously accepted thy person (<sup>1004</sup>Genesis 4:4), thou mayest “eat ... with a cheerful (not sensually ‘merry’) heart” (<sup>2083</sup>Ecclesiastes 3:13 5:18 <sup>4146</sup>Acts 2:46).

**8. white** — in token of joy (<sup>2308</sup>Isaiah 61:3). Solomon was clad in *white* (JOSEPHUS, *Antiquities*, 8:7,3); hence his attire is compared to the “*lilies*” (<sup>4169</sup>Matthew 6:29), typical of the spotless righteousness of Jesus Christ, which the redeemed shall wear (<sup>4018</sup>Revelation 3:18 7:14).

**ointment** — (<sup><4215></sup>Psalm 23:5), opposed to a gloomy exterior (<sup><1042></sup>2 Samuel 14:2 <sup><9817></sup>Psalm 45:7 <sup><1017></sup>Matthew 6:17); typical, also (<sup><2100></sup>Ecclesiastes 7:1 <sup><2108></sup>Song of Solomon 1:3).

**9. wife ... lovest** — godly and true love, opposed to the “snares” of the “thousand” concubines (<sup><2123></sup>Ecclesiastes 7:26,28), “among” whom Solomon could not find the true love which joins one man to *one* woman (<sup><1055></sup>Proverbs 5:15,18,19 18:22 19:14).

**10. Whatsoever** — namely, in the service of God. This and last verse plainly are the language of Solomon, not of a skeptic, as HOLDEN would explain it.

**hand**, etc. — (<sup><8118></sup>Leviticus 12:8, *Margin*; <sup><9107></sup>1 Samuel 10:7, *Margin*).

**thy might** — diligence (<sup><8115></sup>Deuteronomy 6:5; <sup><2480></sup>Jeremiah 48:10, *Margin*).

**no work ... in the grave** — (<sup><8304></sup>John 9:4 <sup><6413></sup>Revelation 14:13). “The soul’s play-day is Satan’s work-day; the idler the man the busier the tempter” [SOUTH].

**11.** This verse qualifies the sentiment, <sup><2107></sup>Ecclesiastes 9:7-9. Earthly “enjoyments,” however lawful in their place (<sup><2101></sup>Ecclesiastes 3:1), are to give way when any work to be done for God requires it. Reverting to the sentiment (<sup><2107></sup>Ecclesiastes 8:17), we ought, therefore, not only to work God’s work “with might” (<sup><2101></sup>Ecclesiastes 9:10), but also with the feeling that the event is wholly “in God’s hand” (<sup><2101></sup>Ecclesiastes 9:1).

**race ... not to the swift** — (<sup><1082></sup>2 Samuel 18:23); spiritually (<sup><3185></sup>Zephaniah 3:19 <sup><8106></sup>Romans 9:16).

**nor ... battle to ... strong** — (<sup><1074></sup>1 Samuel 17:47 <sup><4419></sup>2 Chronicles 14:9,11,15 <sup><8316></sup>Psalm 33:16).

**bread** — livelihood.

**favor** — of the great.

**chance** — seemingly, really Providence. But as man cannot “find it out” (<sup><2111></sup>Ecclesiastes 3:11), he needs “with all might” to use opportunities. Duties are ours; events, God’s.

**12. his time** — namely, of death (<sup><2115></sup>Ecclesiastes 7:15 <sup><2122></sup>Isaiah 13:22). Hence the danger of delay in doing the work of God, as one knows not when his opportunity will end (<sup><2101></sup>Ecclesiastes 9:10).

**evil net** — fatal to them. The unexpected suddenness of the capture is the point of comparison. So the second coming of Jesus Christ, “as a snare” (<sup><215></sup>Luke 21:35).

**evil time** — as an “evil net,” fatal to them.

13. Rather, “I have seen wisdom of this kind also,” that is, exhibited in the way which is described in what follows [MAURER].

14, 15. (<sup><106></sup>2 Samuel 20:16-22).

**bulwarks** — military works of besiegers.

15. **poor** — as to the temporal advantages of true wisdom, though it often saves others. It receives little reward from the world, which admires none save the rich and great.

**no man remembered** — (<sup><428></sup>Genesis 40:23).

16. Resuming the sentiment (<sup><279></sup>Ecclesiastes 7:19 <sup><122></sup>Proverbs 21:22 24:5).

**poor man’s wisdom is despised** — not the poor man mentioned in <sup><215></sup>Ecclesiastes 9:15; for *his* wisdom could not have saved the city, had “his words not been heard”; but poor men in general. So Paul (<sup><271></sup>Acts 27:11).

17. **The words of wise**, etc. — Though generally the poor wise man is not heard (<sup><216></sup>Ecclesiastes 9:16), yet “the words of wise men, when heard in quiet (when calmly given heed to, as in <sup><215></sup>Ecclesiastes 9:15), are more serviceable than,” etc.

**ruleth** — as the “great king” (<sup><214></sup>Ecclesiastes 9:14). Solomon reverts to “the rulers to their own hurt” (<sup><289></sup>Ecclesiastes 8:9).

18. **one sinner**, etc. — (<sup><610></sup>Joshua 7:1,11,12). Though wisdom excels folly (<sup><216></sup>Ecclesiastes 9:16 <sup><279></sup>Ecclesiastes 7:19), yet a “little folly (equivalent to *sin*) can destroy much good,” both in himself (<sup><101></sup>Ecclesiastes 10:1 <sup><120></sup>James 2:10) and in others. “Wisdom” must, from the antithesis to “sinner,” mean religion. Thus typically, the “little city” may be applied to *the Church* (<sup><222></sup>Luke 12:32 <sup><222></sup>Hebrews 12:22); the great king to *Satan* (<sup><221></sup>John 12:31); the despised poor wise man, Jesus Christ (<sup><231></sup>Isaiah 53:2,3 <sup><103></sup>Mark 6:3 <sup><189></sup>2 Corinthians 8:9 <sup><107></sup>Ephesians 1:7,8 <sup><103></sup>Colossians 2:3).

# CHAPTER 10

## Ⓜ ECCLESIASTES 10:1-20.

1. Following up Ⓜ Ecclesiastes 9:18.

**him that is in reputation** — for example, David (Ⓜ 2 Samuel 12:14); Solomon (Ⓜ 1 Kings 11:1-43); Jehoshaphat (Ⓜ 2 Chronicles 18:1-34 19:2); Josiah (Ⓜ 2 Chronicles 35:22). The more delicate the perfume, the more easily spoiled is the ointment. Common oil is not so liable to injury. So the higher a man's religious character is, the more hurt is caused by a sinful folly in him. Bad savor is endurable in oil, but not in what professes to be, and is compounded by the perfumer ("apothecary") for, fragrance. "Flies" answer to "a little folly" (sin), appropriately, being *small* (Ⓜ 1 Corinthians 5:6); also, "Beelzebub" means *prince of flies*. "Ointment" answers to "reputation" (Ⓜ Ecclesiastes 7:1 Ⓜ Genesis 34:30). The verbs are *singular*, the noun *plural*, implying that each of the flies causes the stinking savor.

2. (Ⓜ Ecclesiastes 2:14).

**right** — The right hand is more expert than the left. The godly wise is more on his guard than the foolish sinner, though at times he slip. Better a diamond with a flaw, than a pebble without one.

3. **by the way** — in his ordinary *course*; in his simplest acts (Ⓜ Proverbs 6:12-14). That he "saith," *virtually*, "that he" himself, etc. [*Septuagint*]. But *Vulgate*, "He thinks that *every one* (*else* whom he meets) is a fool."

4. **spirit** — anger.

**yielding pacifieth** — (Ⓜ Proverbs 15:1). This explains "leave not thy place"; do not in a *resisting* spirit withdraw from thy post of duty (Ⓜ Ecclesiastes 8:3).

5. **as** — rather, "by reason of an error" [MAURER and HOLDEN].

6. **rich** — not in mere wealth, but in *wisdom*, as the antithesis to "folly" (for "foolish men") shows. So *Hebrew*, rich, equivalent to "liberal," in a good sense (Ⓜ Isaiah 32:5). Mordecai and Haman (Ⓜ Esther 3:1,2 6:6-11).

7. **servants upon horses** — the worthless exalted to *dignity* (Ⓜ Jeremiah 17:25); and vice versa (Ⓜ 2 Samuel 15:30).

8. The fatal results to kings of such an unwise policy; the wrong done to others recoils on themselves (<sup>21039</sup>Ecclesiastes 8:9); they fall into the pit which they dug for others (<sup>17070</sup>Esther 7:10 <sup>49075</sup>Psalms 7:15 <sup>21027</sup>Proverbs 26:27). Breaking through the wise fences of their throne, they suffer unexpectedly themselves; as when one is stung by a serpent lurking in the stones of his neighbor's garden wall (<sup>43012</sup>Psalms 80:12), which he maliciously pulls down (<sup>31569</sup>Amos 5:19).

9. *removeth stones* — namely, of an ancient building [WEISS]. His neighbor's landmarks [HOLDEN]. *Cuts out* from the quarry [MAURER].

*endangered* — by the splinters, or by the head of the hatchet, flying back on himself. Pithy aphorisms are common in the East. The sense is: Violations of true wisdom recoil on the perpetrators.

10. *iron ... blunt* — in “cleaving wood” (<sup>21009</sup>Ecclesiastes 10:9), answering to the “fool set in dignity” (<sup>21006</sup>Ecclesiastes 10:6), who wants sharpness. More force has then to be used in both cases; but “force” without judgment “endangers” one's self. Translate, “If one hath blunted his iron” [MAURER]. The preference of rash to judicious counsellors, which entailed the pushing of matters by *force*, proved to be the “hurt” of Rehoboam (<sup>41121</sup>1 Kings 12:1-33).

*wisdom is profitable to direct* — to a prosperous issue. Instead of forcing matters by main “strength” to one's own hurt (<sup>21016</sup>Ecclesiastes 9:16,18).

11. A “serpent will bite” if “enchantment” is not used; “and a babbling calumniator is no better.” Therefore, as one may escape a serpent by charms (<sup>4804</sup>Psalms 58:4,5), so one may escape the sting of a calumniator by discretion (<sup>21002</sup>Ecclesiastes 10:12), [HOLDEN]. Thus, “without enchantment” answers to “not whet the edge” (<sup>21000</sup>Ecclesiastes 10:10), both expressing, figuratively, *want of judgment*. MAURER translates, “There is no gain to the enchanter” (*Margin*, “*master of the tongue*”) from his enchantments, because the serpent bites before he can use them; hence the need of continual caution. <sup>21008</sup>Ecclesiastes 10:8-10, caution in acting <sup>21001</sup>Ecclesiastes 10:11 and following verses, caution in speaking.

12. *gracious* — Thereby he takes precaution against sudden injury (<sup>21001</sup>Ecclesiastes 10:11).

*swallow up himself* — (<sup>21008</sup>Proverbs 10:8,14,21,32 12:13 15:2 22:11).

13. Illustrating the *folly* and *injuriousness* of the fool's words; last clause of <sup>21002</sup>Ecclesiastes 10:12.

14. *full of words* — (<sup>21000</sup>Ecclesiastes 5:2).

**a man cannot tell what shall be** — (<sup>2022</sup>Ecclesiastes 3:22 6:12 8:7 11:2 <sup>2170</sup>Proverbs 27:1). If man, universally (including the wise man), cannot foresee the future, much less can the fool; his “many words” are therefore futile.

**15. labor ... wearieth** — (<sup>2352</sup>Isaiah 55:2 <sup>2323</sup>Habakkuk 2:13).

**knoweth not how to go to the city** — proverb for ignorance of the most ordinary matters (<sup>2108</sup>Ecclesiastes 10:3); spiritually, *the heavenly city* (<sup>4940</sup>Psalms 107:7 <sup>4173</sup>Matthew 7:13,14). MAURER connects <sup>2105</sup>Ecclesiastes 10:15 with the following verses. The labor (vexation) caused by the foolish (injurious princes, <sup>2106</sup>Ecclesiastes 10:4-7) harasses him who “knows not how to go to the city,” to ingratiate himself with them there. *English Version* is simpler.

**16. a child** — given to pleasures; behaves with childish levity. Not *in years*; for a nation may be happy under a young prince, as Josiah.

**eat in the morning** — the usual time for dispensing *justice* in the East (<sup>2212</sup>Jeremiah 21:12); here, given to feasting (<sup>2351</sup>Isaiah 5:11 <sup>4415</sup>Acts 2:15).

**17. son of nobles** — not merely in blood, but in virtue, the true nobility (So 7:1 <sup>2315</sup>Isaiah 32:5,8).

**in due season** — (<sup>2101</sup>Ecclesiastes 3:1), not until duty has first been attended to.

**for strength** — to refresh the body, not for *revelry* (included in “drunkenness”).

**18. building** — literally, “the joining of the rafters,” namely, the kingdom (<sup>2106</sup>Ecclesiastes 10:16 <sup>2316</sup>Isaiah 3:6 <sup>2191</sup>Amos 9:11).

**hands** — (<sup>2045</sup>Ecclesiastes 4:5 <sup>2160</sup>Proverbs 6:10).

**droppeth** — By neglecting to repair the roof in time, the rain gets through.

**19.** Referring to <sup>2108</sup>Ecclesiastes 10:18. Instead of repairing the breaches in the commonwealth (equivalent to “building”), the princes “make a feast for laughter” (<sup>2106</sup>Ecclesiastes 10:16), and wine maketh their *life* glad (<sup>4945</sup>Psalms 104:15), and (but) money supplieth (answereth their wishes by supplying) all things,” that is, they take bribes to support *their extravagance*; and hence arise the wrongs that are perpetrated (<sup>2105</sup>Ecclesiastes 10:5,6 <sup>2106</sup>Ecclesiastes 3:16 <sup>2123</sup>Isaiah 1:23 5:23). MAURER takes “all things” of *the wrongs* to which princes are instigated by “money”; for example, the heavy taxes, which were the occasion of Rehoboam losing ten tribes (<sup>1124</sup>1 Kings 12:4, etc.).

**20. *thought*** — literally, “consciousness.”

***rich*** — the great. The language, as applied to earthly princes knowing the “thought,” is figurative. But it literally holds good of the King of kings (<sup><139></sup>Psalm 139:1-24), whose consciousness of every evil thought we should ever realize.

***bed-chamber*** — the most secret place (<sup><1162></sup>2 Kings 6:12).

***bird of the air***, etc. — proverbial (compare <sup><3121></sup>Habakkuk 2:11 <sup><2940></sup>Luke 19:40); in a way as marvellous and rapid, as if birds or some winged messenger carried to the king information of the curse so uttered. In the East superhuman sagacity was attributed to birds (see on <sup><18821></sup>Job 28:21; hence the proverb).

# CHAPTER 11

## ◀2110◀ ECCLESIASTES 11:1-10.

1. ▶2110◀ Ecclesiastes 11:2 shows that *charity* is here inculcated.

**bread** — bread corn. As in the Lord’s prayer, *all things needful for the body and soul*. Solomon reverts to the sentiment (◀2090◀ Ecclesiastes 9:10).

**waters** — image from the custom of sowing seed by casting it from boats into the overflowing waters of the Nile, or in any marshy ground. When the waters receded, the grain in the alluvial soil sprang up (◀2320◀ Isaiah 32:20). “Waters” express *multitudes*, so ▶2110◀ Ecclesiastes 11:2 ▶675◀ Revelation 17:15; also the seemingly *hopeless* character of the recipients of the charity; but it shall prove at last to have been not thrown away (◀2340◀ Isaiah 49:4).

2. **portion** — of thy bread.

**seven** — the perfect number.

**eight** — even to *more than seven*; that is, “to many” (so “waters,” ▶2110◀ Ecclesiastes 11:1), nay, even to *very many* in need (◀855◀ Job 5:19 ▶315◀ Micah 5:5).

**evil** — The day may be near, when you will need the help of those whom you have bound to you by kindnesses (◀2160◀ Luke 16:9). The very argument which covetous men use against liberality (namely, that bad times may come), the wise man uses for it.

3. **clouds** — answering to “evil” (◀2110◀ Ecclesiastes 11:2), meaning, When the times of evil are fully ripe, evil *must* come; and speculations about it beforehand, so as to prevent one sowing seed of liberality, are vain (◀2110◀ Ecclesiastes 11:4).

**tree** — Once the storm uproots it, it lies either northward or southward, according as it fell. So man’s character is unchangeable, whether for hell or heaven, once that death overtakes him (◀620◀ Revelation 22:11,14,15). *Now* is his time for liberality, before the evil days come (◀2110◀ Ecclesiastes 12:1).

4. Therefore sow thy charity in faith, without hesitancy or speculation as to results, because they may not seem promising (◀2090◀ Ecclesiastes 9:10). So in ▶2110◀ Ecclesiastes 11:1, man is told to “cast his bread corn” on the seemingly unpromising “waters” (◀835◀ Psalm 126:5,6). The farmer would get on badly,

who, instead of sowing and reaping, spent his time in watching the wind and clouds.

**5. spirit** — How the *soul* animates the body! Thus the transition to the formation of the *body* “in the womb” is more natural, than if with MAURER we translate it “wind” (<sup>2100</sup>Ecclesiastes 1:6 <sup>4008</sup>John 3:8).

**bones ... grow** — (<sup>4808</sup>Job 10:8,9 <sup>4005</sup>Psalm 139:15,16).

**knowest not the works of God** — (<sup>2001</sup>Ecclesiastes 3:11 8:17 9:12).

**6. morning ... evening** — early and late; when young and when old; in sunshine and under clouds.

**seed** — of godly works (<sup>4802</sup>Hosea 10:12 <sup>4000</sup>2 Corinthians 9:10 <sup>4007</sup>Galatians 6:7).

**prosper** — (<sup>2550</sup>Isaiah 55:10,11).

**both ... alike** — Both the unpromising and the promising sowing may bear good fruit in *others*; certainly they shall to the faithful *sower*.

**7. light** — of life (<sup>2071</sup>Ecclesiastes 7:11 <sup>4909</sup>Psalm 49:19). Life is enjoyable, especially to the godly.

**8.** But while man thankfully enjoys life, “let him remember” it will not last for ever. The “many days of darkness,” that is, the unseen world (<sup>4802</sup>Job 10:21,22 <sup>4882</sup>Psalm 88:12), also days of “evil” in this world (<sup>2102</sup>Ecclesiastes 11:2), are coming; therefore sow the good seed while life and good days last, which are not too long for accomplishing life’s duties.

**All that cometh** — that is, All that followeth in the *evil* and *dark days* is vain, as far as *work for God* is concerned (<sup>2000</sup>Ecclesiastes 9:10).

**9. Rejoice** — not *advice*, but *warning*. Song of Solomon <sup>4125</sup>1 Kings 22:15, is irony; if thou dost rejoice (*carnally*, <sup>2002</sup>Ecclesiastes 2:2 7:2, not *moderately*, as in <sup>2058</sup>Ecclesiastes 5:18), etc., then “know that ... God will bring thee into judgment” (<sup>2087</sup>Ecclesiastes 3:17 12:14).

**youth ... youth** — distinct *Hebrew* words, *adolescence* or *boyhood* (before <sup>2123</sup>Ecclesiastes 12:13), and full-grown *youth*. It marks the gradual progress in self-indulgence, to which the young especially are prone; they see the roses, but do not discover the thorns, until pierced by them. Religion will cost self-denial, but the want of it infinitely more (<sup>2108</sup>Luke 14:28).

**10. sorrow** — that is, *the lusts* that end in “sorrow,” opposed to “rejoice,” and “heart cheer thee” (<sup>2109</sup>Ecclesiastes 11:9), *Margin*, “anger,” that is, all

“ways of thine heart”; “remove,” etc., is thus opposed to “walk in,” etc. (<sup>21109</sup>Ecclesiastes 11:9).

**flesh** — the bodily organ by which the sensual *thoughts* of the “heart” are embodied in *acts*.

**childhood** — rather, “boyhood”; the same *Hebrew* word as the first, “youth” in <sup>21109</sup>Ecclesiastes 11:9. A motive for self-restraint; the time is coming when the vigor of youth on which thou reliest, will seem vain, except in so far as it has been given to God (<sup>21110</sup>Ecclesiastes 12:1).

**youth** — literally, *the dawn* of thy days.

# CHAPTER 12

## Ⓜ12: ECCLESIASTES 12:1-14.

1. As Ⓜ1109 Ecclesiastes 11:9,10 showed what youths are to shun, so this verse shows what they are to follow.

**Creator** — “Remember” that thou art not thine own, but God’s property; for He has created thee (Ⓜ940B Psalm 100:3). Therefore serve Him with thy “all” (Ⓜ4120 Mark 12:30), and with thy *best* days, not with the dregs of them (Ⓜ1087 Proverbs 8:17 22:6 Ⓜ4304 Jeremiah 3:4 Ⓜ2627 Lamentations 3:27). The *Hebrew* is “Creators,” plural, implying the plurality of persons, as in Ⓜ0028 Genesis 1:26; so *Hebrew*, “Makers” (Ⓜ2505 Isaiah 54:5).

**while ... not** — that is, *before that* (Ⓜ1089 Proverbs 8:26) the evil days come; namely, calamity and old age, when one can no longer serve God, as in youth (Ⓜ1102 Ecclesiastes 11:2,8).

**no pleasure** — of a sensual kind (Ⓜ1085 2 Samuel 19:35 Ⓜ900 Psalm 90:10). Pleasure in God continues to the gully old (Ⓜ2364 Isaiah 46:4).

2. Illustrating “the evil days” (Ⓜ4336 Jeremiah 13:16). “Light,” “sun,” etc., express *prosperity*; “darkness,” *pain and calamity* (Ⓜ2130 Isaiah 13:10 30:26).

**clouds ... after ... rain** — After rain sunshine (comfort) might be looked for, but only a brief glimpse of it is given, and the gloomy clouds (pains) return.

3. **keepers of the house** — namely, *the hands and arms* which *protected* the body, as guards do a palace (Ⓜ0424 Genesis 49:24 Ⓜ3019 Job 4:19 Ⓜ4702 2 Corinthians 5:1), are now palsied.

**strong men ... bow** — (Ⓜ765 Judges 16:25,30). Like supporting pillars, *the feet and knees* (So 5:15); the *strongest* members (Ⓜ3970 Psalm 147:10).

**grinders** — the molar teeth.

**cease** — are idle.

**those that look out of the windows** — the eyes; the powers of vision, looking out from beneath the eyelids, which open and shut like the casement of a window.

**4. doors** — *the lips*, which are closely *shut* together as *doors*, by old men in eating, for, if they did not do so, the food would drop out (<sup><8114></sup>Job 41:14 <sup><8115></sup>Psalms 141:3 <sup><8116></sup>Micah 7:5).

**in the streets** — that is, toward the street, “the *outer doors*” [MAURER and WEISS].

**sound of ... grinding** — The teeth being almost gone, and the lips “shut” in eating, the sound of mastication is scarcely heard.

**the bird** — the cock. In the East all mostly rise with the dawn. But the old are glad to rise from their sleepless couch, or painful slumbers still earlier, namely, when the cock crows, before dawn (<sup><8117></sup>Job 7:4) [HOLDEN]. The least noise awakens them [WEISS].

**daughters of music** — the organs that produce and that enjoy music; the *voice* and *ear*.

**5. that which is high** — The old are afraid of ascending a *hill*.

**fears ... in the way** — Even on the level *highway* they are full of fears of falling, etc.

**almond ... flourish** — In the East the hair is mostly dark. *The white head* of the old among the dark-haired is like *an almond tree*, with its white blossoms, among the dark trees around [HOLDEN]. The almond tree *flowers* on a leafless stock in *winter* (answering to *old age*, in which all the powers are dormant), while the other trees are flowerless. GESENIUS takes the *Hebrew* for *flourishes* from a different root, *casts off*; when the old man loses his gray hairs, as the almond tree *casts* its white flowers.

**grasshoppers** — the dry, shrivelled, old man, his backbone sticking out, his knees projecting forwards, his arms backwards, his head down, and the apophyses enlarged, is like that insect. Hence arose the fable, that Tithonus in very old age was changed into a grasshopper [PARKHURST]. “The locust *raises itself* to fly”; the old man about to leave the body is like a locust when it is assuming its winged form, and is about to fly [MAURER].

**a burden** — namely, to himself.

**desire shall fail** — satisfaction shall be abolished. For “desire,” *Vulgate* has “the caper tree,” provocative of lust; not so well.

**long home** — (<sup><8118></sup>Job 16:22 17:13).

**mourners** — (<sup><8119></sup>Jeremiah 9:17-20), hired for the occasion (<sup><8120></sup>Matthew 9:23).

6. A double image to represent *death*, as in <sup><2120></sup>Ecclesiastes 12:1-5, *old age*:

(1) A *lamp* of frail material, but *gilded* over, often in the East hung from roofs by a *cord* of silk and *silver* interwoven; as the lamp is dashed down and broken, when the cord breaks, so man at death; the golden bowl of the lamp answers to *the skull*, which, from the vital preciousness of its contents, may be called “golden”; “the silver cord” is *the spinal marrow*, which is white and precious as silver, and is attached to the brain.

(2) A *fountain*, from which water is drawn by a *pitcher* let down by a rope wound round a *wheel*; as, when the pitcher and wheel are broken, water can no more be drawn, so life ceases when the vital energies are gone. The “fountain” *may* mean the right ventricle of the heart; the “cistern,” the left; the pitcher, the veins; the wheel the aorta, or great artery [SMITH].

The circulation of the blood, whether known or not to Solomon, *seems* to be implied in the language put by the Holy Ghost into his mouth. This gloomy picture of old age applies to those who have not “remembered their Creator in youth.” They have none of the consolations of God, which they might have obtained in youth; it is now too late to seek them. A good old age is a blessing to the godly (<sup><0151></sup>Genesis 15:15 <sup><0153></sup>Job 5:26 <sup><0161></sup>Proverbs 16:31 20:29).

7. *dust* — the dust — formed body.

*spirit* — surviving the body; implying its immortality (<sup><2081></sup>Ecclesiastes 3:11).

8-12. A summary of the first part.

*Vanity*, etc. — Resumption of the sentiment with which the book began (<sup><2002></sup>Ecclesiastes 1:2 <sup><0171></sup>John 2:17).

9. *gave good heed* — literally, “he weighed.” The “teaching the people” seems to have been *oral*; the “proverbs,” *in writing*. There must then have been auditories *assembled to hear* the inspired *wisdom of the Preacher*. See the explanation of *Koheleth* in the *Introduction*, and (<sup><1061></sup>1 Kings 4:34).

*that which is written*, etc. — rather, (he sought) “*to write down* uprightly (or, ‘aright’) words of truth” [HOLDEN and WEISS]. “Acceptable” means an agreeable style; “uprightly ... truth,” correct sentiment.

11. *goads* — piercing deeply into the mind (<sup><4127></sup>Acts 2:37 9:5 <sup><3042></sup>Hebrews 4:12); evidently *inspired words*, as the end of the verse proves.

**fastened** — rather, on account of the *Hebrew* genders, (The words) “are fastened (in the memory) like nails” [HOLDEN].

**masters of assemblies** — rather, “the masters of collections (that is, collectors of inspired sayings, <sup><2181></sup>Proverbs 25:1), are given (‘have published them as proceeding’ [HOLDEN]) from one Shepherd,” namely, the Spirit of Jesus Christ [WEISS], (<sup><3524></sup>Ezekiel 37:24). However, the mention of “goads” favors the *English Version*, “masters of assemblies,” namely, *under-shepherds*, inspired by *the Chief Shepherd* (<sup><6181></sup>1 Peter 5:2-4). SCHMIDT translates, “The masters of assemblies are fastened (made sure) as nails,” so <sup><3023></sup>Isaiah 22:23.

12. (See on <sup><2118></sup>Ecclesiastes 1:18).

**many books** — of mere *human* composition, opposed to “by these”; these *inspired* writings are the only sure source of “admonition.”

**(over much) study** — in mere human books, wearies the body, without solidly profiting the soul.

13. The grand inference of the whole book.

**Fear God** — The antidote to following creature idols, and “vanities,” whether self-righteousness (<sup><2076></sup>Ecclesiastes 7:16,18), or wicked oppression and other evils (<sup><2082></sup>Ecclesiastes 8:12,13), or mad mirth (<sup><2019></sup>Ecclesiastes 2:2 7:2-5), or self-mortifying avarice (<sup><2083></sup>Ecclesiastes 8:13,17), or youth spent without God (<sup><2119></sup>Ecclesiastes 11:9 12:1).

**this is the whole duty of man** — literally, “this is the whole man,” the full ideal of man, as originally contemplated, realized wholly by Jesus Christ alone; and, through Him, by saints now in part, hereafter perfectly (<sup><6192></sup>1 John 3:22-24 <sup><6214></sup>Revelation 22:14).

14. **For God shall bring every work into judgment** — The future judgment is the test of what is “vanity,” what solid, as regards the chief good, the grand subject of the book.

# THE SONG OF SOLOMON

Commentary by **A. R. FAUSSETT**

## INTRODUCTION

The Song of Solomon, called in the *Vulgate* and *Septuagint*, “The Song of Songs,” from the opening words. This *title* denotes its *superior excellence*, according to the *Hebrew* idiom; so *holy of holies*, equivalent to “most holy” (<sup><0287></sup>Exodus 29:37); *the heaven of heavens*, equivalent to the highest heavens (<sup><0104></sup>Deuteronomy 10:14). It is one of the five volumes (*megilloth*) placed immediately after the Pentateuch in manuscripts of the Jewish Scriptures. It is also fourth of the Hagiographa (*Cetubim, writings*) or the third division of the Old Testament, the other two being the Law and the Prophets. The Jewish enumeration of the *Cetubim* is Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Canticles, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther, Daniel, Ezra (including Nehemiah), and Chronicles. Its *canonicity* is certain; it is found in all *Hebrew* manuscripts of Scripture; also in the *Greek Septuagint*; in the catalogues of MELITO, bishop of Sardis, A.D. 170 (EUSEBIUS, *Ecclesiastical History*, 4.26), and of others of the ancient Church.

ORIGEN and JEROME tell us that the Jews forbade it to be read by any until he was thirty years old. It certainly needs a degree of spiritual maturity to enter aright into the holy mystery of love which it allegorically sets forth. To such as have attained this maturity, of whatever age they be, the Song of Songs is one of the most edifying of the sacred writings. ROSENMULLER justly says, The sudden transitions of the bride from the court to the grove are inexplicable, on the supposition that it describes merely human love. Had it been the latter, it would have been positively objectionable, and never would have been inserted in the holy canon. The allusion to “Pharaoh’s chariots” (So 1:9) has been made a ground for conjecturing that the love of Solomon and Pharaoh’s daughter is the subject of the Song. But this passage alludes to a remarkable event in the history of the Old Testament Church, the deliverance from the hosts and chariots of Pharaoh at the Red Sea. (However, see on <sup><0109></sup>Song of Solomon 1:9). The other allusions are quite opposed to the notion; the bride is represented at times as a shepherdess (So 1:7), “an abomination to the Egyptians” (<sup><0451></sup>Genesis 46:34); so also <sup><0206></sup>Song of Solomon 1:6 3:4 4:8 5:7 are at variance with it. The Christian fathers, ORIGEN and THEODORET, compared the teachings of Solomon to a ladder with three steps; Ecclesiastes, natural (the nature of

sensible things, vain); Proverbs, moral; Canticles, mystical (figuring the union of Christ and the Church). The Jews compared Proverbs to the outer court of Solomon's temple, Ecclesiastes to the holy place, and Canticles to the holy of holies. Understood allegorically, the Song is cleared of all difficulty. "Shulamith" (So 6:13), the bride, is thus an appropriate name, *Daughter of Peace* being the feminine of Solomon, equivalent to the *Prince of Peace*. She by turns is a vinedresser, shepherdess, midnight inquirer, and prince's consort and daughter, and He a suppliant drenched with night dews, and a king in His palace, in harmony with the various relations of the Church and Christ. As Ecclesiastes sets forth the vanity of love of the creature, Canticles sets forth the fullness of the love which joins believers and the Savior. The entire economy of salvation, says HARRIS, aims at restoring to the world the lost spirit of love. God is love, and Christ is the embodiment of the love of God. As the other books of Scripture present severally their own aspects of divine truth, so Canticles furnishes the believer with language of holy love, wherewith his heart can commune with his Lord; and it portrays the intensity of Christ's love to him; the affection of love was created in man to be a transcript of the divine love, and the Song clothes the latter in words; were it not for this, we should be at a loss for language, having the divine warrant, wherewith to express, without presumption, the fervor of the love between Christ and us. The image of a bride, a bridegroom, and a marriage, to represent this spiritual union, has the sanction of Scripture throughout; nay, the spiritual union was *the original fact in the mind of God*, of which marriage is the transcript (<sup>254</sup>Isaiah 54:5 62:5 <sup>310</sup>Jeremiah 3:1, etc. <sup>260</sup>Ezekiel 16:1-63 23:1-49 <sup>405</sup>Matthew 9:15 22:2 25:1, etc.; <sup>405</sup>John 3:29 <sup>412</sup>2 Corinthians 11:2 <sup>423</sup>Ephesians 5:23-32, where Paul does not go from the marriage relation to the union of Christ and the Church as if the former were the first; but comes down from the latter as the first and best recognized fact on which the relation of marriage is based <sup>607</sup>Revelation 19:7 21:2 22:17). Above all, the Song seems to correspond to, and form a trilogy with, Psalms 45 and 72, which contain the same imagery; just as Psalm 37 answers to Proverbs, and the Psalms 39 and 73 to Job. Love to Christ is the strongest, as it is the purest, of human passions, and therefore needs the strongest language to express it: to the pure in heart the phraseology, drawn from the rich imagery of Oriental poetry, will not only appear not indelicate or exaggerated, but even below the reality. A single emblem is a *type*; the actual rites, incidents, and persons of the Old Testament were appointed types of truths afterwards to be revealed. But the *allegory* is a continued metaphor, in which the circumstances are palpably often purely imagery, while the thing signified is altogether real. The clue to the meaning of the Song is not to be looked for in the allegory itself, but in other parts of Scripture. "It lies in the casket of revelation an exquisite gem, engraved

with emblematical characters, with nothing literal thereon to break the consistency of their beauty” [BURROWES]. This accounts for the name of God not occurring in it. Whereas in the *parable* the writer narrates, in the *allegory* he never does so. The Song throughout consists of immediate addresses either of Christ to the soul, or of the soul to Christ. “The experimental knowledge of Christ’s loveliness and the believer’s love is the best commentary on the whole of this allegorical Song” [LEIGHTON]. Like the curiously wrought Oriental lamps, which do not reveal the beauty of their transparent emblems until lighted up within, so the types and allegories of Scripture, “the lantern to our path” (~~3910~~ Psalm 119:105), need the inner light of the Holy Spirit of Jesus to reveal their significance. The details of the allegory are not to be too minutely pressed. In the Song, with an Oriental profusion of imagery, numbers of lovely, sensible objects are aggregated not strictly congruous, but portraying jointly by their very diversity the thousand various and seemingly opposite beauties which meet together in Christ.

The unity of subject throughout, and the recurrence of the same expressions (So 2:6,7 3:5 8:3,4 2:16 6:3 7:10 3:6 6:10 8:5), prove the unity of the poem, in opposition to those who make it consist of a number of separate erotic songs. The sudden transitions (for example, from the midnight knocking at a humble cottage to a glorious description of the King) accord with the alternations in the believer’s experience. However various the divisions assigned be, most commentators have observed four breaks (whatever more they have imagined), followed by four abrupt beginnings (So 2:7 3:5 5:1 8:4). Thus there result five parts, all alike ending in full repose and refreshment. We read (~~4103~~ 1 Kings 4:32) that Solomon’s songs were “a thousand and *five*.” The odd number *five* added over the complete *thousand* makes it not unlikely that the “five” refers to the Song of songs, consisting of five parts.

It answers to the idyllic poetry of other nations. The Jews explain it of the union of Jehovah and ancient Israel; the allusions to the *temple* and the *wilderness* accord with this; some Christians of Christ and the Church; others of Christ and the individual believer. All these are true; for the Church is one in all ages, the ancient typifying the modern Church, and its history answering to that of each individual soul in it. Jesus “sees all, as if that all were one, loves one, as if that one were all.” “The time suited the manner of this revelation; because types and allegories belonged to the old dispensation, which reached its ripeness under Solomon, when the temple was built” [MOODY STUART]. “The daughter of Zion at that time was openly married to Jehovah”; for it is thenceforth that the prophets, in reproving Israel’s subsequent sin, speak of it as a breach of her marriage

covenant. The songs heretofore sung by her were the preparatory hymns of her childhood; “the last and crowning “Song of Songs” was prepared for the now mature maiden against the day of her marriage to the King of kings” [ORIGEN]. Solomon was peculiarly fitted to clothe this holy mystery with the lovely natural imagery with which the Song abounds; for “he spake of trees, from the cedar in Lebanon, even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall” (<sup>1003</sup>1 Kings 4:33). A higher qualification was his knowledge of the eternal Wisdom or Word of God (<sup>200E</sup>Proverbs 8:1-36), the heavenly bridegroom. David, his father, had prepared the way, in Psalms 45 and 72; the son perfected the allegory. It seems to have been written in early life, long before his declension; for after it a song of holy gladness would hardly be appropriate. It was the song of his first love, in the kindness of his youthful espousals to Jehovah. Like other inspired books, its sense is not to be restricted to that local and temporary one in which the writer may have understood it; it extends to all ages, and shadows forth everlasting truth (<sup>400E</sup>1 Peter 1:11,12 <sup>600E</sup>2 Peter 1:20,21).

“Oh that I knew how all thy lights combine, and the configurations of their glorie, Seeing not only how each verse doth shine, but all the constellations of the storie.” &nbsp;   — HERBERT.

Three notes of time occur [MOODY STUART]:

- (1) The Jewish Church speaks of the Gentile Church (So 8:8) towards the end;
- (2) Christ speaks to the apostles (So 5:1) in the middle;
- (3) The Church speaks of the coming of Christ (So 1:2) at the beginning. Thus we have, in direct order, Christ about to come, and the cry for the advent;

Christ finishing His work on earth, and the last supper; Christ ascended, and the call of the Gentiles. In another aspect we have:

- (1) In the individual soul the longing for the manifestation of Christ to it, and the various alternations in its experience (So 1:2,4 2:8 3:1,4,6,7) of His manifestation;
- (2) The abundant enjoyment of His sensible consolations, which is soon withdrawn through the bride’s carelessness (So 5:1-3, etc.), and her longings after Him, and reconciliation (So 5:8-16 6:3, etc. <sup>200E</sup>Song of Solomon 7:1, etc.);

**(3)** Effects of Christ's manifestation on the believer; namely, assurance, labors of love, anxiety for the salvation of the impenitent, eagerness for the Lord's second coming (So 7:10,12 8:8-10,14).

# CHAPTER 1

## SONG OF SOLOMON 1:1-17.

### CANTICLE I. — (SO 1:2-2:7) — THE BRIDE SEARCHING FOR AND FINDING THE KING.

**1. *The song of songs*** — The most excellent of all songs, *Hebrew* idiom (<sup><4257></sup>Exodus 29:37 <sup><6049></sup>Deuteronomy 10:14). A foretaste on earth of the “new song” to be sung in glory (<sup><6183></sup>Revelation 5:9 14:3 15:2-4).

***Solomon’s*** — “King of Israel,” or “Jerusalem,” is not added, as in the opening of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes, not because Solomon had not yet ascended the throne [MOODY STUART], but because his personality is hid under that of Christ, the true Solomon (equivalent to *Prince of Peace*). The earthly Solomon is not introduced, which would break the consistency of the allegory. Though the bride bears the chief part, the Song throughout is not hers, but that of her “Solomon.” He animates her. He and she, the Head and the members, form but one Christ [ADELAIDE NEWTON]. Aaron prefigured Him as priest; Moses, as prophet; David, as a suffering king; Solomon, as the triumphant prince of peace. The camp in the wilderness represents the Church in the world; the peaceful reign of Solomon, after all enemies had been subdued, represents the Church in heaven, of which joy the Song gives a foretaste.

**2. *him*** — abruptly. She names him not, as is natural to one whose heart is full of some much desired friend: so Mary Magdalene at the sepulcher (<sup><4115></sup>John 20:15), as if everyone must know whom she means, the *one* chief object of her desire (<sup><4725></sup>Psalms 73:25 <sup><4134></sup>Matthew 13:44-46 <sup><1016></sup>Philippians 3:7,8).

***kiss*** — the token of *peace* from the Prince of Peace (<sup><4151></sup>Luke 15:20); “our Peace” (<sup><6810></sup>Psalms 85:10 <sup><5021></sup>Colossians 1:21 <sup><4114></sup>Ephesians 2:14).

***of his mouth*** — marking the tenderest affection. For a king to permit his hands, or even garment, to be kissed, was counted a great honor; but that he should himself kiss another *with his mouth* is the greatest honor. God had in times past spoken by *the mouth* of His prophets, who had declared the Church’s betrothal; the bride now longs for contact with *the mouth of the Bridegroom Himself* (<sup><3212></sup>Job 23:12 <sup><4142></sup>Luke 4:22 <sup><5001></sup>Hebrews 1:1,2). True of the Church before the first advent, longing for “the hope of Israel,” “the

desire of all nations”; also the awakened soul longing for the kiss of *reconciliation*; and further, the kiss that is the token of the *marriage contract* (<sup><3029></sup>Hosea 2:19,20), and of *friendship* (<sup><3041></sup>1 Samuel 20:41 <sup><3042></sup>John 14:21 15:15).

**thy love** — *Hebrew*, “loves,” namely, tokens of love, loving blandishments.

**wine** — which makes glad “the heavy heart” of one ready to perish, so that he “remembers his misery no more” (<sup><3006></sup>Proverbs 31:6,7). So, in a “better” sense, Christ’s love (<sup><3017></sup>Habakkuk 3:17,18). He gives the same praise to the bride’s love, with the emphatic addition, “How much” (So 4:10). Wine was created by His first miracle (<sup><3001></sup>John 2:1-11), and was the pledge given of His love at the last supper. The spiritual wine is His blood and His spirit, the “new” and better wine of the kingdom (<sup><4029></sup>Matthew 26:29), which we can never drink to “excess,” as the other (<sup><4058></sup>Ephesians 5:18; compare <sup><4216></sup>Psalms 23:5 <sup><2501></sup>Isaiah 55:1).

3. Rather, “As regards the savor of thy ointments, it is good” [MAURER]. In <sup><2040></sup>Song of Solomon 4:10,11, the Bridegroom reciprocates the praise of the bride in the same terms.

**thy name** — Christ’s *character and office* as the “Anointed” (<sup><3006></sup>Isaiah 9:6 61:1), as “the savor of ointments” are the graces that surround His *person* (<sup><1957></sup>Psalms 45:7,8). <sup><2001></sup>Ecclesiastes 7:1, in its fullest sense, applies to Him. The holy anointing oil of the high priest, which it was death for anyone else to make (so <sup><4042></sup>Acts 4:12), implies the exclusive preciousness of Messiah’s name (<sup><4023></sup>Exodus 30:23-28,31-38). So Mary brake the box of precious ointment over Him, appropriately (<sup><4145></sup>Mark 14:5), the broken box typifying His body, which, when broken, diffused all grace: compounded of various spices, etc. (<sup><5019></sup>Colossians 1:19 2:9); of sweet odor (<sup><5019></sup>Ephesians 5:2).

**poured** — (<sup><2532></sup>Isaiah 53:12 <sup><6116></sup>Romans 5:5).

**therefore** — because of the manifestation of God’s character in Christ (<sup><6001></sup>John 4:9,19). So the penitent woman (<sup><4037></sup>Luke 7:37,38,47).

**virgins** — the pure in heart (<sup><7102></sup>2 Corinthians 11:2 <sup><6404></sup>Revelation 14:4). The same *Hebrew* is translated, “thy hidden ones” (<sup><4938></sup>Psalms 83:3). The “ointment” of the Spirit “poured forth” produces the “love of Christ” (<sup><6116></sup>Romans 5:5).

4. (1) The cry of ancient Israel for Messiah, for example, Simeon, Anna, etc. (2) The cry of an awakened soul for the drawing of the Spirit, after it has got a glimpse of Christ’s loveliness and its own helplessness.

**Draw me** — The Father draws (<sup><B644></sup>John 6:44). The Son draws (<sup><B603></sup>Jeremiah 31:3 <sup><B104></sup>Hosea 11:4 <sup><B22></sup>John 12:32). “Draw” here, and “Tell” (So 1:7), reverently qualify the word “kiss” (So 1:2).

**me, we** — No believer desires to go to heaven alone. We are converted as *individuals*; we follow Christ as joined in a *communion* of saints (<sup><B44></sup>John 1:41,45). Individuality and community meet in the bride.

**run** — Her earnestness kindles as she prays (<sup><B481></sup>Isaiah 40:31 <sup><B422></sup>Psalms 119:32,60).

**after thee** — not before (<sup><B104></sup>John 10:4).

**king ... brought me into** — (<sup><B54></sup>Psalms 45:14,15 <sup><B6></sup>John 10:16). He is the anointed *Priest* (So 1:3); *King* (So 1:4).

**chambers** — Her prayer is answered even beyond her desires. Not only is she permitted to *run* after Him, but is brought into the inmost pavilion, where Eastern kings admitted none but the most intimate friends (<sup><B741></sup>Esther 4:11 5:2 <sup><B275></sup>Psalms 27:5). The erection of the temple of Solomon was the first bringing of the bride into permanent, instead of migratory, chambers of the King. Christ’s body on earth was the next (<sup><B121></sup>John 2:21), whereby believers are brought within the veil (<sup><B116></sup>Ephesians 2:6 <sup><B109></sup>Hebrews 10:19,20). Entrance into the closet for prayer is the first step. The earnest of the future bringing into heaven (<sup><B43></sup>John 14:3). *His* chambers are the bride’s also (<sup><B31></sup>Isaiah 26:20). There are various *chambers, plural* (<sup><B42></sup>John 14:2).

**be glad and rejoice** — *inward* and *outward* rejoicing.

**in thee** — (<sup><B110></sup>Isaiah 61:10 <sup><B104></sup>Philippians 4:1,4). Not in our spiritual frames (<sup><B310></sup>Psalms 30:6,7).

**remember** — rather, “commemorate with praises” (<sup><B317></sup>Isaiah 63:7). The mere *remembrance* of spiritual joys is better than the *present enjoyment* of carnal ones (<sup><B409></sup>Psalms 4:6,7).

**upright** — rather, “uprightly,” “sincerely” (<sup><B501></sup>Psalms 58:1 <sup><B119></sup>Romans 12:9); so Nathanael (<sup><B147></sup>John 1:47); Peter (<sup><B217></sup>John 21:17); or “deservedly” [MAURER].

**5. black** — namely, “as the tents of Kedar,” equivalent to *blackness* (<sup><B115></sup>Psalms 120:5). She draws the image from the black goatskins with which the Scenite Arabs (“Kedar” was in Arabia-Petraea) cover their tents (contrasted with the splendid state tent in which *the King* was awaiting His bride according to Eastern custom); typifying the darkness of man’s natural state. To feel this, and yet also feel one’s self in Jesus Christ “comely as the

curtains of Solomon, marks the believer (<sup><678></sup>Romans 7:18, etc. <sup><601></sup>Romans 8:1); <sup><5015></sup>1 Timothy 1:15, “I *am* chief”; so she says not merely, “I was,” but “I am”; *still* black in herself, but comely through *His* comeliness put upon her (<sup><364></sup>Ezekiel 16:14).

**curtains** — first, the hangings and veil in the temple of Solomon (<sup><360></sup>Ezekiel 16:10); then, also, the “fine linen which is the righteousness of saints” (<sup><698></sup>Revelation 19:8), the white wedding garment provided by Jesus Christ (<sup><2910></sup>Isaiah 61:10 <sup><4211></sup>Matthew 22:11 <sup><4013></sup>1 Corinthians 1:30 <sup><5028></sup>Colossians 1:28 2:10 <sup><6074></sup>Revelation 7:14). *Historically*, the dark tents of Kedar represent the Gentile Church (<sup><2608></sup>Isaiah 60:3-7, etc.). As the vineyard at the close is transferred from the Jews, who had not kept their own, to the Gentiles, so the Gentiles are introduced at the commencement of the Song; for they were among the earliest enquirers after Jesus Christ (<sup><4011></sup>Matthew 2:1-12): the wise men from the East (Arabia, or Kedar).

**daughters of Jerusalem** — professors, not the bride, or “the virgins,” yet not enemies; invited to gospel blessings (So 3:10,11); so near to Jesus Christ as not to be unlikely to find Him (So 5:8); desirous to seek Him with her (So 6:1; compare <sup><2183></sup>Song of Solomon 6:13 7:1,5,8). In <sup><2108></sup>Song of Solomon 7:8,9, the bride’s Beloved becomes *their* Beloved; not, however, of *all* of them (So 8:4; compare <sup><4237></sup>Luke 23:27,28).

6. She feels as if her blackness was so great as to be gazed at by all.

**mother’s children** — (<sup><4036></sup>Matthew 10:36). She is to forget “her own people and her father’s house,” that is, the worldly connections of her unregenerate state (<sup><950></sup>Psalms 45:10); they had maltreated her (<sup><2315></sup>Luke 15:15,16). Children of the same mother, but not the same father [MAURER], (<sup><3081></sup>John 8:41-44). They made her a common keeper of vineyards, whereby the sun looked upon, that is, burnt her; thus she did “not keep her own” vineyard, that is, fair beauty. So the world, and the soul (<sup><4036></sup>Matthew 16:26 <sup><4125></sup>Luke 9:25). The believer has to watch against the same danger (<sup><4671></sup>1 Corinthians 9:27). So he will be able, instead of the self-reproach here, to say as in <sup><2182></sup>Song of Solomon 8:12.

7. **my soul loveth** — more intense than “the virgins” and “the upright love thee” (So 1:3,4 <sup><4237></sup>Matthew 22:37). To carry out the design of the allegory, the royal encampment is here represented as moving from place to place, in search of green pastures, under the *Shepherd King* (<sup><3231></sup>Psalms 23:1-6). The bride, having first enjoyed communion with him in the pavilion, is willing to follow Him into labors and dangers; arising from all absorbing love (<sup><4149></sup>Luke 14:26); this distinguishes her from the formalist (<sup><3027></sup>John 10:27 <sup><6441></sup>Revelation 14:4).

**feedest** — tendest thy flock (<sup>2301</sup>Isaiah 40:11 <sup>5830</sup>Hebrews 13:20 <sup>4125</sup>1 Peter 2:25 5:4 <sup>4177</sup>Revelation 7:17). No *single* type expresses *all* the office of Jesus Christ; hence arises the variety of *diverse* images used to portray the manifold aspects of Him: these would be quite incongruous, if the Song referred to the earthly Solomon. Her intercourse with Him is peculiar. She hears His voice, and addresses none but Himself. Yet it is through a veil; she sees Him not (<sup>4238</sup>Job 23:8,9). If we would be fed, we must follow the Shepherd through the *whole* breadth of His Word, and not stay on *one* spot alone.

**makest ... to rest** — distinct from “feedest”; periods of rest are vouchsafed after labor (<sup>2306</sup>Isaiah 4:6 49:10 <sup>2543</sup>Ezekiel 34:13-15). Communion in private must go along with public following of Him.

**turneth aside** — rather one *veiled*, that is, as a *harlot*, not His true bride (<sup>4385</sup>Genesis 38:15), [GESENIUS]; Or as a *mourner* (<sup>4150</sup>2 Samuel 15:30), [WEISS]; or as one *unknown* [MAURER]. All imply estrangement from the Bridegroom. She feels estranged even among Christ’s true servants, answering to “thy companions” (<sup>4228</sup>Luke 22:28), so long as she has not Himself present. The opposite spirit to <sup>4104</sup>1 Corinthians 3:4.

**8. If** — she ought to have *known* (<sup>4348</sup>John 14:8,9). The confession of her ignorance and *blackness* (So 1:5) leads Him to call her “fairest” (<sup>4120</sup>Matthew 12:20). Her jealousy of letting even “His companions” take the place of Himself (So 1:7) led her too far. He directs her to follow them, as they follow Him (<sup>4101</sup>1 Corinthians 11:1 <sup>5800</sup>Hebrews 6:10,12); to use ordinances and the ministry; where *they* are, *He* is (<sup>2466</sup>Jeremiah 6:16 <sup>4089</sup>Matthew 18:19,20 <sup>5805</sup>Hebrews 10:25). Indulging in isolation is not the way to find Him. It was thus, literally, that Zipporah found her bridegroom (<sup>4126</sup>Exodus 2:16). The bride unhesitatingly asks the watchmen afterwards (So 3:3).

**kids** — (<sup>4315</sup>John 21:15). Christ is to be found in active ministrations, as well as in prayer (<sup>4125</sup>Proverbs 11:25).

**shepherds’ tents** — ministers in the sanctuary (<sup>4801</sup>Psalms 84:1).

**9. horses in Pharaoh’s chariots** — celebrated for *beauty*, *swiftness*, and *ardor*, at the Red Sea (<sup>4245</sup>Exodus 14:15). These qualities, which *seem* to belong to the ungodly, *really* belong to the saints [MOODY STUART]. The allusion may be to the horses brought at a high price by Solomon out of Egypt (<sup>4106</sup>2 Chronicles 1:16,17). So the bride is redeemed out of spiritual Egypt by the true Solomon, at an infinite price (<sup>2800</sup>Isaiah 51:1 <sup>4018</sup>1 Peter 1:18,19). But the deliverance from *Pharaoh at the Red Sea* accords with the allusion to the tabernacle (So 1:5 3:6,7); it rightly is put at the beginning

of the Church's call. The *ardor* and *beauty* of the bride are the point of comparison; (So 1:4) "run"; (So 1:5) "comely." Also, like Pharaoh's horses, she forms a great company (<sup><6697></sup>Revelation 19:7,14). As Jesus Christ is both Shepherd and Conqueror, so believers are not only His *sheep*, but also, as a Church *militant* now, His *chariots and horses* (So 6:4).

**10. rows of jewels** — (<sup><361></sup>Ezekiel 16:11-13). OLERIUS says, Persian ladies wear two or three rows of pearls round the head, beginning on the forehead and descending down to the cheeks and under the chin, so that their faces seem to be set in pearls (<sup><361></sup>Ezekiel 16:11) implies the vital energy of the bride; this verse, her superadded graces (<sup><2009></sup>Proverbs 1:9 4:9 <sup><5019></sup>1 Timothy 2:9 <sup><6006></sup>2 Peter 1:5).

**11. We** — the Trinity implied by the Holy Ghost, whether it was so by the writer of the Song or not (<sup><0002></sup>Genesis 1:26 <sup><3083></sup>Proverbs 8:30 30:4). "The Jews acknowledged God as king, and Messiah as king, in interpreting the Song, but did not know that these two are one" [LEIGHTON].

**make** — not merely *give* (<sup><4001></sup>Ephesians 2:10).

**borders of gold, with studs of silver** — that is, "spots of silver" — Jesus Christ delights to give more "to him that hath" (<sup><4059></sup>Matthew 25:29). He crowns *His own work* in us (<sup><2362></sup>Isaiah 26:12). The "borders" here are equivalent to "rows" (So 1:10); but here, the King seems to give the finish to her attire, by adding a *crown* (*borders*, or circles) of gold studded with silver spots, as in <sup><4017></sup>Esther 2:17. Both the *royal* and *nuptial* crown, or chaplet. The *Hebrew* for "spouse" (So 4:8) is *a crowned one* (<sup><3602></sup>Ezekiel 16:12 <sup><6120></sup>Revelation 2:10). The crown is given at once upon conversion, in title, but in sensible possession afterwards (<sup><5008></sup>2 Timothy 4:8).

**12. While** — It is the presence of the Sun of Righteousness that draws out the believer's odors of grace. It was the sight of Him at table that caused the two women to bring forth their ointments for Him (<sup><4037></sup>Luke 7:37,38 <sup><6108></sup>John 12:3 <sup><4015></sup>2 Corinthians 2:15). Historically fulfilled (<sup><4011></sup>Matthew 2:11); spiritually (<sup><6030></sup>Revelation 3:20); and in church worship (<sup><4080></sup>Matthew 18:20); and at the Lord's Supper especially, for here *public* communion with Him at table amidst His friends is spoken of, as <sup><2004></sup>Song of Solomon 1:4 refers to *private* communion (<sup><4006></sup>1 Corinthians 10:16,21); typically (<sup><4249></sup>Exodus 24:9-11); the future perfect fulfillment (<sup><4223></sup>Luke 22:30 <sup><6699></sup>Revelation 19:9). The allegory supposes the King to have stopped in His movements and to be seated with His friends on the divan. What grace that a table should be prepared for us, while still militant (<sup><4235></sup>Psalms 23:5)!

**my spikenard** — not boasting, but *owning* the Lord's grace to and in her. The spikenard is a lowly herb, the emblem of humility. She rejoices that *He* is well pleased with her graces, His own work (<sup><3018></sup>Philippians 4:18).

**13. bundle of myrrh** — abundant *preciousness* (Greek), (<sup><6071></sup>1 Peter 2:7). Even a *little* myrrh was costly; much more a *bundle* (<sup><5009></sup>Colossians 2:9). BURROWES takes it of a *scent-box filled with liquid myrrh*; the liquid obtained by incision gave the tree its chief value.

**he** — rather, “it”; it is the myrrh that lies in the bosom, as the cluster of camphire is in the vineyards (So 1:14).

**all night** — an undivided heart (<sup><4017></sup>Ephesians 3:17; contrast <sup><3014></sup>Jeremiah 4:14 <sup><3165></sup>Ezekiel 16:15,30). Yet on account of the everlasting covenant, God restores the adulteress (<sup><3060></sup>Ezekiel 16:60,62 <sup><3012></sup>Hosea 2:2, etc.). The night is the whole present dispensation till the everlasting day dawns (<sup><6132></sup>Romans 13:12). Also, literally, “night” (<sup><3347></sup>Psalms 119:147,148), the night of *affliction* (<sup><908></sup>Psalms 42:8).

**14. cluster** — Jesus Christ is one, yet *manifold* in His graces.

**camphire** — or, “cypress.” The “hennah” is meant, whose odorous flowers grow in clusters, of a color white and yellow softly blended; its bark is dark, the foliage light green. Women deck their persons with them. The loveliness of Jesus Christ.

**vineyards** — appropriate in respect to Him who is “the vine.” The spikenard was for the banquet (So 1:12); the myrrh was in her bosom continually (So 1:13); the camphire is in the midst of natural beauties, which, though lovely, are eclipsed by the one cluster, Jesus Christ, pre-eminent above them all.

**En-gedi** — in South Palestine, near the Dead Sea (<sup><6152></sup>Joshua 15:62 <sup><3570></sup>Ezekiel 47:10), famed for aromatic shrubs.

**15. fair** — He discerns beauty in her, who had said, “I am black” (So 1:5), because of the everlasting covenant (<sup><9511></sup>Psalms 45:11 <sup><3515></sup>Isaiah 62:5 <sup><4005></sup>Ephesians 1:4,5).

**doves' eyes** — large and beautiful in the doves of Syria. The prominent features of her beauty (<sup><0066></sup>Matthew 10:16), gentleness, innocence, and constant love, emblem of the Holy Ghost, who changes us to *His own* likeness (<sup><0080></sup>Genesis 8:10,11 <sup><0186></sup>Matthew 3:16). The opposite kind of eyes (<sup><9A05></sup>Psalms 101:5 <sup><0155></sup>Matthew 20:15 <sup><6014></sup>2 Peter 2:14).

**16. Reply of the Bride.** She presumes to call Him beloved, because He called her so first. Thou callest me “fair”; if I am so, it is not in myself; it is all from Thee (<sup><1917></sup>Psalm 90:17); but *Thou* art fair in Thyself (<sup><1918></sup>Psalm 45:2).

***pleasant*** — (<sup><1187></sup>Proverbs 3:17) towards Thy friends (<sup><1125></sup>2 Samuel 1:26).

***bed ... green*** — the couch of green grass on which the King and His bride sit to “rest at noon.” Thus her prayer in <sup><2100></sup>Song of Solomon 1:7 is here granted; a green oasis in the desert, always found near waters in the East (<sup><1231></sup>Psalm 23:2 <sup><2417></sup>Isaiah 41:17-19). The scene is a kiosk, or summer house. *Historically*, the literal resting of the Babe of Beth-lehem and his parents on the *green* grass provided for cattle (<sup><1117></sup>Luke 2:7,12). In this verse there is an incidental allusion, in <sup><2115></sup>Song of Solomon 1:15, to the offering (<sup><1124></sup>Luke 2:24). So the “cedar and fir” ceiling refers to the temple (<sup><1186></sup>1 Kings 5:6-10 6:15-18); type of the heavenly temple (<sup><622></sup>Revelation 21:22).

**17. *our house*** — see on <sup><2116></sup>Song of Solomon 1:16; but *primarily*, the kiosk (<sup><2110></sup>Isaiah 11:10), “His rest.” Cedar is pleasing to the eye and smell, hard, and never eaten by worms.

***fix*** — rather, “cypress,” which is hard, durable, and fragrant, of a reddish hue [GESENIUS, WEISS, and MAURER]. Contrasted with the shifting “tents” (So 1:5), His house is “*our house*” (<sup><1923></sup>Psalm 92:13 <sup><1129></sup>Ephesians 2:19 <sup><1816></sup>Hebrews 3:6). Perfect oneness of Him and the bride (<sup><1141></sup>John 14:20 17:21). There is the shelter of a princely roof from the sun (<sup><1310></sup>Psalm 121:6), without the confinement of walls, and amidst rural beauties. The carved ceiling represents the wondrous excellencies of His divine nature.

## CHAPTER 2

### SONG OF SOLOMON 2:1-17.

**1. rose** — if applied to Jesus Christ, it, with the white lily (lowly, <sup><4089></sup>2 Corinthians 8:9), answers to “white and ruddy” (So 5:10). But it is rather the *meadow-saffron*: the *Hebrew* means radically a plant with a *pungent bulb*, inapplicable to the *rose*. So *Syriac*. It is of a white and violet color [MAURER, GESENIUS, and WEISS]. The bride thus speaks of herself as lowly though lovely, in contrast with the lordly “apple” or citron tree, the bridegroom (So 2:3); so the “lily” is applied to her (So 2:2),

**Sharon** — (<sup><2351></sup>Isaiah 35:1,2). In North Palestine, between Mount Tabor and Lake Tiberias (<sup><1356></sup>1 Chronicles 5:16). *Septuagint* and *Vulgate* translate it, “a plain”; though they err in this, the *Hebrew* Bible not elsewhere favoring it, yet the parallelism to *valleys* shows that, in the proper name Sharon, there is here a tacit reference to its meaning of lowliness. Beauty, delicacy, and lowliness, are to be in her, as they were in Him (<sup><4112></sup>Matthew 11:29).

**2. Jesus Christ to the Bride** (<sup><4006></sup>Matthew 10:16 <sup><4519></sup>John 15:19 <sup><4259></sup>1 John 5:19). Thorns, equivalent to the wicked (<sup><4236></sup>2 Samuel 23:6 <sup><4574></sup>Psalms 57:4).

**daughters** — of men. not of God; not “the virgins.” “If thou art the lily of Jesus Christ, take heed lest by impatience, rash judgments, and pride, thou thyself become a thorn” [LUTHER].

**3. Her reply. apple** — generic including the golden citron, pomegranate, and orange apple (<sup><2511></sup>Proverbs 25:11). He combines the *shadow* and fragrance of the citron with the *sweetness* of the orange and pomegranate fruit. The foliage is perpetual; throughout the year a succession of blossoms, fruit, and perfume (<sup><5017></sup>James 1:17).

**among the sons** — parallel to “among the daughters” (So 2:2). He alone is ever fruitful among the fruitless wild trees (<sup><3916></sup>Psalms 89:6 <sup><5009></sup>Hebrews 1:9).

**I sat ... with ... delight** — literally, “I eagerly desired and sat” (<sup><3949></sup>Psalms 94:19 <sup><4051></sup>Mark 6:31 <sup><4016></sup>Ephesians 2:6 <sup><4008></sup>1 Peter 1:8).

**shadow** — (<sup><5005></sup>Psalms 121:5 <sup><2005></sup>Isaiah 4:6 25:4 32:2). Jesus Christ interposes the shadow of His cross between the blazing rays of justice and us sinners.

**fruit** — Faith plucks it (<sup><0188></sup>Proverbs 3:18). Man lost the tree of life (<sup><0022></sup>Genesis 3:22,23). Jesus Christ regained it for him; he eats it partly now (<sup><0118></sup>Psalm 119:103 <sup><0165></sup>John 6:55,57 <sup><0113></sup>1 Peter 2:3); fully hereafter (<sup><0117></sup>Revelation 2:7 22:2,14); not earned by the sweat of his brow, or by his righteousness (<sup><0101></sup>Romans 10:1-21). Contrast the worldling's fruit (<sup><0133></sup>Deuteronomy 32:32 <sup><0156></sup>Luke 15:16).

**4.** Historically fulfilled in the joy of Simeon and Anna in the temple, over the infant Savior (<sup><0225></sup>Luke 2:25-38), and that of Mary, too (compare <sup><0153></sup>Luke 1:53); typified (<sup><0249></sup>Exodus 24:9-11). Spiritually, the bride or beloved is led (So 2:4) first *into the King's chambers*, thence is *drawn* after Him in answer to her prayer; is next received on a grassy couch under a cedar kiosk; and at last in a "banqueting hall," such as, JOSEPHUS says, Solomon had in his palace, "wherein all the vessels were of gold" (*Antiquities*, 8:5,2). The transition is from holy retirement to *public* ordinances, church worship, and the Lord's Supper (<sup><0108></sup>Psalm 36:8). The bride, as the queen of Sheba, is given "all her desire" (<sup><0103></sup>1 Kings 10:13 <sup><0165></sup>Psalm 63:5 <sup><0108></sup>Ephesians 3:8,16-21 <sup><0109></sup>Philippians 4:19); type of the heavenly feast hereafter (<sup><0216></sup>Isaiah 25:6,9).

**his banner ... love** — After having rescued us from the enemy, our victorious captain (<sup><0110></sup>Hebrews 2:10) seats us at the banquet under a banner inscribed with *His name*, "love" (<sup><0103></sup>1 John 4:8). His love conquered us to Himself; this banner rallies round us the forces of Omnipotence, as our protection; it marks to what country we belong, heaven, the abode of love, and in what we most glory, the cross of Jesus Christ, through which we triumph (<sup><0107></sup>Romans 8:37 <sup><0157></sup>1 Corinthians 15:57 <sup><0121></sup>Revelation 3:21). Compare with "over me," "*underneath* are the everlasting arms" (<sup><0137></sup>Deuteronomy 33:27).

**5. flagons** — MAURER prefers translating, "dried raisin cakes"; from the *Hebrew* root "fire," namely, dried by heat. But the "house of *wine*" (So 2:4, *Margin*) favors "flagons"; the "new wine" of the kingdom, the Spirit of Jesus Christ.

**apples** — from the tree (So 2:3), so sweet to her, the promises of God.

**sick of love** — the highest degree of sensible enjoyment that can be attained here. It may be at an early or late stage of experience. Paul (<sup><0112></sup>2 Corinthians 12:7). In the last sickness of J. Welch. he was overheard saying, "Lord, hold thine hand, it is enough; thy servant is a clay vessel, and can hold no more" [FLEMING, *Fulfilling of the Scriptures*]. In most cases this intensity of joy is reserved for the heavenly banquet. Historically, Israel had it, when the Lord's glory filled the tabernacle. and afterwards the temple. so that the priests could not stand to minister: so in the Christian Church on Pentecost.

The bride addresses *Christ* mainly, though in her rapture she uses the plural, “Stay (ye) me,” speaking generally. So far from asking the withdrawal of the manifestations which had overpowered her, she asks for more: so “*fainteth for*” (<sup><4810></sup>Psalm 84:2): also Peter. on the mount of transfiguration (<sup><4813></sup>Luke 9:33), “Let us make ... *not knowing what he said.*”

6. The “stay” she prayed for (So 2:5) is granted (<sup><4832></sup>Deuteronomy 33:12,27 <sup><4824></sup>Psalm 37:24 <sup><2416></sup>Isaiah 41:16). None can pluck from that *embrace* (<sup><4818></sup>John 10:28-30). His hand keeps us from falling (<sup><4814></sup>Matthew 14:30,31); to it we may commit ourselves (<sup><4815></sup>Psalm 31:5).

**left hand** — the left is the inferior hand, by which the Lord less signally manifests His love, than by the right; the secret hand of ordinary providence, as distinguished from that of manifested grace (the “right”). They really go together, though sometimes they seem divided; here both are felt at once. THEODORET takes the left hand, equivalent to *judgment and wrath*; the right, equivalent to *honor and love*. The hand of justice no longer is lifted to smite, but is under the head of the believer to support (<sup><2321></sup>Isaiah 42:21); the hand of Jesus Christ pierced by justice for our sin supports us. The charge not to disturb the beloved occurs thrice: but the sentiment here, “His left hand ...” nowhere else fully; which accords with the intensity of joy (So 2:5) found nowhere else; in <sup><2183></sup>Song of Solomon 8:3, it is only conditional, “*should embrace,*” not “doth.”

7. **by the roes** — not an oath but a solemn charge, to act as cautiously as the hunter would with the wild roes, which are proverbially timorous; he must advance with breathless circumspection, if he is to take them; so he who would not lose Jesus Christ and His Spirit, which is easily grieved and withdrawn, must be tender of conscience and watchful (<sup><2363></sup>Ezekiel 16:43 <sup><4043></sup>Ephesians 4:30 5:15 <sup><2159></sup>1 Thessalonians 5:19). In *Margin*, title of <sup><4221></sup>Psalm 22:1, Jesus Christ is called the “*Hind of the morning,*” hunted to death by the dogs (compare <sup><2183></sup>Song of Solomon 2:8,9, where He is represented as bounding on the hills, <sup><4913></sup>Psalm 18:33). Here He is *resting*, but with a repose easily broken (<sup><4317></sup>Zephaniah 3:17). It is thought a gross rudeness in the East to awaken one sleeping, especially a person of rank.

**my love** — in *Hebrew*, *feminine* for *masculine*, the abstract for concrete, Jesus Christ being the embodiment of *love* itself (So 3:5 8:7), where, as here, the context requires it to be applied to Him, not her. She too is “love” (So 7:6), for His love calls forth her love. Presumption in the convert is as grieving to the Spirit as despair. The *lovingness* and *pleasantness* of the hind and roe (<sup><2159></sup>Proverbs 5:19) is included in this image of Jesus Christ.

**CANTICLE II. — (SO 2:8-3:5) —  
JOHN THE BAPTIST'S MINISTRY.**

**8. *voice*** — an exclamation of joyful surprise, evidently after a long silence. The restlessness of sin and fickleness in her had disturbed His rest with her, which she had professed not to wish disturbed “till He should please.” He left her, but in sovereign grace unexpectedly heralds His return. She awakes, and at once recognizes His voice (<sup>(40RB)</sup>1 Samuel 3:9,10 <sup>(40RD)</sup>John 10:4); her sleep is not so sinfully deep as in <sup>(40RE)</sup>Song of Solomon 5:2.

***leaping*** — hounding, as the roe does, over the roughest obstacles (<sup>(40ES)</sup>2 Samuel 2:18 <sup>(40EB)</sup>1 Chronicles 12:8); as the father of the prodigal “had compassion and *ran*” (<sup>(40SU)</sup>Luke 15:20).

***upon the hills*** — as the sunbeams glancing from hill to hill. So *Margin*, title of Jesus Christ (<sup>(40ZE)</sup>Psalms 22:1), “Hind of the *morning*” (type of His resurrection). Historically, the coming of the kingdom of heaven (the gospel dispensation), announced by John Baptist, is meant; it primarily is the garden or vineyard; the bride is called so in a secondary sense. “The voice” of Jesus Christ is indirect, through “the friend of the bridegroom” (<sup>(40RZ)</sup>John 3:29), John the Baptist. Personally, He is silent during John’s ministration. who awoke the long slumbering Church with the cry. “Every *hill* shall be made low,” in the spirit of Elias, on the “rent mountains” (<sup>(40IB)</sup>1 Kings 19:11; compare <sup>(40SI)</sup>Isaiah 52:7). Jesus Christ is implied as coming with intense desire (<sup>(40ZS)</sup>Luke 22:15 <sup>(40SI)</sup>Hebrews 10:7), disregarding the mountain hindrances raised by man’s sin.

**9. *he standeth*** — after having bounded over the intervening space like a roe. He often stands near when our unbelief hides Him from us (<sup>(40ZG)</sup>Genesis 28:16 <sup>(40IB)</sup>Revelation 3:14-20). His usual way; long promised and expected; sudden at last: so, in visiting the second temple (<sup>(40RE)</sup>Malachi 3:1); so at Pentecost (<sup>(40IL)</sup>Acts 2:1,2); so in visiting an individual soul, Zaccheus (<sup>(40UH)</sup>Luke 19:5,6 <sup>(40RB)</sup>John 3:8); and so, at the second coming (<sup>(40B4)</sup>Matthew 24:48,50 <sup>(40RH)</sup>2 Peter 3:4,10). So it shall be at His second coming (<sup>(40RE)</sup>1 Thessalonians 5:2,3).

***wall*** — over the cope of which He is first seen; next, He looks *through* (not *forth*; for He is outside) at the windows, *glancing* suddenly and stealthily (not as *English Version*, “showing Himself”) through the lattice. The prophecies, types, etc., were lattice glimpses of Him to the Old Testament Church, in spite of the *wall* of separation which sin had raised (<sup>(40SE)</sup>John 8:56); clearer glimpses were given by John Baptist, but not unclouded (<sup>(40IB)</sup>John 1:26). The legal wall of partition was not to be removed until His death (<sup>(40E4)</sup>Ephesians 2:14,15 <sup>(40SI)</sup>Hebrews 10:20). Even now, He is only seen by *faith*, through the windows of His Word and the lattice of

ordinances and sacraments (<sup><4265></sup>Luke 24:35 <sup><6142></sup>John 14:21); not full vision (<sup><4832></sup>1 Corinthians 13:12); an incentive to our looking for His second coming (<sup><2337></sup>Isaiah 33:17 <sup><1023></sup>Titus 2:13).

**10, 11.** Loving reassurance given by Jesus Christ to the bride, lest she should think that He had ceased to love her, on account of her unfaithfulness, which had occasioned His temporary withdrawal. He allures her to brighter than worldly joys (<sup><3210></sup>Micah 2:10). Not only does the saint wish to depart to be with Him, but He still more desires to have the saint with Him above (<sup><6174></sup>John 17:24). Historically, the vineyard or garden of the King, here first introduced, is “the kingdom of heaven preached” by John the Baptist, before whom “the law and the prophets were” (<sup><2169></sup>Luke 16:16).

**11. *the winter*** — the law of the covenant of works (<sup><1046></sup>Matthew 4:16).

***rain is over*** — (<sup><3218></sup>Hebrews 12:18-24 <sup><6118></sup>1 John 2:8). Then first the Gentile Church is called “beloved, which was not beloved” (<sup><8125></sup>Romans 9:25). So “the winter” of estrangement and sin is “past” to the believer (<sup><2342></sup>Isaiah 44:22 <sup><4810></sup>Jeremiah 50:20 <sup><4157></sup>2 Corinthians 5:17 <sup><4101></sup>Ephesians 2:1). The rising “Sun of righteousness” dispels the “rain” (<sup><1134></sup>2 Samuel 23:4 <sup><4306></sup>Psalms 126:5 <sup><3042></sup>Malachi 4:2). The winter in Palestine is past by April, but all the showers were not over till May. The time described here is that which comes directly after these last showers of winter. In the highest sense, the coming resurrection and deliverance of the earth from the past curse is here implied (<sup><8189></sup>Romans 8:19 <sup><6204></sup>Revelation 21:4 22:3). No more “clouds” shall then “return after the rain” (<sup><2112></sup>Ecclesiastes 12:2 <sup><6048></sup>Revelation 4:3; compare <sup><0093></sup>Genesis 9:13-17); “the rainbow round the throne” is the “token” of this.

**12. *flowers*** — tokens of anger past, and of grace come. “The summoned bride is welcome,” say some fathers, “to weave from them garlands of beauty, wherewith she may adorn herself to meet the King.” Historically, the flowers, etc., only give promise; the fruit is not ripe yet; suitable to the preaching of John the Baptist, “The kingdom of heaven is *at hand*”; not yet fully come.

***the time of ... singing*** — the rejoicing at the advent of Jesus Christ.

GREGORY NYSSENUS refers the *voice* of the turtledove to John the Baptist. It with the olive branch announced to Noah that “the rain was over and gone” (<sup><0081></sup>Genesis 8:11). So John the Baptist, spiritually. Its *plaintive* “voice” answers to his preaching of *repentance* (<sup><2186></sup>Jeremiah 8:6,7). *Vulgate* and *Septuagint* translate, “The time of *pruning*,” namely, spring (<sup><6152></sup>John 15:2). The mention of the “turtle’s” cooing better accords with our text. The turtledove is migratory (<sup><2187></sup>Jeremiah 8:7), and “comes” early in May; emblem of love, and so of the Holy Ghost. Love, too, shall be the keynote

of the “new *song*” hereafter (<sup><2350></sup>Isaiah 35:10 <sup><6105></sup>Revelation 1:5 14:3 19:6). In the individual believer now, joy and love are here set forth in their *earlier* manifestations (<sup><4028></sup>Mark 4:28).

**13. *putteth forth*** — rather, “ripens,” literally, “makes red” [MAURER]. The unripe figs, which grow in winter, begin to ripen in early spring, and in June are fully matured [WEISS].

***vines with the tender grape*** — rather, “the vines *in flower*,” literally, “a flower,” in apposition with “vines” [MAURER]. The vine flowers were so sweet that they were often put, when dried, into new wine to give it flavor. Applicable to the first manifestations of Jesus Christ, “the true Vine,” both to the Church and to individuals; as to Nathanael under *the fig tree* (<sup><4148></sup>John 1:48).

***Arise***, etc. — His call, described by the bride, ends as it began (So 2:10); it is a consistent whole; “love” from first to last (<sup><2301></sup>Isaiah 52:1,2 <sup><4072></sup>2 Corinthians 6:17,18). “Come,” in the close of <sup><6277></sup>Revelation 22:17, as at His earlier manifestation (<sup><4128></sup>Matthew 11:28).

**14. *dove*** — here expressing endearment (<sup><3749></sup>Psalms 74:19). Doves are noted for *constant attachment*; emblems, also, in their soft, plaintive note, of *softened penitents* (<sup><2391></sup>Isaiah 59:11 <sup><2176></sup>Ezekiel 7:16); other points of likeness are their *beauty*; “their wings covered with silver and gold” (<sup><1983></sup>Psalms 68:13), typifying the change in the converted; the *dove-like spirit*, breathed into the saint by the Holy Ghost, whose emblem is the dove; *the messages of peace* from God to sinful men, as Noah’s dove, with the olive branch (<sup><0081></sup>Genesis 8:11), intimated that the flood of wrath was past; *timidity*, fleeing with fear from sin and self to the cleft Rock of Ages (<sup><2309></sup>Isaiah 26:4, *Margin*; <sup><3111></sup>Hosea 11:11); *gregarious*, flocking together to the kingdom of Jesus Christ (<sup><2108></sup>Isaiah 60:8); *harmless simplicity* (<sup><4106></sup>Matthew 10:16).

***clefts*** — the refuge of doves from storm and heat (<sup><2483></sup>Jeremiah 48:28; see <sup><2496></sup>Jeremiah 49:16). GESENIUS translates the *Hebrew* from a different root, “the refuges.” But see, for “clefts,” <sup><0238></sup>Exodus 33:18-23. It is only when we are *in Christ Jesus* that our “voice is *sweet* (in prayer, <sup><2048></sup>Song of Solomon 4:3,11 <sup><4000></sup>Matthew 10:20 <sup><4046></sup>Galatians 4:6, because it is *His* voice *in us*; also in speaking *of Him*, <sup><3016></sup>Malachi 3:16); and our countenance comely” (<sup><0249></sup>Exodus 34:29 <sup><1277></sup>Psalms 27:5 71:3 <sup><2316></sup>Isaiah 33:16 <sup><4782></sup>2 Corinthians 3:18).

***stairs*** — (<sup><2630></sup>Ezekiel 38:20, *Margin*), a steep rock, broken into stairs or terraces. It is in “secret places” and rugged scenes that Jesus Christ woos the soul from the world to Himself (<sup><3204></sup>Micah 2:10 7:14). So Jacob amid the stones of Beth-el (<sup><0281></sup>Genesis 28:11-19); Moses at Horeb (<sup><0081></sup>Exodus

3:1-22); so Elijah (<sup><1189></sup>1 Kings 19:9-13); Jesus Christ with the three disciples on a “high mountain apart,” at the transfiguration (<sup><1076></sup>Matthew 17:1); John in Patmos (<sup><1009></sup>Revelation 1:9). “Of the eight beatitudes, five have an afflicted condition for their subject. As long as the waters are on the earth, we dwell in the ark; but when the land is dry, the dove itself will be tempted to wander” [JEREMY TAYLOR]. Jesus Christ does not invite her to leave the rock, but *in* it (Himself), yet in holy freedom to lay aside the timorous spirit, look up boldly as accepted in Him, pray, praise, and confess Him (in contrast to her shrinking from being *looked at*, <sup><2106></sup>Song of Solomon 1:6), (<sup><1089></sup>Ephesians 6:19 <sup><3815></sup>Hebrews 13:15 <sup><1048></sup>1 John 4:18); still, though trembling, the voice and countenance of the soul in Jesus Christ are pleasant to Him. The Church found no cleft in the Sinaitic legal rock, though good in itself, wherein to hide; but in Jesus Christ stricken by God for us, as the rock smitten by Moses (<sup><1011></sup>Numbers 20:11), there is a hiding-place (<sup><2337></sup>Isaiah 32:2). *She* praised His “voice” (So 2:8,10); it is thus that her voice also, though tremulous, is “sweet” to Him here.

**15.** Transition to the vineyard, often formed in “stairs” (So 2:14), or terraces, in which, amidst the vine leaves, foxes hid.

*foxes* — generic term, including jackals. They eat only grapes, not the vine flowers; but they need to be driven out *in time* before the grape is ripe. She had failed in watchfulness before (So 1:6); now when converted, she is the more jealous of *subtle* sins (<sup><3023></sup>Psalm 139:23). In spiritual winter certain evils are frozen up, as well as good; in the spring of revivals these start up unperceived, crafty, false teachers, spiritual pride, uncharitableness, etc. (<sup><992></sup>Psalm 19:12 <sup><1133></sup>Matthew 13:26 <sup><1184></sup>Luke 8:14 <sup><1072></sup>2 Timothy 2:17 <sup><3125></sup>Hebrews 12:15). “Little” sins are parents of the greatest (<sup><2101></sup>Ecclesiastes 10:1 <sup><1186></sup>1 Corinthians 5:6). Historically, John the Baptist spared not the *fox-like* Herod (<sup><1033></sup>Luke 13:32), who gave vine-like promise of fruit at first (<sup><1031></sup>Mark 6:20), at the cost of his life; nor the viper-Sadducees, etc.; nor the varied subtle forms of sin (<sup><1077></sup>Luke 3:7-14).

**16. mine ... his** — rather, “is for me ... for Him” (<sup><3888></sup>Hosea 3:3), where, as here, there is the assurance of indissoluble union, in spite of temporary absence. <sup><2117></sup>Song of Solomon 2:17, entreating Him to return, shows that He has gone, perhaps through her want of guarding against the “little sins” (So 2:15). The order of the clauses is reversed in <sup><2188></sup>Song of Solomon 6:3, when she is riper in faith: there she rests more on *her being His*; here, on *His being hers*; and no doubt her sense of love to Him is a pledge that she is His (<sup><1043></sup>John 14:21,23 <sup><1183></sup>1 Corinthians 8:3); this is her consolation in His withdrawal now.

***I am his*** — by creation (<sup><1940B></sup>Psalm 100:3), by redemption (<sup><16170></sup>John 17:10 <sup><16148></sup>Romans 14:8 <sup><16169></sup>1 Corinthians 6:19).

***feedeth*** — as a “roe,” or gazelle (So 2:17); instinct is sure to lead him back to his feeding ground, where the lilies abound. So Jesus Christ, though now withdrawn, the bride feels sure will return to His favorite resting-place (So 7:10 <sup><16214></sup>Psalm 132:14). So hereafter (<sup><16213></sup>Revelation 21:3). <sup><16131></sup>Psalm 45:1, title, terms his lovely bride’s “lilies” [HENGSTENBERG] pure and white, though among thorns (So 2:2).

**17. Night** — is the image of the present world (<sup><16132></sup>Romans 13:12). “Behold men as if dwelling in subterranean cavern” [PLATO, *Republic*, 7.1].

***Until*** — that is, “Before that,” etc.

***break*** — rather, “breathe”; referring to the refreshing breeze of dawn in the East; or to the air of *life*, which distinguishes morning from the death-like stillness of night. MAURER takes this verse of the *approach of night*, when the breeze arises after the heat of day (compare <sup><16188></sup>Genesis 3:8, *Margin*, with <sup><16181></sup>Genesis 18:1), and the “shadows” are lost in night (<sup><16211></sup>Psalm 102:11); thus our life will be the *day*; death, the *night* (<sup><16104></sup>John 9:4). The *English Version* better accords with (So 3:1). “By *night*” (<sup><16132></sup>Romans 13:12).

***turn*** — to me.

***Bether*** — Mountains of Bithron, separated from the rest of Israel by the Jordan (<sup><1029></sup>2 Samuel 2:29), not far from Bethabara, where John baptized and Jesus was first manifested. Rather, as *Margin*, “of divisions,” and *Septuagint*, *mountains intersected* with deep gaps, hard to pass over, separating the bride and Jesus Christ. In <sup><1214></sup>Song of Solomon 8:14 the mountains are *of spices*, on which the roe feeds, not *of separation*; for at His first coming He had to overpass the gulf made by sin between Him and us (<sup><13016></sup>Zechariah 4:6,7); in His second, He will only have to come down from the fragrant hill above to take home His prepared bride. Historically, in the ministry of John the Baptist, Christ’s call to the bride was not, as later (So 4:8), “Come *with me*,” but “Come *away*,” namely, to meet Me (So 2:2,10,13). Sitting in darkness (<sup><1016></sup>Matthew 4:16), she “waited” and “looked” eagerly for Him, the “great light” (<sup><10179></sup>Luke 1:79 2:25,38); at His rising, the shadows of the law (<sup><15126></sup>Colossians 2:16,17 <sup><15811></sup>Hebrews 10:1) were to “flee away.” So we wait for the second coming, when means of grace, so precious now, shall be superseded by the Sun of righteousness (<sup><161301></sup>1 Corinthians 13:10,12 <sup><16222></sup>Revelation 21:22,23). The Word is our light until then (<sup><16119></sup>2 Peter 1:19).

# CHAPTER 3

## SONG OF SOLOMON 3:1-11.

**1. *By night*** — literally, “By nights.” Continuation of the longing for the dawn of the Messiah (So 2:17 <sup><6016></sup>Psalm 130:6 <sup><3040></sup>Malachi 4:2). The spiritual desertion here (So 2:17 3:5) is not due to indifference, as in <sup><2182></sup>Song of Solomon 5:2-8. “As nights and dews are better for flowers than a continual sun, so Christ’s absence (at times) giveth sap to humility, and putteth an edge on hunger, and furnisheth a fair field to faith to put forth itself” [RUTHERFORD]. Contrast <sup><2018></sup>Song of Solomon 1:13 <sup><3109></sup>Psalm 30:6,7.

***on ... bed*** — the secret of her failure (<sup><2647></sup>Isaiah 64:7 <sup><2937></sup>Jeremiah 29:13 <sup><3085></sup>Amos 6:1,4 <sup><3074></sup>Hosea 7:14).

***loveth*** — no want of sincerity, but of diligence, which she now makes up for by leaving her bed to seek Him (<sup><1922></sup>Psalm 22:2 63:8 <sup><2349></sup>Isaiah 26:9 <sup><3317></sup>John 20:17). Four times (So 3:1-4) she calls Jesus Christ, “Him whom my soul loveth,” designating Him as *absent*; language of desire: “He loved me,” would be language of *present* fruition (<sup><6015></sup>Revelation 1:5). In questioning the watchmen (So 3:3), she does not even name Him, so full is her heart of Him. Having found Him at dawn (for throughout *He* is the *morning*), she charges the daughters not to abridge by intrusion the period of His stay. Compare as to the thoughtful seeking for Jesus Christ in the time of John the Baptist, in vain at first, but presently after successful (<sup><0855></sup>Luke 3:15-22 <sup><3119></sup>John 1:19-34).

***found him not*** — Oh, for such honest dealings with ourselves (<sup><1254></sup>Proverbs 25:14 <sup><6112></sup>Jude 1:12)!

**2. Wholly awake for God** (<sup><2485></sup>Luke 14:18-20 <sup><4154></sup>Ephesians 5:14). “An honest resolution is often to (the doing of) duty, like a needle that draws the thread after it” [DURHAM]. Not a mere wish, that counts not the cost — to leave her easy bed, and wander in the dark night seeking Him (<sup><3106></sup>Proverbs 13:4 <sup><1213></sup>Matthew 21:30 <sup><2427></sup>Luke 14:27-33).

***the city*** — Jerusalem, literally (<sup><1835></sup>Matthew 3:5 <sup><3119></sup>John 1:19), and spiritually the *Church* here (<sup><8122></sup>Hebrews 12:22), in glory (<sup><6210></sup>Revelation 21:2).

**broad ways** — open spaces at the gates of Eastern cities, where the public assembled for business. So, the assemblies of worshippers (So 8:2,3 <sup><1023></sup>Proverbs 1:20-23 <sup><8125></sup>Hebrews 10:25). She had in her first awakening shrunk from them, seeking Jesus Christ alone; but she was desired to seek the footsteps of the flock (So 1:8), so now in her second trial she goes forth to them of herself. “The more the soul grows in grace, and the less it leans on ordinances, the more it prizes and profits by them” [MOODY STUART] (<sup><9736></sup>Psalm 73:16,17).

**found him not** — Nothing short of Jesus Christ can satisfy her (<sup><8278></sup>Job 23:8-10 <sup><9501></sup>Psalm 63:1,2).

**3. watchmen** — ministers (<sup><2516></sup>Isaiah 62:6 <sup><3017></sup>Jeremiah 6:17 <sup><3187></sup>Ezekiel 3:17 <sup><8137></sup>Hebrews 13:17), fit persons to consult (<sup><2311></sup>Isaiah 21:11 <sup><3017></sup>Malachi 2:7).

**found me** — the general ministry of the Word “finds” individually souls in quest of Jesus Christ (<sup><1027></sup>Genesis 24:27, end of verse <sup><4164></sup>Acts 16:14); whereas formalists remain unaffected.

**4. Jesus Christ** is generally “found” near the watchmen and means of grace; but they are not Himself; the star that points to Beth-lehem is not the Sun that has risen there; she hastens past the guideposts to the goal [MOODY STUART]. Not even angels could satisfy Mary, instead of Jesus Christ (<sup><8111></sup>John 20:11-16).

**found him** — (<sup><2519></sup>Isaiah 45:19 <sup><2101></sup>Hosea 6:1-3 <sup><1034></sup>Matthew 13:44-46).

**held him**, etc. — willing to be held; not willing, if not held (<sup><1023></sup>Genesis 32:26 <sup><1019></sup>Matthew 28:9 <sup><1028></sup>Luke 24:28,29 <sup><6111></sup>Revelation 3:11). “As a little weeping child will hold its mother fast, not because it is stronger than she, but because her bowels constrain her not to leave it; so Jesus Christ yearning over the believer *cannot go*, because He *will not*” [DURHAM]. In <sup><2004></sup>Song of Solomon 1:4 it is He who leads the bride into His chambers; here it is she who leads Him into her mother’s. There are times when the grace of Jesus Christ seems to draw us to Him; and others, when we with strong cries draw Him to us and ours. In the East one large apartment often serves for the whole family; so the bride here speaks of her mother’s apartment and her own together. The mention of the “mother” excludes impropriety, and imparts the idea of heavenly love, pure as a sister’s, while ardent as a bride’s; hence the frequent title, “my sister — spouse.” Our mother after the Spirit, is *the Church*, the new Jerusalem (<sup><8185></sup>John 3:5-8 <sup><8109></sup>Galatians 4:19,26); for her we ought to pray continually (<sup><1034></sup>Ephesians 3:14-19), also for the *national* Jerusalem (<sup><2519></sup>Isaiah 62:6,7 <sup><5101></sup>Romans 10:1), also for the *human family*, which is our mother and kindred after the flesh; these our mother’s children have evilly treated us (So 1:6); but, like

our Father, we are to return good for evil (<sup><4184></sup>Matthew 5:44,45), and so bring Jesus Christ home to them (<sup><4122></sup>1 Peter 2:12).

5. So <sup><2117></sup>Song of Solomon 2:7; but *there* it was for the non-interruption of her own fellowship with Jesus Christ that she was anxious; *here* it is for the not grieving of the Holy Ghost, on the part of the daughters of Jerusalem. Jealously avoid levity, heedlessness, and offenses which would mar the gracious work begun in others (<sup><1807></sup>Matthew 18:7 <sup><4122></sup>Acts 2:42,43 <sup><4031></sup>Ephesians 4:30).

### CANTICLE III. — (SO 3:6-5:1) — THE BRIDEGROOM WITH THE BRIDE.

Historically, the ministry of Jesus Christ on earth.

6. New scene (So 3:6-11). The friends of the Bridegroom see a cortege approach. His palanquin and guard.

*cometh out* — rather, “up from”; the wilderness was lower than Jerusalem [MAURER].

*pillars of smoke* — from the perfumes burned around Him and His bride. Image from Israel and the tabernacle (answering to “bed,” <sup><2117></sup>Song of Solomon 3:7) marching through the desert with the pillar of smoke by day and fire by night (<sup><0243></sup>Exodus 14:20), and the pillars of smoke ascending from the altars of incense and of atonement; so Jesus Christ’s righteousness, atonement, and ever-living intercession. Balaam, the last representative of patriarchism, was required to curse the Jewish Church, just as *it* afterwards would not succumb to Christianity without a struggle (<sup><0241></sup>Numbers 22:41), but he had to bless in language like that here (<sup><0245></sup>Numbers 24:5,6). Angels too joyfully ask the same question, when Jesus Christ with the tabernacle of His body (answering to “*His bed*,” <sup><2117></sup>Song of Solomon 3:7 <sup><4014></sup>John 1:14, “dwelt,” *Greek* “tabernacled,” <sup><4121></sup>John 2:21) ascends into heaven (<sup><0248></sup>Psalms 24:8-10); also when they see His glorious bride with Him (<sup><0618></sup>Psalms 68:18 <sup><4173></sup>Revelation 7:13-17). Encouragement to her; amid the darkest trials (So 3:1), she is still on the road to glory (So 3:11) in a palanquin “paved with love” (So 3:10); she is now in soul spiritually “coming,” exhaling the sweet graces, faith, love, joy, peace, prayer, and praise; (the fire is lighted *within*, the “smoke” is seen *without*, <sup><4143></sup>Acts 4:13); it is in the *desert* of trial (So 3:1-3) she gets them; she is the “merchant” buying from Jesus Christ without money or price (<sup><2511></sup>Isaiah 55:1 <sup><4185></sup>Revelation 3:18); just as myrrh and frankincense are got, not in Egypt, but in the Arabian sands and the mountains of Palestine. Hereafter she shall “come” (So 3:6,11) in a glorified body, too

(<sup><1021></sup>Philippians 3:21). Historically, Jesus Christ returning from the wilderness, full of the Holy Ghost (<sup><4001></sup>Luke 4:1,14). The same, “Who is this,” etc. (<sup><2311></sup>Isaiah 63:1,5).

7. In <sup><2116></sup>Song of Solomon 3:6 the *wilderness* character of the Church is portrayed; in <sup><2117></sup>Song of Solomon 3:7,8, its *militant* aspect. In <sup><2118></sup>Song of Solomon 3:9,10, Jesus Christ is seen dwelling in believers, who are His “chariot” and “body.” In <sup><2119></sup>Song of Solomon 3:11, the consummation in glory.

**bed** — palanquin. His body, literally, guarded by a definite number of angels, *threescore*, or sixty (<sup><4053></sup>Matthew 26:53), from the wilderness (<sup><4001></sup>Matthew 4:1,11), and continually (<sup><4003></sup>Luke 2:13 22:43 <sup><4010></sup>Acts 1:10,11); just as six hundred thousand of Israel guarded the Lord’s tabernacle (<sup><4027></sup>Numbers 2:17-32), one for every ten thousand. In contrast to the “bed of sloth” (So 3:1).

**valiant** — (<sup><4053></sup>Joshua 5:13,14). Angels guarding His *tomb* used like words (<sup><4006></sup>Mark 16:6).

**of Israel** — true subjects, not mercenaries.

8. **hold** — not actually grasping them, but having them girt on the thigh ready for use, like their Lord (<sup><4953></sup>Psalm 45:3). So believers too are guarded by angels (<sup><4911></sup>Psalm 91:11 <sup><5014></sup>Hebrews 1:14), and they themselves need “every man” (<sup><4048></sup>Nehemiah 4:18) to be armed (<sup><4901></sup>Psalm 144:1,2 <sup><4704></sup>2 Corinthians 10:4 <sup><4062></sup>Ephesians 6:12,17 <sup><5102></sup>1 Timothy 6:12), and “expert” (<sup><4712></sup>2 Corinthians 2:11).

**because of fear in the night** — Arab marauders often turn a wedding into mourning by a night attack. So the bridal procession of saints in the night of this wilderness is the chief object of Satan’s assault.

9. **chariot** — more elaborately made than the “bed” or travelling litter (So 3:7), from a *Hebrew* root, “to elaborate” [EWALD]. So the temple of “cedar of Lebanon,” as compared with the temporary tabernacle of shittim wood (<sup><4002></sup>Samuel 7:2,6,7 <sup><4054></sup>1 Kings 5:14 6:15-18), Jesus Christ’s body is the antitype, “made” by the Father for Him (<sup><4003></sup>1 Corinthians 1:30 <sup><5005></sup>Hebrews 10:5), the wood answering to His human nature, the gold, His divine; the two being but one Christ.

10. **pillars** — supporting the canopy at the four corners; curtains at the side protect the person within from the sun. Pillars with silver sockets supported the veil that enclosed the holy of holies; emblem of Jesus Christ’s *strength* (<sup><4021></sup>1 Kings 7:21), *Margin*, “silver,” emblem of His *purity* (<sup><4906></sup>Psalm 12:6); so the saints hereafter (<sup><4082></sup>Revelation 3:12).

**bottom** — rather, “the back for resting or reclining on” (*Vulgate* and *Septuagint*) [MAURER]. So the floor and mercy seat, the *resting-place*” of God (<sup>41214</sup>Psalm 132:14) in the temple, was gold (<sup>41061</sup>1 Kings 6:30).

**covering** — rather, “seat,” as in <sup>4859</sup>Leviticus 15:9. Hereafter the saints shall share His *seat* (<sup>46121</sup>Revelation 3:21).

**purple** — the veil of the holiest, partly purple, and the *purple* robe put on Jesus Christ, accord with *English Version*, “*covering*.” “Purple” (including scarlet and crimson) is the emblem of *royalty*, and of *His blood*; typified by the passover lamb’s blood, and the wine when the twelve *sat* or *reclined* at the Lord’s table.

**paved** — translated, like mosaic pavement, with the various acts and promises of love of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost (<sup>43687</sup>Zephaniah 3:17 <sup>43081</sup>John 4:8,16), in contrast with the tables of stone in the “midst” of the ark, covered with writings of stern command (compare <sup>4893</sup>John 19:13); *this* is all grace and love to believers, who answer to “the daughters of Jerusalem” (<sup>48117</sup>John 1:17). The exterior silver and gold, cedar, purple, and guards, may deter, but when the bride enters *within*, she rests on a pavement of love.

**11. Go forth** — (<sup>42816</sup>Matthew 25:6).

**daughters of Zion** — spirits of saints, and angels (<sup>42611</sup>Isaiah 61:10 <sup>43097</sup>Zechariah 9:9).

**crown** — nuptial (<sup>4368</sup>Ezekiel 16:8-12); the Hebrews wore costly crowns or chaplets at weddings (<sup>4916</sup>Psalm 2:6 <sup>4692</sup>Revelation 19:12). The crown of thorns was once His nuptial chaplet, His blood the wedding wine cup (<sup>4895</sup>John 19:5). “His mother,” that so crowned Him, is the *human race*, for He is “the Son of *man*,” not merely the son of Mary. The same mother reconciled to Him (<sup>41239</sup>Matthew 12:50), as the Church, travails in birth for souls, which she presents to Him as a crown (<sup>43001</sup>Philippians 4:1 <sup>4640</sup>Revelation 4:10). Not being ashamed to call the children brethren (<sup>4821</sup>Hebrews 2:11-14), He calls *their* mother *His* mother (<sup>49219</sup>Psalm 22:9 <sup>48829</sup>Romans 8:29 <sup>4621</sup>Revelation 12:1,2).

**behold** — (<sup>43112</sup>2 Thessalonians 1:10).

**day of his espousals** — chiefly final marriage, when the number of the elect is complete (<sup>46611</sup>Revelation 6:11).

**gladness** — (<sup>4965</sup>Psalm 45:15 <sup>4326</sup>Isaiah 62:5 <sup>4697</sup>Revelation 19:7). MOODY STUART observes as to this Canticle (So 3:6-5:1), the center of the Book, these characteristics:

**(1)** The bridegroom takes the chief part, whereas elsewhere the bride is the chief speaker.

**(2)** Elsewhere He is either “King” or “Solomon”; here He is twice called “King Solomon.” The bride is six times here called the “spouse”; never so before or after; also “sister” four times, and, except in the first verse of the next Canticle, nowhere else.

**(3)** He and she are never separate; no absence, no complaint, which abound elsewhere, are in this Canticle.

# CHAPTER 4

## SONG OF SOLOMON 4:1-16.

**1.** Contrast with the bride's state by nature (<sup><2006></sup>Isaiah 1:6) *her state by grace* (So 4:1-7), "perfect through His comeliness put upon her" (<sup><2664></sup>Ezekiel 16:14 <sup><615></sup>John 15:3). The praise of Jesus Christ, unlike that of the world, hurts not, but edifies; as His, not ours, is the glory (<sup><854></sup>John 5:44 <sup><600></sup>Revelation 4:10,11). Seven features of beauty are specified (So 4:1-5) ("lips" and "speech" are but one feature, <sup><2008></sup>Song of Solomon 4:3), the number for *perfection*. To each of these is attached a comparison from nature: the resemblances consist not so much in outward likeness, as in the combined sensations of delight produced by contemplating these natural objects.

**doves** — the large melting eye of the Syrian dove appears especially beautiful amid the foliage of its native groves: so the bride's "eyes within her locks" (<sup><404></sup>Luke 7:44). MAURER for "locks," has "veil"; but locks suit the connection better: so the *Hebrew* is translated (<sup><2402></sup>Isaiah 47:2). The dove was the only bird counted "clean" for sacrifice. Once the heart was "the cage of every unclean and hateful bird." Grace makes the change.

**eyes** — (<sup><102></sup>Matthew 6:22 <sup><418></sup>Ephesians 1:18; contrast <sup><1028></sup>Matthew 5:28 <sup><408></sup>Ephesians 4:18 <sup><616></sup>1 John 2:16). Chaste and guileless ("harmless," <sup><1006></sup>Matthew 10:16, *Margin*; <sup><817></sup>John 1:47). John the Baptist, historically, was the "turtledove" (So 2:12), with eye directed to the coming Bridegroom: his Nazarite unshorn hair answers to "locks" (<sup><802></sup>John 1:29,36).

**hair ... goats** — The hair of goats in the East is fine like silk. As long hair is her glory, and marks her subjection to man (<sup><616></sup>1 Corinthians 11:6-15), so the Nazarite's hair marked his subjection and separation unto God. (Compare <sup><0767></sup>Judges 16:17, with <sup><607></sup>2 Corinthians 6:17 <sup><3014></sup>Titus 2:14 <sup><609></sup>1 Peter 2:9). Jesus Christ cares for the minutest concerns of His saints (<sup><1003></sup>Matthew 10:30).

**appear from** — literally, "*that lie down from*"; lying along the hillside, they seem to *hang from* it: a picture of the bride's hanging tresses.

**Gilead** — beyond Jordan: there stood "the heap of witness" (<sup><0348></sup>Genesis 31:48).

**2. even shorn** — is translated (<sup><1065></sup>1 Kings 6:25), “of one size”; so the point of comparison to *teeth* is their *symmetry* of form; as in “came up from the washing,” the *spotless whiteness*; and in “twins,” the *exact correspondence of the upper and lower teeth*: and in “none barren,” *none wanting*, none without its fellow. Faith is the tooth with which we eat the living bread (<sup><465></sup>John 6:35,54). Contrast the teeth of sinners (<sup><450></sup>Psalm 57:4 <sup><304></sup>Proverbs 30:14); also their end (<sup><481></sup>Psalm 3:7 <sup><4050></sup>Matthew 25:30). Faith leads the flock to the washing (<sup><330></sup>Zechariah 13:1 <sup><461></sup>1 Corinthians 6:11 <sup><5085></sup>Titus 3:5).

**none ... barren** — (<sup><6008></sup>2 Peter 1:8). He who is begotten of God begets instrumentally other sons of God.

**3. thread** — like a delicate fillet. Not thick and white as the leper’s lips (type of sin), which were therefore to be “covered,” as “unclean” (<sup><4835></sup>Leviticus 13:45).

**scarlet** — The blood of Jesus Christ (<sup><2065></sup>Isaiah 6:5-9) cleanses the leprosy, and unseals the lips (<sup><2579></sup>Isaiah 57:19 <sup><2404></sup>Hosea 14:2 <sup><3815></sup>Hebrews 13:15). Rahab’s scarlet thread was a type of it (<sup><0028></sup>Joshua 2:18).

**speech** — not a separate feature from the *lips* (<sup><3809></sup>Zephaniah 3:9 <sup><5006></sup>Colossians 4:6). Contrast “uncircumcised lips” (<sup><0162></sup>Exodus 6:12). MAURER and BURROWES translate, “thy mouth.”

**temples** — rather, *the upper part of the cheek* next the temples: the seat of shamefacedness; so, “within thy locks,” no display (<sup><4105></sup>1 Corinthians 11:5,6,15). Mark of true penitence (<sup><4506></sup>Ezra 9:6 <sup><2466></sup>Ezekiel 16:63). Contrast <sup><2483></sup>Jeremiah 3:3 <sup><2487></sup>Ezekiel 3:7.

**pomegranate** — When cut, it displays in rows seeds pellucid, like crystal, tinged with red. Her modesty is not on the surface, but within, which Jesus Christ can see into.

**4. neck** — stately: in beautiful contrast to the blushing temples (So 4:3); not “stiff” (<sup><2304></sup>Isaiah 48:4 <sup><4055></sup>Acts 7:51), as that of unbroken nature; nor “stretched forth” wantonly (<sup><2306></sup>Isaiah 3:16); nor burdened with the legal yoke (<sup><2014></sup>Lamentations 1:14 <sup><4450></sup>Acts 15:10); but erect in gospel freedom (<sup><2301></sup>Isaiah 52:2).

**tower of David** — probably on Zion. He was a man of war, preparatory to the reign of Solomon, the king of peace. So warfare in the case of Jesus Christ and His saints precedes the coming rest. Each soul won from Satan by Him is a trophy gracing the bride (<sup><0122></sup>Luke 11:22); (each hangs on Him, <sup><2023></sup>Isaiah 22:23,24); also each victory of her faith. As shields adorn a temple’s walls (<sup><2711></sup>Ezekiel 27:11), so necklaces hang on the bride’s neck (<sup><0050></sup>Judges 5:30 <sup><1106></sup>1 Kings 10:16).

**5. breasts** — The bust is left open in Eastern dress. The breastplate of the high priest was made of “two” pieces, folded one on the other, in which were the Urim and Thummim (*lights* and *perfection*). “Faith and love” are the double breastplate (<sup><518></sup>1 Thessalonians 5:8), answering to “hearing the word” and “keeping it,” in a similar connection with breasts (<sup><4127></sup>Luke 12:27,28).

**roes** — He reciprocates her praise (So 2:9). Emblem of *love* and *satisfaction* (<sup><159></sup>Proverbs 5:19).

**feed** — (<sup><212></sup>Psalm 23:2).

**among the lilies** — shrinking from thorns of strife, worldliness, and ungodliness (<sup><1362></sup>2 Samuel 23:6 <sup><137></sup>Matthew 13:7). Roes feed *among*, not *on* the lilies: where these grow, there is moisture producing green pasturage. The lilies represent her white dress (<sup><954></sup>Psalm 45:14 <sup><698></sup>Revelation 19:8).

**6.** Historically, *the hill of frankincense* is Calvary, where, “through the eternal Spirit He offered Himself”; the mountain of myrrh is His embalment (<sup><939></sup>John 19:39) till the resurrection “daybreak.” The third Canticle occupies the one cloudless day of His presence on earth, beginning from the night (So 2:17) and ending with the night of His departure (So 4:6). His promise is almost exactly in the words of her prayer (So 2:17), (the same Holy Ghost breathing in Jesus Christ and His praying people), with the difference that she then looked for His visible coming. He now tells her that when He shall have gone from sight, He still is to be met with spiritually in prayer (<sup><986></sup>Psalm 68:16 <sup><1820></sup>Matthew 28:20), until the everlasting day break, when we shall see face to face (<sup><630></sup>1 Corinthians 13:10,12).

**7.** Assurance that He is going from her in love, not in displeasure (<sup><616></sup>John 16:6,7).

**all fair** — still stronger than <sup><215></sup>Song of Solomon 1:15 <sup><201></sup>Song of Solomon 4:1.

**no spot** — our privilege (<sup><457></sup>Ephesians 5:27 <sup><500></sup>Colossians 2:10); our duty (<sup><187></sup>2 Corinthians 6:17 <sup><123></sup>Jude 1:23 <sup><307></sup>James 1:27).

**8.** Invitation to her to leave the border mountains (the highest worldly elevation) between the hostile lands north of Palestine and the Promised Land (<sup><9510></sup>Psalm 45:10 <sup><1813></sup>Philippians 3:13).

**Amana** — south of Anti-Libanus; the river Abana, or Amana, was near Damascus (<sup><1502></sup>2 Kings 5:12).

**Shenir** — The whole mountain was called *Hermon*; the part held by the Sidonians was called *Sirion*; the part held by the Amorites, *Shenir* (<sup><489B></sup>Deuteronomy 3:9). Infested by the devouring lion and the stealthy and swift leopard (<sup><497B></sup>Psalms 76:4 <sup><491B></sup>Ephesians 6:11 <sup><418B></sup>1 Peter 5:8). Contrasted with the mountain of myrrh, etc. (So 4:6 <sup><211P></sup>Isaiah 2:2); the good land (<sup><238P></sup>Isaiah 35:9).

**with me** — twice repeated emphatically. The presence of Jesus Christ makes up for the absence of all besides (<sup><489B></sup>Luke 18:29,30 <sup><476B></sup>2 Corinthians 6:10). Moses was permitted to see Canaan from Pisgah; Peter, James, and John had a foretaste of glory on the mount of transfiguration.

**9. sister ... spouse** — This title is here first used, as He is soon about to institute the Supper, the pledge of the nuptial union. By the term “sister,” carnal ideas are excluded; the ardor of a spouse’s love is combined with the purity of a sister’s (<sup><254B></sup>Isaiah 54:5; compare <sup><408B></sup>Mark 3:35).

**one** — Even *one* look is enough to secure His love (<sup><382P></sup>Zechariah 12:10 <sup><429B></sup>Luke 23:40-43). Not merely the Church collectively, but each *one* member of it (<sup><483B></sup>Matthew 18:10,14 <sup><415P></sup>Luke 15:7,24,32).

**chain** — necklace (<sup><238B></sup>Isaiah 62:3 <sup><348P></sup>Malachi 3:17), answering to the “shields” hanging in the tower of David (So 4:4). Compare the “ornament” (<sup><418B></sup>1 Peter 3:4); “chains” (<sup><400B></sup>Proverbs 1:9 3:22).

**10. love** — *Hebrew*, “loves”; manifold tokens of thy love.

**much better** — answering to her “better” (So 1:2), but with *increased* force. An Amoebean pastoral character pervades the Song, like the classic Amoebean idylls and eclogues.

**wine** — The love of His saints is a more reviving cordial to Him than wine; for example, at the feast in Simon’s house (<sup><417B></sup>Luke 7:36,47 <sup><408B></sup>John 4:32; compare <sup><380P></sup>Zechariah 10:7).

**smell of ... ointments than all spices** — answering to her praise (So 1:3) with increased force. Fragrant, as being fruits of *His* Spirit in us (<sup><482B></sup>Galatians 5:22).

**11. drop** — always ready to fall, being full of honey, though not always (<sup><410B></sup>Proverbs 10:19) actually *dropping* (So 5:13 <sup><431P></sup>Deuteronomy 32:2 <sup><402B></sup>Matthew 12:34).

**honeycomb** — (<sup><418B></sup>Proverbs 5:3 16:24).

**under thy tongue** — not always *on*, but *under*, the tongue, ready to fall (<sup><452P></sup>Psalms 55:21). Contrast her former state (<sup><408B></sup>Psalms 140:3 <sup><481B></sup>Romans

3:13). “Honey and milk” were the glory of the good land. The change is illustrated in the penitent thief. Contrast <sup><4244></sup>Matthew 27:44 with <sup><4239></sup>Luke 23:39, etc. It was literally with “one” eye, a sidelong glance of love “better than wine,” that he refreshed Jesus Christ (So 4:9,10). “To-day shalt thou be *with Me* (compare <sup><2418></sup>Song of Solomon 4:8) in Paradise” (So 4:12), is the only joyous sentence of His seven utterances on the cross.

**smell of ... garments** — which are often perfumed in the East (<sup><4618></sup>Psalms 45:8). The perfume comes from Him on us (<sup><4912></sup>Psalms 133:2). We draw nigh to God in the perfumed garment of our elder brother (<sup><4072></sup>Genesis 27:27; see <sup><4612></sup>Jude 1:23).

**Lebanon** — abounding in odoriferous trees (<sup><2845></sup>Hosea 14:5-7).

**12.** The *Hebrew* has no “is.” Here she is distinct from the garden (So 5:1), yet identified with it (So 4:16) as being one with Him in His sufferings. Historically the Paradise, into which the soul of Jesus Christ entered at death; and the tomb of Joseph, in which His body was laid amid “myrrh,” etc. (So 4:6), situated in a *nicely kept* garden (compare “gardener,” <sup><4015></sup>John 20:15); “sealed” with a stone (<sup><4126></sup>Matthew 27:66); in which it resembles “wells” in the East (<sup><4028></sup>Genesis 29:3,8). It was in a garden of light Adam fell; in a garden of darkness, Gethsemane, and chiefly that of the tomb, the second Adam retrieved us. Spiritually the garden is the gospel kingdom of heaven. Here all is ripe; previously (So 2:13) it was “the *tender* grape.” The garden is His, though He calls the plants hers (So 4:13) by His gift (<sup><2301></sup>Isaiah 61:3, end).

**spring ... fountain** — Jesus Christ (<sup><4040></sup>John 4:10) sealed, while He was in the sealed tomb: it poured forth its full tide on Pentecost (<sup><4375></sup>John 7:37-39). Still He is a sealed fountain until the Holy Ghost opens it to one (<sup><4311></sup>1 Corinthians 12:3). The Church also is “a garden enclosed” (<sup><4908></sup>Psalms 4:3 <sup><2411></sup>Isaiah 5:1, etc.). Contrast <sup><4909></sup>Psalms 80:9-12. So “a spring” (<sup><2207></sup>Isaiah 27:3 58:11); “sealed” (<sup><4909></sup>Ephesians 4:30 <sup><5129></sup>2 Timothy 2:19). As wives in the East are secluded from public gaze, so believers (<sup><4938></sup>Psalms 83:3 <sup><5108></sup>Colossians 3:3). Contrast the open streams which “pass away” (<sup><4065></sup>Job 6:15-18 <sup><4127></sup>2 Peter 2:17).

**13. orchard** — *Hebrew*, “a paradise,” that is, a pleasure-ground and orchard. Not only flowers, but fruit trees (<sup><4618></sup>John 15:8 <sup><3011></sup>Philippians 1:11).

**camphire** — not camphor (So 1:14), *hennah*, or cypress blooms.

**14. calamus** — “sweet cane” (<sup><4123></sup>Exodus 30:23 <sup><4061></sup>Jeremiah 6:20).

*myrrh and aloes* — Ointments are associated with His death, as well as with feasts (<sup><4017></sup>John 12:7). The bride's ministry of "myrrh and aloes" is recorded (<sup><4039></sup>John 19:39).

**15. of** — This pleasure-ground is not dependent on mere reservoirs; it has a fountain *sufficient to water* many "gardens" (*plural*).

*living* — (<sup><2178></sup>Jeremiah 17:8 <sup><4043></sup>John 4:13,14 7:38,39).

*from Lebanon* — Though the fountain is lowly, the source is lofty; fed by the perpetual snows of Lebanon, refreshingly cool (<sup><2484></sup>Jeremiah 18:14), fertilizing the gardens of Damascus. It springs upon earth; its source is heaven. It is now not "sealed," but open "streams" (<sup><6217></sup>Revelation 22:17).

**16. Awake** — literally, "arise." All besides is ready; one thing alone is wanted — the breath of God. This follows rightly after His death (So 6:12 <sup><4011></sup>Acts 2:1-4). It is His call to the Spirit to come (<sup><4046></sup>John 14:16); in <sup><4038></sup>John 3:8, compared to "the wind"; quickening (<sup><4068></sup>John 6:63 <sup><2709></sup>Ezekiel 27:9). Saints offer the same prayer (<sup><4086></sup>Psalm 85:6 <sup><4082></sup>Habakkuk 3:2). The north wind "*awakes*," or *arises* strongly, namely, the Holy Ghost as a reprover (<sup><4068></sup>John 16:8-11); the south wind "*comes*" gently, namely, the Holy Ghost as the comforter (<sup><4046></sup>John 14:16). The west wind brings rain from the sea (<sup><1184></sup>1 Kings 18:44,45 <sup><2754></sup>Luke 12:54). The east wind is tempestuous (<sup><4072></sup>Job 27:21 <sup><2708></sup>Isaiah 27:8) and withering (<sup><0412></sup>Genesis 41:23). These, therefore, are not wanted; but first the north wind clearing the air (<sup><4072></sup>Job 37:22 <sup><1253></sup>Proverbs 25:23), and then the warm south wind (<sup><4072></sup>Job 37:17); so the Holy Ghost first clearing away mists of gloom, error, unbelief, sin, which intercept the light of Jesus Christ, then infusing spiritual warmth (<sup><4016></sup>2 Corinthians 4:6), causing the graces to exhale their odor.

*Let my beloved*, etc. — *the bride's reply*. The fruit was now at length ripe; the last passover, which He had so desired, is come (<sup><2217></sup>Luke 22:7,15,16,18), the only occasion in which He took charge of the preparations.

*his* — answering to Jesus Christ's "My." She owns that the garden is His, and the fruits in her, which she does not in false humility deny (<sup><4066></sup>Psalm 66:16 <sup><4219></sup>Acts 21:19 <sup><4150></sup>1 Corinthians 15:10) are His (<sup><4058></sup>John 15:8 <sup><4011></sup>Philippians 1:11).

# CHAPTER 5

## SONG OF SOLOMON 5:1-16.

1. Answer to her prayer (<sup><2634></sup>Isaiah 65:24 <sup><6181></sup>Revelation 3:20).

*am come* — already (So 4:16); “come” (<sup><0136></sup>Genesis 28:16).

*sister ... spouse* — As Adam’s was created of his flesh, out of his opened side, there being none on earth on a level with him, so the bride out of the pierced Savior (<sup><4053></sup>Ephesians 5:30-32).

*have gathered ... myrrh* — His course was already complete; the myrrh, etc. (<sup><4011></sup>Matthew 2:11 26:7-12 <sup><6181></sup>John 19:39), emblems of the indwelling of the anointing Holy Ghost, were already gathered.

*spice* — literally, “balsam.”

*have eaten* — answering to her “eat” (So 4:16).

*honeycomb* — distinguished here from liquid “honey” dropping from trees. The last supper, here set forth, is one of *espousal*, a pledge of the future *marriage* (So 8:14 <sup><6181></sup>Revelation 19:9). Feasts often took place in gardens. In the absence of sugar, then unknown, honey was more widely used than with us. His eating honey with milk indicates His true, yet spotless, human nature from infancy (<sup><2175></sup>Isaiah 7:15); and after His resurrection (<sup><0242></sup>Luke 24:42).

*my wine* — (<sup><6881></sup>John 18:11) — a cup of wrath to Him, of mercy to us, whereby God’s Word and promises become to us “milk” (<sup><1910></sup>Psalm 19:10 <sup><4012></sup>1 Peter 2:2). “My” answers to “His” (So 4:16). The myrrh (emblem, by its bitterness, of *repentance*), honey, milk (*incipient faith*), wine (*strong faith*), in reference to believers, imply that He accepts all their graces, however various in degree.

*eat* — He desires to make us partakers in His joy (<sup><2571></sup>Isaiah 55:1,2 <sup><4165></sup>John 6:53-57 <sup><4008></sup>1 John 1:3).

*drink abundantly* — so as to be filled (<sup><4918></sup>Ephesians 5:18; as <sup><3009></sup>Haggai 1:6).

*friends* — (<sup><6155></sup>John 15:15).

**CANTICLE IV. — (SO 5:2-8:4) — FROM THE AGONY OF  
GETHSEMANE TO THE CONVERSION OF SAMARIA.**

2. Sudden change of scene from evening to midnight, from a betrothal feast to cold repulse. He has gone from the feast alone; night is come; He knocks at the door of His espoused; she hears, but in sloth does not shake off half-conscious drowsiness; namely, the disciples' torpor (<sup><4154></sup>Matthew 26:40-43), "the spirit willing, the flesh weak" (compare <sup><4178></sup>Romans 7:18-25 <sup><4186></sup>Galatians 5:16,17,24). Not *total* sleep. The lamp was burning beside the *slumbering* wise virgin, but wanted trimming (<sup><4155></sup>Matthew 25:5-7). It is *His* voice that rouses her (Jon 1:6 <sup><4154></sup>Ephesians 5:14 <sup><4181></sup>Revelation 3:20). Instead of bitter reproaches, He addresses her by the most endearing titles, "my sister, my love," etc. Compare His thought of *Peter* after the denial (<sup><4167></sup>Mark 16:7).

**dew** — which falls heavily in summer nights in the East (see <sup><4188></sup>Luke 9:58).

**drops of the night** — (<sup><4212></sup>Psalm 22:2 <sup><4224></sup>Luke 22:44). His death is not *expressed*, as unsuitable to the allegory, a song of love and joy; <sup><4181></sup>Song of Solomon 5:4 refers to the scene in the judgment hall of Caiaphas, when Jesus Christ employed the cock-crowing and look of love to awaken Peter's sleeping conscience, so that his "bowels were moved" (<sup><4228></sup>Luke 22:61,62); <sup><4186></sup>Song of Solomon 5:5,6, the disciples with "myrrh," etc. (<sup><4204></sup>Luke 24:1,5), seeking Jesus Christ in the tomb, but finding Him not, for He has "withdrawn Himself" (<sup><4174></sup>John 7:34 13:33); <sup><4181></sup>Song of Solomon 5:7, the trials by watchmen extend through the whole night of His withdrawal from Gethsemane to the resurrection; they took off the "veil" of Peter's disguise; also, literally the linen cloth from the young man (<sup><4165></sup>Mark 14:51); <sup><4188></sup>Song of Solomon 5:8, the sympathy of friends (<sup><4237></sup>Luke 23:27).

**undefiled** — not polluted by spiritual adultery (<sup><4146></sup>Revelation 14:4 <sup><5001></sup>James 4:4).

3. Trivial excuses (<sup><4148></sup>Luke 14:18).

**coat** — rather, the inmost vest, next the skin, taken off before going to bed.

**washed ... feet** — before going to rest, for they had been soiled, from the Eastern custom of wearing sandals, not shoes. Sloth (<sup><4107></sup>Luke 11:7) and despondency (<sup><4177></sup>Deuteronomy 7:17-19).

4. A key in the East is usually a piece of wood with pegs in it corresponding to small holes in a wooden bolt within, and is put through a hole in the door, and thus draws the bolt. So Jesus Christ "puts forth His hand (namely, His Spirit, <sup><4184></sup>Ezekiel 3:14), by (*Hebrew*, 'from,' so in <sup><4189></sup>Song of Solomon 2:9) the hole"; in "chastening" (<sup><4182></sup>Psalm 38:2

Revelation 3:14-22, singularly similar to this passage), and other unexpected ways letting Himself in (<sup><2273></sup>Luke 22:61,62).

**bowels ... moved for him** — It is His which are first troubled for us, and which cause ours to be troubled for Him (<sup><2612></sup>Jeremiah 31:20 <sup><28108></sup>Hosea 11:8).

**5. dropped with myrrh** — The best proof a bride could give her lover of welcome was to anoint herself (the back of the hands especially, as being the coolest part of the body) *profusely* with the *best* perfumes (<sup><12023></sup>Exodus 30:23 <sup><1002></sup>Esther 2:12 <sup><3107></sup>Proverbs 7:17); “sweet-smelling” is in the *Hebrew* rather, “spontaneously exuding” from the tree, and therefore the *best*. She designed also to anoint Him, whose “head was filled with the drops of night” (<sup><2411></sup>Luke 24:1). The myrrh typifies *bitter* repentance, the fruit of the Spirit’s unction (<sup><7021></sup>2 Corinthians 1:21,22).

**handles of the lock** — sins which closed the heart against Him.

**6. withdrawn** — He *knocked* when she was sleeping; for to have left her then would have ended in the death sleep; He *withdraws* now that she is roused, as she needs correction (<sup><347></sup>Jeremiah 2:17,19), and can appreciate and safely bear it now, which she could not then. “The strong He’ll strongly try” (<sup><4003></sup>1 Corinthians 10:13).

**when he spake** — rather, “because of His speaking”; at the remembrance of His tender words (<sup><3302></sup>Job 29:2,3 <sup><32713></sup>Psalms 27:13 142:7), or *till He should speak*. no answer — (<sup><3213></sup>Job 23:3-9 30:20 34:29 <sup><21844></sup>Lamentations 3:44). Weak faith receives immediate comfort (<sup><31844></sup>Luke 8:44,47,48); strong faith is tried with delay (<sup><11522></sup>Matthew 15:22,23).

**7. watchmen** — historically, the Jewish priests, etc. (see on <sup><21719></sup>Song of Solomon 5:2); spiritually, ministers (<sup><2316></sup>Isaiah 62:6 <sup><3837></sup>Hebrews 13:17), faithful in “smiting” (<sup><3815></sup>Psalms 141:5) too harsh; or, perhaps, unfaithful; disliking her zeal wherewith she sought Jesus Christ, first, with spiritual prayer, “opening” her heart to Him, and then in charitable works “about the city”; miscalling it fanaticism (<sup><2615></sup>Isaiah 66:5), and taking away her veil (the greatest indignity to an Eastern lady), as though she were positively immodest. She had before sought Him by night in the streets, under strong affection (So 3:2-4), and so without rebuff from “the watchmen,” found Him immediately; but now after sinful neglect, she encounters pain and delay. God forgives believers, but it is a serious thing to draw on His forgiveness; so the *growing reserve* of God towards Israel observable in Judges, as His people repeat their demands on His grace.

8. She turns from the unsympathizing watchmen to humbler persons, not yet themselves knowing Him, but in the way towards it. Historically, His secret friends in the night of His withdrawal (<sup><2277></sup>Luke 23:27,28). Inquirers *may* find (“*if ye find*”) Jesus Christ before she who has grieved His Spirit finds Him again.

**tell** — in prayer (<sup><3161></sup>James 5:16).

**sick of love** — from an opposite cause (So 2:5) than through excess of delight at His *presence*; now excess of pain at His *absence*.

9. Her own beauty (<sup><2164></sup>Ezekiel 16:14), and lovesickness for Him, elicit now their enquiry (<sup><4156></sup>Matthew 5:16); heretofore “other lords besides Him had dominion over them”; thus they had seen “no beauty in Him” (<sup><2343></sup>Isaiah 26:13 53:2).

10. (<sup><6185></sup>1 Peter 3:15).

**white and ruddy** — health and beauty. So David (equivalent to *beloved*), His forefather after the flesh, and type (<sup><9742></sup>1 Samuel 17:42). “The Lamb” is at once His nuptial and sacrificial name (<sup><6019></sup>1 Peter 1:19 <sup><6907></sup>Revelation 19:7), characterized by white and red; *white*, His spotless manhood (<sup><6014></sup>Revelation 1:14). The *Hebrew* for *white* is properly “illuminated by the sun,” white as the light” (compare <sup><4172></sup>Matthew 17:2); *red*, in His blood-dyed garment as slain (<sup><2343></sup>Isaiah 63:1-3 <sup><6088></sup>Revelation 5:6 19:13). Angels are white, not red; the blood of martyrs does not enter heaven; His alone is seen there.

**chiefest** — literally, “a standard bearer”; that is, as conspicuous above all others, as a standard bearer is among hosts (<sup><9517></sup>Psalms 45:7 89:6 <sup><2310></sup>Isaiah 11:10 55:4 <sup><3120></sup>Hebrews 2:10; compare <sup><1088></sup>2 Samuel 18:3 <sup><8323></sup>Job 33:23 <sup><5109></sup>Philippians 2:9-11 <sup><6065></sup>Revelation 1:5). The chief of sinners needs the “chiefest” of Saviours.

11. **head ... gold** — *the Godhead* of Jesus Christ, as distinguished from His *heel*, that is, His manhood, which was “bruised” by Satan; both together being one Christ (<sup><6103></sup>1 Corinthians 11:3). Also His sovereignty, as Nebuchadnezzar, the supreme king was “the head of gold” (<sup><2122></sup>Daniel 2:32-38 <sup><5008></sup>Colossians 1:18), the highest creature, compared with Him, is brass, iron, and clay. “Preciousness” (*Greek*, <sup><6017></sup>1 Peter 2:7).

**bushy** — *curled*, token of Headship. In contrast with her *flowing* locks (So 4:1), the token of her subjection to Him (<sup><3004></sup>Psalms 8:4-8 <sup><6103></sup>1 Corinthians 11:3,6-15). The *Hebrew* is (pendulous as) the *branches of a palm*, which, when in leaf, resemble waving plumes of feathers.

**black** — implying youth; no “gray hairs” (<sup><19427></sup>Psalm 102:27 110:3,4 <sup><3009></sup>Hosea 7:9). Jesus Christ was crucified in the prime of vigor and manliness. In heaven, on the other hand, His hair is “white,” He being the Ancient of days (<sup><2009></sup>Daniel 7:9). These contrasts often concur in Him (So 5:10), “white and ruddy”; here the “raven” (So 5:12), the “dove,” as both with Noah in the ark (<sup><0081></sup>Genesis 8:11); emblems of judgment and mercy.

**12. as the eyes of doves** — rather, “as doves” (<sup><3983></sup>Psalm 68:13); bathing in “the rivers”; so combining in their “silver” feathers the *whiteness* of milk with the *sparkling brightness* of the water trickling over them (<sup><4016></sup>Matthew 3:16). The “milk” may allude to the white around the pupil of the eye. The “waters” refer to the eye as the fountain of *tears of sympathy* (<sup><3065></sup>Ezekiel 16:5,6 <sup><0941></sup>Luke 19:41). Vivacity, purity, and love, are the three features typified.

**fitly set** — as a gem in a ring; as the precious stones in the high priest’s breastplate. Rather, translate as *Vulgate* (the doves), *sitting at the fullness* of the stream; by the full stream; or, as MAURER (the eyes) “*set in fullness*, not sunk in their sockets (<sup><6116></sup>Revelation 5:6), (“seven,” expressing *full* perfection), (<sup><3897></sup>Zechariah 3:9 4:10).

**13. cheeks** — the seat of beauty, according to the *Hebrew* meaning [GESENIUS]. Yet men smote and spat on them (<sup><2816></sup>Isaiah 50:6).

**bed** — full, like the raised surface of the garden bed; fragrant with ointments, as beds with aromatic plants (literally, “balsam”).

**sweet flowers** — rather, “*terraces* of aromatic herbs” — “*high-raised* parterres of sweet plants,” in parallelism to “bed,” which comes from a *Hebrew* root, meaning “elevation.”

**lips** — (<sup><3952></sup>Psalm 45:2 <sup><4046></sup>John 7:46).

**lilies** — red lilies. Soft and gentle (<sup><4022></sup>1 Peter 2:22,23). How different lips were man’s (<sup><4217></sup>Psalm 22:7)!

**dropping ... myrrh** — namely, His lips, just as the sweet dewdrops which hang in the calyx of the lily.

**14. rings set with ... beryl** — *Hebrew, Tarshish*, so called from the city. The ancient chrysolite, gold in color (*Septuagint*), our topaz, one of the stones on the high priest’s breastplate, also in the foundation of New Jerusalem (<sup><6219></sup>Revelation 21:19,20; also <sup><2006></sup>Daniel 10:6). “Are as,” is plainly to be supplied, see in <sup><2163></sup>Song of Solomon 5:13 a similiar ellipsis; not as MOODY STUART: “*have* gold rings.” The hands bent in are compared to beautiful rings, in which beryl is set, as the nails are in the fingers.

BURROWES explains the rings as *cylinders* used as signets, such as are found in Nineveh, and which resemble fingers. A ring is the token of sonship (<sup><4152></sup>Luke 15:22). A slave was not allowed to wear a *gold* ring. He imparts His sonship and freedom to us (<sup><4007></sup>Galatians 4:7); also of authority (<sup><0442></sup>Genesis 41:42; compare <sup><4162></sup>John 6:27). He seals us in the name of God with His signet (<sup><6002></sup>Revelation 7:2-4), compare below, <sup><2180></sup>Song of Solomon 8:6, where she desires to be herself *a signet-ring* on His arms; so “graven on the palms,” etc., that is, on the signet-ring in His hand (<sup><2306></sup>Isaiah 49:16; contrast <sup><3123></sup>Haggai 2:23, with <sup><2124></sup>Jeremiah 22:24).

**belly** — BURROWES and MOODY STUART translate, “body.” NEWTON, as it is elsewhere, “bowels”; namely, His compassion (<sup><3214></sup>Psalms 22:14 <sup><2351></sup>Isaiah 63:15 <sup><2310></sup>Jeremiah 31:20 <sup><2108></sup>Hosea 11:8).

**bright** — literally, “elaborately wrought so as to shine,” so His “prepared” body (<sup><2805></sup>Hebrews 10:5); the “ivory palace” of the king (<sup><1958></sup>Psalms 45:8); spotless, pure, so the bride’s “neck is as to tower of *ivory*” (So 7:4).

**sapphires** — spangling in the girdle around Him (<sup><2105></sup>Daniel 10:5). “To the pure all things are pure.” As in statuary to the artist the partly undraped figure is suggestive only of beauty, free from indelicacy, so to the saint the personal excellencies of Jesus Christ, typified under the ideal of the noblest human form. As, however, the bride and bridegroom are in public, the usual robes on the person, richly ornamented, are presupposed (<sup><2315></sup>Isaiah 11:5). Sapphires indicate His *heavenly* nature (so <sup><4183></sup>John 3:13, “*is in heaven*”), even in His humiliation, *overlaying* or cast “over” His ivory human body (<sup><0240></sup>Exodus 24:10). Sky-blue in color, the *height* and *depth* of the love of Jesus Christ (<sup><4188></sup>Ephesians 3:18).

**15. pillars** — strength and steadfastness. Contrast man’s “legs” (<sup><2123></sup>Ecclesiastes 12:3). Allusion to the temple (<sup><1058></sup>1 Kings 5:8,9 7:21), the “cedars” of “Lebanon” (<sup><4270></sup>Psalms 147:10). Jesus Christ’s “legs” were not broken on the cross, though the thieves’ were; on them rests the weight of our salvation (<sup><4733></sup>Psalms 75:3).

**sockets of fine gold** — His sandals, answering to the bases of the pillars; “set up from everlasting” (<sup><2182></sup>Proverbs 8:22,23) to the feet, “of fine gold.” He was tried in the fire and found without alloy.

**countenance** — rather, “His aspect,” including both *mien* and *stature* (compare <sup><1231></sup>2 Samuel 23:21, *Margin*; with <sup><3123></sup>1 Chronicles 11:23). From the several *parts*, she proceeds to the general effect of the *whole* person of Jesus Christ.

**Lebanon** — so called from its *white* limestone rocks.

**excellent** — literally, “choice,” that is, fair and tall as the cedars on Lebanon (<sup><350B></sup>Ezekiel 31:3, etc.). Majesty is the prominent thought (<sup><420B></sup>Psalm 21:5). Also the cedars’ *duration* (<sup><301B></sup>Hebrews 1:11); *greenness* (<sup><423B></sup>Luke 23:31), and refuge afforded by it (<sup><367B></sup>Ezekiel 17:22,23).

**16.** Literally, “His *palate* is *sweetness*, yea, all over loveliness,” that is, He is the *essence* of these qualities.

**mouth** — so <sup><200B></sup>Song of Solomon 1:2, not the same as “lips” (So 5:13), His breath (<sup><2310B></sup>Isaiah 11:4 <sup><432B></sup>John 20:22). “All over,” all the beauties scattered among creatures are transcendently concentrated in Him (<sup><5019B></sup>Colossians 1:19 2:9).

**my beloved** — for I love Him.

**my friend** — for He loves me (<sup><1083B></sup>Proverbs 18:24). Holy boasting (<sup><484B></sup>Psalm 34:2 <sup><403B></sup>1 Corinthians 1:31).

# CHAPTER 6

## SONG OF SOLOMON 6:1-13.

1. Historically, at Jesus Christ's crucifixion and burial, Joseph of Arimathea, and Nicodemus, and others, joined with His professed disciples. By speaking of Jesus Christ, the bride does good not only to her own soul, but to others (see on <sup><2100></sup>Song of Solomon 1:4; <sup><4186></sup>Malachi 3:16; <sup><4154></sup>Matthew 5:14-16). Compare the hypocritical use of similar words (<sup><4128></sup>Matthew 2:8).

2. *gone down* — Jerusalem was on a hill (answering to its *moral* elevation), and the gardens were at a little distance in the valleys below.

*beds of spices* — (balsam) which He Himself calls the “mountain of myrrh,” etc. (So 4:6), and again (So 8:14), the resting-place of His body amidst spices, and of His soul in paradise, and now in heaven, where He stands as High Priest for ever. Nowhere else in the Song is there mention of mountains of spices.

*feed in ... gardens* — that is, in the churches, though He may have withdrawn for a time from the individual believer: she implies an invitation to the daughters of Jerusalem to enter His spiritual Church, and become lilies, made white by His blood. He is gathering some lilies now to plant on earth, others to transplant into heaven (So 5:1 <sup><1634></sup>Genesis 5:24 <sup><4128></sup>Mark 4:28,29 <sup><4176></sup>Acts 7:60).

3. In speaking of Jesus Christ to others, she regains her own assurance. Literally, “I am *for* my beloved ... *for me*.” Reverse order from <sup><2116></sup>Song of Solomon 2:16. She *now*, after the season of darkness, grounds her convictions on His love towards her, more than on hers towards Him (<sup><4638></sup>Deuteronomy 33:3). *There*, it was the young believer concluding that she was His, from the sensible assurance that He was hers.

4. *Tirzah* — meaning “pleasant” (<sup><8121></sup>Hebrews 13:21); “well-pleasing” (<sup><4154></sup>Matthew 5:14); the royal city of one of the old Canaanite kings (<sup><4124></sup>Joshua 12:24); and after the revolt of Israel, the royal city of its kings, before Omri founded Samaria (<sup><1168></sup>1 Kings 16:8,15). No ground for assigning a later date than the time of Solomon to the Song, as Tirzah was even in his time the capital of the north (Israel), as Jerusalem was of the south (Judah).

**Jerusalem** — residence of the kings of *Judah*, as Tirzah, of *Israel* (<sup><3801></sup>Psalm 48:1, etc.; <sup><3901></sup>Psalm 122:1-3 125:1,2). Loveliness, security, unity, and loyalty; also the union of Israel and Judah in the Church (<sup><29113></sup>Isaiah 11:13 <sup><3168></sup>Jeremiah 3:18 <sup><3570></sup>Ezekiel 37:16,17,22; compare <sup><3122></sup>Hebrews 12:22 <sup><6212></sup>Revelation 21:2,12).

**terrible** — awe-inspiring. Not only armed as a city on the defensive, but as an army on the offensive.

**banners** — (See on <sup><2180></sup>Song of Solomon 5:10; <sup><3104></sup>Psalm 60:4); Jehovah-nissi (<sup><4708></sup>2 Corinthians 10:4).

5. (So 4:9 <sup><1328></sup>Genesis 32:28 <sup><1231></sup>Exodus 32:9-14 <sup><3124></sup>Hosea 12:4). This is the way “the army” (So 6:4) “overcomes” not only enemies, but Jesus Christ Himself, with eyes fixed on Him (<sup><4215></sup>Psalm 25:15 <sup><4112></sup>Matthew 11:12). Historically. <sup><2103></sup>Song of Solomon 6:3-5 represent the restoration of Jesus Christ to His Church at the resurrection; His sending her forth as an army, with new powers (<sup><4165></sup>Mark 16:15-18,20); His rehearsing the *same* instructions (see on <sup><2103></sup>Song of Solomon 6:6) as when with them (<sup><2244></sup>Luke 24:44).

**overcome** — literally, “have taken me by storm.”

6. Not vain repetition of <sup><2101></sup>Song of Solomon 4:1,2. The use of the same words shows His love unchanged after her temporary unfaithfulness (<sup><3386></sup>Malachi 3:6).

8. **threescore** — indefinite number, as in <sup><2317></sup>Song of Solomon 3:7. Not queens, etc., of *Solomon*, but witnesses of the espousals, rulers of the earth contrasted with the saints, who, though many, are but “one” bride (<sup><2525></sup>Isaiah 52:15 <sup><2225></sup>Luke 22:25,26 <sup><3121></sup>John 17:21 <sup><3071></sup>1 Corinthians 10:17). The one Bride is contrasted with the many wives whom Eastern kings had in violation of the marriage law (<sup><1101></sup>1 Kings 11:1-3).

9. Hollow professors, like half wives, have no part in the one bride.

**only one of her mother** — namely, “Jerusalem above” (<sup><304></sup>Galatians 4:26). The “little sister” (So 8:8) is not inconsistent with her being “the only one”; for that sister is one with herself (<sup><3106></sup>John 10:16).

**choice** — (<sup><3009></sup>Ephesians 1:4 <sup><5213></sup>2 Thessalonians 2:13). As she exalted Him above all others (So 5:10), so He now her.

**daughters ... blessed her** — (<sup><2188></sup>Isaiah 8:18 61:9 <sup><3164></sup>Ezekiel 16:14 <sup><5112></sup>2 Thessalonians 1:10). So at her appearance after Pentecost (<sup><4043></sup>Acts 4:13 6:15 24:25 26:28).

**10.** The words expressing the admiration of the daughters. Historically (<sup><415B></sup>Acts 5:24-39).

**as the morning** — As yet she is not come to the fullness of her light (<sup><214B></sup>Proverbs 4:18).

**moon** — shining in the night, by light borrowed from the sun; so the bride, in the darkness of this world, reflects the light of the Sun of righteousness (<sup><415B></sup>2 Corinthians 3:18).

**sun** — Her light of justification is perfect, for it is His (<sup><415B></sup>2 Corinthians 5:21 <sup><214B></sup>1 John 4:17). The moon has less light, and has only one half illuminated; so the bride's sanctification is as yet imperfect. Her future glory (<sup><415B></sup>Matthew 13:43).

**army** — (So 6:4). The climax requires this to be applied to the starry and angelic hosts, from which God is called Lord of Sabaoth. Her final glory (<sup><415B></sup>Genesis 15:5 <sup><214B></sup>Daniel 12:3 <sup><611B></sup>Revelation 12:1). The Church Patriarchal, "the morning"; Levitical, "the moon"; Evangelical, "the sun"; Triumphant, "the bannered army" (<sup><614B></sup>Revelation 19:14).

**11.** The bride's words; for she everywhere is the narrator, and often soliloquizes, which He never does. The first garden (So 2:11-13) was that of spring, full of flowers and grapes not yet ripe; the second, autumn, with spices (which are always connected with the person of Jesus Christ), and nothing unripe (So 4:13, etc.). The third here, of "nuts," from the previous autumn; the end of winter, and verge of spring; the Church in the upper room (<sup><415B></sup>Acts 1:13, etc.), when one dispensation was just closed, the other not yet begun; the hard shell of the old needing to be broken, and its inner sweet kernel extracted [ORIGEN] (<sup><212B></sup>Luke 24:27,32); waiting for the Holy Ghost to usher in spiritual spring. The *walnut* is meant, with a bitter outer husk, a hard shell, and sweet kernel. So the Word is distasteful to the careless; when awakened, the sinner finds the letter hard, until the Holy Ghost reveals the sweet inner spirit.

**fruits of the Valley** — MAURER translates, "the *blooming products* of the river," that is, the plants growing on the *Margin* of the river flowing through the garden. She goes to watch the *first* sproutings of the various plants.

**12.** Sudden outpourings of the Spirit on Pentecost (<sup><415B></sup>Acts 2:1-13), while the Church was using the means (answering to "the garden," <sup><214B></sup>Song of Solomon 6:1 <sup><415B></sup>1 John 3:8).

**Ammi-nadib** — supposed to me one proverbial for swift driving. Similarly (So 1:9). Rather, "my willing people" (<sup><415B></sup>Psalms 110:3). A willing chariot

bore a “willing people”; or Nadib is *the Prince*, Jesus Christ (<sup><3887></sup>Psalm 68:17). She is borne in a moment into His presence (<sup><4116></sup>Ephesians 2:6).

**13.** Entreaty of the daughters of Jerusalem to her, in her chariot-like flight from them (compare <sup><1122></sup>2 Kings 2:12 <sup><1094></sup>2 Samuel 19:14).

**Shulamite** — new name applied to her now for the first time. *Feminine* of Solomon, Prince of Peace; His bride, daughter of peace, accepting and proclaiming it (<sup><2817></sup>Isaiah 52:7 <sup><4142></sup>John 14:27 <sup><4151></sup>Romans 5:1 <sup><4127></sup>Ephesians 2:17). Historically, this name answers to the time when, not without a divine design in it, the young Church met in *Solomon’s* porch (<sup><4111></sup>Acts 3:11 5:12). The entreaty, “Return, O Shulamite,” answers to the people’s desire to keep Peter and John, after the lame man was healed, when they were about to enter the temple. Their reply attributing the glory not to themselves, but to Jesus Christ, answers to the bride’s reply here, “What will ye see” in me? “As it were,” etc. She accepts the name Shulamite, as truly describing her. But adds, that though “one” (So 6:9), she is nevertheless “two.” Her glories are her Lord’s, beaming through her (<sup><4151></sup>Ephesians 5:31,32). The two armies are the family of Jesus Christ in heaven, and that on earth, joined and one with Him; the one militant, the other triumphant. Or Jesus Christ and His ministering angels are one army, the Church the other, both being one (<sup><4172></sup>John 17:21,22). Allusion is made to Mahanaim (meaning *two hosts*), the scene of Jacob’s victorious conflict by prayer (<sup><1032></sup>Genesis 32:2,9,22-30). Though she is peace, yet she has warfare here, between flesh and spirit within and foes without; her strength, as Jacob’s at Mahanaim, is Jesus Christ and His host enlisted on her side by prayer; whence she obtains those graces which raise the admiration of the daughters of Jerusalem.

# CHAPTER 7

## SONG OF SOLOMON 7:1-13.

**1. thy feet** — rather, “thy goings” (<sup><4970F></sup>Psalm 17:5). Evident allusion to <sup><250F></sup>Isaiah 52:7: “*How beautiful ... are the feet of him ... that publisheth peace*” (Shulamite, <sup><2043></sup>Song of Solomon 6:13).

**shoes** — Sandals are richly jewelled in the East (<sup><4152></sup>Luke 15:22 <sup><4085></sup>Ephesians 6:15). She is evidently “on the mountains,” whither she was wafted (So 6:12), *above* the daughters of Jerusalem, who therefore portray her *feet* first.

**daughter** — of God the Father, with whom Jesus Christ is one (<sup><4189></sup>Matthew 5:9), “children of (the) God” (of *peace*), equivalent to Shulamite (<sup><9510></sup>Psalm 45:10-15 <sup><4082></sup>2 Corinthians 6:18), as well as bride of Jesus Christ.

**prince’s** — therefore princely herself, freely giving the word of life to others, not sparing her “feet,” as in <sup><208></sup>Song of Solomon 5:3 <sup><4221></sup>Exodus 12:11. To act on the offensive is defensive to ourselves.

**joints** — rather, “the rounding”; the full graceful curve of the hips in the female figure; like the *rounding of a necklace* (as the *Hebrew* for “jewels” means). Compare with the *English Version*, <sup><4013></sup>Ephesians 4:13-16 <sup><4129></sup>Colossians 2:19. Or, applying it to the girdle binding together the robes round the hips (<sup><4164></sup>Ephesians 6:14).

**cunning workman** — (<sup><4394></sup>Psalm 139:14-16 <sup><4110></sup>Ephesians 2:10,22:5:29,30,32).

**2. navel** — rather, “girdle-clasp,” called from the part of the person underneath. The “shoes” (So 7:1) prove that *dress* is throughout presupposed on all parts where it is usually worn. She is “a bride adorned for her husband”; the “uncomely parts,” being most adorned (<sup><4123></sup>1 Corinthians 12:23). The girdle-clasp was adorned with red rubies resembling the “round goblet” (crater or *mixer*) of spice — mixed wine (not “liquor,” <sup><2182></sup>Song of Solomon 8:2 <sup><2152></sup>Isaiah 5:22). The wine of the “New Testament in His blood” (<sup><4220></sup>Luke 22:20). The spiritual exhilaration by it was mistaken for that caused by new wine (<sup><4123></sup>Acts 2:13-17 <sup><4168></sup>Ephesians 5:18).

**belly** — that is, *the vesture* on it. As in <sup>4963</sup>Psalm 45:13,14, gold and needlework compose the bride's attire, so golden-colored "wheat" and white "lilies" here. The ripe grain, in token of harvest joy, used to be decorated with lilies; so the accumulated spiritual food (<sup>4065</sup>John 6:35 12:24), free from chaff, not fenced with thorns, but made attractive by lilies ("believers," <sup>2100</sup>Song of Solomon 2:2 <sup>4426</sup>Acts 2:46,47 5:13,14, in common partaking of it). Associated with the exhilarating wine cup (<sup>3097</sup>Zechariah 9:17), as here.

3. The daughters of Jerusalem describe her in the same terms as Jesus Christ in <sup>2105</sup>Song of Solomon 4:5. The testimonies of heaven and earth coincide.

**twins** — faith and love.

4. **tower of ivory** — In <sup>2104</sup>Song of Solomon 4:4, Jesus Christ saith, "a tower of David builded for an armory." Strength and conquest are the main thought in His description; here, beauty and polished whiteness; contrast <sup>2101</sup>Song of Solomon 1:1-17.

**fishpools** — seen by BURCKHARDT, clear (<sup>6201</sup>Revelation 22:1), deep, quiet, and full (<sup>4120</sup>1 Corinthians 2:10,15).

**Heshbon** — east of Jordan, residence of the Amorite king, Sihon (<sup>4025</sup>Numbers 21:25, etc.), afterwards held by Gad.

**Bath-rabbim** — "daughter of a multitude"; a crowded thoroughfare. Her eyes (So 4:1) are called by Jesus Christ, "doves eyes," waiting on Him. But here, looked on by the daughters of Jerusalem, they are compared to a placid lake. She is calm even amidst the crowd (<sup>2102</sup>Proverbs 8:2 <sup>4363</sup>John 16:33).

**nose** — or, face.

**tower of Lebanon** — a border-fortress, watching the hostile Damascus. Towards Jesus Christ her face was full of holy shame (see on <sup>2104</sup>Song of Solomon 4:1; <sup>2103</sup>Song of Solomon 4:3); towards spiritual foes, like a watchtower (<sup>3101</sup>Habakkuk 2:1 <sup>4137</sup>Mark 13:37 <sup>4043</sup>Acts 4:13), elevated, so that she looks not up from earth to heaven, but down from heaven to earth. If we retain "nose," discernment of spiritual fragrance is meant.

5. **upon thee** — the headdress "upon" her.

**Carmel** — signifying a well-cultivated field (<sup>2302</sup>Isaiah 35:2). In <sup>2105</sup>Song of Solomon 5:15 He is compared to *majestic* Lebanon; she hero, to *fruitful* Carmel. Her headdress, or crown (<sup>3102</sup>2 Timothy 4:8 <sup>4104</sup>1 Peter 5:4). Also

the souls won by her (<sup><5129></sup>1 Thessalonians 2:19,20), a token of her fruitfulness.

**purple** — royalty (<sup><6109></sup>Revelation 1:6). As applied to hair, it expresses the glossy splendor of black hair (literally, “pendulous hair”) so much admired in the East (So 4:1). While the King compares her hair to the flowering hair of goats (the token of her *subjection*), the daughters of Jerusalem compare it to *royal purple*.

**galleries** — (so <sup><2117></sup>Song of Solomon 1:17, *Margin*; <sup><6218></sup>Revelation 21:3). But MAURER translates here, “flowing ringlets”; with these, as with “thongs” (so LEE, from the *Arabic* translates it) “the King is held” bound (So 6:5 <sup><1065></sup>Proverbs 6:25). Her purple crowns of martyrdom especially captivated the King, appearing from His galleries (<sup><4175></sup>Acts 7:55,56). As Samson’s strength was in his locks (<sup><07167></sup>Judges 16:17). Here first the daughters see the King themselves.

6. Nearer advance of the daughters to the Church (<sup><4127></sup>Acts 2:47 5:13, end). Love to her is the first token of love to Him (<sup><6111></sup>1 John 5:1, end).

**delights** — fascinating charms to them and to the King (So 7:5 <sup><2309></sup>Isaiah 62:4, Hephzi-bah). Hereafter, too (<sup><3817></sup>Zephaniah 3:17 <sup><3122></sup>Malachi 3:12 <sup><6219></sup>Revelation 21:9).

7. **palm tree** — (<sup><39212></sup>Psalms 92:12). The sure sign of *water near* (<sup><01572></sup>Exodus 15:27 <sup><8138></sup>John 7:38).

**clusters** — not of dates, as MOODY STUART thinks. The parallelism (So 7:8), “clusters of the vine,” shows it is here clusters of grapes. Vines were often trained (termed “wedded”) on other trees.

8. The daughters are no longer content to admire, but resolve to lay hold of her fruits, high though these be. The palm stem is bare for a great height, and has its crown of fruit-laden boughs at the summit. It is the symbol of triumphant joy (<sup><8213></sup>John 12:13); so hereafter (<sup><6109></sup>Revelation 7:9).

**breasts** — (<sup><23611></sup>Isaiah 66:11).

**the vine** — Jesus Christ (<sup><3847></sup>Hosea 14:7, end; <sup><6151></sup>John 15:1).

**nose** — that is, breath; the Holy Ghost breathed into her *nostrils* by Him, whose “mouth is most sweet” (So 5:16).

**apples** — citrons, off the tree to which He is likened (So 2:3).

9. **roof of thy mouth** — thy voice (<sup><11523></sup>Proverbs 15:23).

**best wine** — the *new* wine of the gospel kingdom (<sup><41425></sup>Mark 14:25), poured out at Pentecost (<sup><4404></sup>Acts 2:4,13,17).

**for my beloved** — (So 4:10). Here first the daughters call Him theirs, and become one with the bride. The steps successively are (So 1:5) where they misjudge her (So 3:11); <sup><2178></sup>Song of Solomon 5:8, where the possibility of their finding Him, before she regained Him, is expressed; <sup><2178></sup>Song of Solomon 5:9 (So 6:1 7:6,9 <sup><4042></sup>John 4:42).

**causing ... asleep to speak** — (<sup><2351></sup>Isaiah 35:6 <sup><4169></sup>Mark 5:19,20 <sup><4047></sup>Acts 2:47 <sup><4164></sup>Ephesians 5:14). Jesus Christ's first miracle turned water into "good wine kept until now" (<sup><4101></sup>John 2:10); just as the Gospel revives those asleep and dying under the law (<sup><1806></sup>Proverbs 31:6 <sup><4109></sup>Romans 7:9,10,24,25 8:1).

**10.** Words of the daughters of Jerusalem and the bride, now united into one (<sup><4042></sup>Acts 4:32). They are mentioned again distinctly (So 8:4), as fresh converts were being added from among enquirers, and these needed to be charged not to grieve the Spirit.

**his desire is toward me** — strong assurance. He so desires us, as to give us sense of His desire toward us (<sup><4017></sup>Psalm 139:17,18 <sup><4221></sup>Luke 22:15 <sup><4101></sup>Galatians 2:20 <sup><4106></sup>1 John 4:16).

**11. field** — the country. "The tender grape (MAURER translates, flowers) and vines" occurred before (So 2:13). But here she prepares for Him all kinds of fruit old and new; also, she anticipates, in going forth to seek them, communion with Him in "loves." "Early" implies immediate earnestness. "The villages" imply distance from Jerusalem. At Stephen's death the disciples were scattered from it through Judea and Samaria, preaching the word (<sup><4046></sup>Acts 8:4-25). Jesus Christ was with them, confirming the word with miracles. They gathered the *old* fruits, of which Jesus Christ had sown the seed (<sup><4069></sup>John 4:39-42), as well as *new* fruits.

**lodge** — forsaking *home* for Jesus Christ's sake (<sup><4169></sup>Matthew 19:29).

**12.** (<sup><4015></sup>Mark 1:35 <sup><4004></sup>John 9:4 <sup><4160></sup>Galatians 6:10). Assurance fosters diligence, not indolence.

**13. mandrakes** — *Hebrew, audaim*, from a root meaning "to love"; love apples, supposed to exhilarate the spirits and excite love. Only here and <sup><4314></sup>Genesis 30:14-16. *Atropa mandragora* of LINNAEUS; its leaves like lettuce, but dark green, flowers purple, root forked, fruit of the size of an apple, ruddy and sweet-smelling, gathered in wheat harvest, that is, in May (*Mariti*, ii. 195).

*gates* — the entrance to the kiosk or summer house. Love “lays up” the best of everything for the person beloved (~~400B~~1 Corinthians 10:31 ~~500B~~Philippians 3:8 ~~600B~~1 Peter 4:11), thereby really, though unconsciously, laying up for itself (~~500B~~1 Timothy 6:18,19).

# CHAPTER 8

## SONG OF SOLOMON 8:1-14.

**1.** He had been a brother already. Why, then, this prayer here? It refers to the time after His resurrection, when the previous *outward* intimacy with Him was no longer allowed, but it was implied it should be renewed at the second coming (<BIB>John 20:17). For this the Church here prays; meanwhile she enjoys *inward* spiritual communion with Him. The last who ever “kissed” Jesus Christ on earth was the traitor Judas. The bride’s return with the King to her mother’s house answers to <ABS>Acts 8:25, after the mission to Samaria. The rest spoken of (So 8:4) answers to <ABS>Acts 9:31.

*that sucked ... mother* — a brother born of the same mother; the closest tie.

**2.** Her desire to bring Him into her home circle (<BIB>John 1:41).

*who would instruct me* — rather, “thou wouldest instruct me,” namely, how I might best please thee (<BIB>Isaiah 11:2,3 50:4 <BIB>Luke 12:12 <BIB>John 14:26 16:13).

*spiced wine* — seasoned with aromatic perfumes. Jesus Christ ought to have our choicest gifts. Spices are never introduced in the song in His absence; therefore the time of His return from “the mountain of spices” (So 8:14) is contemplated. The cup of betrothal was given by Him at the last supper; the cup or marriage shall be presented by her at His return (<BIB>Matthew 26:29). Till then the believer often cannot feel towards, or speak of, Him as he would wish.

**3, 4.** The “left and right hand,” etc., occurred only once actually (So 2:6), and here optatively. Only at His first manifestation did the Church palpably embrace Him; at His second coming there shall be again sensible communion with Him. The rest in <BIB>Song of Solomon 8:4, which is a *spiritual* realization of the wish in <BIB>Song of Solomon 8:3 (<BIB>1 Peter 1:8), and the charge not to disturb it, close the first, second, and fourth canticles; not the third, as the bridegroom there takes charge Himself; nor the fifth, as, if *repose* formed its close, we might mistake the present state for our rest. The broken, longing close, like that of the whole Bible (<BIB>Revelation 22:20), reminds us we are to be waiting for a Savior to come. On “daughters of Jerusalem,” see on <BIB>Song of Solomon 7:10.

**CANTICLE V. — (SO 8:5-14) — FROM THE CALL OF THE  
GENTILES TO THE CLOSE OF REVELATION.**

**5. *Who is this*** — Words of the daughters of Jerusalem, that is, the churches of Judea; referring to Paul, on his return from Arabia (“the wilderness”), whither he had gone after conversion (<sup><4015></sup>Galatians 1:15-24).

***I raised thee ... she ... bare thee*** — (<sup><4034></sup>Acts 26:14-16). The first words of Jesus Christ to the bride since her going to the garden of nuts (So 6:9,10); so His appearance to Paul is the only one since His ascension, <sup><2183></sup>Song of Solomon 8:13 is not an address of Him as *visible*: her reply implies He is not visible (<sup><4038></sup>1 Corinthians 15:8). Spiritually, she was found in the moral wilderness (<sup><2365></sup>Ezekiel 16:5 <sup><3016></sup>Hosea 13:5); but now she is “coming up from” it (<sup><2102></sup>Jeremiah 2:2 <sup><3014></sup>Hosea 2:14), especially in the last stage of her journey, her conscious weakness casting itself the more wholly on Jesus Christ (<sup><4719></sup>2 Corinthians 12:9). “Raised” (<sup><4010></sup>Ephesians 2:1-7). Found ruined under the forbidden tree (<sup><0032></sup>Genesis 3:22-24); restored under the shadow of Jesus Christ crucified, “the green tree” (<sup><4231></sup>Luke 23:31), fruit-“bearing” by the cross (<sup><2511></sup>Isaiah 53:11 <sup><4124></sup>John 12:24). “Born again by the Holy Ghost” “there” (<sup><3468></sup>Ezekiel 16:3-6). In this verse, *her dependence*, in the similar verse, <sup><2101></sup>Song of Solomon 3:6, etc., *His omnipotence to support her*, are brought out (<sup><4539></sup>Deuteronomy 33:26).

**6. Implying approaching absence of the Bridegroom.**

***seal*** — having her name and likeness engraven on it. His Holy Priesthood also in heaven (<sup><0206></sup>Exodus 28:6-12,15-30 <sup><5044></sup>Hebrews 4:14); “his heart” there answering to “thine heart” here, and “two shoulders” to “arm.” (Compare <sup><2224></sup>Jeremiah 22:24, with <sup><3023></sup>Haggai 2:23). But the Holy Ghost (<sup><4013></sup>Ephesians 1:13,14). As in <sup><2186></sup>Song of Solomon 8:5, she was “leaning” on Him, that is, her arm on His *arm*, her head on His *bosom*; so she prays now that before they part, her impression may be engraven both on His *heart* and His *arm*, answering to His *love* and His *power* (<sup><4715></sup>Psalms 77:15; see <sup><4038></sup>Genesis 38:18 <sup><3019></sup>Isaiah 62:3).

***love is strong as death*** — (<sup><4213></sup>Acts 21:13 <sup><4585></sup>Romans 8:35-39 <sup><6121></sup>Revelation 12:11). This their love unto death flows from His (<sup><4015></sup>John 10:15 15:13).

***jealousy ... the grave*** — *Zealous love*, jealous of all that would come between the soul and Jesus Christ (<sup><1190></sup>1 Kings 19:10 <sup><4940></sup>Psalms 106:30,31 <sup><4000></sup>Luke 9:60 14:26 <sup><4302></sup>1 Corinthians 16:22).

***cruel*** — rather, “unyielding” hard, as the grave will not let go those whom it once holds (<sup><6103></sup>John 10:28).

**a most vehement flame** — literally, “the fire-flame of Jehovah” (<sup>3906</sup>Psalm 80:16 <sup>2366</sup>Isaiah 6:6). Nowhere else is *God’s* name found in the Song. The zeal that burnt in Jesus Christ (<sup>3969</sup>Psalm 69:9 <sup>2129</sup>Luke 12:49,50) kindled in His followers (<sup>4003</sup>Acts 2:3 <sup>3510</sup>Romans 15:30 <sup>3607</sup>Philippians 2:17).

**7. waters** — in contrast with the “coals of fire” (So 8:6 <sup>1833</sup>1 Kings 18:33-38). Persecutions (<sup>4003</sup>Acts 8:1) cannot quench love (<sup>3039</sup>Hebrews 10:34 <sup>3125</sup>Revelation 12:15,16). Our many provocations have not quenched His love (<sup>4003</sup>Romans 8:33-39).

**if ... give all the substance ... contemned** — Nothing short of Jesus Christ Himself, not even heaven without Him, can satisfy the saint (<sup>3038</sup>Philippians 3:8). Satan offers the world, as to Jesus Christ (<sup>4003</sup>Matthew 4:8), so to the saint, in vain (<sup>3125</sup>1 John 2:15-17 5:4). Nothing but our love in turn can satisfy Him (<sup>4001</sup>1 Corinthians 13:1-3).

**8. The Gentile Church** (<sup>2368</sup>Ezekiel 16:48). “We,” that is, the Hebrew Church, which heretofore admitted Gentiles to communion, only by becoming *Judaic proselytes*. Now first *idolatrous* Gentiles are admitted *directly* (<sup>4417</sup>Acts 11:17-26). Generally, the saint’s anxiety for other souls (<sup>4059</sup>Mark 5:19 <sup>4003</sup>John 4:28,29).

**no breasts** — neither faith nor love as yet (see on <sup>2005</sup>Song of Solomon 4:5), which “come by hearing” of Him who first loved us. Not yet fit to be His bride, and mother of a spiritual offspring.

**what shall we do** — the chief question in the early Church at the first council (<sup>4453</sup>Acts 15:23-29). How shall “the elder brother” treat the “younger,” already received by the Father (<sup>2125</sup>Luke 15:25-32)? Generally (<sup>3052</sup>2 Samuel 15:15 <sup>4003</sup>John 9:4 <sup>4006</sup>Acts 9:6 <sup>4000</sup>Galatians 6:10).

**In the day ... spoken for** — that is, when she shall be *sought in marriage* (<sup>07407</sup>Judges 14:7), namely, by Jesus Christ, the heavenly bridegroom.

**9. wall ... door** — the very terms employed as to the Gentile question (<sup>4427</sup>Acts 14:27 <sup>4024</sup>Ephesians 2:14). If she be a wall in Zion, founded on Jesus Christ (<sup>4001</sup>1 Corinthians 3:11), we will not “withstand God” (<sup>4417</sup>Acts 11:17 15:8-11). But if so, we must not “build” (<sup>4454</sup>Acts 15:14-17) on her “wood, hay, stubble” (<sup>4002</sup>1 Corinthians 3:12), that is, Jewish rites, etc., but “a palace of silver,” that is, all the highest privileges of church communion (<sup>4001</sup>Galatians 2:11-18 <sup>4001</sup>Ephesians 2:11-22). Image from the splendid turrets “built” on the “walls” of Jerusalem, and flanking the “door,” or gateway. The Gentile Church is the “door,” the type of catholic accessibleness (<sup>4001</sup>1 Corinthians 16:9); but it must be not a mere

thoroughfare but furnished with a wooden framework, so as not merely to admit, but also to safely enclose: cedar is fragrant, beautiful, and enduring.

**10.** The Gentile Church's joy at its free admission to gospel privileges (<sup><4150></sup>Acts 15:30,31). She is one wall in the spiritual temple of the Holy Ghost, the Hebrew Church is the other; Jesus Christ, the common foundation, joins them (<sup><4011></sup>Ephesians 2:11-22).

**breasts ... towers** — alluding to the silver palace, which the bridal virgins proposed to build on her (So 8:9). “Breasts” of consolation (<sup><2761></sup>Isaiah 66:11); faith and love (<sup><2188></sup>1 Thessalonians 5:8); opposed to her previous state, “no breasts” (So 8:8 <sup><5002></sup>2 Thessalonians 1:3). Thus <sup><2166></sup>Ezekiel 16:46,61 was fulfilled, both Samaria and the Gentiles being joined to the Jewish gospel Church.

**favor** — rather, “peace.” The Gentile Church too is become the Shulamite (So 6:13), or *peace*-enjoying bride of Solomon, that is, Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace (<sup><4181></sup>Romans 5:1 <sup><4124></sup>Ephesians 2:14). Reject not those whom God accepts (<sup><04128></sup>Numbers 11:28 <sup><4109></sup>Luke 9:49 <sup><4158></sup>Acts 15:8,9). Rather, superadd to such every aid and privilege (So 8:9).

**11.** The joint Church speaks of Jesus Christ's vineyard. Transference of it from the Jews, who rendered not the fruits, as is implied by the silence respecting any, to the Gentiles (<sup><4133></sup>Matthew 21:33-43).

**Baal-hamon** — equivalent to *the owner of a multitude*; so Israel in Solomon's day (<sup><1020></sup>1 Kings 4:20); so <sup><2101></sup>Isaiah 5:1, “*a very fruitful hill*” abounding in *privileges*, as in *numbers*. thousand pieces — namely, silverlings, or shekels. The vineyard had a thousand vines probably; a vine at a silverling (<sup><2123></sup>Isaiah 7:23), referring to this passage.

**12.** “mine” by grant of the true Solomon. Not merely “let out to keepers,” as in the Jewish dispensation of *works*, but “mine” by grace. This is “before me,” that is, *in my power* [MAURER]. But though no longer under constraint of “keeping” the law as a mere letter and covenant of works, *love* to Jesus Christ will constrain her the more freely to render all to Solomon (<sup><4182></sup>Romans 8:2-4 <sup><4162></sup>1 Corinthians 6:20 <sup><4185></sup>Galatians 5:13 <sup><4126></sup>1 Peter 2:16), after having paid what justice and His will require should be paid to others (<sup><4129></sup>1 Corinthians 7:29-31 9:14). “Before me” may also mean “I will never lose sight of it” (contrast <sup><2106></sup>Song of Solomon 1:6) [MOODY STUART]. She will not keep it for herself, though so freely given to her, but for His use and glory (<sup><0913></sup>Luke 19:13 <sup><4165></sup>Romans 6:15 14:7-9 <sup><4127></sup>1 Corinthians 12:7). Or the “two hundred” may mean a *double tithe* (two-tenths of the whole paid back by Jesus Christ) as the reward of grace for our surrender of *all* (the thousand) to Him (<sup><4107></sup>Galatians 6:7 <sup><5000></sup>Hebrews 6:10); then she and

“those that keep” are the same [ADELAIDE NEWTON]. But Jesus Christ pays back not merely *two tithes*, but *His all* for our all (<sup><41E1></sup>1 Corinthians 3:21-23).

**13.** Jesus Christ’s address to her; now no longer visibly present. Once she “had not kept” her vineyard (So 1:6); now she “dwells” in it, not as its owner, but its superintendent under Jesus Christ, with vinedressers (“companions”), for example, Paul, etc. (<sup><41E5></sup>Acts 15:25,26), under her (So 8:11,12); these ought to obey her when she obeys Jesus Christ. Her voice in prayer and praise is to be heard continually by Jesus Christ, if her voice before men is to be effective (So 2:14, end; <sup><41E4></sup>Acts 6:4 13:2,3).

**14.** (See on <sup><21D7></sup>Song of Solomon 2:17). As she began with longing for His first coming (So 1:2), so she ends with praying for His second coming (<sup><31D6></sup>Psalms 130:6 <sup><31E3></sup>Philippians 3:20,21 <sup><62E1></sup>Revelation 22:20). MOODY STUART makes the roe upon spices to be the musk deer. As there are four gardens, so four mountains, which form not mere images, as Gilead, Carmel, etc., but part of the structure of the Song:

- (1) Bether, or *division* (So 2:17), God’s justice *dividing* us from God.
- (2) Those “of leopards” (So 4:8), sin, the world, and Satan.
- (3) That “of myrrh and aloes” (So 4:6,14), the sepulcher of Calvary.
- (4) Those “of spices,” here answering to “the hill of frankincense” (So 4:6), where His *soul* was for the three days of His death, and heaven, where He is a High Priest now, offering incense for us on the fragrant mountain of His own finished work (<sup><5014></sup>Hebrews 4:14,7:25 <sup><61E8></sup>Revelation 8:3,4); thus He surmounts the other three mountains, God’s justice, our sin, death.

The mountain of spices is as much greater than our sins, as heaven is higher than earth (<sup><19A31></sup>Psalms 103:11). The abrupt, unsatisfied close with the yearning prayer for His *visible* coming shows that the marriage is future, and that to wait eagerly for it is our true attitude (<sup><40E1></sup>1 Corinthians 1:7 <sup><5110></sup>1 Thessalonians 1:10 <sup><51E1></sup>Titus 2:13 <sup><61E2></sup>2 Peter 3:12).

# THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET

## ISAIAH

Commentary by **A. R. FAUSSETT**

### INTRODUCTION

ISAIAH, son of Amoz (not Amos); contemporary of Jonah, Amos, Hosea, in Israel, but younger than they; and of Micah, in Judah. His call to a higher degree of the prophetic office (<sup><2301></sup>Isaiah 6:1-13) is assigned to the last year of Uzziah, that is, 754 B.C. The first through fifth chapters belong to the closing years of that reign; not, as some think, to Jotham's reign: in the reign of the latter he seems to have exercised his office only orally, and not to have left any *record* of his prophecies because they were not intended for all ages. The first through fifth and sixth chapters are all that was designed for the Church universal of the prophecies of the first twenty years of his office. New historical epochs, such as occurred in the reigns of Ahaz and Hezekiah, when the affairs of Israel became interwoven with those of the Asiatic empires, are marked by prophetic writings. The prophets had now to interpret the judgments of the Lord, so as to make the people conscious of His punitive justice, as also of His mercy. <sup><2301></sup>Isaiah 7:1-10:4 belong to the reign of Ahaz. The thirty-sixth through thirty-ninth chapters are historical, reaching to the fifteenth year of Hezekiah; probably the tenth through twelfth chapters and all from the thirteenth through twenty-sixth chapters, inclusive, belong to the same reign; the historical section being appended to facilitate the right understanding of these prophecies; thus we have Isaiah's office extending from about 760 to 713 B.C., forty-seven years. Tradition (*Talmud*) represents him as having been sawn asunder by Manasseh with a wooden saw, for having said that he had seen Jehovah (<sup><4033></sup>Exodus 33:20 <sup><42116></sup>2 Kings 21:16 <sup><381157></sup>Hebrews 11:37). <sup><4432></sup>2 Chronicles 32:32 seems to imply that Isaiah survived Hezekiah; but "first and last" is not added, as in <sup><4462></sup>2 Chronicles 26:22, which makes it possible that his history of Hezekiah was only carried up to a certain point. The second part, the fortieth through sixty-sixth chapters, containing complaints of gross idolatry, needs not to be restricted to Manasseh's reign, but is applicable to previous reigns. At the accession of Manasseh, Isaiah would be eighty-four; and if he prophesied for eight years afterwards, he must have endured

martyrdom at ninety-two; so Hosea prophesied for sixty years. And Eastern tradition reports that he lived to one hundred and twenty. The conclusive argument against the tradition is that, according to the inscription, all Isaiah's prophecies are included in the time from Uzziah to Hezekiah; and the internal evidence accords with this.

His WIFE is called the *prophetess* [<sup>238B</sup>Isaiah 8:3], that is, endowed, as Miriam, with a prophetic gift.

His CHILDREN were considered by him as not belonging merely to himself; in their names, Shearjashub, "the remnant shall return" [<sup>238B</sup>Isaiah 7:3, *Margin*], and Maher-shalal-hash-baz, "speeding to the spoil, he hasteth to the prey" [<sup>238B</sup>Isaiah 8:1, *Margin*], the two chief points of his prophecies are intimated to the people, the *judgments* of the Lord on the people and the world, and yet His *mercy* to the elect.

His GARMENT of sackcloth (<sup>238B</sup>Isaiah 20:2), too, was a silent preaching by fact; he appears as the embodiment of that repentance which he taught.

His HISTORICAL WORKS. — History, as written by the prophets, is retroverted prophecy. As the past and future alike proceed from the essence of God, an inspired insight into the past implies an insight into the future, and vice versa. Hence most of the Old Testament histories are written by prophets and are classed with their writings; the Chronicles being not so classed, cannot have been written by them, but are taken from historical monographs of theirs; for example, Isaiah's life of Uzziah, <sup>4422</sup>2 Chronicles 26:22; also of Hezekiah, <sup>4422</sup>2 Chronicles 32:32; of these latter all that was important for all ages has been preserved to us, while the rest, which was local and temporary, has been lost.

The INSCRIPTION (<sup>2300E</sup>Isaiah 1:1) applies to the whole book and implies that Isaiah is the author of the second part (the fortieth through sixty-sixth chapters), as well as of the first. Nor do the words, "concerning Judah and Jerusalem" [<sup>2300E</sup>Isaiah 1:1], oppose the idea that the inscription applies to the whole; for whatever he says against other nations, he says on account of their relation to Judah. So the inscription of Amos, "concerning *Israel*" [<sup>3000E</sup>Amos 1:1], though several prophecies follow against foreign nations. EWALD maintains that the fortieth through sixty-sixth chapters, though spurious, were subjoined to the previous portion, in order to preserve the former. But it is untrue that the first portion is unconnected with those chapters. The former ends with the Babylonian exile (<sup>2316E</sup>Isaiah 39:6), the latter begins with the coming redemption from it. The portion, the fortieth through forty-sixth chapters, has no heading of its own, a proof that it is closely connected with what precedes, and falls under the general heading in <sup>2300E</sup>Isaiah 1:1. JOSEPHUS (*The Antiquities of the Jews*, 11.1.1,2) says that

Cyrus was induced by the prophecies of Isaiah (<sup>23403</sup>Isaiah 44:28 45:1,13) to aid the Jews in returning and rebuilding the temple <sup>5001</sup>Ezra 1:1-11 confirms this; Cyrus in his edict there plainly refers to the prophecies in the second portion, which assign the kingdoms to him from Jehovah, and the duty of rebuilding the temple. Probably he took from them his historical name Cyrus (*Coresh*). Moreover, *subsequent prophets imitate this second portion*, which EWALD assigns to later times; for example, compare <sup>2801</sup>Jeremiah 50:1-51:64 with Isaiah's predictions against Babylon [Is 13:1-14:23]. "The Holy One of Israel," occurring but three times elsewhere in the Old Testament [<sup>12022</sup>2 Kings 19:22 <sup>19784</sup>Psalm 78:41 89:18 <sup>28123</sup>Jeremiah 50:29 51:5], is a favorite expression in the second, as in the first portion of Isaiah: it expresses God's covenant faithfulness in fulfilling the promises therein: Jeremiah borrows the expression from him. Also Ecclesiasticus 48:22-25 ("comforted"), quotes <sup>23401</sup>Isaiah 40:1 as Isaiah's. <sup>40417</sup>Luke 4:17 quotes <sup>2504</sup>Isaiah 61:1,2 as Isaiah's, and as read as such by Jesus Christ in the synagogue.

The DEFINITENESS of the prophecies is striking: As in the second portion of isaiah, so in <sup>3008</sup>Micah 4:8-10, the *Babylonian* exile, and the deliverance from it, are foretold a hundred fifty years before any hostilities had arisen between Babylon and Judah. On the other hand, all the prophets who foretell the *Assyrian* invasion coincide in stating, that Judah should be delivered from *it*, not by Egyptian aid, but directly by the Lord. Again Jeremiah, in the height of the Chaldean prosperity, foretold its conquest by the Medes, who should enter Babylon through the dry bed of the Euphrates on a night of general revelry. No human calculation could have discovered these facts. EICHORN terms these prophecies "veiled historical descriptions," recognizing in spite of himself that they are more than general poetical fancies. The fifty-third chapter of Isaiah was certainly written ages before the Messiah, yet it *minutely* portrays His sufferings: these cannot be Jewish inventions, for the Jews looked for a *reigning*, not a suffering, Messiah.

Rationalists are so far right that THE PROPHECIES ARE ON A GENERAL BASIS whereby they are distinguished from soothsaying. They rest on the essential idea of God. The prophets, penetrated by this inner knowledge of His character, became conscious of the eternal laws by which the world is governed: that sin is man's ruin, and must be followed by judgment, but that God's covenant mercy to His elect is unchangeable. Without prophetism, the elect remnant would have decreased, and even God's judgments would have missed their end, by not being recognized as such: they would have been unmeaning, isolated facts. Babylon was in Isaiah's days under Assyria; it had tried a revolt unsuccessfully: but the elements of

its subsequent success and greatness were then existing. The Holy Ghost enlightened his natural powers to discern this its rise; and his spiritual faculties, to foresee its fall, the sure consequence, in God's eternal law, of the pride which pagan success generates — and also Judah's restoration, as the covenant-people, with whom God, according to His essential character, would not be wroth for ever. True conversion is the prophet's grand remedy against all evils: in this alone consists his politics. Rebuke, threatening, and promise, regularly succeed one another. The idea at the basis of all is in <sup>2317</sup>Isaiah 26:7-9 <sup>2108</sup>Leviticus 10:3 <sup>3102</sup>Amos 3:2.

The USE OF THE PRESENT AND PRETERITE in prophecy is no proof that the author is later than Isaiah. For *seers* view the future as present, and indicate what is *ideally* past, not really past; seeing things in the light of God, who "calls the things that are not as though they were." Moreover, as in looking from a height on a landscape, hills seem close together which are really wide apart, so, in events foretold, the *order*, *succession*, and *grouping* are presented, but the intervals of *time* are overlooked. The *time*, however, is sometimes marked (<sup>2252</sup>Jeremiah 25:12 <sup>2703</sup>Daniel 9:26). Thus the deliverance from Babylon, and that effected by Messiah, are in rapid transition grouped together by THE LAW OF PROPHETIC SUGGESTION; yet no prophet so confounds the two as to make Messiah the leader of Israel from Babylon. *To the prophet* there was probably no double sense; but to his spiritual eye the two events, though distinct, lay so near, and were *so analogous*, that he could not separate them in description without unfaithfulness to the picture presented before him. The more remote and antitypical event, however, namely, Messiah's coming, is that to which he always hastens, and which he describes with far more minuteness than he does the nearer type; for example, Cyrus (compare <sup>2310</sup>Isaiah 45:1 with <sup>2511</sup>Isaiah 53:1-12). In some cases he takes his stand in the midst of events between, for example, the humiliation of Jesus Christ, which he views as *past*, and His glorification, as *yet to come*, using the future tense as to the latter (compare <sup>2504</sup>Isaiah 53:4-9 with <sup>2510</sup>Isaiah 53:10-12). Marks of the time of events are given sparingly in the prophets: yet, as to Messiah, definitely enough to create the general expectation of Him at the time that He was in fact born.

The CHALDAEISMS alleged against the genuineness of the second portion of Isaiah, are found more in the first and undoubted portion. They occur in all the Old Testament, especially in the poetical parts, which prefer unusual expressions, and are due to the fact that the patriarchs were surrounded by Chaldee-speaking people; and in Isaiah's time a few Chaldee words had crept in from abroad.

His SYMBOLS are few and simple, and his poetical images correct; in the prophets, during and after the exile, the reverse holds good; Haggai and Malachi are not exceptions; for, though void of bold images, their style, unlike Isaiah's, rises little above prose: a clear proof that our Isaiah was long before the exile.

Of VISIONS, strictly so called, he has but one, that in the sixth chapter; even it is more simple than those in later prophets. But he often gives SIGNS, that is, a present fact as pledge of the more distant future; God condescending to the feebleness of man (<sup>2301A</sup>Isaiah 7:14 <sup>2373A</sup>Isaiah 37:30 38:7).

The VARIETIES IN HIS STYLE do not prove spuriousness, but that he varied his style with his subject. The second portion is not so much addressed to his contemporaries, as to the future people of the Lord, the elect remnant, purified by the previous judgments. Hence its tenderness of style, and frequent repetitions (<sup>2301B</sup>Isaiah 40:1): for comforting exhortation uses many words; so also the many epithets added to the name of God, intended as stays whereon faith may rest for comfort, so as not to despair. In both portions alike there are peculiarities characteristic of Isaiah; for example, "to be called" equivalent to *to be*: the repetition of the same words, instead of synonyms, in the parallel members of verses; the interspersing of his prophecies with hymns: "the remnant of olive trees," etc., for the remnant of people who have escaped God's judgments. Also compare <sup>2365A</sup>Isaiah 65:25 with <sup>2310B</sup>Isaiah 11:6.

The CHRONOLOGICAL ARRANGEMENT favors the opinion that Isaiah himself collected his prophecies into the volume; not Hezekiah's men, as the *Talmud* guesses from <sup>2181A</sup>Proverbs 25:1. All the portions, the dates of which can be ascertained, stand in the right place, except a few instances, where prophecies of similar contents are placed together: with the termination of the Assyrian invasion (the thirty-sixth through thirty-ninth chapters) terminated the public life of Isaiah. The second part is his prophetic legacy to the small band of the faithful, analogous to the last speeches of Moses and of Jesus Christ to His chosen disciples.

The EXPECTATION OF MESSIAH is so strong in Isaiah, that JEROME *To Paulinus* calls his book not a prophecy, but the *gospel*: "He is not so much a prophet as an evangelist." Messiah was already shadowed forth in <sup>1440</sup>Genesis 49:10, as the Shiloh, or *tranquillizer*; also in Psalms 2, 45, 72, 110. Isaiah brings it out more definitely; and, whereas they dwelt on His kingly office, Isaiah develops most His priestly and prophetic office; the hundred tenth Psalm also had set forth His priesthood, but His *kingly* rather than, as Isaiah, His *suffering*, priesthood. The latter is especially dwelt on in the second part, addressed to *the faithful elect*; whereas the first part,

addressed to *the whole people*, dwells on Messiah's *glory*, the antidote to the fears which then filled the people, and the assurance that the kingdom of God, then represented by Judah, would not be overwhelmed by the surrounding nations.

His STYLE (HENGSTENBERG, *Christology of the Old Testament*,) is simple and sublime; in imagery, intermediate between the poverty of Jeremiah and the exuberance of Ezekiel. He shows his command of it in varying it to suit his subject.

The FORM is mostly that of *Hebrew poetical parallelism*, with, however, a freedom unshackled by undue restrictions.

JUDAH, the less apostate people, rather than Israel, was the subject of his prophecies: his residence was mostly at Jerusalem. On his praises, see Ecclesiasticus 48:22-25. Christ and the apostles quote no prophet so frequently.

# CHAPTER 1

## ISAIAH 1:1-31.

1. THE GENERAL TITLE OR PROGRAM applying to the entire book: this discountenances the Talmud tradition, that he was sawn asunder by Manasseh.

**Isaiah** — equivalent to “*The Lord shall save*”; significant of the subject of his prophecies. On “vision,” see <sup><1000></sup>1 Samuel 9:9 <sup><10126></sup>Numbers 12:6; and see my *Introduction*.

**Judah and Jerusalem** — Other nations also are the subjects of his prophecies; but only in their relation to the Jews (<sup><2300></sup>Isaiah 13:1-23:18); so also the ten tribes of Israel are introduced only in the same relation (<sup><2000></sup>Isaiah 7:1-9:21). Jerusalem is particularly specified, being the site of the temple, and the center of the theocracy, and the future throne of Messiah (<sup><9800></sup>Psalms 48:2,3,9 <sup><24017></sup>Jeremiah 3:17). Jesus Christ is the “Lion of the tribe of Judah” (<sup><6180></sup>Revelation 5:5).

**Uzziah** — called also Azariah (<sup><2402></sup>2 Kings 14:21 <sup><4012></sup>2 Chronicles 26:1,17,20). The Old Testament prophecies spiritually interpret the histories, as the New Testament Epistles interpret the Gospels and Acts. Study them together, to see their spiritual relations. Isaiah prophesied for only a few years before Uzziah’s death; but his prophecies of that period (<sup><2000></sup>Isaiah 1:1-6:13) apply to Jotham’s reign also, in which he probably wrote none; for <sup><2000></sup>Isaiah 7:1-25 enters immediately on Ahaz’ reign, after Uzziah in <sup><2100></sup>Isaiah 6:1-13; the prophecies under Hezekiah follow next.

2. The very words of Moses (<sup><6300></sup>Deuteronomy 32:1); this implies that the law was the charter and basis of all prophecy (<sup><2000></sup>Isaiah 8:20).

**Lord** — *Jehovah*; in *Hebrew*, “the self-existing and promise-fulfilling, unchangeable One.” The Jews never pronounced this holy name. but substituted Adonai. The *English Version*, LORD in capitals, marks the *Hebrew* “*Jehovah*,” though *Lord* is rather equivalent to “Adonai” than “*Jehovah*.”

**children** — (<sup><1002></sup>Exodus 4:22).

**rebelled** — as sons (<sup><2118></sup>Deuteronomy 21:18) and as subjects, God being king in the theocracy (<sup><2130></sup>Isaiah 63:10). “Brought up,” literally, “elevated,” namely, to peculiar privileges (<sup><2106></sup>Jeremiah 2:6-8 <sup><2104></sup>Romans 9:4,5).

3. (<sup><2107></sup>Jeremiah 8:7).

**crib** — the stall where it is fed (<sup><2144></sup>Proverbs 14:4). Spiritually the word and ordinances.

**Israel** — The whole nation, Judah as well as Israel, in the restricted sense. God regards His covenant-people in their designed unity.

**not know** — namely, his Owner, as the parallelism requires; that is, *not recognize* Him as such (<sup><0095></sup>Exodus 19:5, equivalent to “my people,” <sup><0110></sup>John 1:10,11).

**consider** — *attend* to his Master (<sup><2108></sup>Isaiah 41:8), notwithstanding the spiritual *food* which He provides (answering to “crib” in the parallel clause).

4. **people** — the peculiar designation of God’s elect nation (<sup><2109></sup>Hosea 1:10), that *they* should be “laden with iniquity” is therefore the more monstrous. Sin is a *load* (<sup><0084></sup>Psalms 38:4 <sup><0128></sup>Matthew 11:28).

**seed** — another appellation of God’s elect (<sup><0107></sup>Genesis 12:7 <sup><2121></sup>Jeremiah 2:21), designed to be a “holy seed” (<sup><2163></sup>Isaiah 6:13), but, awful to say, “evildoers!”

**children** — by adoption (<sup><2101></sup>Hosea 11:1), yet “evildoers”; not only so, but “corrupters” of others (<sup><0062></sup>Genesis 6:12); the climax. So “nation — people — seed children.”

**provoked** — literally, “despised,” namely, so as to provoke (<sup><2103></sup>Proverbs 1:30,31).

**Holy One of Israel** — the peculiar heinousness of their sin, that it was against *their* God (<sup><2102></sup>Amos 3:2).

**gone ... backward** — literally, “estranged” (<sup><2181></sup>Psalms 58:3).

5. **Why** — rather, as *Vulgate*, “On what part.” Image from a body covered all over with marks of blows (<sup><2182></sup>Psalms 38:3). There is no part in which you have not been smitten.

**head ... sick**, etc. — not referring, as it is commonly quoted, to their *sins*, but to the universality of their *punishment*. However, sin, the moral disease of the head or intellect, and the *heart*, is doubtless made its own punishment (<sup><2133></sup>Proverbs 1:31 <sup><2129></sup>Jeremiah 2:19 <sup><2181></sup>Hosea 8:11). “Sick,”

literally, “is in a state of sickness” [GESENIUS]; “has *passed into* sickness” [MAURER].

6. From the lowest to the highest of the people; “the ancient and honorable, the *head*, the prophet that teacheth lies, the tail.” See <sup><2003></sup>Isaiah 9:13-16. He first states their wretched condition, obvious to all (<sup><2006></sup>Isaiah 1:6-9); and then, not previously, their irreligious state, the cause of it.

**wounds** — judicially inflicted (<sup><2053></sup>Hosea 5:13).

**mollified with ointment** — The art of medicine in the East consists chiefly in external applications (<sup><2038></sup>Luke 10:34 <sup><2054></sup>James 5:14).

7. Judah had not in Uzziah’s reign recovered from the ravages of the Syrians in Joash’s reign (<sup><1004></sup>2 Chronicles 24:24), and of Israel in Amaziah’s reign (<sup><4253></sup>2 Chronicles 25:13,23, etc.). Compare Isaiah’s contemporary (<sup><3006></sup>Amos 4:6-11), where, as here (<sup><2009></sup>Isaiah 1:9,10), Israel is compared to “Sodom and Gomorrah,” because of the judgments on it by “fire.”

**in your presence** — before your eyes: without your being able to prevent them.

**desolate**, etc. — literally, “there is desolation, such as one might look for from foreign” invaders.

8. **daughter of Zion** — the city (<sup><1914></sup>Psalm 9:14), Jerusalem and its inhabitants (<sup><1021></sup>2 Kings 19:21): “daughter” (*feminine, singular* being used as a neuter collective noun), equivalent to *sons* (<sup><2016></sup>Isaiah 12:6, *Margin*) [MAURER]. Metropolis or “mother city” is the corresponding term. The idea of youthful beauty is included in “daughter.”

**left** — as a *remnant* escaping the general destruction.

**cottage** — a hut, made to give temporary *shelter* to the caretaker of the vineyard.

**lodge** — not permanent.

**besieged** — rather, as “left,” and <sup><2009></sup>Isaiah 1:9 require, *preserved*, namely, from the desolation all round [MAURER].

9. Jehovah of Sabaoth, that is, God of the angelic and starry hosts (<sup><1915></sup>Psalm 59:5 147:4 148:2). The latter were objects of idolatry, called hence *Sabaism* (<sup><2076></sup>2 Kings 17:16). God is above even them (<sup><1365></sup>1 Chronicles 16:26). “The groves” were symbols of these starry hosts; it was their worship of Sabaoth instead of the Lord of Sabaoth, which had caused

the present desolation (<sup><4248></sup>2 Chronicles 24:18). It needed no less a power than His, to preserve even a “remnant.” Condescending grace for the elect’s sake, since He has no need of us, seeing that He has countless hosts to serve Him.

**10. Sodom** — spiritually (<sup><0159></sup>Genesis 19:24 <sup><2234></sup>Jeremiah 23:14 <sup><2366></sup>Ezekiel 16:46 <sup><6108></sup>Revelation 11:8).

**11.** God does not here absolutely disparage sacrifice, which is as old and universal as sin (<sup><0072></sup>Genesis 3:21 4:4), and sin is almost as old as the world; but sacrifice, unaccompanied with obedience of heart and life (<sup><0152></sup>1 Samuel 15:22 <sup><2819></sup>Psalms 50:9-13 51:16-19 <sup><3069></sup>Hosea 6:6). *Positive* precepts are only means; *moral* obedience is the end. A foreshadowing of the gospel, when the One real sacrifice was to supersede all the shadowy ones, and “bring in everlasting righteousness” (<sup><0406></sup>Psalms 40:6,7 <sup><2724></sup>Daniel 9:24-27 <sup><2810></sup>Hebrews 10:1-14).

**full** — to satiety; weary of

**burnt offerings** — burnt whole, except the blood, which was sprinkled about the altar.

**fat** — not to be eaten by man, but burnt on the altar (<sup><0304></sup>Leviticus 3:4,5,11,17).

**12. appear before me** — in the temple where the Shekinah, resting on the ark, was the symbol of God’s presence (<sup><0235></sup>Exodus 23:15 <sup><0912></sup>Psalms 42:2).

**who hath required this** — as if you were doing God a service by such hypocritical offerings (<sup><3809></sup>Job 35:7). God did require it (<sup><0237></sup>Exodus 23:17), but not in this spirit (<sup><3169></sup>Micah 6:6,7).

**courts** — areas, which the worshippers were. None but priests entered the temple itself.

**13. oblations** — unbloody; “meat (*old* English sense, not *flesh*) offerings,” that is, of flour, fruits, oil, etc. (<sup><0304></sup>Leviticus 2:1-13). *Hebrew, mincha.*

**incense** — put upon the sacrifices, and burnt on the altar of incense. Type of prayer (<sup><0102></sup>Psalms 141:2 <sup><0608></sup>Revelation 8:3).

**new moons** — observed as festivals (<sup><0100></sup>Numbers 10:10 28:11,14) with sacrifices and blowing of silver trumpets.

**sabbaths** — both the seventh day and the beginning and closing days of the great feasts (<sup><0224></sup>Leviticus 23:24-39).

**away with** — bear, MAURER translates, “I cannot *bear iniquity and* the solemn meeting,” that is, the meeting associated with iniquity — literally, the *closing* days of the feasts; so the great days (<sup><R236></sup>Leviticus 23:36 <sup><R157></sup>John 7:37).

**14. appointed** — the sabbath, passover, pentecost, day of atonement, and feast of tabernacles [HENGSTENBERG]; they alone were fixed to certain times of the year.

**weary** — (<sup><R33></sup>Isaiah 43:24).

**15.** (<sup><R68></sup>Psalms 66:18 <sup><R89></sup>Proverbs 28:9 <sup><R83></sup>Lamentations 3:43,44).

**spread ... hands** — in prayer (<sup><R22></sup>1 Kings 8:22). *Hebrew*, “bloods,” for *all* heinous sins, persecution of God’s servants especially (<sup><R35></sup>Matthew 23:35). It was the vocation of the prophets to dispel the delusion, so contrary to the law itself (<sup><R16></sup>Deuteronomy 10:16), that outward ritualism would satisfy God.

**16.** God saith to the sinner, “Wash *you*,” etc., that he, finding his inability to “make” himself “clean,” may cry to *God*, Wash me, cleanse me (<sup><R10></sup>Psalms 51:2,7,10).

**before mine eyes** — not mere outward reformation before *man’s* eyes, who cannot, as God, see into the heart (<sup><R29></sup>Jeremiah 32:19).

**17. seek judgment** — *justice*, as magistrates, instead of *seeking* bribes (<sup><R13></sup>Jeremiah 22:3,16).

**judge** — vindicate (<sup><R65></sup>Psalms 68:5 <sup><R17></sup>James 1:27).

**18.** God deigns to argue the case with us, that all may see the just, nay, loving principle of His dealings with men (<sup><R37></sup>Isaiah 43:26).

**scarlet** — the color of Jesus Christ’s robe when bearing our “sins” (<sup><R28></sup>Matthew 27:28). So Rahab’s thread (<sup><R18></sup>Joshua 2:18; compare <sup><R46></sup>Leviticus 14:4). The rabbins say that when the lot used to be taken, a *scarlet* fillet was bound on the scapegoat’s head, and after the high priest had confessed his and the people’s sins over it, the fillet became *white*: the miracle ceased, according to them, forty years before the destruction of Jerusalem, that is, exactly when Jesus Christ was crucified; a remarkable admission of adversaries. *Hebrew* for “scarlet” radically means *double-dyed*; so the *deep-fixed permanency* of sin in the heart, which no mere tears can wash away.

**snow** — (<sup><1500></sup>Psalm 51:7). Repentance is presupposed, before sin can be made white as snow (<sup><2019></sup>Isaiah 1:19,20); *it* too is God's gift (<sup><3118></sup>Jeremiah 31:18, end <sup><2121></sup>Lamentations 5:21 <sup><4151></sup>Acts 5:31).

**red** — refers to "blood" (<sup><2015></sup>Isaiah 1:15).

**as wool** — restored to its original undyed whiteness. This verse shows that the old fathers did not look only for transitory promises (Article VII, *Book of Common Prayer*). For sins of ignorance, and such like, alone had trespass offerings appointed for them; greater guilt therefore needed a greater sacrifice, for, "without shedding of blood there was no remission"; but none such was appointed, and yet forgiveness was promised and expected; therefore spiritual Jews must have looked for the One Mediator of both Old Testament and New Testament, though dimly understood.

**19, 20.** *Temporal* blessings in "the land of their possession" were prominent in the Old Testament promises, as suited to the childhood of the Church (<sup><0117></sup>Exodus 3:17). New Testament *spiritual* promises derive their imagery from the former (<sup><1115></sup>Matthew 5:5).

**20.** **Lord hath spoken it** — Isaiah's prophecies rest on the law (<sup><0333></sup>Leviticus 26:33).

**21.** **faithful** — as a wife (<sup><2515></sup>Isaiah 54:5 62:5 <sup><3019></sup>Hosea 2:19,20).

**harlot** — (<sup><2163></sup>Ezekiel 16:28-35).

**righteousness lodged** — (<sup><0113></sup>2 Peter 3:13).

**murderers** — murderous *oppressors*, as the antithesis requires (see on <sup><2015></sup>Isaiah 1:15; <sup><0115></sup>1 John 3:15).

**22.** Thy princes and people are degenerate in "solid worth," equivalent to "silver" (<sup><1163></sup>Jeremiah 6:28,30 <sup><1228></sup>Ezekiel 22:18,19), and in their use of *the living Word*, equivalent to "wine" (So 7:9).

**mixed** — literally, "circumcised." So the *Arabic*, "to murder" wine, equivalent to dilute it.

**23.** **companions of thieves** — by connivance (<sup><1111></sup>Proverbs 29:24).

**gifts** — (<sup><2020></sup>Ezekiel 22:12). A nation's corruption begins with its rulers.

**24.** **Lord ... Lord** — *Adonai*, JEHOVAH.

**mighty One of Israel** — mighty to take vengeance, as before, to save.

**Ah** — indignation.

**ease me** — My long tried patience will *find relief* in at last punishing the guilty (<sup>23613</sup>Ezekiel 5:13). God’s language condescends to human conceptions.

**25. turn ... hand** — not in wrath, but in *grace* (<sup>23817</sup>Zechariah 13:7), “upon thee,” as <sup>23026</sup>Isaiah 1:26,27 show; contrasted with the *enemies*, of whom He will *avenge* Himself (<sup>23026</sup>Isaiah 1:24).

**purely** — literally, “as alkali purifies.”

**thy dross** — not *thy sins*, but the sinful *persons* (<sup>24039</sup>Jeremiah 6:29); “enemies” (<sup>23024</sup>Isaiah 1:24); degenerate princes (see on <sup>23022</sup>Isaiah 1:22), intermingled with the elect “remnant” of grace.

**tin** — *Hebrew, bedil*, here the alloy of lead, tin, etc., separated by smelting from the silver. The pious Bishop Bedell took his motto from this.

**26.** As the degeneracy had shown itself most in the *magistrates* (<sup>23017</sup>Isaiah 1:17-23), so, at the “restoration,” these shall be such as the theocracy “at the first” had contemplated, namely, after the Babylonish restoration in part and typically, but fully and antotypically under Messiah (<sup>23017</sup>Isaiah 32:1 52:8 <sup>24317</sup>Jeremiah 33:7 <sup>24028</sup>Matthew 19:28).

**faithful** — no longer “an harlot.”

**27. redeemed** — temporarily, civilly, and morally; type of the spiritual *redemption* by the *price* of Jesus Christ’s blood (<sup>24018</sup>1 Peter 1:18,19), the foundation of “judgment” and *righteousness*, and so of pardon. The *judgment* and “righteousness” are God’s first (<sup>23021</sup>Isaiah 42:21 <sup>24018</sup>Romans 3:26); so they become man’s when “converted” (<sup>24018</sup>Romans 8:3,4); typified in the display of God’s “justice,” then exhibited in delivering His covenant-people, whereby justice or “righteousness” was produced in them.

**converts** — so MAURER. But *Margin*, “they that return of her,” namely the remnant that return from captivity. However, as Isaiah had not yet expressly foretold the Babylonian captivity, the *English Version* is better.

**28. destruction** — literally, “breaking into shivers” (<sup>24027</sup>Revelation 2:27). The prophets hasten forward to the final extinction of the ungodly (<sup>24320</sup>Psalms 37:20 <sup>24027</sup>Revelation 19:20 20:15); of which antecedent judgments are types.

**29. ashamed** — (<sup>24021</sup>Romans 6:21).

**oaks** — Others translate the “terebinth” or “turpentine tree.” Groves were dedicated to idols. Our Druids took their name from the *Greek* for “oaks.”

A sacred tree is often found in Assyrian sculpture; symbol of the starry hosts, Saba.

***gardens*** — planted enclosures for idolatry; the counterpart of the garden of Eden.

**30. *oak*** — Ye shall be like the “oaks,” the object of your “desire” (<sup>2019</sup>Isaiah 1:29). People become like the gods they worship; they never rise above their level (<sup>468</sup>Psalm 135:18). So men’s sins become their own scourges (<sup>319</sup>Jeremiah 2:9). The leaf of the idol oak fades by a law of necessary consequence, having no living sap or “water” from God. So “garden” answers to “gardens” (<sup>2019</sup>Isaiah 1:29).

**31. *strong*** — powerful rulers (<sup>319</sup>Amos 2:9).

***maker of it*** — rather, his work. He shall be at once the fuel, “tow,” and the cause of the fire, by kindling the first “spark.”

***both*** — the wicked ruler, and “his work,” which “is as a spark.”

## CHAPTER 2

<sup><300E</sup>Isaiah 2:1-22.

1. The inscription.

*The word* — the revelation.

2. Same as <sup><300E</sup>Micah 4:1. As Micah prophesied in Jotham's reign, and Isaiah in Uzziah's, Micah rests on Isaiah, whom he confirms: not vice versa. HENGSTENBERG on slight grounds makes <sup><300E</sup>Micah 4:1 the original.

*last days* — that is, Messiah's: especially the days yet to come, to which all prophecy hastens, when "the house of the God of Jacob," namely, at Jerusalem, shall be the center to which the converted nations shall flock together (<sup><403E</sup>Matthew 13:32 <sup><403E</sup>Luke 2:31,32 <sup><400E</sup>Acts 1:6,7); where "the kingdom" of Israel is regarded as certain and the *time* alone uncertain (<sup><408E</sup>Psalm 68:15,16 72:8,11).

*mountain of the Lord's house ... in the top*, etc. — the temple on Mount Moriah: type of the Gospel, beginning at Jerusalem, and, like an object set on the highest hill, made so conspicuous that all nations are attracted to it.

*flow* — as a broad stream (<sup><260E</sup>Isaiah 66:12).

3. If the curse foretold against Israel has been literally fulfilled, so shall the promised blessing be literal. We Gentiles must not, while giving them the curse, deny them their peculiar blessing by spiritualizing it. The Holy Ghost shall be poured out for *a general* conversion then (<sup><280E</sup>Jeremiah 50:5 <sup><380E</sup>Zechariah 8:21,23 <sup><202E</sup>Joel 2:28).

*from Jerusalem* — (<sup><204E</sup>Luke 24:47) an earnest of the future relations of Jerusalem to Christendom (<sup><610E</sup>Romans 11:12,15).

4. *judge* — as a sovereign umpire, settling all controversies (compare <sup><300E</sup>Isaiah 11:4). LOWTH translates "work," "conviction."

*plowshares* — in the East resembling a short sword (<sup><200E</sup>Isaiah 9:6,7 <sup><300E</sup>Zechariah 9:10).

5. The connection is: As Israel's high destiny is to be a blessing to all nations (<sup><408E</sup>Genesis 12:3), let Israel's children walk worthy of it (<sup><408E</sup>Ephesians 5:8).

**6. *Therefore*** — rather, “For”: reasons why there is the more need of the exhortation in <sup><2105></sup>Isaiah 2:5.

***thou*** — transition to Jehovah: such rapid transitions are natural, when the mind is full of a subject.

***replenished*** — rather, filled, namely, with the superstitions of the East, Syria, and Chaldea.

***soothsayers*** — forbidden (<sup><6580></sup>Deuteronomy 18:10-14).

***Philistines*** — southwest of Palestine: antithesis to “the east.”

***please themselves*** — rather, join hands with, that is, enter into alliances, matrimonial and national: forbidden (<sup><0233></sup>Exodus 23:32 <sup><6133></sup>Nehemiah 13:23, etc.).

**7. *gold*** — forbidden to be heaped together (<sup><6577></sup>Deuteronomy 17:17). Solomon disobeyed (<sup><1102></sup>1 Kings 10:21,27).

***horses ... chariots*** — forbidden (<sup><6576></sup>Deuteronomy 17:16). But Solomon disobeyed (<sup><1126></sup>1 Kings 20:26). Horses could be used effectively for war in the plains of Egypt; not so in the hilly Judea. God designed there should be as wide as possible a distinction between Israel and the Egyptians. He would have His people wholly dependent on Him, rather than on the ordinary means of warfare (<sup><6107></sup>Psalms 20:7). Also horses were connected with idolatry (<sup><0231></sup>2 Kings 23:11); hence His objection: so the transition to “idols” (<sup><2105></sup>Isaiah 2:8) is natural.

**8.** (<sup><2804></sup>Hosea 8:4). Not so much public idolatry, which was not sanctioned in Uzziah’s and Jotham’s reign, but (see <sup><0234></sup>2 Kings 15:4,35) as *private*.

**9. *mean*** — in rank: not morally base: opposed to “the great man.” The former is in *Hebrew*, *Adam*, the latter, *ish*.

***boweth*** — namely, to idols. *All* ranks were idolaters.

***forgive ... not*** — a threat expressed by an imperative. Isaiah so identifies himself with God’s will, that he prays for that which he knows God purposes. So <sup><6816></sup>Revelation 18:6.

**10.** Poetical form of expressing that, such were their sins, they would be obliged by God’s judgments to seek a hiding-place from His wrath (<sup><6185></sup>Revelation 6:15,16).

***dust*** — equivalent to “caves of the earth,” or dust (<sup><2105></sup>Isaiah 2:19).

***for fear***, etc. — literally, “from the face of the terror of the Lord.”

**11. lofty looks** — literally, “eyes of pride” (<sup><49827></sup>Psalm 18:27).

**humbled** — by calamities. God will so vindicate His honor “in that day” of judgments, that none else “shall be exalted” (<sup><3849></sup>Zechariah 14:9).

**12.** Man has had many days: “the day of the Lord” shall come at last, beginning with judgment, a never-ending day in which God shall be “all in all” (<sup><4153></sup>1 Corinthians 15:28 <sup><6010></sup>2 Peter 3:10).

**every** — not merely *person*, as *English Version* explains it, but every *thing* on which the nation prided itself.

**13. cedars ... oaks** — image for haughty nobles and princes (<sup><3019></sup>Amos 2:9 <sup><38115></sup>Zechariah 11:1,2; compare <sup><6698></sup>Revelation 19:18-21).

**Bashan** — east of Jordan, north of the river Jabbok, famous for fine oaks, pasture, and cattle. Perhaps in “oaks” there is reference to their idolatry (<sup><2012></sup>Isaiah 1:29).

**14. high ... hills** — referring to the “high places” on which sacrifices were unlawfully offered, even in Uzziah’s (equivalent to Azariah) reign (<sup><1214></sup>2 Kings 15:4). Also, *places* of strength, fastnesses in which they trusted, rather than in God; so

**15. tower ... wall** — *Towers* were often made on the walls of cities.

**fenced** — strongly fortified.

**16. Tarshish** — *Tartessus* in southwest Spain, at the mouth of the Guadalquivir, near Gibraltar. It includes the adjoining region: a Phoenician colony; hence its connection with Palestine and the Bible (<sup><1492></sup>2 Chronicles 9:21). The name was also used in a wide sense for *the farthest west*, as our West Indies (<sup><2769></sup>Isaiah 66:19 <sup><1947></sup>Psalm 48:7 72:10). “Ships of Tarshish” became a phrase for *richly laden* and *far-voyaging* vessels. The judgment shall be on all that minister to man’s luxury (compare <sup><6817></sup>Revelation 18:17-19).

**pictures** — ordered to be destroyed (<sup><4632></sup>Numbers 33:52). Still to be seen on the walls of Nineveh’s palaces. It is remarkable that whereas all other ancient civilized nations, Egypt, Assyria, Greece, Rome, have left monuments in the fine arts, Judea, while rising immeasurably above them in the possession of “the living oracles,” has left none of the former. The fine arts, as in modern Rome, were so often associated with polytheism, that God required His people in this, as in other respects, to be separate from the nations (<sup><6745></sup>Deuteronomy 4:15-18). But *Vulgate* translation is perhaps better, “All that is beautiful to the sight”; not only paintings, but all

luxurious — ornaments. One comprehensive word for all that goes before (compare <sup><6682></sup>Revelation 18:12,14,16).

17. Repeated from <sup><2421></sup>Isaiah 2:11, for emphatic confirmation.

18. *idols* — literally, “vain things,” “nothings” (<sup><6604></sup>1 Corinthians 8:4). Fulfilled to the letter. *Before* the Babylonian captivity the Jews were most prone to idolatry; in no instance, *ever since*. For the future fulfillment, see <sup><3832></sup>Zechariah 13:2 <sup><6635></sup>Revelation 13:15 19:20.

19. The fulfillment answers exactly to the threat (<sup><2420></sup>Isaiah 2:10).

*they* — the idol-worshippers.

*caves* — abounding in Judea, a hilly country; hiding-places in times of alarm (<sup><0936></sup>1 Samuel 13:6).

*shake ... earth* — and the heavens also (<sup><3829></sup>Hebrews 12:26). Figure for severe and universal judgments.

20. *moles* — Others translate “mice.” The sense is, *under ground*, in darkness.

*bats* — unclean birds (<sup><6819></sup>Leviticus 11:19), living amidst tenantless ruins (<sup><6613></sup>Revelation 11:13).

22. The high ones (<sup><2421></sup>Isaiah 2:11,13) on whom the people trust, shall be “brought low” (<sup><2421></sup>Isaiah 3:2); therefore “cease from” depending on them, instead of on the Lord (<sup><3938></sup>Psalms 146:3-5).

# CHAPTER 3

## ISAIAH 3:1-26.

1. **For** — continuation of <sup><2122></sup>Isaiah 2:22.

**Lord of hosts** — therefore able to do as He says.

**doth** — present for future, so certain is the accomplishment.

**stay ... staff** — the same *Hebrew* word, the one masculine, the other feminine, an *Arabic* idiom for *all kinds of support*. What a change from the previous luxuries (<sup><2107></sup>Isaiah 2:7)! Fulfilled in the siege by Nebuchadnezzar and afterwards by Titus (<sup><3573></sup>Jeremiah 37:21 38:9).

2. Fulfilled (<sup><1244></sup>2 Kings 24:14).

**prudent** — the *Hebrew* often means a “soothsayer” (<sup><6580></sup>Deuteronomy 18:10-14); thus it will mean, the diviners, on whom they rely, shall in that day fail. It is found in a good sense (<sup><2160></sup>Proverbs 16:10), from which passage the Jews interpret it *a king*; “without” whom Israel long has been (<sup><2304></sup>Hosea 3:4).

**ancient** — old and experienced (<sup><1126></sup>1 Kings 12:6-8).

3. **captain of fifty** — not only captains of thousands, and centurions of a hundred, but even semi-centurions of fifty, shall fail.

**honorable** — literally, “of dignified aspect.”

**cunning** — skillful. The mechanic’s business will come to a standstill in the siege and subsequent desolation of the state; artisans are no mean “stay” among a nation’s safeguards.

**eloquent orator** — rather, as *Vulgate*, “skilled in whispering,” that is, incantation (<sup><4885></sup>Psalms 58:5). See <sup><2189></sup>Isaiah 8:19, below; and on “prudent,” see on <sup><2182></sup>Isaiah 3:2.

4. **children** — in ability for governing; antithesis to the “ancient” (see <sup><2182></sup>Isaiah 3:12 <sup><2106></sup>Ecclesiastes 10:16).

**babes** — in warlike might; antithesis to “the mighty” and “man of war.”

5. The anarchy resulting under such imbecile rulers (<sup><2104></sup>Isaiah 3:4); unjust exactions mutually; the forms of respect violated (<sup><2082></sup>Leviticus 19:32).

**base** — low-born. Compare the marks of “the last days” (<sup><2102></sup>2 Timothy 3:2).

6. Such will be the want of men of wealth and ability, that they will “take hold of” (<sup><2001></sup>Isaiah 4:1) the first man whom they meet, having any property, to make him “ruler.”

**brother** — one having no better hereditary claim to be ruler than the “man” supplicating him.

**Thou hast clothing** — which none of us has. Changes of raiment are wealth in the East (<sup><1105></sup>2 Kings 5:5).

**ruin** — Let our ruined affairs be committed to thee to retrieve.

7. **swear** — literally, “lift up,” namely, his hand; the gesture used in solemn attestation. Or, his voice, that is, answer; so *Vulgate*.

**healer** — of the body politic, incurably diseased (<sup><2006></sup>Isaiah 1:6).

**neither ... clothing** — so as to relieve the people and maintain a ruler’s dignity. A nation’s state must be bad indeed, when none among men, naturally ambitious, is willing to accept office.

8. Reason given by the prophet, why all shrink from the government.

**eyes of his glory** — to provoke His “glorious” Majesty before His “eyes” (compare <sup><2005></sup>Isaiah 49:5 <sup><2013></sup>Habakkuk 1:13). The *Syriac* and *LOWTH*, by a slight change of the *Hebrew*, translate, “the *cloud* of His glory,” the *Shekinah*.

9. **show** — The *Hebrew* means, “that which may be *known* by their countenances” [GESENIUS and WEISS]. But MAURER translates, “Their respect for person”; so *Syriac* and *Chaldee*. But the parallel word “declare” favors the other view. KIMCHI, from the *Arabic*, translates “their hardness” (<sup><2088></sup>Job 19:3, *Margin*), or impudence of countenance (<sup><2108></sup>Jeremiah 3:3). They have lost not only the substance of virtue, but its color.

**witness** — literally, “corresponds” to them; their look answers to their inner character (<sup><2108></sup>Hosea 5:5).

**declare** — (<sup><2113></sup>Jude 1:13). “Foaming *out* their own shame”; so far from making it a secret, “glorying” in it (<sup><2109></sup>Philippians 3:19).

**unto themselves** — Compare “in themselves” (<sup>2103</sup>Proverbs 1:31 <sup>8:36</sup><sup>2129</sup>Jeremiah 2:19 <sup>8:27</sup>Romans 1:27).

**10.** The faithlessness of many is no proof that *all* are faithless. Though nothing but croaking of frogs is heard on the surface of the pool, we are not to infer there are no fish beneath [BENGEL]. (See <sup>2119</sup>Isaiah 1:19,20).

**fruit of doings** — (<sup>2103</sup>Proverbs 1:31) in a good sense (<sup>8:8</sup>Galatians 6:8 <sup>2124</sup>Revelation 22:14). Not salvation by works, but by fruit-bearing faith (<sup>2154</sup>Isaiah 45:24 <sup>2126</sup>Jeremiah 23:6). GESENIUS and WEISS translate, *Declare as to the righteous that, etc.* MAURER, “Say that *the righteous is blessed.*”

**11. ill** — antithesis to “well” (<sup>2181</sup>Isaiah 3:10); emphatic ellipsis of the words italicized. “Ill!”

**hands** — his conduct; “hands” being the instrument of acts (<sup>2182</sup>Ecclesiastes 8:12,13).

**12.** (See <sup>2181</sup>Isaiah 3:4).

**oppressors** — literally “exactors,” that is, exacting princes (<sup>2117</sup>Isaiah 60:17). They who *ought* to be *protectors* are *exactors*; as unqualified for rule as “children,” as effeminate as “women.” Perhaps it is also implied that they were under the influence of their harem, the women of their court.

**lead** — *Hebrew*, “call thee blessed”; namely, the false *prophets*, who flatter the people with promises of safety in sin; as the political “rulers” are meant in the first clause.

**way of thy paths** — (<sup>2166</sup>Jeremiah 6:16). The right way set forth in the law. “Destroy” — *Hebrew*, “Swallow up,” that is, cause so utterly to disappear that not a vestige of it is left.

**13. standeth up** — no longer *sitting* in silence.

**plead** — indignant against a wicked people (<sup>2166</sup>Isaiah 66:16 <sup>2185</sup>Ezekiel 20:35).

**14. ancients** — Hence they are spoken of as “taken away” (<sup>2181</sup>Isaiah 3:1,2).

**vineyard** — the Jewish theocracy (<sup>2181</sup>Isaiah 5:1-7 <sup>8:10</sup>Psalms 80:9-13).

**eaten up** — “burnt”; namely, by “oppressive exactions” (<sup>2182</sup>Isaiah 3:12). Type of the crowning guilt of the husbandmen in the days of Jesus Christ (<sup>4134</sup>Matthew 21:34-41).

**spoil ... houses** — (<sup>4234</sup>Matthew 23:14).

15. What right have ye to beat, etc. (<sup><3945></sup>Psalm 94:5 <sup><3880></sup>Micah 3:2,3).

*grind* — by exactions, so as to leave them nothing.

*faces* — persons; with the additional idea of it being *openly* and *palpably* done. “Presence,” equivalent to “face” (*Hebrew*).

16. *Because the daughters of Zion are haughty*, etc. — Luxury had become great in Uzziah’s prosperous reign (<sup><4385></sup>2 Chronicles 26:5).

*stretched forth* — proudly elevated (<sup><4975></sup>Psalm 75:5).

*wanton* — rather, “making the eyes to glance about,” namely, wantonly (<sup><2183></sup>Proverbs 6:13) [MAURER]. But LOWTH, “falsely setting off the eyes with paint.” Women’s eyelids in the East are often colored with stibium, or powder of lead (see on <sup><1824></sup>Job 42:14; <sup><2480></sup>Jeremiah 4:30, *Margin*).

*mincing* — tripping with short steps.

*tinkling* — with their ankle rings on both feet, joined by small chains, which sound as they walk, and compel them to take short steps; sometimes little bells were attached (<sup><2388></sup>Isaiah 3:18,20).

17. *smite with a scab* — literally “make bald,” namely, by disease.

*discover* — cause them to suffer the greatest indignity that can befall female captives, namely to be stripped naked, and have their persons exposed (<sup><2308></sup>Isaiah 47:3; compare with <sup><2310></sup>Isaiah 20:4).

18. *bravery* — the finery.

*tinkling* — (See <sup><2316></sup>Isaiah 3:16).

*cauls* — network for the head. Or else, from an *Arabic* root, “little suns,” answering to the “tires” or neck ornaments, “like the moon” (<sup><0082></sup>Judges 8:21). The *chumarah* or crescent is also worn in front of the headdress in West Asia.

19. *chains* — rather, pendants, hanging about the neck, and dropping on the breast.

*mufflers* — veils covering the face, with apertures for the eyes, close above and loosely flowing below. The word radically means “tremulous,” referring to the changing effect of the spangles on the veil.

20. *bonnets* — turbans.

**ornaments of the legs** — the short stepping chains from one foot to another, to give a measured gait; attached to the “tinkling ornaments” (<sup><2316></sup>Isaiah 3:16).

**headbands** — literally, “girdles.”

**tablets** — rather, “houses of the breath,” that is, smelling boxes [*Vulgate*].

**earrings** — rather, amulets suspended from the neck or ears, with magic formulae inscribed; the root means to “whisper” or “conjure.”

**21. nose jewels** — The cartilage between the nostrils was bored to receive them; they usually hung from the left nostril.

**22.** Here begin *entire* articles of apparel. Those before were single ornaments.

**changeable** — from a root, “to put off”; not worn commonly; put on and off on special occasions. So, dress clothes (<sup><3015></sup>Zechariah 3:4).

**mantles** — fuller tunics with sleeves, worn over the common one, reaching down to the feet.

**wimples** — that is, mufflers, or hoods. In <sup><0815></sup>Ruth 3:15, “veils”; perhaps here, a broad cloak, or shawl, thrown over the head and body.

**crisping pins** — rather, money bags (<sup><1223></sup>2 Kings 5:23).

**23. glasses** — mirrors of polished metal (<sup><0208></sup>Exodus 38:8). But the *Septuagint*, a transparent, gauze-like, garment.

**hoods** — miters, or diadems (<sup><2313></sup>Isaiah 62:3 <sup><3015></sup>Zechariah 3:5).

**veils** — large enough to cover the head and person. Distinct from the smaller veils (“mufflers”) above (<sup><0265></sup>Genesis 24:65). Token of woman’s subjection (<sup><4110></sup>1 Corinthians 11:10).

**24. stink** — arising from ulcers (<sup><3412></sup>Zechariah 14:12).

**girdle** — to gird up the loose Eastern garments, when the person walked.

**rent** — the *Septuagint*, better, a “rope,” an emblem of poverty; the poor have nothing else to gird up their clothes with.

**well-set hair** — (<sup><0131></sup>1 Peter 3:3,4).

**baldness** — (<sup><2117></sup>Isaiah 3:17).

**stomacher** — a broad plaited girdle.

*sackcloth* — (<sup><10E3></sup>2 Samuel 3:31).

*burning* — a sunburnt countenance, owing to their hoods and veils being stripped off, while they had to work as captives under a scorching sun (So 1:6).

25. *Thy men* — of Jerusalem.

26. *gates* — The place of concourse personified is represented mourning for the loss of those multitudes which once frequented it.

*desolate ... sit upon ... ground* — the very figure under which Judea was represented on medals after the destruction by Titus: a *female sitting* under a palm tree in a posture of grief; the motto, *Judaea capta* (<sup><8E13></sup>Job 2:13 <sup><3D0></sup>Lamentations 2:10, where, as here primarily, the destruction by Nebuchadnezzar is alluded to).

# CHAPTER 4

## <2300>ISAIAH 4:1-6.

*that day* — the calamitous period described in previous chapter.

*seven* — indefinite number among the Jews. So many men would be slain, that there would be very many more women than men; for example, seven women, contrary to their natural bashfulness, would sue to (equivalent to “take hold of,” <2306>Isaiah 3:6) one man to marry them.

*eat ... own bread* — foregoing the privileges, which the law (<0210>Exodus 21:10) gives to wives, when a man has more than one.

*reproach* — of being unwedded and childless; especially felt among the Jews, who were looking for “the seed of the woman,” Jesus Christ, described in <2306>Isaiah 4:2 <2501>Isaiah 54:1,4 <0125>Luke 1:25.

2. In contrast to those on whom vengeance falls, there is a manifestation of Jesus Christ to the “escaped of Israel” in His characteristic attributes, *beauty* and *glory*, typified in Aaron’s garments (<0282>Exodus 28:2). Their *sanctification* is promised as the fruit of their being “written” in the book of life by sovereign love (<2308>Isaiah 4:3); the means of it are the “spirit of judgment” and that of “burning” (<2306>Isaiah 4:4). Their “defense” by the special presence of Jesus Christ is promised (<2309>Isaiah 4:5,6).

*branch* — the sprout of JEHOVAH, Messiah (<0235>Jeremiah 23:5 33:15 <3008>Zechariah 3:8 6:12 <0178>Luke 1:78, *Margin*). The parallel clause does not, as MAURER objects, oppose this; for “fruit of the earth” answers to “branch”; He shall not be a dry, but a *fruit-bearing branch* (<2306>Isaiah 27:6 <3043>Ezekiel 34:23-27). He is “of the *earth*” in His birth and death, while He is also “of the *Lord*” (*Jehovah*) (<0124>John 12:24). His name, “the Branch,” chiefly regards His descent from David, *when the family was low and reduced* (<0104>Luke 2:4,7,24); a sprout with more than David’s glory, springing as from a decayed tree (<2100>Isaiah 11:1 53:2 <0226>Revelation 22:16).

*excellent* — (<3004>Hebrews 1:4 8:6).

*comely* — (So 5:15,16 <2364>Ezekiel 16:14).

*escaped of Israel* — the elect remnant (<0115>Romans 11:5);

(1) in the return from Babylon;

(2) in the escape from Jerusalem's destruction under Titus;

(3) in the still future assault on Jerusalem, and deliverance of "the third part"; events mutually analogous, like concentric circles

(<sup>381E</sup>Zechariah 12:2-10 13:8,9, etc. <sup>384E</sup>Zechariah 14:2 <sup>352E</sup>Ezekiel 39:23-29 <sup>298E</sup>Joel 3:1-21).

**3. *left in Zion*** — equivalent to the "escaped of Israel" (<sup>204E</sup>Isaiah 4:2).

***shall be called*** — shall *be* (<sup>230E</sup>Isaiah 9:6).

***holy*** — (<sup>258E</sup>Isaiah 52:1 60:21 <sup>627E</sup>Revelation 21:27).

***written*** — in the book of life, antotypically (<sup>308E</sup>Philippians 4:3 <sup>685E</sup>Revelation 3:5 17:8). Primarily, in the *register* kept of *Israel's* families and tribes.

***living*** — not "blotted out" from the registry, as *dead*; but written there as among the "escaped of Israel" (<sup>270E</sup>Daniel 12:1 <sup>233E</sup>Ezekiel 13:9). To the *elect of Israel*, rather than the saved in general, the *special* reference is here (<sup>287E</sup>Joel 3:17).

**4. *When*** — that is, After.

***washed*** — (<sup>383E</sup>Zechariah 13:1).

***filth*** — moral (<sup>202E</sup>Isaiah 1:21-25).

***daughters of Zion*** — same as in <sup>236E</sup>Isaiah 3:16.

***purged*** — purified by judgments; destroying the ungodly, correcting and refining the godly.

***blood*** — (<sup>205E</sup>Isaiah 1:15).

***spirit*** — Whatever God does in the universe, He does by His *Spirit*, "without the hand" of man (<sup>380E</sup>Job 34:20 <sup>344E</sup>Psalms 104:30). Here He is represented using His power as *Judge*.

***burning*** — (<sup>408E</sup>Matthew 3:11,12). The same Holy Ghost, who sanctifies believers by the fire of affliction (<sup>302E</sup>Malachi 3:2,3), dooms unbelievers to the fire of perdition (<sup>403E</sup>1 Corinthians 3:13-15).

**5. *create*** — The "new creation" needs as much God's creative omnipotence, as the material creation (<sup>400E</sup>2 Corinthians 4:6 <sup>402E</sup>Ephesians 2:10). So it shall be in the case of the Holy Jerusalem to come (<sup>255E</sup>Isaiah 65:17,18).

**upon** — The pillar of cloud stood over the tabernacle, as symbol of God’s favor and presence (<sup>42131</sup>Exodus 13:21,22 <sup>4911</sup>Psalm 91:1). Both on *individual families* (“every dwelling”) and on the *general* sacred “assemblies” (<sup>4821</sup>Leviticus 23:2). The “cloud” became a “fire” by night in order to be seen by the Lord’s people.

**upon all the glory** — “upon the glorious whole”; namely, the Lord’s people and sanctuary [MAURER]. May it not mean, “Upon whatever the glory (the *Shekinah* spoken of in the previous clause) shall rest, there shall be a defense.” The symbol of His presence shall ensure also safety. So it was to Israel against the Egyptians at the Red Sea (<sup>4249</sup>Exodus 14:19,20). So it shall be to literal Jerusalem hereafter (<sup>3115</sup>Zechariah 2:5). Also to the Church, the spiritual “Zion” (<sup>2325</sup>Isaiah 32:18 33:15-17 <sup>3822</sup>Hebrews 12:22).

**tabernacle** — Christ’s body (<sup>4114</sup>John 1:14). “The Word ‘tabernacled’ (Greek for ‘dwelt’) among us” (<sup>4121</sup>John 2:21 <sup>3881</sup>Hebrews 8:2). It is a “shadow from the heat” and “refuge from the storm” of divine wrath against man’s sins (<sup>2204</sup>Isaiah 25:4). Heat and storms are violent in the East; so that a portable tent is a needful part of a traveller’s outfit. Such shall be God’s wrath hereafter, from which the “escaped of Israel” shall be sheltered by Jesus Christ (<sup>2331</sup>Isaiah 26:20,21 32:2).

**covert** — answering to “defense” (<sup>2115</sup>Isaiah 4:5). The *Hebrew* for *defense* in <sup>3015</sup>Isaiah 4:5, is “covering”; the lid of the ark or mercy seat was named from the same *Hebrew* word, *caphtar*; the *propitiatory*; for it, being sprinkled with blood by the high priest once a year, on the day of atonement, *covered* the people typically from wrath. Jesus Christ is the true Mercy Seat, on whom the *Shekinah* rested, the *propitiatory*, or atonement, beneath whom the law is kept, as it was literally within the ark, and man is *covered* from the storm. The redeemed Israel shall also be, by union with Him, a tabernacle for God’s glory, which, unlike that in the wilderness, shall not be taken down (<sup>2381</sup>Isaiah 38:20).

# CHAPTER 5

## ISAIAH 5:1-30.

### PARABLE OF JEHOVAH'S VINEYARD.

A new prophecy; entire in itself. Probably delivered about the same time as the second and third chapters, in Uzziah's reign. Compare <sup>2165</sup>Isaiah 5:15,16 with <sup>2167</sup>Isaiah 2:17; <sup>2168</sup>Isaiah 5:1 with <sup>2164</sup>Isaiah 3:14. However, the close of the chapter alludes *generally* to the still distant invasion of Assyrians in a later reign (compare <sup>2165</sup>Isaiah 5:26 with <sup>2178</sup>Isaiah 7:18; <sup>2165</sup>Isaiah 5:25 with <sup>2192</sup>Isaiah 9:12). When the time drew nigh, according to the ordinary prophetic usage, he handles the details *more particularly* (<sup>2190</sup>Isaiah 7:1-8:22); namely, the calamities caused by the Syro-Israelitish invasion, and subsequently by the Assyrians whom Ahaz had invited to his help.

**1. to** — rather, “concerning” [GESENIUS], that is, in the person of My beloved, as His representative [VITRINGA]. Isaiah gives a hint of the distinction and yet unity of the Divine Persons (compare *He* with *I*, <sup>2168</sup>Isaiah 5:2,3).

**of my beloved** — inspired by Him; or else, a tender song [CASTALIO]. By a slight change of reading “a song of His love” [HOUBIGANT]. “The Beloved” is Jehovah, the Second Person, the “Angel” of God the Father, not in His character as incarnate *Messiah*, but as *God of the Jews* (<sup>4230</sup>Exodus 23:20,21 32:34 33:14).

**vineyard** — (<sup>2164</sup>Isaiah 3:14 <sup>4805</sup>Psalms 80:8, etc.). The Jewish covenant-people, separated from the nations for His glory, as the object of His peculiar care (<sup>4198</sup>Matthew 20:1 21:33). Jesus Christ in the “vineyard” of the New Testament Church is the same as the Old Testament Angel of the Jewish covenant.

**fruitful hill** — literally, “a horn” (“peak,” as the Swiss *shreckhorn*) of the *son of oil*; poetically, for *very fruitful*. Suggestive of isolation, security, and a sunny aspect. Isaiah alludes plainly to the Song of Solomon (So 6:3 8:11,12), in the words “*His* vineyard” and “*my* Beloved” (compare <sup>2331</sup>Isaiah 26:20 61:10, with <sup>2104</sup>Song of Solomon 1:4 4:10). The transition from “branch” (<sup>2102</sup>Isaiah 4:2) to “vineyard” here is not unnatural.

2. **fenced** — rather, “digged and trenched” the ground to prepare it for planting the vines [MAURER].

**choicest vine** — *Hebrew, sorek*; called still in Morocco, *serki*; the grapes had scarcely perceptible seeds; the Persian *kishmish* or *bedaria*, that is, “without seed” (<sup><1001></sup>Genesis 49:11).

**tower** — to watch the vineyard against the depredations of man or beast, and for the use of the owner (<sup><1033></sup>Matthew 21:33).

**wine-press** — including the wine-fat; both hewn, for coolness, out of the rocky undersoil of the vineyard.

**wild grapes** — The *Hebrew* expresses offensive putrefaction, answering to the corrupt state of the Jews. Fetid fruit of the wild vine [MAURER], instead of “choicest” grapes. Of the poisonous monk’s hood [GESENIUS]. The Arabs call the fruit of the nightshade “wolf grapes” (<sup><1023></sup>Deuteronomy 32:32,33 <sup><1008></sup>2 Kings 4:39-41). JEROME tries to specify the details of the parable; the “fence,” *angels*; the “stones gathered out,” *idols*; the “tower,” the “*temple* in the midst” of Judea; the “wine-press,” the *altar*.

3. **And now**, etc. — appeal of God to themselves, as in <sup><2018></sup>Isaiah 1:18 <sup><3008></sup>Micah 6:3. So Jesus Christ, in <sup><1040></sup>Matthew 21:40,41, alluding in the very form of expression to this, makes them pass sentence on themselves. God condemns sinners “out of their own mouth” (<sup><1030></sup>Deuteronomy 32:6 <sup><1080></sup>Job 15:6 <sup><1022></sup>Luke 19:22 <sup><1004></sup>Romans 3:4).

4. God has done all that could be done for the salvation of sinners, consistently with His justice and goodness. The God of nature is, as it were, amazed at the unnatural fruit of so well-cared a vineyard.

5. **go to** — that is, attend to me.

**hedge ... wall** — It had both; a proof of the care of the owner. But now it shall be trodden down by wild beasts (enemies) (<sup><1002></sup>Psalms 80:12,13).

6. **I will ... command** — The parable is partly dropped and Jehovah, as in <sup><3008></sup>Isaiah 5:7, is implied to be the Owner: for He alone, not an ordinary husbandman (<sup><1040></sup>Matthew 21:43 <sup><1072></sup>Luke 17:22), could give such a “command.”

**no rain** — antotypically, *the heaven-sent teachings of the prophets* (<sup><3008></sup>Amos 8:11). Not accomplished in the Babylonish captivity; for Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Haggai, and Zechariah prophesied during or after it. But in gospel times.

7. Isaiah here applies the parable. It is no mere *human* owner, nor a *literal* vineyard that is meant.

*vineyard of the Lord* — His *only* one (<sup>4298E</sup>Exodus 19:5 <sup>4318E</sup>Amos 3:2).

*pleasant* — “the plant of his delight”; just as the husbandman was at pains to select the *sorek*, or “choicest vine” (<sup>4318E</sup>Isaiah 5:2); so God’s election of the Jews.

*judgment* — justice. The play upon words is striking in the *Hebrew*, He looked for *mishpat*, but behold *mispāt* (“bloodshed”); for *tsedaqua*, but behold *tseaqua* (the cry that attends anarchy, covetousness, and dissipation, <sup>4318E</sup>Isaiah 5:8,11,12; compare the cry of the rabble by which justice was overborne in the case of Jesus Christ, <sup>4172E</sup>Matthew 27:23,24).

## <sup>4318E</sup>ISAIAH 5:8-23.

### SIX DISTINCT WOES AGAINST CRIMES.

8. (<sup>4293E</sup>Leviticus 25:13 <sup>4310E</sup>Micah 2:2). The jubilee restoration of possessions was intended as a guard against avarice.

*till there be no place* — left for any one else.

*that they may be* — rather, and ye be.

*the earth* — the land.

9. *In mine ears ... the Lord* — namely, has revealed it, as in <sup>4321E</sup>Isaiah 22:14.

*desolate* — literally, “a desolation,” namely, on account of the national sins.

*great and fair* — houses.

10. *acres* — literally, “yokes”; as much as one yoke of oxen could plow in a day.

*one* — only.

*bath* — of wine; seven and a half gallons.

*homer ... ephah* — Eight bushels of seed would yield only three pecks of produce (<sup>4351E</sup>Ezekiel 45:11). The ephah and bath, one-tenth of an homer.

11. Second *Woe* — against intemperance.

**early** — when it was regarded especially shameful to drink (<sup>4025</sup>Acts 2:15 <sup>3075</sup>1 Thessalonians 5:7). Banquets for revelry began earlier than usual (<sup>2106</sup>Ecclesiastes 10:16,17).

**strong drink** — *Hebrew, sichar*, implying intoxication.

**continue** — drinking all day till evening.

12. Music was common at ancient feasts (<sup>2308</sup>Isaiah 24:8,9 <sup>3065</sup>Amos 6:5,6).

**viol** — an instrument with twelve strings [JOSEPHUS, *Antiquities*, 8.10].

**tabret** — *Hebrew, toph*, from the use of which in drowning the cries of children sacrificed to Moloch, *Tophet* received its name. *Arabic, duf*. A kettle drum, or tambourine.

**pipe** — flute or flageolet: from a *Hebrew* root “to bore through”; or else, “to dance” (compare <sup>3211</sup>Job 21:11-15).

**regard not ... Lord** — a frequent effect of feasting (<sup>3005</sup>Job 1:5 <sup>426</sup>Psalm 28:5).

**work ... operation** — in punishing the guilty (<sup>2359</sup>Isaiah 5:19 <sup>2302</sup>Isaiah 10:12).

13. **are gone** — The prophet sees the *future* as if it were before his eyes.

**no knowledge** — because of their foolish recklessness (<sup>2352</sup>Isaiah 5:12 <sup>2008</sup>Isaiah 1:3 <sup>3006</sup>Hosea 4:6 <sup>2944</sup>Luke 19:44).

**famished** — awful contrast to their luxurious feasts (<sup>2351</sup>Isaiah 5:11,12).

**multitude** — plebeians in contradistinction to the “honorable men,” or nobles.

**thirst** — (<sup>4970</sup>Psalm 107:4,5). Contrast to their drinking (<sup>2351</sup>Isaiah 5:11). In their deportation and exile, they shall hunger and thirst.

14. **hell** — the grave; *Hebrew, sheol*; *Greek, hades*; “the unseen world of spirits.” Not here, “the place of torment.” Poetically, it is represented as enlarging itself immensely, in order to receive the countless hosts of Jews, which should perish (<sup>0463</sup>Numbers 16:30).

**their** — that is, of the Jewish people.

**he that rejoiceth** — the drunken reveller in Jerusalem.

15. (Compare <sup>2309</sup>Isaiah 2:9,11,17). *All* ranks, “mean” and “mighty” alike; so “honorable” and “multitude” (<sup>2353</sup>Isaiah 5:13).

**16.** God shall be “exalted” in man’s view, because of His manifestation of His “justice” in punishing the guilty.

*sanctified* — regarded as holy by reason of His “righteous” dealings.

**17. after their manner** — literally, “according to their own word,” that is, *at will*. Otherwise, *as in their own pasture* [GESENIUS]: so the *Hebrew* in <sup><R02></sup>Micah 2:12. The lands of the Scenite tent dwellers (<sup><R07></sup>Jeremiah 35:7). Arab shepherds in the neighborhood shall roam at large, the whole of Judea being so desolate as to become a vast pasturage.

*waste ... fat ones* — the *deserted* lands of the *rich* (“fat,” <sup><R23></sup>Psalm 22:29), then gone into captivity; “strangers,” that is, nomad tribes shall make their flocks to feed on [MAURER]. Figuratively, “the lambs” are the pious, “the fat ones” the impious. So tender disciples of Jesus Christ (<sup><R15></sup>John 21:15) are called “lambs”; being meek, harmless, poor, and persecuted. Compare <sup><R08></sup>Ezekiel 39:18, where the fatlings are the rich and great (<sup><R01></sup>1 Corinthians 1:26,27). The “strangers” are in this view the “other sheep not of the” the Jewish “fold” (<sup><R06></sup>John 10:16), the *Gentiles* whom Jesus Christ shall “bring” to be partakers of the rich privileges (<sup><R17></sup>Romans 11:17) fell from. Thus “after their (own) manner” will express that the Christian Church should worship God in freedom, released from legal bondage (<sup><R03></sup>John 4:23 <sup><R00></sup>Galatians 5:1).

**18.** Third *Woe* — against obstinate perseverance in sin, as if they wished to provoke divine judgments.

*iniquity* — guilt, incurring punishment [MAURER].

*cords*, etc. — cart-rope — Rabbins say, “An evil inclination is at first like a fine *hair-string*, but the finishing like a *cart-rope*.” The antithesis is between the slender *cords* of sophistry, like the spider’s web (<sup><R19></sup>Isaiah 59:5 <sup><R04></sup>Job 8:14), with which one sin *draws* on another, until they at last bind themselves with great guilt as with a *cart-rope*. They strain every nerve in sin.

*vanity* — wickedness.

*sin* — substantive, not a verb: they draw on themselves “sin” and its penalty recklessly.

**19. work** — vengeance (<sup><R02></sup>Isaiah 5:12). Language of defiance to God. So Lamech’s boast of impunity (<sup><R03></sup>Genesis 4:23,24; compare <sup><R75></sup>Jeremiah 17:15 <sup><R02></sup>2 Peter 3:3,4).

*counsel* — God’s threatened purpose to punish.

**20.** Fourth *Woe* — against those who confound the distinctions of right and wrong (compare <sup><6128></sup>Romans 1:28), “reprobate,” *Greek*, “undiscriminating: the moral perception darkened.”

*bitter ... sweet* — sin is *bitter* (<sup><2129></sup>Jeremiah 2:19 <sup><4823></sup>Acts 8:23 <sup><3125></sup>Hebrews 12:15); though it seem sweet for a time (<sup><3197></sup>Proverbs 9:17,18). Religion is *sweet* (<sup><3503></sup>Psalms 119:103).

**21.** Fifth *Woe* — against those who were so “wise in their own eyes” as to think they knew better than the prophet, and therefore rejected his warnings (<sup><2294></sup>Isaiah 29:14,15).

**22, 23.** Sixth *Woe* — against corrupt judges, who, “mighty” in drinking “wine” (a boast still not uncommon), if not in defending their country, obtain the means of self-indulgence by taking bribes (“reward”). The two verses are closely joined [MAURER].

*minge strong drink* — not with *water*, but *spices* to make it intoxicating (<sup><3196></sup>Proverbs 9:2,5 <sup><2882></sup>Song of Solomon 8:2).

*take away the righteousness* — set aside the just claims of those having a righteous cause.

**24.** Literally, “tongue of fire eateth” (<sup><4413></sup>Acts 2:3).

*flame consumeth the chaff* — rather, withered grass falleth before the flame (<sup><4182></sup>Matthew 3:12).

*root ... blossom* — *entire* decay, both the hidden *source* and outward *manifestations* of prosperity, perishing (<sup><3816></sup>Job 18:16 <sup><3101></sup>Malachi 4:1).

*cast away ... law* — in its spirit, while retaining the letter.

**25.** *anger ... kindled* — (<sup><2213></sup>2 Kings 22:13,17).

*hills ... tremble* — This probably fixes the date of this chapter, as it refers to the *earthquake in the days of Uzziah* (<sup><3101></sup>Amos 1:1 <sup><3845></sup>Zechariah 14:5). The earth trembled as if conscious of the presence of God (<sup><2045></sup>Jeremiah 4:24 <sup><3816></sup>Habakkuk 3:6).

*torn* — rather, were as dung (<sup><3510></sup>Psalms 83:10).

*For all this*, etc. — This burden of the prophet’s strains, with dirge-like monotony, is repeated at <sup><2192></sup>Isaiah 9:12,17,21 10:4. With all the past calamities, still heavier judgments are impending; which he specifies in the rest of the chapter (<sup><6314></sup>Leviticus 26:14, etc.).

**26. lift ... ensign** — to call together the hostile nations to execute His judgments on Judea (<sup><23016></sup>Isaiah 10:5-7 45:1). But for *mercy* to it, in <sup><23112></sup>Isaiah 11:12 18:3.

**hiss** — (compare 7:18). Bees were drawn out of their hives by the sound of a flute, or *hissing*, or *whistling* (<sup><3018></sup>Zechariah 10:8). God will collect the nations round Judea like bees (<sup><10144></sup>Deuteronomy 1:44 <sup><15812></sup>Psalms 118:12).

**end of the earth** — the widely distant subject races of which the Assyrian army was made up (<sup><23216></sup>Isaiah 22:6). The ulterior fulfillment took place in the siege under Roman Titus. Compare “end of the earth” (<sup><15384></sup>Deuteronomy 28:49, etc.). So the pronoun is *singular* in the *Hebrew*, for “them,” “their,” “whose” (him, his, etc.), <sup><21616></sup>Isaiah 5:26-29; referring to some *particular* nation and person [HORSLEY].

**27. weary** — with long marches (<sup><16258></sup>Deuteronomy 25:18).

**none ... slumber** — requiring no rest.

**girdle** — with which the ancient loose robes used to be girded for action. Ever ready for march or battle.

**nor the latchet ... broken** — The soles were attached to the feet, not by upper leather as with us, but by straps. So securely clad that not even a strap of their sandals gives way, so as to impede their march.

**28. bent** — ready for battle.

**hoofs ... flint** — The ancients did not shoe their horses: hence the value of hard hoofs for long marches.

**wheels** — of their chariots. The Assyrian army abounded in cavalry and chariots (<sup><23216></sup>Isaiah 22:6,7 36:8).

**29. roaring** — their battle cry.

**30. sorrow, and the light is darkened** — Otherwise, *distress and light* (that is, hope and fear) alternately succeed (as usually occurs in an unsettled state of things), *and darkness arises in*, etc. [MAURER].

**heavens** — literally “clouds,” that is, its sky is rather “clouds” than sky. Otherwise from a different *Hebrew* root, “in its destruction” or ruins. HORSLEY takes “sea ... look unto the land” as a new image taken from mariners in a coasting vessel (such as all ancient vessels were), *looking for the nearest land*, which the *darkness* of the storm conceals, so that *darkness and distress* alone may be said to be visible.

# CHAPTER 6

## ISAIAH 6:1-13.

### VISION OF JEHOVAH IN HIS TEMPLE.

Isaiah is outside, near the altar in front of the temple. The doors are supposed to open, and the veil hiding the Holy of Holies to be withdrawn, unfolding to his view a vision of God represented as an Eastern monarch, attended by seraphim as His ministers of state (<sup><4129></sup>1 Kings 22:19), and with a robe and flowing train (a badge of dignity in the East), which filled the temple. This assertion that he had seen God was, according to tradition (not sanctioned by <sup><2300></sup>Isaiah 1:1; see *Introduction*), the pretext for sawing him asunder in Manasseh's reign (<sup><38157></sup>Hebrews 11:37). Visions often occur in the other prophets: in Isaiah there is only this one, and it is marked by characteristic clearness and simplicity.

**1. In ... year ... Uzziah died** — Either *literal* death, or *civil* when he ceased as a leper to exercise his functions as king [*Chaldee*], (<sup><4339></sup>2 Chronicles 26:19-21). 754 B.C. [CALMET] 578 (*Common Chronology*). This is not the first beginning of Isaiah's prophecies, but his inauguration to a higher degree of the prophetic office: <sup><2369></sup>Isaiah 6:9, etc., implies the tone of one who had already experience of the people's obstinacy.

**Lord** — here *Adonai, Jehovah* in <sup><2365></sup>Isaiah 6:5; *Jesus Christ* is meant as speaking in <sup><2360></sup>Isaiah 6:10, according to <sup><4324></sup>John 12:41. Isaiah could only have "seen" *the Son*, not the divine essence (<sup><3018></sup>John 1:18). The words in <sup><2360></sup>Isaiah 6:10 are attributed by Paul (<sup><4325></sup>Acts 28:25,26) to the *Holy Ghost*. Thus the Trinity in unity is implied; as also by the thrice "Holy" (<sup><2360></sup>Isaiah 6:3). Isaiah mentions the robes, temple, and seraphim, but not the form of God Himself. Whatever it was, it was different from the usual Shekinah: that was on the mercy seat, this on a throne; that a cloud and fire, of this no form is specified: over that were the cherubim, over this the seraphim; that had no clothing, this had a flowing robe and train.

**2. stood** — not necessarily the posture of *standing*; rather, *were in attendance on Him* [MAURER], hovering on expanded wings.

**the** — not in the *Hebrew*.

**seraphim** — nowhere else applied to God’s attendant angels; but to the *fiery flying* (not winged, but *rapidly moving*) serpents, which bit the Israelites (<sup><0216></sup>Numbers 21:6), called so from the poisonous *inflammation* caused by their bites. *Seraph* is to burn; implying the *burning zeal*, dazzling *brightness* (<sup><1211></sup>2 Kings 2:11 6:17 <sup><3013></sup>Ezekiel 1:13 <sup><4838></sup>Matthew 28:3) and serpent-like *rapidity* of the seraphim in God’s service. Perhaps Satan’s form as a *serpent* (*nachash*) in his appearance to man has some connection with his original form as a seraph of light. The head of the serpent was the symbol of *wisdom* in Egypt (compare <sup><0216></sup>Numbers 21:8 <sup><1204></sup>2 Kings 18:4). The seraphim, with six wings and one face, can hardly be identified with the cherubim, which had four wings (in the temple only *two*) and four faces (<sup><3008></sup>Ezekiel 1:5-12). (But compare <sup><6608></sup>Revelation 4:8). The “face” and “feet” imply a human form; something of a serpentine form (perhaps a basilisk’s head, as in the temples of Thebes) may have been mixed with it: so the cherub was compounded of various animal forms. However, seraph may come from a root meaning “princely,” applied in <sup><7003></sup>Daniel 10:13 to Michael [MAURER]; just as cherub comes from a root (changing *m* into *b*), meaning “noble.”

**twin** — Two wings alone of the six were kept ready for instant flight in God’s service; two veiled their faces as unworthy to look on the holy God, or pry into His secret counsels which they fulfilled (<sup><0106></sup>Exodus 3:6 <sup><3048></sup>Job 4:18 15:15); two covered their feet, or rather the whole of the *lower parts* of their persons — a practice usual in the presence of Eastern monarchs, in token of reverence (compare <sup><3011></sup>Ezekiel 1:11, *their bodies*). Man’s service *a fortiori* consists in reverent waiting on, still more than in active service for, God.

3. (<sup><6608></sup>Revelation 4:8). The Trinity is implied (on “Lord,” see on <sup><2108></sup>Isaiah 6:1). God’s *holiness* is the keynote of Isaiah’s whole prophecies.

**whole earth** — the *Hebrew* more emphatically, *the fullness of the whole earth* is His *glory* (<sup><3201></sup>Psalms 24:1 72:19).

4. **posts of ... door** — rather, foundations of the thresholds.

**house** — temple.

**smoke** — the Shekinah cloud (<sup><1030></sup>1 Kings 8:10 <sup><2304></sup>Ezekiel 10:4).

5. **undone** — (<sup><1233></sup>Exodus 33:20). The same effect was produced on others by the presence of God (<sup><0062></sup>Judges 6:22 13:22 <sup><3415></sup>Job 42:5,6 <sup><4838></sup>Luke 5:8 <sup><6017></sup>Revelation 1:17).

**lips** — appropriate to the context which describes the praises of the *lips*, sung in alternate responses (<sup><1253></sup>Exodus 15:20,21 <sup><2108></sup>Isaiah 6:3) by the

seraphim: also appropriate to the office of *speaking* as the prophet of God, about to be committed to Isaiah (<sup><2169></sup>Isaiah 6:9).

**seen** — not strictly Jehovah Himself (<sup><4118></sup>John 1:18 <sup><5466></sup>1 Timothy 6:16), but the symbol of His presence.

**Lord** — *Hebrew*, “JEHOVAH.”

**6. unto me** — The seraph had been in the temple, Isaiah *outside of it*.

**live coal** — literally, “a hot stone,” used, as in some countries in our days, to roast meat with, for example, the meat of the sacrifices. Fire was a symbol of purification, as it takes the dross out of metals (<sup><3181></sup>Malachi 3:2,3).

**the altar** — of burnt offering, in the court of the priests before the temple. The fire on it was at first kindled by God (<sup><4118></sup>Leviticus 9:24), and was kept continually burning.

**7. mouth ... lips** — (See on <sup><2169></sup>Isaiah 6:5). The *mouth* was touched because it was the part to be used by *the prophet* when inaugurated. So “*tongues of fire*” rested on the disciples (<sup><4118></sup>Acts 2:3,4) when they were being set apart to *speak* in various languages of Jesus.

**iniquity** — conscious unworthiness of acting as God’s messenger.

**purged** — literally, “covered,” that is, expiated, not by any physical effect of fire to cleanse from sin, but in relation to the *altar sacrifices*, of which Messiah, who here commissions Isaiah, was in His death to be the antitype: it is implied hereby that it is only by sacrifice sin can be pardoned.

**8. I ... us** — The change of number indicates the Trinity (compare <sup><4002></sup>Genesis 1:26 11:7). Though not a sure *argument* for the doctrine, for the *plural* may indicate merely majesty, it *accords* with that truth proved elsewhere.

**Whom ... who** — implying that *few* would be willing to bear the self-denial which the delivering of such an unwelcome message to the Jews would require on the part of the messenger (compare <sup><1295></sup>1 Chronicles 29:5).

**Here am I** — prompt zeal, now that he has been specially qualified for it (<sup><2169></sup>Isaiah 6:7; compare <sup><4118></sup>1 Samuel 3:10,11 <sup><4116></sup>Acts 9:6).

**9. Hear ... indeed** — *Hebrew*, “In hearing hear,” that is, *Though ye hear* the prophet’s warnings *again and again*, ye are doomed, because of your perverse will (<sup><4117></sup>John 7:17), *not to understand*. Light enough is given in revelation to guide those sincerely seeking to *know*, in order that they may

do, God's will; darkness enough is left to confound the wilfully blind (<sup><2388></sup>Isaiah 43:8). So in Jesus' use of parables (<sup><1034></sup>Matthew 13:14).

**see..indeed** — rather, “though ye *see again and again*,” yet, etc.

**10. Make ... fat** — (<sup><497></sup>Psalm 119:17). “Render them the more hardened by thy warnings” [MAURER]. This effect is the fruit, not of *the truth* in itself, but of the corrupt state of *their hearts*, to which God here judicially gives them over (<sup><267></sup>Isaiah 63:17). GESENIUS takes the imperatives as futures. “Proclaim truths, the *result* of which proclamation *will be* their becoming the more hardened” (<sup><6128></sup>Romans 1:28 <sup><4018></sup>Ephesians 4:18); but this does not so well as the former set forth God as *designedly* giving up sinners to *judicial* hardening (<sup><6108></sup>Romans 11:8 <sup><3121></sup>2 Thessalonians 2:11). In the first member of the sentence, the order is, *the heart, ears, eyes*; in the latter, the reverse order, *the eyes, ears, heart*. It is from the *heart* that corruption flows into the *ears and eyes* (<sup><4072></sup>Mark 7:21,22); but through *the eyes and ears healing* reaches the heart (<sup><6107></sup>Romans 10:17), [BENGL]. (<sup><2152></sup>Jeremiah 5:21 <sup><3312></sup>Ezekiel 12:2 <sup><3171></sup>Zechariah 7:11 <sup><4157></sup>Acts 7:57 <sup><5004></sup>2 Timothy 4:4). In <sup><1035></sup>Matthew 13:15, the words are quoted in the *indicative*, “*is waxed gross*” (so the *Septuagint*), not the *imperative*, “*make fat*”; God's word as to the future is as certain as if it were already fulfilled. To *see with one's eyes* will not convince a will that is opposed to the truth (compare <sup><6145></sup>John 11:45,46 12:10,11). “One must *love* divine things in order to *understand* them” [PASCAL].

**be healed** — of their spiritual malady, sin (<sup><2106></sup>Isaiah 1:6 <sup><1943></sup>Psalm 103:3 <sup><2174></sup>Jeremiah 17:14).

**11. how long** — will this wretched condition of the nation being hardened to its destruction continue?

**until** — (<sup><2169></sup>Isaiah 5:9) — fulfilled primarily at the Babylonish captivity, and more fully at the dispersion under the Roman Titus.

**12.** (<sup><1251></sup>2 Kings 25:21).

**forsaking** — abandonment of dwellings by their inhabitants (<sup><2109></sup>Jeremiah 4:29).

**13. and it shall return, and ... be eaten** — Rather, “*but it shall be again given over to be consumed*”: if even a tenth survive the first destruction, it shall be destroyed by a second (<sup><2165></sup>Isaiah 5:25 <sup><2101></sup>Ezekiel 5:1-5,12), [MAURER and HORSLEY]. In *English Version*, “return” refers to the poor remnant left in the land at the Babylonish captivity (<sup><1244></sup>2 Kings 24:14 25:12), which afterwards fled to Egypt in fear (<sup><1251></sup>2 Kings 25:26), and subsequently *returned* thence along with others who had fled to Moab and

Edom (<sup><240E></sup>Jeremiah 40:11,12), and suffered under further divine judgments.

**tell** — rather, “terebinth” or “turpentine tree” (<sup><210E></sup>Isaiah 1:29).

**substance ... when ... cast ... leaves** — rather, “As a *terebinth* or *oak* in which, when they are cast down (not ‘cast their leaves,’ <sup><844E></sup>Job 14:7), the trunk or stock remains, so the holy seed (<sup><500E></sup>Ezra 9:2) shall be the stock of that land.” The seeds of vitality still exist in both the land and the scattered people of Judea, waiting for the returning spring of God’s favor (<sup><611E></sup>Romans 11:5,23-29). According to Isaiah, not all Israel, but the *elect remnant alone*, is destined to salvation. God shows unchangeable severity towards sin, but covenant faithfulness in preserving a remnant, and to it Isaiah bequeaths the prophetic legacy of the second part of his book (the fortieth through sixty-sixth chapters).

# CHAPTER 7

## ISAIAH 7:1-9:7.

### PREDICTION OF THE ILL SUCCESS OF THE SYRO-ISRAELITISH INVASION OF JUDAH — AHAZ ALLIANCE WITH ASSYRIA, AND ITS FATAL RESULTS TO JUDEA — YET THE CERTAINTY OF FINAL PRESERVATION AND OF THE COMING OF MESSIAH.

In the Assyrian inscriptions the name of Rezin, king of Damascus, is found among the tributaries of Tiglath-pileser, of whose reign the annals of seventeen years have been deciphered. For the historical facts in this chapter, compare <sup><1257></sup>2 Kings 15:37-16:9. Rezin of Syria and Pekah of Israel, as confederates, advanced against Jerusalem. In the first campaign they “smote Ahaz with a great slaughter” (<sup><148F></sup>2 Chronicles 28:5). Their object was probably to unite the three kingdoms against Assyria. Egypt seems to have favored the plan, so as to interpose these confederate kingdoms between her own frontier and Assyria (compare <sup><21718></sup>Isaiah 7:18, “Egypt”; and <sup><12774></sup>2 Kings 17:4, Hoshea’s league with Egypt). Rezin and Pekah may have perceived Ahaz’ inclination towards Assyria rather than towards their own confederacy; this and the old feud between Israel and Judah (<sup><1126></sup>1 Kings 12:16) occasioned their invasion of Judah. Ahaz, at the *second* inroad of his enemies (compare <sup><1480I></sup>2 Chronicles 28:1-26 and <sup><1257></sup>2 Kings 15:37, with <sup><2146F></sup>Isaiah 16:5), smarting under his former defeat, applied to Tiglath-pileser, in spite of Isaiah’s warning in this chapter, that he should rather rely on God; that king accordingly attacked Damascus, and slew Rezin (<sup><12419></sup>2 Kings 16:9); and probably it was at the same time that he carried away part of Israel captive (<sup><1259></sup>2 Kings 15:29), unless there were *two* assaults on Pekah — that in <sup><1259></sup>2 Kings 15:29, the earlier, and that in which Tiglath helped Ahaz subsequently [G. V. SMITH]. Ahaz was saved at the sacrifice of Judah’s independence and the payment of a large tribute, which continued till the overthrow of Sennacherib under Hezekiah (<sup><2557F></sup>Isaiah 37:37 <sup><1248></sup>2 Kings 16:8,17,18 <sup><1483F></sup>2 Chronicles 28:20). Ahaz’ reign began about 741 B.C., and Pekah was slain in 738 [WINER].

**1. Ahaz** — In the first years of his reign the design of the two kings against Judah was carried out, which was formed in Jotham’s reign (<sup><1257></sup>2 Kings 15:37).

**Syria** — *Hebrew, Aram* (<sup><1012></sup>Genesis 10:22,23), originally the whole region between the Euphrates and Mediterranean, including *Assyria*, of which *Syria* is an abbreviation; here the region round Damascus, and along Mount Libanus.

**Jerusalem** — An actual siege of it took place, but was foiled (<sup><1216></sup>2 Kings 16:5).

**2. *is confederate with*** — rather, *is encamped upon* the territory of Ephraim [MAURER], or better, as Rezin was encamped against *Jerusalem*, “*is supported by*” [LOWTH] Ephraim, whose land lay between Syria and Judah. The mention of “David” alludes, in sad contrast with the present, to the time when David made Syria subject to him (<sup><1016></sup>2 Samuel 8:6).

**Ephraim** — the ten tribes.

**as ... *trees of ... wood*** — simultaneous agitation.

**3. *Go forth*** — out of the city, to the place where Ahaz was superintending the works for defense and the cutting off of the water supply from the enemy, and securing it to the city. So <sup><2319></sup>Isaiah 22:9 <sup><1618></sup>2 Chronicles 32:4.

**Shearjashub** — that is, A remnant shall return (<sup><2183></sup>Isaiah 6:13) was a standing memorial to Ahaz and the Jews that the nation should not, notwithstanding the general calamity (<sup><2377></sup>Isaiah 7:17-25 <sup><2186></sup>Isaiah 8:6-8), be utterly destroyed (<sup><2321></sup>Isaiah 10:21,22).

**conduit** — an aqueduct from the pool or reservoir for the supply of the city. At the foot of Zion was Fount Siloah (<sup><2316></sup>Isaiah 8:6 <sup><1615></sup>Nehemiah 3:15, <sup><401></sup>John 9:7), called also Gihon, on the west of Jerusalem (<sup><1630></sup>2 Chronicles 32:30). Two pools were supplied from it, *the Upper*, or *Old* (<sup><2311></sup>Isaiah 22:11), or *King's* (<sup><1624></sup>Nehemiah 2:14), and *the Lower* (<sup><2319></sup>Isaiah 22:9), which received the superfluous waters of the upper. The upper pool is still to be seen, about seven hundred yards from the Jaffa gate. The highway leading to the fullers' field, which was in a position near water for the purposes of washing, previous to drying and bleaching, the cloth, was probably alongside the aqueduct.

**4. *Take heed***, etc. — that is, *See that* thou be quiet (not seeking Assyrian aid in a fit of panic).

**tails** — mere *ends* of firebrands, almost consumed themselves (about soon to fall before the Assyrians, <sup><2188></sup>Isaiah 7:8), therefore harmless.

**smoking** — as about to go out; not *blazing*.

**son of Remaliah** — Pekah, a usurper (<sup><1255></sup>2 Kings 15:25). The Easterners express contempt by designating one, not by his own name, but by his father's, especially when the father is but little known (<sup><1817></sup>1 Samuel 20:27,31).

6. **vex** — rather, “throw into consternation” [GESENIUS].

**make a breach** — rather, “cleave it asunder.” Their scheme was to divide a large portion of the territory between themselves, and set up a vassal king of their own over the rest.

**son of Tabeal** — unknown; a Syrian-sounding name, perhaps favored by a party in Jerusalem (<sup><2186></sup>Isaiah 3:6,9,12).

7. (<sup><2180></sup>Isaiah 8:10 <sup><1130></sup>Proverbs 21:30).

8. **head** — that is, in both Syria and Israel the *capital* shall remain as it is; they shall not conquer Judah, but each shall possess only his own dominions.

**threescore and five ... not a people** — As these words break the symmetry of the parallelism in this verse, either they ought to be placed after “Remaliah's son,” in <sup><2109></sup>Isaiah 7:9, or else they refer to some older prophecy of Isaiah, or of Amos (as the Jewish writers represent), parenthetically; to which, in <sup><2108></sup>Isaiah 7:8, the words, “If ye will not believe ... not be established,” correspond in parallelism. *One* deportation of Israel happened within one or two years from this time, under Tiglath-pileser (<sup><1259></sup>2 Kings 15:29). *Another* in the reign of Hoshea, under Shalmaneser (<sup><1270></sup>2 Kings 17:1-6), was about twenty years after. But the final one which utterly “broke” up Israel so as to be “not a people,” accompanied by a colonization of Samaria with foreigners, was under Esar-haddon, who carried away Manasseh, king of Judah, also, in the twenty-second year of his reign, sixty-five years from the utterance of this prophecy (compare <sup><1402></sup>Ezra 4:2,3,10, with <sup><1274></sup>2 Kings 17:24 <sup><1431></sup>2 Chronicles 33:11) [USHER]. The event, though so far off, was enough to assure the people of Judah that as God, the Head of the theocracy, would *ultimately* interpose to destroy the enemies of His people, so they might rely on Him *now*.

9. **believe, ... be established** — There is a paronomasia, or play on the words, in the *Hebrew*: “if ye will not *confide*, ye shall not *abide*.” Ahaz brought distress on himself by distrust in the Lord, and trust in Assyria.

11. **Ask thee** — since thou dost not credit the prophet's words.

**sign** — a miraculous token to assure thee that God will fulfill His promise of saving Jerusalem (<sup><23749></sup>Isaiah 37:30 38:7,8). “Signs,” facts then present or near at hand as pledges for the more distant future, are frequent in Isaiah.

**ask ... in ... depth** — literally, “Make deep ... ask it,” that is, Go to the depth of the earth or of *Hades* [*Vulgate* and *LOWTH*], or, Mount high for it (literally, “Make high”). So in <sup><4063></sup>Matthew 16:1. Signs in *heaven* are contrasted with the signs on earth and below it (raising the dead) which Jesus Christ had wrought (compare <sup><5106></sup>Romans 10:6,7). He offers Ahaz the widest limits within which to make his choice.

**12. neither ... tempt** — hypocritical pretext of keeping the law (<sup><6166></sup>Deuteronomy 6:16); “tempt,” that is, put God to the proof, as in <sup><1005></sup>Matthew 4:7, by seeking His miraculous interposition without warrant. But here there *was* the warrant of the prophet of God; to have asked a sign, when thus offered, would not have been a *tempting* of God. Ahaz true reason for declining was his resolve not to do God’s will, but to negotiate with Assyria, and persevere in his idolatry (<sup><4267></sup>2 Kings 16:7,8,3,4,10). Men often excuse their distrust in God, and trust in their own devices, by *professed* reverence for God. Ahaz may have fancied that though Jehovah was the God of Judea and could work a sign there, that was no proof that the local god of Syria might not be more powerful. Such was the common heathen notion (<sup><2300></sup>Isaiah 10:10,11:36:18-20).

**13. Is it a small thing?** — Is it not enough for you (<sup><6163></sup>Numbers 16:9)? The allusion to “David” is in order to contrast *his* trust in God with his degenerate descendant Ahaz’ distrust.

**weary** — try the patience of.

**men** — prophets. Isaiah as yet had given no outward proof that he was from God; but now God has offered a sign, which Ahaz publicly rejects. The sin is therefore *now* not merely against “men,” but openly against “God.” Isaiah’s manner therefore changes from mildness to bold reproof.

**14. himself** — since thou wilt not ask a sign, nay, rejectest the offer of one.

**you** — for the sake of the house of believing “David” (God remembering His everlasting covenant with David), not for unbelieving Ahaz’ sake.

**Behold** — arresting attention to the extraordinary prophecy.

**virgin** — from a root, “to lie hid,” virgins being closely kept from men’s gaze in their parents’ custody in the East. The *Hebrew*, and the *Septuagint* here, and *Greek* (<sup><4023></sup>Matthew 1:23), have the article, *the* virgin, some definite one known to the speaker and his hearers; primarily, the woman,

then a virgin, about immediately to become the second wife, and bear a child, whose attainment of the age of discrimination (about three years) should be preceded by the deliverance of Judah from its two invaders; its fullest significance is realized in “*the woman*” (<sup><0085></sup>Genesis 3:15), whose seed should bruise the serpent’s head and deliver captive man (<sup><2612></sup>Jeremiah 31:22 <sup><3108></sup>Micah 5:3). Language is selected such as, while *partially* applicable to the immediate event, receives its *fullest*, most appropriate, and exhaustive accomplishment in Messianic events. The New Testament application of such prophecies is not a strained “accommodation”; rather the temporary fulfillment of an adaptation of the far-reaching prophecy to the present passing event, which foreshadows typically the great central end of prophecy, Jesus Christ (<sup><6910></sup>Revelation 19:10). Evidently the wording is such as to apply more fully to Jesus Christ than to the prophet’s son; “*virgin*” applies, in its simplest sense, to the Virgin Mary, rather than to the prophetess who ceased to be a *virgin* when she “conceived”; “*Immanuel*,” *God with us* (<sup><0114></sup>John 1:14 <sup><6108></sup>Revelation 21:3), cannot in a strict sense apply to Isaiah’s son, but only to Him who is presently called expressly (<sup><2106></sup>Isaiah 9:6), “the Child, the Son, Wonderful (compare <sup><2188></sup>Isaiah 8:18), the mighty *God*.” Local and temporary features (as in <sup><2175></sup>Isaiah 7:15,16) are added in every type; otherwise it would be no type, but the thing itself. There are resemblances to the great Antitype sufficient to be recognized by those who seek them; dissimilarities enough to confound those who do not desire to discover them.

**call** — that is, “*she shall*,” or as *Margin*, “*thou, O Virgin, shalt call*;” mothers often named their children (<sup><0004></sup>Genesis 4:1,25 19:37 29:32). In <sup><0123></sup>Matthew 1:23 the expression is strikingly changed into, “*They shall call*”; when the prophecy received its *full* accomplishment, no longer is the name Immanuel restricted to the *prophetess*’ view of His character, as in its partial fulfillment in her son; *all* shall then call (that is, not literally), or regard Him as *peculiarly and most fitly characterized by the descriptive name*, “Immanuel” (<sup><5161></sup>1 Timothy 3:16 <sup><5119></sup>Colossians 2:9).

**name** — not mere appellation, which neither Isaiah’s son nor Jesus Christ bore literally; but what describes His manifested attributes; His *character* (so <sup><2106></sup>Isaiah 9:6). The name in its proper destination was not arbitrary, but characteristic of the individual; sin destroyed the faculty of perceiving the internal being; hence the severance now between the name and the character; in the case of Jesus Christ and many in Scripture, the Holy Ghost has supplied this want [OLSHAUSEN].

**15. Butter** — rather, curdled milk, the acid of which is grateful in the heat of the East (<sup><8107></sup>Job 20:17).

**honey** — abundant in Palestine (<sup><07408></sup>Judges 14:8 <sup><09425></sup>1 Samuel 14:25 <sup><10804></sup>Matthew 3:4). Physicians directed that the first food given to a child should be honey, the next milk [BARNABAS, *Epistle*]. HORSLEY takes this as implying the real humanity of the Immanuel Jesus Christ, about to be fed as other infants (<sup><01252></sup>Luke 2:52). <sup><23722></sup>Isaiah 7:22 shows that besides the fitness of milk and honey for children, a state of *distress* of the inhabitants is *also* implied, when, by reason of the invaders, milk and honey, things produced *spontaneously*, shall be the only abundant articles of food [MAURER].

**that he may know** — rather, until He shall know.

**evil ... choose ... good** — At about three years of age moral consciousness begins (compare <sup><23804></sup>Isaiah 8:4 <sup><01139></sup>Deuteronomy 1:39 Jon 4:11).

**16. For** — The deliverance implied in the name “Immanuel,” and the cessation of distress as to food (<sup><23714></sup>Isaiah 7:14,15), shall last only till the child grows to know good and evil;

**for ... the land that ... abhorrest ... forsaken of ... kings** — rather, desolate shall be the land, before whose two kings thou art alarmed [HENGSTENBERG and GESENIUS].

**the land** — namely, Syria and Samaria regarded as one (<sup><21419></sup>2 Kings 16:9 15:30), just *two* years after this prophecy, as it foretells. HORSLEY takes it, “The land (Judah and Samaria) of (the former of) which thou art the plague (literally, ‘thorn’) shall be forsaken,” etc.; a prediction thus, that Judah and Israel (appropriately regarded as *one* “land”) should cease to be kingdoms (<sup><01111></sup>Luke 2:1 <sup><04490></sup>Genesis 49:10) before Immanuel came.

## <sup><23717></sup>ISAIAH 7:17-25.

### FATAL CONSEQUENCES OF AHAZ' ASSYRIAN POLICY.

Though temporary deliverance (<sup><23716></sup>Isaiah 7:16 8:4) was to be given then, and final deliverance through Messiah, sore punishment shall follow the former. After subduing Syria and Israel, the Assyrians shall encounter Egypt (<sup><02729></sup>2 Kings 23:29), and Judah shall be the battlefield of both (<sup><23718></sup>Isaiah 7:18), and be made tributary to that very Assyria (<sup><44831></sup>2 Chronicles 28:20 <sup><02407></sup>2 Kings 16:7,8) now about to be called in as an ally (<sup><23904></sup>Isaiah 39:1-6). Egypt, too, should prove a fatal ally (<sup><23306></sup>Isaiah 36:6 31:1, etc.).

**18. hiss** — whistle, to bring bees to settle (see on <sup><23436></sup>Isaiah 5:26).

**fly** — found in numbers about the arms of the Nile and the canals from it (<sup><2395></sup>Isaiah 19:5-7 <sup><23></sup>3), here called “rivers.” Hence arose the plague of flies (<sup><1021></sup>Exodus 8:21). Figurative, for *numerous* and *troublesome* foes from the remotest parts of Egypt, for example, Pharaoh-nechoh.

**bee** — (<sup><1044></sup>Deuteronomy 1:44 <sup><4812></sup>Psalm 118:12). As numerous in Assyria as the fly in marshy Egypt. Sennacherib, Esar-haddon, and Nebuchadnezzar fulfilled this prediction.

**19. rest** — image of flies and bees kept up. The enemy shall overspread the land *everywhere*, even in “desolate valleys.”

**thorns** — wild, contrasted with “bushes,” which were *valued* and objects of care (see *Margin*).

**20. razor** — The Assyrians are to be God’s *instrument* of devastating Judea, just as a razor sweeps away all hair before it (<sup><2305></sup>Isaiah 10:5 <sup><329></sup>Ezekiel 29:19,20).

**hired** — alluding to Ahaz’ hiring (<sup><1247></sup>2 Kings 16:7,8) Tiglath-pileser against Syria and Israel; namely,

**by them beyond the river** — namely, the Euphrates; the eastern boundary of Jewish geographical knowledge (<sup><3728></sup>Psalm 72:8); the river which Abram crossed; the Nile also may be included (<sup><2378></sup>Isaiah 7:18) [G. V. SMITH]. GESENIUS translates, “With a razor *hired in the parts beyond the river.*”

**head ... feet** — the *whole body*, including the most honored parts. To cut the “beard” is the greatest indignity to an Easterner (<sup><2316></sup>Isaiah 50:6 <sup><1004></sup>2 Samuel 10:4,5 <sup><1608></sup>Ezekiel 5:1).

## <sup><2372></sup>ISAIAH 7:21-25.

### THE COMING DESOLATE STATE OF THE LAND OWING TO THE ASSYRIANS AND EGYPTIANS.

**21. nourish** — that is, own.

**young cow** — a heifer giving milk. *Agriculture* shall cease, and the land become one great *pasturage*.

**22. abundance** — by reason of the wide range of land lying desolate over which the cows and sheep (including goats) may range.

**butter** — thick milk, or *cream*.

**honey** — (See on <sup>2375</sup>Isaiah 7:15). Food of *spontaneous* growth will be the resource of the *few* inhabitants left. Honey shall be abundant as the bees will find the wild flowers abounding everywhere.

**23. *where there were***, etc. — where up to that time there was so valuable a vineyard as to have in it a thousand vines, worth a silverling (*shekel*, about fifty cents; *a large price*) each, there shall be only briers (So 8:11). Vineyards are estimated by the number of the vines, and the goodness of the kind of vine. Judea admits of a high state of cultivation, and requires it, in order to be productive; its present barrenness is due to neglect.

**24.** It shall become a vast hunting ground, abounding in wild beasts (compare <sup>2409</sup>Jeremiah 49:19).

**25. *shall be*** — rather, “were once.”

***digged*** — in order to plant and rear vines (<sup>2386</sup>Isaiah 5:6).

***there shall not come*** — that is, none shall come who fear thorns, seeing that thorns shall abound on all sides [MAURER]. Otherwise, “Thou shalt not come *for fear of thorns*” [GESENIUS]. Only cattle shall be able to penetrate the briery ground.

***lesser cattle*** — sheep and goats.

# CHAPTER 8

## ISAIAH 8:1-9:7.

The first seven verses of the ninth chapter belong to this section. The eighth chapter continues the subject of the seventh chapter, but at a later period (compare <sup><2100E></sup>Isaiah 8:4 with <sup><23716></sup>Isaiah 7:16); implying that the interval till the accomplishment is shorter now than then. The tone of <sup><20877></sup>Isaiah 8:17,21,22, expresses calamity more immediate and afflictive than <sup><2008E></sup>Isaiah 7:4,15,22.

1. **great** — suitable, for letters large enough to be read by all.

**roll** — rather, *tablet* of wood, metal, or stone (<sup><2308E></sup>Isaiah 30:8 <sup><311P></sup>Habakkuk 2:2); sometimes coated with wax, upon which characters were traced with a pointed instrument, or iron stylus; skins and papyrus were also used (<sup><23917></sup>Isaiah 19:7).

**man's pen** — that is, in ordinary characters which the humblest can read (so <sup><311P></sup>Habakkuk 2:2). *Hebrew*, *enosh* means a “common man,” is contrasted with the *upper ranks* (<sup><6217></sup>Revelation 21:17 <sup><6135E></sup>Romans 3:5). Not in hieroglyphics. The object was that, after the event, all might see that it had been predicted by Isaiah.

**concerning** — the title and subject of the prophecy.

**Maher-shalal-hash-baz** — “They (that is, the Assyrians) hasten to the spoil (namely, to spoil Syria and Samaria), they speed to the prey” [GESENIUS]. Otherwise, “The spoil (that is, spoiler) hastens, the rapine speeds forward” [MAURER].

2. **I took** — rather, “The Lord said to me, that I should take,” etc. [MAURER].

**Uriah** — an accomplice of Ahaz in idolatry, and therefore a witness not likely to assist the prophet of God in getting up a *prophecy after the event* (<sup><2160></sup>2 Kings 16:10). The witnesses were in order that when the event should come, they might testify that the tablet containing the prophecy had been inscribed with it at the time that it professed.

**Zechariah** — (<sup><493></sup>2 Chronicles 29:13).

3. **prophetess** — perhaps the same as the “virgin” (<sup><2174></sup>Isaiah 7:14), in the interim married as Isaiah's second wife: this is in the primary and

temporary sense. Immanuel is even in this sense distinct from Maher-shalal-hash-baz. Thus nineteen months at least intervene from the prophecy (<sup>23074</sup>Isaiah 7:14), nine before the birth of Immanuel, and ten from that time to the birth of Maher-shalal-hash-baz: adding eleven or twelve months *before* the latter could cry, “Father” (<sup>23804</sup>Isaiah 8:4), we have about three years in all, agreeing with <sup>23075</sup>Isaiah 7:15,16.

**4. *before***, etc. — within a year.

**6. *waters of Shiloah ... softly*** — Their source is on the southeast of Zion and east of Jerusalem. It means “sent,” the water being *sent* through an aqueduct (<sup>4307</sup>John 9:7). Figurative for the mild, though now weak, sway of the house of David; in the highest sense Shiloah expresses the benignant sway of Jehovah in the theocracy, administered through David. Contrast to the violent Euphrates, “the river” that typifies Assyria (<sup>23807</sup>Isaiah 8:7 <sup>6575</sup>Revelation 17:15). “This people” refers both to *Israel*, which preferred an alliance with Rezin of Syria to one with the kings of Judah, and to *Judah*, a party in which seems to have favored the pretensions of the son of Tabeal against David’s line (<sup>2306</sup>Isaiah 7:6); also to *Judah’s desire to seek an Assyrian alliance* is included in the censure (compare <sup>2307</sup>Isaiah 7:17). <sup>2384</sup>Isaiah 8:14 shows that both nations are meant; both alike rejected the divine Shiloah. Not “My people,” as elsewhere, when God expresses favor, but “this people” (<sup>2309</sup>Isaiah 6:9).

**7. *therefore*** — for the reason given in <sup>2386</sup>Isaiah 8:6, the Assyrian flood, which is first to overflow Syria and Samaria, shall rise high enough to reach rebel Judah also (<sup>2388</sup>Isaiah 8:8).

***the river*** — Euphrates swollen in spring by the melting of the snow of the Armenian mountains (compare <sup>2386</sup>Isaiah 8:6 <sup>2302</sup>Isaiah 7:20).

***all his glory*** — Eastern kings travel with a gorgeous retinue.

***channels*** — natural and artificial in the level region, Mesopotamia.

**8. *pass through*** — The flood shall not stop at Syria and Samaria, but shall *penetrate into* Judea.

***the neck*** — When the waters reach to the neck, a man is near drowning; still the *head* is not said to be overflowed. Jerusalem, elevated on hills, is the head. The danger shall be so imminent as to reach near it at Sennacherib’s invasion in Hezekiah’s reign; but it shall be spared (<sup>2308</sup>Isaiah 30:28).

***wings*** — the extreme bands of the Assyrian armies, fulfilled (<sup>2303</sup>Isaiah 36:1 37:25).

**thy land, O Immanuel** — Though temporarily applied to Isaiah's son, in the *full* sense this is applicable only to Messiah, that Judea is *His*, was, and still is, a pledge that, however sorely overwhelmed, it shall be saved at last; the "head" is safe even now, waiting for the times of restoration (<sup>4006</sup>Acts 1:6); at the same time these words imply that, notwithstanding the temporary deliverance from Syria and Israel, implied in "Immanuel," the greatest calamities are to follow to Judah.

**9. Associate yourselves** — rather, "Raise tumults," or, Rage, that is, Do your worst [MAURER], referring perhaps to the attack of Rezin and Pekah on Jerusalem.

**and ... be broken in pieces** — rather, "yet ye shall be thrown into consternation." *Imperative* in the *Hebrew*, according to the idiom whereby the second of two imperatives implies the *future*, namely, the consequence of the action contained in the first (so <sup>2369</sup>Isaiah 6:9). The name "Immanuel" in <sup>2308</sup>Isaiah 8:8 (compare <sup>2380</sup>Isaiah 8:10) suggests the thought of the ultimate safety of *Immanuel's land*, both from its present two invaders, and even from the Assyrians, notwithstanding the grievous flood, wherewith the previous verses foretell they shall deluge it. The succession of the house of David cannot be set aside in Judah, for Immanuel Messiah is to be born in it as heir of David, of whom Isaiah's son is but a type (<sup>2308</sup>Isaiah 9:4,6).

**give ear ... far countries** — witness the discomfiture of Judah's enemies. The prophecy probably looks on *also* to the final conspiracy of Antichrist and his supporters against the Heir of David's throne in the latter days and their utter overthrow [HORSLEY].

**gird yourselves ... gird yourselves** — The repetition expresses vehemently the *certainty* of their being *thrown into consternation* (not as *English Version*, "broken in pieces").

**10. the word** — of command, for the assault of Jerusalem.

**God is with us** — "Immanuel" implies this (<sup>0849</sup>Numbers 14:9 <sup>1917</sup>Psalms 46:7).

**11. with a strong hand** — or else, "when He grasped me with His hand" [HORSLEY]. MAURER, as *English Version*, "with the impetus of His hand," that is, the felt impulse of His inspiration in my mind (<sup>2157</sup>Jeremiah 15:17 <sup>3008</sup>Ezekiel 1:3 3:14,22 37:1).

**way of ... people** — their distrust of Jehovah, and the panic which led them and Ahab to seek Assyrian aid.

**12-16.** The words of Jehovah.

**confederacy** — rather, a conspiracy; an appropriate term for the *unnatural* combination of *Israel* with *Syrian* foreigners against Judea and the theocracy, to which the former was bound by ties of blood and hereditary religion [MAURER].

**to all ... say** — rather, of all which this people calleth a conspiracy [G. V. SMITH].

**their fear** — namely, object of fear: the hostile conspiracy.

**be afraid** — rather [MAURER], “nor make others to be afraid.”

**13. Sanctify** — *Honor* His *holy* name by regarding Him as your only hope of safety (<sup><2323></sup>Isaiah 29:23 <sup><0412></sup>Numbers 20:12).

**him ... fear** — “fear” lest you provoke His wrath by your fear of man and distrust of Him.

**14. sanctuary** — inviolable asylum, like the altar of the temple (<sup><1051></sup>1 Kings 1:50 2:28 <sup><5116></sup>Ezekiel 11:16; compare <sup><1030></sup>Proverbs 18:10); namely, to those who fear and trust in Him.

**but ... offense** — that is a rock over which they should fall to their hurt; namely those who would not believe.

**both ... houses** — Israel and Judah. Here again the prophecy expands beyond the temporary application in Ahaz’ time. The very stone, Immanuel, which would have been a *sanctuary* on belief, becomes a fatal *stumbling-block* through unbelief. Jesus Christ refers to this in <sup><1244></sup>Matthew 21:44. (Compare <sup><1509></sup>Deuteronomy 32:4,15,18,30,31,37 <sup><1734></sup>Daniel 2:34 <sup><5133></sup>Romans 9:33 <sup><1018></sup>1 Peter 2:8).

**gin** — trap, in which birds are unexpectedly caught (<sup><1235></sup>Luke 21:35 <sup><1182></sup>1 Thessalonians 5:2). So at the destruction of Jerusalem under Titus.

**15. stumble ... taken** — images from the means used in taking wild animals.

**16. Bind up ... seal** — What Isaiah had before briefly noted by inscribing *Maher-shalal-hash-baz* in a *tablet*, fixed up in some public place, he afterwards wrote out more in detail in a *parchment roll* (<sup><2108></sup>Isaiah 30:8); this he is now to *seal up*, not merely in order that nothing may be added to, or taken from it, as being complete, but to imply that it relates to distant events, and is therefore to be a *sealed* and *not understood* testimony (<sup><2109></sup>Isaiah 6:9,10), except in part among God’s disciples,” that is, those who “sanctify the Lord” by obedient trust (<sup><1254></sup>Psalms 25:14). Subsequent revelations would afterwards clear up what now was dark. So the

Apocalypse explains what in Daniel was left unexplained (compare <sup><208></sup>Daniel 8:26 12:9). “The words are closed up and *sealed* till the time of the end”; but <sup><220></sup>Revelation 22:10, “*Seal* not the sayings of the prophecy ... for the time is at hand” (compare <sup><191></sup>Revelation 5:1,5,9),

**testimony** — attested by Uriah and Zechariah (<sup><209></sup>Isaiah 8:2).

**law** — the revelation just given, having the force of a law.

**disciples** — not as MAURER, Uriah and Zechariah (compare <sup><107></sup>John 7:17 15:15).

**17. I** — Whatever the rest of the nation may do, I will look to Jehovah alone.

**that hideth ... face** — *though* He seems now to *withdraw His countenance* from Judah (the then representative of “the house of Jacob”). Let us *wait* and trust in, though we cannot see, Him (<sup><200></sup>Isaiah 50:10 54:8 <sup><308></sup>Habakkuk 2:3 <sup><125></sup>Luke 2:25,38).

**18. I and the children** — Isaiah means “salvation of Jehovah”; His children’s names, also (<sup><208></sup>Isaiah 7:3 7:14 8:3), were “signs” suggestive of the coming and final deliverance.

**wonders** — that is symbols of the future (<sup><208></sup>Isaiah 20:3 <sup><308></sup>Zechariah 3:8). “Behold I ... me” is quoted in <sup><123></sup>Hebrews 2:13 to prove *the manhood of the Messiah*. This is the *main* and *ultimate* fulfillment of the prophecy; its *temporary* meaning is applied to Ahaz’ time. Isaiah typically, in <sup><207></sup>Isaiah 8:17,18, personates Messiah, who is at once “Father” and “Son,” *Isaiah* and *Immanuel*, “Child” and “Mighty God,” and is therefore called here a “wonder,” as in <sup><206></sup>Isaiah 9:6, “Wonderful.” Hence in <sup><123></sup>Hebrews 2:13, believers are called His “children”; but in <sup><208></sup>Isaiah 8:11,12, His “brethren.” On “the Lord hath given me,” see <sup><107></sup>John 6:37,39 10:29 17:12.

**which dwelleth in ... Zion** — and will therefore protect *Jerusalem*.

**19. Seek unto** — Consult in your national difficulties.

**them ... familiar spirits** — necromancers, spirit charmers. So Saul, when he had forsaken God (<sup><107></sup>1 Samuel 28:7, etc.), consulted the witch of Endor in his difficulties. These follow in the wake of idolatry, which prevailed under Ahaz (<sup><124></sup>2 Kings 16:3,4,10). He copied the soothsaying as he did the idolatrous “altar” of Damascus (compare <sup><106></sup>Leviticus 20:6, which forbids it, <sup><208></sup>Isaiah 19:3).

**wizards** — men claiming supernatural *knowledge*; from the *old* English, “*to wit*,” that is, know.

**peep** — rather “chirp faintly,” as young birds do; this sound was generally ascribed to departed spirits; by ventriloquism the soothsayers caused a low sound to proceed as from a grave, or dead person. Hence the *Septuagint* renders the *Hebrew* for “necromancers” here “ventriloquists” (compare <sup>2304</sup>Isaiah 29:4).

**mutter** — moan.

**should not**, etc. — The answer which Isaiah recommends to be given to those advising to have recourse to necromancers.

**for the living**, etc. — “should one, *for the safety* of the living, seek unto (consult) the dead?” [GESENIUS]. LOWTH renders it, “*In place of* (consulting) the living, should one consult the dead?”

**20. To the law**, etc. — the revelation of God by His prophet (<sup>2306</sup>Isaiah 8:16), to which he directs them to refer those who would advise necromancy.

**if they speak not ... it is because** — *English Version* understands “they” as the necromancers. But the *Hebrew* rendered “because” is not this but “who”; and “if not,” ought rather to be “shall they not”; or, *truly they shall speak according to this word, who have no morning light* (so the *Hebrew*, that is, prosperity after the night of sorrows) *dawning* on them [MAURER and G. V. SMITH]. They who are in the dark night of trial, without a dawn of hope, shall surely say so, Do not seek, as we did, to necromancy, but to the law,” etc. *The law* perhaps includes here the *law of Moses*, which was the “Magna Charta” on which prophetism commented [KITTO].

**21, 22.** More detailed description of the despair, which they shall fall into, who sought necromancy instead of God; <sup>2303</sup>Isaiah 8:20 implies that *too late* they shall see how much better it would have been for them to have sought “to the law,” etc. (<sup>6523</sup>Deuteronomy 32:31). But now they are given over to despair. Therefore, while seeing the truth of God, they only “curse their King and God”; foreshadowing the future, like conduct of those belonging to the “kingdom of the beast,” when they shall be visited with divine plagues (<sup>6611</sup>Revelation 16:11; compare <sup>2302</sup>Jeremiah 18:12).

**through it** — namely, the land.

**hardly bestead** — oppressed with anxiety.

**hungry** — a more grievous famine than the temporary one in Ahaz’ time, owing to Assyria; *then there was some food, but none now* (<sup>2315</sup>Isaiah 7:15,22 <sup>6308</sup>Leviticus 26:3-5,14-16,20).

*their king ... God* — Jehovah, King of the Jews (~~488B~~Psalm 5:2 68:24).

*look upward ... unto the earth* — Whether they look up to heaven, or down towards *the land of Judea*, nothing but despair shall present itself.

*dimness of anguish* — darkness of distress (~~410Z~~Proverbs 1:27).

*driven to darkness* — rather, “*thick darkness*” (~~423B~~Jeremiah 23:12). Driven onward, as by a sweeping storm. The Jewish rejection of “their King and God,” Messiah, was followed by all these awful calamities.

# CHAPTER 9

## ISAIAH 9:1-7.

### CONTINUATION OF THE PROPHECY IN THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

1. *Nevertheless*, etc. — rather, “*For* darkness shall not (continually) be on it (that is, the land) on which there is (now) distress” [HENGSTENBERG and MAURER]. The “for” refers, not to the words immediately preceding, but to the consolations in <sup><2300></sup>Isaiah 8:9,10,17,18. Do not despair, *for*, etc.

*when at the first*, etc. — rather, “as the former time has brought contempt on the land of Zebulun and Naphtali (namely, the deportation of their inhabitants under Tiglath-pileser, <sup><2152></sup>2 Kings 15:29, a little before the giving of this prophecy); so shall the after-coming time bring honor to the way of the sea (the district around the lake of Galilee), the land beyond (but HENGSTENBERG, “by the side of”) Jordan (*Perea*, east of Jordan, belonging to Reuben, Gad, and half-Manasseh), the circle (but HENGSTENBERG, “Galilee”) (that is, region) of the “Gentiles” [MAURER, HENGSTENBERG, etc.]. *Galil* in *Hebrew* is a “circle,” “circuit,” and from it came the name Galilee. North of Naphtali, inhabited by a mixed race of Jews and Gentiles of the bordering Phoenician race (<sup><0013></sup>Judges 1:30 <sup><1011></sup>1 Kings 9:11). Besides the recent deportation by Tiglath-pileser, it had been sorely smitten by Benhadad of Syria, two hundred years before (<sup><1150></sup>1 Kings 15:20). It was after the Assyrian deportation colonized with heathens, by Esar-haddon (<sup><2724></sup>2 Kings 17:24). Hence arose the contempt for it on the part of the southern Jews of purer blood (<sup><1046></sup>John 1:46 7:52). The same region which was so darkened once, shall be among the first to receive Messiah’s light (<sup><1013></sup>Matthew 4:13,15,16). It was in despised Galilee that He first and most publicly exercised His ministry; from it were most of His apostles. Foretold in <sup><1538></sup>Deuteronomy 33:18,19 <sup><4107></sup>Acts 2:7 <sup><3827></sup>Psalms 68:27,28, Jerusalem, the theocratic capital, might readily have known Messiah; to compensate less favored Galilee, He ministered mostly there; Galilee’s very debasement made it feel its need of a Savior, a feeling not known to the self-righteous Jews (<sup><1013></sup>Matthew 9:13). It was appropriate, too, that He who was both “the Light to lighten the Gentiles, and the Glory of His people Israel,” should minister chiefly on the border land of *Israel*, near the *Gentiles*.

2. *the people* — the whole nation, Judah and Israel.

*shadow of death* — the darkest misery of captivity.

3. *multiplied ... nation* — primarily, the rapid *increase* of Israelites after the return from Babylon; more fully and exhaustively the rapid spread of Christianity at first.

*not increased the joy* — By a slight change in the *Hebrew*, *its* (joy) is substituted by some for *not*, because “not increased the joy” seems opposite to what immediately follows, “the joy,” etc. HENGSTENBERG, retains *not* thus: “Whose joy thou hadst not increased,” (that is, hadst *diminished*). Others, “Hast thou not increased the joy?” The very difficulty of the reading, *not*, makes it less likely to be an interpolation. HORSLEY best explains it: The prophet sees in vision a shifting scene, comprehending at one glance the history of the Christian Church to remotest times — a land dark and thinly peopled — lit up by a sudden light-filled with new inhabitants — then struggling with difficulties, and again delivered by the utter and final overthrow of their enemies. The influx of Gentile converts (represented here by “Galilee of the Gentiles”) soon was to be followed by the growth of corruption, and the final rise of Antichrist, who is to be destroyed, while God’s people is delivered, as in the case of Gideon’s victory over Midian, not by man’s prowess, but by the special interposition of God.

*before thee* — a phrase taken from sacrificial feasts; the tithe of harvest was eaten *before God* (<sup><6527></sup>Deuteronomy 12:7 14:26).

*as men rejoice ... divide ... spoil* — referring to the judgments on the enemies of the Lord and His people, which usually accompany revelations of His grace.

4. The occasion of the “joy,” the deliverance not only of Ahaz and Judah from the Assyrian tribute (<sup><1218></sup>2 Kings 16:8), and of Israel’s ten tribes from the oppressor (<sup><1258></sup>2 Kings 15:19), but of the Jewish Christian Church from its last great enemy.

*hast* — the past time for the future, in prophetic vision; it expresses the *certainty* of the event.

*yoke of his burden* — the yoke with which he was burdened.

*staff of ... shoulder* — the staff which strikes his shoulder [MAURER]; or the wood, like a yoke, on the neck of slaves, the badge of servitude [ROSENMULLER].

**day of Midian** — (<sup><0008></sup>Judges 7:8-22). As Gideon with a handful of men conquered the hosts of Midian, so Messiah the “child” (<sup><2906></sup>Isaiah 9:6) shall prove to be the “Prince of peace,” and the small Israel under Him shall overcome the mighty hosts of Antichrist (compare <sup><310E></sup>Micah 5:2-5), containing the same contrast, and alluding also to “the Assyrian,” the then enemy of the Church, as here in Isaiah, the type of the last great enemy. For further analogies between Gideon’s victory and the Gospel, compare <sup><0002></sup>2 Corinthians 4:7, with <sup><0022></sup>Judges 7:22. As the “dividing of the spoil” (<sup><2908></sup>Isaiah 9:3) was followed by that which was “not joy,” the making of the idolatrous ephod (<sup><0024></sup>Judges 8:24-27), so the gospel victory was soon followed by apostasy at the first, and shall be so again after the millennial overthrow of Antichrist (<sup><601F></sup>Revelation 20:3,7-9), previous to Satan’s last doom (<sup><600P></sup>Revelation 20:10).

**5. every battle**, etc. — rather, “every greave of (the warrior who is) armed with greaves in the din of battle, and the martial garment (or cloak, called by the Latins *sagum*) rolled in blood, shall be for burning, (and) fuel for fire” [MAURER]. All warlike accoutrements shall be destroyed, as no longer required in the new era of peace (<sup><2306></sup>Isaiah 2:4, 11:6,7 <sup><940P></sup>Psalms 46:9 <sup><5009></sup>Ezekiel 39:9 <sup><3105></sup>Micah 5:5,10 <sup><3005></sup>Zechariah 9:9,10). Compare <sup><3001></sup>Malachi 4:1, as to the previous *burning up* of the wicked.

**6. For** — the ground of these great expectations,

**unto us** — for the benefit of the Jews first, and then the Gentiles (compare “unto you,” <sup><0011></sup>Luke 2:11).

**son ... given** — (<sup><9007></sup>Psalms 2:7). God’s gratuitous gift, on which man had no claim (<sup><4306></sup>John 3:16 <sup><4123></sup>Romans 6:23).

**government ... upon ... shoulder** — The ensign of office used to be worn *on the shoulder*, in token of *sustaining* the government (<sup><2022></sup>Isaiah 22:22). Here *the government on Messiah’s shoulder* is in marked antithesis to the “yoke and staff” of the oppressor on Israel’s “shoulder” (<sup><2904></sup>Isaiah 9:4). He shall receive the kingdom of the earth from the Father, to vindicate it from the misrule of those to whom it was entrusted to hold it for and under the Most High, but who sought to hold it in defiance of His right; the Father asserts His right by the Son, the “Heir of all things,” who will hold it for Him (<sup><2078></sup>Daniel 7:13,14).

**name ... called** — His *essential characteristics shall be*.

**Wonderful** — (See on <sup><2308></sup>Isaiah 8:18; <sup><0738></sup>Judges 13:18, *Margin*; <sup><5106></sup>1 Timothy 3:16).

**Counselor** — (<sup><1917></sup>Psalm 16:7 <sup><5133></sup>Romans 11:33,34 <sup><4124></sup>1 Corinthians 1:24 <sup><5113></sup>Colossians 2:3).

**mighty God** — (<sup><2102></sup>Isaiah 10:21 <sup><4248></sup>Psalm 24:8 <sup><3125></sup>Titus 2:13) HORSLEY translates: “God the mighty man.” “Unto us ... God” is equivalent to “Immanuel” (<sup><2114></sup>Isaiah 7:14).

**everlasting Father** — This marks Him as “Wonderful,” that He is “a child,” yet the “everlasting *Father*” (<sup><3130></sup>John 10:30 14:9). Earthly kings leave their people after a short reign; He will reign over and bless them *for ever* [HENGSTENBERG].

**Prince of Peace** — (See on <sup><2105></sup>Isaiah 9:5; <sup><1440></sup>Genesis 49:10; *Shiloh*, “The Tranquillizer”). Finally (<sup><3118></sup>Hosea 2:18). Even already He is “our peace” (<sup><4114></sup>Luke 2:14 <sup><4114></sup>Ephesians 2:14).

**7. Of ... increase ... no end** — His princely rule shall perpetually increase and be unlimited (<sup><2114></sup>Daniel 2:44).

**throne of David** — (<sup><1185></sup>1 Kings 8:25 <sup><4116></sup>Psalm 2:6 132:11 <sup><3117></sup>Jeremiah 3:17,18 <sup><3123></sup>Ezekiel 34:23-26 37:16,22 <sup><4132></sup>Luke 1:32,33 <sup><4123></sup>Acts 2:30).

**judgment ... justice** — It is not a kingdom of mere might, and triumph of force over enemies, but of righteousness (<sup><2121></sup>Isaiah 42:21 <sup><4116></sup>Psalm 45:6,7), attainable only in and by Messiah.

**zeal**, etc. — including not only Christ’s hidden spiritual victory over Satan at the first coming, but the open one accompanied with “judgments” on Antichrist and every enemy at the second coming (<sup><2317></sup>Isaiah 59:17 <sup><4116></sup>Psalm 9:6-8).

## <sup><3108></sup>ISAIAH 9:8-10:4.

### PROPHECY AS TO THE TEN TRIBES.

Delivered a little later than the previous one. The ninth and tenth chapters ought to have been so divided. The present division into *chapters* was made by Cardinal Hugo, in A.D. 1250; and into *verses*, by Robert Stephens, the famous printer of Paris, in 1551. After the Assyrian invasion of Syria, that of Ephraim shall follow (<sup><1219></sup>2 Kings 16:9); <sup><2108></sup>Isaiah 9:8-11,17-20, foretell the intestine discords in Israel after Hoshea had slain Pekah (A.D. 739), that is, just after the Assyrian invasions, when for seven years it was stripped of magistrates and torn into factions. There are four strophes, each setting forth Ephraim’s *crime* and consequent *punishment*, and ending with the

formula, “For all this His anger is not turned away,” etc. (<sup>2912</sup>Isaiah 9:12,17,21, and <sup>2308</sup>Isaiah 10:4).

**8. Heading of the prophecy;** (<sup>2308</sup>Isaiah 9:8-12), the *first* strophe.

**unto Jacob** — against the ten tribes [LOWTH].

**lighted upon** — fallen from heaven by divine revelation (<sup>2903</sup>Daniel 4:31).

**9. know** — to their cost: experimentally (<sup>2307</sup>Hosea 9:7).

**Samaria** — the capital of Ephraim (compare as to phrase, <sup>2303</sup>Isaiah 1:1).

**10. bricks** — in the East generally sun-dried, and therefore soon dissolved by rain. Granting, say the Ephraimites to the prophet’s threat, that our affairs are in a ruinous state, we will restore them to more than their former magnificence. Self-confident unwillingness to see the judgments of God (<sup>2331</sup>Isaiah 26:11).

**hewn stones** — (<sup>4157</sup>1 Kings 5:17).

**sycamores** — growing abundantly on the low lands of Judea, and though useful for building on account of their antiseptic property (which induced the Egyptians to use them for the cases of their mummies), not very valuable. The *cedar*, on the other hand, was odorous, free from knots, durable, and precious (<sup>4107</sup>1 Kings 10:27). “We will replace cottages with palaces.”

**11. adversaries of Rezin** — the Assyrians, who shall first attack Damascus, shall next advance “against *him*” (Ephraim). This is the punishment of Ephraim’s pride in making light (<sup>2910</sup>Isaiah 9:10) of the judgment already inflicted by God through Tiglath-pileser (<sup>4259</sup>2 Kings 15:29). A *second* Assyrian invasion (see on <sup>2301</sup>Isaiah 7:1) shall follow. The reading “princes” for “adversaries” in uncalled for.

**join** — rather, “arm”; cover with armor [MAURER].

**his** — Rezin’s.

**12. Syrians** — Though now allies of Ephraim, after Rezin’s death they shall join the Assyrians against Ephraim. “Together,” in <sup>2911</sup>Isaiah 9:11, refers to this. Conquering nations often enlist in their armies the subject races (<sup>2316</sup>Isaiah 22:6; compare <sup>4249</sup>2 Kings 16:9 <sup>4651</sup>Jeremiah 35:11), [ABEN EZRA, GESENIUS]. HORSLEY less probably takes “Syrians before,” as *the Syrians to the east*, that is, not Rezin’s subjects, but the *Assyrians*: “Aram” being the common name of Syrians and Assyrians.

**Philistines** — of Palestine.

**behind** — from the *west*: in marking the points of the compass, Orientalists face the east, which is *before* them: the west is *behind*. *The right hand* is the south: *the left*, the north.

**devour** — as a ravenous beast (<sup><2302></sup>Isaiah 1:20 <sup><2402></sup>Jeremiah 10:25 30:16 <sup><4449></sup>Numbers 14:9).

**For all this**, etc. — The burden of each strophe.

13-17. Second strophe.

**turneth not** — the design of God's chastisements; not fulfilled in their case; a new cause for punishment (<sup><2422></sup>Jeremiah 2:20 5:3).

14. **head and tail** — proverbial for *the highest and lowest* (<sup><6283></sup>Deuteronomy 28:13,44).

**branch and rush** — another image for the same thought (<sup><2395></sup>Isaiah 19:15). The branch is *elevated* on the top of the tree: the rush is coarse and *low*.

15. **ancient** — the older.

**honorable** — the man of rank.

**prophet ... lies, ... tail** — There were many such in Samaria (<sup><1276></sup>1 Kings 22:6,22,23; compare as to "tail," <sup><6019></sup>Revelation 9:19).

16. **leaders**, etc. — (See <sup><2182></sup>Isaiah 3:12, *Margin*, and see on <sup><2382></sup>Isaiah 3:12.)

17. **no joy** — the parallelism, "neither ... mercy," shows that this means, He shall have *no such delight* in their youthful warriors, however much they be the nation's delight and reliance, as to *save* them from the enemy's sword (<sup><2388></sup>Isaiah 31:8; compare <sup><2421></sup>Jeremiah 18:21).

**fatherless**, etc. — not even the usual objects of His pity (<sup><1904></sup>Psalm 10:14,18 68:5 <sup><2491></sup>Jeremiah 49:11 <sup><2848></sup>Hosea 14:3) shall be spared.

**hypocrite** — rather, a libertine, polluted [HORSLEY].

**folly** — wickedness (<sup><1940></sup>Psalm 14:1).

**still** — Notwithstanding all these judgments, more remain.

18-21. Third strophe.

**burneth** — maketh consumption, not only *spreading* rapidly, but also *consuming* like fire: sin is its own punishment.

**briers ... thorns** — emblem of the wicked; especially those of low rank (<sup><2208></sup>Isaiah 27:4 <sup><1026></sup>2 Samuel 23:6).

**forest** — from the humble *shrubbery* the flame spreads to the vast *forest*; it reaches *the high*, as well as *the low*.

**mount up like ... smoke** — rather. “They (*the thickets of the forest*) shall lift themselves proudly aloft [the *Hebrew* is from a *Syriac* root, a cock, expressing stateliness of motion, from his strutting gait, HORSLEY], in (in passing into) volumes of ascending smoke” [MAURER].

**19. darkened** — namely, with smoke (<sup>2398</sup>Isaiah 9:18). The *Septuagint* and *Chaldee* render it, “is burnt up,” So MAURER, from an *Arabic* root meaning “suffocating heat.”

**no man ... spare ... brother** — intestine discord snapping asunder the dearest ties of nature.

**20. hungry** — not literally. Image from unappeasable hunger, to picture internal factions, reckless of the most tender ties (<sup>2399</sup>Isaiah 9:19), and insatiably spreading misery and death on every side (<sup>2400</sup>Jeremiah 19:9).

**eat** — not literally, but *destroy* (<sup>4270</sup>Psalms 27:2 <sup>4892</sup>Job 19:22).

**flesh of ... arm** — those nearest akin: their former support (helper) (<sup>2310</sup>Isaiah 32:2) [MAURER].

**21. Manasseh, Ephraim** — the two sons of Joseph. So closely united as to form between them but one tribe; but now about to be rent into factions, thirsting for each other’s blood. Disunited in all things else, but united “together against their brother Judah” (<sup>1250</sup>2 Kings 15:10,30).

# CHAPTER 10

## ISAIAH 10:1-4.

### FOURTH STROPHE.

1. *them that decree* — namely, unrighteous judges.

*write grievousness*, etc. — not the scribes, but the magistrates *who caused unjust decisions* (literally, “injustice” or “grievousness”) *to be recorded* by them (<sup>23616</sup>Isaiah 65:6) [MAURER], (<sup>23110</sup>Isaiah 1:10,23).

2. *To turn aside*, etc. — The effect of their conduct is to pervert the cause of the needy [HORSLEY]. In *English Version* “from judgment” means “from *obtaining justice*.”

*take away the right* — “make plunder of the right” (rightful claim) [HORSLEY].

3. *what will ye do* — what way of escape will there be for you?

*visitation* — of God’s wrath (<sup>23214</sup>Isaiah 26:14 <sup>18515</sup>Job 35:15 <sup>28107</sup>Hosea 9:7).

*from far* — from Assyria.

*leave ... glory* — rather, “deposit (for safekeeping) your *wealth*” [LOWTH]. So <sup>2917</sup>Psalms 49:17.

4. *Without me* — not having Me to “flee to” (<sup>23103</sup>Isaiah 10:3).

*bow down* — Bereft of strength they shall fall; or else, they shall lie down fettered.

*under ... under* — rather, “among” (literally, “in the place of”) [HORSLEY]. The “under” may be, however, explained, “trodden *under the* (feet of the) *prisoners* going into captivity,” and “overwhelmed *under the* heaps of *slain* on the battlefield” [MAURER].

## ISAIAH 10:5-32 AND ISAIAH 11:12.

### DESTRUCTION OF THE ASSYRIANS; COMING OF MESSIAH; HYMN OF PRAISE.

<sup>2309</sup>Isaiah 10:9,11 show that Samaria was destroyed before this prophecy. It was written when Assyria proposed (a design which it soon after tried to carry out under Sennacherib) to destroy Judah and Jerusalem, as it had destroyed Samaria. This is the first part of Isaiah's prophecies under Hezekiah. Probably between 722 and 715 B.C. (see <sup>2307</sup>Isaiah 10:27).

**5. *O Assyrian***, etc. — rather, “What, ho (but MAURER, *Woe to the*) Assyrian! He is the rod and staff of Mine anger (*My instrument in punishing*, <sup>2610</sup>Jeremiah 51:20 <sup>2973</sup>Psalms 17:13). In their hands is Mine indignation” [HORSLEY, after JEROME]. I have put into the Assyrians' hands the execution of Mine indignation against My people.

**6. *send him*** — “Kings' hearts are in the hand of the Lord” (<sup>2100</sup>Proverbs 21:1).

***hypocritical*** — polluted [HORSLEY].

***nation*** — Judah, against whom Sennacherib was forming designs.

***of my wrath*** — objects of My wrath.

***give ... charge*** — (<sup>2842</sup>Jeremiah 34:22).

***and to tread***, etc. — HORSLEY translates: “And then to make *him* (the Assyrian) a trampling under foot like the mire of the streets” (so <sup>2302</sup>Isaiah 10:12 <sup>2334</sup>Isaiah 33:1 <sup>2805</sup>Zechariah 10:5). But see <sup>2372</sup>Isaiah 37:26.

**7. *meaneth not so*** — He is only thinking of his own schemes, while God is overruling them to *His* purposes.

***think*** — intend. Sinners plans are no less culpable, though they by them unconsciously fulfill God's designs (<sup>2930</sup>Psalms 76:10 <sup>2342</sup>Micah 4:12). So Joseph's brethren (<sup>2651</sup>Genesis 50:20 <sup>2166</sup>Proverbs 16:4). The *sinner's motive*, not the *result* (which depends on God), will be the test in judgment.

***heart to destroy ... not a few*** — Sennacherib's ambition was not confined to Juries. His plan was also to conquer Egypt and Ethiopia (<sup>2301</sup>Isaiah 20:1-6 <sup>2815</sup>Zechariah 1:15).

## ISAIAH 8-11.

### VAUNTINGS OF THE ASSYRIANS. ILLUSTRATED BY THE SELF-LAUDATORY INSCRIPTIONS OF ASSYRIA DECIPHERED BY HINCKS.

*princes ... kings* — Eastern satraps and governors of provinces often had the title and diadem of kings. Hence the title, “King of kings,” implying the greatness of Him who was *over* them (<sup><3377></sup>Ezekiel 26:7 <sup><4572></sup>Ezra 7:12).

**9. *Is not ... as*** — Was there any one of these cities able to withstand me? Not one. So Rab-shakeh vaunts (<sup><2369></sup>Isaiah 36:19).

*Calno* — Calneh, built by Nimrod (<sup><0100></sup>Genesis 10:10), once his capital, on the Tigris.

*Carchemish* — Circesium, on the Euphrates. Taken afterwards by Necho, king of Egypt; and retaken by Nebuchadnezzar: by the Euphrates (<sup><3462></sup>Jeremiah 46:2).

*Hamath* — in Syria, north of Canaan (<sup><0108></sup>Genesis 10:18). Taken by Assyria about 753 s.c. From it colonists were planted by Assyria in Samaria.

*Arpad* — near Hamath.

*Samaria* — now overthrown.

*Damascus* — (<sup><2570></sup>Isaiah 17:1,3).

**10,11. *found*** — unable to resist me: *hath overcome* (so <sup><4528></sup>Psalms 21:8).

*and whose* — rather, “and their.” This clause, down to “Samaria,” is parenthetical.

*excel* — were more powerful. He regards Jerusalem as idolatrous, an opinion which it often had given too much ground for: Jehovah was in his view the mere *local* god of Judea, as Baal of the countries where it was adored, nay, inferior in power to some national gods (<sup><2369></sup>Isaiah 36:19,20,37:12). See in opposition, <sup><2372></sup>Isaiah 37:20 46:1.

*As my hand ... shall I not, as I have* — a double protasis. Agitation makes one accumulate sentences.

**12. *whole work*** — His entire plan is regard to the *punishment* of the Jews (<sup><2308></sup>Isaiah 10:5-7).

**Zion** — the royal residence, the court, princes and nobles; as distinguished from “Jerusalem,” the *people* in general.

**fruit** — the result of, that is, the plants emanating from.

**stout** — *Hebrew*, “greatness of,” that is, pride of.

**glory** — haughtiness.

**13. *I am prudent*** — He ascribes his success to his own prudence, not to God’s providence.

***removed the bounds*** — set aside old, and substituted new boundaries of kingdoms at will. A criminal act, as Jehovah Himself had appointed the boundaries of the nations (<sup>15318</sup>Deuteronomy 32:8).

***treasures*** — “hoarded treasures” [HORSLEY].

***put down ... inhabitants like***, etc. — rather, “as a valiant man, I have brought down (*from their seats*) those *seated*” (namely, “on thrones”; as in <sup>23105</sup>Psalms 2:4 29:10 55:19. The *Hebrew* for “He that abideth,” is *He that sitteth on a throne*); otherwise, “I have brought down (as captives into Assyria, which lay lower than Judea; therefore ‘brought down,’ compare <sup>23105</sup>Isaiah 36:1,10), *the inhabitants*” [MAURER].

**14. *nest*** — implying the ease with which he carried off all before him.

***left*** — by the parent bird.

***none ... moved ... wing*** — image from an angry bird resisting the robbery of its “nest.”

***peeped*** — chirped even low (<sup>23109</sup>Isaiah 8:19). No resistance was offered me, of deed, or even *word*.

**15.** Shall the instrument boast against Him who uses it? Through *free* in a sense, and carrying out his own plans, the Assyrian was unconsciously carrying out *God’s* purposes.

***shaketh it*** — moves it back and forward,

***staff ... lift ... itself ... no wood*** — rather, “as if the staff (*man*, the instrument of God’s judgments on his fellow man) should set aside (Him who is) not wood” (*not* a mere instrument, as *man*). On “no wood” compare <sup>15321</sup>Deuteronomy 32:21, “that which is *not God*,” <sup>23105</sup>Isaiah 31:8 shows that God is meant here by “not wood” [MAURER].

**16. fat ones** — (<sup><2167></sup>Isaiah 5:17). The robust and choice soldiers of Assyria (<sup><4981></sup>Psalms 78:31, where “fattest” answers in the parallelism to “chosen,” or “young men,” *Margin*).

**leanness** — carrying out the image on “fat ones.” *Destruction* (<sup><4945></sup>Psalms 106:15). Fulfilled (<sup><2373></sup>Isaiah 37:36).

**his glory** — Assyria’s *nobles*. So in <sup><2163></sup>Isaiah 5:13, *Margin*; <sup><2107></sup>Isaiah 8:7.

**kindle** — a new image from *fire* consuming quickly dry materials (<sup><3317></sup>Zechariah 12:6).

**17, 18. light of Israel** — carrying out the image in the end of <sup><2306></sup>Isaiah 10:16. *Jehovah*, who is a *light* to *Israel*, shall be the “fire” (<sup><604></sup>Deuteronomy 4:24 <sup><3829></sup>Hebrews 12:29) that shall ignite the “thorns,” (the Assyrians, like dry fuel, a ready prey to flame).

**18. glory of his forest** — The *common* soldiers, the *princes*, *officers*, etc., all alike *together*, shall be consumed (see on <sup><2308></sup>Isaiah 9:18).

**in one day** — (<sup><2373></sup>Isaiah 37:36).

**fruitful field** — literally, “Carmel,” a rich mountain in the tribe of Asher. Figurative for Sennacherib’s mighty army. Perhaps alluding to his own boasting words about to be uttered (<sup><2374></sup>Isaiah 37:24), “I will enter the forest of his Carmel.”

**soul and body** — proverbial for utterly; the *entire* man is made up of *soul* and *body*.

**as when a standard bearer fainteth** — rather, “they shall be as when a *sick man*” (from a *Syriac* root) wastes away.” Compare “leanness,” that is, wasting destruction (<sup><2306></sup>Isaiah 10:16) [MAURER]. Or, “there shall be an entire *dissipation*, like a perfect *melting*” (namely, of the Assyrian army) [HORSLEY].

**19. rest** — those who shall survive the destruction of the host.

**his forest** — same image as in <sup><2308></sup>Isaiah 10:18, for the once dense army.

**child ... write** — so few that a child might count them.

**20-22.** The effect on the “remnant” (contrasted with the Assyrian remnant, <sup><2309></sup>Isaiah 10:19); namely, those who shall be left after the invasion of Sennacherib, will be a return from dependence on external idolatrous nations, as Assyria and Egypt (<sup><1201></sup>2 Kings 18:21 16:7-9), to the God of the theocracy; fulfilled in part in the pious Hezekiah’s days; but from the *future* aspect under which Paul, in <sup><6127></sup>Romans 9:27,28 (compare “short work”

with “whole work,” <sup><23002></sup>Isaiah 10:12, here), regards the whole prophecy, the “remnant,” “who stay upon the Lord,” probably will receive their fullest realization in the portion of Jews left after that Antichrist shall have been overthrown, who shall “return” unto the Lord (<sup><23163></sup>Isaiah 6:13 7:3 <sup><31219></sup>Zechariah 12:9,10 14:2,3 <sup><3162></sup>Zephaniah 3:12).

**21. mighty God** — (<sup><23016></sup>Isaiah 9:6) the God who shall have evinced such *might* in destroying Israel’s enemies. As the Assyrians in Sennacherib’s reign did not carry off *Judah* captive, the returning “remnant” cannot *mainly* refer to this time.

**22. yet** — rather in the sense in which Paul quotes it (<sup><6102></sup>Romans 9:27), “Though Israel be now numerous as the sand, a remnant *only* of them shall return” — the great majority shall perish. The reason is added, Because “the consumption (fully completed destruction) *is* decreed (literally, *decided on, brought to an issue*), it overfloweth (<sup><23183></sup>Isaiah 30:28 8:8) with *justice*”; that is, the infliction of just punishment (<sup><23161></sup>Isaiah 5:16) [MAURER].

**23. even determined** — “A consumption, *and whatever is determined,*” or *decreed* [MAURER].

**midst** — Zion, the central point of the earth as to Jehovah’s presence.

**land** — Israel. But the *Septuagint*, “in the whole *habitable world.*” So *English Version* (<sup><6108></sup>Romans 9:28), “upon the *earth.*”

**24. Therefore** — Return to the main proposition, Assyria’s ultimate punishment, though employed as God’s “rod” to chastise Judea for a time.

**O my people** — God’s tenderness towards His elect nation.

**after the manner of Egypt** — as Egypt and Pharaoh oppressed thee. Implying, too, as Israel was nevertheless *delivered* from them, so now it would be from the Assyrian Sennacherib. The antithesis in <sup><23016></sup>Isaiah 10:26 requires this interpretation [MAURER].

**25. For** — Be not afraid (<sup><23014></sup>Isaiah 10:24), *for*

**indignation ... cease** — The punishments of God against Israel shall be consummated and ended (<sup><23310></sup>Isaiah 26:20 <sup><27133></sup>Daniel 11:36). “Till the indignation be accomplished,” etc.

**mine anger** — shall turn to their (the Assyrians’) destruction.

**26. slaughter of** — “stroke upon.”

**Midian** — (<sup><23004></sup>Isaiah 9:4 <sup><10025></sup>Judges 7:25).

*as his rod was upon the sea* — rather, understanding “stroke” from the previous clause, “according to the stroke of His rod upon the Red Sea” (<sup><02446></sup>Exodus 14:16,26). His “rod” on the Assyrian (<sup><2302F></sup>Isaiah 10:24,26) stands in bold contrast to the Assyrian used as a “rod” to strike others (<sup><2300F></sup>Isaiah 10:5).

*after the manner of Egypt* — as He lifted it up against Egypt at the Red Sea.

**27. his burden** — the Assyrians oppression (<sup><2300F></sup>Isaiah 9:3). Judah was still tributary to Assyria; Hezekiah had not yet revolted, as he did in the beginning of Sennacherib’s reign.

*because of* — (<sup><23015></sup>Hosea 10:15).

*the anointing* — namely, “Messiah” (<sup><2024H></sup>Daniel 9:24). Just as in <sup><2300F></sup>Isaiah 9:4-6, the “breaking of the yoke of” the enemies’ “burden and staff” is attributed to *Messiah*, “For unto us a child is born,” etc., so it is here. MAURER not so well translates, “Because of the fatness”; an image of the Assyrians fierce and wanton pride drawn from a well-fed bull tossing off the yoke (<sup><0525F></sup>Deuteronomy 32:15). So <sup><23016></sup>Isaiah 10:16 above, and <sup><23167F></sup>Isaiah 5:17, “fat ones.”

**28-32.** Onward gradual march of Sennacherib’s army towards Jerusalem, and the panic of the inhabitants vividly pictured before the eyes.

*come to* — *come upon* as a sudden invader (<sup><0347></sup>Genesis 34:27).

*Aiath* — same as Ai (<sup><0602></sup>Joshua 7:2 <sup><0672></sup>Nehemiah 7:32). In the north of Benjamin; so the other towns also; all on the line of march to Jerusalem.

*Michmash* — nine miles northeast of Jerusalem.

*laid up ... carriages* — He has left his heavier *baggage* (so “carriages” for the *things carried*, <sup><0215></sup>Acts 21:15) at Michmash, so as to be more lightly equipped for the siege of Jerusalem. Song of Solomon <sup><072></sup>1 Samuel 17:22 25:13 30:24 [JEROME and MAURER].

**29. passage** — the jaws of the wady or defile at Michmash (<sup><0323></sup>1 Samuel 13:23 14:4,5).

*lodging* — their quarters for the night, after having passed the defile which might have been easily guarded against them.

*Ramah* — near Geba; seven miles from Jerusalem.

*Gibeah of Saul* — his birthplace and residence, in Benjamin (<sup><0104></sup>1 Samuel 11:4), distinct from Gibeah of *Judah* (<sup><0657></sup>Joshua 15:57).

**30. *daughter of Gallim*** — *Gallim and her sons* (see on <sup><2008></sup>Isaiah 1:8; <sup><1292></sup>2 Kings 19:21). “Cry aloud in consternation.”

***Laish*** — not the town in Daniel (<sup><0780></sup>Judges 18:7), but one of the same name near Jerusalem (I Maccabees 9:9).

***Anathoth*** — three miles from Jerusalem in Benjamin; the birthplace of Jeremiah. “Poor” is applied to it in pity, on account of the impending calamity. Others translate, Answer her, O Anathoth.

**31. *Madmenah*** — not the city in Simeon (<sup><655></sup>Joshua 15:31), but a village near Jerusalem.

***removed*** — fled from fear.

***gather themselves to flee*** — “put their goods in a place of safety” [MAURER].

**32. *that day*** — literally, “As yet *this* (one only) day (is allowed to the soldiers) for remaining (halting for rest) at Nob”; northeast of Jerusalem on Olivet; a town of the priests (<sup><6132></sup>Nehemiah 11:32).

***daughter*** — rightly substituted for the *Chetib* reading, *house*. His “shaking his hand” in menace implies that he is now at Nob, *within sight of* Jerusalem.

**33. *bough*** — literally, the “beauty” of the tree; “the beautiful branch.”

***high ones of stature*** — “the upright *stem*,” as distinguished from the previous “boughs” [HORSLEY].

**34.** This verse and <sup><2003></sup>Isaiah 10:33 describe the sudden arrest and overthrow of Sennacherib in the height of his success <sup><2008></sup>Isaiah 10:18,19 <sup><2003></sup>Ezekiel 31:3,14, etc., contain the same image; “Lebanon” and its forest are the Assyrian army; the “iron” axe that fells the forest refers to the stroke which destroyed the one hundred and eighty-five thousand Assyrians (<sup><1295></sup>2 Kings 19:35). The “Mighty One” is Jehovah (<sup><2001></sup>Isaiah 10:21 <sup><2006></sup>Isaiah 9:6).

# CHAPTER 11

## ISAIAH 11:1-16.

From the local and temporary national deliverance the prophet passes by the law of suggestion in an easy transition to the end of all prophecy — the everlasting deliverance under Messiah’s reign, not merely His first coming, but chiefly His second coming. The *language* and illustrations are still drawn from the temporary national subject, with which he began, but the glories described pertain to Messiah’s reign. Hezekiah cannot, as some think, be the subject; for he was already come, whereas the “stem of Jesse” was yet future (“shall come”) (compare <sup><3101></sup>Micah 4:11, etc. <sup><3101></sup>Micah 5:1,2 <sup><3215></sup>Jeremiah 23:5,6 33:15,16 <sup><512></sup>Romans 15:12).

**1. *rod*** — When the proud “boughs” of “Lebanon” (<sup><2103></sup>Isaiah 10:33,34, the Assyrians) are lopped, and the vast “forests cut down” amidst all this rage, a seemingly humble *rod* shall come out of Jesse (Messiah), who shall retrieve the injuries done by the Assyrian “rod” to Israel (<sup><2105></sup>Isaiah 10:5,6,18,19).

***stem*** — literally, “the stump” of a tree cut close by the roots: happily expressing the *depressed* state of the royal house of David, owing to the hostile storm (<sup><2105></sup>Isaiah 10:18,19), when Messiah should arise from it, to raise it to more than its pristine glory. <sup><4107></sup>Luke 2:7 proves this (<sup><2510></sup>Isaiah 53:2; compare <sup><1847></sup>Job 14:7,8; see on <sup><2105></sup>Isaiah 8:6).

***Branch*** — Scion. He is nevertheless also the “root” (<sup><2110></sup>Isaiah 11:10 <sup><4105></sup>Revelation 5:5 22:16. “Root and offspring” combines both, <sup><3105></sup>Zechariah 3:8 6:12).

**2. *Spirit of the Lord*** — JEHOVAH. The Spirit by which the prophets spake: for Messiah was to be a *Prophet* (<sup><2101></sup>Isaiah 61:1 <sup><515></sup>Deuteronomy 18:15,18). *Seven* gifts of the Holy Spirit are specified, to imply that the *perfection* of them was to be in Him. Compare “the *seven* Spirits” (<sup><600></sup>Revelation 1:4), that is, the Holy Ghost in His *perfect fullness*: *seven* being the sacred number. The prophets had only a portion out of the “fullness” in the Son of God (<sup><4116></sup>John 1:16 3:34 <sup><5019></sup>Colossians 1:19).

***rest*** — permanently; not merely come upon Him (<sup><4125></sup>Numbers 11:25,26).

***wisdom*** — (<sup><4133></sup>1 Corinthians 1:30 <sup><4017></sup>Ephesians 1:17 <sup><5019></sup>Colossians 2:3).

**understanding** — coupled with “wisdom,” being its fruit. Discernment and discrimination (<sup><4128></sup>Matthew 22:18 <sup><4125></sup>John 2:25).

**counsel ... might** — the faculty of *forming* counsels, and that of *executing* them (<sup><2339></sup>Isaiah 28:29). Counsellor (<sup><2396></sup>Isaiah 9:6).

**knowledge** — of the deep things of God (<sup><4127></sup>Matthew 11:27). The knowledge of Him gives us true knowledge (<sup><4017></sup>Ephesians 1:17).

**fear of the Lord** — reverential, obedient fear. The first step towards true “knowledge” (<sup><4833></sup>Job 28:28 <sup><5910></sup>Psalms 111:10).

**3. make him of quick understanding** — literally, “*quick-scented* in the fear of Jehovah”; endowed with a singular sagacity in discerning the genuine principle of religious fear of God, when it lies dormant in the yet unawakened sinner (<sup><4123></sup>Matthew 12:20 Acts 10 16:14) [HORSLEY]. But MAURER, “He shall *delight* in the fear of God.” The *Hebrew* means “to delight in the odors” of anything (<sup><1218></sup>Exodus 30:38 <sup><3052></sup>Amos 5:21); “smell,” that is, “delight in.”

**after ... sight** — according to mere external appearances (<sup><4374></sup>John 7:24 8:15 <sup><5101></sup>James 2:1 <sup><0967></sup>1 Samuel 16:7). Herein Messiah is represented a just Judge and Ruler (<sup><6016></sup>Deuteronomy 1:16,17).

**reprove** — “decide,” as the parallelism shows.

**after ... ears** — by mere plausible hearsays, but by the true merits of each case (<sup><4164></sup>John 6:64 <sup><6123></sup>Revelation 2:23).

**4. judge** — see that impartial justice is done them. “Judge” may mean here “rule,” as in <sup><9504></sup>Psalms 67:4.

**reprove** — or, “argue”; “decide.” But LOWTH, “work conviction in.”

**earth** — Compare with <sup><4185></sup>Matthew 5:5, and <sup><6115></sup>Revelation 11:15.

**earth** — its *ungodly* inhabitants, answering to “the wicked” in the parallel, and in antithesis to the “poor” and “meek,” namely, in spirit, the humble pious (<sup><4185></sup>Matthew 5:3). It is at the same time implied that “the earth” will be extraordinarily wicked when He shall come to judge and reign. His reign shall therefore be ushered in with judgments on the apostates (<sup><4909></sup>Psalms 2:9-12 <sup><1288></sup>Luke 18:8 <sup><6127></sup>Revelation 2:27).

**rod of ... mouth** — condemning sentences which proceed from His mouth against the wicked (<sup><6116></sup>Revelation 1:16 2:16 19:15,21).

**breath of ... lips** — his judicial decisions (<sup><2308></sup>Isaiah 30:28 <sup><3853></sup>Job 15:30 <sup><6920></sup>Revelation 19:20 20:9-12). He as the Word of God (<sup><6643></sup>Revelation 19:13-

15) comes to strike that blow which shall decide His claim to the kingdom, previously usurped by Satan, and “the beast” to whom Satan delegates his power. It will be a day of judgment to the Gentile dispensation, as the first coming was to the Jews. Compare a type of the “rod” (<sup><4072></sup>Numbers 17:2-10).

**5. righteousness ... girdle** — (<sup><6013></sup>Revelation 1:13 19:11). The antitypical High Priest (<sup><0230f></sup>Exodus 28:4). The *girdle* secures firmly the rest of the garments (<sup><6013></sup>1 Peter 1:13). So “truth” gives firm consistency to the whole character (<sup><4054></sup>Ephesians 5:14). In <sup><2597></sup>Isaiah 59:17, “righteousness” is His *breastplate*.

**6. wolf ... lamb** — Each animal is coupled with that one which is its natural prey. A fit state of things under the “Prince of Peace” (<sup><2465></sup>Isaiah 65:25 <sup><3645></sup>Ezekiel 34:25 <sup><3218></sup>Hosea 2:18). These may be figures for *men* of corresponding animal-like characters (<sup><3227></sup>Ezekiel 22:27 38:13 <sup><3486></sup>Jeremiah 5:6 13:23 <sup><4075></sup>Matthew 7:15 <sup><4008></sup>Luke 10:3). Still a *literal* change in the relations of animals to man and each other, restoring the state in Eden, is a more likely interpretation. Compare <sup><0019></sup>Genesis 2:19,20, with <sup><3486></sup>Psalms 8:6-8, which describes the restoration to man, in the person of “the Son of man,” of the lost dominion over the animal kingdom of which he had been designed to be the merciful vicegerent under God, for the good of his animal subjects (<sup><4089></sup>Romans 8:19-22).

**7. feed** — namely, “together”; taken from the second clause.

**straw** — no longer *flesh and blood*.

**8. play** — literally, “delight” himself in sport.

**cockatrice** — a fabulous serpent supposed to be hatched from the egg of a cock. The *Hebrew* means a kind of adder, more venomous than the asp; BOCHART supposes the basilisk to be meant, which was thought to poison even with its breath.

**9. my holy mountain** — Zion, that is, Jerusalem. The seat of government and of Messiah’s throne is put for the whole earth (<sup><2487></sup>Jeremiah 3:17).

**sea** — As the waters find their way into every cavern of *its depths*, so Christianity shall pervade every recess of the earth (<sup><3124></sup>Habakkuk 2:14). As <sup><2310f></sup>Isaiah 11:1-5 describe the *personal* qualities of *Messiah*, and <sup><2310f></sup>Isaiah 11:6-9 the regenerating effects of His coming on *creation*, so <sup><2310f></sup>Isaiah 11:10-16 the results of it in the restoration of His people, *the Jews*, and the conversion through them of *the Gentiles*.

**10. root** — rather, “shoot from the root” (compare *Note*, see on <sup><2100></sup>Isaiah 11:1; <sup><2310></sup>Isaiah 53:2 <sup><6000></sup>Revelation 5:5 22:16).

**stand** — permanently and prominently, as a banner lifted up to be the rallying point of an army or people (<sup><2150></sup>Isaiah 5:26 <sup><6120></sup>John 12:32).

**the people** — *peoples*, answering to “the Gentiles” in the parallel member.

**to it ... seek** — diligently (<sup><3000></sup>Job 8:5). They shall give in their allegiance to the Divine King (<sup><2100></sup>Isaiah 2:2 60:5 <sup><3015></sup>Zechariah 2:11). HORSLEY translates, “Of *Him* shall the Gentiles *inquire*”; namely, in a religious sense, *resort as to an oracle for consultation in difficulties*” (<sup><3340></sup>Zechariah 14:16). Compare <sup><6100></sup>Romans 15:12, which quotes this passage, “In *Him* shall the Gentiles trust.”

**rest** — resting-place (<sup><2300></sup>Isaiah 60:13 <sup><3020></sup>Psalms 132:8,14 <sup><3600></sup>Ezekiel 43:7). The sanctuary in the temple of Jerusalem was “the resting-place of the ark and of Jehovah.” So the glorious Church which is to be is described under the image of an oracle to which all nations shall resort, and which shall be filled with the visible glory of God.

**11. set ... hand** — take in hand the work. Therefore the coming restoration of the Jews is to be distinct from that after the Babylonish captivity, and yet to resemble it. The first restoration was *literal*, therefore so shall the second be; the latter, however, it is implied here, shall be much more universal than the former (<sup><2300></sup>Isaiah 43:5-7 49:12,17,18 <sup><2600></sup>Ezekiel 37:21 <sup><3000></sup>Hosea 3:5 <sup><3094></sup>Amos 9:14,15 <sup><3000></sup>Micah 4:6,7 <sup><3000></sup>Zephaniah 3:19,20 <sup><3000></sup>Zechariah 10:10 <sup><4200></sup>Jeremiah 23:8). As to the “remnant” destined by God to survive the judgments on the nation, compare <sup><4400></sup>Jeremiah 46:28.

**Pathros** — one of the three divisions of Egypt, Upper Egypt.

**Cush** — either Ethiopia, south of Egypt, now Abyssinia, or the southern parts of Arabia, along the Red Sea.

**Elam** — Persia, especially the southern part of it now called Susiana.

**Shinar** — Babylonian Mesopotamia, the plain between the Euphrates and the Tigris: in it Babel was begun (<sup><0100></sup>Genesis 10:10). In the Assyrian inscriptions RAWLINSON distinguishes three periods:

- (1) The Chaldean; from 2300 B.C. to 1500, in which falls Chedorlaomer (<sup><0100></sup>Genesis 14:1-17), called in the cuneiform characters Kudur of Hur, or Ur of the Chaldees, and described as the conqueror of Syria. The seat of the first Chaldean empire was in the south, towards the confluence of the Tigris and Euphrates.

(2) The Assyrian, down to 625 B.C.

(3) The Babylonian, from 625 to 538 B.C., when Babylon was taken by the Persian Cyrus.

*islands of ... sea* — the far western regions beyond the sea.

12. In the first restoration Judah alone was restored, with perhaps some few of Israel (the ten tribes): in the future restoration *both* are expressly specified (<sup><3576></sup>Ezekiel 37:16-19 <sup><3488></sup>Jeremiah 3:18). To Israel are ascribed the “outcasts” (masculine); to Judah the “dispersed” (feminine), as the former have been longer and more utterly castaways (though not finally) than the latter (<sup><4072></sup>John 7:52). The masculine and feminine conjoined express the *universality* of the restoration.

*from the four corners of the earth* — Hebrew, “wings of the earth.”

13. *envy ... of Ephraim ... Judah* — which began as early as the time (<sup><4088></sup>Judges 8:1 12:1, etc.). Joshua had sprung from, and resided among the Ephraimites (<sup><4139></sup>Numbers 13:9 <sup><4659></sup>Joshua 19:50); the sanctuary was with them for a time (<sup><4680></sup>Joshua 18:1). The *jealousy* increased subsequently (<sup><4018></sup>2 Samuel 2:8, etc. <sup><4094></sup>2 Samuel 19:41 20:2 3:10); and even before David’s time (<sup><4918></sup>1 Samuel 11:8 15:4), they had appropriated to themselves the national name Israel. It ended in disruption (<sup><1112></sup>1 Kings 11:26, etc. <sup><1112></sup>1 Kings 12:1-33; compare <sup><1249></sup>2 Kings 14:9 <sup><4789></sup>Psalms 78:56-71).

*adversaries of Judah* — rather, “the adversaries *from* Judah”; those of Judah *hostile to the Ephraimites* [MAURER]. The parallelism “the envy of Ephraim,” namely, against Judah, requires this, as also what follows; namely, “Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim” (<sup><3575></sup>Ezekiel 37:15,17,19).

14. With united forces they shall subdue their foes (<sup><3192></sup>Amos 9:12).

*fly* — as a bird of prey (<sup><3108></sup>Habakkuk 1:8).

*upon the shoulders* — This expresses an attack made unexpectedly on one *from behind*. The image is the more apt, as the Hebrew for “shoulders” in <sup><4641></sup>Numbers 34:11 is used also of a maritime coast (“side of the sea”: Hebrew, “shoulder of the sea,” *Margin*). They shall make a sudden victorious descent *upon their borders* southwest of Judea.

*them of the east* — Hebrew, “children of the East,” the Arabs, who, always hostile, are not to be reduced under regular government, but are only to be despoiled (<sup><3428></sup>Jeremiah 49:28,29).

*lay ... hand upon* — take possession of (<sup><2714></sup>Daniel 11:42).

**Edom** — south of Judah, from the Dead Sea to the Red Sea; “Moab” — east of Jordan and the Dead Sea.

**Ammon** — east of Judea, north of Moab, between the Arnon and Jabbok.

**15.** There shall be a second exodus, destined to eclipse even the former one from Egypt in its wonders. So the prophecies elsewhere (<sup>49822</sup>Psalm 68:22 <sup>49422</sup>Exodus 14:22 <sup>33011</sup>Zechariah 10:11). The same deliverance furnishes the imagery by which the return from Babylon is described (<sup>23821</sup>Isaiah 48:20,21).

**destroy** — literally, “devote,” or “doom,” that is, dry up; for what God dooms, perishes (<sup>19449</sup>Psalm 106:9 Na 1:4).

**tongue** — the Bubastic branch of the Nile [VITRINGA]; but as the *Nile* was not the obstruction to the exodus, it is rather the west tongue or Hero&ouml;polite fork of the *Red Sea*.

**with ... mighty wind** — such as the “strong east wind” (<sup>49421</sup>Exodus 14:21), by which God made a way for Israel through the Red Sea. The *Hebrew* for “mighty” means *terrible*. MAURER translates, “With the terror of His anger”; that is, *His terrible anger*.

**in the seven streams** — rather, “shall smite it (*divide it by smiting*) into seven (*many*) streams, so as to be easily crossed” [LOWTH]. So Cyrus divided the river Gyndes, which retarded his march against Babylon, into three hundred sixty streams, so that even a woman could cross it [HERODOTUS, 1.189]. “The river” is the Euphrates, the obstruction to Israel’s return “from Assyria” (<sup>23116</sup>Isaiah 11:16), a type of all future impediments to the restoration of the Jews.

**dry shod** — *Hebrew*, “in shoes.” Even in sandals they should be able to pass over the once mighty river without being wet (<sup>6662</sup>Revelation 16:12).

**16. highway** — a highway clear of obstructions (<sup>23923</sup>Isaiah 19:23 35:8).

**like as ... Israel ... Egypt** — (<sup>2510</sup>Isaiah 51:10,11 63:12,13).

# CHAPTER 12

## ISAIAH 12:1-6.

### THANKSGIVING HYMN OF THE RESTORED AND CONVERTED JEWS.

Just as Miriam, after the deliverance of the Red Sea (<sup>23116</sup>Isaiah 11:16), celebrated it with an ode of praise (<sup>12630</sup>Exodus 15:1-19).

2. **Lord JEHOVAH** — *Jah, Jehovah*. The *repetition* of the name denotes emphasis, and the unchangeableness of God's character.

**strength ... song ... salvation** — derived from <sup>12157</sup>Exodus 15:2 <sup>14884</sup>Psalms 118:14. The idea of *salvation* was peculiarly associated with the feast of *tabernacles* (see <sup>23123</sup>Isaiah 12:3). Hence the cry "Hosanna," "Save, we beseech thee," that accompanied Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem on that day (the fifteenth of the seventh month) (<sup>41019</sup>Matthew 21:9; compare with <sup>14825</sup>Psalms 118:25,26); the earnest of the perfected "salvation" which He shall bring to His people at His glorious second appearance at Jerusalem (<sup>31028</sup>Hebrews 9:28). "He shall appear the second time without sin unto *salvation*." Compare <sup>14103</sup>Revelation 21:3, "The *tabernacle* of God is with men." Compare <sup>41033</sup>Luke 9:33, "three *tabernacles*: one for *thee*," etc. (the transfiguration being a pledge of the future kingdom), (<sup>14815</sup>Psalms 118:15 <sup>31416</sup>Zechariah 14:16). As the Jew was reminded by the feast of *tabernacles* of his wanderings in tents in the wilderness, so the Jew-Gentile Church to come shall call to mind, with thanksgiving, the various past ways whereby God has at last brought them to the heavenly "city of habitation" (<sup>19477</sup>Psalms 107:7).

3. **draw water ... salvation** — an expressive image in a hot country. On the last day of the feast of *tabernacles* the Jews used to bring water in a golden pitcher from the fountain of Siloam, and pour it, mingled with wine, on the sacrifice on the altar, with great rejoicing. This is the allusion in Jesus' words on "the last day of the feast" (<sup>43702</sup>John 7:2,37-39). The pouring out of water indicated *repentance* (<sup>9006</sup>1 Samuel 7:6; compare, as to the *Jews'* repentance hereafter, <sup>31210</sup>Zechariah 12:10). There shall be a *latter* outpouring of the Spirit like the *former* one on pentecost (<sup>21223</sup>Joel 2:23).

**wells** — not mere *streams*, which may run dry, but ever-flowing *fountains* (<sup>43443</sup>John 4:14 7:38), "Out of his belly (that is, in and from himself) —

living water” (<sup><2408></sup>Isaiah 42:18 <sup><1816></sup>Psalms 84:6 <sup><810></sup>Zechariah 13:1  
<sup><1077></sup>Revelation 7:17).

4. **make mention** — *Hebrew*, “cause it to be remembered.”

5. **Sing**, etc. — alluding to <sup><1252></sup>Exodus 15:21.

6. **inhabitant of Zion** — *Hebrew*, “inhabitant”; so “daughter of Zion,” that is, Zion and its people.

**in the midst of thee** — of Jerusalem literally (<sup><2487></sup>Jeremiah 3:17 <sup><585></sup>Ezekiel 48:35 <sup><1615></sup>Zephaniah 3:15,17 <sup><820></sup>Zechariah 2:10).

# CHAPTER 13

## ISAIAH 13:1-22.

### THE THIRTEENTH THROUGH TWENTY-THIRD CHAPTERS CONTAIN PROPHECIES AS TO FOREIGN NATIONS. — THE THIRTEENTH, FOURTEENTH, AND TWENTY-SEVENTH CHAPTERS AS TO BABYLON AND ASSYRIA.

The predictions as to foreign nations are for the sake of the covenant people, to preserve them from despair, or reliance on human confederacies, and to strengthen their faith in God: also in order to extirpate narrow-minded nationality: God is Jehovah to Israel, not for Israel's sake alone, but that He may be thereby Elohim to the nations. These prophecies are in their right chronological place, in the beginning of Hezekiah's reign; then the nations of Western Asia, on the Tigris and Euphrates, first assumed a most menacing aspect.

1. *burden* — *weighty* or *mournful* prophecy [GROTIUS]. Otherwise, simply, *the prophetic declaration*, from a *Hebrew root to put forth with the voice* anything, as in <sup><2310></sup>Numbers 23:7 [MAURER].

*of Babylon* — *concerning* Babylon.

2. *Lift ... banner* — (<sup><2311></sup>Isaiah 5:26 11:10).

*the high mountain* — rather, “*a bare* (literally, “bald,” that is, without trees) mountain”; from it the banner could be seen afar off, so as to rally together the peoples against Babylon.

*unto them* — unto the Medes (<sup><2317></sup>Isaiah 13:17), the assailants of Babylon. It is remarkable that Isaiah does not *foretell* here the Jews' captivity in Babylon, but *presupposes* that event, and throws himself *beyond*, predicting *another* event still more future, the overthrow of the city of Israel's oppressors. It was now one hundred seventy-four years before the event.

*shake ... hand* — *beckon* with the hand — wave the hand to direct the nations to march against Babylon.

*nobles* — Babylonian. Rather, in a bad sense, *tyrants*; as in <sup><2345></sup>Isaiah 14:5, “rulers” in parallelism to “the wicked”; and <sup><3013></sup>Job 21:28 [MAURER].

3. *sanctified ones* — the Median and Persian soldiers *solemnly set apart* by Me for the destruction of Babylon, not *inwardly* “sanctified,” but *designated* to fulfill God’s *holy* purpose (<sup><3512></sup>Jeremiah 51:27,28 <sup><2018></sup>Joel 3:9,11; where the *Hebrew* for *prepare* war is “sanctify” war).

*for mine anger* — to execute it.

*rejoice in my highness* — “Those who are *made to triumph* for My honor” [HORSLEY]. The heathen Medes could not be said to “rejoice in God’s highness” MAURER translates, “My haughtily exulting ones” (<sup><3811></sup>Zephaniah 3:11); a special characteristic of the Persians [HERODOTUS, 1.88]. They *rejoiced in their own highness*, but it was *His* that they were unconsciously glorifying.

4. *the mountains* — namely, which separate Media and Assyria, and on one of which the banner to rally the hosts is supposed to be reared.

*tumultuous noise* — The Babylonians are vividly depicted as hearing some unwonted sound like the din of a host; they try to distinguish the sounds, but can only perceive a *tumultuous noise*.

*nations* — Medes, Persians, and Armenians composed Cyrus’ army.

5. *They* — namely, “Jehovah,” and the armies which are “the weapons of His indignation.”

*far country* — Media and Persia, stretching to the far north and east.

*end of heaven* — the far east (<sup><1906></sup>Psalms 19:6).

*destroy* — rather, “to seize” [HORSLEY].

6. *day of the Lord* — day of His vengeance on Babylon (<sup><2022></sup>Isaiah 2:12). Type of the future “day of wrath” (<sup><6067></sup>Revelation 6:17).

*destruction* — literally, “a devastating tempest.”

*from the Almighty* — not from mere man; therefore irresistible. “Almighty,” *Hebrew*, *Shaddai*.

7. *faint ... melt* — So <sup><2813></sup>Jeremiah 50:43; compare <sup><8015></sup>Joshua 7:5. Babylon was taken by surprise on the night of Belshazzar’s impious feast (<sup><2150></sup>Daniel 5:30). Hence the sudden *fainting and melting of hearts*.

8. *pangs* — The *Hebrew* means also a “messenger.” HORSLEY, therefore, with the *Septuagint* translates, “The *heralds* (who bring word of the unexpected invasion) *are terrified*.” MAURER agrees with *English Version*, literally, “they shall take hold of pangs and sorrows.”

**woman ... travailleth** — (<sup>318B</sup>1 Thessalonians 5:3).

**amazed** — the stupid, bewildered gaze of consternation.

**faces ... flames** — “their visages have the livid hue of flame” [HORSLEY]; with anguish and indignation.

**9. cruel** — not strictly, but *unsparingly just*; opposed to *mercy*. Also answering to the cruelty (in the strict sense) of Babylon towards others (<sup>2347</sup>Isaiah 14:17) now about to be visited on itself.

**the land** — “the earth” [HORSLEY]. The language of <sup>2339</sup>Isaiah 13:9-13 can only primarily and *partially* apply to Babylon; fully and *exhaustively*, the judgments to come, hereafter, on the whole earth. Compare <sup>2330</sup>Isaiah 13:10 with <sup>4209</sup>Matthew 24:29 <sup>6182</sup>Revelation 8:12. The sins of Babylon, *arrogancy* (<sup>2331</sup>Isaiah 13:11 <sup>2341</sup>Isaiah 14:11 47:7,8), *cruelty, false worship* (<sup>2308</sup>Jeremiah 50:38), *persecution of the people of God* (<sup>2346</sup>Isaiah 47:6), are peculiarly characteristic of the Antichristian world of the latter days (<sup>2713</sup>Daniel 11:32-37 <sup>6178</sup>Revelation 17:3,6 18:6,7,9-14,24).

**10. stars**, etc. — figuratively for *anarchy, distress, and revolutions* of kingdoms (<sup>2304</sup>Isaiah 34:4 <sup>2120</sup>Joel 2:10 <sup>2537</sup>Ezekiel 32:7,8 <sup>3109</sup>Amos 8:9 <sup>6162</sup>Revelation 6:12-14). There may be a *literal* fulfillment *finally*, shadowed forth under this imagery (<sup>6201</sup>Revelation 21:1).

**constellations** — *Hebrew*, “a fool,” or “impious one”; applied to the constellation *Orion*, which was represented as an impious giant (Nimrod deified, the founder of Babylon) chained to the sky. See on <sup>4831</sup>Job 38:31.

**11. world** — *the impious* of the world (compare <sup>2104</sup>Isaiah 11:4).

**arrogancy** — Babylon’s besetting sin (<sup>2702</sup>Daniel 4:22,30).

**the terrible** — rather, tyrants [HORSLEY].

**12. man ... precious** — I will so cut off Babylon’s defenders, that a *single man* shall be as rare and precious as the finest gold.

**13. Image for mighty revolutions** (<sup>2249</sup>Isaiah 24:19 34:4 <sup>3109</sup>Habakkuk 3:6,10 <sup>3106</sup>Haggai 2:6,7 <sup>6111</sup>Revelation 20:11).

**14. it** — Babylon.

**roe** — gazelle; the most timid and easily startled.

**no man taketh up** — sheep defenseless, *without a shepherd* (<sup>3317</sup>Zechariah 13:7).

*every man ... to his own people* — The “mingled peoples” of foreign lands shall flee out of her (<sup>2816</sup>Jeremiah 50:16,28,37 51:9).

15. *found* — in the city.

*joined* — “intercepted” [MAURER]. “Every one that has *withdrawn himself*,” namely, to hide in the houses [GESENIUS].

16. (<sup>3108</sup>Psalms 137:8,9).

## ISAIAH 17.

**MEDES** — (<sup>2311</sup>ISAIAH 21:2 <sup>2811</sup>JEREMIAH 51:11,28).

At that time they were subject to Assyria; subsequently Arbaces, satrap of Media, revolted against the effeminate Sardanapalus, king of Assyria, destroyed Nineveh, and became king of Media, in the ninth century B.C.

*not regard silver* — In vain will one try to buy his life from them for a ransom. The heathen XENOPHON (*Cyropaedia*, 5,1,10) represents Cyrus as attributing this characteristic to the Medes, *disregard of riches*. A curious confirmation of this prophecy.

18. *bows* — in the use of which the Persians were particularly skilled.

19. *glory of kingdoms* — (<sup>2340</sup>Isaiah 14:4 47:5 <sup>2814</sup>Jeremiah 51:41).

*beauty of ... excellency* — Hebrew, “the glory of the pride” of the Chaldees; it was their glory and boast.

*as ... Gomorrah* — as utterly (<sup>2408</sup>Jeremiah 49:18 50:40 <sup>3011</sup>Amos 4:11). Taken by Cyrus, by clearing out the canal made for emptying the superfluous waters of the Euphrates, and directing the river into this new channel, so that he was able to enter the city by the old bed in the night.

20. Literally fulfilled.

*neither ... Arabian pitch tent* — Not only shall it not be a permanent residence, but not even a *temporary* resting-place. The Arabs, through dread of evil spirits, and believing the ghost of Nimrod to haunt it, will not pass the night there (compare <sup>2321</sup>Isaiah 13:21).

*neither ... shepherds* — The region was once most fertile; but owing to the Euphrates being now no longer kept within its former channels, it has become a stagnant marsh, unfit for flocks; and on the wastes of its ruins (bricks and cement) no grass grows.

**21. *wild beasts*** — *Hebrew, tsiyim*, animals dwelling in arid wastes. Wild cats, remarkable for their howl [BOCHART].

***doleful creatures*** — “howling beasts,” literally, “howlings” [MAURER].

***owls*** — rather, “ostriches”; a timorous creature, delighting in solitary deserts and making a hideous noise [BOCHART].

***satyrs*** — sylvan demi-gods — half man, half goat — believed by the Arabs to haunt these ruins; probably animals of the goat-ape species [VITRINGA]. *Devil-worshippers*, who *dance* amid the ruins on a certain night [J. WOLFF].

**22. *wild beasts of the islands*** — rather, “jackals”; called by the Arabs “sons of howling”; an animal midway between a fox and a wolf [BOCHART and MAURER].

***cry*** — rather, “answer,” “respond” to each other, as wolves do at night, producing a most dismal effect.

***dragons*** — serpents of various species, which hiss and utter dolorous sounds. Fable gave them wings, because they stand with much of the body elevated and then dart swiftly. MAURER understands here another species of jackal.

***her time ... near*** — though one hundred seventy-four years distant, yet “near” to Isaiah, who is supposed to be speaking to the Jews as if now captives *in* Babylon (<sup>2340</sup>Isaiah 14:1,2).

# CHAPTER 14

<sup><2340></sup>ISAIAH 14:1-3.

THE CERTAINTY OF DELIVERANCE FROM BABYLON.

<sup><2340></sup>ISAIAH 14:4-23.

THE JEWS' TRIUMPHAL SONG THEREAT.

“It moves in lengthened elegiac measure like a song of lamentation for the dead, and is full of lofty scorn” [HERDER].

<sup><2340></sup>ISAIAH 14:24-27.

CONFIRMATION OF THIS BY THE HEREFORTOLD  
DESTRUCTION OF THE ASSYRIANS UNDER  
SENNACHERIB;

a pledge to assure the captives in Babylon that He who, with such ease, overthrew the Assyrian, could likewise effect His purpose as to Babylon. The Babylonian king, the subject of this prediction, is Belshazzar, as representative of the kingdom (<sup><2700></sup>Daniel 5:1-31).

**1. *choose*** — “set His choice upon.” A deliberate predilection [HORSLEY]. Their restoration is grounded on their *election* (see <sup><1923></sup>Psalms 102:13-22).

***strangers*** — proselytes (<sup><1707></sup>Esther 8:17 <sup><4110></sup>Acts 2:10 17:4,17). TACITUS, a heathen [*Histories*, 5.5], attests the fact of numbers of the Gentiles having become Jews in his time. An earnest of the future effect on the heathen world of the Jews' spiritual restoration (<sup><2300></sup>Isaiah 60:4,5,10 <sup><3810></sup>Micah 5:7 <sup><3846></sup>Zechariah 14:16 <sup><5112></sup>Romans 11:12).

**2. *the people*** — of Babylon, primarily. Of the whole Gentile world ultimately (<sup><2302></sup>Isaiah 49:22 66:20 60:9).

***their place*** — Judea (<sup><1500></sup>Ezra 1:1-6).

*possess* — receive in possession.

*captives* — not by physical, but by moral might; the force of love, and regard to Israel's God (<sup><23144></sup>Isaiah 60:14).

3. *rest* — (<sup><2382></sup>Isaiah 28:12 <sup><2385></sup>Ezekiel 28:25,26).

## <sup><23404></sup>ISAIAH 14:4-8.

### A CHORUS OF JEWS EXPRESS THEIR JOYFUL SURPRISE AT BABYLON'S DOWNFALL.

The whole earth rejoices; the cedars of Lebanon taunt him.

4. *proverb* — The Orientals, having few books, embodied their thoughts in weighty, figurative, briefly expressed gnomes. Here a taunting song of triumph (<sup><23104></sup>Micah 2:4 <sup><23106></sup>Habakkuk 2:6).

*the king* — the ideal representative of Babylon; perhaps Belshazzar (<sup><23100></sup>Daniel 5:1-31). The mystical Babylon is ultimately meant.

*golden city* — rather, “the exactress of gold” [MAURER]. But the old translators read differently in the *Hebrew*, “oppression,” which the parallelism favors (compare <sup><23105></sup>Isaiah 3:5).

5. *staff* — not the scepter (<sup><23109></sup>Psalm 2:9), but the staff with which one strikes others, as he is speaking of more tyrants than one (<sup><23101></sup>Isaiah 9:4 10:24 14:29) [MAURER].

*rulers* — tyrants, as the parallelism “the wicked” proves (compare see on <sup><23102></sup>Isaiah 13:2).

6. *people* — the peoples subjected to Babylon.

*is persecuted* — the *Hebrew* is rather, *active*, “which persecuted them, without any to hinder him” [*Vulgate*, JEROME, and HORSLEY].

7. *they* — the once subject nations of the whole earth. HOUBIGANT places the stop after “fir trees” (<sup><23148></sup>Isaiah 14:8), “The very fir trees break forth,” etc. But the parallelism is better in *English Version*.

8. *the fir trees* — now left undisturbed. Probably a kind of evergreen.

*rejoice at thee* — (<sup><19612></sup>Psalm 96:12). *At thy fall* (<sup><19519></sup>Psalm 35:19,24).

*no feller* — as formerly, when thou wast in power (<sup><23103></sup>Isaiah 10:34 37:24).

## ISAIAH 14:9-11.

### THE SCENE CHANGES FROM EARTH TO HELL.

Hades (the *Amenthes* of Egypt), the unseen abode of the departed; some of its tenants, once mighty monarchs, are represented by a bold personification as rising from their seats in astonishment at the descent among them of the humbled king of Babylon. This proves, in opposition to WARBURTON [*The Divine Legation*], that the belief existed among the Jews that there was a Sheol or Hades, in which the “Rephaim” or manes of the departed abode.

**9. moved** — put into agitation.

**for thee** — that is, “at thee”; towards thee; explained by “to meet thee at thy coming” [MAURER].

**chief ones** — literally, “goats”; so rams, leaders of the flock; princes (<sup>33018</sup>Zechariah 10:3). The idea of *wickedness* on a *gigantic* scale is included (<sup>3547</sup>Ezekiel 34:17 <sup>4133</sup>Matthew 25:32,33). MAGEE derives “Rephaim” (*English Version*, “the dead”) from a *Hebrew* root, “to resolve into first elements”; so “the deceased” (<sup>2314</sup>Isaiah 26:14) “ghosts” (<sup>3216</sup>Proverbs 21:16). These being magnified by the imagination of the living into gigantic stature, gave their name to *giants* in general (<sup>01004</sup>Genesis 6:4 14:5 <sup>3528</sup>Ezekiel 32:18,21). “Rephaim,” translated in the *Septuagint*, “giants” (compare see on <sup>3316</sup>Job 26:5,6). Thence, as the giant Rephaim of Canaan were notorious even in that guilty land, *enormous wickedness* became connected with the term. So the Rephaim came to be *the wicked spirits* in Gehenna, the lower of the two portions into which Sheol is divided.

**10.** They taunt him and derive from his calamity consolation under their own (<sup>3316</sup>Ezekiel 31:16).

**weak** — as a shade bereft of blood and life. Rephaim, “the dead,” may come from a *Hebrew* root, meaning similarly “feeble,” “powerless.” The speech of the departed closes with <sup>2341</sup>Isaiah 14:11.

**11.** “Pomp” and music, the accompaniment of Babylon’s former feastings (<sup>2362</sup>Isaiah 5:12 24:8), give place to the corruption and the stillness of the grave (<sup>3527</sup>Ezekiel 32:27).

**worm** — that is bred in putridity.

**worms** — properly those from which the crimson dye is obtained. Appropriate here; instead of the *crimson* coverlet, *over* thee shall be

“worms.” Instead of the gorgeous couch, “*under thee*” shall be the maggot.

## ISAIAH 14:12-15.

### THE JEWS ADDRESS HIM AGAIN AS A FALLEN ONCE-BRIGHT STAR.

The language is so framed as to apply to the Babylonian king primarily, and at the same time to shadow forth through him, the great final enemy, the man of sin, Antichrist, of Daniel, St. Paul, and St. John; he alone shall fulfill exhaustively all the lineaments here given.

**12. *Lucifer*** — “day star.” A title truly belonging to Christ (<sup><6216></sup>Revelation 22:16), “the bright and morning star,” and therefore hereafter to be assumed by Antichrist. GESENIUS, however, renders the *Hebrew* here as in <sup><2912></sup>Ezekiel 21:12 <sup><3412></sup>Zechariah 11:2, “howl.”

***weaken*** — “prostrate”; as in <sup><2713></sup>Exodus 17:13, “discomfit.”

**13. *above ... God*** — In <sup><2180></sup>Daniel 8:10, “stars” express *earthly potentates*. “The stars” are often also used to express *heavenly principalities* (<sup><3881></sup>Job 38:7).

***mount of the congregation*** — the place of solemn *meeting* between God and His people in the temple at Jerusalem. In <sup><2715></sup>Daniel 11:37, and <sup><3104></sup>2 Thessalonians 2:4, this is attributed to Antichrist.

***sides of the north*** — namely, the sides of Mount Moriah on which the temple was built; *north* of Mount Zion (<sup><1981></sup>Psalms 48:2). However, the parallelism supports the notion that the Babylonian king expresses himself according to his own, and not Jewish opinions (so in <sup><3100></sup>Isaiah 10:10) thus “mount of the congregation” will mean the *northern* mountain (perhaps in Armenia) fabled by the Babylonians to be *the common meeting-place of their gods*. “Both sides” imply *the angle* in which the sides meet; and so the expression comes to mean “*the extreme parts of the north*.” So the Hindus place the Meru, the dwelling-place of their gods, in the north, in the Himalayan mountains. So the Greeks, in the *northern* Olympus. The Persian followers of Zoroaster put the Ai-bordsch in the Caucasus north of them. The allusion to the stars harmonizes with this; namely, that those near the *North Pole*, the region of the aurora borealis (compare see on <sup><3829></sup>Job 23:9; <sup><3872></sup>Job 37:22) [MAURER, *Septuagint, Syriac*].

**14. clouds** — rather, “the cloud,” singular. Perhaps there is a reference to the cloud, the symbol of the divine presence (<sup><2304></sup>Isaiah 4:5 <sup><12131></sup>Exodus 13:21). So this tallies with <sup><3104></sup>2 Thessalonians 2:4, “*above* all that is called God”; as here “*above* ... the cloud”; and as the Shekinah-cloud was connected with the *temple*, there follows, “*he as God* sitteth in the temple of God,” answering to “I will be *like the Most High*” here. Moreover, <sup><6704></sup>Revelation 17:4,5, represents Antichrist as seated in BABYLON, to which city, literal and spiritual, Isaiah refers here.

**15. to hell** — to Sheol (<sup><2346></sup>Isaiah 14:6), thou who hast said, “I will ascend into *heaven*” (<sup><4123></sup>Matthew 11:23).

**sides of the pit** — antithetical to the “sides of the north” (<sup><2343></sup>Isaiah 14:13). Thus the reference is to the *sides* of the sepulcher round which the dead were arranged in niches. But MAURER here, as in <sup><2343></sup>Isaiah 14:13, translates, “the *extreme*,” or innermost *parts* of the sepulcher: as in <sup><3523></sup>Ezekiel 32:23 (compare <sup><1213></sup>1 Samuel 24:3).

## <sup><2346></sup>ISAIAH 14:16-20.

### THE PASSERS-BY CONTEMPLATE WITH ASTONISHMENT THE BODY OF THE KING OF BABYLON CAST OUT, INSTEAD OF LYING IN A SPLENDID MAUSOLEUM, AND CAN HARDLY BELIEVE THEIR SENSES THAT IT IS HE.

**16. narrowly look** — to be certain they are not mistaken.

**consider** — “meditate upon” [HORSLEY].

**17. opened not ... house ... prisoners** — But MAURER, as *Margin*, “Did not let his captives loose *homewards*.”

**18. All** — that is, This is the *usual* practice.

**in glory** — in a grand mausoleum.

**house** — that is, “sepulcher,” as in <sup><2125></sup>Ecclesiastes 12:5; “grave” (<sup><2349></sup>Isaiah 14:19). To be excluded from the family sepulcher was a mark of infamy (<sup><2348></sup>Isaiah 34:3 <sup><3229></sup>Jeremiah 22:19 <sup><1132></sup>1 Kings 13:22 <sup><4211></sup>2 Chronicles 21:20 24:25 28:27).

**19. cast out of** — not that he had lain *in* the grave and was then *cast out of* it, but “cast out *without* a grave,” *such as might have been expected by thee* (“thy”).

**branch** — a useless *sucker* starting up from the root of a tree, and cut away by the husbandman.

**raiment of those ... slain** — covered with gore, and regarded with abhorrence as unclean by the Jews. Rather, “*clothed* (that is, covered) *with the slain*”; as in <sup><1006></sup>Job 7:5, “My flesh is clothed with worms and clods of dust” [MAURER].

**thrust through** — that is, “the slain who have been thrust through,” etc.

**stones of ... pit** — whose bodies are buried in sepulchres excavated amidst stones, whereas the king of Babylon is an *unburied* “carcass trodden under foot.”

**20. not ... joined with them** — whereas the princes slain with thee shall be buried, thou shalt not.

**thou ... destroyed ... land** — Belshazzar (or *Naboned*) oppressed his land with wars and tyranny, so that he was much hated [XENOPHON, *Cyropaedia* 4.6,3 7.5,32].

**seed ... never be renowned** — rather, “shall not be named for ever”; the Babylonian dynasty shall end with Belshazzar; his family shall not be perpetuated [HORSLEY].

## ~~<2342>~~ ISAIAH 14:21-23.

### GOD'S DETERMINATION TO DESTROY BABYLON.

**21. Prepare**, etc. — charge to the Medes and Persians, as if they were God's *conscious* instruments.

**his children** — Belshazzar's (<sup><1216></sup>Exodus 20:5).

**rise** — to occupy the places of their fathers.

**fill ... with cities** — MAURER translates, “enemies,” as the *Hebrew* means in <sup><1036></sup>1 Samuel 28:16 <sup><1020></sup>Psalms 139:20; namely, lest they inundate the world with their armies. VITRINGA translates, “disturbers.” In *English Version* the meaning is, “lest they fill the land with *such* cities” of pride as Babylon was.

**22. against them** — the family of the king of Babylon.

**name** — all the *male* representatives, so that the name shall become extinct (<sup><2365></sup>Isaiah 56:5 <sup><1006></sup>Ruth 4:5).

**remnant** — all that is left of them. The dynasty shall cease (<sup><2763></sup>Daniel 5:28-31). Compare as to Babylon in general, <sup><3616></sup>Jeremiah 51:62.

**23. bittern** — rather, “the hedgehog” [MAURER and GESENIUS]. STRABO (16:1) states that enormous hedgehogs were found in the islands of the Euphrates.

**pools** — owing to Cyrus turning the waters of the Euphrates over the country.

**besom** — sweep-net [MAURER], (<sup><1140></sup>1 Kings 14:10 <sup><1213></sup>2 Kings 21:13).

## <sup><2344></sup>ISAIAH 14:24-27.

### A FRAGMENT AS TO THE DESTRUCTION OF THE ASSYRIANS UNDER SENNACHERIB.

This would comfort the Jews when captives in Babylon, being a pledge that God, who had *by that time* fulfilled the promise concerning Sennacherib (though now still future), would also fulfill His promise as to destroying Babylon, Judah’s enemy.

**24.** In this verse *the Lord’s thought* (purpose) stands in antithesis to *the Assyrians’ thoughts* (<sup><2307></sup>Isaiah 10:7). (See <sup><2360></sup>Isaiah 46:10,11 <sup><1959></sup>1 Samuel 15:29 <sup><3186></sup>Malachi 3:6).

**25. That** — My purpose, namely, “that.”

**break ... yoke** — (<sup><2307></sup>Isaiah 10:27).

**my mountains** — Sennacherib’s army was destroyed on the mountains near Jerusalem (<sup><2303></sup>Isaiah 10:33,34). God regarded Judah as peculiarly His.

**26. This is ... purpose ... whole earth** — A hint that the prophecy embraces the present world of all ages in its scope, of which the purpose concerning Babylon and Assyria, the then representatives of the world power, is but a part.

**hand ... stretched out upon** — namely, in punishment (<sup><2365></sup>Isaiah 5:25).

**27.** (<sup><2065></sup>Daniel 4:35).

## ISAIAH 14:28-32.

### PROPHECY AGAINST PHILISTIA.

To comfort the Jews, lest they should fear that people; not in order to call the Philistines to repentance, since the prophecy was probably never circulated among them. They had been subdued by Uzziah or Azariah (<sup><4016></sup>2 Chronicles 26:6); but in the reign of Ahaz (<sup><4038></sup>2 Chronicles 28:18), they took several towns in south Judea. Now Isaiah denounces their final subjugation by Hezekiah.

**28. In ... year ... Ahaz died** — 726 B.C. Probably it was in this year that the Philistines threw off the yoke put on them by Uzziah.

**29. Palestina** — literally, “the land of sojourners.”

**rod ... broken** — The yoke imposed by Uzziah (<sup><4016></sup>2 Chronicles 26:6) was thrown off under Ahaz (<sup><4038></sup>2 Chronicles 28:18).

**serpent’s root** — the stock of Jesse (<sup><2311></sup>Isaiah 11:1). Uzziah was doubtless regarded by the Philistines as a biting “serpent.” But though the effects of his bite have been got rid of, a more deadly *viper*, or “cockatrice” (literally, “viper’s offspring,” as Philistia would regard him), namely, Hezekiah awaits you (<sup><1288></sup>2 Kings 18:8).

**30. first-born of ... poor** — Hebraism, for the *most abject poor*; the *first-born* being the foremost of the family. Compare “first-born of death” (<sup><4083></sup>Job 18:13), for the most *fatal death*. The Jews, heretofore exposed to Philistine invasions and alarms, shall be in safety. Compare <sup><4724></sup>Psalms 72:4, “Children of the needy,” expressing those “needy in *condition*.”

**feed** — image from a flock feeding in safety.

**root** — radical destruction.

**He shall slay** — Jehovah shall. The change of person, “He” after “I,” is a common Hebraism.

**31. gate** — that is, ye who throng the gate; the chief place of concourse in a city.

**from ... north** — Judea, north and east of Palestine.

**smoke** — from the signal-fire, whereby a hostile army was called together; the *Jews’* signal-fire is meant here, the “pillar of cloud and fire,” (<sup><1031></sup>Exodus 13:21 <sup><4095></sup>Nehemiah 9:19); or else from the region devastated by

fire [MAURER]. GESENIUS less probably refers it to the *cloud of dust* raised by the invading army.

**none ... alone ... in ... appointed times** — Rather, “There shall not be a *straggler* among his (the enemy’s) *levies*.” The Jewish host shall advance on Palestine in close array; none shall fall back or ing from weariness (<sup><3169></sup>Isaiah 5:26,27), [LOWTH]. MAURER thinks the *Hebrew* will not bear the rendering “levies” or “armies.” He translates, “There is not one (of the Philistine watch guards) who will remain *alone* (exposed to the enemy) *at his post*,” through fright. On “alone,” compare <sup><394317></sup>Psalms 102:7 <sup><3889></sup>Hosea 8:9.

**32. messengers of the nation** — When messengers come from Philistia to enquire as to the state of Judea, the reply shall be, that the Lord ... (<sup><38701></sup>Psalms 87:1,5 102:16).

**poor** — (<sup><31812></sup>Zephaniah 3:12).

# CHAPTER 15

## ISAIAH 15:1-9.

### THE FIFTEENTH AND SIXTEENTH CHAPTERS FORM ONE PROPHECY ON MOAB.

LOWTH thinks it was delivered in the first years of Hezekiah's reign and fulfilled in the fourth when Shalmaneser, on his way to invade Israel, may have seized on the strongholds of Moab. Moab probably had made common cause with Israel and Syria in a league against Assyria. Hence it incurred the vengeance of Assyria. Jeremiah has introduced much of this prophecy into his forty-eighth chapter.

**1. *Because*** — rather, “Surely”; literally, “(I affirm) that” [MAURER].

***night*** — the time best suited for a hostile incursion (<sup>2200</sup>Isaiah 21:4 <sup>2304</sup>Jeremiah 39:4).

***Ar*** — meaning in *Hebrew*, “the city”; the metropolis of Moab, on the south of the river Arnon.

***Kir*** — literally “a citadel”; not far from Ar, towards the south.

***He*** — Moab personified.

***Bajith*** — rather, “to the *temple*” [MAURER]; answering to the “sanctuary” (<sup>2302</sup>Isaiah 16:12), in a similar context.

***to Dibon*** — Rather, as Dibon was in a *plain* north of the Arnon, “Dibon (is gone up) to the high places,” the usual places of sacrifice in the East. Same town as Dimon (<sup>2309</sup>Isaiah 15:9).

***to weep*** — at the sudden calamity.

***over Nebo*** — rather “in Nebo”; not “on account of” Nebo (compare <sup>2303</sup>Isaiah 15:3) [MAURER]. The town Nebo was adjacent to the mountain, not far from the northern shore of the Dead Sea. There it was that Chemosh, the idol of Moab, was worshipped (compare <sup>6301</sup>Deuteronomy 34:1).

***Medeba*** — south of Heshbon, on a hill east of Jordan.

**baldness ... beard cut off** — The Orientals regarded the beard with peculiar veneration. To cut one's beard off is the greatest mark of sorrow and mortification (compare <sup>2485E</sup>Jeremiah 48:37).

**3. tops of ... houses** — flat; places of resort for prayer, etc., in the East (<sup>440B</sup>Acts 10:9).

**weeping abundantly** — “melting away in tears.” HORSLEY prefers “descending to weep.” Thus there is a “parallelism by alternate construction” [LOWTH], or *chiasmus*; “howl” refers to “tops of houses.” “Descending to weep” to “streets” or squares, whither they descend from the housetops.

**4. Heshbon** — an Amorite city, twenty miles east of Jordan; taken by Moab after the carrying away of Israel (compare <sup>248E</sup>Jeremiah 48:1-47).

**Elealeh** — near Heshbon, in Reuben.

**Jahaz** — east of Jordan, in Reuben. Near it Moses defeated Sihon.

**therefore** — because of the sudden overthrow of their cities. Even the armed men, instead of fighting in defense of their land, shall join in the general cry.

**life**, etc. — rather, “his soul is grieved” (<sup>600B</sup>1 Samuel 1:8) [MAURER].

**5. My** — The prophet himself is moved with pity for Moab. Ministers, in denouncing the wrath of God against sinners, should do it with tender sorrow, not with exultation.

**fugitives** — fleeing from Moab, wander as far as to Zoar, on the extreme boundary south of the Dead Sea. HORSLEY translates, “her nobility,” (<sup>204B</sup>Hosea 4:18).

**heifer**, etc. — that is, raising their voices “like a heifer” (compare <sup>248E</sup>Jeremiah 48:34,36). The expression “three years old,” implies one at its full vigor (<sup>015B</sup>Genesis 15:9), as yet not brought under the yoke; as Moab heretofore unsubdued, but now about to be broken. So <sup>261B</sup>Jeremiah 31:18 <sup>204B</sup>Hosea 4:13. MAURER translates, “Eglath” (in *English Version*, “a heifer”) *Shelishijah* (that is, *the third*, to distinguish it from two others of the same name).

**by the mounting up** — up the ascent.

**Luhith** — a mountain in Moab.

**Horonaim** — a town of Moab not far from Zoar (<sup>248E</sup>Jeremiah 48:5). It means “the two poles,” being near caves.

***cry of destruction*** — a cry appropriate to the destruction which visits their country.

**6. *For*** — the cause of their flight southwards (<sup><1281></sup>2 Kings 3:19,25). “For” the northern regions and even the city Nimrim (the very name of which means “limpid waters,” in Gilead near Jordan) are without water or herbage.

**7. *Therefore*** — because of the devastation of the land.

***abundance*** — literally, “that which is over and above” the necessities of life.

***brook of ... willows*** — The fugitives flee from Nimrim, where the waters have failed, to places better watered. *Margin* has “valley of Arabians”; that is, to the valley on the boundary between them and Arabia-Petraea; now Wady-el Arabah. “Arabia” means a “desert.”

**8. *Eglaim*** — (<sup><3471></sup>Ezekiel 47:10), *En-eglam*. Not the Agalum of EUSEBIUS, eight miles from Areopolis towards the south; the context requires a town on the very borders of Moab or beyond them.

***Beer-elim*** — literally, “the well of the Princes” — (so <sup><0216></sup>Numbers 21:16-18). Beyond the east borders of Moab.

**9. *Dimon*** — same as Dibon (<sup><2812></sup>Isaiah 15:2). Its waters are the Arnon.

***full of blood*** — The slain of Moab shall be so many.

***bring more*** — fresh calamities, namely, the “lions” afterwards mentioned (<sup><1275></sup>2 Kings 17:25 <sup><2416></sup>Jeremiah 5:6 15:3). VITRINGA understands Nebuchadnezzar as meant by “the lion”; but it is *plural*, “lions.” The “more,” or in *Hebrew*, “additions,” he explains of the addition made to the waters of Dimon by the streams of *blood* of the slain.

# CHAPTER 16

## ISAIAH 16:1-14.

### CONTINUATION OF THE PROPHECY AS TO MOAB.

**1. *lamb*** — advice of the prophet to the Moabites who had fled southwards to Idumea, to send to the king of Judah the tribute of lambs, which they had formerly paid to *Israel*, but which they had given up (<sup>1181</sup>2 Kings 3:4,5). David probably imposed this tribute before the severance of Judah and Israel (<sup>1182</sup>2 Samuel 8:2). Therefore Moab is recommended to gain the favor and protection of *Judah*, by paying it to the Jewish king. Type of the need of submitting to Messiah (<sup>1183</sup>Psalms 2:10-12 <sup>1184</sup>Romans 12:1).

***from Sela to*** — rather, “from Petra *through* (literally, ‘towards’) the wilderness” [MAURER]. “Sela” means “a rock,” *Petra* in *Greek*; the capital of Idumea and Arabia-Petraea; the dwellings are mostly hewn out of the rock. The country around was a vast common (“wilderness”) or open pasturage, to which the Moabites had fled on the invasion from the west (<sup>2137</sup>Isaiah 15:7).

***ruler of the land*** — namely, of *Idumea*, that is, the king of Judah; Amaziah had become master of Idumea and Sela (<sup>1247</sup>2 Kings 14:7).

**2. *cast out of ... nest*** — rather, “as a *brood* cast out” (in apposition with “a wandering bird,” or rather, *wandering birds*), namely, a brood just fledged and expelled from the nest in which they were hatched [HORSLEY]. Compare <sup>2104</sup>Isaiah 10:14 <sup>1521</sup>Deuteronomy 32:11.

***daughters of Moab*** — that is, the inhabitants of Moab. Song of Solomon <sup>1292</sup>2 Kings 19:21 <sup>1981</sup>Psalms 48:11 <sup>2461</sup>Jeremiah 46:11 <sup>2002</sup>Lamentations 4:22 [MAURER].

***at the fords*** — trying to cross the boundary river of Moab, in order to escape out of the land. EWALD and MAURER make “fords” a poetical expression for “*the dwellers* on Arnon,” answering to the parallel clause of the same sense, “daughters of Moab.”

**3-5.** GESENIUS, MAURER, etc., regard these verses as an address of the fugitive Moabites to the Jews for protection; they translate <sup>2309</sup>Isaiah 16:4, “Let mine outcasts of *Moab* dwell with thee, Judah”; the protection will be

refused by the *Jews*, for the pride of Moab (<sup>2366</sup>Isaiah 16:6). VITRINGA makes it an additional advice *to Moab*, besides paying tribute. Give shelter to the Jewish outcasts who take refuge in thy land (<sup>2368</sup>Isaiah 16:3,4); so “mercy” will be shown thee in turn by whatever king sits on the “throne” of “David” (<sup>2365</sup>Isaiah 16:5). Isaiah foresees that Moab will be too *proud* to pay the tribute, or conciliate Judah by sheltering its outcasts (<sup>2366</sup>Isaiah 16:6); therefore judgment shall be executed. However, as Moab just before is represented as itself an *outcast* in Idumea, it seems incongruous that it should be called on to *shelter* Jewish outcasts. So that it seems rather to foretell the ruined state of Moab *when its people should beg the Jews for shelter*, but be refused for their pride.

**make ... shadow as ... night ... in ... noonday** — emblem of a thick shelter from the glaring noonday heat (<sup>2306</sup>Isaiah 4:6 25:4 32:2).

**bewray ... wandereth** — Betray not the fugitive to his pursuer.

4. Rather, “Let the outcasts of Moab dwell with thee” (Judah) [HORSLEY].

**for the extortioner**, etc. — The Assyrian *oppressor* probably.

**is at an end** — By the time that Moab begs Judah for shelter, Judah shall be in a condition to afford it, *for* the Assyrian oppressor shall have been “consumed out of the land.”

5. If Judah shelters the suppliant Moab, allowing him to remain in Idumea, a blessing will redound to Judah itself and its “throne.”

**truth ... judgment ... righteousness** — language so divinely framed as to apply to “the latter days” under King Messiah, when “the Lord shall bring again the captivity of Moab” (<sup>492</sup>Psalms 72:2 96:13 98:9 <sup>2487</sup>Jeremiah 48:47 <sup>6112</sup>Romans 11:12).

**hasting** — “prompt in executing.”

6. **We** — Jews. We reject Moab’s supplication for his pride.

**lies** — false boasts.

**not be so** — rather, “not right”; shall prove vain (<sup>2350</sup>Isaiah 25:10 <sup>2489</sup>Jeremiah 48:29,30 <sup>3028</sup>Zephaniah 2:8). “It shall not be so; his lies shall not so effect it.”

7. **Therefore** — all hope of being allowed “shelter by the Jews being cut off.

**foundations** — that is, “ruins”; because, when houses are pulled down, the “foundations” alone are left (<sup>2582</sup>Isaiah 58:12). Jeremiah, in the parallel place

(<sup>2483</sup>Jeremiah 48:31), renders it “men,” who are the moral foundations or stay of a city.

***Kirhareth*** — literally, “a citadel of brick.”

***surely they are stricken*** — rather, joined with “mourn”; “Ye shall mourn utterly stricken” [MAURER and HORSLEY].

**8. *fields*** — vine-fields (<sup>4622</sup>Deuteronomy 32:32).

***vine of Sibmah*** — near Heshbon: namely, languishes.

***lords of ... heathen*** — The heathen princes, the Assyrians, etc., who invaded Moab, destroyed his vines. So Jeremiah in the parallel place (<sup>2482</sup>Jeremiah 48:32,33). MAURER thinks the following words require rather the rendering, “Its (the vine of Sibmah) shoots (the wines got from them) overpowered (by its generous flavor and potency) the lords of the nations” (<sup>4041</sup>Genesis 49:11,12,22).

***come ... Jazer*** — They (the vine shoots) reached even to Jazer, fifteen miles from Heshbon.

***wandered*** — They overran in wild luxuriance the wilderness of Arabia, encompassing Moab.

***the sea*** — the Dead Sea; or else some lake near Jazer now dry; in <sup>2482</sup>Jeremiah 48:32 called “the sea of Jazer”; but see on <sup>2482</sup>Jeremiah 48:32 (<sup>4308</sup>Psalms 80:8-11).

**9. *I*** — will bewail for its desolation, though I belong to another nation (see on <sup>2915</sup>Isaiah 15:5).

***with ... weeping of Jazer*** — as Jazer weeps.

***shouting for ... fallen*** — rather, “Upon thy summer fruits and upon thy luxuriant vines the shouting (*the battle shout*, instead of the *joyous shout* of the grape-gatherers, usual at the vintage) is fallen” (<sup>2960</sup>Isaiah 16:10 <sup>2927</sup>Jeremiah 25:30 51:14). In the parallel passage (<sup>2482</sup>Jeremiah 48:32) the words substantially express the same sense. “The *spoiler* is fallen upon thy summer fruits.”

**10. *gladness*** — such as is felt in gathering a rich harvest. There shall be *no harvest* or vintage owing to the desolation; therefore no “gladness.”

**11. *bowels*** — in Scripture the seat of yearning compassion. It means the inward seat of emotion, the heart, etc. (<sup>2915</sup>Isaiah 63:15; compare <sup>2915</sup>Isaiah 15:5 <sup>2483</sup>Jeremiah 48:36).

**sound ... harp** — as its strings vibrate when beaten with the plectrum or hand.

**12. when it is seen that** — rather, “When Moab shall have *appeared* (before his gods; compare <sup><02385></sup>Exodus 23:15), *when* he is weary (that is, when he shall have fatigued himself with observing burdensome rites <sup><11835></sup>1 Kings 18:26, etc.), on the high place (compare <sup><21512></sup>Isaiah 15:2), *and* shall come to his sanctuary (of the idol Chemosh on Mount Nebo) to pray, he shall not prevail”; he shall effect nothing by his prayers [MAURER].

**13. since that time** — rather, “respecting that time” [HORSLEY]. BARNES translates it, “*formerly*” in contrast to “*but now*” (<sup><21644></sup>Isaiah 16:14): heretofore former prophecies (<sup><01515></sup>Exodus 15:15 <sup><02129></sup>Numbers 21:29) have been given as to Moab, of which Isaiah has given the substance: *but now* a definite and steady *time* also is fixed.

**14. three years ... hireling** — Just as a hireling has his fixed term of engagement, which neither he nor his master will allow to be added to or to be taken from, so the limit within which Moab is to fall is unalterably fixed (<sup><22116></sup>Isaiah 21:16). Fulfilled about the time when the Assyrians led Israel into captivity. The ruins of Elealeh, Heshbon, Medeba, Dibon, etc., still exist to confirm the inspiration of Scripture. The accurate *particularity of specification* of the places three thousand years ago, confirmed by modern research, is a strong testimony to the truth of prophecy.

# CHAPTER 17

## ISAIAH 17:1-11.

### PROPHECY CONCERNING DAMASCUS AND ITS ALLY SAMARIA,

that is, Syria and Israel, which had leagued together (seventh and eighth chapters).

Already, Tiglath-pileser had carried away the people of Damascus to Kir, in the fourth year of Ahaz (<sup><1269></sup>2 Kings 16:9); but now in Hezekiah's reign a *further* overthrow is foretold (<sup><3423></sup>Jeremiah 49:23 <sup><3891></sup>Zechariah 9:1). Also, Shalmaneser carried away Israel from Samaria to Assyria (<sup><1270></sup>2 Kings 17:6 18:10,11) in the *sixth* year of Hezekiah of Judah (the ninth year of Hoshea of Israel). This prophecy was, doubtless, given previously in the *first* years of Hezekiah when the foreign nations came into nearer collision with Judah, owing to the threatening aspect of Assyria.

**1. *Damascus*** — put before *Israel* (Ephraim, <sup><2708></sup>Isaiah 17:3), which is chiefly referred to in what follows, because it was the prevailing power in the league; with it Ephraim either stood or fell (<sup><2311></sup>Isaiah 7:1-25).

**2. *cities of Aroer*** — that is, the cities round Aroer, and under its jurisdiction [GESENIUS]. So “cities with their villages” (<sup><6544></sup>Joshua 15:44); “Heshbon and all her cities” (<sup><6373></sup>Joshua 13:17). Aroer was near Rabbahammon, at the river of Gad, an arm of the Jabbok (<sup><10162></sup>2 Samuel 24:5), founded by the Gadites (<sup><6234></sup>Numbers 32:34).

***for flocks*** — (<sup><2157></sup>Isaiah 5:17).

**3. *fortress ... cease*** — The strongholds shall be pulled down (*Samaria* especially: <sup><2804></sup>Hosea 10:14 <sup><3001></sup>Micah 1:6 <sup><3100></sup>Habakkuk 1:10).

***remnant of Syria*** — all that was left after the overthrow by Tiglath-pileser (<sup><1269></sup>2 Kings 16:9).

***as the glory of ... Israel*** — They shall meet with the same fate as Israel, their ally.

**4. *glory of Jacob*** — the kingdom of Ephraim and all that they rely on (<sup><2811></sup>Hosea 12:2 <sup><3001></sup>Micah 1:5).

*fatness ... lean* — (See on <sup><2306></sup>Isaiah 10:16).

**5. *harvestman***, etc. — The inhabitants and wealth of Israel shall be swept away, and but few left behind just as the husbandman gathers the corn and the fruit. and leaves only a few gleaned ears and grapes (<sup><2809></sup>2 Kings 18:9-11).

*with his arm* — He collects the standing grain with one arm, so that he can cut it with the sickle in the other hand.

*Rephaim* — a fertile plain at the southwest of Jerusalem toward Bethlehem and the country of the Philistines (<sup><4088></sup>2 Samuel 5:18-22).

**6. *in it*** — that is, in the land of Israel.

*two or three ... in the top* — A few poor inhabitants shall be left in Israel, like the two or three olive berries left on the topmost boughs, which it is not worth while taking the trouble to try to reach.

**7. *look to his Maker*** — instead of trusting in their *fortresses* — (<sup><2378></sup>Isaiah 17:3 <sup><3007></sup>Micah 7:7).

**8. *groves*** — A symbolical tree is often found in Assyrian inscriptions, representing *the hosts of heaven* (“Saba”), answering to Ashteroth or Astarte, the queen of heaven, as Baal or Bel is the king. Hence the expression, “image of the grove,” is explained (<sup><4207></sup>2 Kings 21:7).

*images* — literally, “images to the sun,” that is, to Baal, who answers to the sun, as Astarte to the hosts of heaven (<sup><4235></sup>2 Kings 23:5 <sup><4826></sup>Job 31:26).

**9. *forsaken bough*** — rather “the leavings of woods,” what the axeman leaves when he cuts down the grove (compare <sup><2376></sup>Isaiah 17:6).

*which they left because of* — rather, “which (the enemies) shall leave for the children of Israel”; literally, “shall leave (in departing) *from before the face* of the children of Israel” [MAURER]. But a few cities out of many shall be left to Israel, by the purpose of God, executed by the Assyrian.

**10. *forgotten ... God of ... salvation ... rock*** — (<sup><6215></sup>Deuteronomy 32:15,18).

*plants* — rather, “nursery grounds,” “pleasure-grounds” [MAURER].

*set in* — rather, “set them,” the pleasure-grounds.

*strange slips* — cuttings of plants from far, and therefore valuable.

**11. *In the day ... thy plant*** — rather, “In the day of *thy planting*” [HORSLEY].

***shalt ... make ... grow*** — MAURER translates, “Thou didst *fence* it,” namely, the pleasure-ground. The parallel clause, “Make ... flourish,” favors *English Version*. As soon as thou plantest, it grows.

***in the morning*** — that is, immediately after; so in <sup><2946></sup>Psalm 94:14, the *Hebrew*, “in the morning,” is translated “early.”

***but ... shall be a heap*** — rather, “but (promising as was the prospect) the harvest *is gone*” [HORSLEY].

***in ... day of grief*** — rather, “in the day of (expected) *possession*” [MAURER]. “In the day of *inundation*” [HORSLEY].

***of desperate sorrow*** — rather, “And the sorrow shall be desperate or irremediable.” In *English Version* “heap” and “sorrow” may be taken together by hendiadys. “The heap of the harvest shall be desperate sorrow” [ROSENMULLER].

## <sup><2972></sup>ISAIAH 17:12-18:7.

### SUDDEN DESTRUCTION OF A GREAT ARMY IN JUDEA (NAMELY THAT OF THE ASSYRIAN SENNACHERIB), AND ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE EVENT TO THE ETHIOPIAN AMBASSADORS.

The connection of this fragment with what precedes is: notwithstanding the calamities coming on Israel, the people of God shall not be utterly destroyed (<sup><2162></sup>Isaiah 6:12,13); the Assyrian spoilers shall perish (<sup><2973></sup>Isaiah 17:13,14).

**12. *Woe ... multitude*** — rather, “*Hosea* (Hark)! *a noise* of,” etc. The prophet in vision perceives the vast and mixed Assyrian hosts (*Hebrew*, “many *peoples*,” see on <sup><2163></sup>Isaiah 5:26): on the hills of Judah (so “mountains,” <sup><2973></sup>Isaiah 17:13):but at the “rebuke” of God, they shall “flee as chaff.”

***to the rushing ... that make*** — rather, “the roaring ... roareth” (compare <sup><2161></sup>Isaiah 8:7 <sup><2162></sup>Jeremiah 6:23).

**13. *shall ... shall*** — rather, “God rebuketh (<sup><1918></sup>Psalm 9:5) them, and they *flee* — *are chased*”; the event is set before the eyes as actually present, not future.

***chaff of ... mountains*** — Threshing floors in the East are in the open air on *elevated* places, so as to catch the wind which separates the chaff from the wheat (<sup><1881></sup>Psalm 88:13 <sup><2818></sup>Hosea 13:3).

***rolling thing*** — anything that rolls: *stubble*.

**14. *eventide ... before morning*** — fulfilled to the letter in the destruction “before morning” of the vast host that “at eveningtide” was such a *terror* (“trouble”) to Judah; on the phrase see <sup><1906></sup>Psalm 90:6 30:5.

***he is not*** — namely, the enemy.

***us*** — the Jews. A general declaration of the doom that awaits the foes of God’s people (<sup><2547></sup>Isaiah 54:17).

# CHAPTER 18

## ISAIAH 18:1-7.

Isaiah announces the overthrow of Sennacherib's hosts and desires the Ethiopian ambassadors, now in Jerusalem, to bring word of it to their own nation; and he calls on the whole world to witness the event (<sup>2387B</sup>Isaiah 18:3). As <sup>2377D</sup>Isaiah 17:12-14 announced the presence of the foe, so <sup>2380B</sup>Isaiah 18:1-7 foretells his overthrow.

**1. *Woe*** — The heading in *English Version*, “God will destroy the Ethiopians,” is a mistake arising from the wrong rendering “Woe,” whereas the *Hebrew* does not express a threat, but is an *appeal* calling attention (<sup>2351B</sup>Isaiah 55:1 <sup>3809B</sup>Zechariah 2:6): “Ho.” He is not speaking *against* but *to* the Ethiopians, calling on them to hear his prophetic announcement as to the destruction of their enemies.

***shadowing with wings*** — rather, “land of the winged bark”; that is, “barks with wing-like sails, answering to vessels of bulrushes” in <sup>2382B</sup>Isaiah 18:2; the word “rivers,” in the parallelism, also favors it; so the *Septuagint* and *Chaldee* [EWALD]. “Land of the clanging sound of wings,” that is, armies, as in <sup>2385B</sup>Isaiah 8:8; the rendering “bark,” or “ship,” is rather dubious [MAURER]. The armies referred to are those of Tirhakah, advancing to meet the Assyrians (<sup>2350B</sup>Isaiah 37:9). In *English Version*, “shadowing” means *protecting* — stretching out its wings to defend a feeble people, namely, the *Hebrews* [VITRINGA]. The Hebrew for “wings” is the same as for the idol *Cneph*, which was represented in temple sculptures with wings (<sup>1990B</sup>Psalms 91:4).

***beyond*** — Meroe, the island between the “rivers” Nile and Astaboras is meant, famed for its commerce, and perhaps the seat of the Ethiopian government, hence addressed here as representing the whole empire: remains of temples are still found, and the name of “Tirhakah” in the inscriptions. This island region was probably the chief part of Queen Candace's kingdom (<sup>4182B</sup>Acts 8:27). For “beyond” others translate less literally “which borderest on.”

***Ethiopia*** — literally, “Cush.” HORSLEY is probably right that the *ultimate* and *fullest* reference of the prophecy is to the restoration of the Jews in the Holy Land through the instrumentality of some distant people skilled in navigation (<sup>2380B</sup>Isaiah 18:2 <sup>2409B</sup>Isaiah 60:9,10 <sup>1955B</sup>Psalms 45:15 68:31

<sup><3180></sup>Zephaniah 3:10). Phoenician voyagers coasting along would speak of all Western *remote* lands as “beyond” the Nile’s mouths. “Cush,” too, has a wide sense, being applied not only to Ethiopia, but Arabia-Deserta and Felix, and along the Persian Gulf, as far as the Tigris (<sup><1001></sup>Genesis 2:13).

**2. *ambassadors*** — messengers sent to Jerusalem at the time that negotiations passed between Tirhakah and Hezekiah against the expected attack of Sennacherib (<sup><2370></sup>Isaiah 37:9).

**by ... *sea*** — on the *Nile* (<sup><2391></sup>Isaiah 19:5): as what follows proves.

***vessels of bulrushes*** — light canoes, formed of papyrus, daubed over with pitch: so the “ark” in which Moses was exposed (<sup><1003></sup>Exodus 2:3).

**Go** — Isaiah tells them to take back the tidings of what God is about to do (<sup><2384></sup>Isaiah 18:4) against the common enemy of both Judah and Ethiopia.

***scattered and peeled*** — rather, “strong and energetic” [MAURER]. The *Hebrew* for “strong” is literally, “drawn out” (*Margin*; <sup><1330></sup>Psalms 36:10 <sup><1003></sup>Ecclesiastes 2:3). “Energetic,” literally, “sharp” (<sup><3008></sup>Habakkuk 1:8, *Margin*; the verb means to “sharpen” a sword, <sup><2115></sup>Ezekiel 21:15,16); also “polished.” As HERODOTUS (3:20,114) characterizes the Ethiopians as “the tallest and fairest of men,” G. V. SMITH translates, “tall and comely”; literally, “extended” (<sup><2314></sup>Isaiah 45:14, “men of stature”) and *polished* (the Ethiopians had “smooth, glossy skins”). In *English Version* the reference is to the Jews, *scattered* outcasts, and loaded with indignity (literally, “having their hair torn off,” HORSLEY).

***terrible*** — the *Ethiopians* famed for warlike prowess [ROSENMULLER]. The *Jews* who, because of God’s plague, made others to fear the like (<sup><1337></sup>Deuteronomy 28:37). Rather, “awfully remarkable” [HORSLEY]. God puts the “terror” of His people into the surrounding nations at the first (<sup><1227></sup>Exodus 23:27 <sup><1019></sup>Joshua 2:9); so it shall be again in the latter days (<sup><3112></sup>Zechariah 12:2,3).

**from ... *beginning hitherto*** — so *English Version* rightly. But GESENIUS, “to the terrible nation (of upper Egypt) and further beyond” (to the Ethiopians, properly so called).

***meted out*** — *Hebrew*, “of line.” The measuring-line was used in *destroying* buildings (<sup><2341></sup>Isaiah 34:11 <sup><1213></sup>2 Kings 21:13 <sup><2118></sup>Lamentations 2:8). Hence, actively, it means here “a people *meting out*, — an all-destroying people”; which suits the context better than “meted,” passively [MAURER]. HORSLEY, understanding it of *the Jews*, translates it, “Expecting, expecting (in a continual attitude of expectation of Messiah) and trampled under foot”; a graphic picture of them. Most translate, of

*strength, strength* (from a root, *to brace* the sinews), that is, *a most powerful* people.

**trodden down** — true of the Jews. But MAURER translates it actively, a people “treading under foot” all its enemies, that is, *victorious* (<sup>234C</sup>Isaiah 14:25), namely, the Ethiopians.

**spoiled** — “cut up.” The Nile is formed by the junction of many streams in Abyssinia, the Atbara, the Astapus or Blue river (between which two rivers Meroe, the “Ethiopia” here meant, lies), and the Astaboras or White river; these streams *wash down* the soil along their banks in the “land” of Upper Egypt and deposit it on that of Lower Egypt. G. V. SMITH translates it, “Divide.” HORSLEY takes it figuratively *of the conquering armies* which have often “spoiled” *Judea*,

**3. see ye ... hear ye** — rather, “ye shall see ... shall hear.” Call to the whole earth to *be witnesses* of what *Jehovah* (“He”) is about to do. He will “lift up an ensign,” calling the Assyrian motley hosts together (<sup>235B</sup>Isaiah 5:26) on “the mountains” round Jerusalem, to their own destruction. This (the eighteenth chapter) declares the coming overthrow of those armies whose presence is announced in <sup>237D</sup>Isaiah 17:12,13. The same motive, which led Hezekiah to seek aid from Egypt, led him to accept gladly the Ethiopian Tirhakah’s aid (<sup>236B</sup>Isaiah 36:6 37:9). Ethiopia, Egypt, and Judea were probably leagued together against the common enemy, 713 B.C. See notes on the twenty-second chapter, where a difference of tone (as referring to a different period) as to Ethiopia is observable. HORSLEY takes the “ensign” to be the cross, and the “trumpet” the *Gospel trumpet*, which shall be sounded more loudly in the last days.

**4. take ... rest ... consider** — I will *calmly look on* and not interpose, while all seems to promise success to the enemy; when figuratively, the sun’s heat” and “the night dews” ripen their “harvest”; but “before” it reaches its maturity I will destroy it (<sup>238B</sup>Isaiah 18:5 <sup>238A</sup>Ecclesiastes 8:11,12).

**like a clear heat** — rather, “at the time of the clear (serene) heat” [MAURER].

**upon herbs** — answering to “harvest” in the parallel clause. MAURER translates, “in the sunlight” (<sup>382D</sup>Job 31:26 37:21 <sup>380B</sup>Habakkuk 3:4).

**like ... dew** — rather, “at the time of the dew cloud.” God’s “silence” is mistaken by the ungodly for consent; His delay in taking vengeance for forgetfulness (<sup>382D</sup>Psalm 50:21); so it shall be before the vengeance which in the last day shall usher in the restoration of the Jews (<sup>234E</sup>Isaiah 34:1-8 57:11, end of the verse, <sup>488B</sup>2 Peter 3:3-10).

5. **For** — rather, “But.”

**perfect** — perfected. When the enemy’s plans are on the verge of completion.

**sour grape ... flower** — rather, “when the flower shall become the ripening grape” [MAURER].

**sprigs** — the *shoots* with the grapes on them. God will not only disconcert their present plans, but prevent them forming any future ones. HORSLEY takes the “harvest” and vintage here as referring to purifying judgments which cause the excision of the ungodly from the earth, and the placing of the faithful in a state of peace *on the earth*: not the last judgment (<sup>4847D</sup>John 15:2 <sup>6445</sup>Revelation 14:15-20).

6. **birds ... beasts** — transition from the image “sprigs,” “branches,” to the thing meant: the Assyrian soldiers and leaders shall be the prey of birds and beasts, the whole year through, “winter” and “summer,” so numerous shall be their carcasses. HORSLEY translates the *Hebrew* which is *singular*: “upon *it*,” not “upon them”; the “it” refers to God’s “dwelling-place” (<sup>2380H</sup>Isaiah 18:4) in the Holy Land, which Antichrist (“the bird of prey” with the “beasts,” his rebel hosts) is to possess himself of, and where he is to perish.

7. **present ... people scattered and peeled** — For the right rendering, see on <sup>2380E</sup>Isaiah 18:2. The repetition of epithets enhances the honor paid to Jehovah by *so mighty a nation*. The Ethiopians, wonderstruck at such an interposition of Jehovah in behalf of His people, shall send gifts to Jerusalem in His honor (<sup>2360H</sup>Isaiah 16:1 <sup>4988E</sup>Psalms 68:31 72:10). Thus translate: “a present ... *from* a people.” Or translate, as *English Version*; “the present” will mean “the people” of Ethiopia converted to God (<sup>6150G</sup>Romans 15:16). HORSLEY takes the people converted to Jehovah, as the Jews in the latter days.

**place of the name** — where Jehovah peculiarly manifests His glory; <sup>4420</sup>Acts 2:10 and <sup>4427</sup>Acts 8:27 show how worshippers came up to Jerusalem from Egypt” and “Ethiopia.” Frumentius, an Egyptian, in the fourth century, converted Abyssinia to Christianity; and a Christian church, under an *abuna* or bishop, still flourishes there. The full accomplishment is probably still future.

# CHAPTER 19

## ISAIAH 19:1-25.

The nineteenth and twentieth chapters are connected, but with an interval between. Egypt had been held by an Ethiopian dynasty, Sabacho, Sevechus, or Sabacho II, and Tirhakah, for forty or fifty years. Sevechus (called *So*, the ally of Hoshea, <sup><2700></sup>2 Kings 17:4), retired from Lower Egypt on account of the resistance of the priests; and perhaps also, as the Assyrians threatened Lower Egypt. On his withdrawal, Sethos, one of the priestly caste, became supreme, having Tanis (“Zoan”) or else Memphis as his capital, 718 B.C.; while the Ethiopians retained Upper Egypt, with Thebes as its capital, under Tirhakah. A third native dynasty was at Sais, in the west of Lower Egypt; to this at a later period belonged Psammetichus, the first who admitted Greeks into Egypt and its armies; he was one of the dodecarchy, a number of petty kings between whom Egypt was divided, and by aid of foreign auxiliaries overcame the rest, 670 B.C. To the divisions at this last time, GESENIUS refers <sup><2390></sup>Isaiah 19:2; and Psammetichus, <sup><2390></sup>Isaiah 19:4, “a cruel lord.” The dissensions of the ruling castes are certainly referred to. But the time referred to is much earlier than that of Psammetichus. In <sup><2390></sup>Isaiah 19:1, the invasion of Egypt is represented as caused by “the Lord”; and in <sup><2397></sup>Isaiah 19:17, “Judah” is spoken of as “a terror to Egypt,” which it could hardly have been *by itself*. Probably, therefore, the Assyrian invasion of Egypt under Sargon, when Judah was the ally of Assyria, and Hezekiah had not yet refused tribute as he did in the beginning of Sennacherib’s reign, is meant. That Assyria was in Isaiah’s mind appears from the way in which it is joined with Israel and Egypt in the worship of Jehovah (<sup><2392></sup>Isaiah 19:24,25). Thus the dissensions referred to (<sup><2390></sup>Isaiah 19:2) allude to the time of the withdrawal of the Ethiopians from Lower Egypt, probably not without a struggle, especially between 722-715 B.C., answering to 718 B.C., when Sethos usurped the throne and entered on the contest with the military caste, by the aid of the town populations: when the Saitic dynasty was another cause of division. Sargon’s reign was between 722-715 B.C. answering to 718 B.C., when Sethos usurped his throne [G. V. SMITH].

1. **burden** — (See on <sup><2300></sup>Isaiah 13:1).

**upon ... cloud** — (<sup><2448></sup>Psalms 104:3 18:10).

**come into Egypt** — to inflict vengeance. “Egypt,” in *Hebrew*, *Misraim*, plural form, to express the two regions of Egypt. BUNSEN observes, The title of their kings runs thus: “Lord of Upper and lower Egypt.”

**idols** — the bull, crocodile, etc. The idols poetically are said to be “moved” with fear at the presence of one mightier than even they were *supposed* to be (<sup><1022></sup>Exodus 12:12 <sup><2482></sup>Jeremiah 43:12).

2. **set** — stir up. GESENIUS translates, “arm.”

**Egyptians against the Egyptians** — Lower against Upper: and Saitic against both. (See <sup><2380></sup>Isaiah 3:10). NEWTON refers it to the civil wars between Apries and Amasis at the time of Nebuchadnezzar’s invasion; also between Tachos, Nectanebus, and the Mendesians, just before Ochus subdued Egypt.

**kingdom against kingdom** — The *Septuagint* has “nome against nome”; Egypt was divided into forty-two *nomes* or districts.

3. **spirit** — *wisdom*, for which Egypt was famed (<sup><2302></sup>Isaiah 31:2 <sup><1040></sup>1 Kings 4:30 <sup><4072></sup>Acts 7:22); answering to “counsel” in the parallel clause.

**fail** — literally, “be poured out,” that is, be made void (<sup><2402></sup>Jeremiah 19:7). They shall “seek” help from sources that can afford none, “charmners,” etc. (<sup><2389></sup>Isaiah 8:19).

**charmners** — literally, “those making a faint sound”; the soothsayers imitated the faint sound which was attributed to the spirits of the dead (see on <sup><2389></sup>Isaiah 8:19).

4. **cruel lord** — “Sargon,” in *Hebrew* it is *lords*; but *plural* is often used to express *greatness*, where, *one* alone is meant (<sup><1022></sup>Genesis 39:2). The parallel word “king” (singular) proves it. NEWTON makes the *general* reference to be to Nebuchadnezzar, and a *particular* reference to Cambyses, son of Cyrus (who killed the Egyptian god, Apis), and Ochus, Persian conquerors of Egypt, noted for their “fierce cruelty.” GESENIUS refers it to Psammetichus, who had brought into Egypt *Greek* and other foreign mercenaries to subdue the other eleven princes of the dodecarchy.

5. **the sea** — the Nile. Physical calamities, it is observed in history, often accompany political convulsions (<sup><3302></sup>Ezekiel 30:12). The Nile shall “fail” to rise to its wonted height, the result of which will be barrenness and famine. Its “waters” at the time of the overflow resemble “a sea” [PLINY, *Natural History*, 85.11]; and it is still called *El-Bahr*,” “the sea,” by the Egyptians (<sup><2382></sup>Isaiah 18:2 <sup><3513></sup>Jeremiah 51:36). A public record is kept at Cairo of the daily rise of the water at the proper time of overflow, namely, August: if it

rises to a less height than twelve cubits, it will not overflow the land, and famine must be the result. So, also, when it rises higher than sixteen; for the waters are not drained off in time sufficient to sow the seed.

**6. *they shall turn the rivers*** — rather, “the streams shall become putrid”; that is, the artificial streams made for irrigation shall become stagnant and offensive when the waters fail [MAURER]. HORSLEY, with the *Septuagint*, translates, “And waters from the sea shall be drunk”; by the failure of the river water they shall be reduced to sea water.

***brooks of defense*** — rather, “canals of *Egypt*”; “canals,” literally, “Niles,” *Nile canals*, the plural of the Egyptian term for the great river. The same Hebrew word, *Matzor*, whence comes *Mitzraim*, expresses *Egypt*, and a place of “defense.” HORSLEY, as *English Version* translates it, “embanked canals,”

***reeds ... flags*** — the papyrus. “Reed and rush”; *utter* withering.

**7. *paper-reeds*** — rather, pastures, literally, “places naked” of wood, and famed for rich herbage, on the banks of the Nile [GESENIUS]. Compare <sup><0130></sup>Genesis 13:10 <sup><0510></sup>Deuteronomy 11:10. HORSLEY translates, “nakedness upon the river,” descriptive of the appearance of a river when its bottom is bare and its banks stripped of verdure by long drought: so *Vulgate*.

***the brooks*** — the river.

***mouth*** — rather, “the source” [*Vulgate*]. “Even close to the river’s *side* vegetation shall be so withered as to be scattered in the shape of powder by the wind” (*English Version*, “driven away”) [HORSLEY].

**8. *fishers*** — The Nile was famed for fish (<sup><0415></sup>Numbers 11:5); many would be thrown out of employment by the failure of fishes.

***angle*** — a hook. Used in the “brooks” or canals, as the “net” was in “the waters” of the river itself.

**9. *fine flax*** — GESENIUS, for “fine,” translates, “combed”; fine “linen” was worn by the rich only (<sup><0169></sup>Luke 16:19). Egypt was famous for it (<sup><0081></sup>Exodus 9:31 <sup><0108></sup>1 Kings 10:28 <sup><0176></sup>Proverbs 7:16 <sup><0327></sup>Ezekiel 27:7). The processes of its manufacture are represented on the Egyptian tombs. Israel learned the art in Egypt (<sup><0236></sup>Exodus 26:36). The cloth now found on the mummies was *linen*, as is shown by the microscope. WILKINSON mentions linen from Egypt which has five hundred forty (or two hundred seventy double) threads in one inch in the warp; whereas some modern cambric has but a hundred sixty [BARNES].

**networks** — rather, *white cloth* (<sup><1006></sup>Esther 1:6 8:16).

**10. in the purposes** — rather, “the foundations,” that is, “the nobles shall be broken” or brought low: so <sup><2301></sup>Isaiah 3:1 <sup><4918></sup>Psalms 11:3; compare <sup><2393></sup>Isaiah 19:13, “*Their weaving-frames*” [HORSLEY]. “Dykes” call a prince “a *pillar* of the people” [MAURER]. “*Their weaving-frames*” [HORSLEY]. “Dykes” [BARNES].

**all that make sluices**, etc. — “makers of dams,” made to confine the waters which overflow from the Nile in artificial fishponds [HORSLEY]. “Makers of gain,” that is, the common people who have to earn their livelihood, as opposed to the “nobles” previously [MAURER].

**11. Zoan** — The Greeks called it Tanis, a city of Lower Egypt, east of the Tanitic arms of the Nile, now *San*; it was one the Egyptian towns nearest to Palestine (<sup><0132></sup>Numbers 13:22), the scene of Moses’ miracles (<sup><4782></sup>Psalms 78:12,43). It, or else Memphis, was the capital under Sethos.

**I am ... son of the wise ... kings** — Ye have no advice to suggest to Pharaoh in the crisis, notwithstanding that ye boast of descent from wise and royal ancestors. The priests were the usual “counsellors” of the Egyptian king. He was generally chosen from the priestly caste, or, if from the warrior caste, he was admitted into the sacred order, and was called a priest. The priests are, therefore, meant by the expression, “son of the wise, and of ancient kings”; this was their favorite boast (HERODOTUS, 2.141; compare <sup><3074></sup>Amos 7:14 <sup><4236></sup>Acts 23:6 <sup><3085></sup>Philippians 3:5). “Pharaoh” was the common name of all the kings: Sethos, probably, is here meant.

**12. let them know** — that is, How is it that, with all their boast of knowing the future [DIDORUS, 1.81], they do not know what Jehovah of hosts ...

**13. Noph** — called also *Moph*; *Greek, Memphis* (<sup><3906></sup>Hosea 9:6); on the western bank of the Nile, capital of Lower Egypt, second only to Thebes in all Egypt: residence of the kings, until the Ptolemies removed to Alexandria; the word means the “port of the good” [PLUTARCH]. The *military* caste probably ruled in it: “*they also* are deceived,” in fancying their country secure from Assyrian invasion.

**stay of ... tribes** — rather, “corner-stone of her castes” [MAURER], that is, the princes, the two ruling castes, the priests and the warriors: image from a building which rests mainly on its corner-stones (see on <sup><2390></sup>Isaiah 19:10; <sup><2386></sup>Isaiah 28:16 <sup><4382></sup>Psalms 118:22 <sup><0217></sup>Numbers 24:17, *Margin*; <sup><0212></sup>Judges 20:2 <sup><0403></sup>1 Samuel 14:28, *Margin*; <sup><3105></sup>Zechariah 10:4).

**14. err in every work thereof** — referring to the anarchy arising from their internal feuds. HORSLEY translates, “with respect to all *His* (God’s) work”;

they misinterpreted God's dealings at every step. "Mingled" contains the same image as "drunken"; as one *mixes* spices with wine to make it intoxicating (<sup>2362</sup>Isaiah 5:22 <sup>2102</sup>Proverbs 9:2,5), so Jehovah has poured among them a spirit of *giddiness*, so that they are as helpless as a "drunken man."

**15. *work for Egypt*** — nothing which Egypt can do to extricate itself from the difficulty.

***head or tail*** — high or low (<sup>2391</sup>Isaiah 19:11-15, and <sup>2398</sup>Isaiah 19:8-10).

***branch or rush*** — the lofty palm branch or the humble reed (<sup>2394</sup>Isaiah 9:14,15 10:33,34).

**16. *like ... women*** — timid and helpless (<sup>2533</sup>Jeremiah 51:30 Na 3:13).

***shaking of ... hand*** — His judgments by means of the invaders (<sup>2305</sup>Isaiah 10:5,32 11:15).

**17. *Judah ... terror unto Egypt*** — not by itself: but at this time Hezekiah was the active subordinate ally of Assyria in its invasion of Egypt under Sargon. Similarly to the alliance of Judah with Assyria here is <sup>4292</sup>2 Kings 23:29, where Josiah takes the field against Pharaoh-nechoh of Egypt, probably as ally of Assyria against Egypt [G. V. SMITH]. VITRINGA explains it that Egypt in its calamities would remember that prophets of Judah had foretold them, and so Judah would be "a terror unto Egypt."

***thereof*** — of Judah.

***it*** — Egypt.

**18-22. *In that day***, etc. — Suffering shall lead to repentance. Struck with "terror" and "afraid" (<sup>2397</sup>Isaiah 19:17) because of Jehovah's judgments, Egypt shall be converted to Him: nay, even Assyria shall join in serving Him; so that Israel, Assyria, and Egypt, once mutual foes, shall be bound together by the tie of a common faith as one people. So a similar issue from other prophecies (<sup>2387</sup>Isaiah 18:7 23:18).

***five cities*** — that is, *several* cities, as in <sup>2376</sup>Isaiah 17:6 30:17 <sup>4434</sup>Genesis 43:34 <sup>4308</sup>Leviticus 26:8. Rather, *five* definite *cities* of Lower Egypt (<sup>2391</sup>Isaiah 19:11,13 <sup>2304</sup>Isaiah 30:4), which had close intercourse with the neighboring Jewish cities [MAURER]; some say, Heliopolis, Leontopolis (else Diospolis), Migdol, Daphne (Tahpanes), and Memphis.

***language of Canaan*** — that is, of the Hebrews in Canaan, the language of revelation; figuratively for, They shall embrace the Jewish *religion*: so "a pure *language*" and *conversion to God* are connected in <sup>3139</sup>Zephaniah 3:9;

as also the first confounding and multiplication of languages was the punishment of the making of gods at Babel, other than the One God. Pentecost (<sup>4016</sup>Acts 2:4) was the counterpart of Babel: the separation of nations is not to hinder the unity of faith; the full realization of this is yet future (<sup>3849</sup>Zechariah 14:9 <sup>4872</sup>John 17:21). The next clause, “swear to the Lord of Hosts,” agrees with this view; that is, bind themselves to Him by solemn covenant (<sup>2362</sup>Isaiah 45:23 65:16 <sup>4613</sup>Deuteronomy 6:13).

**city of destruction** — Onias; “city of the *sun*,” that is, On, or Heliopolis; he persuaded Ptolemy Philometer (149 B.C.) to let him build a temple in the prefecture (nome) of Heliopolis, on the ground that it would induce Jews to reside there, and that the very site was foretold by Isaiah six hundred years before. The reading of the *Hebrew* text is, however, better supported, “city of *destruction*”; referring to Leontopolis, the site of Onias’ temple: which casts a reproach on that city because *it* was about to contain a temple rivalling the only sanctioned temple, that at Jerusalem. MAURER, with some manuscripts, reads “city of *defense*” or “*deliverance*”; namely, Memphis, or some such city, to which God was about to send “a saviour” (<sup>2369</sup>Isaiah 19:20), to “deliver them.”

**19. altar** — not for *sacrifice*, but as the “pillar” for *memorial* and worship (<sup>4622</sup>Joshua 22:22-26). Isaiah does not contemplate a *temple* in Egypt: for the only legal temple was at Jerusalem; but, like the patriarchs, they shall have altars in various places.

**pillar** — such as Jacob reared (<sup>0128</sup>Genesis 28:18 35:14); it was a common practice in Egypt to raise obelisks commemorating divine and great events.

**at the border** — of Egypt and Judah, to proclaim to both countries the common faith. This passage shows how the Holy Spirit raised Isaiah above a narrow-minded nationality to a charity anticipatory of gospel catholicity.

**20. it** — the altar and pillar.

**a sign** — (of the fulfillment of prophecy) to their contemporaries.

**a witness** — to their descendants.

**unto the Lord** — no longer, to their *idols*, but to *Jehovah*.

**for they shall cry** — or, “a sign ... *that they cried*, ... and *He sent* to them a saviour”; probably, *Alexander the Great* (so “a great one”), whom the Egyptians welcomed as a deliverer (*Greek, Soter*, a title of the Ptolemies) out of the hands of the Persians, who under Cambyses had been their “oppressors.” At Alexandria, called from him, the Old Testament was translated into *Greek* for the Greek-speaking Jews, who in large numbers

dwelt in Egypt under the Ptolemies, his successors. Messiah is the antitype ultimately intended (compare <sup><4120></sup>Acts 2:10, “Egypt”).

**21. *oblation*** — unbloody.

**22. *return*** — for heathen sin and idolatry are an *apostasy* from primitive truth.

***heal*** — as described (<sup><2398></sup>Isaiah 19:18-20).

**23. *highway*** — free communication, resting on the highest basis, the common faith of both (<sup><2398></sup>Isaiah 19:18 <sup><2116></sup>Isaiah 11:16). Assyria and Egypt were joined under Alexander as parts of his empire: Jews and proselytes from both met at the feasts of Jerusalem. A type of gospel times to come.

***serve with*** — serve *Jehovah* with the Assyrians. So “serve” is used absolutely (<sup><831></sup>Job 36:11).

**24. *third*** — The three shall be joined as one nation.

***blessing*** — the source of blessings to other nations, and the object of their benedictions.

***in the midst of the land*** — rather, “earth” (<sup><3107></sup>Micah 5:7). Judah is designed to be the grand center of the whole earth (<sup><2187></sup>Jeremiah 3:17).

**25. *Whom*** — rather, “Which,” namely, “the land,” or “earth,” that is, the people of it [MAURER].

***my people*** — the peculiar designation of Israel, the elect people, here applied to Egypt to express its entire admission to religious privileges (<sup><5121></sup>Romans 9:24-26 <sup><6119></sup>1 Peter 2:9,10).

***work of my hands*** — spiritually (<sup><2123></sup>Hosea 2:23 <sup><4120></sup>Ephesians 2:10).

# CHAPTER 20

## ISAIAH 20:1-6.

### CONTINUATION OF THE SUBJECT OF THE NINETEENTH CHAPTER, BUT AT A LATER DATE. CAPTIVITY OF EGYPT AND ETHIOPIA.

In the reign of Sargon (722-715 B.C.), the successor of Shalmaneser, an Assyrian invasion of Egypt took place. Its success is here foretold, and hence a party among the Jews is warned of the folly of their “expectation” of aid from Egypt or Ethiopia. At a later period (<sup>2310E</sup>Isaiah 18:1-7), when Tirhakah of Ethiopia was their ally, the Ethiopians are treated as *friends*, to whom God announces the overthrow of the common Assyrian foe, Sennacherib. Egypt and Ethiopia in this chapter (<sup>2310B</sup>Isaiah 20:3,4) are represented as *allied together*, the result no doubt of fear of the common foe; previously they had been at strife, and the Ethiopian king had, just before Sethos usurpation, withdrawn from occupation of part of Lower Egypt. Hence, “Egypt” is mentioned *alone* in <sup>2310E</sup>Isaiah 19:1-25, which refers to a somewhat earlier stage of the same event: a delicate mark of truth. Sargon seems to have been the king who finished the capture of Samaria which Shalmaneser began; the alliance of Hoshea with So or Sabacho II of Ethiopia, and his refusal to pay the usual tribute, provoked Shalmaneser to the invasion. On clay cylindrical seals found in Sennacherib’s palace at Koyunjik, the name of Sabacho is deciphered; the two seals are thought, from the inscriptions, to have been attached to the treaty of peace between Egypt and Assyria, which resulted from the invasion of Egypt by Sargon, described in this chapter; <sup>1270E</sup>2 Kings 18:10 curiously confirms the view derived from Assyrian inscriptions, that though Shalmaneser began, Sargon finished the conquest of Samaria; “*they took it*” (compare <sup>1270E</sup>2 Kings 17:4-6). In Sargon’s palace at Khorsabad, inscriptions state that 27,280 Israelites were led captive by the founder of the palace. While Shalmaneser was engaged in the siege of Samaria, Sargon probably usurped the supreme power and destroyed him; the siege began in 723 B.C., and ended in 721 B.C., the first year of Sargon’s reign. Hence arises the paucity of inscriptions of the two predecessors of Sargon. Tiglath-pileser and Shalmaneser; the usurper destroyed them, just as Tiglath-pileser destroyed those of Pul (Sardanapalus), the last of the old line of Ninus; the names of his father and grandfather, which have been

deciphered in the palace of his son Sennacherib, do not appear in the list of Assyrian kings, which confirms the view that he was a satrap who usurped the throne. He was so able a general that Hezekiah made no attempt to shake off the tribute until the reign of Sennacherib; hence Judah was not invaded now as the lands of the Philistines and Egypt were. After conquering Israel he sent his general, Tartan, to attack the Philistine cities, “Ashdod,” etc., preliminary to his invasion of Egypt and Ethiopia; for the line of march to Egypt lay along the southwest coast of Palestine. The inscriptions confirm the prophecy; they tell us he received tribute from a Pharaoh of “Egypt”; besides destroying in part the Ethiopian “No-ammon,” or Thebes (Na 3:8); also that he warred with the kings of “Ashdod,” Gaza, etc., in harmony with Isaiah here; a memorial tablet of him is found in Cyprus also, showing that he extended his arms to that island. His reign was six or seven years in duration, 722-715 B.C. [G. V. SMITH].

**1. Tartan** — probably the same general as was sent by Sennacherib against Hezekiah (<sup><4287></sup>2 Kings 18:17). GESENIUS takes “Tartan” as a title.

**Ashdod** — called by the Greeks Azotus (<sup><4480></sup>Acts 8:40); on the Mediterranean, one of the “five” cities of the Philistines. The taking of it was a necessary preliminary to the invasion of Egypt, to which it was the key in that quarter, the Philistines being allies of Egypt. So strongly did the Assyrians fortify it that it stood a twenty-nine years’ siege, when it was retaken by the Egyptian Psammetichus.

**sent** — Sargon himself remained behind engaged with the Phoenician cities, or else led the main force more directly into Egypt out of Judah [G. V. SMITH].

**2. by** — literally, “by the hand of” (compare <sup><3134></sup>Ezekiel 3:14).

**sackcloth** — the loose outer garment of coarse dark hair-cloth worn by mourners (<sup><1033></sup>2 Samuel 3:31) and by prophets, fastened at the waist by a girdle (<sup><4184></sup>Matthew 3:4 <sup><1105></sup>2 Kings 1:8 <sup><3134></sup>Zechariah 13:4).

**naked** — rather, “uncovered”; he merely put off the outer sackcloth, retaining still the tunic or inner vest (<sup><0923></sup>1 Samuel 19:24 <sup><3126></sup>Amos 2:16 <sup><4217></sup>John 21:7); an emblem to show that Egypt should be stripped of its possessions; the very dress of Isaiah was a silent exhortation to repentance.

**3. three years** — Isaiah’s symbolical action did not continue’ all this time, but *at intervals*, to keep it before the people’s mind during that period [ROSENMULLER]. Rather, join “three years” with “sign,” *a three years’ sign*, that is, a sign that a three years’ calamity would come on Egypt and

Ethiopia [BARNES], (<sup><2188></sup>Isaiah 8:18). This is the only instance of a strictly symbolical act performed by Isaiah. With later prophets, as Jeremiah and Ezekiel, such acts were common. In some cases they were performed, not literally, but only in prophetic vision.

**wonder** — rather, “omen”; conveying a threat as to the future [G. V. SMITH].

**upon** — in reference to, against.

**4. buttocks uncovered** — Belzoni says that captives are found represented thus on Egyptian monuments (<sup><2302></sup>Isaiah 47:2,3 Na 3:5,8,9), where as here, Egypt and Ethiopia are mentioned as in alliance.

**5. they** — the Philistine allies of Egypt who trusted in it for help against Assyria. A warning to the party among the Jews, who, though Judah was then the subordinate ally of Assyria, were looking to Egypt as a preferable ally (<sup><2310></sup>Isaiah 30:7). Ethiopia was their “expectation”; for Palestine had not yet obtained, *but hoped* for alliance with it. Egypt was their “glory,” that is, boast (<sup><2359></sup>Isaiah 13:19); for the alliance with it was completed.

**6. isle** — that is, coast on the Mediterranean — Philistia, perhaps Phoenicia (compare <sup><2320></sup>Isaiah 23:2 11:11 13:22 <sup><3720></sup>Psalms 72:10).

**we** — emphatical; if Egypt, in which we trusted, was overcome, how shall we, a small weak state, escape?

# CHAPTER 21

## ISAIAH 21:1-10.

### REPETITION OF THE ASSURANCE GIVEN IN THE THIRTEENTH AND FOURTEENTH CHAPTERS TO THE JEWS ABOUT TO BE CAPTIVES IN BABYLON, THAT THEIR ENEMY SHOULD BE DESTROYED AND THEY BE DELIVERED.

He does not narrate the event, but graphically supposes himself a watchman in Babylon, beholding the events as they pass.

1. *desert* — the champaign between Babylon and Persia; it was once a *desert*, and it was to become so again.

*of the sea* — The plain was covered with the water of the Euphrates like a “sea” (<sup>251B</sup>Jeremiah 51:13,36; so <sup>231B</sup>Isaiah 11:15, the Nile), until Semiramis raised great dams against it. Cyrus removed these dykes, and so converted the whole country again into a vast desert marsh.

*whirlwinds in the south* — (<sup>850B</sup>Job 37:9 <sup>304B</sup>Zechariah 9:14). The south wind comes upon Babylon from the deserts of Arabia, and its violence is the greater from its course being unbroken along the plain (<sup>301B</sup>Job 1:19).

*desert* — the plain between Babylon and Persia.

*terrible land* — Media; to guard against which was the object of Nitocris great works [HERODOTUS, 1.185]. Compare as to “terrible” applied to a wilderness, as being full of unknown dangers, (<sup>102B</sup>Deuteronomy 1:29).

2. *dealeth treacherously* — referring to the *military* stratagem employed by Cyrus in taking Babylon. It may be translated, “is repaid with treachery”; then the subject of the verb is *Babylon*. She is repaid in her own coin; <sup>231B</sup>Isaiah 33:1 <sup>301B</sup>Habakkuk 2:8, favor this.

*Go up* — Isaiah abruptly recites the order which he hears God giving to the Persians, the instruments of His vengeance (<sup>231B</sup>Isaiah 13:3,17).

*Elam* — a province of Persia, the original place of their settlement (<sup>102B</sup>Genesis 10:22), east of the Euphrates. The name “Persia” was not in use until the captivity; it means a “horseman”; Cyrus first trained the

Persians in horsemanship. It is a mark of authenticity that the name is not found before Daniel and Ezekiel [BOCHART].

**thereof** — the “sighing” *caused* by Babylon (<sup>2340F</sup>Isaiah 14:7,8).

3. Isaiah imagines himself among the exiles in Babylon and cannot help feeling moved by the calamities which come on it. So for Moab (<sup>2395F</sup>Isaiah 15:5 16:11).

**pain** — (Compare <sup>2338F</sup>Isaiah 13:8 <sup>2500F</sup>Ezekiel 30:4,19 Na 2:10).

**at the hearing** — The *Hebrew* may mean, “I was so bowed down that *I could not hear*; I was so dismayed that *I could not see*” (<sup>2142F</sup>Genesis 16:2 <sup>2463F</sup>Psalms 69:23) [MAURER].

4. **panted** — “is bewildered” [BARNES].

**night of my pleasure** — The prophet supposes himself one of the banqueters at Belshazzar’s feast, on the night that Babylon was about to be taken by surprise; hence his expression, “*my pleasure*” (<sup>2341F</sup>Isaiah 14:11 <sup>2513F</sup>Jeremiah 51:39 <sup>2788F</sup>Daniel 5:1-31).

5. **Prepare the table** — namely, the feast in Babylon; during which Cyrus opened the dykes made by Semiramis to confine the Euphrates to one channel and suffered them to overflow the country, so that he could enter Babylon by the channel of the river. Isaiah first represents the king ordering the feast to be got ready. The suddenness of the irruption of the foe is graphically expressed by the rapid turn in the language to an alarm addressed to the Babylonian princes, “Arise,” etc. (compare <sup>2213F</sup>Isaiah 22:13). MAURER translates, “*They prepare the table,*” etc. But see <sup>2389F</sup>Isaiah 8:9.

**watch in ... watchtower** — rather, “set the watch.” This done, they thought they might feast in entire security. Babylon had many watchtowers on its walls.

**anoint ... shield** — This was done to prevent the leather of the shield becoming hard and liable to crack. “Make ready for *defense*”; the mention of the “shield” alone implies that it is the Babylonian revellers who are called on to prepare for instant *self-defense*. HORSLEY translates, “Grip the oiled shield.”

6. **Go, set a watchman, let him declare what he seeth** — God’s direction to Isaiah to set a watchman to “declare” what he sees. But as in <sup>2310F</sup>Isaiah 21:10, Isaiah himself is represented as the one who “declared.” HORSLEY

makes *him* the “watchman,” and translates, “Come, let him who standeth on the watchtower report what he seeth.”

**7. *chariot***, etc. — rather, “a body of riders,” namely, some riding in pairs on horses (literally, “pairs of horsemen,” that is, two abreast), others on asses, others on camels (compare <sup>2307</sup>Isaiah 21:9 <sup>2306</sup>Isaiah 22:6). “Chariot” is not appropriate to be joined, as *English Version* translates, with “asses”; the *Hebrew* means plainly in <sup>2307</sup>Isaiah 21:7, as in <sup>2309</sup>Isaiah 21:9, “a body of men riding.” The Persians used asses and camels for war [MAURER]. HORSLEY translates, “One drawn in a car, with a pair of riders, drawn by an ass, drawn by a camel”; ‘Cyrus is the man; the car drawn by a camel and ass yoked together and driven by two postilions, one on each, is the joint army of Medes and Persians under their respective leaders. He thinks the more ancient military cars were driven by men riding on the beasts that drew them; <sup>2309</sup>Isaiah 21:9 favors this.

**8. *A lion*** — rather, “(The watchman) cried, I am *as* a lion”; so *as* is understood (<sup>2305</sup>Isaiah 62:5 <sup>4901</sup>Psalms 11:1). The point of comparison to “a lion” is in <sup>6603</sup>Revelation 10:3, the *loudness* of the cry. But here it is rather his *vigilance*. The lion’s eyelids are short, so that, even when asleep, he seems to be on the watch, awake; hence he was painted on doors of temples as the symbol of watchfulness, guarding the place (*Hor. Apollo*) [HORSLEY].

**9. *chariot of men*** — chariots with men in them; or rather, the same body of riders, horsemen two abreast, as in <sup>2307</sup>Isaiah 21:7 [MAURER]. But HORSLEY, “The man drawn in a car with a pair of riders.” The first half of this verse describes what the watchman *sees*; the second half, what the watchman *says*, in consequence of what he sees. In the interval between <sup>2307</sup>Isaiah 21:7 and <sup>2309</sup>Isaiah 21:9, the overthrow of Babylon by the horsemen, or man in the car, is accomplished. The overthrow needed to be announced to the prophet by the watchman, owing to the great extent of the city. HERODOTUS (1.131) says that one part of the city was captured some time before the other received the tidings of it.

***answered*** — not to something *said* previously, but in reference to the subject in the mind of the writer, to be collected from the preceding discourse: *proclaimeth* (<sup>4802</sup>Job 3:2, *Margin*; <sup>2703</sup>Daniel 2:26 <sup>4403</sup>Acts 5:8).

***fallen ... fallen*** — The repetition expresses emphasis and certainty (<sup>4903</sup>Psalms 92:9 93:3; compare <sup>2503</sup>Jeremiah 51:8 <sup>6802</sup>Revelation 18:2).

***images*** — Bel, Merodach, etc. (<sup>2802</sup>Jeremiah 50:2 51:44,52). The Persians had no images, temples, or altars, and charged the makers of such with

madness [HERODOTUS 1.131]; therefore they dashed the Babylonian “images broken unto the ground.”

**10. *my threshing*** — that is, my people (the Jews) trodden down by Babylon.

***corn of my floor*** — *Hebrew*, “my son of the floor,” that is, my people, treated as corn laid on the floor for threshing; implying, too, that by affliction, a remnant (grain) would be separated from the ungodly (chaff) [MAURER]. HORSLEY translates, “O thou object of my unremitting *prophetic pains*.” See <sup><2387></sup>Isaiah 28:27,28. Some, from <sup><2613></sup>Jeremiah 51:33, make Babylon the object of the threshing; but Isaiah is plainly addressing his countrymen, as the next words show, not the Babylonians.

## <sup><2211></sup>ISAIAH 21:11,12.

### A PROPHECY TO THE IDUMEANS WHO TAUNTED THE AFFLICTED JEWS IN THE BABYLONISH CAPTIVITY.

One out of Seir asks, What of the night? Is there a hope of the dawn of deliverance? Isaiah replies, The morning is beginning to dawn (*to us*); but night is also coming (*to you*). Compare <sup><4907></sup>Psalms 137:7. The Hebrew captives would be delivered, and taunting Edom punished. If the Idumean wish to ask again, he may do so; if he wishes an answer of peace for his country, then let him “return (repent), come” [BARNES].

**11. *Dumah*** — a tribe and region of Ishmael in Arabia (<sup><1254></sup>Genesis 25:14 <sup><4131></sup>1 Chronicles 1:30); now called *Dumah the Stony*, situated on the confines of Arabia and the Syrian desert; a part put for the *whole* of Edom. VITRINGA thinks “*Dumah*,” *Hebrew*, “silence,” is here used for Idumea, to imply that it was soon to be reduced to *silence* or destruction.

***Seir*** — the principal mountain in Idumea, south of the Dead Sea, in Arabia-Petraea. “He calleth” ought to be rather, “*There is a call* from Seir.”

***to me*** — Isaiah. So the heathen Balak and Ahaziah received oracles from a Hebrew prophet.

***Watchman*** — the prophet (<sup><2316></sup>Isaiah 62:6 <sup><2417></sup>Jeremiah 6:17), so called, because, like a watchman on the lookout from a tower, he announces future events which he sees in prophetic vision (<sup><3111></sup>Habakkuk 2:1,2).

***what of the night*** — What tidings have you to give as to the state of the night? Rather, “What *remains* of the night?” How much of it is past?

[MAURER]. “Night” means calamity (<sup><8510></sup>Job 35:10 <sup><3106></sup>Micah 3:6), which, then, in the wars between Egypt and Assyria, pressed sore on Edom; or on Judah (if, as BARNES thinks, the question is asked in mockery of the suffering Jews in Babylon). The *repetition* of the question marks, in the former view, the anxiety of the Idumeans.

**12.** Reply of the prophet, The *morning* (prosperity) *cometh*, and (soon after follows) *the night* (adversity). Though you, Idumeans, may have a gleam of prosperity, it will soon be followed by adversity again. Otherwise, as BARNES, “Prosperity cometh (to the Jews) to be quickly followed by adversity (to you, Idumeans, who exult in the fall of Jerusalem, have seized on the southern part of their land in their absence during the captivity, and now deride them by your question)” (<sup><2345></sup>Isaiah 34:5-7). This view is favored by <sup><3010></sup>Obadiah 1:10-21.

*if ye will inquire, inquire* — If ye choose to consult me again, do so (similar phrases occur in <sup><0434></sup>Genesis 43:14 <sup><1704></sup>2 Kings 7:4 <sup><1704></sup>Esther 4:16).

*return, come* — “Be converted to God (and then), come” [GESENIUS]; you will then receive a more favorable answer.

## <sup><2213></sup>ISAIAH 21:13-17.

### PROPHECY THAT ARABIA WOULD BE OVERRUN BY A FOREIGN FOE WITHIN A YEAR.

Probably in the wars between Assyria and Egypt; Idumea and Arabia lay somewhat on the intermediate line of march.

**13. upon** — that is, respecting.

*forest* — not a grove of trees, but a region of thick underwood, rugged and inaccessible; for Arabia has no forest of trees.

*travelling companies* — caravans: ye shall be driven through fear of the foe to unfrequented routes (<sup><2338></sup>Isaiah 33:8 <sup><0706></sup>Judges 5:6 <sup><2408></sup>Jeremiah 49:8 is parallel to this passage).

*Dedanim* — In North Arabia (<sup><0238></sup>Genesis 25:3 <sup><2453></sup>Jeremiah 25:23 <sup><3233></sup>Ezekiel 25:13 27:20; a different “Dedan” occurs <sup><0107></sup>Genesis 10:7).

**14. Tema** — a kindred tribe: an oasis in that region (<sup><2453></sup>Jeremiah 25:23). The Temeans give water to the faint and thirsting Dedanites; the greatest act of hospitality in the burning lands of the East, where water is so scarce.

**prevented** — that is, anticipated the wants of the fugitive Dedanites by supplying bread (<sup><0148></sup>Genesis 14:18).

**their bread** — rather, “his (the fugitive’s) bread”; the bread *due to him*, necessary for his support; so “thy grave” (<sup><2349></sup>Isaiah 14:19), [MAURER].

**15. they** — the fugitive Dedanites and other Arabs.

**16. years of ... hireling** — (See on <sup><2364></sup>Isaiah 16:14).

**Kedar** — a wandering tribe (<sup><1016></sup>Psalms 120:5). North of Arabia-Petraea, and south of Arabia-Deserta; put for Arabia in general.

**17. residue ... diminished** — The remnant of Arab warriors, famous in the bow, left after the invasion, shall be small.

# CHAPTER 22

## ISAIAH 22:1-14.

### PROPHECY AS TO AN ATTACK ON JERUSALEM.

That by Sennacherib, in the fourteenth year of Hezekiah; <sup><2218></sup>Isaiah 22:8-11, the preparations for defense and securing of water exactly answer to those in <sup><1404></sup>2 Chronicles 32:4,5,30. “Shebna,” too (<sup><2215></sup>Isaiah 22:15), was scribe at this time (<sup><2318></sup>Isaiah 36:3) [MAURER]. The language of <sup><2212></sup>Isaiah 22:12-14, as to the infidelity and consequent utter ruin of the Jews, seems rather to foreshadow the destruction by Nebuchadnezzar in Zedekiah’s reign, and cannot be restricted to Hezekiah’s time [LOWTH].

**1. of ... valley of vision** — rather, “respecting the valley of visions”; namely, Jerusalem, the seat of divine revelations and visions, “the nursery of prophets” [JEROME], (<sup><2318></sup>Isaiah 2:3 29:1 <sup><2304></sup>Ezekiel 23:4, *Margin*; <sup><2133></sup>Luke 13:33). It lay in a “valley” surrounded by hills higher than Zion and Moriah (<sup><1312></sup>Psalms 125:2 <sup><2113></sup>Jeremiah 21:13).

**thee** — the people of Jerusalem personified.

**housetops** — Panic-struck, they went up on the flat balustraded roofs to look forth and see whether the enemy was near, and partly to defend themselves from the roofs (<sup><1051></sup>Judges 9:51, etc.).

**2. art** — rather, “wert”; for it could not *now* be said to be “a joyous city” (<sup><2313></sup>Isaiah 32:13). The cause of their *joy* (<sup><2213></sup>Isaiah 22:13) may have been because Sennacherib had accepted Hezekiah’s offer to renew the payment of tribute, and they were glad to have peace on any terms, however humiliating (<sup><2184></sup>2 Kings 18:14-16), or on account of the alliance with Egypt. If the reference be to Zedekiah’s time, the joy and feasting are not inapplicable, for this recklessness was a general characteristic of the unbelieving Jews (<sup><2302></sup>Isaiah 56:12).

**not slain with the sword** — but with the famine and pestilence about to be caused by the coming siege (<sup><2109></sup>Lamentations 4:9). MAURER refers this to the *plague* by which he thinks Sennacherib’s army was destroyed, and Hezekiah was made sick (<sup><2303></sup>Isaiah 37:36 38:1). But there is no authority for supposing that the Jews in the city suffered such extremities of plague at

this time, when God destroyed their foes. BARNES refers it to those *slain in flight*, not in open honorable “battle”; <sup><2218></sup>Isaiah 22:3 favors this.

**3. rulers** — rather, “generals” (<sup><6084></sup>Joshua 10:24 <sup><0716></sup>Judges 11:6,11).

**bound** — rather, “are taken.”

**by the archers** — literally, “by the bow”; so <sup><2217></sup>Isaiah 21:17. Bowmen were the light troops, whose province it was to skirmish in front and (<sup><1622></sup>2 Kings 6:22) pursue fugitives (<sup><1218></sup>2 Kings 25:5); this verse applies better to the attack of Nebuchadnezzar than that of Sennacherib.

**all ... in thee** — all found in the city (<sup><2315></sup>Isaiah 13:15), not merely the “rulers” or generals.

**fled from far** — those who had *fled from distant parts* to Jerusalem as a place of safety; rather, *fled afar*.

**4. Look ... from me** — Deep grief seeks to be alone; while others feast joyously, Isaiah mourns in prospect of the disaster coming on Jerusalem (<sup><3008></sup>Micah 1:8,9).

**daughter**, etc. — (see on <sup><2308></sup>Isaiah 1:8; <sup><2311></sup>Lamentations 2:11).

**5. trouble ... by the Lord** — that is, sent by or from the Lord (see on <sup><2315></sup>Isaiah 19:15; <sup><2122></sup>Luke 21:22-24).

**valley of vision** — (See on <sup><2216></sup>Isaiah 22:1). Some think a valley near Ophel is meant as about to be the scene of devastation (compare see on <sup><2313></sup>Isaiah 32:13,14).

**breaking ... walls** — that is, “a day of breaking the walls” of the city.

**crying to the mountains** — the mournful cry of the townsmen “reaches” to (MAURER translates, *towards*) the mountains, and is echoed back by them. JOSEPHUS describes in the very same language the scene at the assault of Jerusalem under Titus. To this the prophecy, probably, refers ultimately. If, as some think, the “cry” is that of those *escaping* to the mountains, compare <sup><0134></sup>Matthew 13:14 24:16, with this.

**6. Elam** — the country stretching east from the Lower Tigris, answering to what was afterwards called Persia (see on <sup><2212></sup>Isaiah 21:2). Later, Elam was a province of Persia (<sup><1549></sup>Ezra 4:9). In Sennacherib’s time, Elam was subject to Assyria (<sup><1281></sup>2 Kings 18:11), and so furnished a contingent to its invading armies. Famed for the bow (<sup><2318></sup>Isaiah 13:18 <sup><2425></sup>Jeremiah 49:35), in which the Ethiopians alone excelled them.

**with chariots of men and horsemen** — that is, they used the bow both *in* chariots and on horseback. “Chariots of men,” that is, chariots in which men are borne, war chariots (compare see on <sup><2609></sup>Isaiah 21:7; <sup><2609></sup>Isaiah 21:9).

**Kir** — another people subject to Assyria (<sup><2609></sup>2 Kings 16:9); the region about the river Kur, between the Caspian and Black Seas.

**uncovered** — took off for the battle the leather covering of the shield, intended to protect the embossed figures on it from dust or injury during the march. “The quiver” and “the shield” express two classes — light and heavy armed troops.

**7. valleys** — east, north, and south of Jerusalem: Hinnom on the south side was the richest valley.

**in array at the gate** — Rab-shakeh stood at the upper pool close to the city (<sup><2609></sup>Isaiah 36:11-13).

**8. he discovered the covering** — rather, “the veil of Judah shall be taken off” [HORSLEY]: figuratively for, exposing to shame as a captive (<sup><2609></sup>Isaiah 47:3 Na 3:5). Sennacherib dismantled all “the defended cities of Judah” (<sup><2609></sup>Isaiah 36:1).

**thou didst look** — rather, “thou shalt look.”

**house of ... forest** — The *house* of armory built of cedar from the *forest* of Lebanon by Solomon, on a slope of Zion called Ophel (<sup><1000></sup>1 Kings 7:2 10:17 <sup><4189></sup>Nehemiah 3:19). Isaiah says (<sup><2209></sup>Isaiah 22:8-13) his countrymen will look to their own strength *to defend* themselves, while others of them will drown their sorrows as to their country in *feasting*, but none will look to Jehovah.

**9. Ye have seen** — rather, “Ye shall see.”

**city of David** — the upper city, on Zion, the south side of Jerusalem (<sup><1000></sup>2 Samuel 5:7,9 <sup><1000></sup>1 Kings 8:1); surrounded by a wall of its own; but even in it there shall be “breaches.” Hezekiah’s preparations for defense accord with this (<sup><4309></sup>2 Chronicles 32:5).

**ye gathered** — rather, “ye shall gather.”

**lower pool** — (See on <sup><2209></sup>Isaiah 22:11). Ye shall bring together into the city by subterranean passages cut in the rock of Zion, the fountain from which the lower pool (only mentioned here) is supplied. see on <sup><2009></sup>Isaiah 7:3; <sup><1209></sup>2 Kings 20:20 <sup><4309></sup>2 Chronicles 32:3-5, represent Hezekiah as having *stopped* the fountains to prevent the Assyrians getting water. But this is consistent with the passage here. The superfluous waters of the lower pool usually

flowed into Hinnom valley, and so through that of Jehoshaphat to the brook Kedron. Hezekiah built a wall round it, *stopped* the outflowing of its waters to debar the foe from the use of them, and turned them into the city.

**10. *numbered*** — rather, “ye shall number,” namely, in order to see which of them may be pulled down with the least loss to the city, and with most advantage for the repair of the walls and rearing of towers (<sup>4436</sup>2 Chronicles 32:5).

***have ye broken down*** — rather, “ye shall break down.”

**11. *Ye made ... a ditch*** — rather, “Ye shall make a reservoir” for receiving the *water*. Hezekiah surrounded Siloah, from which the old (or king’s, or upper) pool took its rise, with a wall joined to the wall of Zion on both sides; between these two walls he made a new pool, into which he directed the waters of the former, thus cutting off the foe from his supply of water also. The opening from which the upper pool received its water was nearer Zion than the other from which the lower pool took its rise, so that the water which flowed from the former could easily be shut in by a wall, whereas that which flowed from the latter could only be brought in by subterranean conduits (compare see on <sup>2329</sup>Isaiah 22:9; <sup>2308</sup>Isaiah 7:3 <sup>4210</sup>2 Kings 20:20 <sup>4438</sup>2 Chronicles 32:3-5,30; Ecclesiasticus 48:17). Both were southwest of Jerusalem.

***have not looked ... neither had respect*** — answering by contrast to “*Thou didst look to the armor, ye have seen*” (“had respect”, or ‘regard to’) the breaches” (<sup>2328</sup>Isaiah 22:8,9).

***maker thereof*** — God, by whose command and aid these defenses were made, and who gave this fountain “long ago.” G. V. SMITH translates, “Him who *doeth* it,” that is, has brought this danger on you — “Him who hath prepared it from afar,” that is, planned it even from a distant time.

**12. *did the Lord God call*** — Usually the *priests* gave the summons to national mourning (<sup>2014</sup>Joel 1:14); now JEHOVAH Himself shall give it; the “call” shall consist in the presence of a terrible foe. Translate, “shall call.”

***baldness*** — emblem of grief (<sup>802</sup>Job 1:20 <sup>3100</sup>Micah 1:16).

**13. Notwithstanding Jehovah’s “call to mourning”** (<sup>2020</sup>Isaiah 22:12), many shall make the desperate state of affairs a reason for reckless revelry (<sup>2161</sup>Isaiah 5:11,12,14 <sup>2182</sup>Jeremiah 18:12 <sup>4652</sup>1 Corinthians 15:32).

## ISAIAH 22:15-25.

### PROPHECY THAT SHEBNA SHOULD BE DEPOSED FROM BEING PREFECT OF THE PALACE, AND ELIAKIM PROMOTED TO THE OFFICE.

In <sup><2305></sup>Isaiah 36:3,22 37:2, we find Shebna “a scribe,” and no longer prefect of the palace (“over the household”), and Eliakim in that office, as is here foretold. Shebna is singled out as the subject of prophecy (the only instance of an *individual* being so in Isaiah), as being one of the irreligious faction that set at naught the prophet’s warnings (<sup><2301></sup>Isaiah 28:1-33:24); perhaps it was he who advised the temporary ignominious submission of Hezekiah to Sennacherib.

**15. *Go, get thee unto*** — rather, “Go in to” (that is, into the house to).

***treasurer*** — “him who dwells in the tabernacle” [JEROME]; namely, in a room of the temple set apart for the treasurer. Rather, “the king’s friend,” or “*principal officer of the court*” (<sup><1005></sup>1 Kings 4:5 18:3 <sup><1373></sup>1 Chronicles 27:33, “the king’s counsellor”) [MAURER]. “This” is prefixed contemptuously (<sup><1301></sup>Exodus 32:1).

***unto Shebna*** — The *Hebrew* for “unto” indicates an accosting of Shebna *with an unwelcome message*.

**16. *What ... whom*** — The prophet accosts Shebna at the very place where he was building a grand sepulcher for himself and his family (compare <sup><2148></sup>Isaiah 14:18 <sup><1021></sup>Genesis 23:1-20 49:29 50:13). “*What* (business) hast thou here, and *whom* hast thou (of thy family, who is likely to be buried) here, that thou *buildest*,” etc., seeing that thou art soon to be deposed from office and carried into captivity? [MAURER].

***on high*** — Sepulchres were made in the *highest* rocks (<sup><1423></sup>2 Chronicles 32:33, *Margin*).

***habitation for himself*** — compare “his own house” (<sup><2148></sup>Isaiah 14:18).

**17. *carry ... away with ... captivity*** — rather, “will cast thee away with a mighty throw” [MAURER]. “Mighty,” literally, “of a man” (so <sup><8801></sup>Job 38:3).

***surely cover*** — namely, with shame, where thou art rearing a monument to perpetuate thy fame [VITRINGA]. “Rolling will roll thee,” that is, will *continually* roll thee on, as a ball to be tossed away [MAURER]. Compare <sup><3205></sup>Isaiah 22:18.

**18. *violently turn and toss*** — literally, “whirling He will whirl thee,” that is, He will, *without intermission*, whirl thee [MAURER]. “He will whirl thee round and round, and (then) cast thee away,” as a stone in a sling is first whirled round repeatedly, before the string is let go [LOWTH].

***large country*** — perhaps Assyria.

***chariots ... shall be the shame of thy lord's house*** — rather, “thy splendid chariots shall be there, O thou disgrace of thy lord's house” [NOYES]; “chariots of thy glory” mean “thy magnificent chariots.” It is not meant that he would have these in a distant land, as he had in Jerusalem, but that he would be borne thither in ignominy instead of in his magnificent chariots. The Jews say that he was tied to the tails of horses by the enemy, to whom he had designed to betray Jerusalem, as they thought he was mocking them; and so he died.

**19. *state*** — office.

***he*** — God. A similar change of persons occurs in <sup><2346></sup>Isaiah 34:16.

**20. *son of Hilkiah*** — supposed by KIMCHI to be the same as Azariah, son of Hilkiah, who perhaps had two names, and who was “over the household” in Hezekiah's time (<sup><1363></sup>1 Chronicles 6:13).

**21. *thy robe*** — of office.

***girdle*** — in which the purse was carried, and to it was attached the sword; often adorned with gold and jewels.

***father*** — that is, a counsellor and friend.

**22. *key*** — emblem of his office over the house; to “open” or “shut”; access rested with him.

***upon ... shoulder*** — So keys are carried sometimes in the East, hanging from the kerchief on the shoulder. But the phrase is rather figurative for *sustaining the government on one's shoulders*. Eliakim, as his name implies, is here plainly a type of the God-man Christ, the son of “David,” of whom Isaiah (<sup><2306></sup>Isaiah 9:6) uses the same language as the former clause of this verse. In <sup><6617></sup>Revelation 3:7, the same language as the latter clause is found (compare <sup><8214></sup>Job 12:14).

**23. *nail ... sure place*** — Large nails or pegs stood in ancient houses on which were suspended the ornaments of the family. The sense is: all that is valuable to the nation shall rest securely on him. In <sup><4308></sup>Ezra 9:8 “nail” is used of the large spike driven into the ground to fasten the cords of the tent to.

**throne** — resting-place to his family, as applied to Eliakim; but “throne,” in the strict sense, as applied to Messiah, the antitype (<sup>-41133</sup>Luke 1:32,33).

24. Same image as in <sup>-23223</sup>Isaiah 22:23. It was customary to “hang” the valuables of a house on nails (<sup>-11063</sup>1 Kings 10:16,17,21 <sup>-21043</sup>Song of Solomon 4:4).

**offspring and the issue** — rather, “the offshoots of the family, high and low” [VITRINGA]. Eliakim would reflect honor even on the latter.

**vessels of cups** — of small capacity: answering to the *low* and humble offshoots.

**vessels of flagons** — larger vessels: answering to the *high offshoots*.

25. **nail ... fastened** — Shebna, who was *supposed* to be firmly fixed in his post.

**burden ... upon it** — All that were dependent on Shebna, all his emoluments and rank will fail, as when a peg is suddenly “cut down,” the ornaments on it fall with it. Sin reaches in its effects even to the family of the guilty (<sup>-02115</sup>Exodus 20:5).

# CHAPTER 23

## ISAIAH 23:1-18.

### PROPHECY RESPECTING TYRE.

MENANDER, the historian, notices a siege of Tyre by Shalmaneser, about the time of the siege of Samaria. Sidon, Acco, and Old Tyre, on the mainland, were soon reduced; but New Tyre, on an island half a mile from the shore, held out for five years. Sargon probably finished the siege. Sennacherib does not, however, mention it among the cities which the Assyrian kings conquered (thirty-sixth and thirty-seventh chapters). The expression, “Chaldeans” (<sup>2313</sup>Isaiah 23:13), may imply reference to its siege under Nebuchadnezzar, which lasted thirteen years. Alexander the Great destroyed New Tyre after a seven months’ siege.

**1. Tyre** — *Hebrew, Tsur*, that is, “Rock.”

**ships of Tarshish** — ships of Tyre returning from their voyage to Tarshish, or Tartessus in Spain, with which the Phoenicians had much commerce (<sup>2712</sup>Ezekiel 27:12-25). “Ships of Tarshish” is a phrase also used of large and distant-voyaging merchant vessels (<sup>2116</sup>Isaiah 2:16 <sup>1102</sup>1 Kings 10:22 <sup>487</sup>Psalms 48:7).

**no house** — namely, left; such was the case as to Old Tyre, after Nebuchadnezzar’s siege.

**no entering** — There is *no* house to *enter* (<sup>2340</sup>Isaiah 24:10) [G. V. SMITH]. Or, Tyre is so laid waste, that there is no possibility of *entering the harbor* [BARNES]; which is appropriate to the previous “ships.”

**Chittim** — Cyprus, of which the cities, including *Citium* in the south (whence came “Chittim”), were mostly Phoenician (<sup>2716</sup>Ezekiel 27:6). The ships from Tarshish on their way to Tyre learn the tidings (“it is revealed to them”) of the downfall of Tyre. At a later period Chittim denoted the islands and coasts of the Mediterranean (<sup>2713</sup>Daniel 11:30).

**2. Be still** — “struck dumb with awe.” Addressed to those already in the country, eye-witnesses of its ruin (<sup>210</sup>Lamentations 2:10); or, in contrast to the *busy din* of commerce once heard in Tyre; now all is hushed and *still*.

**isle** — strictly applicable to New Tyre: in the sense *coast*, to the mainland city, Old Tyre (compare <sup><2306></sup>Isaiah 23:6 <sup><2307></sup>Isaiah 20:6).

**Zidon** — of which Tyre was a colony, planted when Zidon was conquered by the Philistines of Ascalon. Zidon means a “fishing station”; this was its beginning.

**replenished** — with wealth and an industrious population (<sup><2708></sup>Ezekiel 27:3,8,23). Here “Zidon,” as the oldest city of Phoenicia, includes all the Phoenician towns on the strip of “coast.” Thus, Eth-baal, king of Tyre [JOSEPHUS, *Antiquities*, 8.3.2], is called king of the Sidonians (<sup><1163></sup>1 Kings 16:31); and on coins Tyre is called the metropolis of the Sidonians.

**3. great waters** — the wide waters of the sea.

**seed** — “grain,” or crop, as in <sup><0985></sup>1 Samuel 8:15 <sup><3992></sup>Job 39:12.

**Sihor** — literally, “dark-colored”; applied to the Nile, as the Egyptian *Jeor*, and the Greek *Melas*, to express the “dark, turbid” colors given to its waters by the fertilizing soil which it deposits at its yearly overflow (<sup><4128></sup>Jeremiah 2:18).

**harvest of the river** — the growth of the Delta; the produce due to the overflow of the Nile: Egypt was the great granary of corn in the ancient world (<sup><0400></sup>Genesis 41:1-57 42:1-38 43:1-34).

**her revenue** — Tyrian vessels carried Egyptian produce obtained in exchange for wine, oil, glass, etc., into various lands, and so made large profits.

**mart** — (<sup><3208></sup>Ezekiel 27:3). No city was more favorably situated for commerce.

**4. Zidon** — called on, as being the parent country of Tyre (<sup><2312></sup>Isaiah 23:12), and here equivalent to Phoenicia in general, to feel the shame (as it was esteemed in the East) of being now as childless as if she never had any. “I (no more now) travail, nor bring forth,” etc. “Strength of the sea,” that is, stronghold, namely, New Tyre, on a rock (as “Tyre” means) surrounded by the sea (<sup><2604></sup>Ezekiel 26:4 15:17; so Venice was called “Bride of the sea”; <sup><3085></sup>Zechariah 9:3).

**5. As**, etc. — rather, “When the report (shall reach) the people of Egypt, they shall be sorely pained at the report concerning Tyre” (namely, its overthrow). So JEROME, “When the Egyptians shall hear that so powerful a neighboring nation has been destroyed, they must know their own end is near” [LOWTH, etc.].

**6. *Pass ... over*** — Escape from Tyre to your colonies as Tarshish (compare <sup><2322></sup>Isaiah 23:12). The Tyrians fled to Carthage and elsewhere, both at the siege under Nebuchadnezzar and that under Alexander.

**7. *Is this*** silent ruin all that is left of *your* once *joyous city* (<sup><2322></sup>Isaiah 23:12)?

***antiquity*** — The Tyrian priests boasted in HERODOTUS' time that their city had already existed 2300 years: an exaggeration, but still implying that it was *ancient* even then.

***her own feet*** — walking on foot as captives to an enemy's land.

**8. *Who*** — answered in <sup><2329></sup>Isaiah 23:9, “The Lord of hosts.”

***crowning*** — crown-giving; that is, the city from which dependent kingdoms had arisen, as Tartessus in Spain, Citium in Cyprus, and Carthage in Africa (<sup><2733></sup>Ezekiel 27:33).

***traffickers*** — literally, “Canaanites,” who were famed for commerce (compare <sup><3107></sup>Hosea 12:7, *Margin*).

**9.** Whoever be the instruments in overthrowing haughty sinners, God, who has all hosts at His command, is the First Cause (<sup><3105></sup>Isaiah 10:5-7).

***stain*** — rather, “to profane”; as in <sup><0214></sup>Exodus 31:14, the *Sabbath*, and other objects of religious reverence; so here, “the pride of all glory” may refer to the Tyrian temple of Hercules, the oldest in the world, according to ARRIAN (<sup><2106></sup>Isaiah 2:16); the prophet of the true God would naturally single out for notice the idol of Tyre [G. V. SMITH]. It may, however, be a *general* proposition; the destruction of Tyre will exhibit to all how God mars the luster of whatever is haughty (<sup><2111></sup>Isaiah 2:11).

**10. *a river*** — *Hebrew*, “the river,” namely, Nile.

***daughter of Tarshish*** — Tyre and its inhabitants (<sup><2308></sup>Isaiah 1:8), about henceforth, owing to the ruin of Tyre, to become inhabitants of its colony, Tartessus: they would *pour forth* from Tyre, as waters flow on when the barriers are removed [LOWTH]. Rather, Tarshish, or Tartessus and its inhabitants, as the phrase usually means: they had been kept in hard bondage, working in silver and lead mines near Tarshish, by the parent city (<sup><2317></sup>Ezekiel 26:17): but now “the bond of restraint” (for so “strength,” *Margin*, “girdle,” that is, bond, <sup><4103></sup>Psalms 2:3, ought to be translated) is removed, since Tyre is no more.

**11. *He*** — Jehovah.

***kingdoms*** — the Phoenician cities and colonies.

**the merchant city** — rather, *Canaan*, meaning the north of it, namely, Phoenicia. On their coins, they call their country *Canaan*.

**12. he** — God.

**rejoice** — riotously (<sup>2307</sup>Isaiah 23:7).

**oppressed** — “deflowered”; laying aside the figure “taken by storm”; the Arabs compare a city never taken to an undefiled virgin (compare Na 3:5, etc.).

**daughter of Zidon** — Tyre: or else, sons of Zidon, that is, the whole land and people of Phoenicia (see on <sup>2312</sup>Isaiah 23:2) [MAURER].

**Chittim** — Citium in Cyprus (<sup>2301</sup>Isaiah 23:1).

**there also ... no rest** — Thy colonies, having been harshly treated by thee, will now repay thee in kind (see on <sup>2320</sup>Isaiah 23:10). But VITRINGA refers it to the calamities which befell the Tyrians in their settlements subsequently, namely, Sicily, Corcyra, Carthage, and Spain, all flowing from the original curse of Noah against the posterity of Canaan (<sup>0025</sup>Genesis 9:25-27).

**13. Behold** — Calling attention to the fact, so humiliating to Tyre, that a people of yesterday, like the Chaldees, should destroy the most ancient of cities, Tyre.

**was not** — had no existence as a recognized nation; the Chaldees were previously but a rude, predatory people (<sup>3017</sup>Job 1:17).

**Assyrian founded it** — The Chaldees (“them that dwell in the wilderness”) lived a nomadic life in the mountains of Armenia originally (Arphaxad, in <sup>0102</sup>Genesis 10:22, refers to such a region of Assyria near Armenia), north and east of Assyria proper. Some may have settled in Mesopotamia and Babylonia very early and given origin to the astrologers called *Chaldees* in later times. But most of the people had been transferred only a little before the time of this prophecy from their original seats in the north to Mesopotamia, and soon afterwards to South Babylonia. “Founded it,” means “assigned *it* (the land) to them who had (heretofore) dwelt in the wilderness” as a permanent settlement (so in <sup>3408</sup>Psalms 104:8) [MAURER]. It was the Assyrian policy to infuse into their own population of the plain the fresh blood of hardy mountaineers, for the sake of recruiting their armies. Ultimately the Chaldees, by their powerful priest-caste, gained the supremacy and established the later or Chaldean empire. HORSLEY refers it to Tyre, founded by an Assyrian race.

**towers thereof** — namely, of Babylon, whose towers, HERODOTUS says, were “set up” by the Assyrians [BARNES]. Rather, “The *Chaldees* set up their *siege-towers*” against Tyre, made for the attack of high walls, from which the besiegers hurled missiles, as depicted in the Assyrian sculptures [G. V. SMITH].

**raised up** — rather, “They *lay bare*,” namely, the foundations of “her (Tyre’s) *palaces*,” that is, utterly overthrew them (<sup>4107P</sup>Psalm 137:7).

**14. strength** — stronghold (compare <sup>4365E</sup>Ezekiel 26:15-18).

**15. forgotten** — Having lost its former renown, Tyre shall be in obscurity.

**seventy years** — (so <sup>4251J</sup>Jeremiah 25:11,12 29:10).

**days of one king** — that is, a dynasty. The Babylonian monarchy lasted properly but seventy years. From the first year of Nebuchadnezzar to the taking of Babylon, by Cyrus, was seventy years; then the subjected nations would be restored to liberty. Tyre was taken in the middle of that period, but it is classed in common with the rest, some conquered sooner and others later, all, however, alike to be delivered at the end of the period. So “king” is used for dynasty (<sup>4207D</sup>Daniel 7:17 8:20): Nebuchadnezzar, his son Evil-merodach, and his grandson, Belshazzar, formed the whole dynasty (<sup>4251J</sup>Jeremiah 25:11,12 27:7 29:10).

**shall Tyre sing as ... harlot** — It shall be to Tyre as the song of the harlot, namely, a harlot that has been forgotten, but who attracts notice again by her song. Large marts of commerce are often compared to harlots seeking many lovers, that is, they court merchants of all nations, and admit any one for the sake of gain (Na 3:4 <sup>4688B</sup>Revelation 18:3). Covetousness is closely akin to idolatry and licentiousness, as the connection (<sup>4485E</sup>Ephesians 5:5 <sup>4108C</sup>Colossians 3:5) proves (compare <sup>4210E</sup>Isaiah 2:6-8,16).

**16.** Same figure (<sup>4231S</sup>Isaiah 23:15) to express that Tyre would again prosper and attract commercial intercourse of nations to her, and be the same joyous, self-indulging city as before.

**17. visit** — not in wrath, but mercy.

**hire** — image from a harlot: her *gains* by commerce. After the Babylonian dynasty was ended, Tyre was rebuilt; also, again, after the destruction under Alexander.

**18. merchandise ... holiness** — Her traffic and gains shall at last (long after the restoration mentioned in <sup>4231T</sup>Isaiah 23:17) be consecrated to Jehovah. Jesus Christ visited the neighborhood of Tyre (<sup>4052I</sup>Matthew

15:21); Paul found disciples there (<sup>4218</sup>Acts 21:3-6); it early became a Christian bishopric, but the full evangelization of that whole race, as of the Ethiopians (<sup>2880</sup>Isaiah 18:1-7), of the Egyptians and Assyrians (<sup>2890</sup>Isaiah 19:1-25), is yet to come (<sup>2305</sup>Isaiah 60:5).

***not treasured*** — but freely expended in His service.

***them that dwell before the Lord*** — the ministers of religion. But HORSLEY translates, “them that *sit* before Jehovah” as *disciples*.

***durable clothing*** — Changes of raiment constituted much of the wealth of former days.

# CHAPTER 24

## ISAIAH 24:1-23.

### THE LAST TIMES OF THE WORLD IN GENERAL, AND OF JUDAH AND THE CHURCH IN PARTICULAR.

The four chapters (the twenty-fourth through the twenty-seventh) form one continuous poetical prophecy: descriptive of the dispersion and successive calamities of the Jews (<sup><2304></sup>Isaiah 24:1-12); the preaching of the Gospel by the first Hebrew converts throughout the world (<sup><2303></sup>Isaiah 24:13-16); the judgments on the adversaries of the Church and its final triumph (<sup><2306></sup>Isaiah 24:16-23); thanksgiving for the overthrow of the apostate faction (<sup><2308></sup>Isaiah 25:1-12), and establishment of the righteous in lasting peace (<sup><2309></sup>Isaiah 26:1-21); judgment on leviathan and entire purgation of the Church (<sup><2307></sup>Isaiah 27:1-13). Having treated of the *several nations in particular* — Babylon, Philistia, Moab, Syria, Israel, Egypt, Edom, and Tyre (the miniature representative of all, as all kingdoms flocked into it) — he passes to the last times of *the world at large* and of Judah the representative and future head of the churches.

1. *the earth* — rather, “the land” of Judah (so in <sup><2308></sup>Isaiah 24:3,5,6 <sup><2302></sup>Joel 1:2). The desolation under Nebuchadnezzar prefigured that under Titus.

2. *as with the people, so with the priest* — All alike shall share the same calamity: no favored class shall escape (compare <sup><2307></sup>Ezekiel 7:12,13 <sup><2309></sup>Hosea 4:9 <sup><0165></sup>Revelation 6:15).

4. *world* — the kingdom of Israel; as in <sup><2304></sup>Isaiah 13:11, Babylon.

*haughty* — literally, “the height” of the people: abstract for concrete, that is, the high people; even the nobles share the general distress.

5. *earth* — rather, “the land.”

*defiled under ... inhabitants* — namely, with innocent blood (<sup><0041></sup>Genesis 4:11 <sup><0153></sup>Numbers 35:33 <sup><0468></sup>Psalms 106:38).

*laws ... ordinance ... everlasting covenant* — The *moral* laws, *positive* statutes, and *national* covenant designed to be for ever between God and them.

6. *earth* — the land.

*burned* — namely, with the consuming wrath of heaven: either internally, as in <sup><818B></sup>Job 30:30 [ROSENMULLER]; or externally, the prophet has before his eyes the people being consumed with the withering dryness of their doomed land (so <sup><2010></sup>Joel 1:10,12), [MAURER].

7. *mourneth* — because there are none to drink it [BARNES]. Rather, “is become vapid” [HORSLEY].

*languisheth* — because there are none to cultivate it now.

8. (<sup><682></sup>Revelation 18:22).

9. *with a song* — the usual accompaniment of feasts.

*strong drink* — (See on <sup><231H></sup>Isaiah 5:11). “Date wine” [HORSLEY].

*bitter* — in consequence of the national calamities.

10. *city of confusion* — rather, “desolation.” What *Jerusalem* would be; by anticipation it is called so. HORSLEY translates, “The city is broken down; it is a ruin.”

*shut up* — through fear; or rather, “choked up by ruins.”

11. *crying for wine* — to drown their sorrows in drink (<sup><2349></sup>Isaiah 16:9); <sup><2005></sup>Joel 1:5, written about the same time, resembles this.

12. *with destruction* — rather “crash” [GESENIUS]. “With a great tumult the gate is battered down” [HORSLEY].

13. *the land* — Judea. Put the comma after “land,” not after “people.” “There shall be among the people (a remnant left), as the shaking (the after-picking) of an olive tree”; as in gathering olives, a few remain on the highest boughs (<sup><237B></sup>Isaiah 17:5,6).

14. *They* — those who are left: the remnant.

*sing for the majesty of the Lord* — sing a thanksgiving for the goodness of the Lord, who has so mercifully preserved them.

*from the sea* — from the distant lands beyond the sea, whither they have escaped.

15. *in the fires* — VITRINGA translates, “in the *caves*.” Could it mean *the fires of affliction* (<sup><600E></sup>1 Peter 1:7)? They were exiles at the time. The fires only loose the carnal bonds off the soul, without injuring a hair, as in the case of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego. LOWTH reads, in the *islands*

(<sup>3338</sup>Ezekiel 26:18). Rather translate for “fires,” “in the regions of morning light,” that is, the east, in antithesis to the “isles of the sea,” that is, the west [MAURER]. Wheresoever ye be scattered, east or west, still glorify the Lord (<sup>3011</sup>Malachi 1:11).

**16.** Songs to God come in together to Palestine from distant lands, as a grand chorus.

*glory to the righteous* — the burden of the songs (<sup>2302</sup>Isaiah 26:2,7). Amidst exile, the loss of their temple, and all that is dear to man, their confidence in God is unshaken. These songs recall the joy of other times and draw from Jerusalem in her present calamities, the cry, “My leanness.” HORSLEY translates, “glory to *the Just One*”; then My leanness expresses his sense of man’s corruption, which led the Jews, “the treacherous dealers” (<sup>2451</sup>Jeremiah 5:11), to crucify the Just One; and his deficiency of righteousness which made him need to be clothed with the righteousness of the Just One (<sup>1965</sup>Psalms 106:15).

*treacherous dealers* — the foreign nations that oppress Jerusalem, and overcome it by stratagem (so in <sup>2302</sup>Isaiah 21:2) [BARNES].

**17.** This verse explains the wretchedness spoken of in <sup>2346</sup>Isaiah 24:16. Jeremiah (<sup>2483</sup>Jeremiah 48:43,44) uses the same words. They are proverbial <sup>2348</sup>Isaiah 24:18 expressing that the inhabitants were nowhere safe; if they escaped one danger, they fell into another, and worse, on the opposite side (<sup>3159</sup>Amos 5:19). “Fear” is the term applied to the cords with feathers of all colors which, when fluttered in the air, scare beasts into the pitfall, or birds into the snare. HORSLEY makes the connection. Indignant at the treatment which the Just One received, the prophet threatens the guilty land with instant vengeance.

**18.** *noise of ... fear* — the shout designed to rouse the game and drive it into the pitfall.

*windows ... open* — taken from the account of the deluge (<sup>0071</sup>Genesis 7:11); *the flood-gates*. So the final judgments of fire on the apostate world are compared to the deluge (<sup>6025</sup>2 Peter 3:5-7).

**19.** *earth* — the land: image from an earthquake.

**20.** *removed like a cottage* — (See on <sup>2308</sup>Isaiah 1:8). Here, *a hanging couch*, suspended from the trees by cords, such as NIEBUHR describes the Arab keepers of lands as having, to enable them to keep watch, and at the same time to be secure from wild beasts. Translate, “Shall wave to and fro like a hammock” swung about by the wind.

**heavy upon it** — like an overwhelming burden.

**not rise again** — not meaning, that it *never* would rise (<sup>2903</sup>Isaiah 24:23), but *in those convulsions* it would not rise, it would surely fall.

**21. host of ... high ones** — the heavenly host, that is, either *the visible host of heaven* (the present economy of nature, affected by the sun, moon, and stars, the objects of idolatry, being abolished, <sup>23617</sup>Isaiah 65:17 60:19, simultaneously with the corrupt polity of men); or rather, “*the invisible rulers of the darkness of this world,*” as the antithesis to “*kings of the earth*” shows. Angels, moreover, preside, as it were, over kingdoms of the world (<sup>27003</sup>Daniel 10:13,20,21).

**22. in the pit** — rather, “for the pit” [HORSLEY]. “In the *dungeon*” [MAURER]. Image from captives thrust together into a dungeon.

**prison** — that is, as in a prison. This sheds light on the disputed passage, <sup>40189</sup>1 Peter 3:19, where also the *prison* is figurative: The “shutting up” of the Jews in Jerusalem under Nebuchadnezzar, and again under Titus, was to be followed by a *visitation* of mercy “after many days” — seventy years in the case of the former — the time is not yet elapsed in the case of the latter. HORSLEY takes “visited” in a bad sense, namely, in wrath, as in <sup>23044</sup>Isaiah 26:14; compare <sup>23316</sup>Isaiah 29:6; the punishment being the heavier in the fact of the delay. Probably a double visitation is intended, deliverance to the elect, wrath to hardened unbelievers; as <sup>29023</sup>Isaiah 24:23 plainly contemplates judgments on proud sinners, symbolized by the “sun” and “moon.”

**23.** (<sup>24872</sup>Jeremiah 3:17). Still future: of which Jesus’ triumphal entry into Jerusalem amidst hosannas was a pledge.

**his ancients** — the elders of His people; or in general, His ancient people, the Jews. After the overthrow of the world kingdoms. Jehovah’s shall be set up with a splendor exceeding the light of the sun and moon under the previous order of things (<sup>23019</sup>Isaiah 60:19,20).

# CHAPTER 25

## ISAIAH 25:1-12.

### CONTINUATION OF THE TWENTY-FOURTH CHAPTER. THANKSGIVING FOR THE OVERTHROW OF THE APOSTATE FACTION, AND THE SETTING UP OF JEHOVAH'S THRONE ON ZION.

The restoration from Babylon and re-establishment of the theocracy was a type and pledge of this.

1. *wonderful* — (<sup>2306</sup>Isaiah 9:6).

*counsels of old* — (<sup>2309</sup>Isaiah 42:9 46:10). Purposes planned long ago; here, as to the deliverance of His people.

*truth* — *Hebrew, Amen*; covenant-keeping, faithful to promises; the peculiar characteristic of Jesus (<sup>6184</sup>Revelation 3:14).

2. *a city ... heap* — Babylon, type of the seat of Antichrist, to be destroyed in the last days (compare <sup>2657</sup>Jeremiah 51:37, with <sup>6680</sup>Revelation 18:1-24, followed, as here, by the song of the saints' thanksgiving in <sup>6690</sup>Revelation 19:1-21). "Heaps" is a graphic picture of Babylon and Nineveh as they now are.

*palace* — Babylon regarded, on account of its splendor, as a vast palace. But MAURER translates, "a citadel."

*of strangers* — foreigners, whose capital pre-eminently Babylon was, the metropolis of the pagan world. "Aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, *strangers* from the covenants of promise" (<sup>2346</sup>Isaiah 29:5 <sup>4012</sup>Ephesians 2:12; see in contrast, <sup>2487</sup>Joel 3:17).

*never be built* — (<sup>2439</sup>Isaiah 13:19,20, etc.).

3. *strong people* — This cannot apply to the Jews; but other nations on which Babylon had exercised its cruelty (<sup>2342</sup>Isaiah 14:12) shall worship Jehovah, awed by the judgment inflicted on Babylon (<sup>2338</sup>Isaiah 23:18).

*city* — not Babylon, which shall then be destroyed, but collectively for the *cities* of the surrounding nations.

**4. *the poor ... needy*** — the Jews, exiles from their country (<sup><2306></sup>Isaiah 26:6 41:17).

***heat*** — calamity (<sup><2306></sup>Isaiah 4:6 32:2).

***blast*** — that is, wrath.

***storm*** — *a tempest of rain*, a winter flood, rushing against and overthrowing the wall of a house.

**5.** Translate, “As the heat in a dry land (is brought down by the shadow of a cloud, so) thou shalt bring down the tumult (the shout of triumph over their enemies) of strangers (foreigners); and as the heat by the shadow of the cloud (is brought low), so the branch (the offspring) of the terrible ones shall be brought low.” PARKHURST translates the *Hebrew* for “branch,” *the exulting song*. JEROME translates the last clause, “And as when the heat burns under a cloud, thou shalt make the branch of the terrible ones to wither”; the branch withering even under the friendly shade of a cloud typifies the wicked brought to ruin, not for want of natural means of prosperity, but by the immediate act of God.

**6. *in this mountain*** — Zion: Messiah’s kingdom was to begin, and is to have its central seat hereafter, at Jerusalem, as the common country of “all nations” (<sup><2007></sup>Isaiah 2:2, etc.).

***all people*** — (<sup><2807></sup>Isaiah 56:7 <sup><2074></sup>Daniel 7:14 <sup><4100></sup>Luke 2:10).

***feast*** — image of felicity (<sup><4022></sup>Psalms 22:26,27 <sup><4081></sup>Matthew 8:11 Luke 14,15 <sup><6909></sup>Revelation 19:9; compare <sup><4368></sup>Psalms 36:8 87:1-7).

***fat things*** — delicacies; the rich mercies of God in Christ (<sup><2507></sup>Isaiah 55:2 <sup><4814></sup>Jeremiah 31:14 <sup><4336></sup>Job 36:16).

***wines on the lees*** — wine which has been long kept on the lees; that is, the oldest and most generous wine (<sup><2481></sup>Jeremiah 48:11).

***marrow*** — the choicest dainties (<sup><4936></sup>Psalms 63:5).

***well refined*** — cleared of all dregs.

**7. *face of ... covering*** — image from mourning, in which it was usual to *cover* the face with a veil (<sup><4050></sup>2 Samuel 15:30). “Face of covering,” that is, the covering itself; as in <sup><4843></sup>Job 41:13, “the face of his garment,” the garment itself. The covering or veil is the mist of ignorance as to a future state, and the way to eternal life, which enveloped the nations (<sup><4008></sup>Ephesians 4:18) and the unbelieving Jew (<sup><4785></sup>2 Corinthians 3:15). The *Jew*, however, is *first* to be converted before the conversion of “*all nations*”; for it is “in

this mountain,” namely, Zion, that the latter are to have the veil taken off (<sup><49A23></sup>Psalm 102:13,15,16,21,22 <sup><6112></sup>Romans 11:12).

8. Quoted in <sup><4654></sup>1 Corinthians 15:54, in support of the resurrection.

**swallow up ... in victory** — completely and permanently “abolish” (<sup><51102></sup>Timothy 1:10 <sup><6114></sup>Revelation 20:14 21:4; compare <sup><1027></sup>Genesis 2:17 3:22).

**rebuke** — (Compare <sup><4838></sup>Mark 8:38 <sup><3126></sup>Hebrews 11:26).

9. **And it shall be said in that day**, etc. — “After death has been swallowed up for ever, the people of God, who had been delivered from the hand of death, shall say to the Lord, Lo, this is our *God*, whom unbelievers regarded as only a *man*” [JEROME]. “The words are so moulded as to point us specially to the person of the Son of God, who ‘saves’ us; as He vouchsafed to Israel temporal saving, so to His elect He appears for the purpose of conferring eternal salvation” [VITRINGA]. *The Jews*, however, have a special share in the words, This is *our* God (see on <sup><2376></sup>Isaiah 25:6).

**we have waited** — “Waited” is characteristic of God’s people in all ages (<sup><4048></sup>Genesis 49:18 <sup><5121></sup>Titus 2:13).

**we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation** — compare <sup><4824></sup>Psalm 118:24, which refers to the second coming of Jesus (compare <sup><4839></sup>Psalm 118:26, with <sup><4235></sup>Luke 13:35).

10. **rest** — as its *permanent protector*; on “hand” in this sense; compare <sup><4306></sup>Ezra 7:6,28.

**Moab** — while Israel is being protected, the foe is destroyed; Moab is the representative of all the foes of God’s people.

**under him** — Rather, “in his own place” or “country” (<sup><4243></sup>Exodus 10:23 16:29).

**for the dunghill** — Rather, “in the water of the dung heap,” in which straw was trodden to make it manure (<sup><4830></sup>Psalm 83:10). HORSLEY translates either, “in the waters of Madmenah,” namely, for the making of bricks; or as the *Septuagint*, “as the *threshing-floor* is trampled by the *corn-drag*” (see *Margin*; <sup><3041></sup>Micah 4:11-13).

11. **he** — *Jehovah* shall spread His hands to strike the foe on this side and on that, with as little effort as a Israel’s Song of Praise for Restoration swimmer spreads forth his arms to cleave a passage through the water [CALVIN]. (<sup><3185></sup>Zechariah 5:3). LOWTH takes “he” as Moab, who, in danger of sinking, shall strain every nerve to save himself; *but Jehovah* (and “he”) shall cause him to sink (“bring down the pride” of Moab, <sup><2316></sup>Isaiah 16:6).

*with the spoils of ... hands* — literally, “the craftily acquired spoils” of his (Moab’s) hands [BARNES]. Moab’s pride, as well as the sudden gripe of his hands (namely, whereby he tries to save himself from drowning) [LOWTH]. “Together with *the joints* of his hands,” that is, though Moab struggle against Jehovah hand and foot [MAURER].

**12. *fortress*** — the strongholds of *Moab*, the representative of the foes of God’s people [BARNES]. Babylon [MAURER]. The society of infidels represented as a city (Revelation 11:8).

# CHAPTER 26

## ISAIAH 26:1-21.

### CONNECTED WITH THE TWENTY-FOURTH AND TWENTY-FIFTH CHAPTERS. SONG OF PRAISE OF ISRAEL AFTER BEING RESTORED TO THEIR OWN LAND.

As the overthrow of the apostate faction is described in the twenty-fifth chapter, so the peace of the faithful is here described under the image of a well-fortified city.

1. **strong city** — Jerusalem, strong in Jehovah's protection: type of the new Jerusalem (<sup>4981</sup>Psalm 48:1-3), contrasted with the overthrow of the ungodly foe (<sup>2304</sup>Isaiah 26:4-7,12-14 <sup>6211</sup>Revelation 22:2,10-12, etc.).

**salvation ... walls** — (<sup>2068</sup>Isaiah 60:18 <sup>2423</sup>Jeremiah 3:23 <sup>3015</sup>Zechariah 2:5). MAURER translates, "Jehovah makes His help serve as walls" (<sup>2331</sup>Isaiah 33:20,21, etc.).

**bulwarks** — the trench with the antemural earthworks exterior to the wall.

2. Address of the returning people to the gates of Jerusalem (type of the heavenly city, <sup>5422</sup>Hebrews 12:22); (<sup>1207</sup>Psalm 24:7,9 118:19). Antitypically (<sup>6214</sup>Revelation 22:14 21:25,27).

**righteous nation** — that had not apostatized during the captivity. HORSLEY translates, "The nation of the Just One," namely, the Jews.

3. **mind ... stayed** — (<sup>1817</sup>Psalm 112:7,8). Jesus can create "perfect peace" within thy mind, though storms of trial rage without (<sup>2579</sup>Isaiah 57:19 <sup>4099</sup>Mark 4:39); as a city kept securely by a strong garrison within, though besieged without (so <sup>3047</sup>Philippians 4:7). "Keep," literally, "guard as with a garrison." HORSLEY translates, (God's) workmanship (the *Hebrew* does not probably mean "mind," but "a thing *formed*," <sup>4010</sup>Ephesians 2:10), so constantly "supported"; or else "formed and supported (by Thee) Thou shalt preserve (it, namely, the righteous nation) in perpetual peace."

4. **Lord JEHOVAH** — *Hebrew, Jah, Jehovah*. The union of the two names expresses in the highest degree God's unchanging love and power (compare <sup>1804</sup>Psalm 68:4). This passage, and <sup>2312</sup>Isaiah 12:2 <sup>4165</sup>Exodus 6:3 <sup>4838</sup>Psalm 83:18, are the four in which the *English Version* retains the

JEHOVAH of the original. MAURER translates, “For JAH (the eternal unchangeable One, <sup><11614></sup>Exodus 3:14) is JEHOVAH, the rock of ages” (compare <sup><2367></sup>Isaiah 45:17 <sup><2625></sup>Deuteronomy 32:15 <sup><1112></sup>1 Samuel 2:2).

**5. lofty city** — Babylon; representative of the stronghold of the foes of God’s people in all ages (<sup><2321></sup>Isaiah 25:2,12 <sup><13></sup>13:14).

**6. poor** — (<sup><2321></sup>Isaiah 25:4), the once afflicted Jewish captives. “Foot shall tread,” is figurative for *exulting* in the fall of God’s enemies (<sup><6831></sup>Revelation 18:20).

**7. uprightness** — rather, “is direct,” that is, is directed by God to a *prosperous issue*, however many be their afflictions in the meantime (as in the case of the Jewish exiles); the context requires this sense (<sup><1319></sup>Psalms 34:19 <sup><1181></sup>Proverbs 3:6 <sup><11></sup>11:5), [MAURER]: thus “way” means *God’s dealings with the righteous* (<sup><4523></sup>Psalms 37:23).

**most upright** — (<sup><1631></sup>Deuteronomy 32:4).

**dost weigh** — (<sup><1113></sup>1 Samuel 2:3 <sup><2152></sup>Proverbs 5:21) Rather, “thou dost make plain and level” [MAURER], removing all obstacles (<sup><2417></sup>Isaiah 40:3,4).

**8. way of thy judgments** — We have waited for Thy proceeding to *punish* the enemy (<sup><2319></sup>Isaiah 26:9,10) [MAURER]. HORSLEY translates <sup><2319></sup>Isaiah 26:7,8, “The path of the *Just One* is perfectly even; an even road Thou wilt level for the Just One, *even the path of Thy laws*, O Jehovah. We have expected Thee.”

**name ... remembrance** — the manifested *character* of God by which He would be *remembered* (<sup><2345></sup>Isaiah 64:5 <sup><1115></sup>Exodus 3:15).

**9. With, ... soul ... I** — literally, “I ... my soul,” in apposition; the faithful Jews here speak *individually*. The overthrow of the foe and the restoration of the Jews are to follow upon *prayer* on the part of the latter and of all God’s people (<sup><2311></sup>Isaiah 62:1-4,6,7 <sup><1923></sup>Psalms 102:13-17).

**in the night** — (<sup><1916></sup>Psalms 63:6 <sup><2111></sup>Song of Solomon 3:1).

**world ... learn ... righteousness** — the remnant left after judgments (<sup><1330></sup>Psalms 58:10,11 <sup><3416></sup>Zechariah 14:16).

**10. uprightness** — rather, as in <sup><2317></sup>Isaiah 26:7, “prosperity,” answering to “favor” in the parallelism, and in antithesis to “judgments in the earth” (<sup><2319></sup>Isaiah 26:9); where prosperity attends the wicked as well as the just, “he will not learn righteousness,” therefore *judgments* must be sent that he may “learn” it [MAURER].

**11. *lifted up*** — to punish the foes of God’s people. They who *will* not see *shall* be made to “see” to their cost (<sup><2152></sup>Isaiah 5:12).

***their envy at the people*** — that is, “Thy people.” LOWTH translates, “They shall see with confusion *Thy zeal for Thy people.*”

***fire of ... enemies*** — that is, the fire to which Thine enemies are doomed (<sup><2108></sup>Isaiah 9:18).

**12. *peace*** — God’s favor, including all blessings, temporal and spiritual, opposed to their previous trials (<sup><4908></sup>Psalms 138:8).

**13. *other lords*** — temporal; heathen kings (<sup><4418></sup>2 Chronicles 12:8 28:5,6), Nebuchadnezzar, etc. Spiritual also, idols and lusts (<sup><4616></sup>Romans 6:16-18).

***by thee only*** — It is due to Thee alone, that we again worship Thee as our Lord [MAURER]. “(We are) Thine only, we will celebrate Thy name” [HORSLEY]. The sanctifying effect of affliction (<sup><4916></sup>Psalms 71:16 119:67,71).

**14. *They*** — The “other lords” or tyrants (<sup><2333></sup>Isaiah 26:13).

***shall not live*** — namely, again.

***deceased*** — *Hebrew*, “Rephaim”; powerless, in the land of shades (<sup><2349></sup>Isaiah 14:9,10).

***therefore*** — that is, inasmuch as. Compare “therefore” (<sup><4185></sup>Genesis 18:5 19:8).

**15. *hast*** — prophetic preterite (<sup><2308></sup>Isaiah 9:3).

***hast removed ... far ... ends of ... earth*** — rather, “Thou hast extended far all the borders of the land” [VITRINGA].

**16. *visited*** — sought.

***poured out*** — (<sup><4918></sup>Psalms 62:8), as a vessel emptying out all its contents.

***prayer*** — literally, “a whispered prayer,” *Margin*, “a secret sighing” to God for help (compare <sup><2437></sup>Jeremiah 13:17 <sup><4836></sup>Deuteronomy 8:16).

**17.** An image of anguish accompanied with expectation, to be followed by joy that will cause the anguish utterly to be forgotten. Zion, looking for deliverance, seemingly in vain, but really about to be gloriously saved (<sup><3049></sup>Micah 4:9,10-13 5:1-3 <sup><4921></sup>John 16:21,22).

**18. *brought forth wind*** — MICHAELIS explains this of the disease *empneumosis*. Rather, “wind” is a figure for that which proves an

*abortive effort*. The “we” is in antithesis to “Thy,” “my” (<sup>2309</sup>Isaiah 26:19), what *we* vainly attempt, *God* will accomplish.

***not wrought ... deliverance in ... earth*** — literally, “the land (Judea) is *not made security*,” that is, is not become a place of security from our enemies.

***neither ... world fallen*** — The “world” at large, is in antithesis to “the earth,” that is, Judea. The world at enmity with the city of God has not been subdued. But MAURER explains “fallen,” according to *Arabic* idiom, of the *birth* of a child, which is said to *fall* when being born; “inhabitants of the world (*Israel*, <sup>2304</sup>Isaiah 24:4; not the world in general) are not yet born”; that is, the country as yet lies desolate, and is not yet populated.

**19.** In antithesis to <sup>2304</sup>Isaiah 26:14, “They (Israel’s foes) shall not live”; “Thy (Jehovah’s) dead men (the Jews) shall live,” that is, primarily, *be restored, spiritually* (<sup>2501</sup>Isaiah 54:1-3), *civilly and nationally* (<sup>2305</sup>Isaiah 26:15); whereas Thy foes shall not; ultimately, and in the fullest scope of the prophecy, *restored to life literally* (<sup>3501</sup>Ezekiel 37:1-14 <sup>2721</sup>Daniel 12:2).

***together with my dead body*** — rather, “my dead body,” or “bodies” (the Jewish nation personified, which had been spiritually and civilly dead; or the nation, as a parent, speaking of the *bodies* of her children individually, see on <sup>2309</sup>Isaiah 26:9, “I,” “My”): Jehovah’s “dead” and “my dead” are one and the same [HORSLEY]. However, as Jesus is the antitype to Israel (<sup>4025</sup>Matthew 2:15), *English Version* gives a true sense, and one ultimately contemplated in the prophecy: *Christ’s* dead body being raised again is the source of Jehovah’s people (*all*, and especially believers, the spiritual Israelites) also being raised (<sup>4651</sup>1 Corinthians 15:20-22).

***Awake*** — (<sup>4054</sup>Ephesians 5:14), spiritually.

***in dust*** — prostrate and dead, spiritually and nationally; also literally (<sup>2502</sup>Isaiah 25:12 47:1).

***dew*** — which falls copiously in the East and supplies somewhat the lack of rain (<sup>3845</sup>Hosea 14:5).

***cast out ... dead*** — that is, shall bring them forth to life again.

**20. *enter ... chambers*** — When God is about to take vengeance on the ungodly, the saints shall be shut in by Him in a place of safety, as Noah and his family were in the days of the flood (<sup>4076</sup>Genesis 7:16), and as Israel was commanded not to go out of doors on the night of the slaying of the Egyptian first-born (<sup>0122</sup>Exodus 12:22,23 <sup>4912</sup>Psalms 31:20 83:3). The saints are calmly and confidently to await the issue (<sup>0143</sup>Exodus 14:13,14).

21. (~~300E~~ Micah 1:3 ~~6014~~ Jude 1:14).

*disclose ... blood* — (~~0010~~ Genesis 4:10,11 ~~1818~~ Job 16:18 ~~3207~~ Ezekiel 24:7,8).  
All the innocent blood shed, and all other wrongs done, so long seemingly  
with impunity, shall then be avenged (~~6606~~ Revelation 16:6).

# CHAPTER 27

## ISAIAH 27:1-13.

### CONTINUATION OF THE TWENTY-FOURTH, TWENTY-FIFTH, AND TWENTY-SIXTH CHAPTERS.

At the time when Israel shall be delivered, and the ungodly nations punished, God shall punish also the great enemy of the Church.

1. *sore* — rather, “hard,” “well-tempered.”

*leviathan* — literally, in *Arabic*, “the twisted animal,” applicable to every great tenant of the waters, sea-serpents, crocodiles, etc. In <sup>290B</sup>Ezekiel 29:3 32:2 <sup>200E</sup>Daniel 7:1, etc. <sup>600B</sup>Revelation 12:3, etc., potentates hostile to Israel are similarly described; antitypically and ultimately Satan is intended (<sup>600B</sup>Revelation 20:10).

*piercing* — rigid [LOWTH]. Flying [MAURER and *Septuagint*]. Long, extended, namely, as the crocodile which cannot readily bend back its body [HOUBIGANT].

*crooked* — winding.

*dragon* — *Hebrew*, *tenin*; the crocodile.

*sea* — the Euphrates, or the expansion of it near Babylon.

2. In that day when leviathan shall be destroyed, the vineyard (<sup>800B</sup>Psalms 80:8), the Church of God, purged of its blemishes, shall be *lovely* in God’s eyes; to bring out this sense the better, LOWTH, by changing a *Hebrew* letter, reads “pleasant,” “lovely,” for “red wine.”

*sing* — a *responsive* song [LOWTH].

*unto her* — rather, “concerning her” (see on <sup>200B</sup>Isaiah 5:1); namely, the Jewish state [MAURER].

3. *lest any hurt it* — attack it [MAURER]. “Lest aught be wanting in her” [HORSLEY].

4. *Fury is not in me* — that is I entertain no longer anger towards my vine.

*who would set ... in battle* — that is, would that I had the briars, etc. (the wicked foe; <sup><2198></sup>Isaiah 9:18 10:17 <sup><1216></sup>2 Samuel 23:6), before me! “I would go through,” or rather, “*against* them.”

**5. Or** — Else; the only alternative, if Israel’s enemies wish to escape being “burnt together.”

*strength* — rather, “the refuge which I afford” [MAURER]. “Take hold,” refers to the horns of the altar which fugitives often *laid hold* of as an asylum (<sup><1053></sup>1 Kings 1:50 2:28). Jesus is God’s “strength,” or “refuge” which sinners must repair to and take hold of, if they are to have “peace” with God (<sup><3634></sup>Isaiah 45:24 <sup><6104></sup>Romans 5:1 <sup><4124></sup>Ephesians 2:14; compare <sup><8221></sup>Job 22:21).

**6. He** — Jehovah. Here the song of the Lord as to His vineyard (<sup><2370></sup>Isaiah 27:2-5) ends; and the prophet confirms the sentiment in the song, under the same image of a *vine* (compare <sup><9213></sup>Psalms 92:13-15 <sup><3416></sup>Hosea 14:5,6).

*Israel ... fill ... world* — (<sup><6112></sup>Romans 11:12).

**7. him ... those** — Israel — Israel’s enemies. Has God punished His people as severely as He has those enemies whom He employed to chastise Israel? No! Far from it. Israel, after trials, He will restore; Israel’s enemies He will utterly destroy at last.

*the slaughter of them that are slain by him* — rather, “Is *Israel* slain according to the slaughter of *the enemy slain*?” the slaughter wherewith the enemy is slain [MAURER].

**8. In measure** — not beyond measure; in moderation (<sup><8216></sup>Job 23:6 <sup><4016></sup>Psalms 6:1 <sup><2102></sup>Jeremiah 10:24 30:11 46:28).

*when it shooteth* — image from the vine; rather, passing from the image to the thing itself, “*when sending her away* (namely, Israel to exile; <sup><2811></sup>Isaiah 50:1, God only *putting* the adulteress *away* when He might justly have put her to death), Thou didst *punish* her” [GESENIUS].

*stayeth* — rather, as *Margin*, “*when He removeth it* by His rough wind in the day,” etc.

*east wind* — especially violent in the East (<sup><8721></sup>Job 27:21 <sup><2487></sup>Jeremiah 18:17).

**9. By this** — exile of Israel (the “sending away,” <sup><2708></sup>Isaiah 27:8).

*purged* — expiated [HORSLEY].

**all the fruit** — This is the whole *benefit* designed to be brought about by the chastisement; namely, the removal of his (Israel's) sin (namely, object of idolatry (<sup><612></sup>Deuteronomy 9:21 <sup><3108></sup>Hosea 10:8)).

**when he** — Jehovah; at the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, His instrument. The Jews ever since have abhorred idolatry (compare <sup><3108></sup>Isaiah 17:8).

**not stand up** — shall rise no more [HORSLEY].

**10. city** — Jerusalem; the beating asunder of whose altars and images was mentioned in (<sup><2107></sup>Isaiah 27:9 (compare <sup><2340></sup>Isaiah 24:10-12)).

**calf feed** — (<sup><2107></sup>Isaiah 17:2); it shall be a vast wild pasture.

**branches** — resuming the image of the vine (<sup><2106></sup>Isaiah 27:6).

**11. boughs ... broken off** — so the Jews are called (<sup><5117></sup>Romans 11:17,19,20).

**set ... on fire** — burn them as fuel; “women” are specified, as probably it was their office to collect fuel and kindle the fire for cooking.

**no understanding** — as to the ways of God (<sup><6128></sup>Deuteronomy 32:28,29 <sup><4151></sup>Jeremiah 5:21 <sup><2106></sup>Hosea 4:6).

**12.** Restoration of the Jews from their dispersion, described under the image of fruits shaken from trees and collected.

**beat off** — as fruit beaten off a tree with a stick (<sup><6141></sup>Deuteronomy 24:20), and then gathered.

**river** — Euphrates.

**stream of Egypt** — on the confines of Palestine and Egypt (<sup><0615></sup>Numbers 34:5 <sup><6654></sup>Joshua 15:4,47), now *Wady-el-Arish*, Jehovah's vineyard, Israel, extended according to His purpose from the Nile to the Euphrates (<sup><1103></sup>1 Kings 4:21,24 <sup><5718></sup>Psalms 72:8).

**one by one** — gathered most carefully, not merely as a nation, but as *individuals*.

**13. great trumpet** — image from the trumpets blown on the first day of the seventh month to summon the people to a holy convocation (<sup><6234></sup>Leviticus 23:24). Antotypically, the gospel trumpet (<sup><6115></sup>Revelation 11:15 14:6) which the Jews shall hearken to in the last days (<sup><3120></sup>Zechariah 12:10 13:1). As the passover in the first month answers to Christ's crucifixion, so the day of atonement and the idea of “salvation connected with the feast of tabernacles

in the same seventh month, answer to the *crowning* of “redemption” at His second coming; therefore *redemption* is put last in <sup>4033</sup>1 Corinthians 1:30.

**Assyria** — whither the ten tribes had been carried; Babylonia is mainly meant, to which Assyria at that time belonged; the two tribes were restored, and *some* of the ten accompanied them. However, “Assyria” is designedly used to point *ultimately* to the future restoration of the ten *fully*, never yet accomplished (<sup>4188</sup>Jeremiah 3:18).

**Egypt** — whither many had fled at the Babylonish captivity (<sup>4417</sup>Jeremiah 41:17,18). Compare as to the future restoration, <sup>23111</sup>Isaiah 11:11,12,16 51:9-16 (“Rahab” being Egypt).

# CHAPTER 28

## ISAIAH 28:1-29.

The twenty-eighth through thirty-third chapters form almost one continuous prophecy concerning the destruction of Ephraim, the impiety and folly of Judah, the danger of their league with Egypt, the straits they would be reduced to by Assyria, from which Jehovah would deliver them on their turning to Him; the twenty-eighth chapter refers to the time just before the sixth year of Hezekiah's reign, the rest not very long before his fourteenth year.

**1. crown of pride** — Hebrew for “proud crown of the drunkards,” etc. [HORSLEY], namely, Samaria, the capital of Ephraim, or Israel. “Drunkards,” literally (<sup>2307</sup>Isaiah 28:7,8 <sup>2311</sup>Isaiah 5:11,22 <sup>3001</sup>Amos 4:1 6:1-6) and metaphorically, *like drunkards*, rushing on to their own destruction.

**beauty ... flower** — “whose glorious beauty or ornament is a fading flower.” Carrying on the image of “drunkards”; it was the custom at feasts to wreath the brow with *flowers*; so Samaria, “which is (not as *English Version*, ‘which are’) upon the head of the fertile valley,” that is, situated on a hill surrounded with the rich valleys as a garland (<sup>1163</sup>1 Kings 16:24); but the garland is “fading,” as garlands often do, because Ephraim is now close to ruin (compare <sup>2308</sup>Isaiah 16:8); fulfilled 721 B.C. (<sup>1716</sup>2 Kings 17:6,24).

**2. strong one** — the Assyrian (<sup>2305</sup>Isaiah 10:5).

**cast down** — namely, Ephraim (<sup>2301</sup>Isaiah 28:1) and Samaria, its crown.

**with ... hand** — with violence (<sup>2311</sup>Isaiah 8:11).

**3. crown ... the drunkards** — rather, “the crown of the drunkards.”

**4.** Rather, “the fading flower, their glorious beauty (<sup>2301</sup>Isaiah 28:1), which is on the head of the fat (fertile) valley, shall be as the early fig” [G. V. SMITH]. Figs usually ripened in August; but earlier ones (*Hebrew bikkurah*, Spanish *bokkore*) in June, and were regarded as a delicacy (<sup>2301</sup>Jeremiah 24:2 <sup>3000</sup>Hosea 9:10 <sup>3000</sup>Micah 7:1).

**while it is yet** — that is, *immediately*, without delay; describing the *eagerness* of the Assyrian Shalmaneser, not merely to conquer, but to *destroy utterly* Samaria; whereas other conquered cities were often spared.

**5-13.** The prophet now turns to Judah; a gracious promise to the remnant (“residue”); a warning lest through like sins Judah should share the fate of Samaria.

***crown*** — in antithesis to the “*fading crown*” of Ephraim (<sup><2380F></sup>Isaiah 28:1,3).

***the residue*** — primarily, *Judah*, in the prosperous reign of Hezekiah (<sup><1280F></sup>2 Kings 18:7), antitypically, *the elect of God*; as He here is called *their* “crown and diadem,” so are they called *His* (<sup><2318F></sup>Isaiah 62:3); a beautiful reciprocity.

**6.** Jehovah will inspire their magistrates with justice, and their soldiers with strength of spirit.

***turn ... battle to ... gate*** — the defenders of their country who not only repel the foe from themselves, but drive him to the gates of his own cities (<sup><10123F></sup>2 Samuel 11:23 <sup><1280F></sup>2 Kings 18:8).

**7.** Though Judah is to survive the fall of Ephraim, yet “they also” (the men of Judah) have perpetrated like sins to those of Samaria (<sup><2180F></sup>Isaiah 5:3,11), which must be chastised by God.

***erred ... are out of the way*** — “stagger ... reel.” Repeated, to express the *frequency* of the vice.

***priest ... prophet*** — If the ministers of religion sin so grievously, how much more the other rulers (<sup><2560F></sup>Isaiah 56:10,12)!

***vision*** — even in that most sacred function of the prophet to declare God’s will revealed to them.

***judgment*** — The priests had the administration of the law committed to them (<sup><1570F></sup>Deuteronomy 17:9 19:17). It was against the law for the priests to take wine before entering the tabernacle (<sup><1500F></sup>Leviticus 10:9 <sup><2640F></sup>Ezekiel 44:21).

**9, 10.** Here the drunkards are introduced as scoffingly commenting on Isaiah’s warnings: “Whom *will* he (does *Isaiah* presume to) teach knowledge? And whom will He make to understand *instruction*? Is it those (that is, does he take us to be) just weaned, etc.? For (he is constantly repeating, as if to little children) precept upon precept,” etc.

***line*** — a rule or law. [MAURER]. The repetition of sounds in *Hebrew*. *tzav latzav, tzav latzav, gav laqav, gav laquav*, expresses the scorn of the imitators of Isaiah’s speaking; he spoke *stammering* (<sup><2380F></sup>Isaiah 28:11). God’s mode of teaching offends by its simplicity the pride of sinners (<sup><1151F></sup>2 Kings 5:11,12 <sup><10123F></sup>1 Corinthians 1:23). *Stammerers* as they were by

drunkenness, and children in knowledge of God, they needed to be spoken to in the language of children, and “with stammering lips” (compare <sup><0138></sup>Matthew 13:13). A just and merciful retribution.

**11. For** — rather, “Truly.” This is *Isaiah’s reply to the scoffers*: Your drunken questions shall be answered by the severe lessons from God conveyed through the Assyrians and Babylonians; the dialect of these, though Semitic, like the *Hebrew*, was so far different as to sound to the Jews like the speech of *stammerers* (compare <sup><2339></sup>Isaiah 33:19 36:11). To them who will not understand God will speak still more unintelligibly.

**12.** Rather, “He (Jehovah) who hath said to them.”

**this ... the rest** — Reference may be primarily to “rest” from national warlike preparations, the Jews being at the time “weary” through various preceding calamities, as the Syro-Israelite invasion (<sup><2008></sup>Isaiah 7:8; compare <sup><2305></sup>Isaiah 30:15 22:8 39:2 36:1 <sup><2808></sup>2 Kings 18:8). But spiritually, the “rest” meant is that to be found in obeying those very “precepts” of God (<sup><2300></sup>Isaiah 28:10) which they jeered at (compare <sup><2166></sup>Jeremiah 6:16 <sup><0129></sup>Matthew 11:29).

**13. But** — rather, “Therefore,” namely, because “they would not hear” (<sup><2302></sup>Isaiah 28:12).

**that they might go** — the *designed result* to those who, from a defect of the *will*, so far from profiting by God’s mode of instructing, “precept upon precept,” etc., made it into a stumbling-block (<sup><2065></sup>Hosea 6:5 8:12 <sup><0134></sup>Matthew 13:14).

**go, and fall** — image appropriately from “drunkards” (<sup><2300></sup>Isaiah 28:7, which they were) who in trying to “go forward fall backward.”

**14. scornful** — (See on <sup><2309></sup>Isaiah 28:9).

**15. said** — virtually, in your conduct, if not in words.

**covenant** — There may be a tacit reference to their confidence in their “covenant” with the Assyrians in the early part of Hezekiah’s prosperous reign, before he ceased to pay tribute to them, as if it ensured Judah from evil, whatever might befall the neighboring Ephraim (<sup><2300></sup>Isaiah 28:1). The *full* meaning is shown by the language (“covenant with death — hell,” or *sheol*) to apply to all lulled in false security spiritually (<sup><0104></sup>Psalm 12:4 <sup><2008></sup>Ecclesiastes 8:8 <sup><2081></sup>Jeremiah 8:11); the godly alone are in covenant with death (<sup><0023></sup>Job 5:23 <sup><2028></sup>Hosea 2:18 <sup><4022></sup>1 Corinthians 3:22).

**overflowing scourge** — two metaphors: the hostile Assyrian armies like an overwhelming flood.

**pass through** — namely, through Judea on their way to Egypt, to punish it as the protector of Samaria (<sup><2774></sup>2 Kings 17:4).

**lies** — *They* did not use these *words*, but Isaiah designates their sentiments by their true name (<sup><3104></sup>Amos 2:4).

**16.** Literally, “*Behold Me as Him who has laid*”; namely, in My divine counsel (<sup><6138></sup>Revelation 13:8); none save I could lay it (<sup><2335></sup>Isaiah 63:5).

**stone** — *Jesus Christ; Hezekiah* [MAURER], or *the temple* [EWALD], do not realize the full significance of the language; but only in type point to Him, in whom the prophecy receives its exhaustive accomplishment; whether *Isaiah* understood its fullness or not (<sup><6111></sup>1 Peter 1:11,12), the Holy Ghost plainly contemplated its fulfillment in Christ alone; so in <sup><2331></sup>Isaiah 32:1; compare <sup><1442></sup>Genesis 49:24 <sup><1482></sup>Psalms 118:22 <sup><1210></sup>Matthew 21:42 <sup><5011></sup>Romans 10:11 <sup><1029></sup>Ephesians 2:20.

**tried** — both by the devil (<sup><1403></sup>Luke 4:1-13) and by men (<sup><2101></sup>Luke 20:1-38), and even by God (<sup><1274></sup>Matthew 27:46); a stone of tested solidity to bear the vast superstructure of man’s redemption. The *tested righteousness* of Christ gives its peculiar merit to His vicarious sacrifice. The connection with the context is; though a “scourge” shall visit Judea (<sup><2385></sup>Isaiah 28:15), yet God’s gracious purpose as to the elect remnant, and His kingdom of which “Zion” shall be the center, shall not fail, because its rests on Messiah (<sup><1024></sup>Matthew 7:24,25 <sup><5129></sup>2 Timothy 2:19).

**precious** — literally “of preciousness,” so in the *Greek*, (<sup><6017></sup>1 Peter 2:7). *He is preciousness.*

**corner-stone** — (<sup><1057></sup>1 Kings 5:17 7:9 <sup><8306></sup>Job 38:6); the stone laid at the corner where two walls meet and connecting them; often costly.

**make haste** — flee in hasty alarm; but the *Septuagint* has “be ashamed”; so <sup><5133></sup>Romans 9:33, and <sup><6116></sup>1 Peter 2:6, “be confounded,” substantially the same idea; he who rests on Him shall not have the shame of disappointment, nor flee in sudden panic (see <sup><2315></sup>Isaiah 30:15 32:17).

**17. line** — the measuring-line of the plummet. HORSLEY translates, “I will appoint judgment for the rule, and justice for the plummet.” As the corner-stone stands most perpendicular and exactly proportioned, so Jehovah, while holding out grace to believers in the Foundation-stone, will judge the scoffers (<sup><2385></sup>Isaiah 28:15) according to the exact *justice* of the law (compare <sup><5123></sup>James 2:13).

**hail** — divine judgment (<sup><2319></sup>Isaiah 30:30 32:19).

**18. *disannulled*** — obliterated, as letters traced on a waxen tablet are obliterated by passing the stylus over it.

***trodden down*** — passing from the metaphor in “scourge” to the thing meant, the *army* which *treads down* its enemies.

**19. *From the time***, etc. — rather, “As often as it comes over (that is, passes through), it shall overtake you” [HORSLEY]; like a flood returning *from time to time*, frequent hostile invasions shall assail Judah, after the deportation of the ten tribes.

***vexation ... understand ... report*** — rather, “It shall be a terror even to hear the mere report of it” [MAURER], (<sup><4981></sup>1 Samuel 3:11). But G. V. SMITH, “Hard treatment (HORSLEY, ‘dispersion’) only shall make you to understand instruction”; they scorned at the simple way in which the prophet offered it (<sup><2309></sup>Isaiah 28:9); therefore, they must be taught by the severe teachings of adversity.

**20.** Proverbial, for they shall find all their sources of confidence fail them; all shall be hopeless perplexity in their affairs.

**21. *Perazim*** — In the valley of Rephaim (<sup><1058></sup>2 Samuel 5:18,20 <sup><1341></sup>1 Chronicles 14:11), there Jehovah, by David, *broke forth* as waters do, and made a *breach* among the *Philistines*, David’s enemies, as *Perazim* means, expressing a sudden and complete overthrow.

***Gibeon*** — (<sup><1346></sup>1 Chronicles 14:16 <sup><1052></sup>2 Samuel 5:25, *Margin*); not Joshua’s victory (<sup><4900></sup>Joshua 10:10).

***strange*** — as being against His own people; judgment is not what God delights in; it is, though necessary, yet strange to Him (<sup><2133></sup>Lamentations 3:33).

***work*** — punishing the guilty (<sup><2302></sup>Isaiah 10:12).

**22. *mockers*** — a sin which they had committed (<sup><2309></sup>Isaiah 28:9,10).

***bands*** — their Assyrian bondage (<sup><2307></sup>Isaiah 10:27); Judah was then tributary to Assyria; or, “lest your punishment be made still more severe” (<sup><2302></sup>Isaiah 24:22).

***consumption*** — destruction (<sup><2302></sup>Isaiah 10:22,23 <sup><2107></sup>Daniel 9:27).

**23.** Calling attention to the following illustration from husbandry (<sup><4901></sup>Psalms 49:1,2). As the husbandman does his different kinds of work, each in its *right time* and *due proportion*, so God adapts His measures to the varying

exigencies of the several cases: now mercy, now judgments; now punishing sooner, now later (an answer to the scoff that His judgments, being put off so long, would never come at all, <sup><2169></sup>Isaiah 5:19); His object being not to *destroy* His people any more than the farmer's object in threshing is to destroy his crop; this vindicates God's "strange work" (<sup><2320></sup>Isaiah 28:21) in punishing His people. Compare the same image, <sup><2416></sup>Jeremiah 24:6 <sup><2123></sup>Hosea 2:23 <sup><4182></sup>Matthew 3:12.

**24. *all day*** — emphatic; he is not *always* ploughing: he also "sows," and that, too, in accordance with sure rules (<sup><2325></sup>Isaiah 28:25).

***doth he open*** — supply "always." Is he *always harrowing*?

**25. *face*** — the "surface" of the ground: "made plain," or level, by harrowing.

***fitches*** — rather, "dill," or "fennel"; *Nigella romana*, with black seed, easily beaten out, used as a condiment and medicine in the East. So the *Septuagint*, "cummin" was used in the same way.

***cast in ... principal wheat*** — rather, *plant the wheat in rows* (for wheat was thought to yield the largest crop, by being planted sparingly [PLINY, *Natural History*, 18.21]); [MAURER]; "sow the wheat regularly" [HORSLEY]. But GESENIUS, like *English Version*, "fat," or "principal," that is, excellent wheat.

***appointed barley*** — rather, "barley in its appointed place" [MAURER].

***in their place*** — rather, "in its (the field's) border" [MAURER].

**26. *to discretion*** — in the due rules of husbandry; God first taught it to man (<sup><4023></sup>Genesis 3:23).

**27.** The husbandman uses the same discretion in threshing. The dill ("fitches") and cummin, leguminous and tender grains, are beaten out, not as wheat, etc., with the heavy corn-drag ("threshing instrument"), but with "a staff"; heavy instruments would crush and injure the seed.

***cart wheel*** — two iron wheels armed with iron teeth, like a saw, joined together by a wooden axle. The "corn-drag" was made of three or four wooden cylinders, armed with iron teeth or flint stones fixed underneath, and joined like a sledge. Both instruments cut the straw for fodder as well as separated the corn.

***staff*** — used also where they had but a small quantity of *corn*; the flail (<sup><4027></sup>Ruth 2:17).

**28. Bread corn** — corn of which bread is made.

**bruised** — *threshed* with the corn-drag (as contrasted with dill and cummin, “beaten with the staff”), or, “trodden out” by the hoofs of cattle driven over it on the threshing-floor [G. V. SMITH], (<sup><46204></sup>Deuteronomy 25:4 <sup><3043></sup>Micah 4:13).

**because** — rather, “but” [HORSLEY]; though the corn is threshed with the heavy instrument, *yet* he will not always be thus threshing it.

**break it** — “drive over it (continually) the wheel” [MAURER].

**cart** — threshing-drag.

**horsemen** — rather, “horses”; used to tread out corn.

**29. This also** — The skill wherewith the husbandman duly adjusts his modes of threshing is given by God, as well as the skill (<sup><23309></sup>Isaiah 28:26) wherewith he tills and sows (<sup><23304></sup>Isaiah 28:24,25). Therefore He must also be able to adapt His modes of treatment to the several moral needs of His creatures. His object in sending *tribulation* (derived from the Latin *tribulum*, a “threshing instrument,” <sup><02281></sup>Luke 22:31 <sup><46168></sup>Romans 5:3) is to sever the moral chaff from the wheat, not to crush utterly; “His judgments are usually in the line of our offenses; by the nature of the judgments we may usually ascertain the nature of the sin” [BARNES].

# CHAPTER 29

## ISAIAH 29:1-24.

### COMING INVASION OF JERUSALEM: ITS FAILURE: UNBELIEF OF THE JEWS.

This chapter opens the series of prophecies as to the invasion of Judea under Sennacherib, and its deliverance.

1. **Ariel** — Jerusalem; Ariel means “Lion of God,” that is, city rendered by God invincible: the lion is emblem of a mighty hero (<sup>4133</sup>2 Samuel 23:20). Otherwise “Hearth of God,” that is, place where the altar-fire continually burns to God (<sup>2309</sup>Isaiah 31:9 <sup>4685</sup>Ezekiel 43:15,16).

**add ... year to year** — ironically; suffer one year after another to glide on in the round of formal, heartless “sacrifices.” Rather, “add yet another year” to the one just closed [MAURER]. Let a year elapse and a little more (<sup>2309</sup>Isaiah 32:10, *Margin*).

**let ... kill sacrifices** — rather, “let the beasts (of another year) go round” [MAURER]; that is, after the completion of a year “I will distress Ariel.”

2. **Yet** — rather, “Then.”

**heaviness ... sorrow** — rather, preserving the *Hebrew* paronomasia, “groaning” and “moaning.”

**as Ariel** — either, “the city shall be as a *lion of God*,” that is, it shall emerge from its dangers unvanquished; or “it shall be as the *altar of burnt offering*,” consuming with fire the besiegers (<sup>2306</sup>Isaiah 29:6 <sup>2309</sup>Isaiah 30:30 <sup>3102</sup>Leviticus 10:2); or best, as <sup>2303</sup>Isaiah 29:3 continues the *threat*, and the promise of *deliverance* does not come till <sup>2304</sup>Isaiah 29:4, “it shall be like a hearth of burning,” that is, a scene of devastation by fire [G. V. SMITH]. The prophecy, probably, contemplates *ultimately*, besides the affliction and deliverance in Sennacherib’s time, the destruction of Jerusalem by Rome, the dispersion of the Jews, their restoration, the destruction of the enemies that besiege the city (<sup>3842</sup>Zechariah 14:2), and the final glory of Israel (<sup>2307</sup>Isaiah 29:17-24).

3. **I** — *Jehovah*, acting through the Assyrian, etc., His instruments (<sup>2305</sup>Isaiah 10:5).

**mount** — an artificial *mound* formed to out-top high walls (<sup><2353B></sup>Isaiah 37:33); else a *station*, namely, of warriors, for the siege.

**round about** — not *fully* realized under Sennacherib, but in the Roman siege (<sup><298B></sup>Luke 19:43 21:20).

**forts** — siege-towers (<sup><1510B></sup>Deuteronomy 20:20).

4. Jerusalem shall be as a captive, humbled to the dust. Her voice shall come from the earth as that of the spirit charmers or necromancers (<sup><2389B></sup>Isaiah 8:19), faint and shrill, as the voice of the dead was supposed to be. Ventriloquism was doubtless the trick caused to make the voice appear to come from the earth (<sup><239B></sup>Isaiah 19:3). An appropriate retribution that Jerusalem, which consulted necromancers, should be made like them!

5. **Moreover** — rather, “Yet”; yet in this extremity help shall come, and the enemy be scattered.

**strangers** — foreign enemies, invaders (<sup><232B></sup>Isaiah 25:2).

**it shall be** — namely, the destruction of the enemy.

**at an instant** — in a moment (<sup><2312B></sup>Isaiah 30:23).

6. **Thou** — the Assyrian army.

**thunder**, etc. — not literally, in the case of the Assyrians (<sup><2377B></sup>Isaiah 37:36); but figuratively for an awful judgment (<sup><2389B></sup>Isaiah 30:30 28:17). The ulterior fulfillment, in the case of the Jews’ foes in the last days, may be more literal (see as to “earthquake,” <sup><344B></sup>Zechariah 14:4).

7. **munition** — fortress.

8. Their disappointment in the very height of their confident expectation of taking Jerusalem shall be as great as that of the hungry man who in a dream fancies he eats, but awakes to hunger still (<sup><4973B></sup>Psalms 73:20); their dream shall be dissipated on the fatal morning (<sup><2377B></sup>Isaiah 37:36).

**soul** — simply *his appetite*: he is still thirsty.

9. **Stay** — rather, “Be astounded”; expressing the stupid and amazed incredulity with which the Jews received Isaiah’s announcement.

**wonder** — The second imperative, as often (<sup><2389B></sup>Isaiah 8:9), is a threat; the first is a simple declaration of a fact, “Be astounded, since you choose to be so, at the prophecy, soon *you will be amazed* at the sight of the actual event” [MAURER].

**cry ... out ... cry** — rather, “Be ye blinded (since you choose to be so, though the light shines all round you), and soon ye shall be blinded” in good earnest to your sorrow [MAURER], (<sup>23169</sup>Isaiah 6:9,10).

**not with wine** — but with spiritual paralysis (<sup>25177</sup>Isaiah 51:17,21).

**ye ... they** — The change from speaking *to*, to speaking *of* them, intimates that the prophet turns away from them to a greater distance, because of their stupid unbelief.

**10.** Jehovah gives them up judicially to their own hardness of heart (compare <sup>38437</sup>Zechariah 14:13). Quoted by Paul, with variations from the *Septuagint*, <sup>61108</sup>Romans 11:8. See <sup>23660</sup>Isaiah 6:10 <sup>49623</sup>Psalms 69:23.

**eyes; the prophets**, etc. — rather, “hath closed your eyes, the prophets; and your heads (*Margin*; see also <sup>23822</sup>Isaiah 3:2), the seers, He hath covered.” The Orientals cover the head to sleep; thus “covered” is parallel to “closed your eyes” (<sup>40049</sup>Judges 4:19). Covering the face was also preparatory to execution (<sup>47008</sup>Esther 7:8). This cannot apply to the time when Isaiah himself prophesied, but to subsequent times.

**11. of all** — rather, “*the whole* vision.” “Vision” is the same here as “revelation,” or “law”; in <sup>23815</sup>Isaiah 28:15, the same *Hebrew* word is translated, “covenant” [MAURER].

**sealed** — (<sup>23869</sup>Isaiah 8:16), God seals up the truth so that even the learned, because they lack believing docility, cannot discern it (<sup>4030</sup>Matthew 13:10-17 11:25). Prophecy remained comparatively a *sealed* volume (<sup>2704</sup>Daniel 12:4,9), until Jesus, who “alone is worthy,” “opened the seals” (<sup>4600</sup>Revelation 5:1-5,9 6:1).

**12.** The unlearned succeed no better than the learned, not from want of human learning, as they fancy, but from not having the teaching of God (<sup>2843</sup>Isaiah 54:13 <sup>2813</sup>Jeremiah 31:34 <sup>4165</sup>John 6:45 <sup>4017</sup>1 Corinthians 2:7-10 <sup>4120</sup>1 John 2:20).

**13. precept of men** — instead of the precepts of God, given by His prophets; also worship external, and by rule, not heartfelt as God requires (<sup>4004</sup>John 4:24). Compare Christ’s quotation of this verse from the *Septuagint*.

**14.** (<sup>3008</sup>Habakkuk 1:5 <sup>4434</sup>Acts 13:41). The “*marvellous* work” is one of *unparalleled* vengeance on the hypocrites: compare “*strange* work,” <sup>2322</sup>Isaiah 28:21. The judgment, too, will visit the wise in that respect in which they most pride themselves; their *wisdom* shall be hid, that is, shall

no longer appear, so as to help the nation in its distress (compare <sup><4019></sup>1 Corinthians 1:19).

**15. seek deep to hide** — rather, “That seek to hide deeply,” etc. (compare <sup><2301></sup>Isaiah 30:1,2). The reference is to the *secret* plan which many of the Jewish nobles had of seeking Egyptian aid against Assyria, contrary to the advice of Isaiah. At the same time the hypocrite in general is described, who, under a plausible exterior, tries to hide his real character, not only from men, but even from God.

**16.** Rather, “Ah! your perverseness! just as if the potter should be esteemed as the clay!” [MAURER]. Or, “Ye invert (turn upside down) the order of things, putting yourselves instead of God,” and vice versa, just as if the potter should be esteemed as the clay [HORSLEY], (<sup><2351></sup>Isaiah 45:9 64:8).

**17. turned** — as contrasted with *your* “turnings of things upside down” (<sup><2301></sup>Isaiah 29:16), there shall be other and better *turnings* or revolutions; the outpouring of the Spirit in the latter days (<sup><2301></sup>Isaiah 32:15); first on the Jews; which shall be followed by their national restoration (see on <sup><2301></sup>Isaiah 29:2; <sup><3801></sup>Zechariah 12:10) then on the Gentiles (<sup><2301></sup>Joel 2:28).

**fruitful field** — literally, “a Carmel” (see on <sup><2301></sup>Isaiah 10:18). The moral change in the Jewish nation shall be as great as if the wooded Lebanon were to become a fruitful field, and vice versa. Compare <sup><4011></sup>Matthew 11:12, *Greek*: “the kingdom of heaven *forces itself*,” as it were, on man’s acceptance; instead of men having to seek Messiah, as they had John, in a *desert*, He presents Himself before them with loving invitations; thus men’s hearts, once a moral desert, are reclaimed so as to bear fruits of righteousness: vice versa, the ungodly who seemed prosperous, both in the moral and literal sense, shall be exhibited in their real barrenness.

**18. deaf ... blind** — (Compare <sup><4011></sup>Matthew 11:5). The spiritually blind, etc., are chiefly meant; “the book,” as Revelation is called pre-eminently, shall be no longer “sealed,” as is described (<sup><2301></sup>Isaiah 29:11), but the most unintelligent shall hear and see (<sup><2301></sup>Isaiah 35:5).

**19. meek** — rather, *the afflicted* godly: the idea is, *virtuous suffering* (<sup><2301></sup>Isaiah 61:1 <sup><4201></sup>Psalms 25:9 37:11) [BARNES].

**poor among men** — that is, the poorest of men, namely, the pious poor.

**rejoice** — when they see their oppressors punished (<sup><2301></sup>Isaiah 29:20,21), and Jehovah exhibited as their protector and rewarder (<sup><2301></sup>Isaiah 29:22-24 <sup><2417></sup>Isaiah 41:17 <sup><4011></sup>James 2:5).

**20. terrible** — namely, the persecutors among the Jewish nobles.

**scorner** — (<sup><2384></sup>Isaiah 28:14,22).

**watch for** — not only commit iniquity, but watch for opportunities of committing it, and make it their whole study (see <sup><3101></sup>Micah 2:1 <sup><1859></sup>Matthew 26:59 27:1).

**21.** Rather, “Who make a man guilty in his *cause*” [GESENIUS], that is, unjustly condemn him. “A man” is in the *Hebrew a poor man*, upon whom such unjust condemnations might be practiced with more impunity than on the rich; compare <sup><2369></sup>Isaiah 29:19, “the meek ... the poor.”

**him that reproveth** — rather, “pleadeth”; one who has a suit at issue.

**gate** — the place of concourse in a city, where courts of justice were held (<sup><1841></sup>Ruth 4:11 <sup><1823></sup>Proverbs 31:23 <sup><3150></sup>Amos 5:10,12).

**just** — one who has a just cause; or, Jesus Christ, “the Just One” [HORSLEY].

**for a thing of naught** — rather, “through falsehood,” “by a decision that is null in justice” [BARNES]. Compare as to Christ, <sup><3131></sup>Proverbs 28:21 <sup><1855></sup>Matthew 26:15 <sup><4183></sup>Acts 3:13,14 8:33.

**22.** Join “saith ... concerning the house of Jacob.”

**redeemed** — out of Ur, a land of idolaters (<sup><1348></sup>Joshua 24:3).

**not now** — After the moral revolution described (<sup><2397></sup>Isaiah 29:17), the children of Jacob shall no longer give cause to their forefathers to blush for them.

**wax pale** — with shame and disappointment at the wicked degeneracy of his posterity, and fear as to their punishment.

**23. But** — rather, “For.”

**he** — Jacob.

**work of mine hands** — spiritually, as well as physically (<sup><2395></sup>Isaiah 19:25 60:21 <sup><4110></sup>Ephesians 2:10). By Jehovah’s agency Israel shall be cleansed of its corruptions, and shall consist wholly of pious men (<sup><2543></sup>Isaiah 54:13,14 2:1 60:21).

**midst of him** — that is, his land. Or else “His children” are the *Gentiles adopted among the Israelites, his lineal descendants* (<sup><4103></sup>Romans 9:26 <sup><4186></sup>Ephesians 3:6) [HORSLEY].

**24. They ... that erred** — (<sup><2307></sup>Isaiah 28:7).

*learn doctrine* — rather, “shall receive discipline” or “instruction.” “Murmuring” was the characteristic of Israel’s rebellion against God (~~Exodus 16:8~~ ~~Psalm 106:25~~). This shall be so no more. Chastisements, and, in HORSLEY’S view, the piety of the Gentiles provoking the Jews to holy jealousy (~~Romans 11:11,14~~), shall then produce the desired effect.

# CHAPTER 30

## ISAIAH 30:1-32.

### THE THIRTIETH THROUGH THIRTY-SECOND CHAPTERS REFER PROBABLY TO THE SUMMER OF 714 B.C., AS THE TWENTY-NINTH CHAPTER TO THE PASSOVER OF THAT YEAR.

Jewish ambassadors were now on their way to Egypt to seek aid against Assyria (<sup>2301</sup>Isaiah 30:2-6,15 31:1). Isaiah denounces this reliance on Egypt rather than on Jehovah. God had prohibited such alliances with heathen nations, and it was a leading part of Jewish polity that they should be a separate people (<sup>1238</sup>Exodus 23:32 <sup>1802</sup>Deuteronomy 7:2).

1. *take counsel* — rather, as <sup>2304</sup>Isaiah 30:4,6 imply, “execute counsels.”

*cover ... covering* — that is, wrap themselves in reliances disloyal towards Jehovah. “Cover” thus answers to “seek to hide deeply their counsel from the Lord” (<sup>2915</sup>Isaiah 29:15). But the *Hebrew* is literally, “who pour out libations”; as it was by these that *leagues* were made (<sup>1248</sup>Exodus 24:8 <sup>3011</sup>Zechariah 9:11), translate, “who make a league.”

*not of* — not suggested by My Spirit” (<sup>1022</sup>Numbers 27:21 <sup>1694</sup>Joshua 9:14).

*that they may add* — The *consequence* is here spoken of as their *intention*, so reckless were they of sinning: one sin entails the commission of another (<sup>1639</sup>Deuteronomy 29:19).

2. *walk* — are now setting out, namely, their ambassadors (<sup>2304</sup>Isaiah 30:4).

*Egypt* — See on <sup>2301</sup>Isaiah 19:1; <sup>2301</sup>Isaiah 20:1.

*Pharaoh* — the generic name of the kings of Egypt, as *Caesar* was at Rome. The word in Egyptian means “king” [JOSEPHUS, *Antiquities*, 8.6,2]. *Phra*, “the sun,” was the hieroglyphic symbol and title of the king.

*shadow* — image from shelter against heat: *protection* (<sup>1305</sup>Psalms 121:5,6).

3. *shame* — disappointment. Egypt, weakened by its internal dissensions, can give no solid help.

4. *his* — Judah’s (compare <sup>2302</sup>Isaiah 9:21).

**at Zoan** — are already arrived there on their errand to Pharaoh (see <sup><2391></sup>Isaiah 19:11).

**came to Hanes** — are come there. West of the Nile, in central Egypt: Egyptian *Hnes*; the Greek *Heracleopolis*: perhaps the Anysis of HERODOTUS (2.137); according to GROTIUS, *Tahpanhes* contracted (<sup><2407></sup>Jeremiah 43:7-9); the seat of a reigning prince at the time, as was Zoan, hence the Jewish ambassadors go to both.

5. (<sup><2423></sup>Jeremiah 2:36.)

6. **burden** — the prophecy as to, etc. [MAURER]; so the *Septuagint*, the fresh inscription here marks emphatically the prediction that follows. Or, rather, Isaiah sees in vision, the ambassador's beasts *burdened* with rich presents *travelling southwards* (namely, to Egypt, <sup><2716></sup>Daniel 11:5,6), and exclaims, Oh, the *burden of treasure* on the beasts! etc. (<sup><2809></sup>Hosea 8:9 12:1).

**land of trouble** — the desert between Palestine and Egypt, destitute of water and abounding in dangerous animals (<sup><4885></sup>Deuteronomy 8:15 <sup><2406></sup>Jeremiah 2:6).

**flying serpent** — (<sup><2349></sup>Isaiah 14:29), a species which springs like a dart from trees, on its prey.

**will carry** — rather, present, “carry,” namely, as presents to Egypt (<sup><1159></sup>1 Kings 15:19).

**young asses** — rather, “full-grown asses” [MAURER].

7. “Egypt is vanity, and to no purpose will they help” [G. V. SMITH].

**strength** — *Hebrew*, *Rabah*, a designation for Egypt (<sup><2509></sup>Isaiah 51:9 <sup><4804></sup>Psalms 87:4), implying her *haughty fierceness*; translate, “Therefore I call her Arrogance that sitteth still.” She who boasted of the help she would give, when it came to the test, sat still (<sup><2366></sup>Isaiah 36:6). *English Version* agrees with <sup><2305></sup>Isaiah 30:15 <sup><2304></sup>Isaiah 7:4.

8. **table** — a tablet (<sup><3012></sup>Habakkuk 2:2), which should be set in public, containing the prophecy in a briefer form, to be read by all.

**a book** — namely, a parchment roll, containing the prophecy in full, for the use of distant posterity. Its truth will be seen hereafter when the event has come to pass. See on <sup><2381></sup>Isaiah 8:1; <sup><2386></sup>Isaiah 8:16.

**for ever and ever** — rather read, “For a *testimony* for ever” [*Chaldee, JEROME, LOWTH*]: “testimony is often joined to the notion of *perpetuity* (<sup><4319></sup>Deuteronomy 31:19,21,26).

**9. lying** — unfaithful to Jehovah, whose covenant they had taken on them as His adopted *children* (<sup><2591></sup>Isaiah 59:13 <sup><3819></sup>Proverbs 30:9).

**10.** (<sup><3116></sup>Micah 2:6,11 3:5).

**See not** — as you now do, foretelling misfortune.

**Prophecy not ... right things** — Not that they avowedly requested this, but their conduct *virtually* expressed it. No man, *professedly*, wished to be deceived; but many seek a kind of teaching which is deceit; and which, if they would examine, they might know to be such (<sup><1223></sup>1 Kings 22:13). The Jews desired success to be foretold as the issue of their league with Egypt, though ill had been announced by God’s prophet as the result; this constituted the “deceits.”

**11.** Depart from the true “way” (so in <sup><4499></sup>Acts 19:9,23) of religion.

**cause ... to cease** — Let us hear no more of His name. God’s *holiness* is what troubles sinners most.

**12. Holy One** — Isaiah so little yields to their wicked prejudices that he repeats the very name and truth which they disliked.

**this word** — Isaiah’s exhortation to reliance on Jehovah.

**oppression** — whereby they levied the treasures to be sent to conciliate Egypt (<sup><2316></sup>Isaiah 30:6).

**perverseness** — in relying on Egypt, rather than on Jehovah.

**13.** Image from a curve swelling out in a wall (<sup><518></sup>Psalm 62:3); when the former gives way, it causes the downfall of the whole wall; so their policy as to Egypt.

**14. he** — the enemy; or rather, God (<sup><919></sup>Psalm 2:9 <sup><4911></sup>Jeremiah 19:11).

**It** — the Jewish state.

**potter’s vessel** — earthen and fragile.

**sherd** — a fragment of the vessel large enough to take up a live coal, etc.

**pit** — cistern or pool. The swell of the wall is at first imperceptible and gradual, but at last it comes to the crisis; so the decay of the Jewish state.

**15. *returning and rest*** — turning back from your embassy to Egypt, and ceasing from warlike preparations.

***quietness*** — answering to “wait for Him (God)” (<sup>2308</sup>Isaiah 30:18).

**16. *flee*** — not as fugitives, but we will *speed* our course; namely, against the Assyrians, by the help of cavalry supplied by Egypt (<sup>2309</sup>Isaiah 31:1). This was expressly against the Mosaic law (<sup>4576</sup>Deuteronomy 17:16; see on <sup>2310</sup>Isaiah 2:7; <sup>2348</sup>Hosea 14:3).

***shall ... flee*** — literally, “before your enemies”; their sin and its punishment correspond.

**17. *One thousand*** — A thousand *at once*, or, “*As one man*” [MAURER].

***rebuke*** — the battle cry.

***shall ye*** — at the rebuke of five shall ye, namely, *all* (in contrast to the “one thousand”) flee so utterly that even two shall not be left together, but each one shall be as solitary “as a signal staff” [G. V. SMITH], or “a banner on a hill” (<sup>2359</sup>Isaiah 5:26 11:12). The signal staff was erected to rally a nation in war. The remnant of Jews left would be beacons to warn all men of the justice of God, and the truth of His threatenings. GESENIUS (from <sup>6385</sup>Leviticus 26:8 <sup>6320</sup>Deuteronomy 32:30) arbitrarily inserts “ten thousand.” “At the rebuke of five shall ten thousand of you flee.”

**18. *therefore*** — on account of your wicked perverseness (<sup>2301</sup>Isaiah 30:1,2,9,15,16), Jehovah will *delay* to be gracious [HORSLEY]. Rather, *wait* or *delay* in punishing, to give you time for repentance (<sup>2303</sup>Isaiah 30:13,14,17) [MAURER]. Or, “Yet therefore” (namely, because of the distress spoken of in the previous verses; that distress will lead the Jews to repentance, and so Jehovah will pity them) [GESENIUS].

***be exalted*** — Men will have more elevated views of God’s mercy; or else, “He will rise up to pity you” [G. V. SMITH]. Or (taking the previous clause as MAURER, “Therefore Jehovah will delay” in punishing you, “in order that He may be gracious to you,” if ye repent), He will be *far removed* from you (so in <sup>5905</sup>Psalms 10:5, *far above out sight*); that is, He will not immediately descend to punish, “in order that He may have mercy,” etc.

***judgment*** — justice; faithfulness to His covenant.

***wait*** — compare <sup>2305</sup>Isaiah 30:15, wait, namely, for His times of having mercy.

**19.** (<sup>2359</sup>Isaiah 65:9). The restoration from Babylon only typifies the *full* accomplishment of the prophecy (<sup>2303</sup>Isaiah 30:18-33).

*weep no more* — (<sup><2318></sup>Isaiah 25:8).

*thy cry* — (<sup><2318></sup>Isaiah 26:8,9 <sup><2312></sup>Jeremiah 29:12-14).

20. Rather, “The Lord will give”; the “though” is not in the original.

*bread of adversity* — He will not deny you food enough to save you in your adversity (<sup><1227></sup>1 Kings 22:27 <sup><1802></sup>Psalms 127:2).

*be removed* — rather, “hide themselves”; they shall no more be forced to hide themselves from persecution, but shall be openly received with reverence [MAURER]. Contrast with this <sup><1749></sup>Psalms 74:9 <sup><3081></sup>Amos 8:11.

21. *word* — conscience, guided by the Holy Spirit (<sup><1613></sup>John 16:13).

22. *covering of ... images* — rather, “images” (formed of wood or potter’s clay, and) “covered with silver.” Hezekiah, and afterwards Josiah, defiled them (<sup><1238></sup>2 Kings 23:8,10,14,16 <sup><1801></sup>2 Chronicles 31:1; compare <sup><2121></sup>Isaiah 2:20 <sup><1803></sup>Deuteronomy 7:25).

23. *rain of* — rather, “for thy seed.” Physical prosperity accompanies national piety; especially under the Old Testament. The *early* rain fell soon after the seed was sown in October or November; the *latter* rain in the spring, before the ripening of the corn. Both were needed for a good harvest.

*increase* — the produce.

*fat* — bread made of the best wheat flour (compare <sup><1441></sup>Genesis 49:20 <sup><1824></sup>Deuteronomy 32:14).

24. *ear* — that is till. Asses were employed in tillage, as well as oxen (<sup><1820></sup>Deuteronomy 22:10).

*clean* — rather, *salted* provender [GESENIUS]. The Arab proverb is, “Sweet provender is as bread to camels — salted provender as confectionery.” The very cattle shall share the coming felicity. Or else, *well-fermented maslin*, that is, provender formed of a mixture of various substances: grain, beans, vetches, hay, and salt.

*winnowed* — not as it is usually given to cattle before it is separated from the chaff; the grain shall be so abundant that it shall be given winnowed.

*shovel* — by which the grain was thrown up in the wind to separate it from the chaff.

*fan* — an instrument for winnowing.

25. Even the otherwise barren hills shall then be well-watered (<sup>234B</sup>Isaiah 44:3).

*the day*, etc. — when the disobedient among *the Jews* shall have been slain, as foretold in <sup>230B</sup>Isaiah 30:16: “towers,” that is, mighty men (<sup>205B</sup>Isaiah 2:15). Or else, the *towers of the Assyrian Sennacherib*, or of *Babylon*, types of all enemies of God’s people.

26. Image from the heavenly bodies to express the increase of spiritual light and felicity. “Sevenfold” implies the *perfection* of that felicity, seven being the sacred number. It shall also be literally fulfilled hereafter in the heavenly city (<sup>209B</sup>Isaiah 60:19,20 <sup>622B</sup>Revelation 21:23,24 22:5).

*breach* — the wound, or calamity, sent by God on account of their sins (<sup>200B</sup>Isaiah 1:5).

27. *name of ... Lord* — that is, Jehovah Himself (<sup>94B</sup>Psalms 44:5 54:1); represented as a storm approaching and ready to burst over the Assyrians (<sup>230B</sup>Isaiah 30:30,31).

*burden ... is heavy* — literally, “grievousness is the flame,” that is, the flame which darts from Him is grievous. Or else (as the *Hebrew* means an “uplifting”) *the uprising cloud is grievous* [G. V. SMITH]; the gathering cloud gradually rising till it bursts.

28. (<sup>210B</sup>Isaiah 11:4 <sup>318B</sup>2 Thessalonians 2:8).

*reach ... neck* — the most extreme danger; yet as the *head*, or capital of Judah, was to be spared (<sup>238B</sup>Isaiah 8:8), so the head, or sovereign of Assyria, Sennacherib, should escape.

*sieve of vanity* — Rather, “the winnowing fan of destruction” [LOWTH] (<sup>241B</sup>Isaiah 41:16).

*bridle in ... jaws* — as prisoners are represented in the Assyrian inscriptions (<sup>252B</sup>Isaiah 37:29).

*causing ... to err* — (<sup>267B</sup>Isaiah 63:17). “People,” *Hebrew*, “peoples,” namely, the various races composing the Assyrian armies (<sup>215B</sup>Isaiah 5:26).

29. *the night ... solemnity* — As in the passover night ye celebrate your deliverance from Egypt, so shall ye celebrate your rescue from Assyrian bondage. Translate, “*the solemnity*” (<sup>022B</sup>Exodus 12:42).

*goeth with a pipe* — or flute. They used to go up to Jerusalem (“the mountain of the Lord,” Zion) at the three feasts with music and gladness (<sup>156B</sup>Deuteronomy 16:16 <sup>156B</sup>Ezra 2:65 <sup>927B</sup>Psalms 122:1-4).

**30.** Jehovah's "glorious voice," raised against the enemy (<sup><2317></sup>Isaiah 30:27), is again mentioned here, in contrast to the music (<sup><2319></sup>Isaiah 30:29) with which His people shall come to worship Him.

**lighting down of ... arm** — (<sup><2332></sup>Isaiah 30:32 <sup><4882></sup>Psalms 38:2). The descent of His arm in striking.

**scattering** — namely, a blast that scatters, or an "inundation" [MAURER].

**31.** The Assyrian rod which beat shall itself be beaten, and that by the mere voice of the Lord, that is, an unseen divine agency (<sup><2315></sup>Isaiah 10:5,24).

**32. grounded** — rather, "decreed," "appointed" [MAURER].

**staff** — the avenging rod.

**him** — the Assyrian; type of all God's enemies in every age. *Margin* and MAURER construe, "Every passing through (infliction, <sup><2335></sup>Isaiah 28:15) of the appointed rod, which, etc., shall be with tabrets," that is, accompanied with joy on the part of the rescued peoples.

**battles of shaking** — that is, shock of battles (<sup><2316></sup>Isaiah 19:16; compare "sift ... sieve," <sup><2318></sup>Isaiah 30:28).

**with it** — namely, Assyria.

**33. Tophet** — literally, "A place of abomination"; the valley of the sons of Hinnom, southeast of Jerusalem, where Israel offered human sacrifices to Moloch by fire; hence a place of burning (<sup><1230></sup>2 Kings 23:10 <sup><2173></sup>Jeremiah 7:31). Latterly Gehinnom or Gehenna, that is, valley of Hinnom, was the receptacle of the refuse of the city, to consume which fires were constantly burning. Hence it came to express hell, the place of torment. In the former sense it was a fit place to symbolize the funeral pyre of the Assyrian army (not that it actually perished there); the Hebrews did not burn, but buried their dead, but the heathen Assyrians are to be burnt as a mark of ignominy. In the latter sense Tophet is the receptacle "prepared for the devil (antitype to the king, <sup><2342></sup>Isaiah 14:12-15) and his angels," and unbelieving men (<sup><4152></sup>Matthew 5:22 25:41 <sup><4193></sup>Mark 9:43,44).

# CHAPTER 31

## ISAIAH 31:1-9.

### THE CHIEF STRENGTH OF THE EGYPTIAN ARMIES LAY IN THEIR CAVALRY.

**1. *and stay on horses, and trust in chariots*** — In their level and fertile plains horses could easily be used and fed (<sup><1249></sup>Exodus 14:9 <sup><1103></sup>1 Kings 10:28). In hilly Palestine horses were not so easily had or available. The Jews were therefore the more eager to get Egyptian chariots as allies against the Assyrian cavalry. In Assyrian sculptures chariots are represented drawn by three horses, and with three men in them (see <sup><2309></sup>Isaiah 36:9 <sup><1207></sup>Psalms 20:7 <sup><793></sup>Daniel 9:13).

**2. *he also is wise*** — as well as the Egyptian priests, so famed for wisdom (<sup><4172></sup>Acts 7:22), but who are “fools” before Him (<sup><2911></sup>Isaiah 19:11). He not only devises, but executes what He devises without “calling back His words” (<sup><9239></sup>Numbers 23:19).

***home*** — the whole race.

***help*** — the Egyptian succor sought by the Jews.

**3. *not spirit*** — not of divine power (<sup><1569></sup>Psalms 56:4 146:3,5 <sup><3017></sup>Zechariah 4:6).

***he that helpeth*** — Egypt.

***holpen*** — Judah.

**4.** (<sup><2913></sup>Isaiah 42:13 <sup><2110></sup>Hosea 11:10).

***roaring on*** — “growling over” his prey.

***abase himself*** — be disheartened or frightened.

**5.** As in the image of “the lion,” the point of comparison is the fearless might of Jehovah; so in that of the birds, it is His solicitous affection (<sup><16211></sup>Deuteronomy 32:11 <sup><19104></sup>Psalms 91:4 <sup><12377></sup>Matthew 23:37).

**flying** — Rather, “which defend” their young with their wings; “to fly” is a secondary meaning of the *Hebrew* word [MAURER]. “Hovering over” to protect their young [G. V. SMITH].

**passing over** — as the destroying angel *passing over, so as to spare* the blood-marked houses of the Israelites on the first passover (<sup><10213></sup>Exodus 12:13,23,27). He passed, or *leaped forward* [LOWTH], to *destroy* the enemy and to spare His people.

6. The power and love of Jehovah, just mentioned, are the strongest incentives for returning to Him (<sup><2162></sup>Ezekiel 16:62,63 <sup><3161></sup>Hosea 6:1).

**ye ... Israel** — The change of person marks that when they return to the Lord, He will address them in more direct terms of communion in the second person; so long as they were *revolters*, God speaks *of* them, as more at a distance, in the third person, rather than to them.

7. In the day of trial the idols will be found to render no help and will therefore be cast away. Compare as to the future restoration and conversion of Israel simultaneously with the interposition of Jehovah in its defense, <sup><3119></sup>Zechariah 12:9-14 13:1,2.

**for a sin** — that is, whereby especially you contracted guilt (<sup><11231></sup>1 Kings 12:30).

8. **Assyrian** — Sennacherib, representative of some powerful head of the ungodly in the latter ages [HORSLEY].

**sword, not of ... mighty ... mean man** — but by the unseen sword of God.

**flee** — Sennacherib alone *fled* homewards after his army had been destroyed (<sup><23157></sup>Isaiah 37:37).

**young men** — the flower of his army.

**discomfited** — rather, “shall be subject to slavery”; literally, “shall be liable to tribute,” that is, personal service (<sup><6111></sup>Deuteronomy 20:11 <sup><1012></sup>Joshua 9:21) [MAURER]. Or, not so well, “shall melt away” [ROSENMULLER].

9. Rather, “*shall pass beyond* his strongholds”; he Shall not stop to take refuge in it through fear (<sup><17147></sup>Judges 20:47 <sup><24828></sup>Jeremiah 48:28) [GESENIUS].

**ensign** — the banner of Jehovah protecting the Jews [MAURER].

**fire ... furnace** — “light” and “fire,” namely, of Jehovah’s *altar* at Jerusalem (<sup><2311></sup>Isaiah 29:1). Perhaps “furnace,” as distinguished from “fire,” may mean that His *dwelling-place* (His hearth) was at Jerusalem

(compare ~~2015~~ Isaiah 4:5); or else the *fiery furnace* awaiting all the enemies who should attack Jerusalem.

# CHAPTER 32

## ISAIAH 32:1-20.

### MESSIAH'S KINGDOM; DESOLATIONS, TO BE SUCCEEDED BY LASTING PEACE, THE SPIRIT HAVING BEEN POURED OUT.

The times of purity and happiness which shall follow the defeat of the enemies of Jehovah's people (<sup>2301</sup>Isaiah 32:1-8). The period of wrath before that happy state (<sup>2309</sup>Isaiah 32:9-14). The assurance of the final prosperity of the Church is repeated (<sup>2315</sup>Isaiah 32:15-20).

**1. king** — not Hezekiah, who was already on the throne, whereas a *future* time is contemplated. If he be meant at all, it can only be as a type of Messiah the King, to whom alone the language is fully applicable (<sup>2385</sup>Hosea 3:5 <sup>2309</sup>Zechariah 9:9; see on <sup>2310</sup>Isaiah 11:3-5). The kingdom shall be transferred from the world kings, who have exercised their power *against* God, instead of *for* God, to the rightful King of kings (<sup>2317</sup>Ezekiel 21:27 <sup>2073</sup>Daniel 7:13,14).

**princes** — subordinate; referring to all in authority under Christ in the coming kingdom on earth, for example, the apostles, etc. (<sup>2220</sup>Luke 22:30 <sup>2002</sup>1 Corinthians 6:2 <sup>2012</sup>2 Timothy 2:12 <sup>2025</sup>Revelation 2:26,27 3:21).

**2. a man** — rather, *the man* Christ [LOWTH]; it is as “the Son of man” He is to reign, as it was as Son of man He suffered (<sup>2164</sup>Matthew 26:64 <sup>2352</sup>John 5:27 19:5). Not as MAURER explains, “*every* one of the princes shall be,” etc.

**rivers** — as refreshing as water and the cool shade are to the heated traveler (<sup>2306</sup>Isaiah 35:6,7 41:18).

**3. them that see** — the seers or prophets.

**them that hear** — the people under instruction (<sup>2305</sup>Isaiah 35:5,6).

**4. rash** — rather, “the hasty”; contrast “shall not make haste” (<sup>2306</sup>Isaiah 28:16); the reckless who will not take time to weigh religious truth aright. Or else, the well-instructed [HORSLEY].

**stammers** — those who speak confusedly on divine things (compare <sup>2040</sup>Exodus 4:10-12 <sup>2306</sup>Jeremiah 1:6 <sup>2009</sup>Matthew 10:19,20). Or, rather, those

drunken *scorners* who in stammering style imitated Isaiah's warnings to mock them [MAURER] (<sup><2307></sup>Isaiah 28:7-11,13,14,22 29:20); in this view, translate, "speak *uprightly*" (agreeably to the divine law); not as *English Version*, referring to the distinctness of articulation, "plainly."

5. *vile* — rather, "fool" [LOWTH]; that is, ungodly (<sup><2401></sup>Psalms 14:1 74:18).

*liberal* — rather, "noble-minded."

*churl* — rather, "fraudulent" [GESENIUS].

*bountiful* — religiously. The atheistic churl, who envies the believer his hope "full of immortality," shall no longer be held as a patriot struggling for the emancipation of mankind from superstition [HORSLEY].

6. *vile ... villainy* — rather, "the (irreligious) fool ... (his) folly."

*will speak* — rather, "present"; for (so far is the "fool" from deserving the epithet "noble-minded") the fool "speaketh" folly and "worketh," etc.

*hypocrisy* — rather, "profligacy" [HORSLEY].

*error* — impiety, perverse arguments.

*hungry* — spiritually (<sup><4016></sup>Matthew 5:6).

7. *churl* — "the fraudulent"; this verse refers to the last clause of <sup><2315></sup>Isaiah 32:5; as <sup><2316></sup>Isaiah 32:6 referred to its first clause.

*speaketh right* — pleadeth a just cause (<sup><2321></sup>Isaiah 29:21); spiritually, "the poor man's cause" is the divine doctrine, his rule of faith and practice.

8. *liberal* — rather, "noble-minded."

*stand* — shall be approved under the government of the righteous King.

9-20. Address to the women of Jerusalem who troubled themselves little about the political signs of the times, but lived a life of self-indulgence (<sup><2316></sup>Isaiah 3:16-23); the failure of food through the devastations of the enemy is here foretold, being what was most likely to affect them as mothers of families, heretofore accustomed to every luxury. VITRINGA understands "women — daughters" as the cities and villages of Judea (<sup><2361></sup>Ezekiel 16:1-63). See <sup><3011></sup>Amos 6:1.

10. *Many days and years* — rather, "In little more than a year" [MAURER]; literally, "days upon a year" (so <sup><2301></sup>Isaiah 29:1).

*vintage shall fail* — through the arrival of the Assyrian invader. As the wheat harvest is omitted, Isaiah must look for the invasion in the summer

or autumn of 714 B.C., when the wheat would have been secured already, and the later fruit “gathering,” and vintage would be still in danger.

**11. *strip you*** — of your gay clothing. (See <sup><3109></sup>Isaiah 2:19,21).

**12. *lament for ... teats*** — rather, shall smite on their breasts in lamentation “for thy pleasant fields” (Na 2:7) [MAURER]. “Teats” in *English Version* is used for fertile lands, which, like *breasts*, nourish life. The transition from “ye” to “they” (<sup><3211></sup>Isaiah 32:11,12) is frequent.

**13.** (<sup><3116></sup>Isaiah 5:6 7:23).

***houses of joy*** — pleasure-houses outside of Jerusalem, not Jerusalem itself, but other cities destroyed by Sennacherib in his march (<sup><3171></sup>Isaiah 7:20-25). However, the prophecy, in its full accomplishment, refers to the utter desolation of Judea and its *capital* by Rome, and subsequently, previous to the second coming of the King (<sup><4186></sup>Psalms 118:26 <sup><4135></sup>Luke 13:35 19:38); “the joyous city” is in this view, Jerusalem (<sup><3116></sup>Isaiah 22:2).

**14. *palaces*** — most applicable to Jerusalem (see on <sup><3213></sup>Isaiah 32:13).

***multitude ... left*** — the noisy din of the city, that is, the city with its noisy multitude shall lie forsaken [MAURER].

***forts*** — rather, “Ophel” (that is the mound), the term applied specially to the declivity on the east of Zion, surrounded with its own wall (<sup><4212></sup>2 Chronicles 27:3 33:14 <sup><4164></sup>2 Kings 5:24), and furnished with “towers” (or watchtowers), perhaps referred to here (<sup><4163></sup>Nehemiah 3:26,27).

***for ever*** — limited by thee, “until,” etc., <sup><3215></sup>Isaiah 32:15, *for a long time*.

**15.** This can only partially apply to the spiritual revival in Hezekiah’s time; its full accomplishment belongs to the Christian dispensation, first at Pentecost (<sup><3128></sup>Joel 2:28 <sup><4117></sup>Acts 2:17), perfectly in coming times (<sup><19461></sup>Psalms 104:30 <sup><4163></sup>Ezekiel 36:26 39:29 <sup><3210></sup>Zechariah 12:10), when the Spirit shall be poured on Israel, and through it on the Gentiles (<sup><3116></sup>Micah 5:7).

***wilderness ... fruitful field ... forest*** — when Judea, so long waste, shall be populous and fruitful, and the land of the enemies of God shall be desolate. Or, “the field, now fruitful, shall be but as a barren forest in comparison with what it shall be then” (<sup><3217></sup>Isaiah 29:17). The barren shall become fruitful by regeneration; those already regenerate shall bring forth fruits in such abundance that their former life shall seem but as a wilderness where no fruits were.

**16. *judgment*** — justice.

*wilderness* — then reclaimed.

*fruitful field* — then become more fruitful (<sup>2321S</sup>Isaiah 32:15); thus “wilderness” and “fruitful field” include the *whole* land of Judea.

17. *work* — the effect (<sup>2148F</sup>Proverbs 14:34 <sup>2408S</sup>James 3:18).

*peace* — internal and external.

18. *sure ... quiet* — free from fear of invasion.

19. Literally, “But it shall hail with coming down of the forest, and in lowness shall the city (Nineveh) be brought low; that is, humbled.” The “hail” is Jehovah’s wrathful visitation (<sup>2310F</sup>Isaiah 30:30 28:2,17). The “forest” is the Assyrian host, dense as the trees of a forest (<sup>2308F</sup>Isaiah 10:18,19,33,34 <sup>2810Z</sup>Zechariah 11:2).

20. While the enemy shall be brought “low,” the Jews shall cultivate their land in undisturbed prosperity.

*all waters* — well-watered places (<sup>2325S</sup>Isaiah 30:25). The *Hebrew* translation, “beside,” ought rather to be translated, “upon” (<sup>2110F</sup>Ecclesiastes 11:1), where the meaning is, “Cast thy seed upon the waters when the river overflows its banks; the seed will sink into the mud and will spring up when the waters subside, and you will find it after many days in a rich harvest.” Before sowing, they send oxen, etc., into the water to tread the ground for sowing. CASTALIO thinks there is an allusion to the Mosaic precept, not to plough with an ox and ass together, mystically implying that the Jew was to have no intercourse with Gentiles; the Gospel abolishes this distinction (<sup>2501F</sup>Colossians 3:11); thus the sense here is, Blessed are ye that sow the gospel seed without distinction of race in the teachers or the taught. But there is no need of supposing that the ox and ass here are *yoked together*; they are probably “sent forth” separately, as in <sup>2324S</sup>Isaiah 30:24.

# CHAPTER 33

## ISAIAH 33:1-24.

### THE LAST OF ISAIAH'S PROPHECIES AS TO SENNACHERIB'S OVERTHROW.

Isaiah 33:1,8,9, describe the Assyrian spoiler; strong as he is, he shall fall before Jehovah who is stronger (Isaiah 33:2-6,10-12). The time is the autumn of 713 B.C.

**1. *and thou*** — that is, though thou wast not spoiled — though thou wast not dealt treacherously with (see on Isaiah 24:16), thy spoiling and treachery are therefore without excuse, being unprovoked.

***cease*** — When God has let thee do thy worst, in execution of His plans, thine own turn shall come (compare Isaiah 10:12 14:2 Habakkuk 2:8 Revelation 13:10).

**2. *us; we ... their ... our*** — He speaks interceding for His people, separating himself in thought for a moment from them, and immediately returns to his natural identification with them in the word “our.”

***every morning*** — each day as it dawns, especially during our danger, as the parallel “time of trouble” shows.

**3. *the tumult*** — the approach of Jehovah is likened to an advancing thunderstorm (Isaiah 29:6 30:27), which is His voice (Revelation 1:15), causing the people to “flee.”

***nation*** — the Assyrian levies.

**4.** The invaders’ “spoil” shall be left behind by them in their flight, and the Jews shall gather it.

***caterpillar*** — rather, “the wingless locust”; as it gathers; the *Hebrew* word for “gathers” is properly used of the gathering of the fruits of harvest (Isaiah 32:10).

***running to and fro*** — namely, in gathering harvest fruits.

***he*** — rather, “they.”

**them** — rather, “it,” that is, the prey.

**6. wisdom** — sacred; that is, piety.

**thy** — Hezekiah’s; or rather, “Judea’s.” “His” refers to the same; such changes from the pronoun possessive of the second person to that of the third are common in *Hebrew poetry*.

**treasure** — Not so much material wealth as piety shall constitute the riches of the nation (<sup>(21002)</sup>Proverbs 10:22 15:16).

**7-9.** From the vision of future glory Isaiah returns to the disastrous present; the grief of “the valiant ones” (parallel to, and identical with, “the ambassadors of peace”), men of rank, sent with presents to sue for peace, but standing “without” the enemy’s camp, their suit being rejected (<sup>(21842)</sup>2 Kings 18:14,18,37). The highways deserted through fear, the cities insulted, the lands devastated.

**cry** — (<sup>(21514)</sup>Isaiah 15:4).

**8. broken ... covenant** — When Sennacherib invaded Judea, Hezekiah paid him a large sum to leave the land; Sennacherib received the money and yet sent his army against Jerusalem (<sup>(21844)</sup>2 Kings 18:14,17).

**despised** — make slight of as unable to resist him (<sup>(21009)</sup>Isaiah 10:9 36:19); easily captures them.

**9.** (<sup>(21404)</sup>Isaiah 24:4).

**Lebanon** — personified; the allusion may be to the Assyrian cutting down its choice trees (<sup>(21408)</sup>Isaiah 14:8 37:24).

**Sharon** — south of Carmel, along the Mediterranean, proverbial for fertility (<sup>(21819)</sup>Isaiah 35:2).

**Bashan** — afterwards called Batanea (<sup>(21013)</sup>Isaiah 2:13).

**fruits** — rather, understand “leaves”; they lie as desolate as in winter.

**10.** The sight of His people’s misery arouses Jehovah; He has let the enemy go far enough.

**I** — emphatic; God Himself will do what man could not.

**11. Ye** — the enemy.

**conceive chaff** — (<sup>(21618)</sup>Isaiah 26:18 59:4).

**your breath** — rather, *your own spirit* of anger and ambition [MAURER], (<sup><2318></sup>Isaiah 30:28).

**12.** (<sup><2195></sup>Isaiah 9:19 <sup><3111></sup>Amos 2:1). Perhaps alluding to their being about to be burnt on the funeral pyre (<sup><2318></sup>Isaiah 30:33).

**thorns** — the wicked (<sup><1216></sup>2 Samuel 23:6,7).

**13. far off** — distant nations.

**near** — the Jews and adjoining peoples (<sup><2340></sup>Isaiah 49:1).

**14. sinners in Zion** — false professors of religion among the elect people (<sup><4122></sup>Matthew 22:12).

**hypocrites** — rather, “the profane”; “the abandoned” [HORSLEY].

**who**, etc. — If Jehovah’s wrath could thus consume such a host in one night, who could abide it, if continued for ever (<sup><4095></sup>Mark 9:46-48)? Fire is a common image for the divine judgments (<sup><2316></sup>Isaiah 29:6 30:30).

**among us** — If such awful judgments have fallen on those who knew not the true God, how infinitely worse shall fall on *us* who, amid religious privileges and profession, sin against God, (<sup><1247></sup>Luke 12:47,48 <sup><3047></sup>James 4:17)?

**15.** In contrast to the trembling “sinners in Zion” (<sup><2334></sup>Isaiah 33:14), the righteous shall be secure amid all judgments; they are described according to the Old Testament standpoint of righteousness (<sup><152></sup>Psalms 15:2 24:4).

**stoppeth ... ears ... eyes** — “Rejoiceth not in iniquity” (<sup><4316></sup>1 Corinthians 13:6; contrast <sup><2320></sup>Isaiah 29:20 <sup><3918></sup>Psalms 10:3 <sup><4132></sup>Romans 1:32). The senses are avenues for the entrance of sin (<sup><1197></sup>Psalms 119:37).

**16. on high** — heights inaccessible to the foe (<sup><2311></sup>Isaiah 26:1).

**bread ... waters** — image from the expected siege by Sennacherib; however besieged by trials without, the godly shall have literal and spiritual food, as God sees good for them (<sup><2347></sup>Isaiah 41:17 <sup><4525></sup>Psalms 37:25 34:10 132:15).

**17. Thine** — the saints’.

**king in ... beauty** — not as now, Hezekiah in sackcloth, oppressed by the enemy, but King Messiah (<sup><2301></sup>Isaiah 32:1) “in His beauty” (So 5:10,16 <sup><4048></sup>Revelation 4:3).

**land ... very far off** — rather, “the land in its remotest extent” (no longer pent up as Hezekiah was with the siege); see *Margin*. For Jerusalem is made the scene of the king’s glory (<sup><2330></sup>Isaiah 33:20, etc.), and it could not be said to be “very far off,” unless the far-off land be *heaven*, the Jerusalem above, which is to follow the *earthly* reign of Messiah at literal Jerusalem (<sup><2357></sup>Isaiah 65:17-19 <sup><3487></sup>Jeremiah 3:17 <sup><6200></sup>Revelation 21:1,2,10).

**18. meditate** — on the “terror” caused by the enemy, but now past.

**where**, etc. — the language of the Jews exulting over their escape from danger.

**scribe** — who enrolled the army [MAURER]; or, who prescribed the tribute to be paid [ROSENMULLER]; or, who kept an account of the spoil. “The principal scribe of the host” (<sup><1259></sup>2 Kings 25:19 <sup><3525></sup>Jeremiah 52:25). The Assyrian records are free from the exaggerations of Egyptian records. Two scribes are seen in every Assyrian bas-relief, writing down the various objects brought to them, the heads of the slain, prisoners, cattle, sheep, etc.

**receiver** — “weigher,” *Margin*. LAYARD mentions, among the Assyrian inscriptions, “a pair a scales for weighing the spoils.”

**counted ... towers** — he whose duty it was to reconnoitre and report the strength of the city to be besieged.

**19. fierce people** — The Assyrians shall not be allowed to enter Jerusalem (<sup><1262></sup>2 Kings 19:32). Or, thou shalt not any longer see fierce enemies threatening thee as previously; such as the Assyrians, Romans, and the last Antichristian host that is yet to assail Jerusalem (<sup><1539></sup>Deuteronomy 28:49,50 <sup><3165></sup>Jeremiah 5:15 <sup><3842></sup>Zechariah 14:2).

**stammering** — barbarous; so “deeper,” etc., that is, unintelligible. The Assyrian tongue differed only in dialect from the *Hebrew*, but in the Assyrian levies were many of non-Semitic race and language, as the Medes, Elamites, etc. (see on <sup><2381></sup>Isaiah 28:11).

**20. solemnities** — solemn assemblies at the great feasts (see on <sup><3109></sup>Isaiah 30:29; <sup><1940></sup>Psalms 42:4; <sup><1982></sup>Psalms 48:12).

**not ... taken down ... removed** — image from captives “removed” from their land (<sup><2367></sup>Isaiah 36:17). There shall be no more “taking away” to an enemy’s land. Or else, from nomads living in shifting tents. The saints, who sojourned once in tabernacles as pilgrims, shall have a “building of God — eternal in the heavens” (<sup><4701></sup>2 Corinthians 5:1 <sup><3109></sup>Hebrews 11:9,10; compare <sup><2510></sup>Isaiah 54:2).

**stakes** — driven into the ground; to these the “cords” were fastened. Christ’s Church shall never fall (<sup><41618></sup>Matthew 16:18). So individual believers (<sup><46182></sup>Revelation 3:12).

**21. there** — namely, in Jerusalem.

**will be ... rivers** — Jehovah will be as a broad river surrounding our city (compare <sup><2306></sup>Isaiah 19:6 <sup><41618></sup>Na 3:8), and this, too, a river of such a kind as no ship of war can pass (compare <sup><2301></sup>Isaiah 26:1). Jerusalem had not the advantage of a river; Jehovah will be as one to it, affording all the advantages, without any of the disadvantages of one.

**galley with oars** — war vessels of a long shape, and propelled by oars; merchant vessels were broader and carried sail.

**gallant** — same *Hebrew* word as for “glorious,” previously; “mighty” will suit both places; a ship of war is meant. No “mighty vessel” will dare to pass where the “mighty Lord” stands as our defense.

**22. Lord** — thrice repeated, as often: the Trinity (<sup><40169></sup>Numbers 6:24-26).

**judge ... lawgiver ... king** — perfect ideal of the theocracy, to be realized under Messiah alone; the judicial, legislative, and administrative functions as king to be exercised by Him in person (<sup><23104></sup>Isaiah 11:4 <sup><321></sup>32:1 <sup><3042></sup>James 4:12).

**23. tacklings** — Continuing the allegory in <sup><2321></sup>Isaiah 33:21, he compares the enemies’ host to a war galley which is deprived of the tacklings or cords by which the mast is sustained and the sail is spread; and which therefore is sure to be wrecked on “the broad river” (<sup><2321></sup>Isaiah 33:21), and become the prey of Israel.

**they** — the tacklings, “hold not firm the base of the mast.”

**then** — when the Assyrian host shall have been discomfited. Hezekiah had given Sennacherib three hundred talents of silver, and thirty of gold (<sup><1284></sup>2 Kings 18:14-16), and had stripped the temple of its gold to give it to him; this treasure was probably part of the prey found in the foe’s camp. After the invasion, Hezekiah had so much wealth that he made an improper display of it (<sup><1213></sup>2 Kings 20:13-15); this wealth, probably, was in part got from the Assyrian.

**the lame** — Even the most feeble shall spoil the Assyrian camp (compare <sup><2316></sup>Isaiah 35:6 <sup><1016></sup>2 Samuel 5:6).

**24. sick** — SMITH thinks the allusion is to the beginning of the pestilence by which the Assyrians were destroyed, and which, while sparing the

righteous, affected some within the city (“sinners in Zion”); it may have been the sickness that visited Hezekiah (<sup>2380E</sup>Isaiah 38:1-22). In the Jerusalem to come there shall be no “sickness,” because there will be no “iniquity,” it being forgiven (<sup>39A3B</sup>Psalm 103:3). The latter clause of the verse contains the cause of the former (<sup>4011F</sup>Mark 2:5-9).

# CHAPTER 34

## ISAIAH 34:1-17.

### JUDGMENT ON IDUMEA.

The thirty-fourth and thirty-fifth chapters form one prophecy, the former part of which denounces God's judgment against His people's enemies, of whom Edom is the representative; the second part, of the flourishing state of the Church consequent on those judgments. This forms the termination of the prophecies of the first part of Isaiah (the thirty-sixth through thirty-ninth chapters being historical) and is a kind of summary of what went before, setting forth the one main truth, *Israel shall be delivered from all its foes, and happier times shall succeed under Messiah.*

1. All creation is summoned to hear God's judgments (<sup>2068</sup>Ezekiel 6:3 <sup>6501</sup>Deuteronomy 32:1 <sup>4904</sup>Psalms 50:4 <sup>3301</sup>Micah 6:1,2), for they set forth His glory, which is the end of creation (<sup>6153</sup>Revelation 15:3 4:11).

**that come forth of it** — answering to “all that is therein”; or *Hebrew*, “all whatever fills it,” *Margin*.

2. **utterly destroyed** — rather, “doomed them to an utter curse” [HORSLEY].

**delivered** — rather, “appointed.”

3. **cast out** — unburied (<sup>2349</sup>Isaiah 14:19).

**melted** — washed away as with a descending torrent.

4. (<sup>4926</sup>Psalms 102:26 <sup>2423</sup>Joel 2:31 3:15 <sup>4129</sup>Matthew 24:29).

**dissolved** — (<sup>6102</sup>2 Peter 3:10-12) Violent convulsions of nature are in Scripture made the *images* of great changes in the human world (<sup>2349</sup>Isaiah 24:19-21), and shall *literally* accompany them at the winding up of the present dispensation.

**scroll** — Books were in those days sheets of parchment rolled together (<sup>6144</sup>Revelation 6:14).

**fail down** — The stars shall fall when the heavens in which they are fixed pass away.

**fig tree** — (<sup>663</sup>Revelation 6:13).

**5. sword** — (<sup>2460</sup>Jeremiah 46:10). Or else, *knife* for sacrifice for God does not here appear as a warrior with His sword, but as one about to sacrifice victims doomed to slaughter [VITRINGA], (<sup>2597</sup>Ezekiel 39:17).

**bathed** — rather “intoxicated,” namely, with anger (so <sup>652</sup>Deuteronomy 32:42). “In heaven” implies the place where God’s *purpose* of wrath is formed in antithesis to its “coming down” in the next clause.

**Idumea** — originally extending from the Dead Sea to the Red Sea; afterwards they obtained possession of the country east of Moab, of which Bozrah was capital. Petra or Selah, called Joktheel (<sup>1247</sup>2 Kings 14:7), was capital of South Edom (see on <sup>2301</sup>Isaiah 16:1). David subjugated Edom (<sup>4083</sup>2 Samuel 8:13,14). Under Jehoram they regained independence (<sup>4208</sup>2 Chronicles 21:8). Under Amaziah they were again subdued, and Selah taken (<sup>1247</sup>2 Kings 14:7). When Judah was captive in Babylon, Edom, in every way, insulted over her fallen mistress, killed many of those Jews whom the Chaldeans had left, and hence was held guilty of fratricide by God (Esau, their ancestor, having been brother to Jacob): this was the cause of the denunciations of the prophets against Edom (<sup>2501</sup>Isaiah 63:1, etc.; <sup>2407</sup>Jeremiah 49:7 <sup>2512</sup>Ezekiel 25:12-14 35:3-15 <sup>2089</sup>Joel 3:19 <sup>3001</sup>Amos 1:11,12 <sup>3008</sup>Obadiah 1:8,10,12-18 <sup>3008</sup>Malachi 1:3,4). Nebuchadnezzar humbled Idumea accordingly (<sup>2515</sup>Jeremiah 25:15-21).

**of my curse** — that is, doomed to it.

**to judgment** — that is, to execute it.

**6. filled** — gluttoned. The image of a sacrifice is continued.

**blood ... fat** — the parts especially devoted to God in a sacrifice (<sup>4022</sup>Samuel 1:22).

**lambs ... goats** — *sacrificial* animals: the Idumeans, of all classes, doomed to slaughter, are meant (<sup>3005</sup>Zephaniah 1:7).

**Bozrah** — called *Bostra* by the Romans, etc., assigned in <sup>2485</sup>Jeremiah 48:24 to Moab, so that it seems to have been at one time in the dominion of Edom, and at another in that of Moab (<sup>2501</sup>Isaiah 63:1 <sup>2493</sup>Jeremiah 49:13,20,22); it was strictly not in Edom, but the capital of Auranitis (the *Houran*). Edom seems to have extended its dominion so as to include it (compare <sup>2501</sup>Lamentations 4:21).

**7. unicorns** — *Hebrew, reem*: conveying the idea of loftiness, power, and pre-eminence (see on <sup>3899</sup>Job 39:9), in the Bible. At one time the image in

the term answers to a reality in nature; at another it symbolizes an abstraction. The rhinoceros was the original type. The Arab *rim* is two-horned: it was the oryx (the *leucoryx*, antelope, bold and pugnacious); but when accident or artifice deprived it of one horn, the notion of the unicorn arose. Here is meant the portion of the Edomites which was strong and warlike.

**come down** — rather, “fall down,” slain [LOWTH].

**with them** — with the “lambs and goats,” the less powerful Edomites (<sup>2340</sup>Isaiah 34:6).

**bullocks ... bulls** — the young and old Edomites: *all* classes.

**dust** — ground.

**8. recompenses for the controversy of Zion** — that is, the year when God will retaliate on those who have contended with Zion. Her controversy is *His*. Edom had thought to extend its borders by laying hold of its neighbor’s lands and has instigated Babylon to cruelty towards fallen Judah (<sup>3007</sup>Psalm 137:7 <sup>3316</sup>Ezekiel 36:5); therefore Edom shall suffer the same herself (<sup>2342</sup>Lamentations 4:21,22). The final winding up of the controversy between God and all enemies of Him and His people is also foreshadowed (<sup>2302</sup>Isaiah 61:2 63:4 66:14-16 <sup>3008</sup>Malachi 4:1,3 <sup>3002</sup>2 Thessalonians 1:7,8,9 <sup>6418</sup>Revelation 11:18 18:20 19:2).

**9. Images from the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah** (<sup>1024</sup>Genesis 19:24-28; so <sup>1523</sup>Deuteronomy 29:23 <sup>2407</sup>Jeremiah 49:17,18).

**10. It** — The burning pitch, etc. (<sup>2349</sup>Isaiah 34:9).

**smoke ... for ever** — (<sup>6441</sup>Revelation 14:11 18:18:19:3).

**generation to generation** — (<sup>3009</sup>Malachi 1:4).

**none ... pass through** — Edom’s original offense was: they would not let Israel *pass through* their land in peace to Canaan: God *recompenses* them in kind, no traveler shall *pass through* Edom. VOLNEY, the infidel, was forced to confirm the truth of this prophecy: “From the reports of the Arabs, southeast of the Dead Sea, *within three days’ journey* are upwards of thirty ruined towns, *absolutely deserted*.”

**11. cormorant** — The *Hebrew* is rendered, in <sup>4936</sup>Psalm 102:6, “pelican,” which is a seafowl, and cannot be meant here: some waterfowl (*katta*, according to BURCKHARDT) that tenants desert places is intended.

**bittern** — rather, “the hedgehog,” or “porcupine” [GESENIUS] (<sup><2443></sup>Isaiah 14:23).

**owl** — from its being enumerated among water birds in <sup><6817></sup>Leviticus 11:17 <sup><5446></sup>Deuteronomy 14:16. MAURER thinks rather the heron or crane is meant; from a *Hebrew* root, “to blow,” as it utters a sound like the blowing of a horn (<sup><6812></sup>Revelation 18:2).

**confusion** — devastation.

**line ... stones** — metaphor from an architect with line and *plummet-stone* (see on <sup><2382></sup>Isaiah 18:2; <sup><2387></sup>Isaiah 28:17); God will render to it the *exact measure of justice* without mercy (<sup><3013></sup>James 2:13 <sup><1213></sup>2 Kings 21:13 <sup><2388></sup>Lamentations 2:8 <sup><3005></sup>Amos 7:7,8).

**emptiness** — desolation. Edom is now a waste of “stones.”

**12.** Rather, “As to her nobles, there shall be none there who shall declare a kingdom,” that is, a king [MAURER]; Or else, “There shall be no one there whom they shall call to the kingdom” [ROSENMULLER] (<sup><2389></sup>Isaiah 3:6, etc.). Idumea was at first governed by dukes (<sup><0335></sup>Genesis 36:15); out of them the king was chosen when the constitution became a monarchy.

**13. dragons** — (See on <sup><2432></sup>Isaiah 13:21; <sup><2432></sup>Isaiah 13:22).

**court for owls** — rather, “a dwelling for ostriches.”

**14. wild beasts of the desert ... island** — rather, “wild cats ... jackals” (<sup><2432></sup>Isaiah 13:21).

**screech owl** — rather, “the night specter”; in Jewish superstition a female, elegantly dressed, that carried off children by night. The text does not assert the *existence* of such objects of superstition, but describes the place as one which superstition would people with such beings.

**15. great owl** — rather, “the arrow snake,” so called from its darting on its prey [GESENIUS].

**lay** — namely, eggs.

**gather under her shadow** — rather, “cherishes” her young under, etc. (<sup><2471></sup>Jeremiah 17:11).

**16. book of the Lord** — the volume in which the various prophecies and other parts of Scripture began henceforward to be collected together (<sup><2308></sup>Isaiah 30:8 <sup><2002></sup>Daniel 9:2).

**Seek** — (so <sup><2086></sup>Isaiah 8:16,20 <sup><459></sup>John 5:39 7:52).

**no one ... fail** — of these prophecies (<sup><4158></sup>Matthew 5:18).

**none shall want ... mate** — image from *pairing* of animals mentioned, <sup><2345></sup>Isaiah 34:15 (“mate”); no prediction shall want a fulfillment as its companion. Or rather, “none of these wild animals (just spoken of) shall be wanting: none shall be without its mate” to pair and breed with, in desolate Idumea.

**my ... his** — Such changes of person are frequent in *Hebrew poetry*.

**them** — the wild beasts.

**17. cast ... lot** — As conquerors apportion lands by lot, so Jehovah has appointed and marked out (“divided”) Edom for the wild beasts (<sup><0255></sup>Numbers 26:55,56 <sup><1684></sup>Joshua 18:4-6).

# CHAPTER 35

## ISAIAH 35:1-10.

### CONTINUATION OF THE PROPHECY IN THE THIRTY-FOURTH CHAPTER.

See on <sup><2304></sup>Isaiah 34:1, *introduction* there.

1. ***solitary place*** — literally, “a dry place,” without springs of water. A *moral* wilderness is meant.

***for them*** — namely, on account of the punishment inflicted according to the preceding prophecy on the enemy; probably the blessings set forth in this chapter are included in the causes for joy (<sup><2582></sup>Isaiah 55:12).

***rose*** — rather, “the meadow-saffron,” an autumnal flower with bulbous roots; so *Syriac* translation.

2. ***glory of Lebanon*** — its ornament, namely, its cedars (<sup><2308></sup>Isaiah 10:34).

***excellency of Carmel*** — namely, its beauty.

***Sharon*** — famed for its fertility.

***see ... glory of the Lord ... excellency*** — (<sup><2305></sup>Isaiah 40:5,9). While the wilderness which had neither “glory” nor “excellency” shall have both “given to it,” the Lord shall have all the “glory” and “excellency” ascribed to *Him*, not to the transformed wilderness (<sup><4156></sup>Matthew 5:16).

3. ***Strengthen ... hands ... confirm ... knees*** — The *Hebrew* for “strengthen” refers to the strength residing in the *hand* for grasping and holding a thing manfully; “confirm,” to the firmness with which one keeps his ground, so as not to be dislodged by any other [MAURER]. Encourage the Jews, now desponding, by the assurance of the blessings promised.

4. ***fearful*** — “hasty,” *Margin*; that is, with a heart fluttered with agitation.

***with*** — the *Hebrew* is more forcible than the *English Version*: “God will come, vengeance! even God, a recompense!” The sense is the same.

5, 6. Language figuratively, descriptive of the joy felt at the deliverance from Assyria and Babylon; literally, true of the antitypical times of Messiah

and His miracles (see *Margin references*, <sup><4015></sup>Matthew 11:5 <sup><4007></sup>Luke 7:2 <sup><6005></sup>John 1:5:8 <sup><4005></sup>Acts 3:2).

**6. leap** — literally, “fulfilled” (<sup><4005></sup>Acts 3:8 14:10).

**sing** — joyful thanksgiving.

**in ... wilderness ... waters** — (<sup><2418></sup>Isaiah 41:18).

**7. parched ground** — rather, “the mirage (*Hebrew, Sharab*, ‘the sun’s heat’) shall become a (real) lake.” The sun’s rays refracted on the glowing sands at midday give the appearance of a take of water and often deceive the thirsty traveler (compare <sup><2413></sup>Jeremiah 2:13 <sup><2418></sup>Isaiah 41:18).

**dragons** — rather, “jackals.”

**each** — namely, jackal.

**grass** — rather, “a dwelling or receptacle (answering to the previous habitation) for reeds,” etc. (which only grow where there is water, <sup><8011></sup>Job 8:11). Where once there was no water, water shall abound.

**8. highway** — such a causeway (*raised way*, from a *Hebrew* root, “to cast up”) as was used for the march of armies; valleys being filled up, hills and other obstructions removed (<sup><2320></sup>Isaiah 62:10; compare <sup><2403></sup>Isaiah 40:3,4).

**way of holiness** — Hebraism for “the holy way.” HORSLEY translates, “the way of the Holy One;” but the words that follow, and <sup><2310></sup>Isaiah 35:10, show it is the way leading the redeemed back to Jerusalem, both the literal and the heavenly (<sup><2310></sup>Isaiah 52:1 <sup><2417></sup>Joel 3:17 <sup><6227></sup>Revelation 21:27); still Christ at His coming again shall be the Leader on the way, for which reason it is called, “The way of the Lord” (<sup><2403></sup>Isaiah 40:3 <sup><3001></sup>Malachi 3:1).

**it shall be for those: the wayfaring men** — rather, “He (the Holy One) shall be with them, walking in the way” [HORSLEY].

**though fools** — rather, “And (even) fools,” that is, the simple shall not go astray, namely, because “He shall be with them” (<sup><4025></sup>Matthew 11:25 <sup><4025></sup>1 Corinthians 1:26-28).

**9. No lion** — such as might be feared on the way through the wilderness which abounded in wild beasts, back to Judea. Every danger shall be warded off the returning people (<sup><2310></sup>Isaiah 11:6-9 <sup><3525></sup>Ezekiel 34:25 <sup><2018></sup>Hosea 2:18). Compare spiritually, <sup><1017></sup>Proverbs 3:17.

**10. Language:** literally, applying to the return from Babylon; figuratively and more fully to the completed redemption of both literal and spiritual Israel.

*joy upon ... heads* — (<sup>1300</sup>Psalm 126:2). Joy manifested in their countenances. Some fancy an allusion to the custom of pouring oil “upon the head,” or wearing chaplets in times of public festivity (<sup>1108</sup>Ecclesiastes 9:8).

# CHAPTER 36

## ISAIAH 36:1-22.

### SENNACHERIB'S INVASION; BLASPHEMOUS SOLICITATIONS; HEZEKIAH IS TOLD OF THEM.

This and the thirty-seventh through thirty-ninth chapters form the historical appendix closing the first division of Isaiah's prophecies, and were added to make the parts of these referring to Assyria more intelligible. So

<sup><2301></sup>Jeremiah 52:1-34; compare <sup><1221></sup>2 Kings 25:1-30. The section occurs almost word for word in <sup><1213></sup>2 Kings 18:13,17-20 <sup><1214></sup>2 Kings 18:14-16, however, is additional matter. Hezekiah's "writing" also is in Isaiah, not in Kings (<sup><2301></sup>Isaiah 38:9-20). We know from <sup><4322></sup>2 Chronicles 32:32 that Isaiah wrote the acts of Hezekiah. It is, therefore, probable, that his record here (<sup><2301></sup>Isaiah 36:1-39:8) was incorporated into the Book of Kings by its compiler. Sennacherib lived, according to Assyrian inscriptions, more than twenty years after his invasion; but as Isaiah survived Hezekiah (<sup><4322></sup>2 Chronicles 32:32), who lived upwards of fifteen years after the invasion (<sup><2301></sup>Isaiah 38:5), the record of Sennacherib's death (<sup><2378></sup>Isaiah 37:38) is no objection to this section having come from Isaiah; <sup><4322></sup>2 Chronicles 32:1-33 is probably an abstract drawn from Isaiah's account, as the chronicler himself implies (<sup><4322></sup>2 Chronicles 32:32). Pul was probably the last of the old dynasty, and Sargon, a powerful satrap, who contrived to possess himself of supreme power and found a new dynasty (see on <sup><2301></sup>Isaiah 20:1). No attempt was made by Judah to throw off the Assyrian yoke during his vigorous reign. The accession of his son Sennacherib was thought by Hezekiah the opportune time to refuse the long-paid tribute; Egypt and Ethiopia, to secure an ally against Assyria on their Asiatic frontier, promised help; Isaiah, while opposed to submission to Assyria, advised reliance on Jehovah, and not on Egypt, but his advice was disregarded, and so Sennacherib invaded Judea, 712 B.C. He was the builder of the largest of the excavated palaces, that of Koyunjik. HINCKS has deciphered his name in the inscriptions. In the third year of his reign, these state that he overran Syria, took Sidon and other Phoenician cities, and then passed to southwest Palestine, where he defeated the Egyptians and Ethiopians (compare <sup><1213></sup>2 Kings 18:21 19:9). His subsequent retreat, after his host was destroyed by God, is of course suppressed in the inscriptions. But other particulars inscribed agree strikingly with the Bible; the capture of

the “defensed cities of Judah,” the devastation of the country and deportation of its inhabitants; the increased tribute imposed on Hezekiah — thirty talents of gold — this *exact number being given in both*; the silver is set down in the inscriptions at eight hundred talents, in the Bible three hundred; the latter may have been the actual amount carried off, the larger sum may include the silver from the temple doors, pillars, etc. (<sup><2816></sup>2 Kings 18:16).

1. ***fourteenth*** — the third of Sennacherib’s reign. His ultimate object was Egypt, Hezekiah’s ally. Hence he, with the great body of his army (<sup><4419></sup>2 Chronicles 32:9), advanced towards the Egyptian frontier, in southwest Palestine, and did not approach Jerusalem.

2. ***Rab-shakeh*** — In <sup><2817></sup>2 Kings 18:17, Tartan and Rab-saris are joined with him. Rab-shakeh was probably the chief leader; *Rab* is a title of authority, “chief-cup-bearer.”

***Lachish*** — a frontier town southwest of Jerusalem, in Judah; represented as a great fortified city in a hilly and fruitful country in the Koyunjik bas-reliefs, now in the British Museum; also, its name is found on a slab over a figure of Sennacherib on his throne.

***upper pool*** — the side on which the Assyrians would approach Jerusalem coming from the southwest (see on <sup><2318></sup>Isaiah 7:3).

3. ***Eliakim*** — successor to Shebna, who had been “over the household,” that is, chief minister of the king; in <sup><2725></sup>Isaiah 22:15-20, this was foretold.

***scribe*** — secretary, recorder — literally, “one who reminds”; a remembrancer to keep the king informed on important facts, and to act as historiographer. In <sup><2818></sup>2 Kings 18:18, the additional fact is given that the Assyrian envoys “called to the king,” in consequence of which Eliakim, etc., “came out to them.”

4. ***great king*** — the usual title of the Persian and Assyrian kings, as they had many subordinate princes or kings under them over provinces (<sup><2318></sup>Isaiah 10:8).

5. ***counsel*** — Egypt was famed for its wisdom.

6. It was a similar alliance with So (that is, Sabacho, or else Sevechus), the Ethiopian king of Egypt, which provoked the Assyrian to invade and destroy Israel, the northern kingdom, under Hoshea.

7. The Assyrian mistakes Hezekiah’s religious reforms whereby he took away the high places (<sup><2814></sup>2 Kings 18:4) as directed *against Jehovah*. Some

of the high places may have been dedicated to Jehovah, but worshipped under the form of an *image* in violation of the second commandment: the “brazen serpent,” also (broken in pieces by Hezekiah, and called *Nehushtan*, “a piece of brass,” because it was worshipped by Israel) was originally set up by *God’s* command. Hence the Assyrian’s allegation has a specious color: you cannot look for help from Jehovah, for your king has “taken away His altars.”

**to Jerusalem** — (<sup>482B</sup>Deuteronomy 12:5,11; <sup>400D</sup>John 4:20).

**8. give pledges** — a taunting challenge. Only give the *guarantee* that you can supply as many as two thousand riders, and I will give thee two thousand horses. But seeing that you have not even this small number (see on <sup>230E</sup>Isaiah 2:7), how can you stand against the hosts of Assyrian cavalry? The Jews tried to supply their weakness in this “arm” from Egypt (<sup>230E</sup>Isaiah 31:1).

**9. captain** — a governor under a satrap; even *he* commands more horsemen than this.

**10.** A boastful inference from the past successes of Assyria, designed to influence the Jews to surrender; their *own* principles bound them to yield to Jehovah’s will. He may have heard from partisans in Judah what Isaiah had foretold (<sup>230E</sup>Isaiah 10:5,6).

**11. Syrian** — rather, “Aramean”: the language spoken north and east of Palestine, and understood by the Assyrians as belonging to the same family of languages as their own: nearly akin to *Hebrew* also, though not intelligible to the multitude (compare <sup>428E</sup>2 Kings 5:5-7). “Aram” means a “high land,” and includes parts of Assyria as well as Syria.

**Jews’ language** — The men of Judah since the disruption of Israel, claimed the *Hebrew* as their own peculiarly, as if they were now the only true representatives of the whole Hebrew twelve tribes.

**ears of ... people on ... wall** — The interview is within hearing distance of the city. The people crowd on the wall, curious to hear the Assyrian message. The Jewish rulers fear that it will terrify the people and therefore beg Rab-shakeh to speak Aramean.

**12.** Is it to *thy master* and *thee* that I am sent? Nay, it is to *the men on the wall*, to let them know (so far am I from wishing them not to hear, as *you* would wish), that unless they surrender, they shall be reduced to the direst extremities of famine in the siege (<sup>442I</sup>2 Chronicles 32:11, explains the word here), namely, to eat their own excrements: or, connecting, “that they may eat,” etc., with “sit upon the wall”; who, as they hold the wall, are

knowingly exposing themselves to the direst extremities [MAURER]. Isaiah, as a faithful historian, records the filthy and blasphemous language of the Assyrians to mark aright the true character of the attack on Jerusalem.

**13.** Rab-shakeh speaks louder and plainer than ever to the men on the wall.

**15.** The foes of God's people cannot succeed against them, unless they can shake their trust in Him (compare <sup><2330></sup>Isaiah 36:10).

**16. *agreement ... by ... present*** — rather, “make *peace* with me”; literally, “blessing” so called from the mutual *congratulations* attending the ratification of peace. So *Chaldee*. Or else, “*Do homage* to me” [HORSLEY].

***come out*** — surrender to me; then you may remain in quiet possession of your lands till my return from Egypt, when I will lead you away to a land fruitful as your own. Rab-shakeh tries to soften, in the eyes of the Jews, the well-known Assyrian policy of weakening the vanquished by deporting them to other lands (<sup><0472></sup>Genesis 47:21 <sup><2716></sup>2 Kings 17:6).

**19. *Hamath ... Arphad*** — (See on <sup><2309></sup>Isaiah 10:9).

***Sepharvaim*** — literally, “the two scribes”; now Siphpara, on the east of Euphrates, above Babylon. It was a just retribution (<sup><3013></sup>Proverbs 1:31 <sup><3409></sup>Jeremiah 2:19). Israel worshipped the gods of Sepharvaim, and so colonists of Sepharvaim were planted in the land of Israel (thenceforth called Samaria) by the Assyrian conqueror (<sup><2724></sup>2 Kings 17:24; compare <sup><2834></sup>2 Kings 18:34).

***Samaria*** — Shalmaneser began the siege against Hoshea, because of his conspiring with So of Egypt (<sup><2704></sup>2 Kings 17:4). Sargon finished it; and, in his palace at Khorsabad, he has mentioned the number of Israelites carried captive — 27,280 [G. V. SMITH].

**20.** (Compare <sup><2301></sup>Isaiah 10:11 <sup><4329></sup>2 Chronicles 32:19). Here he contradicts his own assertion (<sup><2330></sup>Isaiah 36:10), that he had “come up against the land *with the Lord*.” Liars need good memories. He classes Jehovah with the idols of the other lands; nay, thinks Him inferior in proportion as Judah, under His tutelage, was less than the lands under the tutelage of the idols.

**21. *not a word*** — so as not to enter into a war of words with the blasphemer (<sup><0244></sup>Exodus 14:14 <sup><6109></sup>Jude 1:9).

**22. *clothes rent*** — in grief and horror at the blasphemy (<sup><0265></sup>Matthew 26:65).

# CHAPTER 37

## ISAIAH 37:1-38.

### CONTINUATION OF THE NARRATIVE IN THE THIRTY-SIXTH CHAPTER.

1. *sackcloth* — (See on <sup><2310></sup>Isaiah 20:2).

*house of the Lord* — the sure resort of God's people in distress (<sup><197316></sup>Psalm 73:16,17 77:13).

2. *unto Isaiah* — implying the importance of the prophet's position at the time; the chief officers of the court are deputed to wait on him (compare <sup><1222></sup>2 Kings 22:12-14).

3. *rebuke* — that is, the Lord's rebuke for His people's sins (<sup><1497></sup>Psalm 149:7 <sup><3809></sup>Hosea 5:9).

*blasphemy* — blasphemous railing of Rab-shakeh.

*the children*, etc. — a proverbial expression for, We are in the most extreme danger and have no power to avert it (compare <sup><1313></sup>Hosea 13:13).

4. *hear* — take cognizance of (<sup><10612></sup>2 Samuel 16:12).

*reprove* — will punish him for the words, etc. (<sup><15121></sup>Psalm 50:21).

*remnant* — the two tribes of the kingdom of Judah, Israel being already captive. Isaiah is entreated to act as intercessor with God.

6. *servants* — literally, "youths," mere lads, implying disparagement, not an embassy of venerable elders. The *Hebrew* is different from that for "servants" in <sup><2305></sup>Isaiah 37:5.

*blasphemed me* — (<sup><2361></sup>Isaiah 36:20).

7. *blast* — rather, "I will put a *spirit* (<sup><2306></sup>Isaiah 28:6 <sup><1223></sup>1 Kings 22:23) into him," that is, so influence his judgment that when he hears the report (<sup><2309></sup>Isaiah 37:9, concerning Tirhakah), he shall return [GESENIUS]; the "report" also of the destruction of his army at Jerusalem, reaching Sennacherib, while he was in the southwest of Palestine on the borders of Egypt, led him to retreat.

*by the sword* — (<sup><2373></sup>Isaiah 37:38).

**8. returned** — to the camp of his master.

**Libnah** — meaning “whiteness,” the *Blanche-garde* of the Crusaders [STANLEY]. EUSEBIUS and JEROME place it more south, in the district of Eleutheropolis, ten miles northwest of Lachish, which Sennacherib had captured (see on <sup><2380></sup>Isaiah 36:2). Libnah was in Judea and given to the priests (<sup><1054></sup>1 Chronicles 6:54,57).

**9. Tirhakah** — (See on <sup><2372></sup>Isaiah 17:12; <sup><2381></sup>Isaiah 18:6). Egypt was in part governed by three successive Ethiopian monarchs, for forty or fifty years: Sabacho, Sevechus, and Tirhakah. Sevechus retired from Lower Egypt owing to the resistance of the priests, whereupon Sethos, a prince-priest, obtained supreme power with Tanis (Zoan in Scripture), or Memphis, as his capital. The Ethiopians retained Upper Egypt under Tirhakah, with Thebes as the capital. Tirhakah’s fame as a conqueror rivalled that of Sesostris; he, and one at least, st of the Pharaohs of Lower Egypt, were Hezekiah’s allies against Assyria. The tidings of his approach made Sennacherib the more anxious to get possession of Jerusalem before his arrival.

*sent* — <sup><1290></sup>2 Kings 19:9 more fully expresses Sennacherib’s eagerness by adding “again.”

**10.** He tries to influence *Hezekiah himself*, as Rab-shakeh had addressed the people.

**God ... deceive** — (Compare <sup><1029></sup>Numbers 23:19).

**11. all lands** — (<sup><2347></sup>Isaiah 14:17). He does not dare to enumerate *Egypt* in the list.

**12. Gozan** — in Mesopotamia, on the Chabour (<sup><1270></sup>2 Kings 17:6 18:11). Gozan is the name of the *district*, Chabour of the *river*.

**Haran** — more to the west. Abraham removed to it from Ur (<sup><1013></sup>Genesis 11:31); the *Carroe* of the Romans.

**Rezep** — farther west, in Syria.

**Eden** — There is an ancient village, *Adna*, north of Baghdad. Some think Eden to be the name of a *region* (of Mesopotamia or its vicinity) *in* which was Paradise; Paradise was not Eden itself (<sup><1008></sup>Genesis 2:8). “A garden in Eden.”

**Telassar** — now Tel-afer, west of Mosul [LAYARD]. *Tel* means a “hill” in *Arabic* and *Assyrian* names.

**13. Hena ... Ivah** — in Babylonia. From *Ava* colonists had been brought to Samaria (<sup><1272></sup>2 Kings 17:24).

**14. spread** — unrolled the scroll of writing. God “*knows* our necessities before we ask Him,” but He delights in our unfolding them to Him with filial confidence (<sup><1418></sup>2 Chronicles 20:3,11-13).

**16. dwellest** — the Shekinah, or fiery symbol of God’s presence, *dwelling* in the, temple with His people, is from *shachan*, “to dwell” (<sup><1252></sup>Exodus 25:22 <sup><811></sup>Psalms 80:1 99:1).

**cherubim** — derived by transposition from either a *Hebrew* root, *rachab*, to “ride”; or rather, *barach*, to “bless.” They were formed out of the same mass of pure gold as the mercy seat itself (<sup><1259></sup>Exodus 25:19, *Margin*). The phrase, “dwellest between the cherubim,” arose from their position at each end of the mercy seat, while the Shekinah, and the awful name, JEHOVAH, in written letters, were in the intervening space. They are so inseparably associated with the manifestation of God’s glory, that whether the Lord is at rest or in motion, they always are mentioned with Him (<sup><1039></sup>Numbers 7:89 <sup><9130></sup>Psalms 18:10).

(1) They are first mentioned (<sup><1034></sup>Genesis 3:24) “on the edge of” (as “on the east” may be translated) Eden; the *Hebrew* for “placed” is properly to “place in a tabernacle,” which implies that this was a local tabernacle in which the symbols of God’s presence were manifested suitably to the altered circumstances in which man, after the fall, came before God. It was here that Cain and Abel, and the patriarchs down to the flood, presented their offerings: and it is called “the presence of the Lord” (<sup><1046></sup>Genesis 4:16). When those symbols were removed at the close of that early patriarchal dispensation, small models of them were made for domestic use, called, in *Chaldee*, “seraphim” or “teraphim.”

(2) The cherubim, in the Mosaic tabernacle and Solomon’s temple, were the same in form as those at the outskirts of Eden: compound figures, combining the distinguishing properties of several creatures: the ox, chief among the tame and useful animals; the lion among the wild ones; the eagle among birds; and man, the head of all (the original headship of man over the animal kingdom, about to be restored in Jesus Christ, <sup><1046></sup>Psalms 8:4-8, is also implied in this combination). They are, throughout Scripture, represented as distinct from God; they could not be likenesses of Him which He forbade in any shape.

(3) They are introduced in the third or gospel dispensation (<sup><404></sup>Revelation 4:6) as “*living creatures*” (not so well translated “beasts” in *English Version*), not angels, but beings closely connected with the redeemed Church. So also in <sup><310></sup>Ezekiel 1:5-25 10:1-22. Thus, throughout the three dispensations, they seem to be symbols of those who in every age should officially study and proclaim the manifold wisdom of God.

***thou alone*** — literally, “*Thou art He who alone art God of all the kingdoms*”; whereas Sennacherib had classed Jehovah with the heathen gods, he asserts the nothingness of the latter and the sole lordship of the former.

17. ***ear ... eyes*** — singular, plural. When we wish to hear a thing we lend one ear; when we wish to see a thing we open *both* eyes.

18. ***have laid waste*** — conceding the truth of the Assyrian’s allegation (<sup><236></sup>Isaiah 36:18-20), but adding the reason, “For they were no gods.”

19. ***cast ... gods into ... fire*** — The policy of the Assyrians in order to alienate the conquered peoples from their own countries was, both to deport them elsewhere, and to destroy the tutelary idols of their nation, the strongest tie which bound them to their native land. The Roman policy was just the reverse.

20. The strongest argument to plead before God in prayer, *the honor of God* (<sup><12></sup>Exodus 32:12-14 <sup><43></sup>Psalms 83:18 <sup><27></sup>Daniel 9:18,19).

21. ***Whereas thou hast prayed to me*** — that is, hast not relied on thy own strength but on Me (compare <sup><121></sup>2 Kings 19:20). “That which thou hast prayed to Me against Sennacherib, I have heard” (<sup><48></sup>Psalms 65:2).

22. Transition to poetry: in parallelism.

***virgin ... daughter*** — honorable terms. “Virgin” implies that the city is, as yet, inviolate. “Daughter” is an abstract collective *feminine* personification of the *population*, the child of the place denoted (see on <sup><231></sup>Isaiah 23:10; <sup><308></sup>Isaiah 1:8). *Zion and her inhabitants*.

***shaken ... head*** — in scorn (<sup><121></sup>Psalms 22:7 109:25 <sup><173></sup>Matthew 27:39). With us to shake the head is a sign of denial or displeasure; but gestures have different meanings in different countries (<sup><281></sup>Isaiah 58:9 <sup><321></sup>Ezekiel 25:6 <sup><125></sup>Zephaniah 2:15).

23. ***Whom*** — not an idol.

24. ***said*** — virtually. Hast thou within thyself?

**height** — imagery from the Assyrian felling of trees in Lebanon (<sup>23418</sup>Isaiah 14:8 33:9); figuratively for, “I have carried my victorious army through the regions most difficult of access, to the most remote lands.”

**sides** — rather, “recesses” [G. V. SMITH].

**fir trees** — not cypresses, as some translate; pine foliage and cedars are still found on the northwest side of Lebanon [STANLEY].

**height of ... border** — In <sup>22922</sup>2 Kings 19:23, “the lodgings of his borders.” Perhaps on the ascent to the top there was a place of repose or caravansary, which bounded the usual attempts of persons to ascend [BARNES]. Here, simply, “its extreme height.”

**forest of ... Carmel** — rather, “its thickest forest.” “Carmel” expresses thick luxuriance (see on <sup>23018</sup>Isaiah 10:18; <sup>23377</sup>Isaiah 29:17).

**25. digged, and drunk water** — In <sup>22914</sup>2 Kings 19:24, it is “*strange waters*.” I have marched into foreign lands where I had to dig wells for the supply of my armies; even the natural destitution of water there did not impede my march.

**rivers of ... besieged places** — rather, “the streams (artificial canals from the Nile) of *Egypt*.” “With the sole of my foot,” expresses that as soon as his vast armies *marched* into a region, the streams were *drunk up* by them; or rather, that the rivers proved no *obstruction* to the onward *march* of his armies. So <sup>23019</sup>Isaiah 19:4-6, referring to *Egypt*, “the river — *brooks of defense* — shall be dried up.” HORSLEY, translates the *Hebrew* for “besieged places,” “rocks.”

**26. Reply of God to Sennacherib.**

**long ago** — join, rather, with “I have done it.” Thou dost boast that it is all by *thy* counsel and might: but it is *I who, long ago, have ordered* it so (<sup>23211</sup>Isaiah 22:11); thou wert but the instrument in My hands (<sup>23015</sup>Isaiah 10:5,15). This was the reason why “the inhabitants were of small power before thee” (<sup>23372</sup>Isaiah 37:27), namely, that I ordered it so; yet thou art in My hands, and I know thy ways (<sup>23378</sup>Isaiah 37:28), and I will check thee (<sup>23379</sup>Isaiah 37:29). Connect also, “*I from ancient times have arranged* (‘formed’) it.” However, *English Version* is supported by <sup>23313</sup>Isaiah 33:13 45:6,21 48:5.

**27. Therefore** — not because of thy power, but because I made them unable to withstand thee.

**grass** — which easily withers (<sup>23419</sup>Isaiah 40:6 <sup>43702</sup>Psalms 37:2).

**on ... housetops** — which having little earth to nourish it fades soonest (<sup><3916></sup>Psalm 129:6-8).

**corn blasted before it be grown up** — SMITH translates, “The cornfield (frail and tender), before the corn is grown.”

**28. *abode*** — rather, “sitting down” (<sup><3912></sup>Psalm 139:2). The expressions here describe a man’s whole course of life (<sup><3917></sup>Deuteronomy 6:7 28:6 <sup><1007></sup>1 Kings 3:7 <sup><3918></sup>Psalm 121:8). There is also a special reference to Sennacherib’s first being *at home*, then *going forth against* Judah and Egypt, and *raging* against Jehovah (<sup><2374></sup>Isaiah 37:4).

**29. *tumult*** — insolence.

***hook in ... nose*** — Like a wild beast led by a ring through the nose, he shall be forced back to his own country (compare <sup><3910></sup>Job 41:1,2 <sup><2394></sup>Ezekiel 19:4 29:4 38:4). In a bas-relief of Khorsabad, captives are led before the king by a cord attached to a hook, or ring, passing through the under lip or the upper lip, and nose.

**30. Addressed to Hezekiah.**

***sign*** — a token which, when fulfilled, would assure him of the truth of the whole prophecy as to the enemy’s overthrow. The two years, in which they were sustained by the spontaneous growth of the earth, were the two in which Judea had been already ravaged by Sennacherib (<sup><2370></sup>Isaiah 32:10). Thus translate: “Ye *did eat* (the first year) such as groweth of itself, and in the second year that ... but *in this third year* sow ye,” etc., for in this year the land shall be delivered from the foe. The fact that Sennacherib moved his camp away *immediately after* shows that the first two years refer to the past, not to the future [ROSENMULLER]. Others, referring the first two years to the future, get over the difficulty of Sennacherib’s *speedy* departure, by supposing that year to have been the sabbatical year, and the second year the jubilee; no indication of this appears in the context.

**31. *remnant*** — Judah *remained* after the ten tribes were carried away; also those of Judah who should survive Sennacherib’s invasion are meant.

**33. *with shields*** — He did come near it, but was not allowed to conduct a proper siege.

***bank*** — a mound to defend the assailants in attacking the walls.

**34.** (See <sup><2372></sup>Isaiah 37:29,37 <sup><2317></sup>Isaiah 29:5-8).

**35. *I will defend*** — Notwithstanding *Hezekiah’s* measures of defense (<sup><4412></sup>2 Chronicles 32:3-5), *Jehovah* was its true defender.

**mine own sake** — since Jehovah's name was blasphemed by Sennacherib (<sup>2332</sup>Isaiah 37:23).

**David's sake** — on account of His promise to David (<sup>4927</sup>Psalm 132:17,18), and to Messiah, the heir of David's throne (<sup>2307</sup>Isaiah 9:7 11:1).

**36.** Some attribute the destruction to the agency of the plague (see on <sup>2306</sup>Isaiah 33:24), which may have caused Hezekiah's sickness, narrated immediately after; but <sup>2331</sup>Isaiah 33:1,4, proves that the Jews spoiled the corpses, which they would not have dared to do, had there been on them infection of a plague. The secondary agency seems, from <sup>2306</sup>Isaiah 29:6 30:30, to have been a storm of hail, thunder, and lightning (compare <sup>1022</sup>Exodus 9:22-25). The simoon belongs rather to Africa and Arabia than Palestine, and ordinarily could not produce such a destructive effect. Some few of the army, as <sup>4822</sup>2 Chronicles 32:21 seems to imply, survived and accompanied Sennacherib home. HERODOTUS (2.141) gives an account confirming Scripture in so far as the sudden discomfiture of the Assyrian army is concerned. The Egyptian priests told him that Sennacherib was forced to retreat from Pelusium owing to a multitude of field mice, sent by one of their gods, having gnawed the Assyrians' *bow-strings* and *shield-straps*. Compare the language (<sup>2333</sup>Isaiah 37:33), "He shall not shoot an *arrow* there, nor come before it with shields," which the Egyptians corrupted into their version of the story. Sennacherib was at the time with a part of his army, not at Jerusalem, but on the Egyptian frontier, southwest of Palestine. The sudden destruction of the host near Jerusalem, a considerable part of his whole army, as well as the advance of the Ethiopian Tirhakah, induced him to retreat, which the Egyptians accounted for in a way honoring to their own gods. The mouse was the Egyptian emblem of destruction. The *Greek* Apollo was called *Sminthian*, from a Cretan word for "a mouse," as a tutelary god of agriculture, he was represented with one foot upon a mouse, since field mice hurt corn. The Assyrian inscriptions, of course, suppress their own defeat, but nowhere boast of having taken Jerusalem; and the only reason to be given for Sennacherib not having, amidst his many subsequent expeditions recorded in the monuments, returned to Judah, is the terrible calamity he had sustained there, which convinced him that Hezekiah was under the divine protection. RAWLINSON says, In Sennacherib's account of his wars with Hezekiah, inscribed with cuneiform characters in the hall of the palace of Koyunjik, built by him (a hundred forty feet long by a hundred twenty broad), wherein even the Jewish physiognomy of the captives is portrayed, there occurs a remarkable passage; after his mentioning his taking two hundred thousand captive Jews, he adds, "Then I prayed unto God"; the only instance of an inscription wherein the name of GOD occurs without a heathen adjunct. The

forty-sixth Psalm probably commemorates Judah's deliverance. It occurred in one "night," according to <sup><1285></sup>2 Kings 19:35, with which Isaiah's words, "when they arose *early in the morning*," etc., are in undesigned coincidence.

*they ... they* — "the Jews ... the Assyrians."

**37. *dwelt at Nineveh*** — for about twenty years after his disaster, according to the inscriptions. The word, "dwelt," is consistent with any indefinite length of time. "Nineveh," so called from Ninus, that is, Nimrod, its founder; his name means "exceedingly impious rebel"; he subverted the existing patriarchal order of society, by setting up a system of chieftainship, founded on conquest; the hunting field was his training school for war; he was of the race of Ham, and transgressed the limits marked by God (<sup><1008></sup>Genesis 10:8-11,25), encroaching on Shem's portion; he abandoned Babel for a time, after the miraculous confusion of tongues and went and founded Nineveh; he was, after death, worshipped as Orion, the constellation (see on <sup><3809></sup>Job 9:9; <sup><3831></sup>Job 38:31).

**38. *Nisroch*** — *Nisr*, in *Semitic*, means "eagle;" the termination *och*, means "great." The eagle-headed human figure in Assyrian sculptures is no doubt Nisroch, the same as Asshur, the chief Assyrian god; the corresponding goddess was Asheera, or Astarte; this means a "grove," or sacred tree, often found as the symbol of the heavenly hosts (*Saba*) in the sculptures, as Asshur the *Eponymus* hero of Assyria (<sup><1001></sup>Genesis 10:11) answered to the sun or Baal, Belus, the title of office, "Lord." This explains "image of the grove" (<sup><1207></sup>2 Kings 21:7). The eagle was worshipper by the ancient Persians and Arabs.

***Esar-haddon*** — In <sup><5012></sup>Ezra 4:2 he is mentioned as having brought colonists into Samaria. He is also thought to have been the king who carried Manasseh captive to Babylon (<sup><4691></sup>2 Chronicles 33:11). He built the palace on the mound Nebbiyunus, and that called the southwest palace of Nimroud. The latter was destroyed by fire, but his name and wars are recorded on the great bulls taken from the building. He obtained his building materials from the northwest palaces of the ancient dynasty, ending in Pul.

# CHAPTER 38

## ISAIAH 38:1-22.

### HEZEKIAH'S SICKNESS; PERHAPS CONNECTED WITH THE PLAGUE OR BLAST WHEREBY THE ASSYRIAN ARMY HAD BEEN DESTROYED.

1. *Set ... house in order* — Make arrangement as to the succession to the throne; for he had then no son; and as to thy other concerns.

*thou shall die* — speaking according to the ordinary course of the disease. His being spared fifteen years was not a change in God's mind, but an illustration of God's dealings being unchangeably regulated by the state of man in relation to Him.

2. The couches in the East run along the walls of houses. He turned away from the spectators to hide his emotion and collect his thoughts for prayer.

3. He mentions his past religious consistency, not as a boast or a ground for justification; but according to the Old Testament dispensation, wherein temporal rewards (as long life, etc., <sup><1212></sup>Exodus 20:12) followed legal obedience, he makes his religious conduct a plea for asking the prolongation of his life.

*walked* — Life is a journey; the pious "walk with God" (<sup><1151></sup>Genesis 5:24 <sup><1191></sup>1 Kings 9:4).

*perfect* — sincere; not absolutely perfect, but *aiming* towards it (<sup><1155></sup>Matthew 5:45); single-minded in walking as in the presence of God (<sup><1171></sup>Genesis 17:1). The *letter* of the Old Testament legal righteousness was, however, a standard very much below the *spirit* of the law as unfolded by Christ (<sup><1151></sup>Matthew 5:20-48 <sup><1181></sup>2 Corinthians 3:6,14,17).

*wept sore* — JOSEPHUS says, the reason why he wept so sorely was that being childless, he was leaving the *kingdom* without a successor. How often our wishes, when gratified, prove curses! Hezekiah lived to have a son; that son was the idolater Manasseh, the chief cause of God's wrath against Judah, and of the overthrow of the kingdom (<sup><1231></sup>2 Kings 23:26,27).

4. In <sup><1214></sup>2 Kings 20:4, the quickness of God's answer to the prayer is marked, "afore Isaiah had gone out into the middle court, the word of the

LORD came to him”; that is, before he had left Hezekiah, or at least when he had just left him, and Hezekiah was in the aCt of praying after having heard God’s message by Isaiah (compare <sup><2624></sup>Isaiah 65:24 <sup><1915></sup>Psalms 32:5 <sup><2701></sup>Daniel 9:21).

**5. *God of David thy father*** — God remembers the covenant with the father to the children (<sup><0215></sup>Exodus 20:5 <sup><1925></sup>Psalms 89:28,29).

***tears*** — (<sup><1508></sup>Psalms 56:8).

***days ... years*** — Man’s *years*, however many, are but as so many *days* (<sup><0057></sup>Genesis 5:27).

**6.** In <sup><0218></sup>2 Kings 20:8, after this verse comes the statement which is put at the end. in order not to interrupt God’s message (<sup><2302></sup>Isaiah 38:21,22) by Isaiah (<sup><2315></sup>Isaiah 38:5-8).

***will deliver*** — The city was *already* delivered, but here assurance is given, that. Hezekiah shall have *no more* to fear from the Assyrians.

**7. *sign*** — a token that God would fulfill His promise that Hezekiah should “go up into the house of the Lord *the third day*” (<sup><0215></sup>2 Kings 20:5,8); the words in italics are not in Isaiah.

**8. *bring again*** — cause to return (<sup><0602></sup>Joshua 10:12-14). In <sup><0219></sup>2 Kings 20:9,11, the choice is stated to have been given to Hezekiah, whether the shadow should go forward, or go back, ten degrees. Hezekiah replied, “It is a light thing (a less decisive miracle) for the shadow to go down (its usual direction) ten degrees: nay, but let it return backward ten degrees”; so Isaiah cried to Jehovah that it should be so, and it was so (compare <sup><0602></sup>Joshua 10:12,14).

***sundial of Ahaz*** — HERODOTUS (2.109) states that the sundial and the division of the day into twelve hours, were invented by the Babylonians; from them Ahaz borrowed the invention. He was one, from his connection with Tiglath-pileser, likely to have done so (<sup><0216></sup>2 Kings 16:7,10). “Shadow of the degrees” means the shadow made on the degrees. JOSEPHUS thinks these degrees were *steps ascending* to the palace of Ahaz; the time of day was indicated by the number of steps reached by the shadow. But probably a sundial, strictly so called, is meant; it was of such a size, and so placed, that Hezekiah, when convalescent, could witness the miracle from his chamber. Compare <sup><2302></sup>Isaiah 38:21,22 with <sup><0219></sup>2 Kings 20:9, where translate, shall *this* shadow go forward, etc.; the dial was no doubt *in sight*, probably “in the middle court” (<sup><0219></sup>2 Kings 20:4), the point where Isaiah turned back to announce God’s gracious answers to Hezekiah. Hence this particular sign was given. The retrogression of the shadow may have been

effected by refraction; a cloud denser than the air interposing between the gnomon and dial would cause the phenomenon, which does not take from the miracle, for God gave him the choice whether the shadow should go forward or back, and regulated the time and place. BOSANQUET makes the fourteenth year of Hezekiah to be 689 B.C., the known year of a solar eclipse, to which he ascribes the recession of the shadow. At all events, there is no need for supposing any revolution of the relative positions of the sun and earth, but merely an effect produced on the shadow (<sup><2119></sup>2 Kings 20:9-11); that effect was only *local*, and designed for the satisfaction of Hezekiah, for the Babylonian astronomers and king “sent to enquire of the wonder that was done *in the land*” (<sup><4231></sup>2 Chronicles 32:31), implying that it had not extended to their country. No mention of any instrument for marking time occurs before this dial of Ahaz, 700 B.C. The first mention of the “hour” is made by Daniel at Babylon (<sup><2186></sup>Daniel 3:6).

**9-20.** The prayer and thanksgiving song of Hezekiah is only given here, not in the parallel passages of Second Kings and Second Chronicles. <sup><2309></sup>Isaiah 38:9 is the heading or inscription.

**10. *cutting off*** — ROSENMULLER translates, “the meridian”; when the sun stands in the zenith: so “the perfect day” (<sup><2148></sup>Proverbs 4:18). Rather, “in the *tranquillity* of my days,” that is, that period of life when I might now look forward to a tranquil reign [MAURER]. The *Hebrew* is so translated (<sup><2316></sup>Isaiah 62:6,7).

***go to*** — rather, “go *into*,” as in <sup><2340></sup>Isaiah 46:2 [MAURER].

***residue of my years*** — those which I had calculated on. God sends sickness to teach man not to calculate on the morrow, but to live more wholly to God, as if each day were the last.

**11. *Lord ... Lord*** — The repetition, as in <sup><2389></sup>Isaiah 38:19, expresses the excited feeling of the king’s mind.

***See the Lord*** (Jehovah) — figuratively for “to enjoy His good gifts.” So, in a similar connection (<sup><4273></sup>Psalm 27:13). “I had fainted, unless I had believed *to see the goodness of the Lord* in the land of the living”; (<sup><4342></sup>Psalm 34:12), “What man is he that desireth life that he may *see good*?”

***world*** — rather, translate: “among the inhabitants of the land of *stillness*,” that is, Hades [MAURER], in parallel antithesis to “the land of the living” in the first clause. The *Hebrew* comes from a root, to “rest” or “cease” (<sup><4346></sup>Job 14:6).

**12. *age*** — rather, as the parallel “shepherd’s tent” requires *habitation*, so the *Arabic* [GESENIUS].

***departed*** — is broken up, or shifted, as a tent to a different locality. The same image occurs (<sup><4001></sup>2 Corinthians 5:1 <sup><6012></sup>2 Peter 1:12,13). He plainly expects to exist, and not cease to be in another state; as the shepherd still lives, after he has struck his tent and removed elsewhere.

***I have cut off*** — He attributes to *himself* that which is *God’s* will with respect to him; because he *declares* that will. So Jeremiah is said to “root out” kingdoms, because he *declares* God’s purpose of doing so (<sup><3400></sup>Jeremiah 1:10). The weaver cuts off his web from the loom when completed. <sup><8006></sup>Job 7:6 has a like image. The Greeks represented the Fates as spinning and cutting off the threads of each man’s life.

***he*** — God.

***with pining sickness*** — rather, “from the thrum,” or thread, which tied the loom to the weaver’s beam.

***from day ... to night*** — that is, in the space of a single day between morning and night (<sup><8003></sup>Job 4:20).

**13. *I reckoned ... that*** — rather, *I composed* (my mind, during the night, expecting relief in the “morning,” so <sup><8004></sup>Job 7:4): *for* (“*that*” is not, as in the *English Version*, to be supplied) as a lion He *was breaking* all my bones [VITRINGA] (<sup><8006></sup>Job 10:16 <sup><2500></sup>Lamentations 3:10,11). The *Hebrew*, in <sup><3400></sup>Psalms 131:2, is rendered, “I quieted.” Or else, “I made myself like a lion (namely, in roaring, through pain), He was so breaking my bones!” Poets often compare great groaning to a lion’s roaring, so, <sup><2384></sup>Isaiah 38:14, he compares his groans to the sounds of other animals (<sup><4201></sup>Psalms 22:1) [MAURER].

**14.** Rather, “Like a swallow, or a crane” (from a root; “to disturb the water,” a bird frequenting the water) [MAURER], (<sup><3400></sup>Jeremiah 8:7).

***chatter*** — twitter: broken sounds expressive of pain.

***dove*** — called by the Arabs the daughter of mourning, from its plaintive note (<sup><2391></sup>Isaiah 59:11).

***looking upward*** — to God for relief.

***undertake for*** — literally, “be surety for” me; assure me that I shall be restored (<sup><439122></sup>Psalms 119:122).

**15-20.** The second part of the song passes from prayer to thanksgiving at the prayer being heard.

**What shall I say?** — the language of one at a loss for words to express his sense of the unexpected deliverance.

**both spoken ... and ... done it** — (<sup>0239</sup>Numbers 23:19). Both promised and performed (<sup>5154</sup>1 Thessalonians 5:24 <sup>8103</sup>Hebrews 10:23).

**himself** — No one else could have done it (<sup>4901</sup>Psalms 98:1).

**go softly ... in the bitterness** — rather, “*on account* of the bitterness”; I will behave myself humbly in remembrance of my past sorrow and sickness from which I have been delivered by God’s mercy (see <sup>1127</sup>1 Kings 21:27,29). In <sup>4901</sup>Psalms 42:2, the same *Hebrew* verb expresses the slow and solemn gait of one going up to the house of God; it is found nowhere else, hence ROSENMULLER explains it, “I will reverently attend the sacred festivals in the temple”; but this ellipsis would be harsh; rather metaphorically the word is transferred to a *calm, solemn, and submissive* walk of life.

**16. by these** — namely, *by God’s benefits*, which are implied in the context (<sup>2385</sup>Isaiah 38:15, “He hath Himself done it” “unto me”). *All* “men live by these” benefits (<sup>4947</sup>Psalms 104:27-30), “and in all these is the life of my spirit,” that is, I also live by them (<sup>6888</sup>Deuteronomy 8:3).

**and (wilt) make me to live** — The *Hebrew* is *imperative*, “make me to live.” In this view he adds a *prayer* to the confident hope founded on his comparative convalescence, which he expressed, “Thou *wilt* recover me” [MAURER].

**17. for peace** — instead of the prosperity which I had previously.

**great bitterness** — literally, “bitterness to me, bitterness”; expressing intense emotion.

**in love** — literally, “attachment,” such as *joins* one to another tenderly; “Thou hast been lovingly attached to me from the pit”; pregnant phrase for, Thy love has gone down to the pit, and drawn me out from it. The “pit” is here simply *death*, in Hezekiah’s sense; realized in its fullness only in reference to the *soul’s* redemption from hell by Jesus Christ (<sup>2301</sup>Isaiah 61:1), who went down to the pit for that purpose Himself (<sup>4804</sup>Psalms 88:4-6 <sup>3015</sup>Zechariah 9:11,12 <sup>8133</sup>Hebrews 13:20). “Sin” and sickness are connected (<sup>4943</sup>Psalms 103:3; compare <sup>2504</sup>Isaiah 53:4, with <sup>4087</sup>Matthew 8:17 9:5,6), especially under the Old Testament dispensation of temporal sanctions; but

even now, sickness, though not invariably arising from sin *in individuals*, is connected with it in the general moral view.

**cast ... behind back** — consigned my sins to oblivion. The same phrase occurs (<sup><1149></sup>1 Kings 14:9 <sup><4626></sup>Nehemiah 9:26 <sup><4877></sup>Psalms 50:17). Contrast <sup><4908></sup>Psalms 90:8, “Thou hast set our iniquities *before* thee, our secret sins *in the light of thy countenance*.”

**18. death** — that is, the dead; Hades and its inhabitants (<sup><4822></sup>Job 28:22; see on <sup><2381></sup>Isaiah 38:11). Plainly Hezekiah believed in a world of disembodied spirits; his language does not imply what skepticism has drawn from it, but simply that he regarded the disembodied state as one incapable of declaring the praises of God *before men*, for it is, *as regards this world*, an unseen land of stillness; “the living” alone can praise God *on earth*, in reference to which only he is speaking; <sup><2571></sup>Isaiah 57:1,2 shows that at this time the true view of the blessedness of the righteous dead was held, though not with the full clearness of the Gospel, which “has brought life and immortality to light” (<sup><5112></sup>2 Timothy 1:10).

**hope for thy truth** — (<sup><10427></sup>Psalms 104:27). Their probation is at an end. They can no longer exercise faith and hope in regard to Thy faithfulness to Thy promises, which are limited to the present state. For “hope” ceases (even in the case of the godly) when sight begins (<sup><4124></sup>Romans 8:24,25); the ungodly have “no hope” (<sup><5113></sup>1 Thessalonians 4:13). Hope in God’s truth is one of the grounds of praise to God (<sup><4714></sup>Psalms 71:14 119:49). Others translate, “cannot celebrate.”

**19. living ... living** — emphatic repetition, as in <sup><2381></sup>Isaiah 38:11,17; his heart is so full of the main object of his prayer that, for want of adequate words, he repeats the same word.

**father to the children** — one generation of the *living* to another. He probably, also, hints at his own desire to live until he should have a child, the successor to his throne, to whom he might make known and so perpetuate the memory of God’s truth.

**truth** — *faithfulness* to His promises; especially in Hezekiah’s case, His promise of hearing prayer.

**20. was ready** — not in the *Hebrew*; “Jehovah was for my salvation,” that is, saved me (compare <sup><2321></sup>Isaiah 12:2).

**we** — I and my people.

***in the house of the Lord*** — This song was designed, as many of the other Psalms, as a *form* to be used in public worship at stated times, perhaps on every anniversary of his recovery; hence “all the days of *our* life.”

***lump of figs*** — a round cake of figs pressed into a mass (<sup>102518</sup>1 Samuel 25:18). God works by means; the meanest of which He can make effectual.

***boil*** — inflamed ulcer, produced by the plague.

**22. *house of the Lord*** — Hence he makes the praises to be sung there prominent in his song (<sup>23831</sup>Isaiah 38:20 <sup>13812</sup>Psalms 116:12-14,17-19).

# CHAPTER 39

## ISAIAH 39:1-8.

### HEZEKIAH'S ERROR IN THE DISPLAY OF HIS RICHES TO THE BABYLONIAN AMBASSADOR.

**1. *Merodach-baladan*** — For a hundred fifty years before the overthrow of Nineveh by Cyaxares the Mede, a succession of rulers, mostly viceroys of Assyria, ruled Babylon, from the time of Nabonassar, 747 B.C. That date is called “the Era of Nabonassar.” Pul or Phallukha was then expelled, and a new dynasty set up at Nineveh, under Tiglath-pileser. Semiramis, Pul’s wife, then retired to Babylon, with Nabonassar, her son, whose advent to the throne of Babylon, after the overthrow of the old line at Nineveh, marked a new era. Sometimes the viceroys of Babylon made themselves, for a time, independent of Assyria; thus Merodach-baladan at this time did so, encouraged by the Assyrian disaster in the Jewish campaign. He had done so before, and was defeated in the first year of Sennacherib’s reign, as is recorded in cuneiform characters in that monarchs palace of Koyunjik. Nabopolassar was the first who established, *permanently*, his independence; his son, Nebuchadnezzar, raised Babylon to the position which Nineveh once occupied; but from the want of stone near the Lower Euphrates, the buildings of Babylon, formed of sun-dried brick, have not stood the wear of ages as Nineveh has.

***Merodach*** — an idol, the same as the god of war and planet Mars (<sup>2301E</sup>Jeremiah 50:2). Often kings took their names from their gods, as if peculiarly under their tutelage. So Belshazzar from Bel.

***Baladan*** — means “Bel is his lord.” The chronicle of EUSEBIUS contains a fragment of BEROSUS, stating that Acises, an Assyrian viceroy, usurped the supreme command at Babylon. Merodach- (or Berodach-) baladan murdered him and succeeded to the throne. Sennacherib conquered Merodach-baladan and left Esar-haddon, his son, as governor of Babylon. Merodach-baladan would naturally court the alliance of Hezekiah, who, like himself, had thrown off the yoke of the Assyrian king, and who would be equally glad of the Babylonian alliance against Assyria; hence arose the excessive attention which he paid to the usurper.

**sick** — An additional reason is given (<sup>4423</sup>2 Chronicles 32:31). “The princes of Babylon sent to enquire of the wonder that was done in the land”; namely, the recession of the shadow on Ahaz’ sundial; to the Chaldean astronomers, such a fact would be especially interesting, the dial having been invented at Babylon.

**2. glad** — It was not the mere act, but the spirit of it, which provoked God (<sup>4423</sup>2 Chronicles 32:25), “Hezekiah rendered not again according to the benefit done unto him, for *his heart was lifted up*”; also compare <sup>4423</sup>2 Chronicles 32:31. God “tries” His people at different times by different ways, bringing out “all that is in their heart,” to show them its varied corruptions. Compare David in a similar case (<sup>1201</sup>1 Chronicles 21:1-8).

**precious things** — rather, “the house of his (aromatic) spices”; from a *Hebrew* root, to “break to pieces,” as is done to aromatics.

**silver ... gold** — partly obtained from the Assyrian camp (<sup>2304</sup>Isaiah 33:4); partly from presents (<sup>4423</sup>2 Chronicles 32:23,27-29).

**precious ointment** — used for anointing kings and priests.

**armor** — or else vessels in general; the parallel passage (<sup>4427</sup>2 Chronicles 32:27), “treasuries ... *for shields*,” favors *English Version*. His arsenal.

**3. What ... whence** — implying that any proposition coming from the idolatrous enemies of God, with whom Israel was forbidden to form alliance, should have been received with anything but *gladness*. Reliance on Babylon, rather than on God, was a similar sin to the previous reliance on Egypt (<sup>2301</sup>Isaiah 30:1-31:9).

**far country** — implying that he had done nothing more than was proper in showing attention to strangers “from a far country.”

**4. All** — a frank confession of his *whole* fault; the king submits his conduct to the scrutiny of a subject, because that subject was accredited by God. Contrast Asa (<sup>4407</sup>2 Chronicles 16:7-10).

**5. Lord of hosts** — who has all thy goods at His disposal.

**6. days come** — one hundred twenty years afterwards. This is the first intimation that the Jews would be carried to *Babylon* — the first designation of their *place* of punishment. The general prophecy of Moses (<sup>1933</sup>Leviticus 26:33 <sup>6236</sup>Deuteronomy 28:64); the more particular one of Ahijah in Jeroboam’s time (<sup>1145</sup>1 Kings 14:15), “beyond the river”; and of <sup>3167</sup>Amos 5:27, “captivity beyond Damascus”; are now concentrated in this specific one as to “Babylon” (<sup>3340</sup>Micah 4:10). It was an exact retribution in

kind, that as Babylon had been the instrument of Hezekiah and Judah's sin, so also it should be the instrument of their punishment.

**7. sons ... from thee** — The sons which Hezekiah (as JOSEPHUS tells us) wished to have (see on <sup><2328B></sup>Isaiah 28:3, on “wept sore”) will be among the foremost in suffering.

**eunuchs** — fulfilled (<sup><2700E></sup>Daniel 1:2,3,7).

**8. peace ... in my days** — The punishment was not, as in David's case (<sup><1024E></sup>2 Samuel 24:13-15), sent in his time. True repentance acquiesces in all God's ways and finds cause of thanksgiving in any mitigation.

# CHAPTER 40

## ISAIAH 40:1-31.

### SECOND PART OF THE PROPHECIES OF ISAIAH.

The former were local and temporary in their reference. These belong to the distant future, and are world-wide in their interest; the deliverance from Babylon under Cyrus, which he here foretells by prophetic suggestion, carries him on to the greater deliverance under Messiah, the Savior of Jews and Gentiles in the present eclectic Church, and the restorer of Israel and Head of the world-wide kingdom, literal and spiritual, ultimately. As Assyria was the hostile world power in the former part, which refers to Isaiah's own time, so Babylon is so in the latter part, which refers to a period long subsequent. The connecting link, however, is furnished (<sup>230B</sup>Isaiah 39:6) at the close of the former part. The latter part was written in the old age of Isaiah, as appears from the greater mellowness of style and tone which pervades it; it is less fiery and more tender and gentle than the former part.

**1. *Comfort ye, comfort ye*** — twice repeated to give double assurance. Having announced the coming captivity of the Jews in Babylon, God now desires His servants, the prophets (<sup>233V</sup>Isaiah 52:7), to comfort them. The scene is laid in Babylon; the time, near the close of the captivity; the ground of comfort is the speedy ending of the captivity, the Lord Himself being their leader.

***my people ... your God*** — correlatives (<sup>281B</sup>Jeremiah 31:33 <sup>200B</sup>Hosea 1:9,10). It is God's covenant relation with His people, and His "word" of promise (<sup>240B</sup>Isaiah 40:8) to their forefathers, which is the ground of His interposition in their behalf, after having for a time chastised them (<sup>254B</sup>Isaiah 54:8).

**2. *comfortably*** — literally, "to the heart"; not merely to the intellect.

***Jerusalem*** — Jerusalem though then in ruins, regarded by God as about to be rebuilt; her *people* are chiefly meant, but the *city* is personified.

***cry*** — publicly and emphatically as a herald cries aloud (<sup>240B</sup>Isaiah 40:3).

**warfare** — or, the *appointed time* of her misery ( <sup><800B></sup>Job 7:1, *Margin*; <sup><844A></sup>Job 14:14 <sup><2700E></sup>Daniel 10:1). The ulterior and Messianic reference probably is *the definite time* when the legal economy of burdensome rites is at an end ( <sup><800B></sup>Galatians 4:3,4).

**pardoned** — The *Hebrew* expresses that her iniquity is so *expiated* that God now *delights* in restoring her.

**double for all her sins** — This can only, in a very restricted sense, hold good of Judah's restoration after the first captivity. For how can it be said her "warfare was accomplished," when as yet the galling yoke of Antiochus and also of Rome was before them? The "double for her sins" must refer to the twofold captivity, the Assyrian and the Roman; at the coming close of this latter dispersion, and then only, can her "iniquity" be said to be "pardoned," or *fully* expiated [HOUBIGANT]. It does not mean double as much as she *deserved*, but *ample* punishment in her twofold captivity. Messiah is the antitypical Israel (compare <sup><412E></sup>Matthew 2:15, with <sup><300E></sup>Hosea 11:1). He indeed has "received" of sufferings *amply* more than enough to expiate "for our sins" ( <sup><615E></sup>Romans 5:15,17). Otherwise (cry unto her) "that she *shall* receive (*blessings*) of the Lord's hand double to the *punishment of all her sins*" (so "sin" is used, <sup><844B></sup>Zechariah 14:19, *Margin*) [LOWTH]. The *English Version* is simpler.

**3. crieth in the wilderness** — So the *Septuagint* and <sup><408B></sup>Matthew 3:3 connect the words. The *Hebrew* accents, however, connect them thus: "In the wilderness prepare ye," etc., and the parallelism also requires this, "Prepare ye *in the wilderness*," answering to "make straight *in the desert*." Matthew was entitled, as under inspiration, to vary the connection, so as to bring out another sense, included in the Holy Spirit's intention; in <sup><408B></sup>Matthew 3:1, "John the Baptist, *preaching in the wilderness*," answers thus to "The voice of one *crying in the wilderness*." MAURER takes the participle as put for the finite verb (so in <sup><300E></sup>Isaiah 40:6), "A voice *crieth*." The clause, "in the wilderness," alludes to Israel's passage through it from Egypt to Canaan ( <sup><680P></sup>Psalms 68:7), Jehovah being their leader; so it shall be at the coming restoration of Israel, of which the restoration from Babylon was but a type (not the full realization; for their way from it was *not* through the "wilderness"). Where John preached (namely, in the wilderness; the type of this earth, a moral wilderness), *there* were the hearers who are ordered to prepare the way of the Lord, and *there* was to be the coming of the Lord [BENGE]. John, though he was immediately followed by the suffering Messiah, is rather the herald of the coming *reigning* Messiah, as <sup><300E></sup>Malachi 4:5,6 ("before *the great and dreadful day of the Lord*"), proves. <sup><417E></sup>Matthew 17:11 (compare <sup><442E></sup>Acts 3:21) implies that John is not exclusively meant; and that though in one sense Elias has

come, in another he is *yet to come*. John was the figurative Elias, coming “in the *spirit and power* of Elias” (<sup><4017></sup>Luke 1:17); <sup><4012></sup>John 1:21, where John the Baptist denies that he was the *actual* Elias, accords with this view <sup><3005></sup>Malachi 4:5,6 cannot have received its exhaustive fulfillment in John; the Jews always understood it of the literal Elijah. As there is another consummating advent of Messiah Himself, so perhaps there is to be of his forerunner Elias, who also was present at the transfiguration.

***the Lord*** — *Hebrew, Jehovah*; as this is applied to Jesus, He must be Jehovah (<sup><4008></sup>Matthew 3:3).

4. Eastern monarchs send heralds before them in a journey to clear away obstacles, make causeways over valleys, and level hills. So John’s duty was to bring back the people to obedience to the law and to remove all self-confidence, pride in national privileges, hypocrisy, and irreligion, so that they should be ready for His coming (<sup><3005></sup>Malachi 4:6 <sup><4017></sup>Luke 1:17).

***crooked*** — declivities.

5. ***see it*** — The *Septuagint* for “it,” has “the salvation of God.” So <sup><4008></sup>Luke 3:6 (compare <sup><4020></sup>Luke 2:30, that is, Messiah); but the Evangelist probably took these words from <sup><2520></sup>Isaiah 52:10.

***for*** — rather, “All flesh shall see *that* the mouth of Jehovah hath spoken it” [BENGE].

6. ***The voice*** — the same divine herald as in <sup><3005></sup>Isaiah 40:3.

***he*** — one of those ministers or prophets (see on <sup><2400></sup>Isaiah 40:1) whose duty it was, by direction of “the voice,” to “comfort the Lord’s afflicted people with the promises of brighter days.”

***All flesh is grass*** — The connection is, “All *human* things, however goodly, are transitory: *God’s* promises alone steadfast” (<sup><2408></sup>Isaiah 40:8,15,17,23,24); this contrast was already suggested in <sup><3005></sup>Isaiah 40:5, “*All flesh ... the mouth of the Lord.*” <sup><4024></sup>1 Peter 1:24,25 applies this passage distinctly to the gospel word of Messiah (compare <sup><4024></sup>John 12:24 <sup><3000></sup>James 1:10).

7. ***spirit of the Lord*** — rather, “wind of Jehovah” (<sup><49316></sup>Psalm 103:16). The withering east wind of those countries sent by Jehovah (Jon 4:8).

***the people*** — rather, “this people” [LOWTH], which may refer to the Babylonians [ROSENMULLER]; but better, *mankind in general*, as in <sup><2400></sup>Isaiah 42:5, so <sup><2400></sup>Isaiah 40:6, “*all flesh*”; *this whole race*, that is, man.

9. Rather, “Oh, thou that bringest good things to Zion; thou that bringest good tidings *to Jerusalem*.” “Thou” is thus the collective personification of the *messengers* who announce God’s gracious purpose to Zion (see on <sup><301></sup>Isaiah 40:1); <sup><231></sup>Isaiah 52:7 confirms this [*Vulgate* and GESENIUS]. If *English Version* be retained, the sense will be the glad message was first to be proclaimed to Jerusalem, and then from it as the center to all “Judea, Samaria, and the uttermost parts of the earth” (<sup><247></sup>Luke 24:47,49 <sup><408></sup>Acts 1:8) [VITRINGA and HENGSTENBERG].

**mountain** — It was customary for those who were about to promulgate any great thing, to ascend a hill from which they could be seen and heard by all (<sup><70></sup>Judges 9:7 <sup><101></sup>Matthew 5:1).

**be not afraid** — to announce to the exiles that their coming return home is attended with danger in the midst of the Babylonians. The gospel minister must “open his mouth *boldly*” (<sup><125></sup>Proverbs 29:25 <sup><169></sup>Ephesians 6:19).

**Behold** — especially at His second coming (<sup><820></sup>Zechariah 12:10 14:5).

10. **with strong hand** — or, “against the strong”; rather, “as a strong one” [MAURER]. Or, against the strong one, namely, Satan (<sup><129></sup>Matthew 12:29 <sup><610></sup>Revelation 20:2,3,10) [VITRINGA].

**arm** — power (<sup><913></sup>Psalm 89:13 98:1).

**for him** — that is, He needs not to seek help for Himself from any external source, but by His own inherent power He gains rule for Himself (so <sup><304></sup>Isaiah 40:14).

**work** — or, “recompense for his work”; rather, “recompense which He gives for work” (<sup><211></sup>Isaiah 62:11 <sup><622></sup>Revelation 22:12).

11. **feed** — including all a shepherd’s care — “tend” (<sup><623></sup>Ezekiel 34:23 <sup><421></sup>Psalm 23:1 <sup><831></sup>Hebrews 13:20 <sup><1251></sup>1 Peter 2:25).

**carry** — applicable to *Messiah’s restoration of Israel*, as sheep scattered in all lands, and unable to move of themselves *to their own land* (<sup><810></sup>Psalm 80:1 <sup><213></sup>Jeremiah 23:3). As Israel was “carried from the womb” (that is, in its earliest days) (<sup><239></sup>Isaiah 63:9,11,12 <sup><972></sup>Psalm 77:20), so it shall be in “old age” (that is, its latter days) (<sup><246></sup>Isaiah 46:3,4).

**gently lead** — as a thoughtful shepherd does the ewes “giving suck” (*Margin*) (<sup><131></sup>Genesis 33:13,14).

12. Lest the Jews should suppose that He who was just before described as a “shepherd” is a mere man, He is now described as GOD.

**Who** — Who else but GOD could do so? Therefore, though the redemption and restoration of His people, foretold here, was a work beyond man's power, they should not doubt its fulfillment since all things are possible to Him who can accurately *regulate the proportion of the waters* as if He had measured them with His hand (compare <sup><3405></sup>Isaiah 40:15). But MAURER translates: "Who can measure," etc., that is, How immeasurable are the works of God? The former is a better explanation (<sup><3305></sup>Job 28:25 <sup><3304></sup>Proverbs 30:4).

**span** — the space from the end of the thumb to the end of the middle finger extended; God measures the vast heavens as one would measure a small object with his span.

**dust of the earth** — All the *earth* is to Him but as a few grains of *dust contained in a small measure* (literally, "the *third* part of a larger measure").

**hills in a balance** — adjusted in their right proportions and places, as exactly as if He had *weighed* them out.

**13.** Quoted in <sup><613></sup>Romans 11:34 <sup><4126></sup>1 Corinthians 2:16. The *Hebrew* here for "directed" is the same as in <sup><3402></sup>Isaiah 40:12 for "meted out"; thus the sense is, "Jehovah measures out heaven with His span"; but who can measure Him? that is, Who can *search out* His Spirit (*mind*) wherewith He searches out and accurately adjusts all things? MAURER rightly takes the *Hebrew* in the same sense as in <sup><3402></sup>Isaiah 40:12 (so <sup><3402></sup>Proverbs 16:2 21:2), "weigh," "ponder." "Direct," as in *English Version*, answers, however, better to "taught" in the parallel clause.

**14. path of judgment** — His wisdom, whereby He so beautifully adjusts the places and proportions of all created things.

**15. of** — rather, (hanging) *from* a bucket [MAURER].

**he taketh up ... as a very little thing** — rather, "are as a mere grain of dust which is taken up," namely, by the wind; literally, "one taketh up," impersonally (<sup><1264></sup>Exodus 16:14) [MAURER].

**isles** — rather, "*lands*" in general, answering to "the nations" in the parallel clause; perhaps *lands*, like Mesopotamia, enclosed by rivers [JEROME] (so <sup><3305></sup>Isaiah 42:15). However, *English Version*, "isles" answers well to "mountains" (<sup><3402></sup>Isaiah 40:12), both alike being lifted up by the power of God; in fact, "isles" are mountains upheaved from the bed of the sea by volcanic agency; only that he seems here to have passed from unintelligent creatures (<sup><3402></sup>Isaiah 40:12) to intelligent, as *nations* and *lands*, that is, their inhabitants.

**16.** All Lebanon's forest would not supply fuel enough to burn sacrifices worthy of the glory of God (<sup>2361</sup>Isaiah 66:1 <sup>11027</sup>1 Kings 8:27 <sup>19108</sup>Psalm 50:8-13).

*beasts* — which abounded in Lebanon.

**17.** (<sup>16319</sup>Psalm 62:9 <sup>27085</sup>Daniel 4:35).

*less than nothing* — MAURER translates, as in <sup>23428</sup>Isaiah 41:24, “of nothing” (*partitively*; or expressive of the *nature* of a thing), a mere nothing.

*vanity* — emptiness.

**18.** Which of the heathen idols, then, is to be compared to this Almighty God? This passage, if not written (as BARNES thinks) so late as the idolatrous times of Manasseh, has at least a prospective warning reference to them and subsequent reigns; the result of the chastisement of Jewish idolatry in the Babylonish captivity was that thenceforth after the restoration the Jews never fell into it. Perhaps these prophecies here may have tended to that result (see <sup>12239</sup>2 Kings 23:26,27).

**19.** *graven* — rather, *an image* in general; for it is incongruous to say “melteth” (that is, casts out of metal) a *graven* image (that is, one of carved wood); so <sup>21014</sup>Jeremiah 10:14, “molten image.”

*spreadeth it over* — (See on <sup>23122</sup>Isaiah 30:22).

*chains* — an ornament lavishly worn by rich Orientals (<sup>21888</sup>Isaiah 3:18,19), and so transferred to their idols. Egyptian relics show that idols were suspended in houses by chains.

**20.** *impoverished* — literally, “sunk” in circumstances.

*no oblation* — *he* who cannot afford to overlay his idol with gold and silver (<sup>23109</sup>Isaiah 40:19).

*tree ... not rot* — the cedar, cypress, oak, or ash (<sup>23444</sup>Isaiah 44:14).

*graven* — of wood; not a *molten* one of metal.

*not be moved* — that shall be durable.

**21.** *ye* — who worship idols. The question emphatically implies, they *had* known.

*from the beginning* — (<sup>23104</sup>Isaiah 41:4,26 48:16). God is the beginning (<sup>1008</sup>Revelation 1:8). The tradition handed down *from the very first*, of the

creation of all things by God at the beginning, ought to convince you of His omnipotence and of the folly of idolatry.

**22. *It is he*** — rather, connected with last verse, “Have ye not known?” — have ye not understood *Him* that sitteth ... ? (<sup><23026></sup>Isaiah 40:26) [MAURER].

***circle*** — applicable to the globular form of the earth, above which, and the vault of sky around it, He sits. For “upon” translate “above.”

***as grasshoppers*** — or locusts in His sight (<sup><04333></sup>Numbers 13:33), as He looks down from on high (<sup><49313></sup>Psalms 33:13,14 113:4-6).

***curtain*** — referring to the awning which the Orientals draw over the open court in the center of their houses as a shelter in rain or hot weather.

**23.** (<sup><19474></sup>Psalms 107:4 <sup><27121></sup>Daniel 2:21).

***judges*** — that is, rulers; for these exercised judicial authority (<sup><19120></sup>Psalms 2:10). The *Hebrew*, *shophtee*, answers to the Carthaginian chief magistrates, *suffetes*.

**24. *they*** — the “princes and judges” (<sup><23423></sup>Isaiah 40:23) who oppose God’s purposes and God’s people. Often compared to tall trees (<sup><49735></sup>Psalms 37:35 <sup><27440></sup>Daniel 4:10).

***not ... sown*** — the seed, that is, *race* shall become extinct (Na 1:14).

***stock*** — not even shall any shoots spring up from the stump when the tree has been cut down: no descendants whatever (<sup><38407></sup>Job 14:7; see on <sup><23100></sup>Isaiah 11:1).

***and ... also*** — so the *Septuagint*. But MAURER translates, “They are hardly (literally, ‘not yet’, as in <sup><42145></sup>2 Kings 20:4) planted (etc.) when He (God) blows upon them.”

***blow*** — The image is from the hot east wind (simoon) that “withers” vegetation.

***whirlwind ... stubble*** — (<sup><49813></sup>Psalms 83:13), refers to the rotatory action of the whirlwind on the stubble.

**25.** (Compare <sup><23168></sup>Isaiah 40:18).

**26. *bringeth out ... host*** — image from a general reviewing his army: He is Lord of Sabaoth, the heavenly hosts (<sup><48822></sup>Job 38:32).

***calleth ... by names*** — numerous as the stars are. God knows each in all its distinguishing *characteristics* — a sense which “name” often bears in

Scripture; so in <sup><0129></sup>Genesis 2:19,20, Adam, as *God's vicegerent*, called the beasts by *name*, that is, characterized them by their several *qualities*, which, indeed, He has imparted.

**by the greatness ... faileth** — rather, “by reason of abundance of (their inner essential) force *and firmness of strength*, not one of them *is driven astray*”; referring to the sufficiency of the physical forces with which He has endowed the heavenly bodies, to prevent all disorder in their motions [HORSLEY]. In *English Version* the sense is, “He has endowed them with their peculiar *attributes* (‘names’) by the greatness of His might,” *and the power of His strength* (the better rendering, instead of, “for that He is strong”).

27. Since these things are so, thou hast no reason to think that thine interest (“way,” that is, condition, <sup><1805></sup>Psalms 37:5 <sup><2411></sup>Jeremiah 12:1) is disregarded by God.

**judgment is passed over from** — rather, “My cause is neglected by my God; He *passes by my case* in my bondage and distress without noticing it.”

**my God** — who especially might be expected to care for me.

28. **known** — by thine own observation and reading of Scripture.

**heard** — from tradition of the fathers.

**everlasting**, etc. — These attributes of Jehovah ought to inspire His afflicted people with confidence.

**no searching of his understanding** — therefore thy cause cannot, as thou sayest, escape His notice; though much in His ways is *unsearchable*, He cannot err (<sup><8107></sup>Job 11:7-9). He is never “faint” or “weary” with having the countless wants of His people ever before Him to attend to.

29. Not only does He “not faint” (<sup><2408></sup>Isaiah 40:28) but He gives power to them who *do faint*.

**no might ... increaseth strength** — a seeming paradox. They “have no might” *in themselves*; but *in Him* they have strength, and He “*increases*” that strength (<sup><4119></sup>2 Corinthians 12:9).

30. **young men** — literally, “those selected”; men picked out on account of their youthful vigor for an enterprise.

31. **mount up** — (<sup><4023></sup>2 Samuel 1:23). Rather, “They shall put forth fresh feathers as eagles” are said to renovate themselves; the parallel clause,

“renew their strength,” confirms this. The eagle was thought to moult and renew his feathers, and with them his strength, in old age (so the *Septuagint*, *Vulgate*, <sup><194315></sup>Psalm 103:5). However, *English Version* is favored by the descending climax, *mount up — run — walk*; in every attitude the praying, waiting child of God is “strong in the Lord” (<sup><158417></sup>Psalm 84:7 <sup><31015></sup>Micah 4:5 <sup><51211></sup>Hebrews 12:1).

# CHAPTER 41

## ISAIAH 41:1-29.

### ADDITIONAL REASONS WHY THE JEWS SHOULD PLACE CONFIDENCE IN GOD'S PROMISES OF DELIVERING THEM; HE WILL RAISE UP A PRINCE AS THEIR DELIVERER, WHEREAS THE IDOLS COULD NOT DELIVER THE HEATHEN NATIONS FROM THAT PRINCE.

1. (<sup>2312</sup>Zechariah 2:13). God is about to argue the case; therefore let the nations listen in reverential silence. Compare <sup>1026</sup>Genesis 28:16,17, as to the spirit in which we ought to behave before God.

*before me* — rather (turning), “towards me” [MAURER].

*islands* — including *all regions beyond sea* (<sup>2452</sup>Jeremiah 25:22), maritime regions, not merely isles in the strict sense.

*renew ... strength* — Let them gather their strength for the argument; let them *adduce their strongest arguments* (compare <sup>2318</sup>Isaiah 1:18 <sup>2382</sup>Job 9:32). “Judgment” means here, to decide the point at issue between us.

2. *Who* — else but God? The fact that God “raiseth up” Cyrus and qualifies him for becoming the conqueror of the nations and deliverer of God’s people, is a strong argument why they should trust in Him. The future is here prophetically represented as present or past.

*the righteous man* — Cyrus; as <sup>2348</sup>Isaiah 44:28 45:1-4,13 46:11, “from the East,” prove. Called “righteous,” not so much on account of his own equity [HERODOTUS, 3.89], as because he fulfilled *God’s* righteous will in restoring the Jews from their unjust captivity. *Raised him up in righteousness*. The *Septuagint* takes the *Hebrew* as a noun “righteousness.” MAURER translates, “Who raised up him whom salvation (national and temporal, the gift of God’s ‘righteousness’ to the good, <sup>2307</sup>Isaiah 32:17; compare <sup>2388</sup>Isaiah 45:8 51:5) meets at his foot” (that is, wherever he goes). Cyrus is said to come *from the East*, because Persia is east of Babylon; but in <sup>2345</sup>Isaiah 41:25, *from the north*, in reference to Media. At the same time the full sense of *righteousness*, or *righteous*, and of the whole passage, is realized only in Messiah, Cyrus’ antitype (Cyrus *knew not* God, <sup>2364</sup>Isaiah 45:4). He goes forth as the Universal Conqueror of the “nations,” in

righteousness making war (<sup><4918></sup>Psalm 2:8,9 <sup><6941></sup>Revelation 19:11-15 6:2 2:26,27). “The idols He shall utterly abolish” (compare <sup><23407></sup>Isaiah 41:7:23, with <sup><3108></sup>Isaiah 2:18). Righteousness was always raised up from the East. Paradise was east of Eden. The cherubim were at the east of the garden. Abraham was called from the East. Judea, the birthplace of Messiah, was in the East.

**called ... to ... foot** — called him to attend His (God’s) steps, that is, follow His guidance. In <sup><45002></sup>Ezra 1:2, Cyrus acknowledges Jehovah as the Giver of his victories. He subdued the nations from the Euxine to the Red Sea, and even Egypt (says XENOPHON).

**dust** — (<sup><29713></sup>Isaiah 17:13 29:5 <sup><49827></sup>Psalm 18:42). Persia, Cyrus’ country, was famed for the use of the “bow” (<sup><23216></sup>Isaiah 22:6). “Before him” means “gave them *into his power*” (<sup><6002></sup>Joshua 10:12). MAURER translates, “Gave his (the enemy’s) sword to be dust, and his (the enemy’s) bow to be as stubble” (<sup><38123></sup>Job 41:26,29).

3. Cyrus had not visited the regions of the Euphrates and westward until he visited them for conquest. So the gospel conquests penetrated regions where the name of God was unknown before.

4. **Who** — else but God?

**calling ... generations from ... beginning** — The origin and position of all nations are from God (<sup><6518></sup>Deuteronomy 32:8 <sup><4472></sup>Acts 17:26); what is true of Cyrus and his conquests is true of all the movements of history *from the first*; all are from God.

**with the last** — that is the last (<sup><23416></sup>Isaiah 44:6 48:12).

5. **feared** — that they would be subdued.

**drew near, and came** — together, for mutual defense.

6. **Be of good courage** — Be not alarmed because of Cyrus, but make new images to secure the favor of the gods against him.

7. One workman encourages the other to be quick in finishing the idol, so as to avert the impending danger.

**nails** — to keep it steady in its place. Wisdom 13:15,16, gives a similar picture of the folly of idolatry.

8. Contrast between the idolatrous nations whom God will destroy by Cyrus, and Israel whom God will deliver by the same man for their forefathers’ sake.

**servant** — so termed as being chosen by God to worship Him themselves, and to lead other peoples to do the same (<sup>2350H</sup>Isaiah 45:4).

**Jacob ... chosen** — (<sup>4920H</sup>Psalms 135:4).

**my friend** — literally, “loving me.”

9. Abraham, the father of the Jews, taken from the remote Ur of the Chaldees. Others take it of Israel, called out of Egypt (<sup>4865T</sup>Deuteronomy 4:37 <sup>2310H</sup>Hosea 11:1).

**from the chief men** — literally, “the elbows”; so *the joints*; hence *the root* which joins the tree to the earth; figuratively, those of ancient and *noble* stock. But the parallel clause “ends of the earth” favors GESSENIUS, who translates, “the *extremities* of the earth”; so JEROME.

10. **be not dismayed** — literally, anxiously *to look at one another* in dismay.

**right hand of my righteousness** — that is, My right hand prepared in accordance with My righteousness (faithfulness to My promises) to uphold thee.

11. **ashamed** — put to the shame of defeat (compare <sup>2547T</sup>Isaiah 54:17 <sup>4818B</sup>Romans 9:33).

12. **seek ... and ... not find** — said of one so utterly put out of the way that not a trace of him can be found (<sup>4873B</sup>Psalms 37:36).

**thing of naught** — shall utterly perish.

13. (<sup>4833B</sup>Deuteronomy 33:26,29).

14. **worm** — in a state of contempt and affliction, whom all loathe and tread on, the very expression which Messiah, on the cross, applies to *Himself* (<sup>4921B</sup>Psalms 22:6), so completely are the Lord and His people identified and assimilated. God’s people are as ‘worms’ in humble thoughts of themselves, and in their enemies’ haughty thoughts of them; worms, but not vipers, or of the serpent’s seed.” [HENRY].

**men** — The parallelism requires the word “men” here to have associated with it the idea of *fewness* or *feebleness*. LOWTH translates, “Ye *mortals* of Israel.” The *Septuagint*, “altogether diminutive.” MAURER supports *English Version*, which the *Hebrew* text best accord with.

**the Lord** — in general.

*and thy redeemer* — in particular; a still stronger reason why He should “help” them.

15. God will make Israel to destroy their enemies as the Eastern corn-drag (<sup><2387></sup>Isaiah 28:27,28) bruises out the grain with its teeth, and gives the chaff to the winds to scatter.

*teeth* — serrated, so as to cut up the straw for fodder and separate the grain from the chaff.

*mountains ... hills* — kingdoms more or less powerful that were hostile to Israel (<sup><2314></sup>Isaiah 2:14).

16. *fan* — winnowed (compare <sup><4182></sup>Matthew 3:12).

*whirlwind ... scatter them* — (<sup><1872></sup>Job 27:21 30:22).

17. *poor and needy* — primarily, the exiles in Babylon.

*water* — figuratively, refreshment, prosperity after their affliction. The language is so constructed as only very partially to apply to the local and temporary event of the restoration from Babylon; but fully to be realized in the waters of life and of the Spirit, under the Gospel (<sup><2315></sup>Isaiah 30:25 44:3 <sup><4157></sup>John 7:37-39 4:14). God wrought no miracles that we read of, in any wilderness, during the return from Babylon.

*faileth* — rather, “*is rigid*” or parched [HORSLEY].

18. Alluding to the waters with which Israel was miraculously supplied in the desert after having come out of Egypt.

*high places* — bare of trees, barren, and unwatered (<sup><2441></sup>Jeremiah 4:11 14:6). “High places ... valleys” spiritually express that in *all* circumstances, whether *elevated* or *depressed*, God’s people will have refreshment for their souls, however little to be expected it might seem.

19. (<sup><2025></sup>Isaiah 32:15 55:13).

*shittah* — rather, the “acacia,” or Egyptian thorn, from which the gum Arabic is obtained [LOWTH].

*oil tree* — the olive.

*fir tree* — rather, the “cypress”: grateful by its shade.

*pine* — GESENIUS translates, “the holm.”

**box tree** — not the shrub used for bordering flower beds, but [GESENIUS] a kind of cedar, remarkable for the smallness of its cones, and the upward direction of its branches.

**20. consider** — literally, “lay it (to hear)”; turn (their attention) to it. “They” refers to *all lands* (<sup>2300E</sup>Isaiah 41:1 <sup>2350E</sup>Psalms 64:9 40:3). The effect on the Gentiles of God’s open interposition hereafter in behalf of Israel shall be, they shall seek Israel’s God (<sup>2310E</sup>Isaiah 2:3 <sup>302E</sup>Zechariah 8:21-23).

**21.** A new challenge to the idolaters (see <sup>2300E</sup>Isaiah 41:1,7) to say, can their idols *predict future events* as Jehovah can (<sup>2342E</sup>Isaiah 41:22-25, etc.)?

**your strong reasons** — the reasons for idol-worship which you think especially strong.

**22. what shall happen** — “Let them *bring near and declare future contingencies*” [HORSLEY].

**former things ... the latter end of them** — show what former predictions the idols have given, that we may compare the event (“latter end”) with them; or give new prophecies (“declare things to come”) (<sup>2300E</sup>Isaiah 42:9), [MAURER]. BARNES explains it more reconditely, “Let them foretell the *entire series* of events, showing, in their *order*, the things which shall *first* occur, as well as those which shall *finally* happen”; the false prophets tried to predict isolated events, having no mutual dependency; not a long *series* of events mutually and orderly connected, and stretching far into futurity. They did not even *try* to do this. None but God can do it (<sup>2360E</sup>Isaiah 46:10 44:7,8). “Or ... things to come” will, in this view, mean, Let them, if they cannot predict the *series*, even predict plainly *any detached* events.

**23. do good ... evil** — give any proof at all of your power, either to reward your friends or punish your enemies (<sup>4580E</sup>Psalms 115:2-8).

**that we may be dismayed, and behold it together** — MAURER translates, “That we (Jehovah and the idols) may look one another in the face (that is, encounter one another, <sup>2482E</sup>2 Kings 14:8,11), and see” our respective powers by a trial. HORSLEY translates, “Then the moment we behold, we shall be dismayed.” “We” thus, and in *English Version*, refers to Jehovah and His worshippers.

**24. of nothing** — (See on <sup>2300E</sup>Isaiah 40:17). The *Hebrew* text is here corrupt; so *English Version* treats it.

**abomination** — abstract for concrete: not merely *abominable*, but the *essence* of whatever is so (<sup>4580E</sup>Deuteronomy 18:12).

**chooseth you** — as an object of worship.

**25. raised up** — in purpose: not fulfilled till a hundred fifty years afterwards.

**north** — In <sup><2410E></sup>Isaiah 41:2, “from the East”; both are true: see the note there.

**call ... my name** — acknowledge Me as God, and attribute his success to Me; this he did in the proclamation (<sup><4500E></sup>Ezra 1:2). This does not necessarily imply that Cyrus renounced idolatry, but hearing of Isaiah’s prophecy given a hundred fifty years before, so fully realized in his own acts, he recognized God as the true God, but retained his idol (so Naaman, <sup><1161E></sup>2 Kings 5:1-27; compare <sup><1273E></sup>2 Kings 17:33,41 <sup><2133E></sup>Daniel 3:28 4:1-3,34-37).

**princes** — the Babylonian satraps or governors of provinces.

**mortar** — “mire”; He shall tread them under foot as dirt (<sup><2300E></sup>Isaiah 10:6).

**26. Who** — of the idolatrous soothsayers? When this prophecy shall be fulfilled, all shall see that God foretold as to Cyrus, which none of the soothsayers have.

**beforetime** — before the event occurred.

**He is righteous** — rather, “It is true”; it was a true prophecy, as the event shows. “He is righteous,” in *English Version*, must be interpreted, The fulfillment of the idol’s words proves that *he is faithful*.

**showeth**, etc. — rather, “there was none (of the soothsayers) that showed ... declared — no one has heard your words” foretelling the event.

**27.** Rather, “I first will give to Zion and to Jerusalem the messenger of good tidings, Behold, behold them!” The clause, “Behold ... them” (*the wished-for event is now present*) is inserted in the middle of the sentence as a detached exclamation, by an elegant transposition, the language being framed abruptly, as one would speak in putting vividly as it were, before the eyes of others, some joyous event which he had just learned [LUDOVICUS DE DIEU] (compare <sup><2400E></sup>Isaiah 40:9). None of the idols had foretold these events. Jehovah was the “first” to do so (see <sup><2400E></sup>Isaiah 41:4).

**28. no counsellor** — no one of the idolatrous soothsayers who could inform (<sup><0944E></sup>Numbers 24:14) *those who consulted* them what would take place. Compare “*counsel* of His messenger” (<sup><2406E></sup>Isaiah 44:26).

**when I asked** — that is, challenged them, in this chapter.

**29. confusion** — “emptiness” [BARNES].

# CHAPTER 42

## ISAIAH 42:1-25.

### MESSIAH THE ANTITYPE OF CYRUS.

God's description of His character (<sup><2340></sup>Isaiah 42:1-4). God addresses Him directly (<sup><2345></sup>Isaiah 42:5-7). Address to the people to attend to the subject (<sup><2348></sup>Isaiah 42:8,9). Call to all, and especially the exile Jews to rejoice in the coming deliverance (<sup><2340></sup>Isaiah 42:10-25).

**1. *my servant*** — The law of prophetic suggestion leads Isaiah from Cyrus to the far greater Deliverer, behind whom the former is lost sight of. The express quotation in <sup><4028></sup>Matthew 12:18-20, and the description can apply to *Messiah* alone (<sup><3906></sup>Psalms 40:6; with which compare <sup><4206></sup>Exodus 21:6 <sup><4068></sup>John 6:38 <sup><5107></sup>Philippians 2:7). Israel, also, in its highest ideal, is called the “servant” of God (<sup><2348></sup>Isaiah 49:3). But this ideal is realized only in the antitypical Israel, its representative-man and Head, Messiah (compare <sup><4025></sup>Matthew 2:15, with <sup><3808></sup>Hosea 11:1). “Servant” was the position assumed by the Son of God throughout His humiliation.

***elect*** — chosen by God before the foundation of the world for an atonement (<sup><4001></sup>1 Peter 1:20 <sup><6138></sup>Revelation 13:8). Redemption was no afterthought to remedy an unforeseen evil (<sup><5625></sup>Romans 16:25,26 <sup><4049></sup>Ephesians 3:9,11 <sup><5102></sup>Timothy 1:9,10 <sup><5005></sup>Titus 1:2,3). In <sup><4028></sup>Matthew 12:18 it is rendered “My beloved”; *the only beloved Son*, beloved in a sense distinct from all others. *Election* and the *love* of God are inseparably joined.

***soul*** — a human phrase applied to God, because of the intended union of humanity with the Divinity: “I Myself.”

***delighteth*** — is well pleased with, and accepts, *as a propitiation*. God could have “delighted” in no created being *as a mediator* (compare <sup><2342></sup>Isaiah 42:21 <sup><63></sup>5 <sup><4087></sup>Matthew 3:17).

***spirit upon him*** — (<sup><2300></sup>Isaiah 11:2 <sup><61></sup>1 <sup><4048></sup>Luke 4:18 <sup><4034></sup>John 3:34).

***judgment*** — the gospel dispensation, founded on *justice*, the canon of the divine rule and principle of judgment called “the law” (<sup><2308></sup>Isaiah 2:3; compare <sup><2344></sup>Isaiah 42:4 <sup><51></sup>4 <sup><49></sup>6). The Gospel has a discriminating *judicial* effect: *saving* to penitents; *condemnatory* to Satan, the enemy (<sup><4021></sup>John

12:31 16:11), and the wilfully impenitent (<sup><419></sup>John 9:39). <sup><4128></sup>Matthew 12:18 has, “He shall *show*,” for “He shall bring forth,” or “*cause to go forth*.” Christ both *produced* and *announced* His “judgment.” The *Hebrew* dwells most on His *producing* it; Matthew on His *announcement* of it: the two are joined in Him.

2. Matthew (<sup><4129></sup>Matthew 12:19) marks the kind of “cry” as that of *altercation* by quoting it, “He shall not *strive*” (<sup><2531></sup>Isaiah 53:7).

**street** — the *Septuagint* translates “outside.” An image from an altercation in a house, loud enough to be heard *in the street* outside: appropriate of Him who “withdrew Himself” from the public fame created by His miracles to privacy (<sup><4125></sup>Matthew 12:15; <sup><2345></sup>Isaiah 34:5, there, shows another and sterner aspect of His character, which is also implied in the term “judgment”).

3. **bruised** — “It pleased the Lord to *bruise* Him” (<sup><2531></sup>Isaiah 53:5,10 <sup><4185></sup>Genesis 3:15); so He can feel for *the bruised*. As <sup><340></sup>Isaiah 42:2 described His unturbulent spirit towards His violent enemies (<sup><4124></sup>Matthew 12:14-16), and His utter freedom from love of notoriety, so <sup><3408></sup>Isaiah 42:3, His tenderness in cherishing the first spark of grace in the penitent (<sup><2411></sup>Isaiah 40:11).

**reed** — fragile: easily “shaken with the wind” (<sup><4107></sup>Matthew 11:7). Those who are at best feeble, and who besides are oppressed by calamity or by the sense of sin.

**break** — entirely crush or condemn. Compare “bind up the broken-hearted” (<sup><2506></sup>Isaiah 50:4 61:1 <sup><4128></sup>Matthew 11:28).

**flax** — put for the lamp-wick, formed of flax. The believer is the *lamp* (so the *Greek*, <sup><4185></sup>Matthew 5:15 <sup><4185></sup>John 5:35): his conscience enlightened by the Holy Ghost is the *wick*. “Smoking” means “dimly burning,” “smouldering,” the flame not quite extinct. This expresses the positive side of the penitent’s religion; as “bruised reed,” the negative. Broken-hearted in himself, but not without some spark of flame: literally, “from above.” Christ will supply such a one with grace as with oil. Also, the light of nature smouldering in the Gentiles amidst the hurtful fumes of error. He not only did not quench, but cleared away the mists and superadded the light of revelation. See JEROME, *To Algasia*, Question 2.

**truth** — <sup><4120></sup>Matthew 12:20 quotes it, “send forth judgment unto *victory*.” Matthew, under the Spirit, gives the virtual sense, but varies the word, in order to bring out a fresh aspect of the same thing. Truth has in itself the elements of victory over all opposing forces. *Truth* is the *victory* of Him

who is “the truth” (<sup>406</sup>John 14:6). The *gospel judicial sifting* (“judgment”) of believers and unbelievers, begun already in part (<sup>488</sup>John 3:18,19 9:39), will be *consummated victoriously in truth* only at His second coming; <sup>203</sup>Isaiah 42:13,14, here, and <sup>402</sup>Matthew 12:32,36,41,42, show that there is reference to the *judicial* aspect of the Gospel, especially finally: besides the mild triumph of Jesus coming in mercy to the penitent *now* (<sup>280</sup>Isaiah 42:2), there shall be *finally* the judgment on His enemies, when the “truth” shall be perfectly developed. Compare <sup>260</sup>Isaiah 61:1-3, where the two comings are similarly joined (<sup>404</sup>Psalms 2:4-6,8 <sup>657</sup>Revelation 15:2,4 <sup>691</sup>Revelation 19:11-16). On “judgment,” see on <sup>280</sup>Isaiah 42:1.

**4. *fail*** — faint; *man* in religion may become as the almost expiring flax-wick (<sup>280</sup>Isaiah 42:3), but not so He in His purposes of grace.

***discouraged*** — literally, “broken,” that is, checked in zeal by discouragements (compare <sup>280</sup>Isaiah 49:4,5). ROSENMULLER not so well translates, “He shall not be too slow on the one hand, nor *run too hastily* on the other.”

***judgment*** — His true religion, the canon of His judgments and righteous reign.

***isles ... wait***, etc. — The distant lands beyond sea shall put their *trust* in His gospel way of salvation. <sup>402</sup>Matthew 12:21 virtually gives the sense, with the inspired addition of another aspect of the same thing, “In his *name* shall the Gentiles *trust*” (as “wait for” here means, <sup>280</sup>Isaiah 30:18). “His law” is not something distinct from Himself, but is indeed *Himself*, the manifestation of God’s character (“name”) in Christ, who is the *embodiment of the law* (<sup>280</sup>Isaiah 42:21 <sup>292</sup>Jeremiah 23:6 <sup>504</sup>Romans 10:4). “Isles” here, and in <sup>280</sup>Isaiah 42:12, may refer to the fact that the populations of which the Church was primarily formed were Gentiles of the countries bordering on the Mediterranean.

**5.** Previously God had spoken *of* Messiah; now (<sup>280</sup>Isaiah 42:5-7) He speaks *to* Him. To show to all that He is able to sustain the Messiah in His appointed work, and that all might accept Messiah as commissioned by such a mighty God, He commences by announcing Himself as the Almighty Creator and Preserver of all things.

***spread ... earth*** — (<sup>406</sup>Psalms 136:6).

**6. *in righteousness*** — rather, “for a righteous purpose” [LOWTH]. (See <sup>280</sup>Isaiah 42:21). God “set forth” His Son “to be a propitiation (so as) to declare His (God’s) *righteousness*, that God might be just, and (yet) the

justifier of him which believeth in Jesus” ( <sup>4835</sup>Romans 3:25,26; compare see on <sup>2340</sup>Isaiah 41:2; <sup>2353</sup>Isaiah 45:13 50:8,9).

**hold ... hand** — compare as to Israel, the type of Messiah, <sup>2318</sup>Hosea 11:3.

**covenant** — the medium of the covenant, originally made between God and Abraham ( <sup>2308</sup>Isaiah 49:8). “The mediator of a better covenant” ( <sup>3008</sup>Hebrews 8:6) than the law (see <sup>2308</sup>Isaiah 49:8 <sup>3813</sup>Jeremiah 31:33 50:5). So the abstract “peace,” for *peace-maker* ( <sup>3316</sup>Micah 5:5 <sup>4024</sup>Ephesians 2:14).

**the people** — Israel; as <sup>2308</sup>Isaiah 49:8, compared with <sup>2308</sup>Isaiah 42:6, proves ( <sup>4023</sup>Luke 2:32).

**7. blind** — spiritually ( <sup>2326</sup>Isaiah 42:16,18,19 <sup>2356</sup>Isaiah 35:5 <sup>4099</sup>John 9:39).

**prison** — ( <sup>2301</sup>Isaiah 61:1,2).

**darkness** — opposed to “light” ( <sup>2326</sup>Isaiah 42:6 <sup>4068</sup>Ephesians 5:8 <sup>4019</sup>1 Peter 2:9).

**8. God turns from addressing Messiah to the people.**

**Lord** — JEHOVAH: God’s distinguishing and incommunicable name, indicating essential *being* and immutable faithfulness (compare <sup>4068</sup>Exodus 6:3 <sup>4338</sup>Psalms 83:18 96:5 <sup>2318</sup>Hosea 12:5).

**my** — that is due to Me, and to Me alone.

**9. former things** — Former predictions of God, which were now fulfilled, are here adduced as proof that they ought to trust in Him alone as God; namely, the predictions as to Israel’s restoration from Babylon.

**new** — namely, predictions as to Messiah, who is to bring all nations to the worship of Jehovah ( <sup>2341</sup>Isaiah 42:1,4,6).

**spring forth** — The same image from plants *just beginning to germinate* occurs in <sup>2369</sup>Isaiah 43:19 58:8. Before there is *the slightest indication* to enable a sagacious observer to infer the coming event, God *foretells* it.

**10. new song** — such as has never before been sung, called for by a new manifestation of God’s grace, to express which no hymn for former mercies would be appropriate. The new song shall be sung when the Lord shall reign in Jerusalem, and all “nations shall flow unto it” ( <sup>2311</sup>Isaiah 2:2 26:1 <sup>4099</sup>Revelation 5:9 14:3).

**ye that go down to the sea** — whose conversion will be the means of diffusing the Gospel to distant lands.

**all ... therein** — all the living creatures *that fill* the sea (<sup><3961></sup>Psalm 96:11) [MAURER]. Or, *all sailors and voyagers* [GESENIUS]. But these were already mentioned in the previous clause: there he called on all who go *upon* the sea; in this clause all animals *in* the sea; so in <sup><3911></sup>Isaiah 42:11, he calls on the inanimate wilderness to lift up its voice. External nature shall be so renovated as to be in unison with the moral renovation.

**11. cities** — in a region not wholly waste, but mainly so, with an oasis here and there.

**Kedar** — in Arabia-Deserta (<sup><2316></sup>Isaiah 21:16 <sup><0253></sup>Genesis 25:13). The Kedarensians led a nomadic, wandering life. So Kedar is here put in general for that class of men.

**rock** — *Sela*, that is, Petra, the metropolis of Idumea and the Nabathoan Ishmaelites. Or it may refer in general to those in Arabia-Petraea, who had their dwellings cut out of the rock.

**the mountains** — namely, of Paran, south of Sinai, in *Arabic* Petraea [VITRINGA].

**12. glory ... islands** — (<sup><2345></sup>Isaiah 24:15).

**13-16.** Jehovah will no longer restrain His wrath: He will go forth as a mighty warrior (<sup><0243></sup>Exodus 15:3) to destroy His people's and His enemies, and to deliver Israel (compare <sup><0963></sup>Psalm 45:3).

**stir up jealousy** — rouse His indignation.

**roar** — image from the battle cry of a warrior.

**14. long time** — namely, during the desolation of Israel (<sup><2304></sup>Isaiah 32:14).

**holden my peace** — (Compare <sup><4912></sup>Psalm 50:21 <sup><3000></sup>Habakkuk 1:2).

**cry like a travailing woman**, etc. — Like a woman in parturition, who, after having restrained her breathing for a time, at last, overcome with labor pain, lets out her voice with a panting sigh; so Jehovah will give full vent to His long pent-up wrath. Translate, instead of “destroy ... devour”; *I will at once breathe hard and pant*, namely, giving loose to My wrath.

**15.** I will destroy all My foes.

**mountains** — in Palestine usually planted with vines and olives in terraces, up to their tops.

**islands** — rather, “dry lands.” God will destroy His foes, the heathen, and their idols, and “dry up” the fountains of their oracles, their doctrines and

institutions, the symbol of which is *water*, and their schools which promoted idolatry [VITRINGA].

**16. *blind*** — God’s people, Israel, in captivity, needing a guide. In the ulterior sense the New Testament Church, which was about to be led and enlightened by the Son of God as its leader and shepherd in the wilderness of the Roman empire, until it should reach a city of habitation. “A way ... they knew not,” refers to the various means ployed by Providence for the establishment of the Church in the world, such as would never have occurred to the mind of mere man. “Blind,” they are called, as not having heretofore seen God’s ways in ordering His Church.

***make darkness light***, etc. — implies that the glorious issue would only be known by the event itself [VITRINGA]. The same holds good of the *individual* believer (<sup>23021</sup>Isaiah 30:21 <sup>19477</sup>Psalms 107:7; compare <sup>23116</sup>Hosea 2:6,14 <sup>40888</sup>Ephesians 5:8 <sup>38135</sup>Hebrews 13:5).

**17. *turned back ... ashamed*** — disappointed in their trust; the same phrase occurs in <sup>18804</sup>Psalms 35:4.

**18. *deaf*** — namely, to the voice of God.

***blind*** — to your duty and interest; wilfully so (<sup>23021</sup>Isaiah 42:20). In this they differ from “the blind” (<sup>23016</sup>Isaiah 42:16). The Jews are referred to. He had said, God would destroy the heathen idolatry; here he remembers that even Israel, His “servant” (<sup>23019</sup>Isaiah 42:19), from whom better things might have been expected, is tainted with this sin.

**19. *my servant*** — namely, Israel. Who of the heathen is so blind? Considering Israel’s high privileges, the heathen’s blindness was as nothing compared with that of Israelite idolaters.

***my messenger ... sent*** — Israel was designed by God to be the herald of His truth to other nations.

***perfect*** — furnished with institutions, civil and religious, suited to their *perfect* well-being. Compare the title, “Jeshurun,” the *perfect* one, applied to Israel (compare <sup>23407</sup>Isaiah 44:2), as the type of Messiah Or translate, the *friend* of God, which Israel was by virtue of descent from Abraham, who was so called (<sup>23408</sup>Isaiah 41:8), [GESENIUS]. The language, “my servant” (compare <sup>23011</sup>Isaiah 42:1), “messenger” (<sup>34011</sup>Malachi 3:1), “perfect” (<sup>61004</sup>Romans 10:4 <sup>38200</sup>Hebrews 2:10 <sup>40222</sup>1 Peter 2:22), can, in the full antitypical sense, only apply to Christ. So <sup>23021</sup>Isaiah 42:21 plainly refers to Him. “Blind” and “deaf” in His case refer to His endurance of suffering and reproach, as though He neither saw nor heard (<sup>49813</sup>Psalms 38:13,14). Thus there is a transition by contrast from the moral *blindness* of Israel

(<sup><2028</sup>Isaiah 42:18) to the patient blindness and deafness of Messiah [HORSLEY].

**20. *observest*** — Thou dost not *keep* them. The “many things” are the many proofs which all along from the first God had given Israel of His goodness and His power (<sup><1803</sup>Deuteronomy 4:32-38 29:2-4 <sup><1901</sup>Psalm 78:1-72 105:1-45).

**he** — transition from the second to the third person. “Opening ... ears,” that is, though he (Israel) hath his ears open (see on <sup><2160</sup>Isaiah 6:10). This language, too (see on <sup><2309</sup>Isaiah 42:19), applies to Messiah as Jehovah’s *servant* (<sup><2315</sup>Isaiah 50:5 <sup><1916</sup>Psalm 40:6).

**21. *his righteousness*** — not His people’s, but His own; <sup><2321</sup>Isaiah 42:24 shows that they had no righteousness (<sup><2353</sup>Isaiah 45:24 59:16). God is *well pleased* with His Son (“in whom My soul *delighteth*,” <sup><2301</sup>Isaiah 42:1), “who fulfils all *righteousness*” (<sup><1185</sup>Matthew 3:15) for them, and with them for His sake (compare <sup><2306</sup>Isaiah 42:6 <sup><1916</sup>Psalm 71:16,19 <sup><1157</sup>Matthew 5:17 <sup><5103</sup>Romans 10:3,4 <sup><1039</sup>Philippians 3:9). Perhaps in God’s “righteousness” here is included His *faithfulness to His promises* given to Israel’s forefathers [ROSENMULLER]; because of this He is well pleased with Israel, even though displeased with their sin, which He here reproves; but that promise could only be based on the *righteousness of Messiah*, the promised seed, which is *God’s* righteousness.

**22. *holes*** — caught by their foes in the *caverns* where they had sought refuge [BARNES]. Or bound in subterranean dungeons [BARNES].

***prison-houses*** — either literal prisons, or their own houses, whence they dare not go forth for fear of the enemy. The connection is: Notwithstanding *God’s* favor to His people for His righteousness’ sake (<sup><2321</sup>Isaiah 42:21), they have fallen into misery (the Babylonish and Romish captivities and their present dispersion), owing to their disregard of the divine law: spiritual imprisonment is included (<sup><2317</sup>Isaiah 42:7).

***none saith, Restore*** — There is no deliverer (<sup><2315</sup>Isaiah 63:5).

**23.** A call that they should be warned by the past judgments of God to obey Him for the time to come.

**24. *Who*** — Their calamity was not the work of chance, but God’s immediate act for their sins.

***Jacob ... Israel ... we*** — change from the third to the first person; Isaiah first speaking to them as a prophet, distinct from them; then identifying

himself with them, and acknowledging His share in the nation's sins (compare <sup><2151></sup>Joshua 5:1).

**25. *him*** — Israel (<sup><2302></sup>Isaiah 42:24).

***strength of battle*** — violence of war.

***it*** — the *battle* or war (compare <sup><2306></sup>Isaiah 10:16).

***knew not*** — knew not the lesson of repentance which the judgment was intended to teach (<sup><2313></sup>Isaiah 5:13 9:13 <sup><2413></sup>Jeremiah 5:3).

# CHAPTER 43

## ISAIAH 43:1-28.

### A SUCCESSION OF ARGUMENTS WHEREIN ISRAEL MAY BE ASSURED THAT, NOTWITHSTANDING THEIR PERVERSITY TOWARDS GOD (<sup>2325</sup>ISAIAH 42:25), HE WILL DELIVER AND RESTORE THEM.

1. **But now** — notwithstanding God’s past just judgments for Israel’s sins.

**created** — not only in the general sense, but specially *created* as a peculiar people unto Himself (<sup>2347</sup>Isaiah 43:7,15,21 <sup>2348</sup>Isaiah 44:2,21,24). So believers, “created in Christ Jesus” (<sup>4120</sup>Ephesians 2:10), “a peculiar people” (<sup>4119</sup>1 Peter 2:9).

**redeemed** — a second argument why they should trust Him besides *creation*. The *Hebrew* means *to ransom by a price paid in lieu of the captives* (compare <sup>2318</sup>Isaiah 43:3). Babylon was to be the ransom in this case, that is, was to be destroyed, in order that they might be delivered; so Christ became a curse, doomed to death, that we might be redeemed.

**called ... by ... name** — not merely “called” in general, as in <sup>2317</sup>Isaiah 42:6 48:12 51:2, but *designated as His own peculiar people* (compare <sup>2318</sup>Isaiah 45:3,4 <sup>4121</sup>Exodus 32:1 33:12 <sup>4122</sup>John 10:3).

2. **rivers ... not overflow thee** — so in passing Jordan, though at its “overflow,” when its “swellings” were especially dangerous (<sup>4123</sup>Joshua 3:15 <sup>2319</sup>Jeremiah 12:5).

**waters ... fire** — a proverbial phrase for the extremest perils (<sup>4124</sup>Psalms 66:12; also <sup>4125</sup>Psalms 138:7). Literally fulfilled at the Red Sea (<sup>4126</sup>Exodus 14:21,22), and in the case of the three youths cast into the fiery furnace for conscience’ sake (<sup>2320</sup>Daniel 3:25,27).

3. **Egypt for thy ransom** — Either Egypt or Israel must perish; God chose that Egypt, though so much more mighty, should be destroyed, in order that His people might be delivered; thus Egypt stood, *instead* of Israel, as a kind of “ransom.” The *Hebrew*, *kopher*, means properly “that with which anything is overlaid,” as the pitch with which the ark was overlaid; hence that which *covers over* sins, an atonement. Nebuchadnezzar had subdued

Egypt, Ethiopia (*Hebrew, Cush*), and Saba (descended from Cush, <sup><1007></sup>Genesis 10:7, probably Meroe of Ethiopia, a great island formed by the Astaboras and the Nile, conquered by Cambyses, successor of Cyrus). Cyrus received these from God with the rest of the Babylonian dominions, in consideration of his being about to deliver Israel. However, the reference may be to the three years' war in which Sargon overcame these countries, and so had his attention diverted from Israel (see on <sup><3017></sup>Isaiah 20:1) [VITRINGA]. But the reference is probably more general, namely, to *all* the instances in which Jehovah sacrificed mighty heathen nations, when the safety of Israel required it.

**4. *Since*** — All along from the beginning; for there was never a time when Israel was not Jehovah's people. The apodosis should be at, "I will give." "Since ever thou wast precious in My sight, honorable, and that I loved thee, I will give," etc. [MAURER]. GESENIUS, as *English Version*, takes "Since" to mean, "Inasmuch as." If the apodosis be as in *English Version*, "Since thou wast precious" will refer to the time when God called His people out of Egypt, manifesting then first the love which He had from everlasting towards them (<sup><2603></sup>Jeremiah 31:3 <sup><3100></sup>Hosea 11:1); "honorable" and "loved," refer to *outward* marks of honor and love from God.

***men ... people*** — *other* nations for thee (so <sup><2448></sup>Isaiah 43:3).

***thy life*** — thy person.

**5.** (<sup><4808></sup>Deuteronomy 30:3).

***seed*** — descendants scattered in all lands. VITRINGA understands it of the *spiritual* "seed" of the Church produced by mystical regeneration: for the expression is, "bring," not "bring back." This sense is perhaps included, but not to the exclusion of the literal Israel's restoration (<sup><2800></sup>Jeremiah 30:10,11 <sup><3009></sup>Amos 9:9 <sup><3805></sup>Zechariah 2:6-13).

**6. *Give up*** — namely, My people.

***sons ... daughters*** — The feminine joined to the masculine expresses the complete *totality* of anything (<sup><3017></sup>Zechariah 9:17).

**7. *called by my name*** — belong to Israel, whose people, as sons of God, bear the name of their Father (<sup><2448></sup>Isaiah 44:5 48:1).

***for my glory*** — (<sup><2448></sup>Isaiah 43:21 <sup><2448></sup>Isaiah 29:23).

**8.** Solemn challenge given by God to the nations to argue with Him the question of His superiority to their idols, and His power to deliver Israel (<sup><2400></sup>Isaiah 41:1).

**blind people** — the Gentiles, who also, like Israel (<sup><2309></sup>Isaiah 42:19), are blind (spiritually), though having eyes; that is, natural faculties, whereby they might know God (<sup><612></sup>Romans 1:20,21) [LOWTH]. Or else, the Jews [VITRINGA].

**9. who ... can declare this** — who among the idolatrous soothsayers hath predicted *this*; that is, as to Cyrus being the deliverer of Israel?

**former** — predictions, as in <sup><2309></sup>Isaiah 42:9 [MAURER]. Or, things that shall first come to pass (see on <sup><2302></sup>Isaiah 41:21,22) [BARNES].

**let them bring forth their witnesses** — as I do mine (<sup><2360></sup>Isaiah 43:10).

**justified** — declared veracious in their pretended prophecies.

**or** — rather, “and”; let men hear their prediction and say, from the event, It is verified (see on <sup><2302></sup>Isaiah 41:26).

**10. Ye** — the Jews, to whom I have given predictions, verified by the event; and in delivering whom I have so often manifested MY power (see <sup><2363></sup>Isaiah 43:3,4 <sup><2348></sup>Isaiah 44:8).

**and my servant** — that is, the whole Jewish people (<sup><2308></sup>Isaiah 41:8).

**believe** — trust in.

**formed** — before I *existed* none of the false gods were *formed*. “Formed” applies to the idols, not to God. <sup><6011></sup>Revelation 1:11 uses the same language to prove the Godhead of *Jesus*, as Isaiah here to prove the Godhead of *Jehovah*.

**11. Lord** — Jehovah.

**saviour** — temporally, from Babylon: eternally, from sin and hell (<sup><2339></sup>Hosea 13:4 <sup><4012></sup>Acts 4:12). The same titles as are applied to God are applied to Jesus.

**12. declared** — predicted the future (<sup><2302></sup>Isaiah 41:22,23).

**saved** — the nation, in past times of danger.

**showed** — namely, that I was God.

**when ... no strange god**, etc. — to whom the predictions uttered by Me could be assigned. “Strange” means *foreign*, introduced from abroad.

**13. before** — literally, *from the time of* the first existence of day.

**let** — Old English for “hinder” (<sup>23427</sup>Isaiah 14:27). Rather, translate, “undo it” [HORSLEY].

**14. sent** — namely, the Medes and Persians (<sup>23087</sup>Isaiah 10:5,6 13:3).

**brought down** — “made to go down” to the sea (<sup>23401</sup>Isaiah 42:10), in order to escape the impending destruction of Babylon.

**nobles** — rather, “fugitives,” namely, the foreigners who sojourned in populous Babylon (<sup>23334</sup>Isaiah 13:14), distinct from the Chaldeans [MAURER].

**whose cry is in the ships** — exulting in their ships with the joyous sailors — cry, boastingly; their joy heretofore in their ships contrasts sadly with their present panic in fleeing to them (<sup>23211</sup>Isaiah 22:2 <sup>23425</sup>Zephaniah 2:15). Babylon was on the Euphrates, which was joined to the Tigris by a canal, and flowed into the Persian Gulf. Thus it was famed for ships and commerce until the Persian monarchs, to prevent revolt or invasion, obstructed navigation by dams across the Tigris and Euphrates.

**15. creator of Israel** — (<sup>23801</sup>Isaiah 43:1).

**your** — proved to be specially *yours* by delivering you.

**16, 17.** Allusion to the deliverance of Israel and overthrow of Pharaoh in the Red Sea, the standing illustration of God’s unchanging character towards His people (<sup>40121</sup>Exodus 14:21,22,27,28).

**17. the power** — the might of the enemies host, every mighty warrior.

**they shall lie down together** — as Pharaoh’s army sank “together” in a watery grave.

**18.** So wonderful shall be God’s future interpositions in your behalf, that all past ones shall be forgotten in comparison. Plainly the future restoration of Israel is the event ultimately meant. Thus the “former things” are such events as the destruction of Sennacherib and the return from Babylon. “Things of old” are events still more ancient, the deliverance from Egypt and at the Red Sea, and entry into Canaan [VITRINGA].

**19. new** — unprecedented in its wonderful character (<sup>23401</sup>Isaiah 42:9).

**spring forth** — as a germinating herb: a beautiful image of the *silent* but *certain gradual growth* of events in God’s providence (<sup>40021</sup>Mark 4:26-28).

**way in ... wilderness** — just as Israel in the wilderness, between the Red Sea and Canaan, was guided, and supplied with water by Jehovah; but the “new” deliverance shall be attended with manifestations of God’s power

and love, eclipsing the old (compare <sup><23117></sup>Isaiah 41:17-19). “I will open a way, not merely in the Red Sea, but in the wilderness of the whole world; and not merely one river shall gush out of the rock, but many, which shall refresh, not the bodies as formerly, but the souls of the thirsty, so that the prophecy shall be fulfilled: ‘With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation’” [JEROME]. “A way” often stands for *the true religion* (<sup><408></sup>Acts 9:2 18:26). “Rivers” express the influences of the Holy Spirit (<sup><4075></sup>John 7:37-39). Israel’s *literal* restoration hereafter is included, as appears by comparing <sup><23115></sup>Isaiah 11:15,16.

**20. *beast*** — image of idolaters, defiled with blood and pollutions, dwelling like dragons, etc., in the wastes of Gentile ignorance: even they shall be converted. Or else, literally, such copious floods of water shall be given by God in the desert, that the very beasts shall (in poetic language) praise the Lord (<sup><4810></sup>Psalms 148:10) [JEROME].

***dragons*** — “serpents,” or else jackals (see on <sup><23122></sup>Isaiah 13:22).

***owls*** — rather, “ostriches.”

**21. *This people*** — namely, The same as “My people, My chosen” (see <sup><2341></sup>Isaiah 43:1,7 <sup><4928></sup>Psalms 102:18).

***my praise*** — on account of the many and great benefits conferred on them, especially their restoration.

**22. *But*** — Israel, *however*, is not to think that these divine favors are due to their own piety towards God. So the believer (<sup><3185></sup>Titus 3:5).

***but*** — rather, “for.”

***wearied of me*** — (<sup><3185></sup>Amos 8:5,6 <sup><3113></sup>Malachi 1:13), though “I have not wearied thee” (<sup><2323></sup>Isaiah 43:23), yet “thou hast been weary of Me.”

**23. *small cattle*** — rather, the “lamb” or “kid,” required by the law to be daily offered to God (<sup><1238></sup>Exodus 29:38 <sup><1238></sup>Numbers 28:3).

***sacrifices*** — offered any way; whereas the *Hebrew* for “holocaust,” or “burnt offering,” denotes that which *ascends* as an offering consumed by fire.

***I have not caused thee to serve*** — that is, to render the the service of a *slave* (<sup><4113></sup>Matthew 11:30 <sup><4185></sup>Romans 8:15 <sup><4185></sup>1 John 4:18 5:3).

***offering*** — bloodless (<sup><4111></sup>Leviticus 2:1,2).

***wearied*** — antithetical to <sup><2322></sup>Isaiah 43:22, “*Thou* hast been weary of Me.” Though God in the law required such offerings, yet not so as to “weary”

the worshipper, or to exact them in cases where, as in the Babylonish captivity, they were physically unable to render them; God did not require them, save in subordination to the higher moral duties (<sup>1818</sup>Psalm 50:8-14 51:16,17 <sup>3018</sup>Micah 6:3,6-8).

**24. *bought*** — for “sweet cane” (aromatic *calamus*) was not indigenous to Palestine, but had to be bought from foreign countries (<sup>2160</sup>Jeremiah 6:20). It was used among the Hebrews to make the sacred ointment (<sup>1818</sup>Exodus 30:23). It is often offered as a mark of hospitality.

***filled*** — satiated (<sup>2614</sup>Jeremiah 31:14). God deigns to use human language to adapt Himself to human modes of thought.

***made me to serve*** — though “I have not caused *thee* to serve” (<sup>2833</sup>Isaiah 43:23). Our sin made the Son of God to become “a *servant*.” He *served* to save us from servile bondage (<sup>3107</sup>Philippians 2:7 <sup>3124</sup>Hebrews 2:14,15).

***wearied me*** — Though I have “not wearied thee” (<sup>2833</sup>Isaiah 43:23; see <sup>2114</sup>Isaiah 1:14).

**25. *I, even I*** — the God against whom your sin is committed, and who alone can and will pardon. (<sup>2402</sup>Isaiah 44:22).

***for mine own sake*** — (<sup>2809</sup>Isaiah 48:9,11). How abominable a thing sin is, since it is against such a God of grace! “Blotted out” is an image from an account-book, in which, when a debt is paid, the charge is *cancelled* or *blotted out*.

***not remember ... sins*** — (<sup>2634</sup>Jeremiah 31:34). When God forgives, He forgives; that is, treats the sinner as if He had forgotten his sins.

**26. *Put me in remembrance*** — Remind Me of every plea which thou hast to urge before Me in thy defense. Image from a trial (<sup>2118</sup>Isaiah 1:18 41:1). Our strongest plea is to remind God of His own promises. So Jacob did at Mahanaim and Peniel (<sup>1639</sup>Genesis 32:9,12). God, then, instead of “pleading against us with His great power,” “will put His strength” in us (<sup>3236</sup>Job 23:6); we thus become “the Lord’s *remembrancers*” (<sup>2616</sup>Isaiah 62:6, *Margin*). “*Declare* God’s righteousness” vindicated in Jesus Christ “that thou mayest be justified” (<sup>1818</sup>Romans 3:26; compare <sup>2311</sup>Isaiah 20:1-6, and <sup>1818</sup>Psalm 143:2).

**27. *first father*** — collectively for “most ancient *ancestors*,” as the parallelism (“teachers”) proves [MAURER]. Or, *thy chief religious ministers* or *priests* [GESENIUS]. *Adam*, the common father of all nations, can hardly be meant here, as it would have been irrelevant to mention *his* sin in an address to *the Jews specially*. *Abraham* is equally out of place here, as he is

everywhere cited as an example of faithfulness, not of “sin.” However, taking the passage in its ultimate application to the Church at large, Adam may be meant.

**teachers** — literally, “interpreters” between God and man, the priests (<sup><1832></sup>Job 33:23 <sup><3017></sup>Malachi 2:7).

**28. profaned the princes** — (<sup><1889></sup>Psalm 89:39 <sup><2511></sup>Lamentations 2:2,6,7). I have esteemed, or treated, them as persons not sacred. I have left them to suffer the same treatment as the common people, stripped of their holy office and in captivity.

**princes of the sanctuary** — “governors of” it (<sup><1315></sup>1 Chronicles 24:5); directing its holy services; priests.

**curse** — *Hebrew, cherim*, a “solemn anathema,” or “excommunication.”

**reproaches** — (<sup><1938></sup>Psalm 123:3,4).

# CHAPTER 44

## ISAIAH 44:1-28.

### CONTINUATION OF THE PREVIOUS CHAPTER.

**1-5. *Yet*** — Though thou hast sinned, yet hear God’s gracious promise as to thy deliverance.

***chosen*** — (<sup>2308</sup>Isaiah 41:8).

**2.** (<sup>2308</sup>Isaiah 43:1,7).

***formed ... from ... womb*** — (So <sup>2342B</sup>Isaiah 44:24 <sup>2301</sup>Isaiah 49:1,5). The sense is similar to that in <sup>2300E</sup>Isaiah 1:2, “I have nourished and brought up children.”

***Jesurun*** — A diminutive term of endearment applied to Israel. The full title of affection was *Israelun*; contracted it became Jeshurun, with an allusion to the *Hebrew* root, *jashar*, “upright,” “perfect” (see on <sup>2309</sup>Isaiah 42:19, note on “He that is perfect”) [GESENIUS], (<sup>4125</sup>Deuteronomy 32:15).

**3.** (<sup>2341B</sup>Isaiah 41:18).

***him ... thirsty*** — rather, “the land” (<sup>2310</sup>Isaiah 35:6,7), figuratively for *man* thirsting after righteousness (<sup>4100</sup>Matthew 5:6).

***floods*** — the *abundant* influences of the Holy Spirit, stronger than “water.”

***spirit*** — including all spiritual and temporal gifts, as the parallel, “blessing,” proves (<sup>2310</sup>Isaiah 11:2 32:15).

***seed*** — (<sup>2321</sup>Isaiah 59:21).

**4. *they*** — thy “seed” and “offspring” (<sup>2343B</sup>Isaiah 44:3).

***as among*** — needlessly inserted in *English Version*. Rather, “The seed shall spring up as willows among the grass beside canals of water” [HORSLEY]. Or, “They shall spring up among the grass (that is, luxuriantly; for what grows in the midst of grass grows luxuriantly) as willows by the water-courses,” which makes the parallel clauses better balanced [MAURER].

5. The third clause answers in parallelism to the first, the fourth to the second.

***I am the Lord's*** — (<sup>2815</sup>Jeremiah 50:5 <sup>4099</sup>1 Corinthians 6:19,20 <sup>4085</sup>2 Corinthians 8:5).

***call himself by the name of Jacob*** — The Gentiles (as the result of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on Israel, the Lord's "seed," first) shall join themselves to the children of Jacob, in order to worship their God (compare <sup>2807</sup>Isaiah 43:7 <sup>4991</sup>Psalms 49:11). Or, "calls," that is, invokes and celebrates *the name of Jacob*, attaches himself to his nation and religion [MAURER], (<sup>4240</sup>Psalms 24:6).

***subscribe ... hand unto ... Lord*** — in solemn and public covenant, pledging himself to God's service (compare <sup>4088</sup>Nehemiah 9:38), before "witnesses" (<sup>4921</sup>Hebrews 12:1), after the manner of a civil contract (<sup>2820</sup>Jeremiah 32:10,12,44). So the Christian in the sacraments [BARNES]. Literally, "shall fill his hand with letters" (<sup>0225</sup>Exodus 32:15 <sup>3120</sup>Ezekiel 2:10) in honor of Jehovah"; or "shall write upon his hand, I am Jehovah's" (compare <sup>2806</sup>Isaiah 49:16 <sup>6136</sup>Revelation 13:16); alluding to the puncture with ink on the hand, whereby a soldier marked himself as bound to his commander; and whereby the Christians used to mark themselves with the name of Christ [LOWTH]. The former view is simpler.

***surname himself ... Israel*** — MAURER and GESENIUS interpret this as the *Hebrew* sanctions, answering to their rendering of the parallel second clause, "*calls blandly* (speaks in honorable terms of) the name of Israel." Retaining *English Version*, we must, from the *Hebrew* understand it thus, "Surname himself by the *honorable* name of Israel" (<sup>2804</sup>Isaiah 45:4).

6. Here follows an argument for Jehovah, as the only God, and against the idols, as vanity (see on <sup>2804</sup>Isaiah 41:4; <sup>2801</sup>Isaiah 43:1; <sup>2809</sup>Isaiah 43:10-12).

7. Who but God can predict future events and declare also the *order* and time of each (see on <sup>2802</sup>Isaiah 41:22,23; <sup>2821</sup>Isaiah 45:21)?

***call*** — "openly proclaim" (<sup>2805</sup>Isaiah 40:6) things to come [MAURER]. Or, "call forth" the event; command that it happen (<sup>2861</sup>Isaiah 46:11 48:15), [BARNES].

***set ... in order*** — There is no chance or confusion; all events occur in the *order* best fitted to subserve God's plans.

***for me*** — It is FOR GOD that all things exist and take place (<sup>6011</sup>Revelation 4:11). But MAURER translates, "Let him *set it forth* (<sup>3379</sup>Job 37:19) *to me*."

*since ... ancient people* — I have given the Jews predictions of the future ever since I appointed them as My people in ancient times; therefore they were qualified to be His witnesses (<sup>2348</sup>Isaiah 44:8). As to their being God’s “ancient (everlasting) people,” see <sup>1630</sup>Deuteronomy 32:7-9 <sup>2606</sup>Jeremiah 31:3; the type of the redeemed Church (<sup>4004</sup>Ephesians 1:4).

8. *be afraid* — literally, “be astounded,” or “distracted with fear.”

*from that time* — namely, from the time that “I appointed the ancient people” (<sup>2347</sup>Isaiah 44:7). From the time of Abraham’s call, his family were the depositories of the predictions of the Redeemer, whereas the promise of Cyrus was not heard of till Isaiah’s time; therefore, the event to the prediction and accomplishment of which God appeals in proof of His sole Godhead, is the redemption of man by a descendant of Abraham, in whose person “the ancient people” was first formally “appointed.” The deliverance of the Jews, by Cyrus, is mentioned afterwards only as an earnest of that greater mercy [HORSLEY].

*no God* — Hebrew, *tsur*, “rock” (<sup>1630</sup>Deuteronomy 32:4); that is, a stronghold to take refuge in, and a solid foundation to build on.

9. (<sup>2308</sup>Isaiah 40:18,20 41:29).

*delectable things* — the idols in which they take such pride and delight.

*not profit* — (<sup>3185</sup>Habakkuk 2:18).

*they are their own witnesses* — contrasted with, “Ye are My witnesses” (<sup>2348</sup>Isaiah 44:8). “They,” that is, both the makers and the idols, are witnesses against themselves, for the idols palpably see and know nothing (<sup>1630</sup>Psalm 115:4-8).

*that they may be ashamed* — the consequence deducible from the whole previous argument, not merely from the words immediately preceding, as in <sup>2303</sup>Isaiah 28:13 36:12. I say all this to show that they are doomed to *perish with shame*, which is their only fitting end.

10. *Who ... ?* — Sarcastic question: “How debased the man must be who *forms a god!*” It is a contradiction in terms. A *made god*, worshipped by its maker (<sup>4001</sup>1 Corinthians 8:4)!

11. *his fellows* — the associates of him who makes an idol; or of the idol (see <sup>1630</sup>Deuteronomy 7:26 <sup>1630</sup>Psalm 115:8 <sup>3007</sup>Hosea 4:17).

*they are of men* — They are mortal men themselves; what better, then, can the idol be than its maker?

***gathered together ... stand up*** — as in a court of justice, to try the issue between God and them (see on <sup>2310E</sup>Isaiah 41:1; <sup>2312E</sup>Isaiah 41:21).

***yet*** — wrongly inserted in *English Version*. The issue of the trial shall be, “they shall fear,” etc.

**12. *tongs*** — rather, “prepareth (to be supplied) *an axe*,” namely, with which to cut down the tree designed as the material of the idol. The “smith” (*Hebrew*, “workman in iron”) here answers to the “carpenter” (*Hebrew*, “workman in wood”). “He worketh it (*the axe*, not the idol, which was wood, not metal) in the coals,” etc. The axe was *wrought*, not cast. The smith makes the axe for the carpenter.

***hungry ... drinketh no water*** — so eager is he to expedite his work while the iron is hot. If the god were worth anything, it would not let him grow “faint” with hunger and thirst. Williams, the missionary, states that the South Sea islanders when they make an idol abstain from food and drink.

**13.** After the smith’s work in preparing the instruments comes the carpenter’s work in forming the idol.

***rule*** — rather, “line” [BARNES].

***with a line*** — rather, a “pencil,” [HORSLEY]. Literally, “red ochre,” which he uses to mark on the wood the outline of the figure [LOWTH]. Or best, the stylus or graver, with which the incision of the outline is made [GESENIUS].

***planes*** — rather, “chisels” or “carving tools,” for a plane would not answer for carving.

***compass*** — from a *Hebrew* root, “to make a circle”; by it, symmetry of form is secured.

***according to ... beauty of a man*** — irony. The highest idea the heathen could form of a god was one of a form like their own. JEROME says, “The more handsome the statue the more august the god was thought.” The incarnation of the Son of God condescends to this anthropomorphic feeling so natural to man, but in such a way as to raise man’s thoughts up to the infinite God who “is a spirit.”

***that it may remain in ... house*** — the only thing it was good for; it could not hear nor save (compare Wisdom 13:15).

**14.** Description of the material out of which the idol is formed.

***cypress*** — rather, from *Hebrew* root, “to be hard,” the holm oak,” an evergreen abundant in Palestine [GESENIUS].

**strengtheneth** — literally, “and he getteth strength to himself in the trees of the forest;” that is, he layeth in a *great store* of timber [LOWTH]. Or, “chooseth,” as “madest strong for thyself,” that is, hast chosen (<sup>13015</sup>Psalm 80:15,17) [GESENIUS]. But *English Version* gives a good sense: “strengtheneth”; that is, rears to maturity; a meaning suitable also to the context of <sup>13015</sup>Psalm 80:15,17, where Israel is compared to a *vine* planted by Jehovah [MAURER].

**rain doth nourish it** — Though the man planted the tree, yet he could not make it grow. In preparing to make an idol, he has to depend on the true God for rain from heaven (<sup>2442</sup>Jeremiah 14:22).

**15.** The same tree that furnishes the material for the god is in part used as fuel for a fire to cook his meals and warm himself!

**thereto** — rather, “he falleth down before *them*,” that is, such images [MAURER].

**16. part ... part** — not distinct parts, but *the same part* of the wood (compare <sup>2347</sup>Isaiah 44:17).

**eateth** — that is, cooks so as to eat (<sup>2349</sup>Isaiah 44:19).

**I have seen** — I feel its power.

**18. he**, etc. — God hath given them over to judicial blindness; not His direct physical, but His providential agency in administering His moral government, is meant (<sup>2319</sup>Isaiah 6:9,10). “Shut,” literally, “daubed,” plastered up; it is an Eastern custom in some cases to seal up the eyes of offenders.

**19. considereth** — literally, “layeth it to heart,” (<sup>2325</sup>Isaiah 42:25 <sup>2421</sup>Jeremiah 12:11).

**abomination** — the scriptural term for an idol, not merely abominable, but the *essence* of what is so, in the eyes of a jealous God (<sup>1115</sup>1 Kings 11:5,7).

**20. feedeth on ashes** — figuratively, for the idolater delights in what is vain (<sup>2154</sup>Proverbs 15:14 <sup>2321</sup>Hosea 12:1). “Feedeth on wind.” There is an allusion, perhaps, also, to the god being made of a tree, the half of which was *reduced to ashes by fire* (<sup>2345</sup>Isaiah 44:15-17); the idol, it is implied, was no better, and could, and ought, to have been reduced to ashes like the other half.

**deceived heart** — The heart and will first go astray, then the intellect and life (<sup>603</sup>Romans 1:28 <sup>4045</sup>Ephesians 4:18).

*lie in ... right hand* — Is not my handiwork (the idol) a self-deceit?

**21. Remember** — “Be not like the idolaters who consider not in their heart” (<sup><2449></sup>Isaiah 44:19).

*these* — things just said as to the folly of idol-worship.

*my servant* — not like the idolaters, slaves to the stock of a tree (<sup><2449></sup>Isaiah 44:19). See <sup><2401></sup>Isaiah 44:1,2.

*thou ... not ... forgotten of me* — Therefore *thou* oughtest to “remember” Me.

**22. blotted out** — the debt of *thy* sin from the account-book in which it was entered (<sup><1333></sup>Exodus 32:32,33 <sup><6102></sup>Revelation 20:12).

*as a thick cloud* — scattered away by the wind (<sup><194312></sup>Psalms 103:12).

*as a cloud* — a descending gradation. Not only the “thick cloud” of the heavier “transgressions,” but the “cloud” (“vapor” [LOWTH], not so dense, but *covering* the sky as a mist) of the countless “sins.” These latter, though not thought much of by man, need, as much as the former, to be cleared away by the Sun of righteousness; else they will be a *mist* separating us from heaven (<sup><19012></sup>Psalms 19:12,13 <sup><61071></sup>1 John 1:7-9).

*return ... for* — The antecedent redemption is the ground of, and motive to, repentance. We do not repent *in order that He may* redeem us, but *because He hath* redeemed us (<sup><3217></sup>Zechariah 12:10 <sup><1247></sup>Luke 24:47 <sup><4188></sup>Acts 3:18,19). He who believes in his being forgiven cannot but love (<sup><10748></sup>Luke 7:43,47).

**23.** Call to inanimate nature to praise God; for it also shall share in the coming deliverance from “the bondage of corruption” (<sup><6101></sup>Romans 8:20,21).

*done it* — effected redemption for both the literal and spiritual Israel.

*lower parts*, etc. — antithetical to “heavens”; “mountains,” “forest,” and “tree,” are the intermediate objects in a descending gradation (see <sup><19911></sup>Psalms 96:11,12).

**24-28.** Confirmation of His promises to the Church and Israel, by various instances of His omnipotence; among these the restoration of the Jews by Cyrus.

*alone* — literally, “Who was with Me?” namely, when I did it; answering to “by Myself,” in the parallel clause (compare similar phrases, <sup><2001></sup>Hosea 8:4 <sup><6101></sup>John 5:30) [MAURER].

**25. *tokens*** — prognostics; the pretended miracles whiten they gave as *proofs* of their supernatural powers.

***liars*** — (<sup>2676</sup>Jeremiah 50:36). Conjurers; or, astrologers; men leading a retired contemplative life in order to study divination by the signs of the stars [VITRINGA].

***backward*** — with shame at their predictions not being verified. “To turn away the face” is to *frustrate defeat* (<sup>2309</sup>Isaiah 36:9 <sup>4025</sup>1 Kings 2:15). The “wise men” are the diviners who, when Babylon was attacked by Cyrus, predicted his overthrow.

**26. *servant*** — in a collective sense, for *the prophets* in general, who foretold the return from Babylon; answering to “His messengers” (*plural*, in the parallel clause) [MAURER]. Antotypically, and ultimately, *Messiah*, who is the consummating embodiment of all the prophets and messengers of God (<sup>3001</sup>Malachi 3:1 <sup>4234</sup>Matthew 21:34,36,37 <sup>4905</sup>John 10:36); hence the *singular*, “His servant.”

***counsel*** — predictions; prophets’ *counsels* concern the future (compare “counsellor,” <sup>2428</sup>Isaiah 41:28).

***Jerusalem*** — regarded prophetically, as lying in ruins.

**27.** Referring to the Euphrates, which was turned into a different channel, close to Babylon, by Cyrus, who thereby took the city. “The deep” is applied to Euphrates as “sea” (<sup>2632</sup>Jeremiah 51:32,36). “Rivers” refers to the artificial canals from the Euphrates made to irrigate the country; when it was turned off into a different bed (namely, a lake, forty miles square, which was originally formed to receive the superfluous water in an inundation), the canals became dry.

**28. *my shepherd*** — type of Messiah (<sup>2301</sup>Isaiah 40:11 <sup>4231</sup>Psalms 23:1 77:20 <sup>4623</sup>Ezekiel 34:23).

***all my pleasure*** — so Messiah (<sup>2301</sup>Isaiah 42:1 53:10). This is the first time Cyrus is *named* expressly; and that, a hundred fifty years before the time when in 550 B.C. he began his reign. The name comes from the *Persian khorschid*, “the sun”; kings often taking their names from the gods; the sun was worshipped as a god in Persia.

***saying*** — rather, “and that saith”; construed with *God*, not with *Cyrus*. God’s word is instantaneously efficient in accomplishing His will.

***to ... to*** — or, “*of Jerusalem ... of the temple*,” as previously, the same *Hebrew* word is translated, “*of Cyrus*” [BARNES]. *English Version* is more

graphic. Cyrus, according to JOSEPHUS, heard of this prophecy of Isaiah delivered so long before; hence he was induced to do that which was so contrary to Oriental policy, to aid in restoring the captive Jews and rebuilding their temple and city.

# CHAPTER 45

## ISAIAH 45:1-25.

### THE SUBJECT OF THE DELIVERANCE BY CYRUS IS FOLLOWED UP.

<sup>2361E</sup>Isaiah 45:1-7. These seven verses should have been appended to previous chapter, and the new chapter should begin with <sup>2361E</sup>Isaiah 45:8, “Drop down,” etc. [HORSLEY]. Reference to the deliverance by Messiah often breaks out from amidst the local and temporary details of the deliverance from Babylon, as the great ultimate end of the prophecy.

**1. his anointed** — Cyrus is so called as being *set apart as king*, by God’s providence, to fulfill His special purpose. Though kings were not *anointed* in Persia, the expression is applied to him in reference to the *Jewish* custom of setting apart kings to the regal office by anointing.

**right hand ... holden** — image from sustaining a feeble person by holding his right hand (<sup>2361E</sup>Isaiah 42:6).

**subdue nations** — namely, the Cilicians, Syrians, Babylonians, Lydians, Bactrians, etc.; his empire extended from Egypt and the Mediterranean to the Indian Ocean, and from Ethiopia to the Euxine Sea.

**loose ... girdle loins** — that is, the girdle off the loins; and so *enfeeble* them. The loose outer robe of the Orientals, when girt fast round the loins, was the emblem of strength and preparedness for action; ungirt, was indicative of *feebleness* (<sup>4880E</sup>Job 38:3 12:21); “*weakeneth the strength of the mighty*” (*Margin*), “*looseth the girdle of the strong.*” *The joints of* (Belshazzar’s) *loins*, we read in <sup>2710E</sup>Daniel 5:6, *were loosed* during the siege by Cyrus, at the sight of the mysterious handwriting on the palace walls. His being taken by surprise, *unaccoutred*, is here foretold.

**to open ... gates** — In the revelry in Babylon on the night of its capture, the inner gates, leading from the streets to the river, were left open; for there were walls along each side of the Euphrates with gates, which, had they been kept shut, would have hemmed the invading hosts in the bed of the river, where the Babylonians could have easily destroyed them. Also, the gates of the palace were left open, so that there was access to every part of the city; and such was its extent, that they who lived in the extremities were

taken prisoners before the alarm reached the center of the palace.  
[HERODOTUS, 1.191].

**2. *crooked ... straight*** — (<sup><2404></sup>Isaiah 40:4), rather, “maketh mountains plain” [LOWTH], that is, clear out of thy way all opposing persons and things. The *Keri* reads as in <sup><2363></sup>Isaiah 45:13, “make straight” (*Margin*).

***gates of brass*** — (<sup><2476></sup>Psalms 107:16). HERODOTUS (1.179) says, Babylon had a hundred massive gates, twenty-five on each of the four sides of the city, all, as well as their posts, of brass.

***bars of iron*** — with which the gates were fastened.

**3. *treasures of darkness*** — that is, hidden in subterranean places; a common Oriental practice. Sorcerers pretended to be able to show where such treasures were to be found; in opposition to their pretensions, God says, He will really give hidden treasures to Cyrus (<sup><2413></sup>Jeremiah 50:37 51:13). PLINY (*Natural History*, 33:3) says that Cyrus obtained from the conquest of Asia thirty-four thousand pounds weight of gold, besides golden vases, and five hundred thousand talents of silver, and the goblet of Semiramis, weighing fifteen talents.

***that thou mayest know*** — namely, not merely that He was “the God of Israel,” but that He was Jehovah, the true God. <sup><4500></sup>Ezra 1:1,2 shows that the correspondence of the event with the prediction had the desired effect on Cyrus.

***which call ... thy name*** — so long before designate thee by name (<sup><2301></sup>Isaiah 43:1).

**4.** (See on <sup><2408></sup>Isaiah 41:8; <sup><2364></sup>Isaiah 43:14).

***surnamed*** — that is, designated to carry out My design of restoring Judah (see on <sup><2445></sup>Isaiah 44:5; <sup><2403></sup>Isaiah 44:28; <sup><2401></sup>Isaiah 45:1). MAURER here, as in <sup><2445></sup>Isaiah 44:5, translates, “I have *addressed thee by an honorable name.*”

***hast not known me*** — *previous* to My calling thee to this office; *after* God’s call, Cyrus *did* know Him in some degree (<sup><4500></sup>Ezra 1:1-3).

**5.** (<sup><2308></sup>Isaiah 42:8 43:3,11 44:8 46:9).

***girded thee*** — whereas “I will loose (the girdle off) the loins of kings” (<sup><2401></sup>Isaiah 45:1), *strengthening* thee, but *enfeebling* them before thee.

***though ... not known me*** — (<sup><2401></sup>Isaiah 45:4). God *knows* His elect before they are made to know Him (<sup><8009></sup>Galatians 4:9 <sup><6156></sup>John 15:16).

**6.** From the rising to the setting of the sun, that is, from *east* to *west*, the whole *habitable* world. It is not said, “from *north* to *south*,” for that would not imply the *habitable* world, as, “from *east* to *west*” does (<sup><4500E></sup>Ezra 1:1, etc.). The conquest of Jerusalem by Babylon, the capital of the world, and the overthrow of Babylon and restoration of the Jews by Cyrus, who expressly acknowledged himself to be but the instrument in God’s hands, were admirably suited to secure, throughout the world, the acknowledgment of Jehovah as the only true God.

**7. *form ... create*** — *yatzar*, to give “form” to previously existing matter. *Bara*, to “create” from nothing the chaotic dark material.

***light ... darkness*** — literally (<sup><0000></sup>Genesis 1:1-3), emblematical also, *prosperity* to Cyrus, *calamity* to Babylon and the nations to be vanquished [GROTIUS] ... Isaiah refers also to the Oriental belief in two coexistent, eternal principles, ever struggling with each other, light or good, and darkness or evil, *Oromasden* and *Ahrimanen*. God, here, in opposition, asserts His sovereignty over both [VITRINGA].

***create evil*** — not *moral* evil (<sup><3013></sup>James 1:13), but in contrast to “peace” in the parallel clause, *war*, *disaster* (compare <sup><3507></sup>Psalms 65:7 <sup><3016></sup>Amos 3:6).

**8. *Drop*** — namely, the fertilizing rain (<sup><0512></sup>Psalms 65:12).

***skies*** — clouds; lower than the “heavens.”

***righteousness*** — that is, the dews of the Holy Spirit, whereby “righteousness” shall “spring up.” (See latter end of the verse).

***earth*** — figuratively for the *hearts of men* on it, *opened* for receiving the truth by the Holy Ghost (<sup><4014></sup>Acts 16:14).

***them*** — the earth and the heavens. HORSLEY prefers: “Let the earth open, and *let salvation and justice grow forth*; let it bring *them forth* together; I the Lord have created *him*” (<sup><2513></sup>Isaiah 45:13). MAURER translates, “Let all kinds of salvation (prosperity) be fruitful” (<sup><0723></sup>Psalms 72:3,6,7). The revival of religion after the return from Babylon suggests to the prophet the diffusion of *Messiah’s Gospel*, especially in days still future; hence the elevation of the language to a pitch above what is applicable to the state of religion after the return.

**9.** Anticipating the objections which the Jews might raise as to why God permitted their captivity, and when He did restore them, why He did so by a foreign prince, Cyrus, not a Jew (<sup><2107></sup>Isaiah 40:27, etc.), but mainly and ultimately, the objections about to be raised by the Jews against *God’s sovereign act in adopting the whole Gentile world as His spiritual Israel*

(<sup>23518</sup>Isaiah 45:8, referring to this *catholic* diffusion of the Gospel), as if it were an infringement of their nation's privileges; so Paul expressly quotes it (<sup>4509</sup>Romans 9:4-8,11-21).

**Let ... strive** — Not in the *Hebrew*; rather, in apposition with “him,” “A potsherd *among* the potsherds of the earth!” A creature fragile and worthless as the fragment of an earthen vessel, among others equally so, and yet presuming to strive with his Maker! *English Version* implies, it is appropriate for man to strive with man, in opposition to <sup>4124</sup>2 Timothy 2:24 [GESENIUS].

**thy ... He** — shall thy work *say of thee*, He ... ?

**10.** If it be wrong for a child, born in less favorable circumstances, to upbraid his parents with having given him birth, *a fortiori*, it is, to upbraid God for His dealings with us. Rather translate, “*a father ... a woman.*” The Jews considered themselves exclusively God's children and were angry that God should adopt the Gentiles besides. Woe to him who says to one already a father, Why dost thou beget other children? [HORSLEY].

**11. Ask ... command** — Instead of striving with Me in regard to My purposes, your wisdom is in prayer to *ask*, and even *command* Me, in so far as it is for My glory, and for your real good (<sup>41123</sup>Mark 11:24 <sup>41623</sup>John 16:23,13, latter part of the verse; <sup>4162</sup>1 John 3:22).

**sons** — (<sup>23413</sup>Isaiah 54:13 <sup>4482</sup>Galatians 3:26).

**work of my hands** — spiritually (<sup>4120</sup>Ephesians 2:10); also literal Israel (<sup>2310</sup>Isaiah 60:21). MAURER translates, instead of “command,” *Leave it to Me*, in My dealings concerning My sons and concerning the work of My hands, to do what I will with My own. LOWTH reads it interrogatively, Do ye presume to question Me and dictate to Me (see <sup>2349</sup>Isaiah 45:9,10)? The same sense is given, if the words be taken in irony. But *English Version* is best.

**12.** The same argument for prayer, drawn from God's omnipotence and consequent power, to grant any request, occurs in <sup>2316</sup>Isaiah 40:26-31.

**I, even my hands** — so *Hebrew* (<sup>4102</sup>Psalms 41:2), “Thou ... thy hand” (both nominatives, in apposition).

**13. him** — Cyrus, type of Messiah, who redeems the captives of Satan “without money and without price” (<sup>2351</sup>Isaiah 55:1), “freely” (gratuitously) (<sup>2316</sup>Isaiah 52:3 <sup>411</sup>61:1 <sup>43015</sup>Zechariah 9:11 <sup>4483</sup>Romans 3:24).

***in righteousness*** — to fulfill My righteous purpose (see on <sup><2310D></sup>Isaiah 41:2; <sup><2306F></sup>Isaiah 42:6 <sup><2326F></sup>Jeremiah 23:6).

**14.** The language but cursorily alludes to Egypt, Ethiopia, and Seba, being given to Cyrus as a ransom in lieu of Israel whom he restored (<sup><2388F></sup>Isaiah 43:3), but mainly and fully describes *the gathering in of the Gentiles to Israel* (<sup><401D></sup>Acts 2:10,11 8:27-38), especially at Israel's future restoration (<sup><2310D></sup>Isaiah 2:2 14:1,2 19:18-22 60:3-14 49:23 <sup><4388F></sup>Psalms 68:31 72:10,11).

***labor*** — wealth acquired by labor (<sup><2189F></sup>Jeremiah 3:24).

***Sabeans ... of stature*** — the men of Meroe, in Upper Egypt. HERODOTUS (3.30) calls the Ethiopians “the tallest of men” (see on <sup><2388D></sup>Isaiah 18:2; <sup><3123></sup>1 Chronicles 11:23).

***thee*** — Jerusalem (“my city,” <sup><23513></sup>Isaiah 45:13).

***in chains*** — (<sup><3928F></sup>Psalms 149:8). “The saints shall judge the world” (<sup><401D></sup>1 Corinthians 6:2) and “rule the nations with a rod of iron” (<sup><3842></sup>Zechariah 14:12-19 <sup><4022></sup>Revelation 2:26,27). The “chains,” in the case of the obedient, shall be the *easy yoke* of Messiah; as “the sword of the Spirit” also is saving to the believer, condemnatory to the unbeliever (<sup><4628></sup>John 12:48 <sup><3042></sup>Hebrews 4:12 <sup><6915></sup>Revelation 19:15).

***God is in thee*** — (<sup><2189F></sup>Jeremiah 3:19).

**15. *God that hidest thyself*** — HORSLEY, after JEROME, explains this as the confession of Egypt, etc., that *God is concealed in human form in the person of Jesus*. Rather, connected with <sup><2389F></sup>Isaiah 45:9,10, the prophet, contemplating the wonderful issue of the seemingly dark counsels of God, implies a censure on those who presume to question God's dealings (<sup><2388F></sup>Isaiah 55:8,9 <sup><6229F></sup>Deuteronomy 29:29). Faith still discerns, even under the veil, the covenant-keeping “God of Israel, the Savior” (<sup><23817></sup>Isaiah 8:17).

**16. *ashamed*** — “disappointed” in their expectation of help from their idols (see on <sup><2307F></sup>Isaiah 42:17; <sup><4907F></sup>Psalms 97:7).

**17. *in the Lord*** — (<sup><2359F></sup>Isaiah 45:24,25), contrasted with the idols which cannot give even temporary help (<sup><2356F></sup>Isaiah 45:16); *in Jehovah* there is *everlasting* salvation (<sup><2304F></sup>Isaiah 26:4).

***not ... ashamed*** — opposed to the doom of the idolaters, who, in the hour of need, shall be “ashamed” (see on <sup><2356F></sup>Isaiah 45:16).

**18.** (See on <sup><2352D></sup>Isaiah 45:12).

**not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited** — Therefore, Judah, lying waste during the Babylonish captivity, shall be peopled again by the exiles. The Jews, from this passage, infer that, after the resurrection, the earth shall be inhabited, for there can be no reason why the earth should *then* exist in vain any more than now (<sup><618></sup>2 Peter 3:13).

**19. not ... secret** — not like the heathen oracles which gave their responses from dark caverns, with studied obscurity (<sup><2486></sup>Isaiah 48:16). Christ plainly quotes these words, thereby identifying Himself with Jehovah (<sup><618></sup>John 18:20).

**I said not ... Seek ... in vain** — When I commanded you to seek Me (Jehovah did so, <sup><2351></sup>Isaiah 45:11, “Ask Me,” etc.), it was not in order that ye might be sent empty away (<sup><6587></sup>Deuteronomy 32:47). Especially in Israel’s time of trial, God’s interposition, in behalf of Zion hereafter, is expressly stated as about to be the answer to prayer (<sup><2316></sup>Isaiah 62:6,7-10 <sup><1923></sup>Psalms 102:13-17,19-21). So in the case of all believers, the spiritual Israel.

**righteousness** — that which is veracious: not in the equivocal terms of heathen responses, fitly symbolized by the “dark places” from which they were uttered.

**right** — true (see on <sup><2312></sup>Isaiah 41:26).

**20. escaped of the nations** — those of the nations who shall have escaped the slaughter inflicted by Cyrus. Now, at last, ye shall see the folly of “praying to a god that cannot save” (<sup><2351></sup>Isaiah 45:16). Ultimately, those that shall be “left of all the nations which shall come against Jerusalem” are meant (<sup><3416></sup>Zechariah 14:16). They shall then all be converted to the Lord (<sup><2462></sup>Isaiah 66:23,24 <sup><2487></sup>Jeremiah 3:17 <sup><3817></sup>Zechariah 8:20-23).

**21. Challenge the worshippers of idols** (<sup><2310></sup>Isaiah 41:1).

**take counsel together** — as to the best arguments wherewith to defend the cause of idolatry.

**who ... from that time** — (<sup><2312></sup>Isaiah 41:22,23; see on <sup><2408></sup>Isaiah 44:8). Which of the idols has done what God hath, namely, foretold, primarily as to Cyrus; ultimately as to the final restoration of Israel hereafter? The idolatry of Israel before Cyrus’ time will have its counterpart in the Antichrist and the apostasy, which shall precede Christ’s manifestation.

**just ... and ... Savior** — *righteous* in keeping His promises, and therefore a *Savior* to His people. Not only is it not inconsistent with, but it is the result

of, His *righteousness*, or *justice*, that He should *save* His redeemed (<sup>2307</sup>Isaiah 42:6,21 <sup>1950</sup>Psalms 85:10,11 <sup>4135</sup>Romans 3:26).

**22. Look ... and be ye saved** — The second imperative expresses the result which will follow obedience to the first (<sup>0428</sup>Genesis 42:18); *ye shall be saved* (<sup>4834</sup>John 3:14,15). <sup>0029</sup>Numbers 21:9: “If a serpent had bitten any man, when he *beheld* the serpent of brass he lived.” What so simple as a look? Not *do* something, but *look* to the Savior (<sup>4161</sup>Acts 16:30,31). Believers look by faith, the eye of the soul. The look is that of one *turning* (see *Margin*) to God, as at once “Just and the Savior” (<sup>2352</sup>Isaiah 45:21), that is, the look of *conversion* (<sup>4927</sup>Psalms 22:27).

**23. sworn by myself** — equivalent to, “As I live,” as <sup>5411</sup>Romans 14:11 quotes it. So <sup>0421</sup>Numbers 14:21. God could swear by no greater, therefore He swears by Himself (<sup>5063</sup>Hebrews 6:13,16).

**word ... in righteousness** — rather, “the truth (see on <sup>2359</sup>Isaiah 45:19) is gone forth from My mouth, the word (of promise), and it shall not return (that is, which shall not be revoked)” [LOWTH]. But the accents favor *English Version*.

**tongue ... swear** — namely, an oath of allegiance to God as their true King (see on <sup>2308</sup>Isaiah 19:18; <sup>2369</sup>Isaiah 65:16). Yet to be fulfilled (<sup>3349</sup>Zechariah 14:9).

**24. Rather, “Only in Jehovah shall men say of me** (this clause is parenthetical), is there righteousness” (which includes *salvation*, <sup>2352</sup>Isaiah 45:21, “a just God and a Savior,” <sup>2363</sup>Isaiah 46:13), etc. [MAURER].

**strength** — namely, to save.

**shall men come** — Those who have set themselves up against God shall come to Him in penitence for the past (<sup>2392</sup>Isaiah 19:22).

**ashamed** — (<sup>2366</sup>Isaiah 45:16 <sup>2547</sup>Isaiah 54:17 41:11).

**25. all ... Israel** — the spiritual Israel (<sup>4129</sup>Romans 2:29) and the literal Israel, that is, the final remnant which shall *all be saved* (<sup>2357</sup>Isaiah 45:17 <sup>5126</sup>Romans 11:26).

**justified** — treated *as if* they were just, through Christ’s righteousness and death (<sup>2415</sup>Jeremiah 23:5).

**glory** — literally, “sing” in His praise (<sup>4024</sup>Jeremiah 9:24 <sup>4031</sup>1 Corinthians 1:31).

# CHAPTER 46

## ISAIAH 46:1-13.

### BABYLON'S IDOLS COULD NOT SAVE THEMSELVES, MUCH LESS HER. BUT GOD CAN AND WILL SAVE ISRAEL: CYRUS IS HIS INSTRUMENT.

**1. *Bel*** — the same as the Phoenician Baal, that is, lord, the chief god of Babylon; to it was dedicated the celebrated tower of Babylon, in the center of one of the two parts into which the city was divided, the palace being in the center of the other. Identical with the *sun*, worshipped on turrets, housetops, and other high places, so as to be nearer the heavenly hosts (*Saba*) (<sup>249B</sup>Jeremiah 19:13 32:29 <sup>300B</sup>Zephaniah 1:5). GESENIUS identifies Bel with the planet Jupiter, which, with the planet Venus (under the name Astarte or Astaroth), was worshipped in the East as the god of fortune, the most propitious star to be born under (see on <sup>236B</sup>Isaiah 65:11). According to the Apocryphal book, *Bel and the Dragon*, Bel was cast down by Cyrus.

***boweth ... stoopeth*** — falleth prostrate (<sup>230B</sup>Isaiah 10:4 <sup>405B</sup>1 Samuel 5:3,4 <sup>405B</sup>Psalms 20:8).

***Nebo*** — the planet Mercury or Hermes, in astrology. The scribe of heaven, answering to the Egyptian Anubis. The extensive worship of it is shown by the many proper names compounded of it: Nebuchadnezzar. Nebuzar-adan, Nabonassar, etc.

***were upon*** — that is, were a *burden* (supplied from the following clause) upon. It was customary to transport the gods of the vanquished to the land of the conquerors, who thought thereby the more effectually to keep down the subject people (<sup>405B</sup>1 Samuel 5:1, etc. <sup>248B</sup>Jeremiah 48:7 49:3 <sup>270B</sup>Daniel 11:8).

***carriages*** — in the Old English sense of *the things carried, the images borne by you*: the lading (<sup>405B</sup>Acts 21:15), “carriages,” not the vehicles, but the baggage. Or, the images *which used to be carried by you* formerly in your solemn processions [MAURER].

***were heavy laden*** — rather, *are put as a load on* the beasts of burden [MAURER]. HORSLEY translates, “They who should have been your *carriers*

(as Jehovah is to His people, <sup><2348></sup>Isaiah 46:3,4) are become *burdens*” (see on <sup><2348></sup>Isaiah 46:4).

2. *deliver* — from the enemies’ hands.

*burden* — their images laid on the beasts (<sup><2348></sup>Isaiah 46:1).

*themselves* — the *gods*, here also distinguished from their images.

3. in contrast to what precedes: Babylon’s idols, so far from *bearing* its people safely are themselves *borne off*, a *burden* to the laden beast; but Jehovah *bears* His people in safety even from the womb to old age (<sup><2349></sup>Isaiah 63:9 <sup><4521></sup>Deuteronomy 32:11 <sup><49716></sup>Psalms 71:6,18). God compares Himself to a nurse tenderly carrying a child; contrast Moses’ language (<sup><40112></sup>Numbers 11:12).

4. *old age* — As “your” — “you” — “you,” are not in the *Hebrew*, the sentiment is more general than *English Version*, though of course it *includes* the Jews from the infancy to the more advanced age of their history (<sup><2370></sup>Isaiah 47:6).

*I am he* — that is the same (<sup><19427></sup>Psalms 102:27 <sup><4034></sup>John 8:24 <sup><3838></sup>Hebrews 13:8).

*I will bear ... carry* — Not only do I not need to be *borne* and *carried* Myself, as the idols (<sup><2348></sup>Isaiah 46:1).

5. (<sup><2308></sup>Isaiah 40:18,25).

6. (<sup><2309></sup>Isaiah 40:19,20 41:7.) They lavish gold out of their purses and spare no expense for their idol. Their profuseness shames the niggardliness of professors who worship God with what cost them nothing. Sin is always a costly service.

7. *cry ... can ... not ... save* — (<sup><2351></sup>Isaiah 45:20, with which contrast <sup><2359></sup>Isaiah 45:19).

8. *show yourselves men* — Renounce the *childishness* of idolatry as shown in what precedes (<sup><4443></sup>1 Corinthians 14:20 16:13 <sup><4044></sup>Ephesians 4:14). In order to be *manly* we must be *godly*; for man was made “in the image of God,” and only rises to his true dignity when joined to God; *virtue* is derived from the *Latin vir*, “a man.”

*bring ... to mind* — rather, “lay it to heart.”

*transgressors* — addressed to the idolaters among the Jews.

9. *former* — namely, proofs of the sole Godship of Jehovah, from predictions fulfilled, and interpositions of God in behalf of Israel (<sup>2381B</sup>Isaiah 45:5).

10. (<sup>2365D</sup>Isaiah 45:21 41:22,23 44:26).

*yet* — not in the *Hebrew*. Translate, “What had not been done” [HORSLEY].

*do all my pleasure* — (<sup>2530I</sup>Isaiah 53:10 <sup>4609G</sup>Romans 9:19).

11. *ravenous bird* — Cyrus so called on account of the rapidity of his marches from the distant regions of Persia to pounce on his prey (see on <sup>2340E</sup>Isaiah 41:2; <sup>2342B</sup>Isaiah 41:25; <sup>2342J</sup>Jeremiah 49:22; <sup>2377B</sup>Ezekiel 17:3). The standard of Cyrus, too, was a golden *eagle* on a spear (see the heathen historian, XENOPHON, 7, where almost the same word is used, *aetos*, as here, *ayit*).

*executeth my counsel* — (<sup>2340B</sup>Isaiah 44:28 45:13). Babylon represents, mystically, the apostate faction: the destruction of its idols symbolizes the future general extirpation of all idolatry and unbelief.

*purposed ... also do it* — (<sup>2361B</sup>Isaiah 43:13).

12. *stout-hearted* — stubborn in resisting God (<sup>4905B</sup>Psalms 76:5 <sup>4075I</sup>Acts 7:51).

*far from righteousness* — (<sup>2509I</sup>Isaiah 59:9 <sup>3100E</sup>Habakkuk 2:4).

13. *near* — antithetical to “far” (<sup>2362I</sup>Isaiah 46:12 <sup>2505E</sup>Isaiah 51:5 56:1 61:10,11 <sup>6006G</sup>Romans 10:6-8).

*righteousness* — answering to “salvation” in the parallel clause; therefore it means here, “my righteous deliverance”; righteous, because proving the *truth* of God’s promises, and so contrived as to not compromise, but vindicate, His righteousness (<sup>2321I</sup>Isaiah 42:21 <sup>4836B</sup>Romans 3:26).

*Zion ... my glory* — rather, “I will give salvation in Zion; to Israel (I will give) my glory” [HORSLEY]. (<sup>2361H</sup>Isaiah 63:11 <sup>4947B</sup>Psalms 14:7 <sup>4023C</sup>Luke 2:32).

# CHAPTER 47

## ISAIAH 47:1-15.

**THE DESTRUCTION OF BABYLON IS REPRESENTED UNDER THE IMAGE OF A ROYAL VIRGIN BROUGHT DOWN IN A MOMENT FROM HER MAGNIFICENT THRONE TO THE EXTREME OF DEGRADATION.**

1. *in the dust* — (See on <sup><2385></sup>Isaiah 3:26; <sup><1823></sup>Job 2:13 <sup><2100></sup>Lamentations 2:10).

*virgin* — that is, heretofore *uncaptured* [HERODOTUS, 1.191].

*daughter of Babylon* — Babylon and its inhabitants (see on <sup><2008></sup>Isaiah 1:8; <sup><2372></sup>Isaiah 37:22).

*no throne* — The seat of empire was transferred to Shushan. Alexander intended to have made Babylon his seat of empire, but Providence defeated his design. He soon died; and Seleucia, being built near, robbed it of its inhabitants, and even of its name, which was applied to Seleucia.

*delicate* — alluding to the effeminate debauchery and prostitution of all classes at banquets and religious rites [CURTIUS, 5.1; HERODOTUS, 1.199; BARUCH, 6.43].

2. *millstones* — like the *querns* or hand-mills, found in this country, before the invention of water mills and windmills: a convex stone, made by the hand to turn in a concave stone, fitted to receive it, the corn being ground between them: the office of a female slave in the East; most degrading (<sup><1810></sup>Job 31:10 <sup><1241></sup>Matthew 24:41).

*uncover thy locks* — rather, “take off thy veil” [HORSLEY]: perhaps the removal of the *plaited hair* worn round the women’s temples is included; it, too, is a *covering* (<sup><1115></sup>1 Corinthians 11:15); to remove it and the veil is the badge of the lowest female degradation; in the East the head is the seat of female modesty; the *face* of a woman is seldom, the whole *head* almost never, seen bare (see on <sup><2218></sup>Isaiah 22:8).

*make bare the leg* — rather “lift up (literally, ‘uncover’; as in lifting up the train the leg is uncovered) thy *flowing train*.” In Mesopotamia, women of low rank, as occasion requires, wade across the rivers with stript legs, or else entirely put off their garments and swim across. “Exchange thy rich,

loose, queenly robe, for the most abject condition, that of one going to and fro through rivers as a slave, to draw water,” etc.

**uncover ... thigh** — gather up the robe, so as to wade across.

**3. not meet ... as a man** — rather, “I will not meet a man,” that is, suffer man to intercede with me — give man an audience [HORSLEY]. Or, “I will not *make peace with any man*,” before all are destroyed. Literally, “strike a league with”; a phrase arising from the custom of *striking* hands together in making a compact [MAURER], (see on <sup><3178></sup>Proverbs 17:18; <sup><1223></sup>Proverbs 22:26 11:15, *Margin*). Or else from *striking* the victims sacrificed in making treaties.

**4. As for** — rather supply, “*Thus saith* our Redeemer” [MAURER]. LOWTH supposes this verse to be the exclamation of a chorus breaking in with praises, “Our Redeemer! Jehovah of hosts,” etc. (<sup><2684></sup>Jeremiah 50:34).

**5. Sit** — the posture of mourning (<sup><1506></sup>Ezra 9:4 <sup><813></sup>Job 2:13 <sup><2101></sup>Lamentations 2:10).

**darkness** — mourning and misery (<sup><2811></sup>Lamentations 3:2 <sup><3108></sup>Micah 7:8).

**lady of kingdoms** — mistress of the world (<sup><2139></sup>Isaiah 13:19).

**6.** reason for God’s vengeance on Babylon: in executing God’s will against His people, she had done so with wanton cruelty (<sup><2305></sup>Isaiah 10:5, etc.; <sup><2617></sup>Jeremiah 50:17 51:33 <sup><3115></sup>Zechariah 1:15).

**polluted my inheritance** — (<sup><2328></sup>Isaiah 43:28).

**the ancient** — Even old age was disregarded by the Chaldeans, who treated all alike with cruelty (<sup><2316></sup>Lamentations 4:16 5:12) [ROSENMULLER]. Or, “the ancient” means Israel, worn out with calamities in the latter period of its history (<sup><2349></sup>Isaiah 46:4), as its earlier stage of history is called its “youth” (<sup><2541></sup>Isaiah 54:6 <sup><2361></sup>Ezekiel 16:60).

**7. so that** — Through thy vain expectation of being a queen for ever, thou didst advance to such a pitch of insolence as not to believe “these things” (namely, as to thy overthrow, <sup><2501></sup>Isaiah 47:1-5) possible.

**end of it** — namely, of thy insolence, implied in her words, “I shall be a lady for ever.”

**8. given to pleasures** — (See on <sup><2401></sup>Isaiah 47:1). In no city were there so many incentives to licentiousness.

**I am ... none ... beside me** — (<sup><2370></sup>Isaiah 47:10). Language of arrogance in man's mouth; fitting for God alone (<sup><2386></sup>Isaiah 45:6). See <sup><2388></sup>Isaiah 5:8, latter part.

**widow ... loss of children** — A state, represented as a female, when it has fallen is called a *widow*, because its *king* is no more; and *childless*, because it has no inhabitants; they having been carried off as captives (<sup><2320></sup>Isaiah 23:4 54:1,4,5 <sup><6807></sup>Revelation 18:7,8).

**9. in a moment** — It should not decay slowly, but be suddenly and unexpectedly destroyed; in a single night it was taken by Cyrus. The prophecy was again literally fulfilled when Babylon revolted against Darius; and, in order to hold out to the last, each man chose one *woman* of his family, and strangled the rest, to save provisions. Darius impaled three thousand of the revolters.

**in ... perfection** — that is, “in full measure.”

**for ... for** — rather, “notwithstanding the ... notwithstanding”; “in spite of” [LOWTH]. So “for” (<sup><0441></sup>Numbers 14:11). Babylon was famous for “expiations or sacrifices, and other incantations, whereby they tried to avert evil and obtain good” [DIODORUS SICULUS].

**10. wickedness** — as in <sup><2931></sup>Isaiah 13:11, the *cruelty* with which Babylon treated its subject states.

**None seeth me** — (<sup><1901></sup>Psalms 10:11 94:7). “There is none to exact punishment from me.” Sinners are not safe, though seeming secret.

**Thy wisdom** — astrological and *political* (<sup><2391></sup>Isaiah 19:11, etc., as to Egypt).

**perverted** — turns thee aside from the right and safe path.

**11. from whence it riseth** — *Hebrew*, “the dawn thereof,” that is, its first rising. Evil shall come on thee without the least previous intimation [ROSENMULLER]. But *dawn* is not applied to “evil,” but to *prosperity* shining out after misery (<sup><2312></sup>Isaiah 21:12). Translate, “Thou shall not see any dawn” (of alleviation) [MAURER].

**put ... off** — rather, as *Margin*, “remove by expiation”; it shall be never ending.

**not know** — unawares: which thou dost not apprehend. Proving the fallacy of thy divinations and astrology (<sup><806></sup>Job 9:5 <sup><1978></sup>Psalms 35:8).

**12. *Stand*** — forth: a scornful challenge to Babylon's magicians to show whether they can defend their city.

***labored*** — The devil's service is a laborious yet fruitless one (<sup>2850</sup>Isaiah 55:2).

**13. *wearied*** — (compare <sup>2870</sup>Isaiah 57:10 <sup>2842</sup>Ezekiel 24:12).

***astrologers*** — literally, those who form *combinations* of the heavens; who watch conjunctions and oppositions of the stars. "Casters of the configurations of the sky" [HORSLEY]. GESENIUS explains it: the dividers of the heavens. In casting a nativity they observed four signs: — the *horoscope*, or sign which arose at the time one was born; the *mid-heaven*; *the sign opposite the horoscope* towards the west; and the *hypogee*.

***monthly prognosticators*** — those who at each new moon profess to tell thereby what is about to happen. Join, not as *English Version*, "save ... from those things," etc.; but, "They that at new moons make known from (by means of) *them* the things that shall come upon thee" [MAURER].

**14.** (<sup>2908</sup>Isaiah 29:6 30:30).

***not ... a coal*** — Like stubble, they shall burn to a dead ash, without leaving a live coal or cinder (compare <sup>2804</sup>Isaiah 30:14), so utterly shall they be destroyed.

**15. *Thus***, etc. — Such shall be the fate of those astrologers who cost thee such an amount of trouble and money.

***thy merchants, from thy youth*** — that is, with whom thou hast trafficked from thy earliest history, the foreigners sojourning in Babylon for the sake of commerce (<sup>2834</sup>Isaiah 13:14 <sup>2806</sup>Jeremiah 51:6,9 Na 3:16,17) [BARNES]. Rather, the *astrologers*, with whom Babylon had so many dealings (<sup>2872</sup>Isaiah 47:12-14) [HORSLEY].

***to his quarter*** — literally, "straight before him" (<sup>2809</sup>Ezekiel 1:9,12). The foreigners, whether soothsayers or merchants, shall flee home out of Babylon (<sup>2806</sup>Jeremiah 50:16).

# CHAPTER 48

## ISAIAH 48:1-22.

### THE THINGS THAT BEFALL BABYLON JEHOVAH PREDICTED LONG BEFORE, LEST ISRAEL SHOULD ATTRIBUTE THEM, IN ITS “OBSTINATE” PERVERSITY, TO STRANGE GODS (<sup>238E</sup>ISAIAH 48:1-5).

1. *the waters of Judah* — spring from the *fountain* of Judah (<sup>624E</sup>Numbers 24:7 <sup>633E</sup>Deuteronomy 33:28 <sup>663E</sup>Psalms 68:26; *Margin*). *Judah* has the “fountain” attributed to it, because it survived the ten tribes, and from it Messiah was to spring.

*swear by ... Lord* — (<sup>239E</sup>Isaiah 19:18 45:23 65:16).

*mention* — in prayers and praises.

*not in truth* — (<sup>240E</sup>Jeremiah 5:2 <sup>404E</sup>John 4:24).

2. *For* — Ye deserve these reproofs; “for” ye call yourselves citizens of “the holy city” (<sup>251E</sup>Isaiah 52:1), but not in truth (<sup>238E</sup>Isaiah 48:1 <sup>461E</sup>Nehemiah 11:1 <sup>702E</sup>Daniel 9:24); so the inscription on their coins of the time of the Maccabees. “Jerusalem the Holy.”

3. *former* — things which have happened in time past to Israel (<sup>230E</sup>Isaiah 42:9 44:7,8 45:21 46:10).

*suddenly* — They came to pass so unexpectedly that the prophecy could not have resulted from mere human sagacity.

4. *obstinate* — *Hebrew*, “hard” (<sup>692E</sup>Deuteronomy 9:27 <sup>241E</sup>Ezekiel 3:7, *Margin*).

*iron sinew* — inflexible (<sup>415E</sup>Acts 7:51).

*brow brass* — shameless as a harlot (see <sup>246E</sup>Jeremiah 6:28 3:3 <sup>240E</sup>Ezekiel 3:7, *Margin*).

5. (See on <sup>238E</sup>Isaiah 48:1; <sup>238E</sup>Isaiah 48:3).

6. **Thou**, etc. — So “ye are my witnesses” (<sup>2307</sup>Isaiah 43:10). Thou canst testify the prediction was uttered long before the fulfillment: “see all this,” namely, that the event answers to the prophecy.

**declare** — make the fact known as a proof that Jehovah alone is God (<sup>2348</sup>Isaiah 44:8).

**new things** — namely, the deliverance from Babylon by Cyrus, *new* in contradistinction from former predictions that had been fulfilled (<sup>2309</sup>Isaiah 42:9 43:19). Antotypically, the prophecy has in view the “new things” of the gospel treasury (So 7:13 <sup>4065</sup>Matthew 13:52 <sup>4087</sup>2 Corinthians 5:17 <sup>6216</sup>Revelation 21:5). From this point forward, the prophecies as to Messiah’s first and second advents and the restoration of Israel, have a *new* circumstantial distinctness, such as did not characterize the previous ones, even of Isaiah. Babylon, in this view, answers to the mystical Babylon of Revelation.

**hidden** — which could not have been guessed by political sagacity (<sup>2722</sup>Daniel 2:22,29 <sup>4109</sup>1 Corinthians 2:9,10).

7. Not like natural results from existing causes, the events when they took place were like acts of *creative* power, such as had never before been “from the beginning.”

**even before the day when** — rather [MAURER], “And before the day (of their occurrence) thou hast not heard of them”; that is, by any human acuteness; they are only heard of by the present inspired announcement.

8. **heardest not** — repeated, as also “knewest not,” from <sup>2387</sup>Isaiah 48:7.

**from that time** — Mine anger *towards* thee. Omit “that.” “Yea, from “*the first* thine ear did not open itself,” namely, to *obey* them [ROSENMULLER]. “To open the ear” denotes obedient attention (<sup>2305</sup>Isaiah 50:5); or, “was not opened” to *receive* them; that is, they were not *declared by Me to thee* previously, since, if thou hadst been informed of them, such is thy perversity, thou couldst not have been kept in check [MAURER]. In the former view, the sense of the words following is, “For I knew that, if I had not foretold the destruction of Babylon so plainly that there could be no perverting of it, thou wouldst have perversely ascribed it to idols, or something else than to Me” (<sup>2385</sup>Isaiah 48:5). Thus they would have relapsed into idolatry, to cure them of which the Babylonian captivity was sent: so they had done (<sup>4234</sup>Exodus 32:4). After the return, and ever since, they have utterly forsaken idols.

**wast called** — as thine appropriate appellation (<sup>2306</sup>Isaiah 9:6).

**from the womb** — from the beginning of Israel's national existence (<sup>234E</sup>Isaiah 44:2).

**9. refrain** — literally, “muzzle”; His wrath, after the return, was to be *restrained a while*, and then, because of their sins, let loose again (<sup>4938</sup>Psalms 78:38).

**for thee** — that is, *that* — omit “that”: “From thee.”

**10.** (See on <sup>2125</sup>Isaiah 1:25).

**with silver** — rather, “*for silver*.” I sought by affliction to purify thee, but thou wast not *as silver* obtained by melting, but as dross [GESENIUS]. Thy repentance is not complete: thou art not yet as refined silver. ROSENMULLER explains, “not as silver,” not with *the intense heat* needed to melt silver (it being harder to melt than gold), that is, not with the most extreme severity. The former view is better (<sup>2125</sup>Isaiah 1:25 <sup>42:25</sup> <sup>2728</sup>Ezekiel 22:18-20,22).

**chosen** — or else [LOWTH], tried ... proved: according to GESENIUS, literally, “to rub with the touchstone,” or to cut in pieces so as to examine (<sup>3332</sup>Zechariah 13:9 <sup>3983</sup>Malachi 3:3 <sup>4007</sup>1 Peter 1:7).

**11. how should my name** — MAURER, instead of “My name” from <sup>2389</sup>Isaiah 48:9, supplies “My glory” from the next clause; and translates, “How (shamefully) My glory has been profaned!” In *English Version* the sense is, “I will refrain (<sup>2389</sup>Isaiah 48:9, that is, not utterly destroy thee), for why should I permit My name to be polluted, which it would be, if the Lord utterly destroyed His elect people” (<sup>2309</sup>Ezekiel 20:9)?

**not give my glory unto another** — If God forsook His people for ever, the heathen would attribute *their triumph* over Israel *to their idols*; so God's glory would be given *to another*.

**12-15.** The Almighty, who has founded heaven and earth, can, and will, restore His people.

**the first ... last** — (<sup>2348</sup>Isaiah 41:4 44:6).

**13. spanned** — measured out (<sup>2302</sup>Isaiah 40:12).

**when I call ... stand up together** — (<sup>2306</sup>Isaiah 40:26 <sup>2325</sup>Jeremiah 33:25). But it is not their creation so much which is meant, as that, like *ministers of God*, the heavens and the earth are prepared at His command to *execute His decrees* (<sup>3891</sup>Psalms 119:91) [ROSENMULLER].

**14. among them** — among the gods and astrologers of the Chaldees (<sup>2342</sup>Isaiah 41:22 43:9 44:7).

**Lord ... loved him; he will**, etc. — that is, “He whom the Lord hath loved will do,” etc. [LOWTH]; namely, Cyrus (<sup>2348</sup>Isaiah 44:28 45:1,13 46:11). However, Jehovah’s language of love is too strong to apply to Cyrus, except as type of *Messiah*, to whom alone it fully applies (<sup>6112</sup>Revelation 5:2-5).

**his pleasure** — not Cyrus’ own, but Jehovah’s.

**15. brought** — led him on his way.

**he** — change from the first to the third person [BARNES]. *Jehovah* shall make his (Cyrus’) way prosperous.

**16. not ... in secret** — (<sup>2359</sup>Isaiah 45:19). Jehovah foretold Cyrus’ advent, not with the studied ambiguity of heathen oracles, but plainly.

**from the time**, etc. — From the moment that the purpose began to be accomplished in the raising up of Cyrus I was present.

**sent me** — The prophet here speaks, claiming attention to his announcement as to Cyrus, on the ground of his mission from God and His Spirit. But he speaks not in his own person so much as in that of *Messiah*, to whom alone in the fullest sense the words apply (<sup>2300</sup>Isaiah 61:1 <sup>6106</sup>John 10:36). Plainly, <sup>2301</sup>Isaiah 49:1, which is the continuation of the forty-eighth chapter, from <sup>2389</sup>Isaiah 48:16, where the change of speaker from God (<sup>2381</sup>Isaiah 48:1,12-15) begins, is the language of *Messiah*. <sup>6001</sup>Luke 4:1,14,18, shows that the Spirit combined with the Father in sending the Son: therefore “His Spirit” is *nominative* to “sent,” not *accusative*, following it.

**17. teacheth ... to profit** — by affliction, such as the Babylonish captivity, and the present long-continued dispersion of Israel (<sup>5821</sup>Hebrews 12:10).

**18. peace** — (<sup>4916</sup>Psalms 119:165). Compare the desire expressed by the same *Messiah* (<sup>4237</sup>Matthew 23:37 <sup>494</sup>Luke 19:42).

**river** — (<sup>2332</sup>Isaiah 33:21 41:18), a river flowing from God’s throne is the symbol of *free, abundant, and ever flowing blessings from Him* (<sup>2370</sup>Ezekiel 47:1 <sup>3448</sup>Zechariah 14:8 <sup>6211</sup>Revelation 22:1).

**righteousness** — *religious prosperity*; the parent of “peace” or *national prosperity*; therefore “peace” corresponds to “righteousness” in the parallelism (<sup>2327</sup>Isaiah 32:17).

**19. sand** — retaining the metaphor of “the sea” (<sup>2388</sup>Isaiah 48:18).

**like the gravel thereof** — rather, as the *Hebrew*, “like that (the offspring) of its (the sea’s) bowels”; referring to the countless living creatures, fishes, etc., of the sea, rather than the gravel [MAURER]. JEROME, *Chaldee*, and Syriac support *English Version*.

**his name ... cut off** — transition from the second person, “thy,” to the third “his.” Israel’s name was cut off “as a nation” during the Babylonish captivity; also it is so now, to which the prophecy especially looks (<sup><6112></sup>Romans 11:20).

**20. Go ... forth ... end of the earth** — Primarily, a prophecy of their joyful deliverance from Babylon, and a direction that they should leave it when God opened the way. But the publication of it “to the ends of the earth” shows it has a more world-wide scope antitypically; <sup><6830></sup>Revelation 18:4 shows that the mystical Babylon is ultimately meant.

**redeemed ... Jacob** — (<sup><2800></sup>Isaiah 43:1 44:22,23).

**21.** Ezra, in describing the return, makes no mention of God cleaving the rock for them in the desert [KIMCHI]. The circumstances, therefore, of the deliverance from Egypt (<sup><0270></sup>Exodus 17:6 <sup><0411></sup>Numbers 20:11 <sup><0585></sup>Psalms 78:15 105:41) and of that from Babylon, are blended together; the language, while more immediately referring to the latter deliverance, yet, as being blended with circumstances of the former not strictly applicable to the latter, cannot *wholly* refer to either, but to the mystic deliverance of man under Messiah, and literally to the final restoration of Israel.

**22.** Repeated (<sup><2572></sup>Isaiah 57:21). All the blessings just mentioned (<sup><2821></sup>Isaiah 48:21) belong only to the godly, not to the wicked. Israel shall first cast away its wicked unbelief before it shall inherit *national prosperity* (<sup><3120></sup>Zechariah 12:10-14 13:1,9 14:3,14,20,21). The sentiment holds good also as to all wicked men (<sup><4850></sup>Job 15:20-25,31-34).

# CHAPTER 49

## ISAIAH 49:1-26.

### SIMILAR TO CHAPTER 42:1-7 (ISAIAH 49:1-9).

Messiah, as the ideal Israel (Isaiah 49:3), states the object of His mission, His want of success for a time, yet His certainty of ultimate success.

**1. *O isles*** — Messiah is here regarded as having been rejected by the Jews (Isaiah 49:4,5), and as now turning to the Gentiles, to whom the Father hath given Him “for a light and salvation.” “Isles” mean all regions *beyond sea*.

***from the womb*** — (Isaiah 44:2 Luke 1:31 John 10:36).

***from ... bowels ... mention of my name*** — His name “Jesus” (that is, God-Savior) was designated by God before His birth (Matthew 1:21).

**2. *my mouth ... sword*** — (Isaiah 11:4 Revelation 19:15). The double office of the Word of God, saving and damnatory, is implied (Isaiah 50:4 John 12:48 Hebrews 4:12).

***shaft*** — (Psalm 45:5). “Polished,” that is, free from all rust, implies His unsullied purity.

***in ... quiver ... hid me*** — Like a sword in its scabbard, or a shaft in the quiver, Messiah, before His appearing, was *hid* with God, ready to be drawn forth at the moment God saw fit [HENGSTENBERG]; also always *protected* by God, as the arrow by the quiver (Isaiah 51:16).

**3. *Israel*** — applied to Messiah, according to the true import of the name, *the Prince* who had power with *God* in wrestling in behalf of man, and who prevails (Genesis 32:28 Hosea 12:3,4). He is also the ideal Israel, the representative man of the nation (compare Matthew 2:15 with Hosea 11:1).

***in whom ... glorified*** — (John 14:13 17:1-5).

**4. *I*** — Messiah.

**in vain** — comparatively in the case of *the greater number* of His own countrymen. “He came unto His own, and His own received Him not” (<sup>2501</sup>Isaiah 53:1-3 <sup>2914</sup>Luke 19:14 <sup>6011</sup>John 1:11 7:5). Only a hundred twenty disciples met after His personal ministry was ended (<sup>4015</sup>Acts 1:15).

**yet ... my judgment ... with the Lord** — Ultimately, God will do justice to My cause, and *reward* (*Margin* for “work,” compare <sup>2300</sup>Isaiah 40:10 62:11) My labors and sufferings. He was never “discouraged” (<sup>2304</sup>Isaiah 42:4 50:7,10). He calmly, in spite of seeming ill success for the time, left the result with God, confident of final triumph (<sup>2530</sup>Isaiah 53:10-12 <sup>4023</sup>1 Peter 2:23). So the ministers of Christ (<sup>4011</sup>1 Corinthians 4:1-5 <sup>4049</sup>1 Peter 4:19).

5. The reason why He was confident that His work would be accepted and rewarded, namely, because He is “glorious in the eyes of Jehovah,” etc.

**to bring Jacob again to him** — (<sup>4054</sup>Matthew 15:24 <sup>4036</sup>Acts 3:26).

**Though Israel be not gathered** — metaphor from a scattered flock which the shepherd gathers together again; or a hen and her chickens (<sup>4137</sup>Matthew 23:37). Instead of the text “not,” the *Keri* has the similar *Hebrew* word, “to Him,” which the parallelism favors: “And that Israel may be gathered *to Him*.”

**yet** — rather, parenthetically. “*For* I am glorious, etc., and My God is My strength.” Then (<sup>2306</sup>Isaiah 49:6) resuming the words from the beginning of <sup>2405</sup>Isaiah 49:5, “He saith” (I repeat), etc. HORSLEY explains, “Notwithstanding the incredulity of the Jews, Messiah shall be glorified in the conversion of the Gentiles,” reading as *English Version*: but if the *Keri* be read, “Israel shall at one time or other be gathered, notwithstanding their incredulity during Messiah’s sojourn on earth.”

6. **It is a light thing** — “It is too little that Thou shouldest,” [HENGSTENBERG], that is, It is not enough honor to Thee to raise up *Jacob* and *Israel*, but I design for Thee more, namely, that Thou shouldest be the means of enlightening the *Gentiles* (<sup>2316</sup>Isaiah 42:6,7 60:3).

**the preserved** — namely, those remaining after the judgments of God on the nation — the elect remnant of Israel reserved for mercy. LOWTH, with a slight but needless change of the *Hebrew*, translates for “tribes” and “preserved,” the “scions” — the “branches.”

7. **whom man despiseth** — *Hebrew*, “the despised of soul,” that is, by every soul, by all men (<sup>2514</sup>Isaiah 52:14,15 53:3 50:6-9 <sup>4216</sup>Psalms 22:6). LOWTH translates, “whose *person* is despised.”

**abhorreth** — literally, “who is an abomination to the nation” (<sup><4238></sup>Luke 23:18-23). The Jews contemptuously call Him always *Tolvi*, “the crucified.” I prefer, on account of *Goi*, the *Hebrew* term for *nation* being usually applied to the *Gentiles*, and that for *people* to the Jews (<sup><3009></sup>Hosea 1:9; so the *Greek* terms respectively also *Laos* and *Ethne*, <sup><4925></sup>Romans 9:25), to take “nation” here collectively for the *Gentile* world, which also spurned Him (<sup><4011></sup>Psalm 2:1-3 <sup><4025></sup>Acts 4:25-27).

**servant of rulers** — (<sup><4172></sup>Matthew 17:27). He who would not exert His power against the rulers (<sup><4162></sup>Matthew 26:52,53).

**shall see** — namely the fulfillment of God’s promises (<sup><2303></sup>Isaiah 49:3,6), “when He (shall be) a light to the *Gentiles*.”

**arise** — to reverence Thee (<sup><4720></sup>Psalm 72:10,11 <sup><1940></sup>Philippians 2:10).

**princes also** — rather, for the parallelism, supply the ellipsis, thus, “Princes *shall see* and shall worship.”

**faithful** — namely, to His promises.

**choose thee** — as God’s *elect* (<sup><2301></sup>Isaiah 42:1).

8. Messiah is represented as having asked for the grace of God in behalf of sinners; this verse contains God the Father’s favorable answer.

**an acceptable time** — “In a time of grace” [HENGSTENBERG]. A limited time (<sup><2302></sup>Isaiah 61:2 <sup><4762></sup>2 Corinthians 6:2). The time judged by God to be the best fitted for effecting the purposes of His grace by Messiah.

**heard thee** — (<sup><4018></sup>Psalm 2:8 <sup><3607></sup>Hebrews 5:7).

**day of salvation** — when “the fullness of time” (<sup><4004></sup>Galatians 4:4) shall have come. The day of salvation is “to-day” (<sup><3607></sup>Hebrews 4:7).

**helped** — given Thee the help needed to enable Thee, as man, to accomplish man’s salvation.

**preserve** — from the assaults and efforts of Satan, to divert Thee from Thy voluntary death to save man.

**covenant of the people** — (See on <sup><2306></sup>Isaiah 42:6). “The people,” *in the singular*, is always applied exclusively to Israel.

**establish the earth** — rather, “to restore the land,” namely, Canaan to Israel. Spiritually, the restoration of *the Church* (the spiritual Israel) to the heavenly land forfeited by man’s sin is also included.

**cause to inherit ... desolate heritages** — image from the desolate state of Judea during the Babylonish captivity. Spiritually, the Gentile world, a moral waste, shall become a garden of the Lord. Literally, Judea lying desolate for ages shall be possessed again by Israel (compare <sup><2307></sup>Isaiah 61:7, “in their land”). *Jesus*, the antitype of, and bearing the same name as *Joshua* (<sup><3048></sup>Hebrews 4:8), shall, like him, divide the land among its true heirs (<sup><2508></sup>Isaiah 54:3 61:4).

9. (<sup><3007></sup>Isaiah 42:7 <sup><3092></sup>Zechariah 9:12).

**prisoners** — the Jews bound in legal bondage.

**them ... in darkness** — the Gentiles having no light as to the one true God [VITRINGA].

**Show yourselves** — not only see but be seen (<sup><4166></sup>Matthew 5:16 <sup><4159></sup>Mark 5:19). Come forth from the darkness of your prison into the light of the Sun of righteousness.

**in the ways**, etc. — In a desert there are no “ways,” nor “high places,” with “pastures”; thus the sense is: “They shall have their pastures, not in deserts, but in cultivated and inhabited places.” Laying aside the figure, the churches of Christ at the first shall be gathered, not in obscure and unknown regions, but in the most populous parts of the Roman empire, Antioch, Alexandria, Rome, etc. [VITRINGA]. Another sense probably is the right one. Israel, on its way back to the Holy Land, shall not have to turn aside to devious paths in search of necessities, but shall find them in *all places* wherever their route lies; so ROSENMULLER. God will supply them *as if* He should make the grass grow in the trodden *ways* and on the barren *high places*.

10. Messiah will abundantly satisfy all the wants, both of literal Israel on their way to Palestine, and of the spiritual on their way to heaven, as their Shepherd (<sup><23613></sup>Isaiah 65:13 <sup><4186></sup>Matthew 5:6), also in heaven (<sup><6176></sup>Revelation 7:16,17).

11. **my** — All things are God’s.

**mountains a way** — I will remove all obstructions out of the way (<sup><23104></sup>Isaiah 40:4).

**exalted** — that is, cast up (<sup><25714></sup>Isaiah 57:14 62:10); for instance, over valleys. VITRINGA explains “mountains” as *great kingdoms*, Egypt, Syria, etc., subjected to Rome, to facilitate the spreading of the Gospel; “highways,” the *Christian doctrine* wherein those who join the Church walk, and which, at the time of Constantine, was to be raised into prominence before all, and publicly protected (<sup><2368></sup>Isaiah 35:8,9).

**12. *Sinim*** — The Arabians and other Asiatics called China *Sin*, or *Tchin*; the Chinese had no special name for themselves, but either adopted that of the reigning dynasty or some high-sounding titles. This view of “Sinim” suits the context which requires a people to be meant “from far,” and distinct from those “from the north and from the west” [GESENIUS].

**13.** So <sup><622></sup>Revelation 12:12. God will have mercy on *the* afflicted, because of His compassion; on *His* afflicted, because of His covenant.

**14. *Zion*** — the literal Israel’s complaint, as if God had forsaken her in the Babylonian captivity; also in their dispersion previous to their future restoration; thereby God’s mercy shall be called forth (<sup><265></sup>Isaiah 63:15-19 <sup><979></sup>Psalms 77:9,10 102:17).

**15.** (<sup><242></sup>Isaiah 44:21 <sup><933></sup>Psalms 103:13 <sup><1071></sup>Matthew 7:11).

**16.** Alluding to the Jews’ custom (perhaps drawn from <sup><1219></sup>Exodus 13:9) of puncturing on their hands a representation of their city and temple, in token of zeal for them [LOWTH], (So 8:6).

**17. *Thy children*** — Israel (<sup><240></sup>Isaiah 49:20,21 <sup><2619></sup>Isaiah 43:6). JEROME reads, for “Thy children,” “Thy builders”; they that destroyed thee shall hasten to build thee.

***haste*** — to rebuild thy desolate capital.

***shall go forth*** — Thy destroyers shall leave Judea to Israel in undisturbed possession.

**18.** As Zion is often compared to a bride (<sup><2605></sup>Isaiah 54:5), so the accession of converts is like bridal ornaments (“jewels,” <sup><2619></sup>Isaiah 62:3 <sup><3017></sup>Malachi 3:17). Her *literal* children are, however, more immediately meant, as the context refers to their restoration; and only secondarily to her *spiritual* children by conversion to Christ. Israel shall be the means of the final complete conversion of the nations (<sup><3007></sup>Micah 5:7 <sup><6112></sup>Romans 11:12,15).

***as a bride*** — namely, binds on her ornaments.

**19. *land of thy destruction*** — thy land once the scene of destruction.

***too narrow*** — (<sup><2501></sup>Isaiah 54:1,2 <sup><3005></sup>Zechariah 10:10).

**20. *children ... after ... other*** — rather, “the children of thy widowhood,” that is, the children of whom thou hast been bereft during their dispersion in other lands (see on <sup><2408></sup>Isaiah 47:8) [MAURER].

***again*** — rather, “yet.”

**give place** — rather, “stand close to me,” namely, in order that we may be the more able to  *dwell*  in in the  *narrow*  place [HORSLEY]. Compare as to Israel’s  *spiritual*  children, and the extension of the gospel sphere, <sup><4519></sup>Romans 15:19,24 <sup><4704></sup>2 Corinthians 10:14-16. But <sup><2342></sup>Isaiah 49:22 (compare <sup><2661></sup>Isaiah 66:20) shows that her literal children are primarily meant. GESENIUS translates, “Make room.”

**21. Who**, etc. — Zion’s joyful wonder at the unexpected restoration of  *the*   *ten*   *tribes* . Secondly, the accession of spiritual Israelites to the mother church of Jerusalem from the Gentiles is meant. This created surprise at first (<sup><4405></sup>Acts 10:45 14:27 15:3,4).

**lost ... am desolate, a captive, and removing to and fro** — rather, “bereaved of ... have been barren, an exile and outcast” [HORSLEY]. She had been “put away” by Jehovah, her husband (<sup><2811></sup>Isaiah 50:1); hence her wonder at the  *children begotten to her* .

**22. lift ... hand** — that is, beckon to (see on <sup><2312></sup>Isaiah 13:2).

**standard** — (<sup><2312></sup>Isaiah 11:12).

**bring ... sons in ... arms** — The Gentiles shall aid in restoring Israel to its own land (<sup><2304></sup>Isaiah 60:4 66:20). Children able to support themselves are carried on the shoulders in the East; but infants, in the arms, or astride on one haunch (<sup><2302></sup>Isaiah 60:12). “Thy sons” must be distinct from “the Gentiles,” who  *carry*  them; and therefore cannot primarily refer to converts among the Gentiles.

**23. lick ... dust** — that is, kiss thy feet in token of humble submission.

**for they ... not ... ashamed ... wait for me** — The restoration of Israel shall be in answer to their prayerful waiting on the Lord (<sup><2305></sup>Isaiah 30:18,19 <sup><49216></sup>Psalms 102:16,17 <sup><3211></sup>Zechariah 12:10 14:3).

**24. the prey** — Israel, long a prey to mighty Gentile nations, whose oppression of her shall reach its highest point under Antichrist (<sup><27133></sup>Daniel 11:36,37,41,45).

**lawful captive** — the Jews justly consigned for their sins (<sup><2811></sup>Isaiah 50:1) as captives to the foe. Secondly, Satan and Death are “the mighty” conquerors of man, upon whom his sin give them their “lawful” claim. Christ answers that claim for the sinners, and so the captive is set free (<sup><3825></sup>Job 19:25 14:14 <sup><3129></sup>Matthew 12:29 <sup><2062></sup>Hosea 6:2, where <sup><2346></sup>Isaiah 49:4 shows the  *primary*  reference is to  *Israel’s*   *restoration* , to which  *the*   *resurrection*  corresponds; <sup><2329></sup>Isaiah 26:19 <sup><4008></sup>Ephesians 4:8 <sup><3024></sup>Hebrews

2:14,15). Others not so well translate, “the captives taken from among the *just* Israelites.”

25. (<sup>2532</sup>Isaiah 53:12 <sup>1968</sup>Psalms 68:18 <sup>5025</sup>Colossians 2:15).

***contend with him***, etc. — (<sup>2547</sup>Isaiah 54:17).

26. ***feed ... own flesh*** — a phrase for *internal strifes* (<sup>2380</sup>Isaiah 9:20).

***own blood*** — a just retribution for their having shed the blood of God’s servants (<sup>6166</sup>Revelation 16:6).

***sweet wine*** — that is must, or new wine, the pure juice which flows from the heap of grapes before they are pressed; the ancients could preserve it for a long time, so as to retain its flavor. It was so mild that it required a large quantity to intoxicate; thus the idea here is that *very much* blood would be shed (<sup>6140</sup>Revelation 14:10,20).

***all flesh shall***, etc. — the effect on the world of God’s judgments (<sup>2365</sup>Isaiah 66:15,16,18,19 <sup>6138</sup>Revelation 15:3,4).

# CHAPTER 50

## ISAIAH 50:1-11.

### THE JUDGMENTS ON ISRAEL WERE PROVOKED BY THEIR CRIMES, YET THEY ARE NOT FINALLY CAST OFF BY GOD.

1. **Where ... mothers divorcement** — Zion is “the mother”; the Jews are the children; and God the Husband and Father (<sup><250E></sup>Isaiah 54:5 62:5 <sup><248A></sup>Jeremiah 3:14). GESENIUS thinks that God means by the question to *deny* that He had given “a bill of divorcement” to her, as was often done on slight pretexts by a husband (<sup><520E></sup>Deuteronomy 24:1), or that He had “sold” His and her “children,” as a poor parent sometimes did (<sup><120E></sup>Exodus 21:7 <sup><120E></sup>2 Kings 4:1 <sup><468E></sup>Nehemiah 5:5) under pressure of his “creditors”; that it was they who sold themselves through their own sins. MAURER explains, “*Show the bill of your mother’s divorcement, whom ... ; produce the creditors to whom ye have been sold; so it will be seen that it was not from any caprice of Mine, but through your own fault, your mother has been put away, and you sold*” (<sup><250E></sup>Isaiah 52:3). HORSLEY best explains (as the antithesis between “I” and “yourselves” shows, though LOWTH translates, “*Ye are sold*”) I have never given your mother a regular bill of divorcement; I have merely “put her away” for a time, and can, therefore, by right as her husband still take her back on her submission; I have not made you, the children, over to any “creditor” to satisfy a debt; I therefore still have the right of a father over you, and can take you back on repentance, though as rebellious children *you* have sold yourselves to sin and its penalty (<sup><1225E></sup>1 Kings 21:25).

**bill ... whom** — rather, “the bill *with which* I have put *her* away” [MAURER].

2. **I** — Messiah.

**no man** — willing to believe in and obey Me (<sup><250E></sup>Isaiah 52:1,3). The same Divine Person had “come” by His prophets in the Old Testament (appealing to them, but in vain, <sup><3025E></sup>Jeremiah 7:25,26), who was about to come under the New Testament.

**hand shortened** — the Oriental emblem of weakness, as the long *stretched-out hand* is of power (<sup><250E></sup>Isaiah 59:1). Notwithstanding your sins, I can still “redeem” you from your bondage and dispersion.

**dry up ... sea** — (<sup><142></sup>Exodus 14:21). The second exodus shall exceed, while it resembles in wonders, the first (<sup><2311></sup>Isaiah 11:11,15 51:15).

**make ... rivers ... wilderness** — turn the prosperity of Israel's foes into adversity.

**fish stinketh** — the very judgment inflicted on their Egyptian enemies at the first exodus (<sup><1078></sup>Exodus 7:18,21).

**3. heavens ... blackness** — another of the judgments on Egypt to be repeated hereafter on the last enemy of God's people (<sup><1212></sup>Exodus 10:21).

**sackcloth** — (<sup><662></sup>Revelation 6:12).

**4. Messiah**, as “the servant of Jehovah” (<sup><2301></sup>Isaiah 42:1), declares that the office has been assigned to Him of encouraging the “weary” exiles of Israel by “words in season” suited to their case; and that, whatever suffering it is to cost Himself, He does not shrink from it (<sup><2305></sup>Isaiah 50:5,6), for that He knows His cause will triumph at last (<sup><2307></sup>Isaiah 50:7,8).

**learned** — not in mere human learning, but in divinely taught modes of instruction and eloquence (<sup><2302></sup>Isaiah 49:2 <sup><1041></sup>Exodus 4:11 <sup><1073></sup>Matthew 7:28,29 13:54).

**speak a word in season** — (<sup><1623></sup>Proverbs 15:23 25:11). Literally, “to succor by words,” namely, in their season of need, the “weary” dispersed ones of Israel (<sup><1636></sup>Deuteronomy 28:65-67). Also, the spiritual “weary” (<sup><2303></sup>Isaiah 42:3 <sup><1123></sup>Matthew 11:28).

**wakeneth morning by morning**, etc. — Compare “daily rising up early” (<sup><2423></sup>Jeremiah 7:25 <sup><1035></sup>Mark 1:35). The image is drawn from a master wakening his pupils early for instruction.

**wakeneth ... ear** — prepares me for receiving His divine instructions.

**as the learned** — as one taught by Him. He “learned obedience,” experimentally, “by the things which He suffered”; thus gaining that practical learning which *adapted* Him for “speaking a word in season” to suffering men (<sup><3038></sup>Hebrews 5:8).

**5. opened ... ear** — (See on <sup><2321></sup>Isaiah 42:20; <sup><2308></sup>Isaiah 48:8); that is, hath made me *obediently attentive* (but MAURER, “hath *informed me of my duty*”), as a *servant* to his master (compare <sup><1906></sup>Psalms 40:6-8, with <sup><1110></sup>Philippians 2:7 <sup><2301></sup>Isaiah 42:1 49:3,6 52:13 53:11 <sup><1113></sup>Matthew 20:28 <sup><1227></sup>Luke 22:27).

**not rebellious** — but, on the contrary, most willing to do the Father’s will in proclaiming and procuring salvation for man, at the cost of His own sufferings ( <sup><3015></sup>Hebrews 10:5-10).

**6. smiters** — with scourges and with the open hand ( <sup><2524></sup>Isaiah 52:14 <sup><4145></sup>Mark 14:65). Literally fulfilled ( <sup><4026></sup>Matthew 27:26 26:27 <sup><4083></sup>Luke 18:33). To “pluck the hair” is the highest insult that can be offered an Oriental ( <sup><1004></sup>2 Samuel 10:4 <sup><2183></sup>Lamentations 3:30). “I gave” implies the voluntary nature of His sufferings; His example corresponds to His precept ( <sup><4053></sup>Matthew 5:39).

**spitting** — To spit in another’s presence is an insult in the East, much more on one; most of all in the face ( <sup><3800></sup>Job 30:10 <sup><4073></sup>Matthew 27:30 <sup><2082></sup>Luke 18:32).

**7. Sample of His not being “discouraged”** ( <sup><2304></sup>Isaiah 42:4 49:5).

**set ... face like ... flint** — set Myself resolutely, not to be daunted from My work of love by shame or suffering ( <sup><2018></sup>Ezekiel 3:8,9).

**8.** ( <sup><2304></sup>Isaiah 49:4). The believer, by virtue of his oneness with Christ, uses the same language ( <sup><4083></sup>Psalms 138:8 <sup><4082></sup>Romans 8:32-34). But “justify” in *His* case, is God’s judicial acceptance and vindication of Him on the ground of *His own* righteousness ( <sup><2344></sup>Luke 23:44-47 <sup><4004></sup>Romans 1:4 <sup><5016></sup>1 Timothy 3:16, with which compare <sup><4088></sup>1 Peter 3:18); in *their* case, on the ground of His righteousness and meritorious death *imputed* to them ( <sup><4069></sup>Romans 5:19).

**stand together** — in judgment, to try the issue.

**adversary** — literally, “master of my cause,” that is, who has real ground of accusation against me, so that he can demand judgment to be given in his favor (compare <sup><3015></sup>Zechariah 3:1, etc. <sup><4020></sup>Revelation 12:10).

**9.** (Compare “deal,” or “proper,” <sup><2523></sup>Isaiah 52:13, *Margin*; <sup><2530></sup>Isaiah 53:10 <sup><4016></sup>Psalms 118:6 <sup><2023></sup>Jeremiah 23:5).

**as a garment** — ( <sup><2506></sup>Isaiah 51:6,8 <sup><4026></sup>Psalms 102:26). A leading constituent of wealth in the East is change of raiment, which is always liable to the inroads of the moth; hence the frequency of the image in Scripture.

**10.** Messiah exhorts the godly after His example ( <sup><2344></sup>Isaiah 49:4,5 42:4) when in circumstances of trial (“darkness,” <sup><2075></sup>Isaiah 47:5), to trust in the arm of Jehovah alone.

**Who is**, etc. — that is, Whosoever ( <sup><4003></sup>Judges 7:3).

**obeyeth ... servant** — namely, Messiah. The godly “honor the Son, even as they honor the Father” (<sup><4163></sup>John 5:23).

**darkness** — (<sup><3008></sup>Micah 7:8,9). God never had a son who was not sometimes in the dark. For even Christ, His only Son, cried out, “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?”

**light** — rather, “splendor”; bright sunshine; for the servant of God is never wholly without “light” [VITRINA]. A godly man’s way may be dark, but his end shall be peace and light. A wicked man’s way may be bright, but his end shall be utter darkness (<sup><4809></sup>Psalm 112:4 97:11 37:24).

**let him trust in the name of the Lord** — as Messiah did (<sup><2808></sup>Isaiah 50:8,9).

**11.** In contrast to the godly (<sup><2800></sup>Isaiah 50:10), the wicked, in times of darkness, instead of trusting in God, trust in themselves (*kindle a light* for themselves to walk by) (<sup><2109></sup>Ecclesiastes 11:9). The image is continued from <sup><2800></sup>Isaiah 50:10, “darkness”; human devices for salvation (<sup><1021></sup>Proverbs 19:21 16:9,25) are like the spark that goes out in an instant in darkness (compare <sup><4806></sup>Job 18:6 21:17, with <sup><4828></sup>Psalm 18:28).

**sparks** — not a steady light, but blazing sparks extinguished in a moment.

**walk** — not a command, but implying that *as surely as they would do so*, they should lie down in sorrow (<sup><4025></sup>Jeremiah 3:25). In exact proportion to mystic Babylon’s previous “glorifying” of herself shall be her sorrow (<sup><4250></sup>Matthew 25:30 8:12 <sup><6807></sup>Revelation 18:7).

# CHAPTER 51

## ISAIAH 51:1-23.

### ENCOURAGEMENT TO THE FAITHFUL REMNANT OF ISRAEL TO TRUST IN GOD FOR DELIVERANCE, BOTH FROM THEIR LONG BABYLONIAN EXILE, AND FROM THEIR PRESENT DISPERSION.

1. *me* — the God of your fathers.

*ye ... follow after righteousness* — the godly portion of the nation; <sup>250F</sup>Isaiah 51:7 shows this (<sup>4169</sup>Proverbs 15:9 <sup>548F1</sup>Timothy 6:11). “Ye follow righteousness,” seek it therefore from Me, who “bring it near,” and that a righteousness “not about to be abolished” (<sup>250F</sup>Isaiah 51:6,7); look to Abraham, your father (<sup>250F</sup>Isaiah 51:2), as a sample of how righteousness before Me is to be obtained; I, the same God who blessed him, will bless you at last (<sup>250F</sup>Isaiah 51:3); therefore trust in Me, and fear not man’s opposition (<sup>250F</sup>Isaiah 51:7,8,12,13). The mistake of the Jews, heretofore, has been, not in that they “followed after righteousness,” but in that they followed it “by the works of the law,” instead of “by faith,” as Abraham did (<sup>608F</sup>Romans 9:31,32 10:3,4 4:2-5).

*hole of ... pit* — The idea is not, as it is often quoted, the inculcation of humility, by reminding men of the fallen state from which they have been taken, but that as Abraham, the *quarry*, as it were (compare <sup>238F</sup>Isaiah 48:1), whence their nation was hewn, had been called out of a strange land to the inheritance of Canaan, and blessed by God, the same God is able to deliver and restore them also (compare <sup>408F</sup>Matthew 3:9).

2. *alone* — translate, “I called him when he was but one” (<sup>253F</sup>Ezekiel 33:24). The argument is: the same God who had so blessed “one” individual, as to become a mighty nation (<sup>412F</sup>Genesis 12:1 22:7), can also increase and bless the small remnant of Israel, both that left in the Babylonish captivity, and that left in the present and latter days (<sup>384F</sup>Zechariah 14:2); “the residue” (<sup>253F</sup>Isaiah 13:8,9).

3. *For* — See for the argument, see on <sup>250F</sup>Isaiah 51:2.

*the garden of the Lord* — restoration of the primeval paradise (<sup>408F</sup>Genesis 2:8 <sup>253F</sup>Ezekiel 28:13 <sup>412F</sup>Revelation 2:7).

**melody** — *Hebrew*, “psalm.” God’s praises shall again be heard.

**4. my people** — the Jews. This reading is better than that of GESENIUS: “O peoples ... nations,” namely, the Gentiles. The Jews are called on to hear and rejoice in the extension of the true religion to the nations; for, at the first preaching of the Gospel, as in the final age to come, it was *from Jerusalem* that the gospel law was, and is, to go forth (<sup><230B></sup>Isaiah 2:3).

**law ... judgment** — the gospel dispensation and institutions (<sup><230E></sup>Isaiah 42:1, “judgment”).

**make ... to rest** — establish firmly; found.

**light**, etc. — (<sup><230B></sup>Isaiah 42:6).

**5. righteousness ... near** — that is, faithful fulfillment of the promised deliverance, answering to “salvation” in the parallel clause (<sup><234E></sup>Isaiah 46:13 56:1 <sup><510B></sup>Romans 10:8,9). Ye follow after “righteousness”; seek it therefore, from Me, and you will not have far to go for it (<sup><250H></sup>Isaiah 51:1).

**arms** — put for Himself; *I by My might*.

**judge** — (<sup><230B></sup>Isaiah 2:3,4 <sup><490B></sup>Psalms 98:9).

**isles**, etc. — (<sup><230H></sup>Isaiah 60:9).

**arm** — (<sup><510B></sup>Romans 1:16), “the power of God unto (the Gentiles as well as the Jews) salvation.”

**6.** (<sup><230B></sup>Isaiah 40:6,8 <sup><490B></sup>Psalms 102:26 <sup><300H></sup>Hebrews 1:11,12).

**vanish away** — literally, “shall be torn asunder,” as a *garment* [MAURER]; which accords with the context.

**in like manner** — But GESENIUS, “Like a gnat”; like the smallest and vilest insect. JEROME translates, as *English Version*, and infers that “in like manner” as man, the heavens (that is, the sky) and earth are not to be annihilated, but changed for the better (<sup><250I></sup>Isaiah 65:17).

**righteousness** — My faithfully fulfilled promise (see on <sup><250E></sup>Isaiah 51:5).

**7. know righteousness** — (See on <sup><250H></sup>Isaiah 51:1).

**8.** (See on <sup><230B></sup>Isaiah 50:9; <sup><300B></sup>Job 4:18-20). Not that the *moth eats men up*, but they shall be destroyed by as insignificant instrumentality as the moth that eats a garment.

**9.** Impassioned prayer of the exiled Jews.

*ancient days* — (<sup>3940</sup>Psalm 44:1).

*Rahab* — poetical name for Egypt (see on <sup>2307</sup>Isaiah 30:7).

*dragon* — *Hebrew, tannin*. The crocodile, an emblem of Egypt, as represented on coins struck after the conquest of Egypt by Augustus; or rather here, “its king,” Pharaoh (see on <sup>2370</sup>Isaiah 27:1; <sup>3743</sup>Psalm 74:13,14 <sup>3700</sup>Ezekiel 32:2, *Margin*; <sup>3208</sup>Ezekiel 29:3).

10. *it* — the arm.

*Art not Thou the same Almighty power that ... ? dried the sea* — the Red Sea (<sup>2366</sup>Isaiah 43:16 <sup>0920</sup>Exodus 14:21).

11. (<sup>2350</sup>Isaiah 35:10).

*Therefore* — assurance of faith; or else the answer of Jehovah corresponding to their prayer. As surely as God redeemed Israel out of Egypt, He shall redeem them from Babylon, both the literal in the age following, and mystical in the last ages (<sup>6800</sup>Revelation 18:20,21). There shall be a second exodus (<sup>2311</sup>Isaiah 11:11-16 27:12,13).

*singing* — image from the custom of singing on a journey when a caravan is passing along the extended plains in the East.

*everlasting joy* — (<sup>6024</sup>Jude 1:24).

*sorrow ... flee away* — (<sup>6204</sup>Revelation 21:4).

12. *comforteth* — (<sup>2508</sup>Isaiah 51:3 <sup>2308</sup>Isaiah 40:1).

*thou* — Zion.

*son of man* — frail and dying as his *parent Adam*.

*be made as grass* — wither as grass (<sup>2306</sup>Isaiah 40:6,7).

13. (<sup>2302</sup>Isaiah 40:12,26,28), the same argument of comfort drawn from the omnipotence of the Creator.

*as if ... ready*, etc. — literally, “when he directs,” namely, his arrow, to destroy (<sup>4212</sup>Psalm 21:12 7:13 11:2) [MAURER].

14. *captive exile* — literally, one *bowed down* as a captive (<sup>2304</sup>Isaiah 10:4) [MAURER]. The scene is primarily Babylon, and the time near the close of the captivity. Secondarily, and antitypically, the mystical Babylon, the last enemy of Israel and the Church, in which they have long suffered, but from which they are to be gloriously delivered.

**pit** — such as were many of the ancient dungeons (compare <sup><2816></sup>Jeremiah 38:6,11,13 <sup><1371></sup>Genesis 37:20).

**nor ... bread ... fail** — (<sup><2330></sup>Isaiah 33:16 <sup><2472></sup>Jeremiah 37:21).

**15. divided ... sea** — the Red Sea. The same *Hebrew* word as “make to rest” (<sup><2510></sup>Isaiah 51:4). Rather, “that terrify the sea,” that is, restrain it by My rebuke, “when its waves roar” [GESENIUS]. The *Hebrew* favors MAURER, “that terrify the sea so that the waves roar.” The sense favors GESENIUS (<sup><2452></sup>Jeremiah 5:22 31:35), or *English Version* (<sup><2510></sup>Isaiah 51:9,10, which favors the special reference to the exodus from Egypt).

**16.** Addressed to Israel, embodied in “the servant of Jehovah” (<sup><2301></sup>Isaiah 42:1), Messiah, its ideal and representative Head, through whom the elect remnant is to be restored.

**put my words in thy mouth** — true of Israel, the depository of true religion, but fully realized only in Israel’s Head and antitype, Messiah (<sup><2402></sup>Isaiah 49:2 50:4,5 59:21 <sup><1583></sup>Deuteronomy 18:18 <sup><1134></sup>John 3:34).

**covered ... in ... shadow of ... hand** — protected thee (see on <sup><2402></sup>Isaiah 49:2).

**plant** — rather, “fix” as a tabernacle; so it ought to be rendered (<sup><2145></sup>Daniel 11:45). The “new creation,” now going on in the spiritual world by the Gospel (<sup><4010></sup>Ephesians 2:10), and hereafter to be extended to the visible world, is meant (<sup><2357></sup>Isaiah 65:17 66:22; compare <sup><2333></sup>Isaiah 13:13 <sup><6102></sup>2 Peter 3:10-13).

**Zion** — Its restoration is a leading part in the new creation to come (<sup><2357></sup>Isaiah 65:17,19).

**17. Awake, awake, stand up, O Jerusalem**, etc. — (<sup><2511></sup>Isaiah 52:1).

**drunk** — Jehovah’s wrath is compared to an intoxicating draught because it confounds the sufferer under it, and makes him fall (<sup><8121></sup>Job 21:20 <sup><9108></sup>Psalms 60:3 75:8 <sup><2515></sup>Jeremiah 25:15,16 49:12 <sup><8125></sup>Zechariah 12:2 <sup><6410></sup>Revelation 14:10); (“poured out without mixture”; rather, “the pure wine juice mixed with intoxicating drugs”).

**of trembling** — which produced trembling or intoxication.

**wrung ... out** — drained the last drop out; the dregs were the sediments from various substances, as honey, dates, and drugs, put into the wine to increase the strength and sweetness.

**18.** Following up the image in <sup><2517></sup>Isaiah 51:17, intoxicated and confused by the cup of God's anger, she has none to guide her in her helpless state; she has not yet awakened out of the sleep caused by that draught. This cannot apply to the Babylonish captivity; for in it they had Ezekiel and Daniel, Ezra and Nehemiah, as "guides," and soon awoke out of that sleep; but it applies to the Jews now, and will be still more applicable in their coming oppression by Antichrist.

**19. two** — classes of evils, for he enumerates *four*, namely, *desolation* and *destruction* to the land and state; *famine* and *the sword* to the people.

*who shall be sorry for thee* — so as to give thee effectual relief: as the parallel clause, "By whom shall I comfort thee?" shows (<sup><2511></sup>Lamentations 2:11-13).

**20. head of all ... streets** — (<sup><2519></sup>Lamentations 2:19 4:1).

*wild bull* — rather, "oryx" [JEROME], or gazelle [GESENIUS], or wild goat [BOCHART]; commonly in the East taken in a net, of a wide sweep, into which the beasts were hunted together. The streets of cities in the East often have gates, which are closed at night; a person wishing to escape would be stopped by them and caught, as a wild animal in a net.

**21. drunken ... not with wine** — (<sup><2519></sup>Isaiah 29:9; compare <sup><2517></sup>Isaiah 51:17,20, here; <sup><2515></sup>Lamentations 3:15).

**22. pleadeth ... cause** — (<sup><2511></sup>Psalm 35:1 <sup><2514></sup>Jeremiah 50:34 <sup><3109></sup>Micah 7:9).

*no more drink it* — (<sup><2511></sup>Isaiah 54:7-9). This cannot apply to Israel after the return from Babylon, but only to them after their final restoration.

**23.** (<sup><2512></sup>Isaiah 49:26 <sup><2515></sup>Jeremiah 25:15-29 <sup><3112></sup>Zechariah 12:2).

*Bow down that ... go over* — Conquerors often literally trod on the necks of conquered kings, as Sapor of Persia did to the Roman emperor Valerian (<sup><3104></sup>Joshua 10:24 <sup><3111></sup>Psalm 18:40 66:11,12).

# CHAPTER 52

## ISAIAH 52:1-15.

### FIRST THROUGH THIRTEEN VERSES CONNECTED WITH FIFTY-FIRST CHAPTER.

Zion long in bondage (<sup><2517></sup>Isaiah 51:17-20) is called to put on beautiful garments appropriate to its future prosperity.

1. **strength** — as thy adornment; answering to “beautiful garments” in the parallel clause. Arouse thyself from dejection and assume confidence.

**the holy city** — (<sup><4610></sup>Nehemiah 11:1 <sup><6212></sup>Revelation 21:2).

**no more ... unclean** — (<sup><2338></sup>Isaiah 35:8 60:21 <sup><2187></sup>Joel 3:17 <sup><6127></sup>Revelation 21:27). A prophecy never yet fulfilled.

**uncircumcised** — spiritually (<sup><3649></sup>Ezekiel 44:9 <sup><4175></sup>Acts 7:51).

2. **from the dust** — the seat of mourners (<sup><3822></sup>Job 2:12,13).

**arise, and sit** — namely, in a more dignified place: on a divan or a throne [LOWTH], after having shaken off the dust gathered up by the flowing dress when seated on the ground; or simply, “Arise, and sit erect” [MAURER].

**bands of ... neck** — the yoke of thy captivity.

3. As you became your foes’ servants, without their paying any price for you (<sup><2153></sup>Jeremiah 15:13), so they shall release you without demanding any price or reward (<sup><2353></sup>Isaiah 45:13), (where Cyrus is represented as doing so: a type of their final restoration gratuitously in like manner). So the spiritual Israel, “sold under sin,” gratuitously (<sup><6174></sup>Romans 7:14), shall be redeemed also gratuitously (<sup><2501></sup>Isaiah 55:1).

4. **My people** — Jacob and his sons.

**went down** — Judea was an elevated country compared with Egypt.

**sojourn** — They went there to stay only till the famine in Canaan should have ceased.

**Assyrian** — Sennacherib. Remember how I delivered you from Egypt and the Assyrian; what, then, is to prevent Me from delivering you out of Babylon (and the mystical Babylon and the Antichrist in the last days)?

**without cause** — answering to “for naught” in <sup><2315></sup>Isaiah 52:5; it was an act of *gratuitous* oppression in the present case, as in that case.

**5. what have I here** — that is, what am I called on to do? The fact “that My people is taken away (into captivity; <sup><2342></sup>Isaiah 49:24,25) for naught” (by *gratuitous* oppression, <sup><2304></sup>Isaiah 52:4; also <sup><2314></sup>Isaiah 52:3, and see on <sup><2318></sup>Isaiah 52:3) demands My interposition.

**they that rule** — or “tyrannize,” namely, Babylon, literal and mystical.

**make ... to howl** — or, raise a cry of exultation over them [MAURER].

**blasphemed** — namely, in Babylon: God’s reason for delivering His people, not their goodness, but for the sake of His holy name (<sup><2319></sup>Ezekiel 20:9,14).

**6. shall know in that day** — when Christ shall reveal Himself to Israel sensibly; the only means whereby their obstinate unbelief shall be overcome (<sup><19A216></sup>Psalms 102:16 <sup><3207></sup>Zechariah 12:10 14:5).

**7. beautiful ... feet** — that is, The *advent* of such a herald seen on the distant “mountains” (see on <sup><2309></sup>Isaiah 40:9; <sup><23427></sup>Isaiah 41:27; <sup><2316></sup>Isaiah 25:6,7; <sup><2107></sup>Song of Solomon 2:17) *running in haste* with the long-expected good tidings, is most grateful to the desolated city (Na 1:15).

**good tidings** — only partially applying to the return from Babylon. Fully, and antotypically, the Gospel (<sup><2100></sup>Luke 2:10,11), “beginning at Jerusalem” (<sup><2247></sup>Luke 24:17), “the city of the great King” (<sup><1155></sup>Matthew 5:35), where Messiah shall, at the final restoration of Israel, “reign” as peculiarly Zion’s God (“*Thy God reigneth*”; compare <sup><1106></sup>Psalms 2:6).

**8. watchmen** — set on towers separated by intervals to give the earliest notice of the approach of any messenger with tidings (compare <sup><2306></sup>Isaiah 21:6-8). The *Hebrew* is more forcible than *English Version*, “The voice of thy watchmen” (exclamatory as in <sup><2108></sup>Song of Solomon 2:8). “They lift up their voice! together they sing.”

**eye to eye** — that is, close at hand, and so clearly [GESENIUS]; <sup><0444></sup>Numbers 14:14, “face to face”; <sup><0428></sup>Numbers 12:8, “mouth to mouth.” Compare <sup><4632></sup>1 Corinthians 13:12 <sup><6234></sup>Revelation 22:4, of which Simeon’s sight of the Savior was a prefiguration (<sup><4030></sup>Luke 2:30). The watchmen, spiritually, are ministers and others who pray for the peace of Jerusalem (<sup><2316></sup>Isaiah 62:6,7),

**bring again** — that is, restore. Or else, “return to” [MAURER].

9. (<sup>2840E</sup>Isaiah 14:7,8 42:11).

**redeemed** — spiritually and nationally (<sup>2880E</sup>Isaiah 48:20).

10. **made bare ... arm** — metaphor from warriors who bare their arm for battle (<sup>300E</sup>Ezekiel 4:7).

**all ... earth ... see ... salvation of ... God** — The deliverance wrought by God for Israel will cause all nations to acknowledge the Lord (<sup>2368E</sup>Isaiah 66:18-20). The partial fulfillment (<sup>430E</sup>Luke 3:6) is a forerunner of the future complete fulfillment.

11. (<sup>2880E</sup>Isaiah 48:20 <sup>3800E</sup>Zechariah 2:6,7). Long residence in Babylon made many loath to leave it: so as to mystical Babylon (<sup>6680E</sup>Revelation 18:4).

**ye ... that bear ... vessels of the Lord** — the priests and Levites, whose office it was to carry the vessels of the temple (<sup>2078E</sup>Jeremiah 27:18). Nebuchadnezzar had carried them to Babylon (<sup>1868E</sup>2 Chronicles 36:18). Cyrus restored them (<sup>450E</sup>Ezra 1:7-11).

**be ... clean** — by separating yourselves wholly from Babylonian idolaters, mystical and literal.

12. **not ... with haste** — as when ye left Egypt (<sup>10238E</sup>Exodus 12:33,39 <sup>650E</sup>Deuteronomy 16:3; compare *Note*, see on <sup>2386E</sup>Isaiah 28:16). Ye shall have time to cleanse yourselves and make deliberate preparation for departure.

**Lord** — Jehovah, as your Leader in front (<sup>2308E</sup>Isaiah 40:3 <sup>10230E</sup>Exodus 23:20 <sup>3008E</sup>Micah 2:13).

**rereward** — literally, “gather up,” that is, to bring up the rear of your host. The transition is frequent from the glory of Messiah in His advent to reign, to His humiliation in His advent to suffer. Indeed, so are both advents accounted one, that He is not said, in His second coming, to be about to *return*, but to *come*.

13. Here the fifty-third chapter ought to begin, and the fifty-second chapter end with <sup>2820E</sup>Isaiah 52:12. This section, from here to end of the fifty-third chapter settles the controversy with the Jews, if Messiah be the person meant; and with infidels, if written by Isaiah, or at any time before Christ. The correspondence with the life and death of Jesus Christ is so minute, that it could not have resulted from conjecture or accident. An impostor could not have shaped *the course of events* so as to have made his character and life appear to be a fulfillment of it. The writing is, moreover, *declaredly prophetic*. The quotations of it in the New Testament show:

(1) that it was, before the time of Jesus, a recognized part of the Old Testament;

(2) that it refers to Messiah

(<sup>4187</sup>Matthew 8:17 <sup>4153</sup>Mark 15:28 <sup>4237</sup>Luke 22:37 <sup>4128</sup>John 12:38 <sup>4038</sup>Acts 8:28-35 <sup>4506</sup>Romans 10:16 <sup>4121</sup>1 Peter 2:21-25). The indirect allusions to it still more clearly prove the Messianic interpretation; so universal was that interpretation, that it is simply *referred to* in connection with the atoning virtue of His death, without being formally quoted (<sup>4192</sup>Mark 9:12 <sup>4023</sup>Romans 4:25 <sup>4353</sup>1 Corinthians 15:3 <sup>4752</sup>2 Corinthians 5:21 <sup>4019</sup>1 Peter 1:19 2:21-25 <sup>4185</sup>1 John 3:5). The genuineness of the passage is certain; for the Jews *would* not have forged it, since it is opposed to *their* notion of Messiah, as a triumphant temporal prince. The Christians *could* not have forged it; for the Jews, the enemies of Christianity, are “our librarians” [PALEY]. The Jews try to evade its force by the figment of two Messiahs, one a suffering Messiah (Ben Joseph), the other a triumphant Messiah (Ben David). HILLEL maintained that Messiah has already come in the person of Hezekiah. BUXTORF states that many of the modern Rabbins believe that He has been come a good while, but will not manifest Himself because of the sins of the Jews. But the ancient Jews, as the Chaldee paraphrast, Jonathan, refer it to Messiah; so the *Medrasch Tauchuma* (a commentary on the Pentateuch); also Rabbi Moses Haddarschan (see HENGSTENBERG, *Christology of the Old Testament*). Some explain it of *the Jewish people*, either in the Babylonish exile, or in their present sufferings and dispersion. Others, the *pious* portion of the nation taken collectively, whose sufferings made a vicarious satisfaction for the ungodly. Others, Isaiah, or Jeremiah [GESENIUS], the *prophets collectively*. But an *individual* is plainly described: he suffers *voluntarily, innocently, patiently*, and as the efficient cause of the righteousness of His people, which holds good of none other but Messiah (<sup>2504</sup>Isaiah 53:4-6,9,11; contrast <sup>2407</sup>Jeremiah 20:7 15:10-21 <sup>4908</sup>Psalms 137:8,9). <sup>2504</sup>Isaiah 53:9 can hold good of none other. The objection that the sufferings (<sup>2501</sup>Isaiah 53:1-10) referred to are represented as *past*, the glorification alone as future (<sup>2503</sup>Isaiah 52:13-15 53:11,12) arises from not seeing that the prophet takes his stand *in the midst* of the scenes which he describes as future. The greater nearness of the first advent, and the interval between it and the second, are implied by the use of the *past tense* as to the first, the *future* as to the second.

**Behold** — awakening attention to the striking picture of Messiah that follows (compare <sup>4006</sup>John 19:5,14).

**my servant** — Messiah (<sup>2304</sup>Isaiah 42:1).

**deal prudently** — rather, “prosper” [GESENIUS] as the parallel clause favors (<sup>2530</sup>Isaiah 53:10). Or, uniting both meanings, “shall reign well” [HENGSTENBERG]. This verse sets forth in the beginning the ultimate issue of His sufferings, the description of which follows: the conclusion (<sup>2532</sup>Isaiah 53:12) corresponds; the section (<sup>2533</sup>Isaiah 52:13 53:12) begins as it ends with His final glory.

**extolled** — elevated (<sup>4169</sup>Mark 16:19 <sup>4022</sup>Ephesians 1:20-22 <sup>4082</sup>1 Peter 3:22).

**14, 15.** Summary of Messiah’s history, which is set forth more in detail in the fifty-third chapter. “Just as many were astonished (accompanied with *aversion*, <sup>2486</sup>Jeremiah 18:16 19:8), etc.; his visage, etc.; so shall He sprinkle,” etc.; Israel in this answers to its antitype Messiah, now “an *astonishment* and byword” (<sup>4357</sup>Deuteronomy 28:37), hereafter about to be a blessing and means of salvation to many nations (<sup>2402</sup>Isaiah 2:2,3 <sup>3307</sup>Micah 5:7).

**thee; his** — Such changes of persons are common in *Hebrew* poetry.

**marred** — *Hebrew*, “disfigurement”; abstract for concrete; not only disfigured, but *disfigurement itself*.

**more than man** — CASTALIO translates, “so that it was no longer that of a man” (compare <sup>4276</sup>Psalms 22:6). The more perfect we may suppose the “body prepared” (<sup>5805</sup>Hebrews 10:5) for Him by God, the sadder by contrast was the “marring” of His visage and form.

**15. sprinkle many** — GESENIUS, for the antithesis to “be astonished,” translates, “shall cause ... to exult.” But the word universally in the Old Testament means either *to sprinkle with blood*, as the high priest makes an expiation (<sup>4006</sup>Leviticus 4:6 16:18,19); or *with water*, to purify (<sup>2325</sup>Ezekiel 36:25; compare as to the Spirit, <sup>4123</sup>Acts 2:33), both appropriate to Messiah (<sup>4338</sup>John 13:8 <sup>3093</sup>Hebrews 9:13,14 10:22 12:24 <sup>4002</sup>1 Peter 1:2). The antithesis is sufficient without any forced rendering. *Many* were astonished; so *many* (not merely men, but) *nations* shall be sprinkled. They were amazed at such an *abject person claiming to be Messiah*; yet it is He who shall *justify and purify*. Men were *dumb with the amazement of scorn* at one marred more than the lowest of men, yet the *highest*: even *kings* (<sup>2307</sup>Isaiah 49:7,23) shall be *dumb with awe and veneration* (“shut ... mouths”; <sup>4299</sup>Job 29:9,10 <sup>3376</sup>Micah 7:16).

**that ... not ... told them** — the reason why kings shall so venerate them; the wonders of redemption, which had not been before told them, shall then be announced to them, wonders such as they had never heard or seen paralleled (<sup>2581</sup>Isaiah 55:1 <sup>4521</sup>Romans 15:21 16:25,26).

# CHAPTER 53

## ISAIAH 53:1-12.

### MAN'S UNBELIEF: MESSIAH'S VICARIOUS SUFFERINGS, AND FINAL TRIUMPH FOR MAN.

The speaker, according to HORSLEY, personates the repenting Jews in the latter ages of the world coming over to the faith of the Redeemer; the whole is their penitent confession. This view suits the context (<sup><2300></sup>Isaiah 52:7-9), which is not to be fully realized until Israel is restored. However, primarily, it is the abrupt exclamation of the prophet: “Who hath believed our report,” that of Isaiah and the other prophets, as to Messiah? The infidel’s objection from the unbelief of the Jews is anticipated and hereby answered: that unbelief and the cause of it (Messiah’s humiliation, whereas *they* looked for One coming to reign) were foreseen and foretold.

**1. report** — literally, “the thing heard,” referring to which sense Paul says, “So, then, faith cometh by *hearing*” (<sup><5106></sup>Romans 10:16,17).

**arm** — power (<sup><2300></sup>Isaiah 40:10); exercised in miracles and in saving men (<sup><5106></sup>Romans 1:16 <sup><4018></sup>1 Corinthians 1:18). The prophet, as if present during Messiah’s ministry on earth, is deeply moved to see *how few believed* on Him (<sup><2300></sup>Isaiah 49:4 <sup><4006></sup>Mark 6:6 9:19 <sup><4015></sup>Acts 1:15). *Two* reasons are given why all *ought* to have believed:

(1) The “report” of the “ancient prophets.”

(2) “The arm of Jehovah” exhibited in Messiah while on earth. In HORSLEY’S view, this will be the penitent confession of the Jews, “How few of our nation, in Messiah’s days, believed in Him!”

**2. tender plant** — Messiah grew silently and insensibly, as a sucker from an ancient stock, seemingly dead (namely, the house of David, then in a decayed state) (see on <sup><2300></sup>Isaiah 11:1).

**shall grow ... hath** — rather, “grew up ... had.”

**before him** — before Jehovah. Though unknown to the world (<sup><4011></sup>John 1:11), Messiah was observed *by God*, who ordered the most minute circumstances attending His growth.

**root** — that is, sprout from a root.

**form** — beautiful form: sorrow had marred His once beautiful form.

**and when we shall see** — rather, joined with the previous words, “Nor comeliness (attractiveness) *that we should look* (with delight) on Him.”

**there is** — rather, “was.” The studied reticence of the New Testament as to His form, stature, color, etc., was designed to prevent our dwelling on the bodily, rather than on His moral beauty, holiness, love, etc., also a providential protest against the making and veneration of images of Him. The letter of P. LENTULUS to the emperor Tiberius, describing His person, is spurious; so also the story of His sending His portrait to Abgar, king of Edessa; and the alleged impression of His countenance on the handkerchief of Veronica. The former part of this verse refers to His birth and childhood; the latter to His first public appearance [VITRINGA].

**3. rejected** — “*forsaken* of men” [GESENIUS]. “Most abject of men.” Literally, “He who *ceases* from men,” that is, is no longer regarded as a man [HENGSTENBERG]. (See on <sup>2504</sup>Isaiah 52:14; <sup>2407</sup>Isaiah 49:7).

**man of sorrows** — that is, whose distinguishing characteristic was sorrows.

**acquainted with** — familiar by constant contact with.

**grief** — literally, “disease”; figuratively for all kinds of *calamity* (<sup>2014</sup>Jeremiah 6:14); *leprosy* especially represented this, being a direct judgment from God. It is remarkable Jesus is not mentioned as having ever suffered under sickness.

**and we hid ... faces** — rather, *as one* who *causes* men to *hide* their faces from Him (in aversion) [MAURER]. Or, “He was as an hiding of the face before it,” that is, as a thing before which a man covers his face in disgust [HENGSTENBERG]. Or, “as one before whom is the covering of the face”; before whom one covers the face in disgust [GESENIUS].

**we** — the prophet identifying himself with the Jews. See HORSLEY’S view (see on <sup>2501</sup>Isaiah 53:1).

**esteemed ... not** — *negative* contempt; the previous words express *positive*.

**4. Surely ... our griefs** — literally, “*But yet* He hath *taken* (or borne) our *sicknesses*,” that is, they who despised Him because of His human infirmities ought rather to have esteemed Him on account of them; for thereby “Himself *took* OUR *infirmities*” (bodily diseases). So <sup>4087</sup>Matthew 8:17 quotes it. In the *Hebrew* for “borne,” or *took*, there is probably the

double notion, He *took on Himself* vicariously (so <sup><253F></sup>Isaiah 53:5,6,8,12), and so He *took away*; His perfect humanity whereby He was bodily afflicted *for us*, and *in all our afflictions* (<sup><253B></sup>Isaiah 63:9 <sup><3045></sup>Hebrews 4:15) was the ground on which He cured the sick; so that Matthew's quotation is not a mere *accommodation*. See Note 42 of ARCHBISHOP MAGEE, *Atonement*. The *Hebrew* there may mean to *overwhelm with darkness*; Messiah's time of darkness was temporary (<sup><4745></sup>Matthew 27:45), answering to the *bruising of His heel*; Satan's is to be eternal, answering to the *bruising of his head* (compare <sup><2810></sup>Isaiah 50:10).

**carried ... sorrows** — The notion of *substitution* strictly. "Carried," namely, as a burden. "Sorrows," that is, pains of the *mind*; as "griefs" refer to pains of the *body* (<sup><4320></sup>Psalm 32:10 <sup><3817></sup>Matthew 8:17). <sup><4187></sup>Matthew 8:17 might seem to oppose this: "And bare our sicknesses." But he uses "*sicknesses*" figuratively for *sins*, the cause of them. Christ took on Himself all man's "infirmities;" so as to remove them; the bodily by direct miracle, grounded on His participation in human infirmities; those of the soul by His vicarious suffering, which did away with the *source* of both. Sin and sickness are ethically connected as cause and effect (<sup><2339></sup>Isaiah 33:24 <sup><4933></sup>Psalm 103:3 <sup><4102></sup>Matthew 9:2 <sup><4354></sup>John 5:14 <sup><3155></sup>James 5:15).

**we did esteem him stricken** — judicially [LOWTH], namely, for *His* sins; whereas it was for *ours*. "We thought Him to be a leper" [JEROME, *Vulgate*], leprosy being the direct divine judgment for guilt (<sup><4301></sup>Leviticus 13:1-59 <sup><4420></sup>Numbers 12:10,15 <sup><4438></sup>2 Chronicles 26:18-21).

**smitten** — by divine judgments.

**afflicted** — for His sins; this was the point in which they so erred (<sup><4234></sup>Luke 23:34 <sup><4187></sup>Acts 3:17 <sup><4108></sup>1 Corinthians 2:8). He was, it is true, "afflicted," but not for *His* sins.

**5. wounded** — a bodily wound; not mere mental sorrow; literally, "pierced"; minutely appropriate to Messiah, whose hands, feet, and side were pierced (<sup><4326></sup>Psalm 22:16). The *Margin*, wrongly, from a *Hebrew* root, translates, "tormented."

**for ... for** — (<sup><4025></sup>Romans 4:25 <sup><4721></sup>2 Corinthians 5:21 <sup><3038></sup>Hebrews 9:28 <sup><4124></sup>1 Peter 2:24 3:18) — *the cause for which* He suffered not His own, but *our* sins.

**bruised** — crushing inward and outward suffering (see on <sup><2530></sup>Isaiah 53:10).

**chastisement** — literally, the correction inflicted by a *parent on children* for their good (<sup><3115></sup>Hebrews 12:5-8,10,11). Not *punishment* strictly; for this can have place only where there is guilt, which He had not; but He took *on*

*Himself the chastisement whereby the peace* (reconciliation with our Father; <sup><4511></sup>Romans 5:1 <sup><4124></sup>Ephesians 2:14,15,17) *of the children of God was to be effected* (<sup><3124></sup>Hebrews 2:14).

**upon him** — as a burden; parallel to “hath borne” and “carried.”

**stripes** — minutely prophetic of His being *scourged* (<sup><4175></sup>Matthew 27:26 <sup><4123></sup>1 Peter 2:24).

**healed** — spiritually (<sup><3408></sup>Psalms 41:4 <sup><2422></sup>Jeremiah 8:22).

**6. Penitent confession of believers and of Israel in the last days** (<sup><3127></sup>Zechariah 12:10).

**sheep ... astray** — (<sup><3976></sup>Psalms 119:176 <sup><4125></sup>1 Peter 2:25). The antithesis is, “In ourselves we were scattered; in Christ we are collected together; by nature we wander, driven headlong to destruction; in Christ we find the way to the gate of life” [CALVIN]. True, also, literally of Israel before its coming restoration (<sup><3545></sup>Ezekiel 34:5,6 <sup><3812></sup>Zechariah 10:2,6; compare with <sup><3523></sup>Ezekiel 34:23,24 <sup><2424></sup>Jeremiah 23:4,5; also <sup><4133></sup>Matthew 9:36).

**laid** — “*hath made to light* on Him” [LOWTH]. Rather, “*hath made to rush upon Him*” [MAURER].

**the iniquity** — that is, its *penalty*; or rather, as in <sup><4121></sup>2 Corinthians 5:21; He was not merely a *sin offering* (which would destroy the antithesis to “righteousness”), but “sin for us”; sin itself vicariously; the representative of *the aggregate sin* of all mankind; not *sins* in the plural, for the “sin” of the world is *one* (<sup><4516></sup>Romans 5:16,17); thus we are made not merely *righteous*, but *righteousness*, even “the righteousness of God.” The innocent was punished *as if* guilty, that the guilty might be rewarded *as if* innocent. This verse could be said of no mere *martyr*.

**7. oppressed** — LOWTH translates, “It was *exacted*, and He was made answerable.” The verb means, “to have payment of a debt sternly exacted” (<sup><4512></sup>Deuteronomy 15:2,3), and so *to be oppressed* in general; the *exaction* of the full penalty for our sins in His sufferings is probably alluded to.

**and ... afflicted** — or, *and yet He suffered*, or *bore Himself patiently*, etc. [HENGSTENBERG and MAURER]. LOWTH’S translation, “He was made answerable,” is hardly admitted by the *Hebrew*.

**opened not ... mouth** — <sup><4119></sup>Jeremiah 11:19; and David in <sup><3813></sup>Psalms 38:13,14 39:9, prefiguring Messiah (<sup><4176></sup>Matthew 26:63 27:12,14 <sup><4123></sup>1 Peter 2:23).

8. Rather, “He was taken away (that is, cut off) by oppression and by a judicial sentence”; a hendiadys for, “by an oppressive judicial sentence” [LOWTH and HENGSTENBERG]. GESENIUS not so well, “He was delivered from oppression and punishment” only by death. *English Version* also translates, “from ... from,” not “by ... by.” But “prison” is not true of Jesus, who was not *incarcerated*; restraint and *bonds* (<sup><682></sup>John 18:24) more accord with the *Hebrew*. <sup><418></sup>Acts 8:33; translate as the *Septuagint*: “In His humiliation His judgment (legal trial) was taken away”; the virtual sense of the *Hebrew* as rendered by LOWTH and sanctioned by the inspired writer of Acts; He was treated as one so mean that a fair trial was denied Him (<sup><125></sup>Matthew 26:59 <sup><415></sup>Mark 14:55-59). HORSLEY translates, “After condemnation and judgment He was *accepted*.”

**who ... declare ... generation** — who can set forth (the wickedness of) His generation? that is, of His contemporaries [ALFORD on <sup><403></sup>Acts 8:33], which suits best the parallelism, “the wickedness of His generation” corresponding to “oppressive judgment.” But LUTHER, “His length of life,” that is, there shall be *no end of His future days* (<sup><230></sup>Isaiah 53:10 <sup><619></sup>Romans 6:9). CALVIN includes *the days of His Church*, which is inseparable from Himself. HENGSTENBERG, “His posterity.” He, indeed, shall be cut off, but His *race* shall be so numerous that none can fully declare it. CHYRSOSTOM, etc., “His eternal sonship and miraculous incarnation.”

**cut off** — implying a *violent death* (<sup><212></sup>Daniel 9:26).

**my people** — Isaiah, including himself among them by the word “my” [HENGSTENBERG]. Rather, JEHOVAH speaks in the person of His prophet, “My people,” by the election of grace (<sup><323></sup>Hebrews 2:13).

**was he stricken** — *Hebrew*, “the stroke (was laid) upon Him.” GESENIUS says the *Hebrew* means “them”; the collective body, whether of the prophets or people, to which the Jews refer the whole prophecy. But JEROME, the *Syriac*, and *Ethiopic* versions translate it “Him”; so it is singular in some passages; <sup><9107></sup>Psalms 11:7, *His*; <sup><272></sup>Job 27:23, *Him*; <sup><345></sup>Isaiah 44:15, *thereto*. The *Septuagint*, the *Hebrew*, *lamo*, “upon Him,” read the similar words, *lamuth*, “unto death,” which would at once set aside the Jewish interpretation, “upon *them*.” ORIGEN, who laboriously compared the *Hebrew* with the *Septuagint*, so read it, and urged it against the Jews of his day, who would have denied it to be the true reading if the word had not then really so stood in the *Hebrew* text [LOWTH]. If his sole authority be thought insufficient, perhaps *lamo* may imply that Messiah was the *representative of the collective body of all men*; hence the equivocal *plural-singular* form.

9. Rather, “His grave was appointed,” or “they appointed Him His grave” [HENGSTENBERG]; that is, they *intended* (by crucifying Him with two thieves, <sup><1273></sup>Matthew 27:38) that He should have His grave “with the wicked.” Compare <sup><688></sup>John 19:31, the denial of honorable burial being accounted a great ignominy (see on <sup><2449></sup>Isaiah 14:19; <sup><403></sup>Jeremiah 26:23).

**and with ... rich** — rather, “*but He was with a rich man,*” etc. GESENIUS, for the parallelism to “the wicked,” translates “ungodly” (the effect of *riches* being to make one ungodly); but the *Hebrew* everywhere means “rich,” never by itself ungodly; the parallelism, too, is one of contrast; namely, between their *design* and the *fact*, as it was ordered by God (<sup><1275></sup>Matthew 27:57 <sup><4153></sup>Mark 15:43-46 <sup><699></sup>John 19:39,40); two rich men honored Him at His death, Joseph of Arimathaea, and Nicodemus.

**in his death** — *Hebrew*, “deaths.” LOWTH translates, “His tomb”; *bamoth*, from a different root, meaning “high places,” and so mounds for sepulture (<sup><347></sup>Ezekiel 43:7). But all the versions oppose this, and the *Hebrew* hardly admits it. Rather translate, “*after His death*” [HENGSTENBERG]; as we say, “*at His death.*” The *plural*, “deaths,” intensifies the force; as Adam by sin “dying died” (<sup><1007></sup>Genesis 2:17, *Margin*); that is, incurred death, physical and spiritual. So Messiah, His substitute, endured death in both senses; spiritual, during His temporary abandonment by the Father; physical, when He gave up the ghost.

**because** — rather, as the sense demands (so in <sup><8167></sup>Job 16:17), “*although He had done no,*” etc. [HENGSTENBERG], (<sup><1023></sup>1 Peter 2:20-22 <sup><1081></sup>1 John 3:5).

**violence** — that is, wrong.

10. Transition from His humiliation to His exaltation.

**pleased the Lord** — the secret of His sufferings. They were voluntarily borne by Messiah, in order that thereby He might “do *Jehovah's will*” (<sup><1688></sup>John 6:38 <sup><3107></sup>Hebrews 10:7,9), as to man’s redemption; so at the end of the verse, “*the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand.*”

**bruise** — (see <sup><2515></sup>Isaiah 53:5); <sup><1005></sup>Genesis 3:15, was hereby fulfilled, though the *Hebrew* word for “bruise,” there, is not the one used here. The word “Himself,” in Matthew, implies a personal *bearing on Himself* of our maladies, spiritual and physical, which *included as a consequence* His ministration to our bodily ailments: these latter are the reverse side of sin; His bearing on Him our spiritual malady involved with it His bearing sympathetically, and healing, the outward: which is its fruits and its type. HENGSTENBERG rightly objects to MAGEE’s translation, “taken away,” instead of “borne,” that the parallelism to “carried” would be destroyed.

Besides, the *Hebrew* word elsewhere, when connected with *sin*, means to bear it and its punishment (<sup><2630></sup>Ezekiel 18:20). Matthew, elsewhere, also sets forth His vicarious atonement (<sup><1018></sup>Matthew 20:28).

**when thou**, etc. — rather, as *Margin*, “when His soul (that is, He) shall have made an offering,” etc. In the *English Version* the change of person is harsh: from Jehovah, addressed in the second person (<sup><2530></sup>Isaiah 53:10), to Jehovah speaking in the first person in <sup><2531></sup>Isaiah 53:11. The *Margin* rightly makes the prophet in the name of Jehovah Himself to speak in this verse.

**offering for sin** — (<sup><482></sup>Romans 3:25 <sup><1011></sup>1 John 2:2 4:10).

**his seed** — His spiritual posterity shall be numerous (<sup><1231></sup>Psalm 22:30); nay, more, though He must die, He shall *see* them. A numerous posterity was accounted a high blessing among the Hebrews; still more so, for one to live to *see* them (<sup><1481></sup>Genesis 48:11 <sup><1306></sup>Psalm 128:6).

**prolong ... days** — also esteemed a special blessing among the Jews (<sup><1916></sup>Psalm 91:16). Messiah shall, after death, rise again to an endless life (<sup><3062></sup>Hosea 6:2 <sup><4619></sup>Romans 6:9).

**prosper** — (<sup><2513></sup>Isaiah 52:13, *Margin*).

**11. Jehovah is still speaking.**

**see of the travail** — He shall see such blessed fruits resulting from His sufferings as amply to repay Him for them (<sup><2306></sup>Isaiah 49:4,5 50:5,9). The “satisfaction,” in seeing the full fruit of His travail of soul in the conversion of Israel and the world, is to be realized in the last days (<sup><2312></sup>Isaiah 2:2-4).

**his knowledge** — rather, *the knowledge* (experimentally) of Him (<sup><4703></sup>John 17:3 <sup><1080></sup>Philippians 3:10).

**my ... servant** — Messiah (<sup><2301></sup>Isaiah 42:1 52:13).

**righteous** — the ground on which He justifies others, His own righteousness (<sup><1011></sup>1 John 2:1).

**justify** — treat *as if* righteous; forensically; on the ground of His meritorious suffering, not *their* righteousness.

**bear ... iniquities** — (<sup><2504></sup>Isaiah 53:4,5), as the sinner’s substitute.

**12. divide** — as a conqueror dividing the spoil after a victory (<sup><1918></sup>Psalm 2:8 <sup><2122></sup>Luke 11:22).

**him** — for Him.

**with ... great** — HENGSTENBERG translates, “I will give Him the mighty for a portion”; so the *Septuagint*. But the parallel clause, “with the strong,” favors *English Version*. His triumphs shall be not merely among the few and weak, but among the many and mighty.

**spoil ... strong** — (<sup><5015></sup>Colossians 2:15; compare <sup><2069></sup>Proverbs 16:19). “With the great; with the mighty,” may mean, as a great and mighty hero.

**poured out ... soul** — that is, His life, which was considered as residing in the blood (<sup><8711></sup>Leviticus 17:11 <sup><6125></sup>Romans 3:25).

**numbered with**, etc. — not that He was a transgressor, but He was *treated* as such, when crucified with thieves (<sup><4158></sup>Mark 15:28 <sup><2237></sup>Luke 22:37).

**made intercession**, etc. — This office He began on the cross (<sup><2334></sup>Luke 23:34), and now continues in heaven (<sup><2396></sup>Isaiah 59:16 <sup><3024></sup>Hebrews 9:24 <sup><6111></sup>John 2:1). Understand *because* before “He was numbered ... He bare ... made intercession.” His meritorious death and intercession are the cause of His ultimate triumph. MAURER, for the parallelism, translates, “He was put on the same footing with the transgressors.” But *English Version* agrees better with the *Hebrew*, and with the sense and fact as to Christ. MAURER’S translation would make a tautology after “He was numbered with the transgressors”; parallelism does not need so servile a repetition. “He *made intercession* for,” etc. answers to the parallel. “He *was numbered with*,” etc. as *effect* answers to *cause*, His intercession for sinners being the effect flowing from His having been numbered with them.

# CHAPTER 54

## ISAIAH 54:1-17.

### THE FRUIT OF MESSIAH'S SUFFERINGS, AND OF ISRAEL'S FINAL PENITENCE AT HER PAST UNBELIEF (<sup>2536</sup>ISAIAH 53:6): HER JOYFUL RESTORATION AND ENLARGEMENT BY JEHOVAH, WHOSE WRATH WAS MOMENTARY, BUT HIS KINDNESS EVERLASTING.

Israel converted is compared to a wife (<sup>2545</sup>Isaiah 54:5 <sup>2535</sup>Isaiah 62:5) put away for unfaithfulness, but now forgiven and taken home again. The converted Gentiles are represented as a new progeny of the long-forsaken but now restored wife. The pre-eminence of the Hebrew Church as the mother Church of Christendom is the leading idea; the conversion of the Gentiles is mentioned only as part of her felicity [HORSLEY].

1. *Sing* — for joy (<sup>3614</sup>Zephaniah 3:14).

*barren* — the Jewish Church once forsaken by God, and therefore during that time destitute of spiritual children (<sup>2549</sup>Isaiah 54:6).

*didst not bear* — during the Babylonian exile primarily. Secondly, and chiefly, during Israel's present dispersion.

*the children* — the Gentiles adopted by special grace into the original Church (<sup>2548</sup>Isaiah 54:3 <sup>2540</sup>Isaiah 49:20,21).

*than ... married wife* — than were her spiritual children, when Israel was still a married wife (under the law, before the Babylonian exile), before God put her away [MAURER]. So Paul contrasts the universal Church of the New Testament with the Church of the Old Testament legal dispensation, quoting this very passage (<sup>4007</sup>Galatians 4:27). But the full accomplishment of it is yet future.

2. (<sup>2409</sup>Isaiah 49:19,20 <sup>2433</sup>Jeremiah 31:31-36,38,39). Thy children shall be so many that thy borders must be extended to contain them.

*curtains* — the cloth forming the covering of the tent.

*spare not* — give abundantly the means for the enlargement of the Church (<sup>4005</sup>2 Corinthians 9:5-7).

***cords ... stakes*** — The more the tent is enlarged by lengthening the cords by which the cloth covering is fastened to the ground, the more the stakes supporting the tent need to be strengthened; the Church is not merely to seek new converts, but to strengthen those she has in the faith. The image is appropriate, as the tabernacle was the symbol of the old Israelitish Church (see on <sup><3330></sup>Isaiah 33:20).

**3. *break forth*** — rather, “burst forth” with increase; thy offspring shall grow, answering to “thy seed” in the parallel clause.

***thy seed*** — Israel and her children, as distinguished from “the Gentiles.”

***desolate cities*** — of Israel (<sup><2346></sup>Isaiah 44:26).

**4.** (<sup><2310></sup>Isaiah 41:10,14).

***shame of thy youth*** — Israel’s *unfaithfulness* as wife of Jehovah, almost from her *earliest* history.

***reproach of widowhood*** — Israel’s punishment in her consequent dismissal from God and barrenness of spiritual children in Babylon and her present dispersion (<sup><2501></sup>Isaiah 54:1 <sup><2342></sup>Isaiah 49:21 <sup><3181></sup>Jeremiah 3:24,25 31:19 <sup><3101></sup>Hosea 2:2-5).

**5.** (<sup><2311></sup>Isaiah 62:5 <sup><3184></sup>Jeremiah 3:14). That God was Israel’s “Maker,” both as individuals and as the theocratic kingdom, is the pledge of assurance that He will be her Redeemer (<sup><2381></sup>Isaiah 43:1-3). *Hebrew*, “*makers ... husbands*”; *plural* for *singular*, to denote excellency.

***of Israel ... whole earth*** — Not until He manifests Himself as God of *Israel* shall He appear as God of *the whole earth* (<sup><1921></sup>Psalm 102:13,15,16 <sup><3345></sup>Zechariah 14:5,9).

**6. *called*** — that is, recalled: the prophetic past for the future.

***forsaken*** — that *had been* forsaken.

***when thou*** — or, “when she was rejected”; one who had been a wife of youth (<sup><2368></sup>Ezekiel 16:8,22,60 <sup><3102></sup>Jeremiah 2:2) at the time when (*thou*, or) she was rejected for infidelity [MAURER]. “A wife of youth *but afterwards* rejected” [LOWTH].

**7. *small moment*** — as compared with Israel’s coming long prosperity (<sup><2331></sup>Isaiah 26:20 60:10). So the spiritual Israel (<sup><3101></sup>Psalm 30:5 <sup><4047></sup>2 Corinthians 4:17).

***gather thee*** — to Myself from thy dispersions.

**8. *In a little wrath*** — rather, “In the overflowing of wrath”; as <sup><1270></sup>Proverbs 27:4, *Margin*, [GESENIUS]. The wrath, though but “for a moment,” was overflowing while it lasted.

***hid ... face*** — (<sup><2387></sup>Isaiah 8:17 <sup><4907></sup>Psalms 30:7).

***everlasting*** — in contrast to “for a moment.”

**9.** I am about to do the same in this instance as in Noah’s flood. As I swore then that it should not return (<sup><0021></sup>Genesis 8:21 9:11), and I kept that promise, so I swear now to My people, and will perform My promise, that there shall be no return of the deluge of My wrath upon them. LOWTH, on insufficient authority, reads (the same will I do now as), “in the days of Noah.”

**10.** (<sup><2501></sup>Isaiah 51:6 <sup><4943></sup>Psalms 89:33,34 <sup><6124></sup>Romans 11:29).

***covenant of my peace*** — (<sup><1015></sup>2 Samuel 23:5). The covenant whereby I have made thee at peace with Me.

**11. *not comforted*** — by anyone; none gave her help or comfort.

***lay ... with fair colors*** — rather, “lay ... in cement of *vermilion*” [LOWTH]. The *Hebrew* for “fair colors” means *stibium*, the paint with which Eastern women painted their eyelids and eyelashes (<sup><1181></sup>2 Kings 9:30). The very cement shall be of the most beautiful color (<sup><6215></sup>Revelation 21:18-21).

**12. *windows*** — rather, “battlements”; literally, “suns”; applied to battlements from their *radiated* appearance.

***agates*** — rather, “rubies.”

***carbuncles*** — literally, “sparkling gems”; the carbuncle when held to the sun becomes like a burning coal.

***all thy borders*** — rather, “thy whole circuit,” consisting of *precious stones*. The glory of the Church on earth, when the Hebrew Church, according to the original design, shall be the metropolis of Christendom.

**13.** Quoted by the Savior (<sup><4165></sup>John 6:45), to prove that in order to come to Him, men must be “drawn” by the Father. So <sup><2434></sup>Jeremiah 31:34 <sup><3002></sup>Micah 4:2 <sup><4120></sup>1 Corinthians 2:10 <sup><3880></sup>Hebrews 8:10 10:16 <sup><4121></sup>1 John 2:20.

***great ... peace*** — generally (<sup><4996></sup>Psalms 119:165). Specially referring to the *peaceful prosperity* which shall prevail under Messiah in the latter days (<sup><2104></sup>Isaiah 2:4,9:6).

**14. *righteousness*** — the characteristic of the reign of Messiah (<sup><23104></sup>Isaiah 11:4,5 <sup><4911E></sup>Psalms 72:2,4 <sup><6691E></sup>Revelation 19:11).

***far from oppression***, etc. — far from *suffering oppression*; “for thou shalt have nothing to fear.”

**15. *gather together***, etc. — that is, If it should happen that enemies “gather together” against thee (<sup><4911E></sup>Psalms 2:2), they will *not* have been sent *by Me* (compare <sup><4380E></sup>Hosea 8:4) as instruments of My wrath (nay, it *will* be with My disapproval); for “whosoever shall gather together,” etc. (<sup><4590E></sup>Psalms 59:3).

***fall for thy sake*** — rather, “shall come over to thy side” [LOWTH]. Literally, “*fall to thee*” (<sup><2109E></sup>Jeremiah 21:9 39:9). To be *fully* fulfilled to Jerusalem hereafter (<sup><3840E></sup>Zechariah 14:16).

**16.** The workman that forms “weapons against thee” (<sup><2547E></sup>Isaiah 54:17) is wholly in My power, therefore thou needest not fear, having Me on thy side.

***for his work*** — rather, “by his labor [HORSLEY]. “According to the exigencies of his work” [MAURER].

***waster to destroy*** — (<sup><2305E></sup>Isaiah 10:5-7 37:26,27 45:1-6). Desolating conquerors who use the “instruments” framed by “the smith.” The repetition of the “I” implies, however, something in the latter half of the verse contrasted with the former understand it, therefore, thus: “I have in My power both him who frames arms and him who destroys *them* (arms)” [ROSENMULLER].

**17. *tongue ... condemn*** — image from a court of justice. Those who desire to “condemn” thee *thou* shalt “condemn” (<sup><2117E></sup>Exodus 11:7 <sup><6123E></sup>Joshua 10:21 <sup><4608E></sup>Psalms 64:8 <sup><6801E></sup>Romans 8:1,33).

***righteousness ... of me*** — (<sup><2453E></sup>Isaiah 45:24 46:13). Rather, “(this is) their justification from Me.” Their enemies would “condemn” them, but I justify and vindicate them, and so they condemn their enemies.

# CHAPTER 55

## ISAIAH 55:1-13.

### THE CALL OF THE GENTILE WORLD TO FAITH THE RESULT OF GOD'S GRACE TO THE JEWS FIRST.

1. **every one** — After the *special* privileges of Israel (<sup>250</sup>Isaiah 54:1-17) there follow, as the consequence, the *universal* invitation to the Gentiles (<sup>247</sup>Luke 24:47 <sup>811</sup>Romans 11:12,15).

**Hosea** — calls the most earnest attention.

**thirsteth** — has a keen sense of need (<sup>406</sup>Matthew 5:6).

**waters ... wine and milk** — a gradation. Not merely *water*, which is needed to maintain life at all, but *wine and milk* to strengthen, cheer, and nourish; the spiritual blessings of the Gospel are meant (<sup>236</sup>Isaiah 25:6 <sup>2101</sup>Song of Solomon 5:1 <sup>4073</sup>John 7:37). “Waters,” *plural*, to denote abundance (<sup>360</sup>Isaiah 43:20 44:3).

**no money** — Yet, in <sup>280</sup>Isaiah 55:2, it is said, “ye spend money.” A seeming paradox. Ye are really spiritual bankrupts: but thinking yourselves to have money, namely, a devotion of your own making, ye lavish it on that “which is not bread,” that is, on idols, whether literal or spiritual.

**buy ... without money** — another paradox. We are *bought*, but not with a *price* paid by ourselves (<sup>650</sup>1 Corinthians 6:20 <sup>608</sup>1 Peter 1:18,19). In a different sense we are to “buy” salvation, namely, by parting with everything which comes between us and Christ who has bought it for us and by making it our own (<sup>634</sup>Matthew 13:44,46 <sup>623</sup>Luke 12:33 <sup>618</sup>Revelation 3:18).

2. **not bread** — (<sup>3123</sup>Habakkuk 2:13). “Bread of deceit” (<sup>3107</sup>Proverbs 20:17). Contrast this with the “bread of life” (<sup>612</sup>John 6:32,35; also <sup>646</sup>Luke 14:16-20).

**satisfieth not** — (<sup>2008</sup>Ecclesiastes 1:8 4:8).

**hearken ... and eat** — When two *imperatives* are joined, the second expresses the *consequence* of obeying the command in the first (<sup>628</sup>Genesis 42:18). *By hearkening ye shall eat*. So in <sup>250</sup>Isaiah 55:1, “buy and eat.” By

buying, and so making it your own, ye shall eat, that is, *experimentally* enjoy it (<sup><4063></sup>John 6:53). Compare the invitation (<sup><3095></sup>Proverbs 9:5,6 <sup><4226></sup>Matthew 22:4).

**fatness** — (<sup><3368></sup>Psalm 36:8 63:5).

**3. me ... live** — by coming to *me* ye shall *live*: for “*I am the life*” (<sup><3405></sup>John 14:6).

**everlasting covenant** — (<sup><2630></sup>Jeremiah 32:40 <sup><4275></sup>2 Samuel 23:5).

**with you ... David** — God’s covenant is with the antitypical David, Messiah (<sup><2623></sup>Ezekiel 34:23), and so with us by our identification with Him.

**sure** — answering to “everlasting,” irrevocable, unfailing, to be relied on (<sup><3405></sup>Psalm 89:2-4,28,29,34-36 <sup><3430></sup>Jeremiah 33:20,21 <sup><4075></sup>2 Samuel 7:15,16 <sup><4018></sup>2 Corinthians 1:18-20).

**mercies of David** — the mercies of grace (<sup><2337></sup>Isaiah 63:7 <sup><3016></sup>John 1:16) which I covenanted to give to David, and especially to Messiah, his antype. Quoted in <sup><4434></sup>Acts 13:34.

**4. him** — the mystical David (<sup><3574></sup>Ezekiel 37:24,25 <sup><2819></sup>Jeremiah 30:9 <sup><2885></sup>Hosea 3:5). Given by God (<sup><2346></sup>Isaiah 49:6).

**witness** — He bore witness even unto death for God, to His law, claims, and plan of redeeming love (<sup><3852></sup>John 18:37 <sup><3005></sup>Revelation 1:5). Revelation is a “testimony”; because it is propounded to be received on the authority of the Giver, and not merely because it can be proved by arguments.

**commander** — “preceptor” [HORSLEY]; “lawgiver” [BARNES].

**to the people** — rather, “peoples.”

**5. thou** — Jehovah addresses Messiah.

**call ... run** — God must *call*, before man can, or will, *run* (So 1:4 <sup><3064></sup>John 6:44). Not merely *come*, but *run* eagerly.

**thou knowest not** — now as thy people (so in <sup><4073></sup>Matthew 7:23).

**nation ... nations** — gradation; from Israel, one *nation*, the Gospel spread to many *nations*, and will do so more fully on Israel’s conversion.

**knew not thee** — (<sup><2525></sup>Isaiah 52:15 <sup><4021></sup>Ephesians 2:11,12).

**because of ... thy God ... glorified thee** — (<sup><2405></sup>Isaiah 60:5,9 <sup><3023></sup>Zechariah 8:23); where similar language is directed to *Israel*, because of the

identification of Israel with Messiah, who is the ideal Israel (<sup>4025</sup>Matthew 2:15; compare with <sup>2810B</sup>Hosea 11:1; see <sup>4183</sup>Acts 3:13).

6. The condition and limit in the obtaining of the spiritual benefits (<sup>2550</sup>Isaiah 55:1-3):

(1) Seek the Lord.

(2) Seek Him while He is to be found

(<sup>2550</sup>Isaiah 65:1 <sup>4306</sup>Psalms 32:6 <sup>4251</sup>Matthew 25:1-13 John 7:34 8:21 <sup>4042</sup>2 Corinthians 6:2 <sup>5018</sup>Hebrews 2:3 3:13,15).

*call* — casting yourselves wholly on His mercy (<sup>5018</sup>Romans 10:13). Stronger than “seek”; so “near” is more positive than “while He may be found” (<sup>5018</sup>Romans 10:8,9).

*near* — propitious (<sup>4348</sup>Psalms 34:18 145:18).

7. *unrighteous* — Hebrew, “man of iniquity”; true of all men. The “wicked” sins more openly in “his way”; the “unrighteous” refers to the more subtle workings of sin in the “thoughts.” All are guilty in the latter respect, though many fancy themselves safe, because not openly “wicked in ways” (<sup>4941</sup>Psalms 94:11). The parallelism is that of gradation. The progress of the penitent is to be from negative reformation, “forsaking his way,” and a farther step, “his thoughts,” to positive repentance, “returning to the Lord” (the only true repentance, <sup>3820</sup>Zechariah 12:10), and making God *his* God, along with the other children of God (the crowning point; *appropriation of God to ourselves*: “to *our* God”). “Return” implies that man originally walked with God, but has apostatized. Isaiah saith, “*our* God,” the God of the believing Israelites; those themselves redeemed desire others to come to *their* God (<sup>4348</sup>Psalms 34:8 <sup>627</sup>Revelation 22:17).

*abundantly pardon* — Literally, “multiply to pardon,” still more than “have mercy”; God’s graciousness is felt more and more the longer one knows Him (<sup>4307</sup>Psalms 130:7).

8. *For* — referring to <sup>2550</sup>Isaiah 55:7. You need not doubt His willingness “abundantly to pardon” (compare <sup>2550</sup>Isaiah 55:12); *for*, though “the wicked” man’s “ways,” and “the unrighteous man’s thoughts,” are so aggravated as to seem unpardonable, God’s “thoughts” and “ways” in pardoning are not regulated by the proportion of the former, as man’s would be towards his fellow man who offended him; compare the “for” (<sup>4251</sup>Psalms 25:11 <sup>4189</sup>Romans 5:19).

9. (<sup>43570</sup>Psalm 57:10 89:2 103:11). “For” is repeated from <sup>2388</sup>Isaiah 55:8. But MAURER, after the negation, translates, “but.”

10. The hearts of men, once barren of spirituality, shall be made, by the outpouring of the Spirit under Messiah, to bear fruits of righteousness (<sup>2186</sup>Isaiah 5:6 <sup>4630</sup>Deuteronomy 32:2 <sup>41204</sup>2 Samuel 23:4 <sup>49216</sup>Psalm 72:6).

*snow* — which covers plants from frost in winter; and, when melted in spring, waters the earth.

*returneth not* — void; as in <sup>23511</sup>Isaiah 55:11; it returns not in the same shape, or without “accomplishing” the desired end.

*bud* — germinate.

11. (<sup>41865</sup>Matthew 24:35). Rain may to us seem lost when it falls on a desert, but it fulfils some purpose of God. So the gospel word falling on the hard heart; it sometimes works a change at last; and even if so, it leaves men without excuse. The full accomplishment of this verse, and <sup>23512</sup>Isaiah 55:12,13, is, however, to be at the Jews’ final restoration and conversion of the world (<sup>23109</sup>Isaiah 11:9-12 60:1-5,21).

12. *go out* — from the various countries in which ye (the Jews) are scattered, to your own land (<sup>24117</sup>Ezekiel 11:17).

*led* — by Messiah, your “Leader” (<sup>23504</sup>Isaiah 55:4 <sup>23512</sup>Isaiah 52:12 <sup>3312</sup>Micah 2:12,13).

*mountains ... trees*, etc. — images justly used to express the seeming sympathy of nature with the joy of God’s people. For, when sin is removed, the natural world shall be delivered from “vanity,” and be renewed, so as to be in unison with the regenerated moral world (<sup>23423</sup>Isaiah 44:23 <sup>4988</sup>Psalm 98:8 <sup>4689</sup>Romans 8:19-22).

13. *thorn* — emblem of the wicked (<sup>40202</sup>2 Samuel 23:6 <sup>3704</sup>Micah 7:4).

*fir tree* — the godly (<sup>23013</sup>Isaiah 60:13 <sup>49212</sup>Psalm 92:12). Compare as to the change wrought, <sup>4669</sup>Romans 6:19.

*brier* — emblem of uncultivation (<sup>2186</sup>Isaiah 5:6).

*myrtle* — Hebrew, *Hedes*, from which comes *Hedassah*, the original name of Esther. Type of the Christian Church; for it is a lowly, though beautiful, fragrant, and evergreen shrub (<sup>49213</sup>Psalm 92:13,14).

*for a name ... everlasting sign* — a perpetual memorial to the glory of Jehovah (<sup>24131</sup>Jeremiah 13:11 33:9).

# CHAPTER 56

## ISAIAH 56:1-12.

### THE PREPARATION NEEDED ON THE PART OF THOSE WHO WISH TO BE ADMITTED TO THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

1. **judgment** — equity. John the Baptist preached similarly a return to righteousness, as needed to prepare men for Messiah's first coming (<sup>408B</sup>Luke 3:3,8-14). So it shall be before the second coming (<sup>300A</sup>Malachi 4:4-6).

**near to come** — (<sup>408D</sup>Matthew 3:2 4:17), also as to the second coming (<sup>232D</sup>Isaiah 62:10,11 <sup>422B</sup>Luke 21:28,31 <sup>631B</sup>Romans 13:11,12 <sup>330D</sup>Hebrews 10:25).

**righteousness** — answering to “salvation” in the parallel clause; therefore it means *righteousness which bringeth salvation* (<sup>248B</sup>Isaiah 46:13 <sup>618B</sup>Romans 3:25,26).

2. (<sup>422B</sup>Luke 12:43).

**the man** — *Hebrew, enosh*, “a man in humble life,” in contradistinction to *Hebrew, ish*, “one of high rank.” Even the humblest, as “the stranger” and “the eunuch” (<sup>230A</sup>Isaiah 56:4,6), are admissible to these privileges.

**this ... it** — what follows: “keeping the Sabbath,” etc. (<sup>238B</sup>Isaiah 58:13,14 <sup>312D</sup>Ezekiel 20:12). A proof that the Sabbath, in the *spirit* of its obligation, was to be binding under the Gospel (<sup>236B</sup>Isaiah 66:23). That gospel times are referred to is plain, from the blessing not being pronounced on the man who observed the *sacrificial* ritual of the Jewish law.

**layeth hold** — image from one grasping firmly some precious object which he is afraid of having forcibly snatched from him. The “Sabbath” here includes all the ordinances of divine worship under the new gospel law.

**keepeth ... hand ... from ... evil** — The observance of the second table of the law; as the “Sabbath” referred to the first table. Together, they form the whole duty of man, the worship of God and a holy life.

3. God welcomes all believers, without distinction of persons, under the new economy (<sup><44034></sup>Acts 10:34,35).

*joined ... to ... Lord* — (<sup><04804></sup>Numbers 18:4,7). “Proselytes.”

*separated* — Proselytes from the Gentiles were not admitted to the same privileges as native Israelites. This barrier between Jews and Gentiles was to be broken down (<sup><40144></sup>Ephesians 2:14-16).

*eunuch* — (<sup><44827></sup>Acts 8:27, etc.). Eunuchs were chamberlains over harems, or court ministers in general.

*dry tree* — barren (compare <sup><42331></sup>Luke 23:31); not admissible into the congregation of Israel (<sup><46204></sup>Deuteronomy 23:1-3). Under the Gospel the eunuch and stranger should be released from religious and civil disabilities.

4. *please me* — sacrifice their own pleasure to mine.

*take hold* — so “layeth hold” (see on <sup><23602></sup>Isaiah 56:2).

5. *in mine house* — the temple, the emblem of the Church (<sup><54815></sup>1 Timothy 3:15). They shall no longer be confined as proselytes were, to the outer court, but shall be admitted “into the holiest” (<sup><58019></sup>Hebrews 10:19,20).

*a place* — literally, “a hand.”

*than of sons* — Though the eunuch is barren of *children* (<sup><23603></sup>Isaiah 56:3), I will give him a more lasting name than that of being father of sons and daughters (regarded as a high honor among the Hebrews) (<sup><40112></sup>John 1:12 10:3 <sup><42411></sup>1 John 3:1 <sup><40173></sup>Revelation 2:17 3:12).

6. *join ... Lord* — (<sup><23606></sup>Jeremiah 50:6). Conditions of admission to the privileges of adoption.

7. *Even them* — (<sup><40113></sup>Ephesians 2:11-13).

*to my holy mountain* — Jerusalem, the seat of the Lord’s throne in His coming kingdom (<sup><24002></sup>Isaiah 2:2 <sup><44817></sup>Jeremiah 3:17).

*joyful* — (<sup><46511></sup>Romans 5:11).

*burnt offerings ... sacrifices* — spiritual, of which the literal were types (<sup><46102></sup>Romans 12:1 <sup><58315></sup>Hebrews 13:15 <sup><40115></sup>1 Peter 2:5).

*accepted* — (<sup><40006></sup>Ephesians 1:6).

*altar* — (<sup><58304></sup>Hebrews 13:10), spiritually, the Cross of Christ, which sanctifies our sacrifices of prayer and praise.

**house ... for all people** — or rather, “peoples.” No longer restricted to *one* favored people (<sup><3100></sup>Malachi 1:1 <sup><602></sup>1 John 4:21,23 <sup><5118></sup>1 Timothy 2:8). To be fully realized at the second coming (<sup><2112></sup>Isaiah 2:2-4). No longer literal, but spiritual sacrifice, namely, “prayer” shall be offered (<sup><4512></sup>Psalms 141:2 51:17 <sup><3011></sup>Malachi 1:11 <sup><4213></sup>Matthew 21:13).

**8. Jehovah** will not only restore the scattered outcasts of Israel (<sup><2112></sup>Isaiah 11:12 <sup><4512></sup>Psalms 147:2) to their own land, but “will gather others (‘strangers’) to him (Israel), besides those gathered” (*Margin*, “to his gathered”; that is, in addition to the Israelites collected from their dispersion), (<sup><4512></sup>John 10:16 <sup><4011></sup>Ephesians 1:10 2:19).

**9. beasts** — Gentile idolatrous nations hostile to the Jews, summoned by God to chastise them (<sup><2412></sup>Jeremiah 12:7-9 50:17 <sup><2615></sup>Ezekiel 34:5): the Chaldeans and subsequently the Romans. The mention of the “outcasts of Israel” (<sup><2518></sup>Isaiah 56:8) brings in view the outcasting, caused by the sins of their rulers (<sup><2510></sup>Isaiah 56:10-12).

**to devour** — namely, Israel.

**10. His watchmen** — Israel’s spiritual leaders (<sup><2512></sup>Isaiah 62:6 <sup><2617></sup>Ezekiel 3:17).

**dumb dogs** — image from bad shepherds’ watchdogs, which fail to give notice, by barking, of the approach of wild beasts.

**blind** — (<sup><4216></sup>Matthew 23:16).

**sleeping, lying down** — rather, “dreamers, sluggards” [LOWTH]. Not merely *sleeping* inactive, but under *visionary delusions*.

**loving to slumber** — not merely slumbering involuntarily, but loving it.

**11. greedy** — literally, “strong” (that is, insatiable) *in appetite* (<sup><2612></sup>Ezekiel 34:2,3 <sup><3111></sup>Micah 3:11).

**cannot understand** — unable to comprehend the wants of the people, spiritually: so Isaiah 56: 10, “cannot bark.”

**look to ... own way** — that is, their own selfish interests; not to the spiritual welfare of the people (<sup><2413></sup>Jeremiah 6:13 <sup><2727></sup>Ezekiel 22:27).

**from his quarter** — rather, “from the highest to the lowest” [LOWTH]. “From his quarter”; that is, from one end to the other of them, *one and all* (<sup><0104></sup>Genesis 19:4).

**12. fetch wine** — language of the national teachers challenging one another to drink. BARNES translates, “I will take another cup” (<sup><2511></sup>Isaiah 5:11).

*to-morrow*, etc. — Their self-indulgence was *habitual* and *intentional*: not merely they drink, but they mean to continue so.

# CHAPTER 57

## ISAIAH 57:1-21.

### THE PEACEFUL DEATH OF THE RIGHTEOUS FEW: THE UNGODLINESS OF THE MANY: A BELIEVING REMNANT SHALL SURVIVE THE GENERAL JUDGMENTS OF THE NATION, AND BE RESTORED BY HIM WHO CREATES PEACE.

In the midst of the excesses of the unfaithful watchmen (<sup><2560></sup>Isaiah 56:10,11,12), most of the few that are godly perish: partly by vexation at the prevailing ungodliness; partly by violent death in persecution: prophetic of the persecuting times of Manasseh, before God's judgments in causing the captivity in Babylon; and again those in the last age of the Church, before the final judgments on the apostasy (<sup><2216></sup>2 Kings 21:16 <sup><1029></sup>Matthew 23:29-35,37 <sup><6117></sup>Revelation 11:17). The *Hebrew* for "perisheth," and "is taken away," expresses a *violent death* (<sup><3102></sup>Micah 7:2).

1. *no man layeth it to heart* — as a public calamity.

*merciful men* — rather, *godly men*; the subjects of mercy.

*none considering* — namely, what was the design of Providence in removing the godly.

*from the evil* — *Hebrew*, from the face of the evil, that is, both from the moral evil on every side (<sup><2560></sup>Isaiah 56:10-12), and from the evils about to come in punishment of the national sins, foreign invasions, etc. (<sup><2560></sup>Isaiah 56:9 57:13). So Ahijah's death is represented as a blessing conferred on him by God for his piety (<sup><1140></sup>1 Kings 14:10-13; see also <sup><2221></sup>2 Kings 22:20).

2. Or, "he *entereth* into peace"; in contrast to the *persecutions* which he suffered in this world (<sup><8883></sup>Job 3:13,17). The *Margin* not so well translates, "he shall go in peace" (<sup><4975></sup>Psalms 37:37 <sup><1029></sup>Luke 2:29).

*rest* — the calm rest of their bodies in their graves (called "beds," <sup><4164></sup>2 Chronicles 16:14; compare <sup><2348></sup>Isaiah 14:18; because they "sleep" in them, with the certainty of awakening at the resurrection, <sup><2044></sup>1 Thessalonians 4:14) is the emblem of the eternal "rest" (<sup><3049></sup>Hebrews 4:9 <sup><6443></sup>Revelation 14:13).

***each one walking in ... uprightness*** — This clause defines the character of those who at death “rest in their beds,” namely, all who walk uprightly.

**3. *But ... ye*** — In contrast to “the righteous” and their end, he announces to the unbelieving Jews their doom.

***sons of the sorceress*** — that is, ye that are addicted to sorcery: this was connected with the worship of false gods (<sup>1216</sup>2 Kings 21:6). No insult is greater to an Oriental than any slur cast on his *mother* (<sup>408</sup>1 Samuel 20:30 <sup>4308</sup>Job 30:8).

***seed of the adulterer*** — *Spiritual* adultery is meant: idolatry and apostasy (<sup>4104</sup>Matthew 16:4).

**4. *sport yourselves*** — make a mock (<sup>2365</sup>Isaiah 66:5). Are ye aware of the glory of Him whom you mock, by mocking His servants (“the righteous,” <sup>2571</sup>Isaiah 57:1)? (<sup>4462</sup>2 Chronicles 36:16).

***make ... wide month*** — (<sup>420</sup>Psalm 22:7,13 35:21 <sup>2126</sup>Lamentations 2:16).

***children of transgression***, etc. — not merely *children of transgressors*, and a *seed of false parents*, but of *transgression* and *falsehood* itself, utterly unfaithful to God.

**5. *Enflaming yourselves*** — burning with lust *towards idols* [GESENIUS]; or else (compare *Margin*), *in the terebinth groves*, which the *Hebrew* and the parallelism favor (see on <sup>2129</sup>Isaiah 1:29) [MAURER].

***under ... tree*** — (<sup>1270</sup>2 Kings 17:10). The tree, as in the Assyrian sculptures, was probably made an idolatrous symbol of *the heavenly hosts*.

***slaying ... children*** — as a sacrifice to Molech, etc. (<sup>1273</sup>2 Kings 17:31 <sup>4402</sup>2 Chronicles 28:3 33:6).

***in ... valleys*** — the valley of the son of Hinnom. Fire was put within a hollow brazen statue, and the child was put in his heated arms; kettle drums (*Hebrew*, *toph*) were beaten to drown the child’s cries; whence the valley was called Tophet (<sup>4406</sup>2 Chronicles 33:6 <sup>2473</sup>Jeremiah 7:3).

***under ... cliffs*** — the gloom of caverns suiting their dark superstitions.

**6.** The smooth stones, shaped as idols, are the gods chosen by thee as thy portion (<sup>4368</sup>Psalm 16:5).

***meat offering*** — not a bloody sacrifice, but one of meal and flour mingled with oil. “Meat” in Old English meant *food*, not *flesh*, as it means now (<sup>4840</sup>Leviticus 14:10).

**Should I receive comfort** — rather, “Shall I bear these things with patience?” [HORSLEY].

**7. Upon ... high mountain ... bed** — image from adultery, *open and shameless* (<sup>2307</sup>Ezekiel 23:7); the “bed” answers to the idolatrous *altar*, the scene of their spiritual unfaithfulness to their divine husband (<sup>2306</sup>Ezekiel 16:16 25 23:41).

**8.** “Remembrance,” that is, memorials of thy idolatry: the objects which thou holdest in remembrance. *They hung up household tutelary gods* “behind the doors”; the very place where God has directed them to write His laws “on the posts and gates” (<sup>1809</sup>Deuteronomy 6:9 11:20); a curse, too, was pronounced on putting up an image “in a secret place” (<sup>1875</sup>Deuteronomy 27:15).

**discovered thyself** — image from an adulteress.

**enlarged ... bed** — so as to receive the more paramours.

**made ... covenant** — with idols: in open violation of thy “covenant” with God (<sup>1098</sup>Exodus 19:5 23:32). Or, “hast made assignations with them for thyself” [HORSLEY].

**thy bed ... their bed** — The Jews’ sin was twofold; they resorted to places of idolatry (“*their bed*”), and they received idols into the temple of God (“*thy bed*”).

**where** — rather, “ever since that” [HORSLEY]. The *Hebrew* for “*where*” means “*room*” (*Margin*), a place; therefore, translate, “thou hast provided a place for it” (for “*their bed*”), namely, by admitting idolatrous altars in thy land [BARNES]; or “thou chooseth a (convenient) place for thyself” in their bed [MAURER] (<sup>2816</sup>Isaiah 56:5).

**9. the king** — *the idol* which they came to worship, perfumed with oil, like harlots (<sup>2403</sup>Jeremiah 4:30 <sup>2396</sup>Ezekiel 23:16,40). So “king” means idol (<sup>3153</sup>Amos 5:26 <sup>3109</sup>Zephaniah 1:5); (*malcham* meaning “king”) [ROSENMULLER]. Rather, *the king of Assyria* or *Egypt*, and other foreign princes, on whom Israel relied, instead of on God; the “ointment” will thus refer to the presents (<sup>2300</sup>Hosea 12:1), and perhaps the compliances with foreigners idolatries, whereby Israel sought to gain their favor [LOWTH] (<sup>2300</sup>Isaiah 30:6 <sup>2363</sup>Ezekiel 16:33 23:16 <sup>2371</sup>Hosea 7:11).

**send ... messengers far off** — not merely to neighboring nations, but to those “far off,” in search of new idols, or else alliances.

**even unto hell** — the lowest possible degradation.

**10. *greatness of ... way*** — the *length* of thy journey in seeking strange gods, or else foreign aid (<sup><4123></sup>Jeremiah 2:23,24). Notwithstanding thy deriving no good from these long journeys (so, “send ... *far off*,” <sup><2519></sup>Isaiah 57:9), thou dost not still give up hope (<sup><4125></sup>Jeremiah 2:25 18:12).

***hast found ... life of ... hand*** — for “thou still findest life (that is, vigor) enough in thy hand” to make new idols [MAURER], or to seek new alliance (“hand” being then taken for *strength* in general).

***grieved*** — rather, “therefore thou art not *weak*” [MAURER]; inasmuch as having “life in thy hand,” thou art still strong in hope.

**11.** Israel wished not to seem *altogether* to have denied God. Therefore they “lied” to Him. God asks, Why dost thou do so? “Whom dost thou fear? Certainly not *Me*; for thou hast not remembered Me.” Translate, “*seeing that* thou hast not remembered Me.”

***laid it to ... heart*** — rather, “nor hast Me at heart”; hast no regard for Me; and that, because I have been long silent and have not punished thee. Literally, “Have I not held My peace, and that for long? and so thou fearest Me not” (<sup><4512></sup>Psalms 50:21 <sup><2041></sup>Ecclesiastes 8:11). It would be better openly to renounce God, than to “flatter Him” with lies of false professions (<sup><4585></sup>Psalms 78:36) [LUDOVICUS DE DIEU]. However, <sup><2512></sup>Isaiah 51:12,13 favors *English Version* of the whole verse; God’s “silent” long-suffering, which was intended to lead them to repentance, caused them “not to fear Him” (<sup><4614></sup>Romans 2:4,5).

**12. *declare*** — I will expose publicly thy (hypocritical) righteousness. I will show openly how vain thy works, in having recourse to idols, or foreign alliances, shall prove (<sup><2513></sup>Isaiah 57:3).

**13. *When thou criest*** — In the time of thy trouble.

***companies*** — namely, of idols, collected by thee from every quarter; or else, of foreigners, summoned to thy aid.

***wind ... carry ... away*** — (<sup><4218></sup>Job 21:18 <sup><4127></sup>Matthew 7:27).

***vanity*** — rather, “a breath” [LOWTH].

***possess ... land ... inherit*** — that is, the literal land of Judea and Mount Zion; the believing remnant of Israel shall return and inherit the land. Secondly, the heavenly inheritance, and the spiritual Zion (<sup><2408></sup>Isaiah 49:8 <sup><4379></sup>Psalms 37:9,11 69:35,36 <sup><4185></sup>Matthew 5:5 <sup><4222></sup>Hebrews 12:22). “He that putteth his trust in Me,” of whatever extraction, shall succeed to the spiritual patrimony of the apostate Jew [HORSLEY].

**14. shall say** — The *nominative* is, “He that trusteth in Me” (<sup><25713></sup>Isaiah 57:13). The believing remnant shall have every obstacle to their return cleared out of the way, at the coming restoration of Israel, the antitype to the return from Babylon (<sup><23816></sup>Isaiah 35:8 40:3,4 62:10,11).

**Cast ... up** — a high road before the returning Jews.

**stumbling-block** — Jesus had been so to the Jews, but will not be so *then* any longer (<sup><40123></sup>1 Corinthians 1:23); their *prejudices* shall then be taken out of the way.

**15.** The pride and self-righteousness of the Jews were the stumbling block in the way of their acknowledging Christ. The *contrition* of Israel in the last days shall be attended with God’s interposition in their behalf. So their self-humiliation, in <sup><23602></sup>Isaiah 66:2,5,10, etc., precedes their final prosperity (<sup><33127></sup>Zechariah 12:6,10-14); there will, probably, be a previous period of unbelief even after their return (<sup><33127></sup>Zechariah 12:8,9).

**16. For** — referring to the promise in <sup><25714></sup>Isaiah 57:14,15, of restoring Israel when “contrite” (<sup><01116></sup>Genesis 6:3 8:21 <sup><47889></sup>Psalms 78:38,39 85:5 103:9,13,14 <sup><30788></sup>Micah 7:18). God “will not contend for ever” *with His people*, for their human spirit would thereby be utterly crushed, whereas God’s object is to chasten, not to destroy *them* (<sup><21333></sup>Lamentations 3:33,34 <sup><30008></sup>Micah 7:8,9). *With the ungodly* He is “angry *every day*” (<sup><49711></sup>Psalms 7:11 <sup><64411></sup>Revelation 14:11).

**spirit ... before me** — that is, the human spirit which *went forth from Me* (<sup><01622></sup>Numbers 16:22), answering to “which I have made” in the parallel clause.

**17. covetousness** — akin to idolatry; and, like it, having drawn off Israel’s heart from God (<sup><21077></sup>Isaiah 2:7 56:11 58:3 <sup><41833></sup>Jeremiah 6:13 <sup><50316></sup>Colossians 3:5).

**hid me** — (<sup><21877></sup>Isaiah 8:17 45:15).

**went on frowardly** — the result of God’s hiding His face (<sup><48812></sup>Psalms 81:12 <sup><41124></sup>Romans 1:24,26).

**18.** Rather, “I have seen his ways (in sin), *yet* will I heal him,” that is, restore Israel spiritually and temporally (<sup><26316></sup>Jeremiah 33:6 3:22 <sup><24041></sup>Hosea 14:4,5) [HORSLEY].

**I will ... restore comforts unto him and to his mourners** — However, the phrase, “his mourners,” favors *English Version*; “his ways” will thus be

his ways of *repentance*; and God's pardon on "seeing" them answers to the like promise (<sup><260E></sup>Isaiah 61:2,3 <sup><261B></sup>Jeremiah 31:18,20).

**19. *fruit of ... lips*** — that is, thanksgivings which flow from the lips. I make men to return thanks to Me (<sup><284D></sup>Hosea 14:2 <sup><283B></sup>Hebrews 13:15).

***Peace, peace*** — "*perfect peace*" (see <sup><236B></sup>Isaiah 26:3, *Margin*; <sup><284D></sup>John 14:27). Primarily, the cessation of the troubles now afflicting the *Jews*, as formerly, under the Babylonian exile. More generally, the peace which the Gospel proclaims both to Israel "that is near," and to the Gentiles who are "far off" (<sup><402B></sup>Acts 2:39 <sup><401D></sup>Ephesians 2:17).

**20. *when it cannot rest*** — rather, "*for it can have no rest*" (<sup><385D></sup>Job 15:20, etc. <sup><1046></sup>Proverbs 4:16,17). *English Version* represents the sea as *occasionally* agitated; but the *Hebrew* expresses that it can *never* be at rest.

**21.** (<sup><288D></sup>Isaiah 48:22 <sup><1022></sup>2 Kings 9:22).

***my God*** — The prophet, having God as *his* God, speaks in the person of Israel, prophetically regarded as having now *appropriated* God and His "peace" (<sup><210E></sup>Isaiah 11:1-3), warning the impenitent that, while they continue so, they can have no peace.

# CHAPTER 58

## ISAIAH 58:1-14.

### REPROOF OF THE JEWS FOR THEIR DEPENDENCE ON MERE OUTWARD FORMS OF WORSHIP.

1. *aloud* — *Hebrew*, “with the throat,” that is, with full voice, not merely from the lips (<sup>4013</sup>1 Samuel 1:13). Speak loud enough to arrest attention.

*my people* — the Jews in Isaiah’s time, and again in the time of our Lord, more zealous for externals than for inward holiness. ROSENMULLER thinks the reference to be to the Jews in the captivity practising their rites to gain God’s favor and a release; and that hence, *sacrifices* are not mentioned, but only *fasting* and *Sabbath observance*, which they could keep though far away from the temple in Jerusalem. The same also applies to their present dispersion, in which they cannot offer *sacrifices*, but can only show their zeal in *fastings*, etc. Compare as to our Lord’s time, <sup>4016</sup>Matthew 6:16 23 <sup>4182</sup>Luke 18:12.

2. Put the stop at “ways”; and connect “as a nation that,” etc. with what follows; “As a nation that did righteousness,” thus answers to, “they ask of Me *just judgments*” (that is, as a matter of justice *due to them*, salvation to themselves, and destruction to their enemies); and “forsook not the ordinance of their God,” answers to “they desire the drawing near of God” (that *God would draw near* to exercise those “just judgments” in behalf of them, and against their enemies) [MAURER]. So JEROME, “In the confidence, as it were, of a good conscience, they demand a just judgment, in the language of the saints: Judge me, O Lord, for I have walked in mine integrity.” So in <sup>4347</sup>Malachi 2:17, they affect to be scandalized at the impunity of the wicked, and impugn God’s *justice* [HORSLEY]. Thus, “seek Me daily, and desire (*English Version* not so well, ‘delight’) to know My ways,” refers to their requiring to know why God delayed so long in helping them. *English Version* gives a good, though different sense; namely, dispelling the delusion that God would be satisfied with outward observances, while the *spirit* of the law, was violated and the heart unchanged (<sup>4288</sup>Isaiah 58:3-14 <sup>4335</sup>Ezekiel 33:31,32; compare <sup>4183</sup>John 18:28), scrupulosity side by side with murder. The prophets were the commentators on the law, as their *Magna Charta*, in its inward spirit and not the mere letter.

3. **Wherefore** — the words of the Jews: “Why is it that, when we fast, Thou dost not notice it” (by delivering us)? They think to lay God under *obligation* to their fasting (<sup><4753></sup>Psalm 73:13 <sup><3144></sup>Malachi 3:14).

**afflicted ... soul** — (<sup><6129></sup>Leviticus 16:29).

**Behold** — God’s reply.

**pleasure** — in antithesis to their boast of having “*afflicted* their soul”; it was only in outward show they really *enjoyed* themselves. GESENIUS not so well translates, “business.”

**exact ... labors** — rather, “*oppressive* labors” [MAURER]. HORSLEY, with *Vulgate*, translates, “Exact the whole upon your *debtors*”; those who owe you labor (<sup><4181></sup>Nehemiah 5:1-5,8-10, etc.).

4. **ye shall not fast** — rather, “ye do not fast at this time, so as to make your voice to be heard on high,” that is, in heaven; your aim in fasting is strife, not to gain the ear of God [MAURER] (<sup><1219></sup>1 Kings 21:9,12,13). In *English Version* the sense is, If you wish acceptance with God, ye must not fast as ye now do, to make your voice heard high *in strife*.

5. **for a man to afflict his soul** — The *pain* felt by abstinence is not the *end* to be sought, as if it were meritorious; it is of value only in so far as it leads us to amend our ways (<sup><2816></sup>Isaiah 58:6,7).

**bow ... head ... sackcloth** — to affect the outward tokens, so as to “*appear* to men to fast” (<sup><1167></sup>Matthew 6:17,18 <sup><1227></sup>1 Kings 21:27 <sup><1048></sup>Esther 4:3).

6. **loose ... bands of wickedness** — that is, to dissolve every tie wherewith one has unjustly bound his fellow men (<sup><1254></sup>Leviticus 25:49, etc.). Servitude, a fraudulent contract, etc.

**undo ... heavy burdens** — *Hebrew*, “loose the bands of the yoke.”

**oppressed** — literally, “the broken.” The expression, “to let go free,” implies that those “broken” with the yoke of *slavery*, are meant (<sup><4181></sup>Nehemiah 5:10-12 <sup><3491></sup>Jeremiah 34:9-11,14,16). JEROME interprets it, broken with poverty; bankrupt.

7. **deal** — distribute (<sup><18116></sup>Job 31:16-21).

**cast out** — rather, reduced [HORSLEY].

**naked ... cover him** — (<sup><1256></sup>Matthew 25:36).

**hide ... thyself** — means to be strange towards them, and not to relieve them in their poverty (<sup><41515></sup>Matthew 15:5).

**flesh** — kindred (<sup><1024</sup>Genesis 29:14). Also brethren in common descent from Adam, and brethren in Christ (<sup><3125</sup>James 2:15).

**8. light** — emblem of prosperity (<sup><2880</sup>Isaiah 58:10 <sup><8117</sup>Job 11:17).

**health** — literally, a long bandage, applied by surgeons to heal a wound (compare <sup><3006</sup>Isaiah 1:6). Hence *restoration* from all past calamities.

**go before thee** — Thy conformity to the divine covenant acts as a leader, conducting thee to peace and prosperity.

**glory ... reward** — like the pillar of cloud and fire, the symbol of God's "glory," which went *behind* Israel, separating them from their Egyptian pursuers (<sup><2820</sup>Isaiah 52:12 <sup><1049</sup>Exodus 14:19,20).

**9. Then ... call ... answer** — when sin is renounced (<sup><2624</sup>Isaiah 65:24). When the Lord's call is *not* hearkened to, He will not hear our "call" (<sup><3668</sup>Psalms 66:18 <sup><1024</sup>Proverbs 1:24,28 15:29 28:9).

**putting forth of ... finger** — the finger of scorn pointed at simple-minded godly men. The middle finger was so used by the Romans.

**speaking vanity** — every *injurious* speech [LOWTH].

**10. draw out thy soul** — "impart of thine own subsistence," or "sustenance" [HORSLEY]. "Soul" is figurative for "that wherewith thou sustainest thy soul," or "life."

**light ... in obscurity** — Calamities shall be suddenly succeeded by prosperity (<sup><3834</sup>Psalms 112:4).

**11. satisfy ... in drought** — (<sup><2417</sup>Isaiah 41:17,18). Literally, "drought," that is, parched places [MAURER].

**make fat** — rather, "strengthen" [NOYES]. "Give thee the free use of thy bones" [JEROME], or, "of thy strength" [HORSLEY].

**watered garden** — an Oriental picture of happiness.

**fail not** — *Hebrew*, "deceive not"; as streams that disappoint the caravan which had expected to find water, as formerly, but find it dried up (<sup><3085</sup>Job 6:15-17).

**12. they ... of thee** — thy people, the Israelites.

**old waste places** — the old ruins of Jerusalem (<sup><2604</sup>Isaiah 61:4 <sup><3668</sup>Ezekiel 36:33-36).

**foundations of many generations** — that is, the buildings which had lain in ruins, even to their *foundations, for many ages*; called in the parallel passage (<sup>2304</sup>Isaiah 61:4), “the *former* desolations”; and in the preceding clause here, “the *old* waste places.” The literal and spiritual restoration of Israel is meant, which shall produce like blessed results on the Gentile world (<sup>309E</sup>Amos 9:11,12 <sup>4156</sup>Acts 15:16,17).

**be called** — appropriately: the name truly designating what thou shalt do.

**breach** — the calamity wherewith God visited Israel for their sin (<sup>2316</sup>Isaiah 30:26 <sup>3153</sup>1 Chronicles 15:13).

**paths to dwell in** — not that the *paths* were *to be dwelt in*, but *the paths leading to their dwellings* were to be restored; “paths, so as to dwell in *the land*” [MAURER].

**13.** (<sup>2812</sup>Isaiah 56:2 <sup>4335</sup>Nehemiah 13:15-22). The Sabbath, even under the new dispensation, was to be obligatory (<sup>2762</sup>Isaiah 66:23).

**foot** — the instrument of motion (compare <sup>3027</sup>Proverbs 4:27); men are not to *travel* for mere pleasure on the Sabbath (<sup>4012</sup>Acts 1:12). The Jews were forbidden to travel on it farther than the tabernacle or temple. If thou keep thy foot from going on thy own ways and “doing thy pleasure,” etc. (<sup>4200</sup>Exodus 20:10,11).

**my holy day** — God claims it as *His* day; to take it for our pleasure is to rob Him of His own. This is the very way in which the Sabbath is mostly broken; it is made a day of carnal pleasure instead of spiritual “delight.”

**holy of the Lord** — not the predicate, but the subject; “if thou call the holy (day) of Jehovah honorable”; if thou treat it as a day to be honored.

**him** — or else, *it*, the Sabbath.

**not doing ... own way** — answering to, “turn away thy foot from the Sabbath.”

**nor finding ... pleasure** — answering to, “doing thy pleasure.” “To keep the Sabbath in an idle manner is the sabbath of oxen and asses; to pass it in a jovial manner is the sabbath of the golden calf, when the people sat down to eat and drink, and rose again to play; to keep it in surfeiting and wantonness is the sabbath of Satan, the devil’s holiday” [BISHOP ANDREWES].

**nor speaking ... words** — answering to, “call Sabbath a delight ... honorable.” Man’s “own words” would “call” it a “weariness”; it is the

spiritual nature given from above which “calls it a delight” (<sup><3085></sup>Amos 8:5 <sup><3013></sup>Malachi 1:13).

**14. *delight ... in ... Lord*** — God rewards in kind, as He punishes in kind. As we “delight” in keeping God’s “Sabbath,” so God will give us “delight” in Himself (<sup><0150></sup>Genesis 15:1 <sup><4022></sup>Job 22:21-26 <sup><4370></sup>Psalm 37:4).

***ride upon ... high places*** — I will make thee *supreme lord* of the land; the phrase is taken from a conqueror riding in his chariot, and occupying the hills and fastnesses of a country [VITRINGA], (<sup><4523></sup>Deuteronomy 32:13 <sup><3008></sup>Micah 1:3 <sup><3089></sup>Habakkuk 3:19). Judea was a land of *hills*; the idea thus is, “I will restore thee to thine own land” [CALVIN]. The parallel words, “heritage of *Jacob*,” confirm this (<sup><0228></sup>Genesis 27:28,29 28:13-15).

***mouth of ... Lord ... spoken it*** — a formula to assure men of the fulfillment of any solemn promise which God has made (<sup><2405></sup>Isaiah 40:5).

# CHAPTER 59

## ISAIAH 59:1-21.

### THE PEOPLE'S SIN THE CAUSE OF JUDGMENTS: THEY AT LAST OWN IT THEMSELVES: THE REDEEMER'S FUTURE INTERPOSITION IN THEIR EXTREMITY.

The reason why Jehovah does not deliver His people, notwithstanding their religious services (<sup>280B</sup>Isaiah 58:3), is not want of power on His part, but because of their sins (<sup>280E</sup>Isaiah 59:1-8); <sup>280D</sup>Isaiah 59:9-15 contain their confession; <sup>280G</sup>Isaiah 59:16-21, the consequent promise of the Messiah.

1. **hand ... shortened** — (See on <sup>280E</sup>Isaiah 50:2).

**ear heavy** — (<sup>236G</sup>Isaiah 6:10).

2. **hid** — *Hebrew*, “caused Him to hide” (<sup>2184</sup>Lamentations 3:44).

3. (<sup>2015</sup>Isaiah 1:15 <sup>4813</sup>Romans 3:13-15).

**hands ... fingers** — Not merely the “hands” perpetrate deeds of *grosser* enormity (“blood”), but the “fingers” commit more *minute* acts of “iniquity.”

**lips ... tongue** — The *lips* “speak” *openly* “lies,” the *tongue* “mutters” malicious *insinuations* (“perverseness”; perverse misrepresentations of others) (<sup>2163</sup>Jeremiah 6:28 9:4).

4. Rather, “No one calleth an adversary into court with justice,” that is, None bringeth a just suit: “No one pleadeth *with* truth.”

**they trust ... iniquity** — (So <sup>4855</sup>Job 15:35 <sup>4974</sup>Psalms 7:14).

5. **cockatrice** — probably the basilisk serpent, *cerastes*. Instead of crushing evil in the egg, they foster it.

**spider's web** — This refers not to the spider's web being made to *entrap*, but to its *thinness*, as contrasted with substantial “garments,” as <sup>280E</sup>Isaiah 59:6 shows. Their works are vain and transitory (<sup>4884</sup>Job 8:14 <sup>2118</sup>Proverbs 11:18).

**eateth ... their eggs** — he who *partakes in their plans*, or *has anything to do with them*, finds them pestiferous.

**that which is crushed** — The *egg*, when it is broken, breaketh out as a viper; their plans, however specious in their undeveloped form like the egg, when developed, are found pernicious. Though the viper is viviparous (from which “vi-per” is derived), yet during gestation, the young are included in eggs, which break at the birth [BOCHART]; however, metaphors often combine things without representing everything to the life.

**6. not ... garments** — like the “fig leaves” wherewith Adam and Eve vainly tried to cover their shame, as contrasted with “the coats of skins” which the Lord God made to clothe them with (<sup>2346</sup>Isaiah 64:6 <sup>4534</sup>Romans 13:14 <sup>487</sup>Galatians 3:27 <sup>1089</sup>Philippians 3:9). The artificial self-deceiving sophisms of human philosophy (<sup>5405</sup>1 Timothy 6:5 <sup>3126</sup>2 Timothy 2:16,23).

**7. feet** — *All* their members are *active* in evil; in <sup>2308</sup>Isaiah 59:3, the “hands, fingers, lips, and tongue,” are specified.

**run ... haste** — (<sup>4815</sup>Romans 3:15). Contrast David’s “running and hasting” in the ways of God (<sup>4872</sup>Psalms 119:32,60).

**thoughts** — not merely their acts, but their whole *thoughts*.

**8. peace** — whether in relation to God, to their own conscience, or to their fellow men (<sup>2571</sup>Isaiah 57:20,21).

**judgment** — justice.

**crooked** — the opposite of “straightforward” (<sup>1016</sup>Proverbs 2:15 28:18).

**9. judgment far** — retribution in kind because *they* had shown “no *judgment* in their goings” (<sup>2308</sup>Isaiah 59:8). “*The vindication of our just rights* by God is withheld by Him from us.”

**us** — In <sup>2308</sup>Isaiah 59:8 and previous verses, it was “they,” the third person; here, “us ... we,” the first person. The nation here speaks: God thus making *them* out of their own mouth condemn themselves; just as *He* by His prophet had condemned them before. Isaiah includes himself with his people and speaks in their name.

**justice** — God’s *justice* bringing salvation (<sup>2343</sup>Isaiah 46:13).

**light** — the dawn of returning prosperity.

**obscurity** — adversity (<sup>2485</sup>Jeremiah 8:15).

**10. grope** — fulfilling Moses’ threat (<sup>4529</sup>Deuteronomy 28:29).

**stumble at noon ... as ... night** — There is no relaxation of our evils; at the time when we might look for the noon of relief, there is still the night of our calamity.

**in desolate places** — rather, to suit the parallel words “at noonday,” in fertile (literally, “fat”; <sup><0272></sup>Genesis 27:28) fields [GESENIUS] (where all is promising) *we are like the dead* (who have no hope left them); or, where *others* are prosperous, *we* wander about as dead men; true of all unbelievers (<sup><2300></sup>Isaiah 26:10 <sup><2157></sup>Luke 15:17).

**11. roar** — moan plaintively, like a hungry bear which growls for food.

**doves** — (<sup><2384></sup>Isaiah 38:14 <sup><3716></sup>Ezekiel 7:16).

**salvation** — retribution in kind: because not salvation, but “destruction” was “in their paths” (<sup><2307></sup>Isaiah 59:7).

**12.** (<sup><2095></sup>Daniel 9:5, etc.).

**thee ... us** — antithesis.

**with us** — that is, we are *conscious* of them (<sup><1873></sup>Job 12:3, *Margin*; <sup><1359></sup>Job 15:9).

**know** — acknowledge they are *our* iniquities.

**13.** The *particulars* of the sins *generally* confessed in <sup><2302></sup>Isaiah 59:12 (<sup><2388></sup>Isaiah 48:8 <sup><3129></sup>Jeremiah 2:19,20). The act, the word, and the thought of apostasy, are all here marked: *transgression* and *departing*, etc.; *lying* (compare <sup><2304></sup>Isaiah 59:4), and *speaking*, etc.; *conceiving* and uttering *from the heart*.

**14.** Justice and righteousness are put away from our legal courts.

**in the street** — in the forum, the place of judicature, usually at the gate of the city (<sup><3087></sup>Zechariah 8:16).

**cannot enter** — is shut out from the forum, or courts of justice.

**15. faileth** — is not to be found.

**he that departeth ... prey** — He that will not fall in with the prevailing iniquity exposes himself as a prey to the wicked (<sup><1018></sup>Psalms 10:8,9).

**Lord saw it** — The iniquity of Israel, so desperate as to require nothing short of Jehovah’s interposition to mend it, typifies the same necessity for a Divine Mediator existing in the deep corruption of man; Israel, the model nation, was chosen to illustrate his awful fact.

**16. *no man*** — namely, to atone by his righteousness for the unrighteousness of the people. “Man” is emphatic, as in <sup><100></sup>1 Kings 2:2; no representative man able to retrieve the cause of fallen men (<sup><230></sup>Isaiah 41:28 <sup><301></sup>Jeremiah 5:1 <sup><323></sup>Ezekiel 22:30).

***no intercessor*** — no one to interpose, “to help ... uphold” (<sup><265></sup>Isaiah 63:5).

***his arm*** — (<sup><200></sup>Isaiah 40:10 <sup><51></sup>51:5). Not *man*’s arm, but *His* alone (<sup><398></sup>Psalms 98:1 <sup><44></sup>44:3).

***his righteousness*** — the “arm” of Messiah. He won the victory for us, not by mere *might* as God, but by His invincible *righteousness*, as man having “the Spirit without measure” (<sup><2310></sup>Isaiah 11:5 <sup><42></sup>42:6, <sup><21></sup>21 <sup><51></sup>51:8 <sup><53></sup>53:11 <sup><600></sup>John 2:1).

**17.** Messiah is represented as a warrior armed at all points, going forth to vindicate His people. Owing to the unity of Christ and His people, their armor is like His, except that they have no “garments of *vengeance*” (which is God’s prerogative, <sup><629></sup>Romans 12:19), or “cloak of *zeal*” (in the sense of *judicial fury* punishing the wicked; this zeal belongs properly to God, <sup><1009></sup>2 Kings 10:16 <sup><602></sup>Romans 10:2 <sup><108></sup>Philippians 3:6; “zeal,” in the sense of *anxiety for the Lord’s honor*, they have, <sup><2511></sup>Numbers 25:11, <sup><13></sup>13 <sup><399></sup>Psalm 69:9 <sup><401></sup>2 Corinthians 7:11 <sup><9></sup>9:2); and for “salvation,” which is of God alone (<sup><308></sup>Psalm 3:8), they have as their *helmet*, “the *hope of salvation*” (<sup><508></sup>1 Thessalonians 5:8). The “helmet of salvation” is attributed to them (<sup><614></sup>Ephesians 6:14, 17) in a secondary sense; namely, derived from Him, and as yet only in *hope*, not fruition (<sup><639></sup>Romans 8:24). The *second coming* here, as often, is included in this representation of Messiah. His “zeal” (<sup><625></sup>John 2:15-17) at His first coming was but a type of His zeal and vengeance against the foes of God at His second coming (<sup><5008></sup>2 Thessalonians 1:8-10 <sup><6911></sup>Revelation 19:11-21).

**18. *deeds*** — *Hebrew*, “recompenses”; “according as their *deeds demand*” [MAURER]. This verse predicts the judgments at the Lord’s second coming, which shall precede the final redemption of His people (<sup><268></sup>Isaiah 66:18, 15, 16).

***islands*** — (See on <sup><2400></sup>Isaiah 41:1). Distant countries.

**19.** (<sup><266></sup>Isaiah 45:6 <sup><3011></sup>Malachi 1:11). The result of God’s judgments (<sup><2309></sup>Isaiah 26:9 <sup><66></sup>66:18-20).

***like a flood*** — (<sup><2467></sup>Jeremiah 46:7, 8 <sup><6215></sup>Revelation 12:15).

***lift up a standard*** — rather, from a different *Hebrew* root, “shall put him to flight,” “drive him away” [MAURER]. LOWTH, giving a different sense to

the *Hebrew* for “enemy” from that in <sup><239:85></sup>Isaiah 59:18, and a forced meaning to the *Hebrew* for “Spirit of the Lord,” translates, “When He shall come as a river *straitened* in its course, which a *mighty wind* drives along.”

**20. to Zion** — <sup><6112></sup>Romans 11:26 quotes it, “*out of Zion*.” Thus Paul, by inspiration, supplements the sense from <sup><1947></sup>Psalms 14:7: He was, and is come to *Zion*, first with redemption, being sprung as man *out of Zion*. The *Septuagint* translates “*for the sake of Zion*.” Paul applies this verse to the coming restoration of Israel spiritually.

**them that turn from** — ( <sup><6112></sup>Romans 11:26). “shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob”; so the *Septuagint*, Paul herein gives the full sense under inspiration. *They* turn from transgression, because He first turns them from it, and it from them ( <sup><1910></sup>Psalms 130:4 <sup><2512></sup>Lamentations 5:21).

**21. covenant with them ... thee** — The covenant is with *Christ*, and with *them* only as united to Him ( <sup><8013></sup>Hebrews 2:13). Jehovah addresses Messiah the representative and ideal Israel. The literal and spiritual Israel are His seed, to whom the promise is to be fulfilled ( <sup><1923></sup>Psalms 22:30).

**spirit ... not depart ... for ever** — ( <sup><2433></sup>Jeremiah 31:31-37 <sup><1820></sup>Matthew 28:20).

# CHAPTER 60

## ISAIAH 60:1-22.

### ISRAEL'S GLORY AFTER HER AFFLICTION.

An ode of congratulation to Zion on her restoration at the Lord's second advent to her true position as the mother church from which the Gospel is to be diffused to the whole Gentile world; the first promulgation of the Gospel among the Gentiles, *beginning at Jerusalem* [<sup><2447></sup>Luke 24:47], is an earnest of this. The language is too glorious to apply to anything that as yet has happened.

**1. Arise** — from the dust in which thou hast been sitting as a mourning female captive (<sup><2183></sup>Isaiah 3:26 52:1,2).

**shine** — or, “be enlightened; for thy light cometh”; impart to others the spiritual light now given thee (<sup><2603></sup>Isaiah 60:3). The *Margin* and *GESENIUS* translate, “Be enlightened”; be resplendent with posterity; imperative for the future indicative, “Thou shalt be enlightened” (<sup><2503></sup>Isaiah 58:8,10 <sup><4183></sup>Ephesians 5:8,14).

**glory of the Lord** — not merely the Shekinah, or cloud of glory, such as rested above the ark in the old dispensation, but the glory of the Lord in person (<sup><2186></sup>Jeremiah 3:16,17).

**is risen** — as the sun (<sup><3002></sup>Malachi 4:2 <sup><4073></sup>Luke 1:78, *Margin*).

**2. darkness ... earth** — the *rest* of the earth: in contrast with “light ... upon thee” (<sup><2001></sup>Isaiah 60:1). The earth will be afterwards enlightened through Israel (<sup><2302></sup>Isaiah 9:2).

**be seen** — *conspicuously*: so the *Hebrew*.

**3.** (<sup><2003></sup>Isaiah 2:3 11:10 43:6 49:22 66:12).

**kings** — (<sup><3001></sup>Isaiah 49:7,23 52:15).

**thy rising** — rather, “thy sun-rising,” that is, “to the brightness that riseth upon thee.”

**4. Lift up ... eyes** — Jerusalem is addressed as a female with *eyes cast down* from grief.

**all they ... they** — The Gentile peoples come together to bring back the dispersed Hebrews, restore their city, and worship Jehovah with offerings.

**nursed at thy side** — rather “carried at thy side.” It is the custom in the East to carry the children astride on the hip, with the arms around the body (<sup>2362</sup>Isaiah 66:12).

**5. see** — (<sup>2306</sup>Isaiah 60:4), namely, the bringing back of thy sons.

**flow together** — rather, “overflow with joy” [LOWTH]; or, from a different Hebrew root, “be bright with joy” [GESENIUS] (<sup>3804</sup>Job 3:4).

**fear** — rather, *beat with the agitation* of solemn joy at the marvellous sight [HORSLEY] (<sup>2339</sup>Jeremiah 33:9).

**be enlarged** — *swell* with delight. Grief, on the contrary, *contracts* the heart.

**abundance of ... sea** — the *wealth* of the lands beyond *the sea*, as in Solomon’s time, the type of the coming reign of the Prince of peace.

**converted** — rather, “be turned,” instead of being turned to purposes of sin and idolatry.

**forces** — rather, “riches.”

**6. camels** — laden with merchandise; the camel is “the ship of the desert” (compare <sup>2306</sup>Isaiah 30:6).

**cover thee** — so many of them shall there be.

**dromedaries** — They have one hunch on the back, whereas the *camel* has two: distinguished for swiftness (<sup>2423</sup>Jeremiah 2:23).

**Midian** — east of the Elanitic branch of the Red Sea, and stretching northward along Mount Seir. Associated with the Ishmaelites in traffic (<sup>4572</sup>Genesis 37:25,28).

**Ephah** — part of Midian, east of the Dead Sea. It abounded in camels (<sup>4065</sup>Judges 6:5).

**Sheba** — in Arabia-Felix, famed for frankincense and gold (<sup>4975</sup>Psalms 72:15 <sup>2463</sup>Jeremiah 6:20), which they traded in (<sup>2364</sup>Isaiah 45:14 <sup>3869</sup>Job 6:19 <sup>3572</sup>Ezekiel 27:22).

**7. Kedar** — (<sup>2216</sup>Isaiah 21:16 <sup>2105</sup>Song of Solomon 1:5), in the south of Arabia-Deserta, or north of Arabia-Petraea; they traded in flocks (<sup>3721</sup>Ezekiel 27:21).

***Nebaioth*** — son of Ishmael, as was Kedar. Father of the Nabatheans in Arabia-Petraea.

***minister*** — by coming up as an acceptable sacrifice.

***come up with acceptance*** — that is, acceptably. The rams *offering themselves* voluntarily (<sup><4983></sup>Psalm 68:30 <sup><5127></sup>Romans 12:1 <sup><6015></sup>1 Peter 2:5), without waiting for any other priest, answer to believers strong in faith and lamb-like meekness; and in the white fleece-like robe of sanctity [VITRINGA].

***house of my glory*** — the temple (<sup><2401></sup>Ezekiel 41:1-26 <sup><3017></sup>Haggai 2:7,9 <sup><4981></sup>Malachi 3:1).

8. The prophet, seeing in vision new hosts approaching quickly like a cloud of doves, asks who they are.

9. (see on <sup><2901></sup>Isaiah 42:4).

***Tarshish first*** — The ships of *Tartessus* (see on <sup><2916></sup>Isaiah 2:16; <sup><2921></sup>Isaiah 23:1, that is, vessels that trade to the most distant regions) will be among the *foremost* to bring back the scattered Israelites (<sup><2961></sup>Isaiah 66:20).

***their silver*** — The nations among whom the Jews have been scattered shall help them with their money in returning (<sup><2905></sup>Isaiah 60:5-7,11,16), as was the case at the return from Babylon (<sup><15004></sup>Ezra 1:4; compare <sup><4983></sup>Psalm 68:30,31).

***unto the name ... to the Holy One*** — rather, *because of* the name — *because of* the Holy One (compare <sup><2919></sup>Isaiah 55:5) [LOWTH].

10. ***kings ... minister unto thee*** — (See on <sup><2907></sup>Isaiah 60:7; <sup><2923></sup>Isaiah 49:23).

***in my wrath I smote thee*** — (<sup><2507></sup>Isaiah 54:7,8 57:17).

11. (<sup><6015></sup>Revelation 21:25). The gates are ever open to receive new offerings and converts (<sup><2920></sup>Isaiah 26:2 <sup><4442></sup>Acts 14:27 <sup><6018></sup>Revelation 3:8). In time of *peace* the gates of a city are open: so, under the Prince of peace, there shall be no need of barring gates against invaders.

***forces*** — riches.

***be brought*** — as willing captives to the truth; or, *if not willingly*, be bought by *judgments to submit to Israel* (<sup><2902></sup>Isaiah 60:12,14). GESENIUS explains it, “may come *escorted by a retinue*.”

12. ***For*** — the reason which will lead Gentile kings and people to submit themselves; fear of the God in Israel (<sup><39475></sup>Zechariah 14:17).

**13. *glory*** — that is, the *trees* which adorned Lebanon; emblem of men eminent in natural gifts, devoting all that is in them to the God of Israel (<sup><2846></sup>Hosea 14:5,6).

***fir ... pine ... box*** — rather, “the cypress ... ilex ... cedar.”

***place of my sanctuary*** — Jerusalem (<sup><2487></sup>Jeremiah 3:17).

***place of my feet*** — no longer the ark (<sup><2486></sup>Jeremiah 3:16), “the footstool” of Jehovah (<sup><2995></sup>Psalm 99:5 132:7 <sup><3302></sup>1 Chronicles 28:2); but “the place of His throne, the place of the soles of His feet, where He will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel for ever,” in the new temple (<sup><2580></sup>Ezekiel 43:7).

**14. *The sons*** — Their *fathers* who “afflicted” Israel having been cut off by divine judgments (<sup><2340></sup>Isaiah 14:1,2 49:23).

***The Zion of the Holy One*** — The royal court of the Holy One. MAURER translates, “Zion, *the sanctuary (holy place)* of Israel” (<sup><2575></sup>Isaiah 57:15 <sup><2948></sup>Psalm 46:4).

**15. *forsaken*** — (<sup><2983></sup>Psalm 78:60,61).

***no man went through thee*** — Thy land was so desolate that no traveler, or caravan, passed through thee; true only of Israel, not true of the Church (<sup><2004></sup>Lamentations 1:4).

***excellency*** — glory, that is, for ever honored.

**16. *suck*** — Thou shalt draw to thyself and enjoy all that is valuable of the possessions of the Gentiles, etc. (<sup><2423></sup>Isaiah 49:23 61:6 66:11,12).

***know*** — by the favors bestowed on thee, and through thee on the Gentiles.

**17.** Poetically, with figurative allusion to the furniture of the temple; all things in that happy age to come shall be changed for the better.

***exactors*** — namely, of tribute.

***righteousness*** — All rulers in restored Jerusalem shall not only be peaceable and righteous, but shall be, as it were, “peace” and “righteousness” itself in their administration.

**18.** (<sup><2304></sup>Isaiah 2:4). Not only shall thy walls keep thee *safe* from foes, but “Salvation” shall serve as thy walls, converting thy foes into friends, and ensuring thee perfect safety (<sup><2301></sup>Isaiah 26:1,2).

***gates*** — once the scene of “destruction” when victorious foes burst through them (<sup><1603></sup>Nehemiah 1:3); henceforth to be not only the scene of

praises, but “Praise” itself; the “gates,” as the place of public concourse, were the scene of thanksgivings (<sup><430></sup>2 Chronicles 31:2 <sup><4304></sup>Psalm 9:14 24:7 100:4). “Judah,” the favored tribe, means “praise.”

**19.** The sun and moon, the brightest objects by day and night, shall be eclipsed by the surpassing glory of God manifesting Himself to thee (<sup><2303></sup>Isaiah 30:26 <sup><3005></sup>Zechariah 2:5 <sup><6223></sup>Revelation 21:23 22:5).

**20.** There shall be no national and spiritual obscurity again as formerly (<sup><2403></sup>Joel 2:10 <sup><3089></sup>Amos 8:9).

*mourning ... ended* — (<sup><2358></sup>Isaiah 25:8 <sup><6204></sup>Revelation 21:4).

**21. all righteous** — (<sup><2403></sup>Isaiah 4:3 52:1 <sup><6227></sup>Revelation 21:27).

*inherit ... land* — (<sup><2403></sup>Isaiah 49:8 54:3 65:9 <sup><4571></sup>Psalm 37:11,22 <sup><4153></sup>Matthew 5:5).

*branch of my planting* — (<sup><2303></sup>Isaiah 61:3 <sup><4923></sup>Psalm 92:13 <sup><4153></sup>Matthew 15:13).

*work of my hands* — the converted Israelites (<sup><2303></sup>Isaiah 29:23 45:11).

*that I may be glorified* — the final end of all God’s gracious dealings (<sup><2403></sup>Isaiah 49:3 61:3).

**22. little one** — Even one, and that the smallest in number and rank, shall be multiplied a thousandfold in both respects (<sup><3102></sup>Micah 5:2 <sup><4139></sup>Matthew 13:31,32).

*his time* — not *our* time; *we* might wish to hasten it, but it will come in due time, as in the case of Jesus’ first coming (<sup><4040></sup>Galatians 4:4); so in that of the restoration of Israel and the conversion of the world (<sup><2368></sup>Isaiah 66:8 <sup><3103></sup>Habakkuk 2:3 <sup><4007></sup>Acts 1:7 <sup><5057></sup>Hebrews 10:37).

# CHAPTER 61

## ISAIAH 61:1-11.

### MESSIAH'S OFFICES: RESTORATION OF ISRAEL.

Messiah announces His twofold commission to bring gospel mercy at His first coming, and judgments on unbelievers and comfort to Zion at His second coming (<sup><260E></sup>Isaiah 61:1-9); the language can be applied to Isaiah, comforting by his prophecies the exiles in Babylon, only in a subordinate sense.

**1. *is upon me; because ... hath anointed me*** — quoted by Jesus as His credentials in preaching (<sup><404S></sup>Luke 4:18-21). The Spirit *is* upon Me in preaching, because Jehovah *hath* anointed Me from the womb (<sup><403S></sup>Luke 1:35), and at baptism, with the Spirit “without measure,” and permanently “abiding” on Me (<sup><210D></sup>Isaiah 11:2 <sup><401E></sup>John 1:32 3:34 <sup><498E></sup>Psalms 45:7; with which compare <sup><101B></sup>1 Kings 1:39,40 <sup><119E></sup>1 Kings 19:16 <sup><122E></sup>Exodus 29:7). “Anointed” as *Messiah*, Prophet, Priest, and King.

***good tidings*** — as the word “gospel” means.

***the meek*** — rather, “the poor,” as <sup><404S></sup>Luke 4:18 has it; that is, those afflicted with calamity, poor in circumstances and in spirit (<sup><401E></sup>Matthew 11:5).

***proclaim liberty*** — (<sup><418E></sup>John 8:31-36). Language drawn from the deliverance of the Babylonian captives, to describe the deliverance from sin and death (<sup><302E></sup>Hebrews 2:15); also from the “liberty proclaimed” to all bond-servants in the year of jubilee (<sup><230E></sup>Isaiah 61:2 <sup><425E></sup>Leviticus 25:10 <sup><448E></sup>Jeremiah 34:8,9).

***opening of the prison*** — The *Hebrew* rather is, “the *most complete* opening,” namely, of the *eyes* to them that are bound, that is, deliverance from *prison*, for captives are as it were *blind* in the darkness of prison (<sup><234E></sup>Isaiah 14:17 35:5 42:7) [EWALD]. So <sup><404S></sup>Luke 4:18 and the *Septuagint* interpret it; <sup><404S></sup>Luke 4:18, under inspiration, adds to this, for the fuller explanation of the *single* clause in the *Hebrew*, “to set at liberty them that are bruised”; thus expressing the *double* “opening” implied; namely, that of the eyes (<sup><418E></sup>John 9:39), and that of the prison (<sup><418E></sup>Romans 6:18 7:24,25 <sup><302E></sup>Hebrews 2:15). His miracles were *acted parables*.

2. **acceptable year** — the year of jubilee on which “liberty was proclaimed to the captives” (<sup><2301></sup>Isaiah 61:1 <sup><4062></sup>2 Corinthians 6:2).

**day of vengeance** — The “acceptable time of grace” is a “year”; the time of “vengeance” but “a day” (so <sup><2308></sup>Isaiah 34:8 63:4 <sup><3001></sup>Malachi 4:1). Jesus (<sup><4040></sup>Luke 4:20,21) “closed the book” before this clause; for the interval from His first to His second coming is “the acceptable year”; the day of vengeance” will not be till He comes again (<sup><5002></sup>2 Thessalonians 1:7-9).

**our God** — The saints call Him “our God”; for He cometh to “avenge” them (<sup><6100></sup>Revelation 6:10 19:2).

**all that mourn** — The “all” seems to include the *spiritual* Israelite mourners, as well as the *literal*, who are in <sup><2303></sup>Isaiah 61:3 called “them that mourn in Zion,” and to whom <sup><2578></sup>Isaiah 57:18 refers.

3. **To appoint ... to give** — The double verb, with the one and the same accusative, imparts glowing vehemence to the style.

**beauty for ashes** — There is a play on the sound and meaning of the Hebrew words, *peer*, *epher*, literally, “ornamental headdress” or *tiara* (<sup><2347></sup>Ezekiel 24:17), worn in times of joy, instead of a headdress of “ashes,” cast on the head in mourning (<sup><1039></sup>2 Samuel 13:19).

**oil of joy** — Perfumed ointment was poured on the guests at joyous feasts (<sup><4235></sup>Psalm 23:5 45:7,8 <sup><3006></sup>Amos 6:6). On occasions of grief its use was laid aside (<sup><1042></sup>2 Samuel 14:2).

**garment of praise** — bright-colored garments, indicative of thankfulness, instead of those that indicate despondency, as sackcloth (<sup><6160></sup>John 16:20).

**trees of righteousness** — Hebrew, *terebinth* trees; symbolical of men strong in righteousness, instead of being, as heretofore, bowed down as a reed with sin and calamity (<sup><2102></sup>Isaiah 1:29,30 <sup><2348></sup>Isaiah 42:3 <sup><1145></sup>1 Kings 14:15 <sup><4008></sup>Psalm 1:3 92:12-14 <sup><3478></sup>Jeremiah 17:8).

**planting of ... Lord** — (See on <sup><2401></sup>Isaiah 60:21).

**that he might be glorified** — (<sup><6158></sup>John 15:8).

4. **old wastes** — Jerusalem and the cities of Judah which long lay in ruins (see on <sup><2582></sup>Isaiah 58:12).

5. **stand** — shall wait on you as servants (<sup><2441></sup>Isaiah 14:1,2 60:10).

6. **But ye** — as contrasted with the *strangers*. Ye shall have no need to attend to your flocks and lands: “strangers” will do that for you; your exclusive business will be the service of Jehovah as His “priests”

(<sup><096></sup>Exodus 19:6, which remains yet to be realized; compare as to the spiritual Israel, <sup><262></sup>Isaiah 66:21 <sup><0115></sup>1 Peter 2:5,9 <sup><0106></sup>Revelation 1:6 5:10).

**Ministers** — (<sup><341></sup>Ezekiel 44:11).

**eat ... riches of ... Gentiles** — (<sup><205></sup>Isaiah 60:5-11).

**in their glory ... boast yourselves** — rather, “in their splendor ye shall *be substituted* in their stead”; ye shall substitute yourselves [MAURER].

**7. double** — Instead of your past share, ye shall have not merely as much, but “double” as much reward (<sup><202></sup>Isaiah 40:2 <sup><302></sup>Zechariah 9:12; compare the third clause in this verse).

**confusion** — rather, “humiliation,” or “contumely.”

**rejoice** — They shall *celebrate with jubilation* their portion [MAURER].  
Transition from the second to the third person.

**in their land** — marking the reference to literal Israel, not to the Church at large.

**everlasting joy** — (<sup><250></sup>Isaiah 35:10).

**8. judgment** — justice, which requires that I should restore My people, and give them double in compensation for their sufferings.

**robbery for burnt offering** — rather, from a different *Hebrew* root, *the spoil of iniquity* [HORSLEY]. So in <sup><306></sup>Job 5:6. Hating, as I do, the *rapine*, combined *with iniquity*, perpetrated on My people by their enemies, I will vindicate Israel.

**direct ... work in truth** — rather, “I will give them the *reward of their work*” (compare <sup><200></sup>Isaiah 40:10, *Margin*; <sup><244></sup>Isaiah 49:4, *Margin*; <sup><261></sup>Isaiah 62:11, *Margin*).

**9. known** — honorably; shall be *illustrious* (<sup><562></sup>Psalms 67:2).

**people** — rather, “peoples.”

**seed ... blessed** — (<sup><262></sup>Isaiah 65:23).

**10. Zion** (<sup><268></sup>Isaiah 61:3) gives thanks for God’s returning favor (compare <sup><0146></sup>Luke 1:46,47 <sup><308></sup>Habakkuk 3:18).

**salvation ... righteousness** — inseparably connected together. The “robe” is a loose mantle thrown over the other parts of the dress (<sup><300></sup>Psalms 132:9,16 149:4 <sup><602></sup>Revelation 21:2 19:8).

***decketh himself with ornaments*** — rather “maketh himself a *priestly headdress*,” that is, a magnificent headdress, such as was worn by the high priest, namely, a miter and a plate, or crown of gold worn in front of it [AQUILA, etc.]; appropriate to the “kingdom of priests,” dedicated to the offering of spiritual sacrifices to God continually (<sup><1250></sup>Exodus 19:6 <sup><6150></sup>Revelation 5:10 20:6).

***jewels*** — rather, “ornaments” in general [BARNES].

11. (<sup><2518></sup>Isaiah 45:8,55:10,11 <sup><19718></sup>Psalm 72:3 85:11).

***bud*** — the tender shoots.

***praise*** — (<sup><2108></sup>Isaiah 60:18 62:7).

# CHAPTER 62

## ISAIAH 62:1-12.

### INTERCESSORY PRAYERS FOR ZION'S RESTORATION, ACCOMPANYING GOD'S PROMISES OF IT, AS THE APPOINTED MEANS OF ACCOMPLISHING IT.

1. **I** — the prophet, as representative of all the praying people of God who love and intercede for Zion (compare <sup>23510</sup>Isaiah 62:6,7 <sup>494213</sup>Psalms 102:13-17), or else Messiah (compare <sup>23516</sup>Isaiah 62:6). So Messiah is represented as unfainting in His efforts for His people (<sup>23045</sup>Isaiah 42:4 50:7).

**righteousness thereof** — not its own inherently, but imputed to it, for its restoration to God's favor: hence "*salvation*" answers to it in the parallelism. "Judah" is to be "*saved*" through "the Lord *our* (Judah's and the Church's) *righteousness*" (<sup>23216</sup>Jeremiah 23:6).

**as brightness** — properly the bright shining of the rising sun (<sup>23019</sup>Isaiah 60:19 4:5 <sup>42304</sup>2 Samuel 23:4 <sup>42048</sup>Proverbs 4:18).

**lamp** — blazing torch.

2. (<sup>23110</sup>Isaiah 11:10 42:1-6 49:7,22,23 60:3,5,16).

**new name** — expression of thy new and improved condition (<sup>23516</sup>Isaiah 62:4), the more valuable and lasting as being conferred by Jehovah Himself (<sup>23512</sup>Isaiah 62:12 <sup>23515</sup>Isaiah 65:15 <sup>46127</sup>Revelation 2:17 3:12).

3. (<sup>3016</sup>Zechariah 9:16)

**in ... hand of ... Lord** — As a crown is worn on the *head*, not "in the hand," *hand* must here be figurative for "under the Lord's *protection*" (compare <sup>4538</sup>Deuteronomy 33:3). "All His saints are in thy hand." His people are *in His hand* at the same time that they are "a crown of glory" to Him (<sup>4612</sup>Revelation 6:2 19:12); reciprocally, He is "a crown of glory and a diadem of beauty" to them (<sup>23515</sup>Isaiah 28:5; compare <sup>34817</sup>Malachi 3:17).

4. **be termed** — *be* "forsaken," so as that that term could be applicable to thee.

**Hepzi-bah** — (<sup>4200</sup>2 Kings 21:1), the name of Hezekiah's wife, a type of Jerusalem, as Hezekiah was of Messiah (<sup>2301</sup>Isaiah 32:1): "my delight is in her."

**Beulah** — "Thou art married." See the same contrast of Zion's past and future state under the same figure (<sup>2504</sup>Isaiah 54:4-6 <sup>6202</sup>Revelation 21:2,4).

**land ... married** — to Jehovah as its *Lord and Husband*: implying not only ownership, but *protection* on the part of the Owner [HORSLEY].

**5. thy sons** — rather, changing the points, which are of no authority in Hebrew, "thy builder" or "restorer," that is, God; for in the parallel clause, and in <sup>2301</sup>Isaiah 62:4, God is implied as being "married" to her; whereas her "sons" could hardly be said to marry their mother; and in <sup>2308</sup>Isaiah 49:18, they are said to be her *bridal ornaments*, not her husband. The plural form, *builders*, is used of God in reverence as "husbands" (see on <sup>2505</sup>Isaiah 54:5).

**over the bride** — in the possession of the bride (<sup>2369</sup>Isaiah 65:19 <sup>2634</sup>Jeremiah 32:41 <sup>3687</sup>Zephaniah 3:17).

**6. I** — Isaiah speaking in the person of the Messiah.

**watchmen upon ... walls** — image from the watches set upon a city's wall to look out for the approach of a messenger with good tidings (<sup>2307</sup>Isaiah 52:7,8); the good tidings of the return of the Jewish exiles from Babylon, prefiguring the return from the present dispersion (compare <sup>2306</sup>Isaiah 21:6-11 <sup>56:10</sup> <sup>2687</sup>Ezekiel 3:17 <sup>33:7</sup>). The watches in the East are announced by a loud cry to mark the vigilance of the watchmen.

**ye that ... mention ... Lord** — Hebrew, "ye that are the Lord's remembrancers"; God's servants who by their prayers "put God in remembrance" of His promises (<sup>2366</sup>Isaiah 43:26); we are required to remind God, as if God could, which He cannot, *forget* His promises (<sup>4349</sup>Psalms 119:49 <sup>2421</sup>Jeremiah 14:21).

**7. no rest** — Hebrew, "silence"; keep not silence *yourselves*, nor let *Him* rest in silence. Compare as to Messiah Himself, "I will not hold ... peace ... not rest" (<sup>2301</sup>Isaiah 62:1); Messiah's watchmen (<sup>2306</sup>Isaiah 62:6,7) imitate *Him* (<sup>2301</sup>Isaiah 62:1) in intercessory "prayer without ceasing" for Jerusalem (<sup>4349</sup>Psalms 122:6 <sup>51:18</sup>); also for the spiritual Jerusalem, the Church (<sup>2801</sup>Luke 18:1,7 <sup>4109</sup>Romans 1:9).

**a praise** — (See on <sup>2301</sup>Isaiah 61:11; <sup>3687</sup>Zephaniah 3:20).

**8. sworn by ... right hand** — His mighty instrument of accomplishing His will (compare <sup>23523</sup>Isaiah 45:23 <sup>3063</sup>Hebrews 6:13).

**sons of ... stranger** — *Foreigners* shall no more rob thee of the fruit of thy labors (compare <sup>23621</sup>Isaiah 65:21,22).

**9. eat ... and praise** — not consume it on their own lusts, and without thanksgiving.

**drink it in ... courts** — They who have *gathered* the vintage shall drink it at the feasts held in the courts surrounding the temple (<sup>61217</sup>Deuteronomy 12:17,18 14:23, etc.).

**10.** What Isaiah in the person of Messiah had engaged in (<sup>23107</sup>Isaiah 62:1) unrestingly to seek, and what the watchmen were unrestingly to pray for (<sup>23107</sup>Isaiah 62:7), and what Jehovah solemnly promised (<sup>23108</sup>Isaiah 62:8,9), is now to be fulfilled; the Gentile nations are commanded to “go through the gates” (either of their own cities [ROSENMULLER] or of Jerusalem [MAURER]), in order to remove all obstacles out of “the way of *the* people (Israel)” (see on <sup>23074</sup>Isaiah 7:14; <sup>2308</sup>Isaiah 40:3 52:10-12).

**standard** — for the dispersed Jews to rally round, with a view to their return (<sup>23422</sup>Isaiah 49:22 11:12).

**11. salvation** — embodied in the Savior (see <sup>3099</sup>Zechariah 9:9).

**his work** — rather, *recompense* (<sup>23010</sup>Isaiah 40:10).

**12. Sought out** — *Sought after and highly prized* by Jehovah; answering to “not forsaken” in the parallel clause; no longer abandoned, but loved; image from a wife (<sup>23104</sup>Isaiah 62:4 <sup>23104</sup>Jeremiah 30:14).

# CHAPTER 63

## ISAIAH 63:1-19.

### MESSIAH COMING AS THE AVENGER, IN ANSWER TO HIS PEOPLE'S PRAYERS.

Messiah, approaching Jerusalem after having avenged His people on His and their enemies, is represented under imagery taken from the destruction of “Edom,” the type of the last and most bitter foes of God and His people (see <sup>2345</sup>Isaiah 34:5, etc.).

1. *Who* — the question of the prophet in prophetic vision.

*died* — scarlet with blood (<sup>2351</sup>Isaiah 63:2,3 <sup>4693</sup>Revelation 19:13).

*Bozrah* — (See on <sup>2346</sup>Isaiah 34:6).

*travelling* — rather, stately; literally, “throwing back the head” [GESENIUS].

*speak in righteousness* — answer of Messiah. I, who have in faithfulness given a promise of deliverance, am now about to fulfill it. Rather, speak of righteousness (<sup>2359</sup>Isaiah 45:19 46:13); *salvation* being meant as the result of His “righteousness” [MAURER].

*save* — The same Messiah that destroys the unbeliever *saves* the believer.

2. The prophet asks why His garments are “died” and “red.”

*winefat* — rather, the “wine-press,” wherein the grapes were trodden with the feet; the juice would stain the garment of him who trod them (<sup>4649</sup>Revelation 14:19,20 19:15). The image was appropriate, as the country round Bozrah abounded in grapes. This final blow inflicted by Messiah and His armies (<sup>4693</sup>Revelation 19:13-15) shall decide His claim to the kingdoms usurped by Satan, and by the “beast,” to whom Satan delegates his power. It will be a day of judgment to the hostile Gentiles, as His first coming was a day of judgment to the unbelieving Jews.

3. Reply of Messiah. For the image, see <sup>2515</sup>Lamentations 1:15. He “treads the wine-press” here not as a *sufferer*, but as an *inflicter* of vengeance.

*will tread ... shall be ... will stain* — rather preterites, “I trod ... trampled ... was sprinkled ... I stained.”

**blood** — literally, “spirited juice” of the grape, pressed out by treading [GESENIUS].

**4. is** — rather, “was.” This assigns the reason why He has thus destroyed the foe (<sup>308B</sup>Zephaniah 3:8).

**my redeemed** — My people *to be redeemed*.

**day ... year** — here, as in <sup>230B</sup>Isaiah 34:8 61:2, the time of “vengeance” is described as a “day”; that of grace and of “recompense” to the “redeemed,” as a “year.”

**5.** The same words as in <sup>259C</sup>Isaiah 59:16, except that *there* it is His “righteousness,” *here* it is His “fury,” which is said to have upheld Him.

**6.** Rather, preterites, “I *trod* down ... made them drunk.” The same image occurs <sup>251F</sup>Isaiah 51:17,21-23 <sup>497B</sup>Psalms 75:8 <sup>253B</sup>Jeremiah 25:26,27.

**will bring down ... strength to ... earth** — rather, “I *spilled* their life-blood (the same *Hebrew* words as in <sup>243B</sup>Isaiah 63:3) on the earth” [LOWTH and *Septuagint*].

**7.** Israel’s penitential confession and prayer for restoration (<sup>49A27</sup>Psalms 102:17,20), extending from <sup>260F</sup>Isaiah 63:7-64:12.

**loving-kindnesses ... praises ... mercies ... loving-kindnesses** — The *plurals* and the repetitions imply that language is inadequate to express the full extent of God’s goodness.

**us** — the dispersed Jews at the time just preceding their final restoration.

**house of Israel** — of all ages; God was good not merely to the Jews now dispersed, but to Israel in every age of its history.

**8. he** — Jehovah “said,” that is, thought, in choosing them as His covenant-people; so “said” (<sup>495C</sup>Psalms 95:10). Not that God was ignorant that the Jews would not keep faith with Him; but God is here said, according to *human* modes of thought to *say within Himself* what He might *naturally* have expected, as the result of His goodness to the Jews; thus the enormity of their *unnatural* perversity is the more vividly set forth.

**lie** — prove false to Me (compare <sup>4947</sup>Psalms 44:17).

**so** — in virtue of His having *chosen* them, He became their *Savior*. So the “therefore” (<sup>281B</sup>Jeremiah 31:33). His eternal *choice* is the ground of His actually saving men (<sup>400B</sup>Ephesians 1:3,4).

**9. *he was afflicted*** — *English Version* reads the *Hebrew* as the *Keri* (*Margin*), does, “There was affliction to Him.” But the *Chetib* (text) reads, “There was no affliction” (the change in *Hebrew* being only of one letter); that is, “In all their affliction there was no (utterly overwhelming) affliction” [GESENIUS]; or, for “*Hardly* had an affliction befallen them, when the angel of His presence saved them” [MAURER]; or, as best suits the parallelism, “In all their straits there was no straitness in His goodness to them” [HOUBIGANT], (<sup>07016</sup>Judges 10:16 <sup>33107</sup>Micah 2:7 <sup>4062</sup>2 Corinthians 6:12).

***angel of his presence*** — literally, “of His face,” that is, who stands before Him continually; Messiah (<sup>02449</sup>Exodus 14:19 23:20,21 <sup>31080</sup>Proverbs 8:30), language applicable to no creature (<sup>02334</sup>Exodus 32:34 33:2,14 <sup>04216</sup>Numbers 20:16 <sup>3988</sup>Malachi 3:1).

***bare them*** — (<sup>2408</sup>Isaiah 46:3,4 40:11 <sup>0290</sup>Exodus 19:4 <sup>0521</sup>Deuteronomy 32:11,12).

**10. *vexed*** — grieved (<sup>0780</sup>Psalm 78:40 95:10 <sup>4075</sup>Acts 7:51 <sup>4003</sup>Ephesians 4:30 <sup>8780</sup>Hebrews 3:10,17).

***he fought*** — rather, “He it was that fought,” namely, the angel of His presence [HORSLEY], (<sup>2108</sup>Lamentations 2:5).

**11. *remembered*** — Notwithstanding *their* perversity, He forgot not *His* covenant of old; therefore He did not wholly forsake them (<sup>0330</sup>Leviticus 26:40-42,44,45 <sup>0966</sup>Psalm 106:45,46); the Jews make this their plea with God, that He should not now forsake them.

***saying*** — God is represented, in human language, mentally speaking of Himself and His former acts of love to Israel, as His ground for pitying them notwithstanding their rebellion.

***sea*** — Red Sea.

***shepherd*** — Moses; or if the *Hebrew* be read *plural*, “shepherds,” Moses, Aaron, and the other leaders (so <sup>3771</sup>Psalm 77:20).

***put ... Spirit ... within him*** — *Hebrew*, “in the inward parts of him,” that is, Moses; or it refers to the flock, “in the midst of his people” (<sup>04117</sup>Numbers 11:17,25 <sup>4690</sup>Nehemiah 9:20 <sup>3705</sup>Haggai 2:5).

**12.** The *right hand* of Moses was but the instrument; the *arm* of God was the real mover (<sup>02516</sup>Exodus 15:6 14:21).

***dividing the water*** — (<sup>4691</sup>Nehemiah 9:11 <sup>4783</sup>Psalm 78:13).

**13. *deep*** — literally, “the tossing and roaring sea.”

**wilderness** — rather, the “open plain” [HORSLEY], wherein there is no obstacle to cause a horse in its course the danger of stumbling.

**14. As a beast ... rest** — image from a herd led “down” from the hills to a fertile and well-watered “valley” (<sup><423P></sup>Psalm 23:2); so God’s Spirit “caused Israel to rest” in the promised land after their weary wanderings.

**to make ... name** — (So <sup><236D></sup>Isaiah 63:12 <sup><1072></sup>2 Samuel 7:23).

**15.** Here begins a fervent appeal to God to pity Israel now on the ground of His former benefits.

**habitation of ... holiness** — (<sup><2575></sup>Isaiah 57:15 <sup><6345></sup>Deuteronomy 26:15 <sup><4872></sup>2 Chronicles 30:27 <sup><4884></sup>Psalm 33:14 80:14).

**zeal ... strength** — evinced formerly for Thy people.

**sounding of ... bowels** — *Thine emotions of compassion* (<sup><236E></sup>Isaiah 16:11 <sup><2820></sup>Jeremiah 31:20 48:36 <sup><3108></sup>Hosea 11:8).

**16. thou ... father** — of Israel, by right not merely of creation, but also of electing adoption (<sup><2648></sup>Isaiah 64:8 <sup><6310></sup>Deuteronomy 32:6 <sup><1390></sup>1 Chronicles 29:10).

**though Abraham ... Israel** — It had been the besetting temptation of the Jews to rest on the mere privilege of their descent from faithful Abraham and Jacob (<sup><1089></sup>Matthew 3:9 <sup><4839></sup>John 8:39 4:12); now at last they renounce this, to trust in God alone as their Father, notwithstanding all appearances to the contrary. Even though Abraham, our earthly father, on whom we have prided ourselves, disown us, *Thou* wilt not (<sup><2345></sup>Isaiah 49:15 <sup><4970></sup>Psalm 27:10). Isaac is not mentioned, because not *all* his posterity was admitted to the covenant, whereas all Jacob’s was; Abraham is specified because he was the first father of the Jewish race.

**everlasting** — an argument why He should help them, namely, because of His *everlasting immutability*.

**17. made us to err** — that is, “suffer” us to err and to be hardened in our heart. They do not mean to deny their own blameworthiness, but confess that through their own fault God gave them over to a reprobate mind (<sup><2369></sup>Isaiah 6:9,10 <sup><4990></sup>Psalm 119:10 <sup><6128></sup>Romans 1:28).

**Return** — (<sup><0406></sup>Numbers 10:36 <sup><4903></sup>Psalm 90:13).

**18. people of ... holiness** — Israel dedicated as holy unto God (<sup><2322></sup>Isaiah 62:12 <sup><6106></sup>Deuteronomy 7:6).

**possessed** — namely, the Holy Land, or Thy “sanctuary,” taken from the following clause, which is parallel to this (compare <sup>2340</sup>Isaiah 64:10,11 <sup>2976</sup>Psalm 74:6-8).

**thy** — an argument why God should help them; their cause is *His* cause.

**19. thine ... never** — rather, “We are Thine *from of old*; Thou barest not rule over them” [BARNES]. LOWTH translates, “We for long have been as those over whom Thou hast not ruled, who are not called by Thy name”; “for long” thus stands in contrast to “but a little while” (<sup>2689</sup>Isaiah 63:18). But the analogy of <sup>2689</sup>Isaiah 63:18 makes it likely that the first clause in this verse refers to the Jews, and the second to their foes, as *English Version* and BARNES translate it. The Jews’ foes are aliens who have unjustly intruded into the Lord’s heritage.

# CHAPTER 64

## ISAIAH 64:1-12.

### TRANSITION FROM COMPLAINT TO PRAYER.

1. **rend ... heavens** — bursting forth to execute vengeance, suddenly descending on Thy people's foe (<sup><498B></sup>Psalm 18:9 144:5 <sup><388B></sup>Habakkuk 3:5,6).

**flow down** — (<sup><078B></sup>Judges 5:5 <sup><300E></sup>Micah 1:4).

2. Oh, that Thy wrath would consume Thy foes *as the fire*. Rather, “as the fire burneth *the dry brushwood*” [GESENIUS].

3. **When** — Supply from <sup><260D></sup>Isaiah 64:2, “As when.”

**terrible things** — (<sup><498B></sup>Psalm 65:5).

**we looked not for** — far exceeding the expectation of any of our nation; unparalleled before (<sup><0240></sup>Exodus 34:10 <sup><498B></sup>Psalm 68:8).

**camest down** — on Mount Sinai.

**mountains flowed** — Repeated from <sup><260E></sup>Isaiah 64:1; they pray God to do the *very same things* for Israel now as in former ages. GESENIUS, instead of “flowed” here, and “flow” in <sup><260E></sup>Isaiah 64:1, translates from a different Hebrew root, “quake ... quaked”; but “fire” *melts* and *causes to flow*, rather than to *quake* (<sup><260D></sup>Isaiah 64:2).

4. **perceived by the ear** — Paul (<sup><400B></sup>1 Corinthians 2:9) has for this, “nor have entered into the heart of man”; the virtual sense, sanctioned by his inspired authority; men might hear with the outward ear, but they could only by the Spirit “perceive” with the “heart” the spiritual significance of God's acts, both those in relation to Israel, primarily referred to here, and those relating to the Gospel secondarily, which Paul refers to.

**O God ... what he ... prepared** — rather, “nor hath eye seen *a god* beside thee *who doeth such things*.” They refer to God's *past* marvellous acts in behalf of Israel as a plea for His now interposing for His people; but the Spirit, as Paul by inspiration shows, contemplated *further* God's revelation in the Gospel, which abounds in marvellous paradoxes never before heard of by carnal ear, not to be understood by mere human sagacity, and when foretold by the prophets not fully perceived or credited; and even after the

manifestation of Christ not to be understood save through the inward teaching of the Holy Ghost. These are partly past and present, and partly future; therefore Paul substitutes “prepared” for “doeth,” though his context shows he includes all three. For “waiteth” he has “love Him”; godly *waiting* on Him must flow from love, and not mere fear.

**5. meetest** — that is, Thou makest peace, or enterest into covenant with him (see on <sup><3408></sup>Isaiah 47:3).

**rejoiceth and worketh** — that is, who *with joyful willingness* worketh [GESENIUS] (<sup><4005></sup>Acts 10:35 <sup><4077></sup>John 7:17).

**those** — Thou meetest “those,” in apposition to “him” who represents a class whose characteristics “those that,” etc., more fully describes.

**remember thee in thy ways** — (<sup><2308></sup>Isaiah 26:8).

**sinned** — literally, “tripped,” carrying on the figure in “ways.”

**in those is continuance** — a plea to deprecate the *continuance* of God’s *wrath*; it is not in Thy wrath that there is continuance (<sup><2547></sup>Isaiah 54:7,8 <sup><3815></sup>Psalms 30:5 103:9), but in Thy ways (“those”), namely, of covenant mercy to Thy people (<sup><3075></sup>Micah 7:18-20 <sup><3086></sup>Malachi 3:6); on the strength of the everlasting continuance of His covenant they infer by faith, “we shall be saved.” God “remembered” for them His covenant (<sup><4966></sup>Psalms 106:45), though *they* often “remembered not” Him (<sup><4982></sup>Psalms 78:42). CASTELLIO translates, “we have sinned for long in them (‘thy ways’), and could we then be saved?” But they hardly would use such a plea when their very object was to be saved.

**6. unclean thing** — legally unclean, as a leper. True of Israel, everywhere now cut off by unbelief and by God’s judgments from the congregation of the saints.

**righteousness** — plural, “uncleanness” extended to *every particular act* of theirs, even to their prayers and praises. True of the best doings of the unregenerate (<sup><3086></sup>Philippians 3:6-8 <sup><3015></sup>Titus 1:15 <sup><3106></sup>Hebrews 11:6).

**filthy rags** — literally, a “menstruous rag” (<sup><4853></sup>Leviticus 15:33 20:18 <sup><2317></sup>Lamentations 1:17).

**fade ... leaf** — (<sup><4905></sup>Psalms 90:5,6).

**7. stirreth** — *rouseth* himself from spiritual drowsiness.

**take hold** — (<sup><2705></sup>Isaiah 27:5).

**8. father** — (<sup><2696></sup>Isaiah 63:16).

**clay ... potter** — (<sup>2396</sup>Isaiah 29:16 45:9). Unable to mould themselves aright, they beg the sovereign will of God to mould them unto salvation, even as He *made* them at the first, and is their “Father.”

9. (<sup>4740</sup>Psalms 74:1,2).

**we are ... thy people** — (<sup>2449</sup>Jeremiah 14:9,21).

10. **holy cities** — No city but Jerusalem is called “the holy city” (<sup>2382</sup>Isaiah 48:2 52:1); the *plural*, therefore, refers to *the upper and the lower parts* of the same city Jerusalem [VITRINGA]; or all Judea was holy to God, so its *cities* were deemed “holy” [MAURER]. But the parallelism favors VITRINGA. *Zion* and *Jerusalem* (the one city) answering to “holy cities.”

11. **house** — the temple.

**beautiful** — includes the idea of *glorious* (<sup>4130</sup>Mark 13:1 <sup>4482</sup>Acts 3:2).

**burned** — (<sup>4747</sup>Psalms 74:7 <sup>2107</sup>Lamentations 2:7 <sup>4469</sup>2 Chronicles 36:19). Its destruction under Nebuchadnezzar prefigured that under Titus.

**pleasant things** — *Hebrew*, “objects of desire”; our homes, our city, and all its dear associations.

12. **for these things** — Wilt Thou, *notwithstanding* these calamities of Thy people, still refuse Thy aid (<sup>2324</sup>Isaiah 42:14)?

# CHAPTER 65

## ISAIAH 65:1-25.

### GOD'S REPLY IN JUSTIFICATION OF HIS DEALINGS WITH ISRAEL.

In <sup><2609></sup>Isaiah 64:9, their plea was, “we are all Thy people.” In answer, God declares that *others* (Gentiles) would be taken into covenant with Him, while His ancient people would be rejected. The Jews were slow to believe this; hence Paul says (<sup><5109></sup>Romans 10:20) that Isaiah was “very bold” in advancing so unpopular a sentiment; he implies what Paul states (<sup><8128></sup>Romans 2:28 9:6,7 11:1-31), that “they are not *all* (in opposition to the Jews’ plea, <sup><2609></sup>Isaiah 64:9) Israel which are of Israel.” God’s reason for so severely dealing with Israel is not changeableness in Him, but sin in them (<sup><2381></sup>Isaiah 65:2-7). Yet the whole nation shall not be destroyed, but only the wicked; a remnant shall be saved (<sup><2368></sup>Isaiah 65:8-10,11-16). There shall be, finally, universal blessedness to Israel, such as they had prayed for (<sup><2677></sup>Isaiah 65:17-25).

**1. *I am sought*** — Hebrew, “I have granted access unto Me to them,” etc. (so <sup><3408></sup>Ezekiel 14:3, “Should I be *inquired of*”; <sup><4028></sup>Ephesians 2:18).

***found*** — <sup><5109></sup>Romans 10:20 renders this, “I was made manifest.” As an instance of the sentiment in the clause, “I am sought,” etc., see <sup><6021></sup>John 12:21; of the sentiment in this clause, <sup><4018></sup>Acts 9:5. Compare as to the Gentile converts, <sup><4012></sup>Ephesians 2:12,13.

***Behold me*** — (<sup><2352></sup>Isaiah 45:22).

***nation ... not called by my name*** — that is, the Gentiles. God retorts in their own words (<sup><2609></sup>Isaiah 63:19) that their plea as being exclusively “called by His name” will not avail, for God’s gospel invitation is not so exclusive (<sup><8125></sup>Romans 9:25 1:16).

**2. *spread out ... hands*** — inviting them earnestly (<sup><2024></sup>Proverbs 1:24).

***all ... day*** — continually, late and early (<sup><2473></sup>Jeremiah 7:13).

***rebellious people*** — Israel, whose rebellion was the occasion of God’s turning to the Gentiles (<sup><5111></sup>Romans 11:11,12,15).

**way ... not good** — that is, the very reverse of good, very bad (<sup>2661</sup>Ezekiel 36:31).

**3. continually** — answering to “all the day” (<sup>2381</sup>Isaiah 65:2). God was continually inviting them, and they *continually* offending Him (<sup>4632</sup>Deuteronomy 32:21).

**to my face** — They made no attempt to hide their sin (<sup>2381</sup>Isaiah 3:9). Compare “before Me” (<sup>4218</sup>Exodus 20:3).

**in gardens** — (See on <sup>2029</sup>Isaiah 1:29; <sup>2367</sup>Isaiah 66:17 <sup>4876</sup>Leviticus 17:5).

**altars of brick** — *Hebrew*, “bricks.” God had commanded His altars to be of *unhewn stone* (<sup>4218</sup>Exodus 20:25). This was in order to separate them, even in *external respects*, from idolaters; also, as all chiselling was forbidden, they could not inscribe superstitious symbols on them as the heathen did. Bricks were more easily so inscribed than stone; hence their use for the cuneiform inscriptions at Babylon, and also for idolatrous altars. Some, not so well, have supposed that the “bricks” here mean the flat brick-paved *roofs* of houses on which they sacrificed to the sun, etc. (<sup>4292</sup>2 Kings 23:12 <sup>2493</sup>Jeremiah 19:13).

**4. remain among ... graves** — namely, for purposes of necromancy, as if to hold converse with the dead (<sup>2389</sup>Isaiah 8:19,20; compare <sup>4118</sup>Mark 5:3); or, for the sake of purifications, usually performed at night among sepulchres, to appease the manes [MAURER].

**monuments** — *Hebrew*, “pass the night in *hidden recesses*,” either the idol’s *inmost shrines* (“consecrated precincts”) [HORSLEY], where they used to sleep, in order to have divine communications in dreams [JEROME]; or better, on account of the parallel “graves,” *sepulchral caves* [MAURER].

**eat swine’s flesh** — To eat it at all was contrary to God’s law (<sup>4817</sup>Leviticus 11:7), but it much increased their guilt that they ate it in idolatrous sacrifices (compare <sup>2367</sup>Isaiah 66:17). VARRO (*On Agriculture*, 2.4) says that swine were first used in sacrifices; the Latins sacrificed a pig to Ceres; it was also offered on occasion of treaties and marriages.

**broth** — so called from the “pieces” (*Margin*) or fragments of bread over which the broth was poured [GESENIUS]; such broth, made of swine’s flesh, offered in sacrifice, was thought to be especially acceptable to the idol and was used in magic rites. Or, “fragments (pieces) of abominable foods,” etc. This fourth clause explains more fully the third, as the second does the first [MAURER].

**is in** — rather, literally, “is their vessels,” that is, constitute their vessels’ contents. The Jews, in our Lord’s days, and ever since the return from Babylon, have been free from idolatry; still the imagery from idolatrous abominations, as being the sin most loathsome in God’s eyes and that most prevalent in Isaiah’s time, is employed to describe the foul sin of Israel in all ages, culminating in their killing Messiah, and still rejecting Him.

5. (<sup>4011</sup>Matthew 9:11 <sup>4030</sup>Luke 5:30 18:11 <sup>4019</sup>Jude 1:19). Applicable to the hypocritical self-justifiers of our Lord’s time.

**smoke** — alluding to the smoke of their self-righteous sacrifices; the fire of God’s *wrath* was kindled at the sight, and exhibited itself in the *smoke* that breathed forth from His nostrils; in *Hebrew* the nose is the seat of anger; and the nostrils distended in wrath, as it were, breathe forth smoke [ROSENMULLER] (<sup>4988</sup>Psalms 18:8).

6. **written before me** — “it is decreed by Me,” namely, what follows (<sup>4835</sup>Job 13:26), [MAURER]; or, their guilt is recorded before Me (compare <sup>4070</sup>Daniel 7:10 <sup>4022</sup>Revelation 20:12 <sup>4016</sup>Malachi 3:16).

**into ... bosom** — (<sup>4992</sup>Psalms 79:12 <sup>4028</sup>Jeremiah 32:18 <sup>4038</sup>Luke 6:38). The Orientals used the loose fold of the garment falling on “the bosom” or lap, as a receptacle for carrying things. The sense thus is: I will repay their sin so *abundantly* that the hand will not be able to receive it; it will need the spacious *fold on the bosom* to contain it [ROSENMULLER]. Rather it is, “I will repay it to *the very person from whom it has emanated*.” Compare “God did render the evil of the men of Shechem upon their heads” (<sup>4057</sup>Judges 9:57 <sup>4970</sup>Psalms 7:16) [GESENIUS].

7. Their sin had been accumulating from age to age until God at last repaid it in full.

**mountains** — (<sup>2507</sup>Isaiah 57:7 <sup>3680</sup>Ezekiel 18:6 20:27,28 <sup>2043</sup>Hosea 4:13).

**their** — “Your” had preceded. From speaking *to*, He speaks *of* them; this implies growing alienation from them and greater distance.

**work** — the full *recompense* of their work (so <sup>2306</sup>Isaiah 49:4).

8. **new wine** — *as if some grapes having good wine-producing juice in them*, be found in a cluster which the vinedresser was about to throw away as bad, and one saith, etc.

**blessing** — that is, good wine-producing juice (compare <sup>4093</sup>Judges 9:13 <sup>4094</sup>Joel 2:14).

**so** — God will spare the godly “remnant,” while the ungodly mass of the nation shall be destroyed (<sup>2309</sup>Isaiah 1:9 6:13 10:21 11:11,12-16).

**my servants** — the godly remnant. But HORSLEY, “for the sake of my servant, Messiah.”

**9. seed** — “the holy seed” (<sup>2163</sup>Isaiah 6:13), a posterity from Jacob, designed to repossess the Holy Land, forfeited by the sin of the former Jews.

**my mountains** — Jerusalem and the rest of Judea, peculiarly God’s (compare <sup>2302</sup>Isaiah 2:2 11:9 14:32).

**it** — the Holy Land.

**elect** — (<sup>2365</sup>Isaiah 65:15,22).

**10. Sharon** — (See on <sup>2339</sup>Isaiah 33:9; <sup>2382</sup>Isaiah 35:2).

**Achor** — meaning “trouble”; a valley near Jericho, so called from the trouble caused to Israel by Achan’s sin (<sup>4074</sup>Joshua 7:24). “The valley of Achor,” proverbial for whatever caused calamity, shall become proverbial joy and prosperity (<sup>3225</sup>Hosea 2:15).

**11. holy mountain** — Moriah, on which the temple was.

**troop** — rather “Gad,” the Babylonian god of fortune, the planet Jupiter, answering to Baal or Bel; the Arabs called it “the Greater Good Fortune”; and the planet Venus answering to Meni, “the Lesser Good Fortune” [GESENIUS, KIMCHI, etc.]. Tables were laid out for their idols with all kinds of viands, and a cup containing a mixture of wine and honey, in Egypt especially, on the last day of the year [JEROME].

**drink offering** — rather, “mixed drink.”

**number** — rather, “Meni”; as goddess of fortune she was thought to number the fates of men. VITRINGA understands Gad to be the sun; Meni the moon, or Ashtaroth or Astarte (<sup>4113</sup>1 Kings 11:33).

**12. number** — “doom” you. Alluding to the “number,” as Meni (<sup>2361</sup>Isaiah 65:11) means. Retribution in kind, the punishment answering to the sin (compare <sup>4334</sup>2 Chronicles 36:14-17).

**I called, ye ... not answer** — “I called,” though “none had called” upon Me (<sup>2347</sup>Isaiah 64:7); yet even then none “answered” (<sup>2128</sup>Proverbs 1:24). Contrast with this God and His people’s mutual fellowship in prayer (<sup>2334</sup>Isaiah 65:24).

**13. eat** — enjoy all blessings from me (So 5:1).

**hungry** — (<sup>3006</sup>Amos 4:6 8:11). This may refer to the siege of Jerusalem under Titus, when 1,100,000 are said to have perished by famine; thus <sup>2365</sup>Isaiah 65:15 will refer to God's people without distinction of Jew and Gentile receiving "another name," namely, that of *Christians* [HOUBIGANT]. A further fulfillment may still remain, just before the creation of the "new heavens and earth," as the context, <sup>2367</sup>Isaiah 65:17, implies.

**14. howl** — (<sup>2350</sup>Isaiah 15:2 <sup>4082</sup>Matthew 8:12).

**15. curse** — The name of "Jew" has been for long a formula of execration (compare <sup>3022</sup>Jeremiah 29:22); if one wishes to curse another, he can utter nothing worse than this, "God make thee what the Jew is!" Contrast the formula (<sup>0481</sup>Genesis 48:20) [MAURER].

**my chosen** — the elect Church, gathered from Jews and Gentiles, called by "another name," *Christians* (<sup>4112</sup>Acts 11:26). However (see on <sup>2363</sup>Isaiah 65:13), as "My chosen," or "elect," in <sup>2351</sup>Isaiah 65:3, refers to the "seed of Jacob," *the believing Jews*, hereafter about to possess their land (<sup>2369</sup>Isaiah 65:19,22), are *ultimately* meant by "My chosen," as contrasted with the unbelieving Jews ("ye"). These elect Jews shall be called by "another," or a *new name*, that is, shall no longer be "forsaken" of God for unbelief, but shall be His "delight" and "married" to Him (<sup>2310</sup>Isaiah 62:2,4).

**thee** — unbelieving Israel. *Isaiah* here speaks of God, whereas in the preceding sentences *God Himself* spake. This change of persons marks without design how completely the prophet realized God with him and in him, so that he passes, without formally announcing it, from God's words to his own, and vice versa, both alike being from God.

**16. That he** — rather, "he who," etc.

**blesseth**, etc. — (<sup>3927</sup>Psalms 72:17 <sup>3002</sup>Jeremiah 4:2).

**God of truth** — very God, as opposed to *false gods*; *Hebrew, Amen*: the very name of Messiah (<sup>4002</sup>2 Corinthians 1:20 <sup>4184</sup>Revelation 3:14), faithful to His promises (<sup>4017</sup>John 1:17 6:32). Real, substantial, spiritual, eternal, as opposed to the shadowy types of the law.

**sweareth**, etc. — God alone shall be appealed to as God (<sup>2308</sup>Isaiah 19:18 <sup>4033</sup>Deuteronomy 6:13 <sup>3661</sup>Psalms 63:11).

**troubles** — that is, sins, provocations [LOWTH]. Rather, *calamities* caused by your sins; so far from these visiting you again, the very *remembrance* of

them is “hid from Mine eyes” by the magnitude of the blessings I will confer on you (<sup>2367</sup>Isaiah 65:17, etc.). [MAURER].

**17.** As Caleb inherited the same land which his feet trod on (<sup>4033</sup>Deuteronomy 1:36 <sup>6449</sup>Joshua 14:9), so Messiah and His saints shall inherit the renovated earth which once they trod while defiled by the enemy (<sup>2304</sup>Isaiah 34:4 51:16 66:22 <sup>3727</sup>Ezekiel 21:27 <sup>4018</sup>Psalms 2:8 37:11 <sup>6183</sup>2 Peter 3:13 <sup>8126</sup>Hebrews 12:26-28 <sup>6201</sup>Revelation 21:1).

***not be remembered*** — See on <sup>2261</sup>Isaiah 65:16, note on “troubles”; the words here answer to “the former ... forgotten,” etc. The former sorrows of the earth, under the fall, shall be so far from recurring, that their very remembrance shall be obliterated by the many mercies I will bestow on the new earth (<sup>6201</sup>Revelation 21:4-27).

**18. *rejoice for ever ... Jerusalem*** — (<sup>2511</sup>Isaiah 51:11). “Everlasting joy ... Zion.” Spiritually (<sup>3161</sup>1 Thessalonians 5:16).

**19.** (<sup>2311</sup>Isaiah 62:5).

***weeping ... no more*** — (<sup>2201</sup>Isaiah 25:7,8 35:10 <sup>6077</sup>Revelation 7:17 21:4), primarily, foretold of *Jerusalem*; secondarily, of *all* the redeemed.

**20.** The longevity of men in the first age of the world shall be enjoyed again.

***thence*** — from that time forward.

***infant of days*** — that is, an infant who shall only complete a few days; short-lived.

***filled ... days*** — None shall die without attaining a full old age.

***child ... die ... hundred years*** — that is “he that dieth an hundred years old shall die a mere child” [LOWTH].

***sinner ... hundred ... be accursed*** — “The sinner that dieth at an hundred years shall be deemed accursed,” that is, his death at so early an age, which in those days the hundredth year will be regarded, just as if it were mere childhood, shall be deemed the effect of God’s special visitation in wrath [ROSENMULLER]. This passage proves that the better age to come on earth, though much superior to the present will not be a perfect state; sin and death shall have place in it (compare <sup>6107</sup>Revelation 20:7,8), but much less frequently than now.

**21.** (See on <sup>2318</sup>Isaiah 62:8; <sup>3094</sup>Amos 9:14).

22. They shall not experience the curse pronounced (<sup><0336></sup>Leviticus 26:16 <sup><6330></sup>Deuteronomy 28:30).

*tree* — among the most *long-lived* of objects in nature. They shall live as long as the trees they “plant” (compare <sup><2308></sup>Isaiah 61:3, end of verse; <sup><1922></sup>Psalms 92:12).

*enjoy* — *Hebrew*, “consume,” “wear out”; they shall live to enjoy the last of it (<sup><2639></sup>Isaiah 62:9).

23. *bring forth for trouble* — literally, “for terror,” that is, “They shall not bring forth children for a *sudden death*” (<sup><0336></sup>Leviticus 26:16 <sup><2458></sup>Jeremiah 15:8).

*seed ... blessed* — (<sup><2309></sup>Isaiah 61:9).

*offspring with them* — (<sup><2002></sup>Hosea 9:12). “Their offspring shall be with themselves” [MAURER]; not “brought forth” only to be cut off by “sudden death” (see the parallel clause).

24. Contrast <sup><2647></sup>Isaiah 64:7, “none ... calleth,” etc.; and see on <sup><2512></sup>Isaiah 65:12, “I called, ye did not answer.” MAURER translates, “They shall hardly (literally, “not yet”) call, when (literally, “and”) I will answer; they shall be still speaking, when I will hear” (<sup><4936></sup>Psalms 32:5; <sup><2001></sup>Daniel 9:20,21).

25. (See on <sup><2310></sup>Isaiah 11:6).

*and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock* — (See on <sup><2310></sup>Isaiah 11:7).

*and dust* — rather, “but dust,” etc. The curse shall *remain* on the serpent [HORSLEY], (<sup><0034></sup>Genesis 3:14 <sup><3317></sup>Micah 7:17). “*To lick the dust*” is figurative of the utter and perpetual *degradation* of Satan and his emissaries (<sup><2423></sup>Isaiah 49:23 <sup><1929></sup>Psalms 72:9). Satan fell *self-tempted*; therefore no atonement was contrived for him, as there was for man, who fell by *his* temptation (<sup><6106></sup>Jude 1:6 <sup><4044></sup>John 8:44). From his peculiar connection with the earth and man, it has been conjectured that the exciting cause of his rebellion was God’s declaration that human nature was to be raised into union with the Godhead; this was “the truth” concerning the person of the Son of God which “he abode not in”; it galled his pride that a lower race was to be raised to that which he had aspired to (<sup><3401></sup>1 Timothy 3:6). How exultingly he might say, when man fell through him, “*God would raise manhood into union with Himself; I have brought it down below the beasts by sin!*” At that very moment and spot he was told that the seed of the abhorred race, man, should bruise his head (<sup><6103></sup>1 John 3:8). He was raised up for this, to show forth God’s glory (<sup><0106></sup>Exodus 9:16 <sup><6017></sup>Romans 9:17). In his unfallen state he may have been God’s vicegerent over the earth and

the animal kingdom before man: this will account for his assuming the form of a serpent (<sup><0033></sup>Genesis 3:1). Man succeeded to that office (<sup><0029></sup>Genesis 2:19,20), but forfeited it by sin, whence Satan became “prince of this world”; Jesus Christ supplants the usurper, and as “Son of man” regains the lost inheritance (<sup><0088></sup>Psalms 8:4-8). The steps in Satan’s overthrow are these: he is cast out, first, from heaven (<sup><6017></sup>Revelation 12:7-9) on earth; next, he is bound a thousand years (<sup><6010></sup>Revelation 20:2,3); finally, he is cast into the lake of fire for ever (<sup><6010></sup>Revelation 20:10).

*the serpent’s meat* — (See on <sup><2008></sup>Isaiah 11:8).

*They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain* — (See on <sup><2009></sup>Isaiah 11:9).

# CHAPTER 66

## ISAIAH 66:1-24.

### THE HUMBLE COMFORTED, THE UNGODLY CONDEMNED, AT THE LORD'S APPEARING: JERUSALEM MADE A JOY ON EARTH.

This closing chapter is *the summary* of Isaiah's prophecies as to the last days, hence the similarity of its sentiments with what went before.

**1. heaven ... throne ... where is ... house ... ye build** — The same sentiment is expressed, as a precautionary proviso for the majesty of God in deigning to own any earthly temple as His, as if He could be circumscribed by space (<sup><1827></sup>1 Kings 8:27) in inaugurating the temple of stone; next, as to the temple of the Holy Ghost (<sup><478></sup>Acts 7:48,49); lastly here, as to “the tabernacle of God with men” (<sup><311></sup>Isaiah 2:2,3 <sup><368></sup>Ezekiel 43:4,7 <sup><618></sup>Revelation 21:3).

**where** — rather, “what is this house that ye are building, etc. — what place is this for My rest?” [VITRINGA].

**2. have been** — namely, made by Me. Or, absolutely, *were* things *made*; and therefore belong to Me, the Creator [JEROME].

**look** — have regard.

**poor** — humble (<sup><2575></sup>Isaiah 57:15).

**trembleth at ... word** — (<sup><221></sup>2 Kings 22:11,19 <sup><199></sup>Ezra 9:4). The spiritual temple of the heart, though not superseding the outward place of worship, is God's favorite dwelling (<sup><449></sup>John 14:23). In the final state in heaven there shall be “no temple,” but “the Lord God” Himself (<sup><612></sup>Revelation 21:22).

**3. God loathes even the sacrifices of the wicked** (<sup><311></sup>Isaiah 1:11 <sup><158></sup>Proverbs 15:8 28:9).

**is as if** — LOWTH not so well omits these words: “He that killeth an ox (presently after) murders a man” (as in <sup><323></sup>Ezekiel 23:39). But the omission in the *Hebrew* of “is as if” — increases the force of the *comparison*. *Human* victims were often offered by the heathen.

**dog's neck** — an abomination according to the Jewish law (<sup><1238></sup>Deuteronomy 23:18); perhaps made so, because dogs were venerated in Egypt. He does not honor this abomination by using the word “sacrifice,” but uses the degrading term, “cut off a dog’s neck” (<sup><1233></sup>Exodus 13:13 <sup><1220></sup>34:20). Dogs as unclean are associated with swine (<sup><1106></sup>Matthew 7:6 <sup><1222></sup>2 Peter 2:22).

**oblation** — unbloody: in antithesis to “swine’s *blood*” (<sup><2606></sup>Isaiah 65:4).

**burneth** — *Hebrew*, “he who offereth as a memorial oblation” (<sup><1011></sup>Leviticus 2:2).

**they have chosen** — opposed to the two first clauses of <sup><2606></sup>Isaiah 66:4: “as they have chosen their own ways, etc., so I will choose their delusions.

**4. delusions** — (<sup><1211></sup>2 Thessalonians 2:11), answering to “their own ways” (<sup><2606></sup>Isaiah 66:3; so <sup><1013></sup>Proverbs 1:31). However, the *Hebrew* means rather “vexations,” “calamities,” which also the parallelism to “fears” requires; “choose *their* calamities” means, “choose the calamities which they thought to escape by their own ways.”

**their fears** — the things they feared, to avert which their idolatrous “abominations” (<sup><2606></sup>Isaiah 66:3) were practiced.

**I called ... none ... answer** — (See on <sup><2602></sup>Isaiah 65:12; <sup><2604></sup>Isaiah 65:24; <sup><1073></sup>Jeremiah 7:13).

**did ... chose** — not only *did* the evil deed, but did it deliberately as a matter of choice (<sup><1013></sup>Romans 1:32). “*They* chose that in which *I* delighted not”; therefore, “*I* will choose” that in which *they* delight not, the “calamities” and “fears” which they were most anxious to avert.

**before mine eyes** — (See on <sup><2606></sup>Isaiah 65:3).

**5. tremble at ... word** — the same persons as in <sup><2602></sup>Isaiah 66:2, the believing few among the Jews.

**cast you out for my name’s sake** — excommunicate, as if too polluted to worship with them (<sup><2606></sup>Isaiah 65:5). So in Christ’s first sojourn on earth (<sup><1012></sup>Matthew 10:22 <sup><1012></sup>John 9:22,34 16:2 15:21). So it shall be again in the last times, when the believing shall be few (<sup><1238></sup>Luke 18:8).

**Let the Lord be glorified** — the mocking challenge of the persecutors, as if their violence towards you was from zeal for God. “Let the Lord show Himself glorious,” namely, *by manifesting Himself in your behalf*; as the parallelism to, “He shall *appear to your joy*,” requires (as in <sup><2606></sup>Isaiah 5:19;

compare <sup><2385></sup>Isaiah 28:15 <sup><57:4></sup>. So again Christ on the cross (<sup><4170></sup>Matthew 27:42,43).

**appear to your joy** — giving you “joy” instead of your “rebuke” (<sup><2318></sup>Isaiah 25:8,9).

**6. God, from Jerusalem and His “temple,” shall take vengeance on the enemy** (<sup><361E></sup>Ezekiel 43:1-8 <sup><301E></sup>Zechariah 12:2,3 14:3,19-21). The abrupt language of this verse marks the suddenness with which God destroys the hostile *Gentile* host outside: as <sup><236E></sup>Isaiah 66:5 refers to the confounding of the unbelieving *Jews*.

**voice of noise** — that is, the *Lord’s* loud-sounding voice (<sup><1083></sup>Psalms 68:33 29:3-9 <sup><3046></sup>1 Thessalonians 4:16).

**7. she** — Zion.

**Before ... travailed ... brought forth** — The accession of numbers, and of prosperity to her, shall be *sudden beyond all expectation* and *unattended with painful effort* (<sup><251E></sup>Isaiah 54:1,4,5). Contrast with this case of the future Jewish Church the *travail-pains* of the *Christian Church* in bringing forth “a man child” (<sup><662E></sup>Revelation 12:2,5). A man child’s birth is in the East a matter of special joy, while that of a female is not so; therefore, it here means the *manly sons* of the restored Jewish Church, the singular being used collectively for the *plural*: or the many sons being regarded as *one* under Messiah, who shall then be manifested as their *one representative Head*.

**8. earth** — rather, to suit the parallelism, “is a *country* (put for the *people* in it) *brought forth* in one day?” [LOWTH]. In *English Version* it means, The earth brings forth its productions gradually, not in one day (<sup><4008></sup>Mark 4:28).

**at once** — In this case, contrary to the usual growth of the nations by degrees, Israel starts into maturity at once.

**for** — rather, “is a nation born at once, *that Zion has*, so soon as she travailed, brought forth?” [MAURER].

**9. cause to bring forth, and shut** — rather, “Shall I who *beget*, restrain the birth?” [LOWTH], (<sup><250E></sup>Isaiah 37:3 <sup><2813></sup>Hosea 13:13); that is, Shall I who have begun, not finish My work of restoring Israel? (<sup><4012></sup>1 Samuel 3:12 <sup><510E></sup>Romans 11:1 <sup><5006></sup>Philippians 1:6).

**shut** — (compare <sup><601E></sup>Revelation 3:7,8).

**10. love ... mourn for her** — (<sup><3924></sup>Psalms 102:14,17,20 122:6).

11. **suck** — (<sup>2305</sup>Isaiah 60:5,16 61:6 49:23).

**abundance** — *Hebrew*, “the ray-like flow of her opulence,” that is, with the milk spouting out from her full breasts (answering to the parallel, “breast of her consolations”) in ray-like streams [GESENIUS].

12. **extend** — I will *turn* peace (prosperity) upon her, like a river turned in its course [GESENIUS]. Or, “I will *spread* peace *over* her as an *overflowing* river” [BARNES], (<sup>2388</sup>Isaiah 48:18).

**flowing stream** — as the Nile by its overflow fertilizes the whole of Egypt.

**borne upon ... sides** — (See on <sup>2604</sup>Isaiah 60:4).

**her ... her** — If “ye” refers to the Jews, translate, “ye shall be borne upon *their sides ... their knees*,” namely, those of the *Gentiles*, as in <sup>2342</sup>Isaiah 49:22; and as “suck” (<sup>2306</sup>Isaiah 60:16) refers to the *Jews* sucking the *Gentile* wealth. However, *English Version* gives a good sense: The Jews, and all who love Jehovah (<sup>2360</sup>Isaiah 66:10), “shall suck, and be borne” by *her* as a mother.

13. **mother** — (<sup>2305</sup>Isaiah 49:15).

**comforteth** — (<sup>2301</sup>Isaiah 40:1,2).

14. **bones** — which once were “dried up” by the “fire” of God’s wrath (<sup>2013</sup>Lamentations 1:13), shall live again (<sup>2088</sup>Proverbs 3:8 15:30 <sup>2501</sup>Ezekiel 37:1, etc.).

**flourish ... herb** — (<sup>6115</sup>Romans 11:15-24).

**known toward** — manifested in behalf of.

15. (<sup>2305</sup>Isaiah 9:5 <sup>4808</sup>Psalms 50:3 <sup>3385</sup>Habakkuk 3:5 <sup>5008</sup>2 Thessalonians 1:8 <sup>6102</sup>2 Peter 3:7).

**chariots ... whirlwind** — (<sup>2403</sup>Jeremiah 4:13).

**render** — as the *Hebrew* elsewhere (<sup>4803</sup>Job 9:13 <sup>4788</sup>Psalms 78:38) means to “allay” or “stay wrath.” MAURER translates it so here: *He stays His anger with nothing but fury*,” etc.; nothing short of pouring out all His fiery fury will satisfy His wrath.

**fury** — “burning heat” [LOWTH], to which the parallel, “flames of fire,” answers.

**16.** Rather, “With fire will Jehovah judge, and with His sword (He will judge) all flesh.” The parallelism and collocation of the *Hebrew* words favor this (<sup>2361</sup>Isaiah 65:12).

***all flesh*** — that is, *all* who are the objects of His wrath. The *godly* shall be hidden by the Lord in a place of safety away from the scene of judgment (<sup>2331</sup>Isaiah 26:20,21 <sup>4312</sup>Psalms 31:20 <sup>5116</sup>1 Thessalonians 4:16,17).

**17. *in ... gardens*** — *Hebrew* and the *Septuagint* rather require, “for (entering into) gardens,” namely, to sacrifice there [MAURER].

***behind one tree*** — rather, “following one,” that is, some idol or other, which, from contempt, he does not name [MAURER]. VITRINGA, etc., think the *Hebrew* for “one,” *Ahhadh*, to be the name of the god; called *Adad* (meaning *One*) in Syria (compare <sup>4473</sup>Acts 17:23). The idol’s power was represented by inclined rays, as of the sun shining on the earth. GESENIUS translates, “following one,” namely, *Hierophant* (“priest”), who led the rest in performing the sacred rites.

***in ... midst*** — namely, of the garden (see on <sup>2788</sup>Isaiah 65:3,4).

***mouse*** — legally unclean (<sup>4812</sup>Leviticus 11:29) because it was an idol to the heathen (see on <sup>2376</sup>Isaiah 37:36; <sup>4104</sup>1 Samuel 6:4). Translate, “the field mouse,” or “dormouse” [BOCHART]. The Pharisees with their self-righteous purifications, and all mere formalists, are included in the same condemnation, described in language taken from the idolatries prevalent in Isaiah’s times.

**18. *know*** — not in the *Hebrew*. Rather, understand the words by aposiopesis; it is usual in threats to leave the persons threatened to supply the hiatus from their own fears, owing to conscious guilt: “For I ... their works and thoughts,” etc.; namely, will punish [MAURER].

***it shall come*** — the time *is come* that I will, etc. [MAURER].

***gather ... nations*** — against Jerusalem, where the *ungodly* Jews shall perish; and then the Lord at last shall fight for Jerusalem against those nations: and the survivors (<sup>2369</sup>Isaiah 66:19) shall “see God’s glory” (<sup>3218</sup>Zechariah 12:8,9 14:1-3,9).

***tongues*** — which have been *many* owing to sin, being confounded at Babel, but which shall again be *one* in Christ (<sup>2074</sup>Daniel 7:14 <sup>3607</sup>Zephaniah 3:9 <sup>6109</sup>Revelation 7:9,10).

**19. sign** — a *banner* on a high place, to indicate the place of meeting for the dispersed Jewish exiles, preparatory to their return to their land (<sup><2768></sup>Isaiah 5:26 <sup><3112></sup>11:12 <sup><2162></sup>62:10).

**those that escape of them** — the Gentile survivors spared by God (see on <sup><2768></sup>Isaiah 66:18; <sup><3141></sup>Zechariah 14:16). <sup><2112></sup>Isaiah 2:2,3 <sup><3117></sup>Micah 5:7; and <sup><3141></sup>Zechariah 14:16-19 represent it, not that the Jews go as missionaries to the Gentiles, but that the Gentiles come up to Jerusalem to learn the Lord's ways there.

**Tarshish** — Tartessus in Spain, in the west.

**Pul** — east and north of Africa: probably the same as *Philoe*, an island in the Nile, called by the Egyptians *Pilak*, that is, the border country, being between Egypt and Ethiopia [BOCHART].

**Lud** — the Libyans of Africa (<sup><0113></sup>Genesis 10:13), Ludim being son of Mizraim (Egypt): an Ethiopian people famous as bowmen (<sup><2410></sup>Jeremiah 46:9): employed as mercenaries by Tyre and Egypt (<sup><3271></sup>Ezekiel 27:10 30:5).

**Tubal** — Tibarenians, in Asia Minor, south of the Caucasus, between the Black Sea and Araxes. Or, the Iberians [JOSEPHUS]. Italy [JEROME].

**Javan** — the Greeks; called Ionians, including all the descendants of Javan, both in Greece and in Asia Minor (<sup><0110></sup>Genesis 10:2-4).

**my glory ... Gentiles** — (<sup><3011></sup>Malachi 1:11).

**20. they** — the Gentiles (<sup><2769></sup>Isaiah 66:19).

**bring ... your brethren** — the Jews, back to the Holy Land (<sup><2412></sup>Isaiah 49:22). It cannot mean the mere entrance of the Jews into the Christian Church; for such an entrance would be by *faith*, not upon “horses, litters, and mules” [HOUBIGANT]. “Offering” is metaphorical, as in <sup><6151></sup>Romans 15:16.

**horses** — not much used by the Jews. The Gentiles are here represented as using *their* modes of conveyance to “bring” the Jews to Jerusalem.

**chariots** — as these are not found in Oriental caravans, translate, “vehicles,” namely, borne, not drawn on wheels.

**litters** — covered sedans for the rich.

**upon swift beasts** — dromedaries: from *Hebrew* root, “to dance,” from their bounding motion, often accelerated by music [BOCHART]. Panniers were thrown across the dromedaries' back for poorer women [HORSLEY].

**21. of them** — the Gentiles.

**priests ... Levites** — for spiritual worship: enjoying the direct access to God which was formerly enjoyed by the ministers of the temple alone (<sup><412></sup>1 Peter 2:9 <sup><600></sup>Revelation 1:6).

**22.** (<sup><267></sup>Isaiah 65:17 <sup><613></sup>2 Peter 3:13 <sup><620></sup>Revelation 21:1).

**23.** Literally, “As often as the new moon (shall be) in its own new moon,” that is, every month (<sup><340></sup>Zechariah 14:16).

**sabbath** — which is therefore perpetually obligatory on earth.

**all flesh** — (<sup><96></sup>Psalms 65:2 72:11).

**before me** — at Jerusalem (<sup><486></sup>Jeremiah 3:16,17).

**24. go forth, and look** — as the Israelites looked at the carcasses of the Egyptians destroyed at the Red Sea (<sup><240></sup>Exodus 14:30; compare <sup><234></sup>Isaiah 26:14-19 <sup><580></sup>Psalms 58:10 49:14 <sup><300></sup>Malachi 4:1-3).

**carcasses**, etc. — (<sup><266></sup>Isaiah 66:16), those slain by the Lord in the last great battle near Jerusalem (<sup><302></sup>Zechariah 12:2-9 14:2-4); type of the final destruction of *all* sinners.

**worm ... not die** — (<sup><404></sup>Mark 9:44,46,48). Image of hell, from bodies left unburied in the valley of Hinnom (whence comes *Gehenna*, or “hell”), south of Jerusalem, where a *perpetual fire* was kept to consume the refuse thrown there (<sup><233></sup>Isaiah 30:33). It shall not be inconsistent with true love for the godly to look with satisfaction on God’s vengeance on the wicked (<sup><640></sup>Revelation 14:10). May God bless this Commentary, and especially its solemn close, to His glory, and to the edification of the writer and the readers of it, for Jesus’ sake!

## THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET

# JEREMIAH

*Commentary by A. R. FAUSSETT*

## INTRODUCTION

JEREMIAH, son of Hilkiyah, one of the ordinary priests, dwelling in Anathoth of Benjamin (<sup><3100></sup>Jeremiah 1:1), not the Hilkiyah the high priest who discovered the book of the law (<sup><12218></sup>2 Kings 22:8); had he been the same, the designation would have been “*the priest*”, or “*the high priest*”. Besides, his residence at Anathoth shows that he belonged to the line of Abiathar, who was deposed from the high priesthood by Solomon (<sup><11026></sup>1 Kings 2:26-35), after which the office remained in Zadok’s line. Mention occurs of Jeremiah in <sup><14635></sup>2 Chronicles 35:25 36:12,21. In 629 B.C. the thirteenth year of King Josiah, while still very young (<sup><24105></sup>Jeremiah 1:5), he received his prophetic call in Anathoth (<sup><24100></sup>Jeremiah 1:2); and along with Hilkiyah the high priest, the prophetess Huldah, and the prophet Zephaniah, he helped forward Josiah’s reformation of religion (<sup><12216></sup>2 Kings 23:1-25). Among the first charges to him was one that he should go and proclaim God’s message in Jerusalem (<sup><24100></sup>Jeremiah 2:2). He also took an official tour to announce to the cities of Judah the contents of the book of the law, found in the temple (<sup><24106></sup>Jeremiah 11:6) five years after his call to prophesy. On his return to Anathoth, his countrymen, offended at his reproofs, conspired against his life. To escape their persecutions (<sup><24121></sup>Jeremiah 11:21), as well as those of his own family (<sup><24106></sup>Jeremiah 12:6), he left Anathoth and resided at Jerusalem. During the eighteen years of his ministry in Josiah’s reign he was unmolested; also during the three months of Jehoahaz or Shallum’s reign (<sup><24210></sup>Jeremiah 22:10-12). On Jehoiakim’s accession it became evident that Josiah’s reformation effected nothing more than a forcible repression of idolatry and the establishment of the worship of God outwardly. The priests, prophets, and people then brought Jeremiah before the authorities, urging that he should be put to death for his denunciations of evil against the city (<sup><24118></sup>Jeremiah 26:8-11). The princes, however, especially Ahikam, interposed in his behalf (<sup><24116></sup>Jeremiah 26:16,24), but he was put under restraint, or at least deemed it prudent not to appear in public. In the fourth year of Jehoiakim (606 B.C.), he was commanded to write the predictions

given orally through him, and to read them to the people. Being “shut up”, he could not himself go into the house of the Lord (<sup>2436</sup>Jeremiah 36:5); he therefore deputed Baruch, his amanuensis, to read them in public on the fast day. The princes thereupon advised Baruch and Jeremiah to hide themselves from the king’s displeasure. Meanwhile they read the roll to the king, who was so enraged that he cut it with a knife and threw it into the fire; at the same time giving orders for the apprehension of the prophet and Baruch. They escaped Jehoiakim’s violence, which had already killed the prophet Urijah (<sup>2437</sup>Jeremiah 26:20-23). Baruch rewrote the words, with additional prophecies, on another roll (<sup>2437</sup>Jeremiah 36:27-32). In the three months’ reign of Jehoiachin or Jeconiah, he prophesied the carrying away of the king and the queen mother (<sup>2438</sup>Jeremiah 13:18 22:24-30; compare <sup>2442</sup>2 Kings 24:12). In this reign he was imprisoned for a short time by Pashur (<sup>2440</sup>Jeremiah 20:1-18), the chief governor of the Lord’s house; but at Zedekiah’s accession he was free (<sup>2440</sup>Jeremiah 37:4), for the king sent to him to “inquire of the Lord” when Nebuchadnezzar came up against Jerusalem (<sup>2440</sup>Jeremiah 21:1-3, etc. <sup>2478</sup>Jeremiah 37:3). The Chaldeans drew off on hearing of the approach of Pharaoh’s army (<sup>2475</sup>Jeremiah 37:5); but Jeremiah warned the king that the Egyptians would forsake him, and the Chaldeans return and burn up the city (<sup>2477</sup>Jeremiah 37:7,8). The princes, irritated at this, made the departure of Jeremiah from the city during the respite a pretext for imprisoning him, on the allegation of his deserting to the Chaldeans (<sup>2480</sup>Jeremiah 38:1-5). He would have been left to perish in the dungeon of Malchiah, but for the intercession of Ebed-melech, the Ethiopian (<sup>2480</sup>Jeremiah 38:6-13). Zedekiah, though he consulted Jeremiah in secret yet was induced by his princes to leave Jeremiah in prison (<sup>2484</sup>Jeremiah 38:14-28) until Jerusalem was taken. Nebuchadnezzar directed his captain, Nebuzar-adan, to give him his freedom, so that he might either go to Babylon or stay with the remnant of his people as he chose. As a true patriot, notwithstanding the forty and a half years during which his country had repaid his services with neglect and persecution, he stayed with Gedaliah, the ruler appointed by Nebuchadnezzar over Judea (<sup>2486</sup>Jeremiah 40:6). After the murder of Gedaliah by Ishmael, Johanan, the recognized ruler of the people, in fear of the Chaldeans avenging the murder of Gedaliah, fled with the people to Egypt, and forced Jeremiah and Baruch to accompany him, in spite of the prophet’s warning that the people should perish if they went to Egypt, but be preserved by remaining in their land (<sup>2490</sup>Jeremiah 41:1-43:13). At Tahpanhes, a boundary city on the Tanitic or Pelustan branch of the Nile, he prophesied the overthrow of Egypt (<sup>2488</sup>Jeremiah 43:8-13). Tradition says he died in Egypt. According to the PSEUDO-EPIPHANIUS, he was stoned at Taphnae or Tahpanhes. The Jews so venerated him that they believed he would rise from the dead and be the forerunner of Messiah (<sup>4164</sup>Matthew 16:14).

HAVERNICK observes that the combination of features in Jeremiah's character proves his divine mission; mild, timid, and susceptible of melancholy, yet intrepid in the discharge of his prophetic functions, not sparing the prince any more than the meanest of his subjects — the Spirit of prophecy controlling his natural temper and qualifying him for his hazardous undertaking, without doing violence to his individuality. Zephaniah, Habakkuk, Daniel, and Ezekiel were his contemporaries. The last forms a good contrast to Jeremiah, the Spirit in his case acting on a temperament as strongly marked by firmness as Jeremiah's was by shrinking and delicate sensitiveness. Ezekiel views the nation's sins as opposed to righteousness — Jeremiah, as productive of misery; the former takes the objective, the latter the subjective, view of the evils of the times. Jeremiah's style corresponds to his character: he is peculiarly marked by pathos, and sympathy with the wretched; his Lamentations illustrate this; the whole series of elegies has but one object — to express sorrow for his fallen country; yet the lights and images in which he presents this are so many, that the reader, so far from feeling it monotonous, is charmed with the variety of the plaintive strains throughout. The language is marked by Aramaeisms, which probably was the ground of JEROME'S charge that the style is "rustic". LOWTH denies the charge and considers him in portions not inferior to Isaiah. His heaping of phrase on phrase, the repetition of stereotyped forms — and these often *three times* — are due to his affected feelings and to his desire to intensify the expression of them; he is at times more concise, energetic, and sublime, especially against foreign nations, and in the rhythmical parts.

The principle of the arrangement of his prophecies is hard to ascertain. The order of kings was — Josiah (under whom he prophesied eighteen years), Jehoahaz (three months), Jehoiakim (eleven years), Jeconiah (three months), Zedekiah (eleven years). But his prophecies under Josiah (the first through twentieth chapters) are immediately followed by a portion under Zedekiah (the twenty-first chapter). Again, <sup>2418</sup>Jeremiah 24:8-10, as to Zedekiah, comes in the midst of the section as to Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, and Jeconiah (the twenty-second, twenty-third, twenty-fifth chapters, etc.) So the thirty-fifth and thirty-sixth chapters as to Jehoiakim, follow the twenty-seventh, twenty-eighth, twenty-ninth, thirty-third, thirty-fourth chapters, as to Zedekiah; and the forty-fifth chapter, dated the fourth year of Jehoiakim, comes after predictions as to the Jews who fled to Egypt after the overthrow of Jerusalem. EWALD thinks the present arrangement substantially Jeremiah's own; the various portions are prefaced by the same formula, "The word which came to Jeremiah from the Lord" (<sup>2419</sup>Jeremiah 7:1 11:1 18:1 <sup>2420</sup>Jeremiah 21:1 25:1 30:1 32:1 34:1,8 35:1 40:1 44:1; compare <sup>2441</sup>Jeremiah 14:1 46:1 47:1 49:34). Notes of time mark other

divisions more or less historical (<sup>260E</sup>Jeremiah 26:1 27:1 36:1 37:1). Two other portions are distinct of themselves (<sup>249E</sup>Jeremiah 29:1 45:1). The second chapter has the shorter introduction which marks the beginning of a strophe; the third chapter seems imperfect, having as the introduction merely “saying” (<sup>248E</sup>Jeremiah 3:1, *Hebrew*). Thus in the poetical parts, there are twenty-three sections divided into strophes of from seven to nine verses, marked some way thus, “The Lord said also unto me”. They form five books: I. The Introduction, first chapter II. Reproofs of the Jews, the second through twenty-fourth chapters, made up of seven sections:

- (1) the second chapter
- (2) the third through sixth chapters;
- (3) the seventh through tenth chapters;
- (4) the eleventh through thirteenth chapters;
- (5) the fourteenth through seventeenth chapters;
- (6) the seventeenth through nineteenth and twentieth chapters;
- (7) the twenty-first through twenty-fourth chapters.

III. Review of all nations in two sections: the twenty-fifth and twenty-sixth through forty-ninth chapters, with a historical appendix of three sections,

- (1) the twenty-sixth chapter;
- (2) the twenty-seventh chapter;
- (3) the twenty-eighth and twenty-ninth chapters.

IV. Two sections picturing the hopes of *brighter times*,

- (1) the thirtieth and thirty-first chapters;
- (2) the thirty-second and thirty-third chapters;

and an historical appendix in three sections:

- (1) <sup>260E</sup>Jeremiah 34:1-7;
- (2) <sup>260E</sup>Jeremiah 34:8-22;
- (3) <sup>261E</sup>Jeremiah 35:1-19.

V. The conclusion, in two sections:

- (1) <sup>261E</sup>Jeremiah 36:2;

(2) <sup><2463></sup>Jeremiah 45:1-5.

Subsequently, in Egypt, he added <sup><2463></sup>Jeremiah 46:13-26 to the previous prophecy as to Egypt; also the three sections, the thirty-seventh through thirty-ninth chapters; fortieth through forty-third chapters; and forty-fourth chapter. The fifty-second chapter was probably (see <sup><2506></sup>Jeremiah 51:64) an appendix from a later hand, taken from <sup><2248></sup>2 Kings 24:18, etc. <sup><2250></sup>2 Kings 25:30. The prophecies against the several foreign nations stand in a different order in the *Hebrew* from that of the *Septuagint*; also the prophecies against them in the *Hebrew* (the forty-sixth through fifty-first chapters) are in the *Septuagint* placed after <sup><2254></sup>Jeremiah 25:14, forming the twenty-sixth and thirty-first chapters; the remainder of the twenty-fifth chapter of the *Hebrew* is the thirty-second chapter of the *Septuagint*. Some passages in the *Hebrew* (<sup><2279></sup>Jeremiah 27:19-22 33:14-26 39:4-14 <sup><2485></sup>Jeremiah 48:45-47) are not found in the *Septuagint*; the *Greek* translators must have had a different recension before them; probably an earlier one. The *Hebrew* is probably the latest and fullest edition from Jeremiah's own hand. See on <sup><2253></sup>Jeremiah 25:13.

The canonicity of his prophecies is established by quotations of them in the New Testament (see <sup><4127></sup>Matthew 2:17 16:14 <sup><3808></sup>Hebrews 8:8-12; on <sup><4129></sup>Matthew 27:9, see on *Introduction to Zechariah*); also by the testimony of Ecclesiasticus 49:7, which quotes <sup><2010></sup>Jeremiah 1:10; of PHILO, who quotes his word as an "oracle"; and of the list of canonical books in MELITO, ORIGEN, JEROME, and the Talmud.

# CHAPTER 1

## Jeremiah 1:1-19.

### THE GENERAL TITLE OR INTRODUCTION

Jeremiah 1:1-3, probably prefixed by Jeremiah, when he collected his prophecies and gave them to his countrymen to take with them to Babylon [MICHAELIS].

**1. *Anathoth*** — a town in Benjamin, twenty stadia, that is, two or three miles north of Jerusalem; now Anata (compare Isaiah 10:30, and the context, Isaiah 10:28-32). One of the four cities allotted to the Kohathites in Benjamin (Joshua 21:18). Compare 1 Kings 2:26,27; a stigma was cast thenceforth on the whole sacerdotal family resident there; this may be alluded to in the words here, “the priests ... in Anathoth.” God chooses “the weak, base, and despised things ... to confound the mighty.”

**2, 3. *Jehoiakim ... Josiah ... Zedekiah*** — Jehoahaz and Jehoiachin are omitted for they reigned only three months each. The first and last of the kings under whom each prophet prophesied are often thus specified in the general title. See on these kings, and Jeremiah’s life, my *Introduction*.

***thirteenth ... of his reign*** — (Jeremiah 25:3).

***fifth month*** — (2 Kings 25:8).

**4-10. *Jeremiah’s call to the prophetic office.***

***unto me*** — other manuscripts read “to him”; but *English Version* probably represents the true *Hebrew* text; this inscription was doubtless made by Jeremiah himself.

**5. *knew*** — approved of thee as My chosen instrument (Exodus 33:12,17; compare Isaiah 49:1,5 Romans 8:29).

***sanctified*** — rather, “separated.” The primary meaning is, “to set apart” from a common to a special use; hence arose the secondary sense, “to sanctify,” ceremonially and morally. It is not here meant that Jehovah cleansed Jeremiah from original sin or regenerated him by His Spirit; but separated him to his peculiar *prophetic office*, including in its range, not merely the Hebrews, but also the nations hostile to them (Jeremiah

25:12-38 27:46-51), [HENDERSON]. Not the effect, but the predestination in Jehovah's secret counsel, is meant by the sanctification here (compare <sup><015></sup>Luke 1:15,41 <sup><45></sup>Acts 15:18 <sup><015></sup>Galatians 1:15 <sup><011></sup>Ephesians 1:11).

6. From the long duration of his office (<sup><002></sup>Jeremiah 1:2,3 <sup><400></sup>Jeremiah 40:1, etc. <sup><408></sup>Jeremiah 43:8, etc.), it is supposed that he was at the time of his call under twenty-five years of age.

**child** — the same word is translated, “young man” (<sup><0052></sup>2 Samuel 18:5). The reluctance often shown by inspired ministers of God (<sup><040></sup>Exodus 4:10 6:12,30 Jon 1:3) to accept the call, shows that they did not assume the office under the impulse of self-deceiving fanaticism, as false prophets often did.

7. **to all that** — to all “to whom” [ROSENMULLER]. Rather, “to all *against* whom”; in a hostile sense (compare <sup><2008></sup>Jeremiah 1:8,17,18,19) [MAURER]. Such was the perversity of the rulers and people of Judea at that time, that whoever would desire to be a faithful prophet needed to arm himself with an intrepid mind; Jeremiah was naturally timid and sensitive; yet the Spirit moulded him to the necessary degree of courage without taking away his peculiar individuality.

8. (<sup><006></sup>Ezekiel 2:6 3:9).

**I am with thee** — (<sup><002></sup>Exodus 3:12 <sup><006></sup>Joshua 1:5).

9. **touched my mouth** — a symbolical act in supernatural vision, implying that God would give him *utterance*, notwithstanding *his* inability to speak (<sup><2008></sup>Jeremiah 1:6). So Isaiah's lips were touched with a living coal (<sup><2007></sup>Isaiah 6:7; compare <sup><2008></sup>Ezekiel 2:8,9,10 <sup><2106></sup>Daniel 10:16).

10. **set thee over** — literally, “appointed thee to the oversight.” He was to have his eye upon the nations, and to *predict* their destruction, or restoration, according as their conduct was bad or good. Prophets are said to *do* that which they *foretell* shall be done; for their word is God's word; and His word is His instrument whereby He doeth all things (<sup><0008></sup>Genesis 1:3 <sup><0006></sup>Psalms 33:6,9). Word and deed are one thing with Him. What His prophet *saith* is as certain as if it were *done*. The prophet's own consciousness was absorbed into that of God; so closely united to God did he feel himself, that Jehovah's words and deeds are described as his. In <sup><0028></sup>Jeremiah 31:28, God is said to do what Jeremiah here is represented as doing (compare <sup><2400></sup>Jeremiah 18:7 <sup><1197></sup>1 Kings 19:17 <sup><0028></sup>Ezekiel 43:3).

**root out** — (<sup><0153></sup>Matthew 15:13).

**pull down** — change of metaphor to architecture (<sup>4704</sup>2 Corinthians 10:4). There is a play on the similar sounds, *lintbosh*, *linthotz*, in the *Hebrew* for “root out ... pull down.”

**build ... plant** — restore upon their repenting. His predictions were to be chiefly, and in the first instance, denunciatory; therefore the destruction of the nations is put first, and with a greater variety of terms than their restoration.

**11. rod** — shoot, or branch.

**almond tree** — literally, “the wakeful tree,” because it awakes from the sleep of winter earlier than the other trees, flowering in January, and bearing fruit in March; symbol of God’s *early* execution of His purpose; <sup>3012</sup>Jeremiah 1:12, “*hasten My word*” (compare <sup>3088</sup>Amos 8:3).

**12. hasten** — rather, “I will *be wakeful* as to My word,” etc.; alluding to <sup>3011</sup>Jeremiah 1:11, “the wakeful tree” [MAURER].

**13.** Another vision, signifying what is the “word” about to be “performed,” and by what instrumentality.

**seething** — literally, “blown under”; so *boiling* by reason of the flame under it kept brisk by blowing. An Oriental symbol of a raging war.

**toward** — rather, “*from* the north.” Literally, “from the face of the region situated towards the north” (compare <sup>3014</sup>Jeremiah 1:14,15) [MAURER]. The pot in the north rested on one side, its mouth being about to pour forth its contents southwards, namely, on Judea. Babylon, though east of Judea, was regarded by the Hebrews as north, because they appropriated the term “east” to Arabia-Deserta, stretching from Palestine to the Euphrates; or rather [BOCHART], the reference here is not to the site, but to the *route* of the Babylonians; not being able to cross the desert, they must enter the Holy Land by the northern frontier, through Riblah in Hamath (<sup>3015</sup>Jeremiah 39:5 52:9).

**14. break forth** — “shall disclose itself.”

**Out of the north** — (<sup>3005</sup>Jeremiah 4:6 6:1,22 10:22 25:9 <sup>3007</sup>Ezekiel 26:7). The Chaldeans did not cast off the yoke of Assyria till several years after, under Nabopolassar, 625 B.C.; but long previously they had so increased as to threaten Assyria, which was now grown weak, and other neighboring peoples.

**15. *families*** — the tribes or clans composing the various kingdoms of Babylon; the specification of these aggravates the picture of calamity (<sup><228B></sup>Jeremiah 25:9).

***throne at ... gates*** — the usual place of administering *justice*. The conquering princes will set up their tribunal there (<sup><240B></sup>Jeremiah 39:3,5 52:9). Or the reference is to the military pavilion (<sup><243B></sup>Jeremiah 43:10) [MAURER].

**16. *utter*** — pronounce. *The judicial sentences, pronounced* against the Jews by the invading princes, would be virtually the “judgments of God” (<sup><230B></sup>Isaiah 10:5).

***works*** — idols.

**17. *gird ... loins*** — resolutely prepare for thy appointed task. Metaphor from the flowing robes worn in the East, which have to be *girt up* with a girdle, so as not to incommode one, when undertaking any active work (<sup><338B></sup>Job 38:3 <sup><212B></sup>Luke 12:35 <sup><411B></sup>1 Peter 1:13).

***dismayed ... confound*** — the same *Hebrew* word; literally, “to break.” Be not *dismayed* at their faces (before them), lest I make thee *dismayed* before their faces (before them), that is, “lest I should permit thee to be overcome by them” (compare <sup><248B></sup>Jeremiah 49:37).

**18. *defenced city***, etc. — that is, I will give thee strength which no power of thine enemies shall overcome (<sup><246B></sup>Jeremiah 6:27 15:20 <sup><250B></sup>Isaiah 50:7 54:17 <sup><221B></sup>Luke 21:15 <sup><406B></sup>Acts 6:10).

***walls*** — *plural*, to express the *abundant* strength to be given him. DE ROSSI’S S manuscripts read *singular*, “wall.”

***people of the land*** — the general masses, as distinguished from the princes and priests.

# CHAPTER 2

## ◀111▶ JEREMIAH 2:1-37.

### EXPOSTULATION WITH THE JEWS, REMINDING THEM OF THEIR FORMER DEVOTEDNESS, AND GOD'S CONSEQUENT FAVOR, AND A DENUNCIATION OF GOD'S COMING JUDGMENTS FOR THEIR IDOLATRY.

Probably in the thirteenth year of the reign of Josiah (◀2002▶ Jeremiah 1:2; compare ▶2416▶ Jeremiah 3:6, “also ... in ... days of Josiah”). The warning not to rely as they did on Egypt (◀2128▶ Jeremiah 2:18), was in accordance with Josiah’s policy, who took part with Assyria and Babylon against Egypt (◀1239▶ 2 Kings 23:29). Jeremiah, doubtless, supported the reformation begun by Josiah, in the previous year (the twelfth of his reign), and fully carried out in the eighteenth.

2. *cry* — proclaim.

*Jerusalem* — the headquarters and center of their idolatry; therefore addressed first.

*thee* — rather, “I remember *in regard to thee*” [HENDERSON]; “for thee” [MAURER].

*kindness of thy youth* — not so much Israel’s kindness towards God, as *the kindness which Israel experienced from God* in their early history (compare ▶2368▶ Ezekiel 16:8,22,60 23:3,8,19 ▶2425▶ Hosea 2:15). For Israel from the first showed perversity rather than *kindness* towards God (compare ▶2441▶ Exodus 14:11,12 15:24 32:1-7, etc.). The greater were God’s favors to them from the first, the fouler was their ingratitude in forsaking Him (◀2428▶ Jeremiah 2:3,5, etc.).

*espousals* — the intervals between Israel’s betrothal to God at the exodus from Egypt, and the formal execution of the marriage contract at Sinai. EWALD takes the “kindness” and “love” to be Israel’s towards God at first (◀12918▶ Exodus 19:8 24:3 35:20-29 36:5 ▶1246▶ Joshua 24:16-17). But compare ▶15216▶ Deuteronomy 32:16,17 ▶2365▶ Ezekiel 16:5,6,15,22 (“days of thy youth”) implies that the *love* here meant was on God’s side, not Israel’s.

***thou wentest after me in ... wilderness*** — the next act of God’s love, His leading them in the desert without needing any strange god, such as they since worshipped, to help Him (<sup>(1807)</sup>Deuteronomy 2:7 32:12). <sup>(3106)</sup>Jeremiah 2:6 shows it is *God’s* “leading” of them, not *their* following after God in the wilderness, which is implied.

**3. *holiness unto the Lord*** — that is, was *consecrated* to the service of *Jehovah* (<sup>(1295)</sup>Exodus 19:5,6). They thus answered to the motto on their high priest’s breastplate, “Holiness to the Lord” (<sup>(8106)</sup>Deuteronomy 7:6 14:2,21).

***first-fruits of his increase*** — that is, of *Jehovah’s* produce. As the *first-fruits* of the whole *produce* of the land were devoted to God (<sup>(1239)</sup>Exodus 23:19 <sup>(4182)</sup>Numbers 18:12,13), so Israel was devoted to Him as the first-fruit and representative nation among all nations. So the spiritual Israel (<sup>(5018)</sup>James 1:18 <sup>(6644)</sup>Revelation 14:4).

***devour*** — carrying on the image of *first-fruits* which were *eaten* before the Lord by the priests as the Lord’s representatives; all who *ate* (injured) *Jehovah’s* first-fruits (Israel), contracted guilt: for example, Amalek, the Amorites, etc., were extirpated for their guilt towards Israel.

***shall come*** — rather, “came.”

**4. *Jacob ... Israel*** — the whole nation.

***families*** — (See on <sup>(2015)</sup>Jeremiah 1:15). Hear God’s word not only collectively, but individually (<sup>(3825)</sup>Zechariah 12:12-14).

**5. *iniquity*** — *wrong* done to them (<sup>(2104)</sup>Isaiah 5:4 <sup>(3108)</sup>Micah 6:3; compare <sup>(6504)</sup>Deuteronomy 32:4).

***walked after vanity*** — contrasted with “*walkest after me* in the wilderness” (<sup>(2310)</sup>Jeremiah 2:2): then *I* was their guide in the barren desert; now they take *idols* as their guides.

***vanity ... vain*** — An idol is not only *vain* (impotent and empty), but *vanity* itself. Its worshippers acquire its character, becoming *vain* as it is (<sup>(612)</sup>Deuteronomy 7:26 <sup>(4958)</sup>Psalms 115:8). A people’s character never rises above that of its gods, which are its “better nature” [BACON] (<sup>(12715)</sup>2 Kings 17:15 Jon 2:8).

**6. *Neither said they, Where***, etc. — The very words which *God* uses (<sup>(2310)</sup>Isaiah 63:9,11,13), when, as it were, reminding Himself of His former acts of love to Israel as a ground for interposing in their behalf again. When *they* would not say, Where is *Jehovah*, etc., *God Himself* at last said it for them (compare see on <sup>(2102)</sup>Jeremiah 2:2).

**deserts ... pits** — The desert between Mount Sinai and Palestine abounds in chasms and pits, in which beasts of burden often sink down to the knees. “Shadow of death” refers to the *darkness* of the caverns amidst the rocky precipices (<sup><4885></sup>Deuteronomy 8:15 32:10).

**7. plentiful** — literally, “a land of Carmel,” or “well-cultivated land”: a garden land, in contrast to the “land of deserts” (<sup><2116></sup>Jeremiah 2:6).

**defiled** — by idolatries (<sup><1120></sup>Judges 2:10-17 <sup><4988></sup>Psalms 78:58,59 106:38).

**you ... ye** — change to the second person from the third, “they” (<sup><2116></sup>Jeremiah 2:6), in order to bring home the guilt to the living generation.

**8.** The three leading classes, whose very office under the theocracy was to lead the people to God, disowned Him in the same language as the nation at large, “Where is the Lord?” (See <sup><2116></sup>Jeremiah 2:6).

**priests** — whose office it was to expound the law (<sup><3116></sup>Malachi 2:6,7).

**handle** — are occupied with the law as the subject of their profession.

**pastors** — civil, not religious: princes (<sup><2115></sup>Jeremiah 3:15), whose duty it was to tend their people.

**prophets** — who should have reclaimed the people from their apostasy, encouraged them in it by pretended oracles from Baal, the Phoenician false god.

**by Baal** — in his name and by his authority (compare <sup><2112></sup>Jeremiah 11:21).

**walked after things ... not profit** — answering to, “walked after *vanity*,” that is, idols (<sup><2115></sup>Jeremiah 2:5; compare <sup><2111></sup>Jeremiah 2:11 <sup><2118></sup>Habakkuk 2:18).

**9. yet plead** — namely, by inflicting still further judgments on you.

**children’s children** — Three manuscripts and JEROME omit “children’s”; they seem to have thought it unsuitable to read “children’s children,” when “children” had not preceded. But it is designedly so written, to intimate that the final judgment on the nation would be suspended *for* many generations [HORSLEY]. (Compare <sup><2115></sup>Ezekiel 20:35,36 <sup><2116></sup>Micah 6:2).

**10. pass over the isles** — rather, “cross over to the isles.”

**Chittim ... Kedar** — that is, the heathen nations, *west* and *east*. Go where you will, you cannot find an instance of any heathen nation forsaking their own for other gods. Israel alone does this. Yet the heathen gods are false

gods; whereas Israel, in forsaking Me for other gods, forsake their “glory” for unprofitable idols.

**Chittim** — Cyprus, colonized by Phoenicians, who built in it the city of Citium, the modern *Chitti*. Then the term came to be applied to all maritime coasts of the Mediterranean, especially Greece (<sup><400B></sup>Numbers 24:24 <sup><230E></sup>Isaiah 23:1 <sup><2113></sup>Daniel 11:30).

**Kedar** — descended from Ishmael; the Bedouins and Arabs, east of Palestine.

**11. glory** — Jehovah, the glory of Israel (<sup><196G></sup>Psalm 106:20 <sup><6123></sup>Romans 1:23). The Shekinah, or cloud resting on the sanctuary, was the symbol of “the glory of the Lord” (<sup><1081></sup>1 Kings 8:11; compare <sup><6104></sup>Romans 9:4). The golden calf was intended as an image of the true God (compare <sup><230E></sup>Exodus 32:4,5), yet it is called an “idol” (<sup><402E></sup>Acts 7:41). It (like Roman Catholic images) was a violation of the *second* commandment, as the heathen multiplying of gods is a violation of the *first*.

**not profit** — (<sup><240B></sup>Jeremiah 2:8).

**12. Impassioned personification** (<sup><2100></sup>Isaiah 1:2).

**horribly afraid** — rather, be horrified.”

**be ... very desolate** — rather, “be exceedingly aghast” at the monstrous spectacle. Literally, “to be dried up,” or “devastated,” (places devastated have such an unsightly look) [MAURER].

**13. two evils** — not merely *one* evil, like the idolaters who know no better; besides *simple* idolatry, My people *add* the sin of forsaking the true God whom they have known; the heathen, though having the sin of idolatry, are free from the further sin of changing the true God for idols (<sup><240E></sup>Jeremiah 2:11).

**forsaken me** — The *Hebrew* collocation brings out the only living God into more prominent contrast with idol nonentities. “*Me* they have forsaken, the Fountain,” etc. (<sup><2473></sup>Jeremiah 17:13 <sup><4930></sup>Psalm 36:9 <sup><6144></sup>John 4:14).

**broken cisterns** — tanks for rain water, common in the East, where wells are scarce. The tanks not only cannot give forth an ever-flowing fresh supply as fountains can, but cannot even retain the water poured into them; the stonework within being broken, the earth drinks up the collected water. So, in general, all earthly, compared with heavenly, means of satisfying man’s highest wants (<sup><238E></sup>Isaiah 55:1,2; compare <sup><6123></sup>Luke 12:33).

**14. *is he a homeborn slave*** — No. “Israel is Jehovah’s *son*, even His first-born” (<sup><1002></sup>Exodus 4:22). <sup><3126></sup>Jeremiah 2:16,18,36, and the absence of any *express* contrast of the two parts of the nation are against EICHORN’S view, that the prophet proposes to Judah, as yet spared, the case of Israel (the ten tribes) which had been carried away by Assyria as a warning of what they might expect if they should still put their trust in Egypt. “Were Israel’s ten tribes of meaner birth than Judah? Certainly not. If, then, the former fell before Assyria, what can Judah hope from Egypt against Assyria? ... Israel” is rather here the whole of the remnant still left in their own land, that is, Judah. “How comes it to pass that the nation which once was under God’s special protection (<sup><2483></sup>Jeremiah 2:3) is now left at the mercy of the foe as a worthless slave?” The prophet sees this event *as if* present, though it was still *future* to Judah (<sup><3129></sup>Jeremiah 2:19).

**15. *lions*** — the Babylonian princes (<sup><2401></sup>Jeremiah 4:7; compare <sup><3189></sup>Amos 3:4). The disaster from the Babylonians in the fourth year of Jehoiakim’s reign, and again three years later when, relying on Egypt, he revolted from Nebuchadnezzar, is here referred to (<sup><2462></sup>Jeremiah 46:2 <sup><1241></sup>2 Kings 24:1,2).

**16. *Noph ... Tahapanes*** — *Memphis*, capital of Lower Egypt, on the west bank of the Nile, near the pyramids of Gizeh, opposite the site of modern Cairo. *Daphne*, on the Tanitic branch of the Nile, near Pelusium, on the frontier of Egypt towards Palestine. <sup><2309></sup>Isaiah 30:4 contracts it, *Hanes*. These two cities, one the capital, the other that with which the Jews came most in contact, stand for the whole of Egypt. *Tahapanes* takes its name from a goddess, Tphnet [CHAMPOLLION]. *Memphis* is from *Man-nofri*, “the abode of good men”; written in *Hebrew*, *Moph* (<sup><3106></sup>Hosea 9:6), or *Noph*. The reference is to the coming invasion of Judah by Pharaoh-necho of Egypt, on his return from the Euphrates, when he deposed Jehoahaz and levied a heavy tribute on the land (<sup><1233></sup>2 Kings 23:33-35). Josiah’s death in battle with the same Pharaoh is probably included (<sup><1232></sup>2 Kings 23:29,30).

***have broken*** — rather, *shall feed down* the crown, etc., that is, affect with the greatest ignominy, such as *baldness* was regarded in the East (<sup><2487></sup>Jeremiah 48:37 <sup><1122></sup>2 Kings 2:23). Instead of “also,” translate, “even” the Egyptians, in whom thou dost trust, shall miserably disappoint thy expectation [MAURER]. Jehoiakim was twice leagued with them (<sup><1234></sup>2 Kings 23:34,35): when he received the crown from them, and when he revolted from Nebuchadnezzar (<sup><1241></sup>2 Kings 24:1,2,7). The Chaldeans, having become masters of Asia, threatened Egypt. Judea, situated between the contending powers, was thus exposed to the inroads of the one or other of the hostile armies; and unfortunately, except in Josiah’s reign, took side with Egypt, contrary to God’s warnings.

**17.** Literally, “Has not thy forsaking the Lord ... procured this (calamity) to thee?” So the *Septuagint*: the Masoretic accents make “this” the *subject* of the verb, leaving the *object* to be understood. “Has not this procured (*it*, that is, the impending calamity) unto thee, that hast forsaken?” etc. (<sup>2118</sup>Jeremiah 4:18).

**led** — (<sup>620</sup>Deuteronomy 32:10).

**the way** — The article expresses *the right way, the way of the Lord*: namely, the moral training which they enjoyed in the Mosaic covenant.

**18. now** — used in a *reasoning* sense, not of *time*.

**the way of Egypt** — What hast thou to do *with the way*, that is, with going down *to Egypt*; or *what ... with going to Assyria*?

**drink ... waters** — that is, to seek *reinvigorating aid* from them; so <sup>2123</sup>Jeremiah 2:13,36; compare “waters,” meaning *numerous forces* (<sup>2187</sup>Isaiah 8:7).

**Sihor** — that is, the *black river*, in *Greek, Melas* (“black”), the Nile: so called from the black deposit or soil it leaves after the inundation (<sup>2131</sup>Isaiah 23:3). The *Septuagint* identifies it with Gihon, one of the rivers of Paradise.

**the river** — *Euphrates*, called by pre-eminence, *the river*; figurative for the Assyrian power. In 625 B.C., the seventeenth year of Josiah, and the fourth of Jeremiah’s office, the kingdom of Assyria fell before Babylon, therefore *Assyria* is here put for *Babylon* its successor: so in <sup>1239</sup>2 Kings 23:29 <sup>2187</sup>Lamentations 5:6. There was doubtless a league between Judea and Assyria (that is, Babylon), which caused Josiah to march against Pharaoh-necho of Egypt when that king went against Babylon: the evil consequences of this league are foretold in this verse and <sup>2126</sup>Jeremiah 2:36.

**19. correct ... reprove** — rather, in the severer sense, “chastise ... punish” [MAURER].

**backslidings** — “apostasies”; *plural*, to express the number and variety of their defections. The very confederacies they entered into were the occasion of their overthrow (<sup>2131</sup>Proverbs 1:31 <sup>2187</sup>Isaiah 3:9 <sup>2185</sup>Hosea 5:5).

**know ... see** — *imperative for futures: Thou shalt know and see* to thy cost.

**my fear** — rather, “the fear of Me.”

**20. I** — the *Hebrew* should be pointed as the second person *feminine*, a form common in Jeremiah: “*Thou* hast broken,” etc. So the *Septuagint*, and the sense requires it.

**thy yoke ... bands** — the yoke and bands which I laid *on thee*, My laws (<sup><2185></sup>Jeremiah 5:5).

**transgress** — so the *Keri*, and many manuscripts read. But the *Septuagint* and most authorities read, “I will not serve,” that is, obey. The sense of *English Version* is, “I broke thy yoke (in Egypt),” etc., “and (at that time) thou saidst, I will not transgress; whereas thou hast (since then) wandered (from Me)” (<sup><1298></sup>Exodus 19:8).

**hill ... green tree** — the scene of idolatries (<sup><1512></sup>Deuteronomy 12:2 <sup><2505></sup>Isaiah 57:5,7).

**wanderest** — rather, “thou hast *bowed down* thyself” (for the act of adultery: figurative of shameless idolatry, <sup><1245></sup>Exodus 34:15,16; compare <sup><1810></sup>Job 31:10).

21. The same image as in <sup><1522></sup>Deuteronomy 32:32 <sup><1808></sup>Psalms 80:8,9 <sup><2181></sup>Isaiah 5:1, etc.

**unto me** — with respect to Me.

22. **nitre** — not what is now so called, namely, saltpeter; but the *natron* of Egypt, a mineral alkali, an incrustation at the bottom of the lakes, after the summer heat has evaporated the water: used for washing (compare <sup><1803></sup>Job 9:30 <sup><1230></sup>Proverbs 25:20).

**soap** — potash, the carbonate of which is obtained impure from burning different plants, especially the *kali* of Egypt and Arabia. Mixed with oil it was used for washing.

**marked** — deeply ingrained, indelibly marked; the *Hebrew*, *catham*, being equivalent to *cathab*. Others translate, “is treasured up,” from the *Arabic*. MAURER from a *Syriac* root, “is polluted.”

23. (<sup><1812></sup>Proverbs 30:12).

**Baalim** — plural, to express manifold excellency: compare *Elohim*.

**see** — consider.

**the valley** — namely, of Hinnom, or Tophet, south and east of Jerusalem: rendered infamous by the human sacrifices to Moloch in it (compare <sup><1812></sup>Jeremiah 19:2,6,13,14 32:35; see on <sup><2183></sup>Isaiah 30:33).

**thou art** — omit. The substantive that follows in this verse (and also that in <sup><1212></sup>Jeremiah 2:24) is in apposition with the preceding “thou.”

**dromedary** — rather, a “young she-camel.”

**traversing** — literally, “enfolding”; making its ways *complicated* by wandering hither and thither, lusting after the male. Compare as to the Jews’ spiritual lust, <sup><2810></sup>Hosea 2:6,7.

**24.** (<sup><2446></sup>Jeremiah 14:6 <sup><3895></sup>Job 39:5). “A wild ass,” agreeing with “thou” (<sup><2423></sup>Jeremiah 2:23).

**at her pleasure** — rather, “in her ardor,” namely, in pursuit of a male, sniffing the wind to ascertain where one is to be found [MAURER].

**occasion** — either from a *Hebrew* root, “to meet”; “her meeting (with the male for sexual intercourse), who can avert it?” Or better from an *Arabic* root: “her *heat* (sexual impulse), who can allay it?” [MAURER].

**all they** — whichever of the males desire her company [HORSLEY].

**will not weary themselves** — have no need to weary themselves in searching for her.

**her month** — in the *season of the year when her sexual impulse is strongest*, she puts herself in the way of the males, so that they have no difficulty in *finding* her.

**25. Withhold**, etc. — that is, abstain from incontinence; figuratively for idolatry [HOUBIGANT].

**unshod**, etc. — do not run so violently in pursuing lovers, as to *wear out thy shoes*: do not “thirst” so incontinently after sexual intercourse. HITZIG thinks the reference is to penances performed *barefoot* to idols, and the *thirst* occasioned by loud and continued invocations to them.

**no hope** — (<sup><2482></sup>Jeremiah 18:12 <sup><2570></sup>Isaiah 57:10). “It is hopeless,” that is, I am *desperately* resolved to go on in my own course.

**strangers** — that is, laying aside the metaphor, “strange gods” (<sup><2483></sup>Jeremiah 3:13 <sup><15216></sup>Deuteronomy 32:16).

**26. is ashamed** — is *put to shame*.

**thief** — (<sup><4801></sup>John 10:1).

**Israel** — that is, Judah (<sup><2428></sup>Jeremiah 2:28).

**27. Thou art my father** — (Contrast <sup><2408></sup>Jeremiah 3:4 <sup><2348></sup>Isaiah 64:8).

**in ... trouble they will say** — namely, to God (<sup><4784></sup>Psalms 78:34 <sup><2316></sup>Isaiah 26:16). Trouble often brings men to their senses (<sup><2156></sup>Luke 15:16-18).

**28. *But*** — God sends them to the gods for whom they forsook Him, to see if *they* can help them (<sup><1625></sup>Deuteronomy 32:37,38 <sup><1704></sup>Judges 10:14).

***according to the number of thy cities*** — Besides national deities, each city had its tutelary god (<sup><2413></sup>Jeremiah 11:13).

**29. *plead with me*** — that is, contend with Me for afflicting you (<sup><2423></sup>Jeremiah 2:23,35).

**30.** (<sup><2458></sup>Jeremiah 5:3 6:29 <sup><2466></sup>Isaiah 1:5 9:13).

***your children*** — that is, your people, you.

***your ... sword ... devoured ... prophets*** — (<sup><4496></sup>2 Chronicles 36:16 <sup><4495></sup>Nehemiah 9:26 <sup><4239></sup>Matthew 23:29,31).

**31.** The *Hebrew* collocation is, “O, the generation, ye,” that is, “O ye who now live.” The generation needed only to be named, to call its degeneracy to view, so palpable was it.

***wilderness*** — in which all the necessities of life are wanting. On the contrary, Jehovah was a never-failing source of supply for all Israel’s wants in the wilderness, and afterwards in Canaan.

***darkness*** — literally, “darkness of Jehovah,” the strongest *Hebrew* term for “darkness; the densest darkness”; compare “land of the shadow of death” (<sup><2416></sup>Jeremiah 2:6).

***We are lords*** — that is, We are our own masters. We will worship what gods we like (<sup><9124></sup>Psalms 12:4 82:6). But it is better to translate from a different *Hebrew* root: “We ramble at large,” without restraint pursuing our idolatrous lusts.

**32.** Oriental women greatly pride themselves on their ornaments (compare <sup><2310></sup>Isaiah 61:10).

***attire*** — girdles for the breast.

***forgotten me*** — (<sup><2425></sup>Jeremiah 13:25 <sup><2084></sup>Hosea 8:14).

**33. *Why trimmest*** — MAURER translates, “*How skilfully* thou dost prepare thy way,” etc. But see <sup><1289></sup>2 Kings 9:30. “Trimmed” best suits the image of one *decking* herself as a harlot.

***way*** — course of life.

***therefore*** — accordingly. Or else, “*nay*, thou hast even,” etc.

**also ... wicked ones** — *even* the wicked harlots, that is, (laying aside the metaphor) even the Gentiles who are wicked, thou teachest to be still more so [GROTIUS].

**34. Also** — not only art thou polluted with idolatry, but *also* with the guilt of shedding innocent blood [MAURER]. ROSENMULLER not so well translates, “even in thy skirts,” etc.; that is, there is no part of thee (*not even thy skirts*) that is not stained with innocent blood (<sup><2150></sup>Jeremiah 19:4 <sup><2216></sup>2 Kings 21:16 <sup><1946></sup>Psalm 106:38). See as to innocent blood shed, not as here in honor of idols, but of *prophets* for having reproved them (<sup><2129></sup>Jeremiah 2:30 <sup><2030></sup>Jeremiah 26:20-23).

**souls** — that is, persons.

**search** — I did not need to “search deep” to find proof of thy guilt; for it was “upon all these” thy skirts. Not in deep caverns didst thou perpetrate these atrocities, but openly in the vale of Hinnom and within the precincts of the temple.

**35.** (<sup><2123></sup>Jeremiah 2:23,29).

**36. gaddest** — runnest to and fro, now seeking help from Assyria (<sup><1486></sup>2 Chronicles 28:16-21), now from Egypt (<sup><2470></sup>Jeremiah 37:7,8 <sup><2318></sup>Isaiah 30:3).

**37. him** — Egypt.

**hands upon ... head** — expressive of mourning (<sup><1039></sup>2 Samuel 13:19).

**in them** — in those stays in which thou trustest.

# CHAPTER 3

## ◀3418▶ JEREMIAH 3:1-25.

### GOD'S MERCY NOTWITHSTANDING JUDAH'S VILENESS.

Contrary to all precedent in the case of adultery, Jehovah offers a return to Judah, the spiritual adulteress (◀3418▶ Jeremiah 3:1-5). A new portion of the book, ending with the sixth chapter. Judah worse than Israel; yet both shall be restored in the last days (◀3418▶ Jeremiah 3:6-25).

**1. *They say*** — rather, as *Hebrew*, “saying,” in agreement with “the LORD”; (◀3418▶ Jeremiah 2:37 Of last chapter [MAURER]. Or, it is equivalent to, “Suppose this case.” Some copyist may have omitted, “The word of the Lord came to me,” *saying*.)

***shall he return unto her*** — will he take her back? It was unlawful to do so (◀3418▶ Deuteronomy 24:1-4).

***shall not*** — Should not the land be polluted if this were done?

***yet return*** — (◀3418▶ Jeremiah 3:22 ◀3418▶ Jeremiah 4:1 ◀3418▶ Zechariah 1:3; compare ◀3418▶ Ezekiel 16:51,58,60). “Nevertheless,” etc. (see on ◀3418▶ Isaiah 50:1).

**2. *high places*** — the scene of idolatries which were spiritual adulteries.

***In ... ways ... sat for them*** — watching for lovers like a prostitute (◀3418▶ Genesis 38:14,21 ◀3418▶ Proverbs 7:12 23:28 ◀3418▶ Ezekiel 16:24,25), and like an Arab who lies in wait for travelers. The Arabs of the desert, east and south of Palestine, are still notorious as robbers.

**3. *no latter rain*** — essential to the crops in Palestine; withheld in judgment (◀3418▶ Leviticus 26:19; compare ◀3418▶ Joel 2:23).

***whore's forehead*** — (◀3418▶ Jeremiah 8:12 ◀3418▶ Ezekiel 3:8).

**4. *from this time*** — not referring, as MICHAELIS thinks, to the reformation begun the year before, that is, the twelfth of Josiah; it means — now at once, now at last.

***me*** — contrasted with the “stock” whom they had heretofore called on as “father” (◀3418▶ Jeremiah 2:27 ◀3418▶ Luke 15:18).

**thou art** — rather, “thou wast.”

**guide of ... youth** — that is, husband (<sup><240D></sup>Jeremiah 2:2 <sup><240E></sup>Proverbs 2:17 <sup><240F></sup>Hosea 2:7,15). *Husband* and *father* are the two most endearing of ties.

**5. he** — “thou,” the second person, had preceded. The change to the third person implies a putting away of God to a *greater distance* from them; instead of repenting and forsaking their idols, they merely deprecate the continuance of their *punishment*. <sup><240G></sup>Jeremiah 3:12 and <sup><240H></sup>Psalm 103:9, answer their question in the event of their penitence.

**spoken and** — rather (God’s reply to them), “Thou hast spoken (thus), *and yet* (all the while) thou hast done evil,” etc.

**as thou couldst** — with all thy might; with incorrigible persistency [CALVIN].

**6.** From here to <sup><240I></sup>Jeremiah 6:30, is a new discourse, delivered in Josiah’s reign. It consists of two parts, the former extending to <sup><240J></sup>Jeremiah 4:3, in which he warns Judah from the example of Israel’s doom, and yet promises Israel final restoration; the latter a threat of Babylonian invasion; as Nabopolassar founded the Babylonian empire, 625 B.C., the seventeenth of Josiah, this prophecy is perhaps not earlier than that date (<sup><240K></sup>Jeremiah 4:5, etc.; <sup><240L></sup>Jeremiah 5:14, etc.; <sup><240M></sup>Jeremiah 6:1, etc.; <sup><240N></sup>Jeremiah 22:1-30); and probably not later than the second thorough reformation in the eighteenth year of the same reign.

**backsliding** — literally, “apostasy”; not merely *apostate*, but *apostasy itself*, the essence of it (<sup><240O></sup>Jeremiah 3:14,22).

**7. I said** — (<sup><240P></sup>2 Kings 17:13).

**sister** — (<sup><240Q></sup>Ezekiel 16:46 23:2,4).

**8.** I saw that, though (whereas) it was for this very reason (namely), because backsliding (apostate) Israel had committed adultery I had put her away (<sup><240R></sup>2 Kings 17:6,18), and given her a bill of divorce, yet Judah, etc. (<sup><240S></sup>Ezekiel 23:11, etc.).

**bill of divorce** — literally, “a writing of *cuttings* off.” The *plural* implies the completeness of the severance. The use of this metaphor here, as in the former discourse (<sup><240T></sup>Jeremiah 3:1), implies a close connection between the discourses. The epithets are characteristic; Israel “apostate” (as the *Hebrew* for “backsliding” is better rendered); Judah, not as yet utterly *apostate*, but *treacherous* or *faithless*.

**also** — herself also, like Israel.

**9. *it*** — Some take this verse of *Judah*, to whom the end of <sup><2488></sup>Jeremiah 3:8 refers. But <sup><2480></sup>Jeremiah 3:10 puts *Judah* in contrast to *Israel* in this verse. “Yet for all this,” referring to the sad example of *Israel*; if <sup><2488></sup>Jeremiah 3:9 referred to *Judah*, “she” would have been written in <sup><2480></sup>Jeremiah 3:10, not “*Judah*.” Translate, “It (the putting away of Israel) had come to pass through ... whoredom; and (that is, for) she (Israel) had defiled the land” etc. [MAURER]. *English Version*, however, *may* be explained to refer to *Israel*.

***lightness*** — “infamy.” [EWALD]. MAURER not so well takes it from the *Hebrew* root, “voice,” “fame.”

**10. *yet*** — notwithstanding the lesson given in Israel’s case of the fatal results of apostasy.

***not ... whole heart*** — The reformation in the eighteenth year of Josiah was not thorough on the part of the people, for at his death they relapsed into idolatry (<sup><4883></sup>2 Chronicles 34:33 <sup><2074></sup>Hosea 7:14).

**11. *justified herself*** — has been made to appear almost just (that is, comparatively innocent) by the surpassing guilt of *Judah*, who adds hypocrisy and treachery to her sin; and who had the example of *Israel* to warn her, but in vain (compare <sup><2658></sup>Ezekiel 16:51 23:11).

***more than*** — in comparison with.

**12. *Go*** — not actually; but turn and proclaim towards the north (*Media* and *Assyria*, where the ten tribes were located by Tiglath-pileser and Shalmaneser, <sup><2159></sup>2 Kings 15:29 17:6 18:9,11).

***Return ... backsliding*** — *Hebrew*, *Shubah*, *Meshubah*, a play on sounds. In order to excite *Judah* to godly jealousy (<sup><5114></sup>Romans 11:14), *Jehovah* addresses the exiled ten tribes of *Israel* with a loving invitation.

***cause ... anger to fall*** — literally, “I will not let fall My countenance” (compare <sup><1005></sup>Genesis 4:5,6 <sup><3293></sup>Job 29:3), that is, I will not *continue* to frown on you.

***keep*** — “anger” is to be supplied (see on <sup><2485></sup>Jeremiah 3:5).

**13. *Only acknowledge*** — (<sup><6501></sup>Deuteronomy 30:1,3 <sup><1885></sup>Proverbs 28:13).

***scattered thy ways*, etc.** — (<sup><2125></sup>Jeremiah 2:25). Not merely the calves at Beth-el, but the idols in every direction, were the objects of their worship (<sup><2365></sup>Ezekiel 16:15,24,25).

**14. *I am married*** — literally, “I am Lord,” that is, husband to you (so <sup><363></sup>Jeremiah 31:32; compare <sup><329></sup>Hosea 2:19,20 <sup><354></sup>Isaiah 54:5). GESENIUS, following the *Septuagint* version of <sup><363></sup>Jeremiah 31:32, and Paul’s quotation of it (<sup><389></sup>Hebrews 8:9), translates, “I have *rejected* you”; so the corresponding *Arabic*, and the idea of *lordship*, may pass into that of *looking down upon*, and so *rejecting*. But the *Septuagint* in *this* passage translates, “I will be Lord over you.” And the “for” has much more force in *English Version* than in that of GESENIUS. The *Hebrew* hardly admits the rendering *though* [HENGSTENBERG].

***take you one of a city*** — Though but *one or two* Israelites were in a (foreign) city, they shall not be forgotten; *all* shall be restored (<sup><309></sup>Amos 9:9). So, in the spiritual Israel, God gathers one convert here, another there, into His Church; not the least one is lost (<sup><384></sup>Matthew 18:14 <sup><515></sup>Romans 11:5; compare <sup><315></sup>Jeremiah 24:5-7).

***family*** — a clan or tribe.

**15. *pastors*** — not religious, but civil rulers, as Zerubbabel, Nehemiah (<sup><323></sup>Jeremiah 23:4 2:8).

**16. *they shall say no more*** — The Jews shall no longer glory in the possession of the ark; it shall not be missed, so great shall be the blessings of the new dispensation. The throne of the Lord, *present Himself*, shall eclipse and put out of mind the ark of the covenant and the mercy seat between the cherubim, God’s former throne. The ark, containing the two tables of the law, disappeared at the Babylonian captivity, and was not restored to the second temple, implying that the symbolical “glory” was to be superseded by a “greater glory” (<sup><319></sup>Haggai 2:9).

***neither ... visit it*** — rather, “neither shall *it be missed*” (so in <sup><324></sup>Jeremiah 23:4).

***done*** — rather, “neither shall it (the ark) *be made* (that is, be restored) any more” [MAURER].

**17. *Jerusalem*** — *the whole city*, not merely the temple. As it has been the center of the *Hebrew* theocracy, so it shall be the point of attraction to the whole earth (<sup><310></sup>Isaiah 2:2-4 <sup><320></sup>Zechariah 2:10,11 14:16-21).

***throne of ... Lord*** — The Shekinah, the symbol of God’s peculiar nearness to Israel (<sup><307></sup>Deuteronomy 4:7) shall be surpassed by the antitype, God’s own throne in Jerusalem (<sup><311></sup>Psalms 2:6,8 <sup><382></sup>Ezekiel 34:23,24 <sup><318></sup>Zechariah 2:5).

***imagination*** — rather, as *Margin*, “the obstinacy” or stubbornness.

**18. *Judah ... Israel ... together*** — Two distinct apostasies, that of Israel and that of Judah, were foretold (<sup><2488></sup>Jeremiah 3:8,10). The two have never been united since the Babylonish captivity; therefore their joint restoration must be still future (<sup><2312></sup>Isaiah 11:12,13 <sup><2579></sup>Ezekiel 37:16-22 <sup><2011></sup>Hosea 1:11).

***north*** — (<sup><2482></sup>Jeremiah 3:12).

***land ... given ... inheritance*** — (<sup><2195></sup>Amos 9:15).

**19.** The good land covenanted to Abraham is to be restored to his seed. But the question arises, How shall this be done?

***put ... among ... children*** — the *Greek* for *adoption* means, literally, “putting among the sons.”

***the children*** — that is, My children. “How shall I receive thee back into My family, after thou hast so long forsaken Me for idols?” The answer is, they would acknowledge Him as “Father,” and no longer turn away from Him. God assumes the language of one wondering how so desperate apostates could be restored to His family and its privileges (compare <sup><2578></sup>Ezekiel 37:3; CALVIN makes it, *How the race of Abraham can be propagated again*, being as it were dead); yet as His purpose has decreed it so, He shows how it shall be effected, namely, they shall receive from Him the spirit of adoption to cry, “My Father” (<sup><2012></sup>John 1:12 <sup><2006></sup>Galatians 4:6). The elect are “children” already in God’s purpose; this is the ground of the subsequent realization of this relationship (<sup><2005></sup>Ephesians 1:5 <sup><2023></sup>Hebrews 2:13).

***pleasant land*** — (<sup><2405></sup>Jeremiah 11:5 <sup><2516></sup>Ezekiel 20:6 <sup><2116></sup>Daniel 11:16, *Margin*).

***heritage of ... hosts*** — a heritage the most goodly of all nations [MAURER]; or a “heritage possessed by powerful hosts” (<sup><2088></sup>Deuteronomy 4:38 <sup><2109></sup>Amos 2:9). The rendering “splendors,” instead of “hosts,” is opposed by the fact that the *Hebrew* for “splendor” is not found in the *plural*.

**20. *Surely*** — rather, “But.”

***husband*** — literally, “friend.”

**21.** In harmony with the preceding promises of God, the penitential confessions of Israel are heard.

***high places*** — The scene of their idolatries is the scene of their confessions. Compare <sup><2423></sup>Jeremiah 3:23, in which they cast aside their trust in these idolatrous high places. The publicity of their penitence is also implied (compare <sup><2472></sup>Jeremiah 7:29 48:38).

22. Jehovah's renewed invitation (<sup><4818></sup>Jeremiah 3:12,14) and their immediate response.

*heal* — forgive (<sup><4818></sup>2 Chronicles 30:18,20 <sup><2840></sup>Hosea 14:4).

*unto thee* — rather, “in obedience to thee”; literally, “for thee” [ROSENMULLER].

23. *multitude of mountains* — that is, the multitude of *gods* worshipped on them (compare <sup><4801></sup>Psalm 121:1,2, *Margin*).

24. *shame* — that is, the *idols*, whose worship only covers us with *shame* (<sup><2811></sup>Jeremiah 11:13 <sup><2890></sup>Hosea 9:10). So far from bringing us “salvation,” they have cost us our cattle and even our children, whom we have sacrificed to them.

25. (<sup><4801></sup>Ezra 9:7).

# CHAPTER 4

## JEREMIAH 4:1-31.

CONTINUATION OF ADDRESS TO THE TEN TRIBES OF ISRAEL. (JEREMIAH 4:1,2). THE PROPHET TURNS AGAIN TO JUDAH, TO WHOM HE HAD ORIGINALLY BEEN SENT (JEREMIAH 4:3-31).

1. **return ... return** — play on words. “If thou wouldest *return to thy land* (thou must first), return (by conversion and repentance) to *Me*.”

**not remove** — no longer be an unsettled *wanderer* in a strange land. So Cain (Genesis 4:12,14).

2. **And thou** — rather, “And *if* (carried on from Jeremiah 4:1) thou shalt swear, ‘Jehovah liveth,’ in truth, etc.”, that is, if thou shalt *worship* Him (for we *swear* by the God whom we worship; compare Deuteronomy 6:13 10:20 Isaiah 19:18 Amos 8:14) in sincerity, etc.

**and the nations** — Rather, this is apodosis to the “if”; *then* shall the nations bless themselves in (by) Him” (Isaiah 65:16). The conversion of the nations will be the consequence of Israel’s conversion (Psalm 102:13,15 Romans 11:12,15).

3. Transition to Judah. Supply mentally. All which (the foregoing declaration as to Israel) applies to Judah.

**and Jerusalem** — that is, and *especially* the men of Jerusalem, as being the most prominent in Judea.

**Break ... fallow ground** — that is, Repent of your idolatry, and so be prepared to serve the Lord in truth (Hosea 10:12 Matthew 13:7). The unhumbled heart is like ground which may be improved, being let out to us for that purpose, but which is as yet fallow, overgrown with weeds, its natural product.

4. Remove your natural corruption of heart (Deuteronomy 10:16 30:6 Romans 2:29 Colossians 2:11).

5. ***cry, gather together*** — rather, “cry fully” that is, loudly. The Jews are warned to take measures against the impending Chaldean invasion (compare <sup>2184</sup>Jeremiah 8:14).

6. ***Zion*** — The standard *toward Zion* intimated that the people of the surrounding country were to fly *to* it, as being the strongest of their fortresses.

7. ***lion*** — Nebuchadnezzar and the Chaldeans (<sup>2185</sup>Jeremiah 2:15 5:6 <sup>2074</sup>Daniel 7:14).

***his thicket*** — lair; Babylon.

***destroyer of the Gentiles*** — rather, “the nations” (<sup>2209</sup>Jeremiah 25:9).

8. Nothing is left to the Jews but to bewail their desperate condition.

***anger ... not turned back*** — (<sup>2392</sup>Isaiah 9:12,17,21).

9. ***heart*** — The *wisdom* of the most leading men will be utterly at a loss to devise means of relief.

10. ***thou hast ... deceived*** — God, having even the false prophets in His hands, is here said to do that which for inscrutable purposes He *permits* them to do (<sup>1092</sup>Exodus 9:12 <sup>3121</sup>2 Thessalonians 2:11; compare <sup>2485</sup>Jeremiah 8:15; which passage shows that the dupes of error were *self-prepared* for it, and that God’s predestination did not destroy their moral freedom as voluntary agents). The false prophets foretold “peace,” and the Jews believed them; God overruled this to His purposes (<sup>2452</sup>Jeremiah 5:12 14:13 <sup>2449</sup>Ezekiel 14:9).

***soul*** — rather, “reacheth to the *life*.”

11. ***dry wind*** — the *simoom*, terrific and destructive, blowing from the southeast across the sandy deserts east of Palestine. Image of the invading Babylonian army (<sup>2335</sup>Hosea 13:15). Babylon in its turn shall be visited by a similar “destroying wind” (<sup>2505</sup>Jeremiah 51:1).

***of ... high places*** — that is, that sweeps over the high places.

***daughter*** — that is, the *children* of my people.

***not to fan*** — a very different wind from those ordinary winds employed for fanning the grain in the open air.

12. ***full ... from those places*** — rather, “a wind *fuller* (that is, more impetuous) *than* those winds” (which fan the corn) (<sup>2411</sup>Jeremiah 4:11) [ROSENMULLER].

**unto me** — “for Me,” as My instrument for executing My purpose.

**sentence** — *judgments* against them (<sup>2416</sup>Jeremiah 1:16).

**13. clouds** — continuing the metaphor in <sup>2415</sup>Jeremiah 4:11:12. Clouds of sand and dust accompany the simoom, and after rapid gyrations ascend like a pillar.

**eagles** — (<sup>4538</sup>Deuteronomy 28:49 <sup>3008</sup>Habakkuk 1:8).

**Woe unto us** — The people are graphically presented before us, without it being formally so stated, bursting out in these exclamations.

**14.** Only one means of deliverance is left to the Jews — a thorough repentance.

**vain thoughts** — namely, projects for deliverance, such as enlisting the Egyptians on their side. GESENIUS translates, “How long wilt thou harbor vain thoughts?”

**15. For ... from Daniel** — The connection is: There is danger in delay; *for* the voice of a messenger announces the approach of the Chaldean enemy from Dan, the northern frontier of Palestine (<sup>2486</sup>Jeremiah 8:16; compare <sup>2405</sup>Jeremiah 4:6 <sup>2414</sup>Jeremiah 1:14).

**Mount Ephraim** — which borders closely on Judah; so that the foe is coming nearer and nearer. Daniel and Beth-el in *Ephraim* were the two places where Jeroboam set up the idolatrous calves (<sup>1129</sup>1 Kings 12:29); just retribution.

**16.** The neighboring foreign “nations” are summoned to witness Jehovah’s judgments on His rebel people (<sup>2408</sup>Jeremiah 6:18,19).

**watchers** — that is, besiegers (compare <sup>4016</sup>2 Samuel 11:16); observed or watched, that is, besieged.

**their voice** — the war shout.

**17. keepers of a field** — metaphor from those who watch a field, to frighten away the wild beasts.

**18.** (<sup>2417</sup>Jeremiah 2:17,19 <sup>4977</sup>Psalms 107:17).

**this is thy wickedness** — that is, the fruit of thy wickedness.

**19.** The prophet suddenly assumes the language of the Jewish state personified, lamenting its affliction (<sup>2409</sup>Jeremiah 10:19,20 9:1,10 <sup>2456</sup>Isaiah 15:5; compare <sup>2941</sup>Luke 19:41).

**at my very heart** — *Hebrew*, “at the walls of my heart”; the muscles round the heart. There is a climax, the “bowels,” the *pericardium*, the “heart” itself.

**maketh ... noise** — moaneth [HENDERSON].

**alarm** — the battle shout.

**20. Destruction ... cried** — Breach upon breach is announced (<sup>4907</sup>Psalm 42:7 <sup>4372</sup>Ezekiel 7:26). The war “trumpet” ... the battle shout ... the “destructions” ... the havoc throughout “the whole land” ... the spoiling of the shepherds “tents” (<sup>4810</sup>Jeremiah 10:20; or, “tents” means *cities*, which should be overthrown as easily as *tents* [CALVIN]), form a gradation.

**21.** Judah in perplexity asks, How long is this state of things to continue?

**22.** Jehovah’s reply; they cannot be otherwise than miserable, since they persevere in sin. The repetition of clauses gives greater force to the sentiment.

**wise ... evil ... to do good ... no knowledge** — reversing the rule (<sup>4569</sup>Romans 16:19) “wise unto ... good, simple concerning evil.”

**23.** Graphic picture of the utter desolation about to visit Palestine. “I beheld, and lo!” four times solemnly repeated, heightens the awful effect of the scene (compare <sup>2349</sup>Isaiah 24:19 34:11).

**without form and void** — reduced to the primeval chaos (<sup>4002</sup>Genesis 1:2).

**24. mountains** — (<sup>2155</sup>Isaiah 5:25).

**moved lightly** — shook vehemently.

**25. no man ... birds** — No vestige of the human, or of the feathered creation, is to be seen (<sup>4780</sup>Ezekiel 38:20 <sup>4305</sup>Zephaniah 1:3).

**26. fruitful place** — *Hebrew*, *Carmel*.

**a wilderness** — *Hebrew*, “the wilderness,” in contrast to “the fruitful place”; the great desert, where *Carmel* was, there is now *the desert* of Arabia [MAURER].

**cities** — in contrast to *the fruitful place* or field.

**27. full end** — utter destruction: I will leave some hope of restoration (<sup>4180</sup>Jeremiah 5:10,18 30:11 46:28; compare <sup>4364</sup>Leviticus 26:44).

**28. For this** — on account of the desolations just described (<sup>2150</sup>Isaiah 5:30 <sup>4045</sup>Hosea 4:3).

*not repent* — (<sup><0239</sup>Numbers 23:19).

**29. *whole city*** — Jerusalem: to it the inhabitants of the country had fled for refuge; but when it, too, is likely to fall, they flee out of it to hide in the “thickets.” HENDERSON translates, “*every city*.”

*noise* — The mere noise of the hostile horsemen shall put you to flight.

**30. *when thou art spoiled*** — rather, “thou, O *destroyed one*” [MAURER].

*renest ... face with painting* — Oriental women paint their eyes with stibium, or antimony, to make them look full and sparkling, the black margin causing the white of the eyes to appear the brighter by contrast (<sup><1180</sup>2 Kings 9:30). He uses the term “distendest” in derision of their effort to make their eyes look large [MAURER]; or else, “renest,” that is, dost lacerate by puncturing the eyelid in order to make the antimony adhere [ROSENMULLER]. So the Jews use every artifice to secure the aid of Egypt against Babylon.

*face* — rather, thy eyes (<sup><2340</sup>Ezekiel 23:40).

**31. *anguish*** — namely, occasioned by the attack of the enemy.

*daughter of Zion* — There is peculiar beauty in suppressing the name of the person in trouble, until that trouble had been fully described [HENDERSON].

*bewaileth herself* — rather, “draweth her breath short” [HORSLEY]; “panteth.”

*spreadeth ... hands* — (<sup><2017</sup>Lamentations 1:17).

# CHAPTER 5

## JEREMIAH 5:1-31.

### THE CAUSE OF THE JUDGMENTS TO BE INFLICTED IS THE UNIVERSAL CORRUPTION OF THE PEOPLE.

1. **a man** — As the pious Josiah, Baruch, and Zephaniah lived in Jerusalem at that time, Jeremiah must here mean the mass of the people, the king, his counsellors, the false prophets, and the priests, as distinguished from the faithful few, whom God had openly separated from the reprobate people; among the latter not even *one* just person was to be found (<sup>2396</sup>Isaiah 9:16) [CALVIN]; the godly, moreover, were forbidden to intercede for them (<sup>2476</sup>Jeremiah 7:16; compare <sup>4183</sup>Genesis 18:23, etc. <sup>4911</sup>Psalms 12:1 <sup>4223</sup>Ezekiel 22:30).

**see ... know** — look ... ascertain.

**judgment** — justice, righteousness.

**pardon it** — rather, *her*.

2. (<sup>3016</sup>Titus 1:16).

**swear falsely** — not a judicial oath; but their profession of the worship of Jehovah is insincere (<sup>2467</sup>Jeremiah 5:7 <sup>2402</sup>Jeremiah 4:2). The reformation under Josiah was merely superficial in the case of the majority.

3. **eyes upon the truth** — (<sup>6534</sup>Deuteronomy 32:4 <sup>4462</sup>2 Chronicles 16:9). “Truth” is in contrast with “swear falsely” (<sup>2467</sup>Jeremiah 5:2). The false-professing Jews could expect nothing but judgments from the God of truth.

**stricken ... not grieved** — (<sup>2423</sup>Jeremiah 2:30 <sup>2406</sup>Isaiah 1:5 9:13).

**refused ... correction** — (<sup>2478</sup>Jeremiah 7:28 <sup>3692</sup>Zephaniah 3:2).

4. **poor** — rather, “*the poor*.” He supposes for the moment that this utter depravity is confined to the uninstructed poor, and that he would find a different state of things in the higher ranks: but there he finds unbridled profligacy.

5. **they have known** — rather, “they must know.” The prophet *supposes it as probable*, considering their position.

**but these** — I found the very reverse to be the case.

**burst ... bonds** — set God's law at defiance (<sup><311B></sup>Psalm 2:3).

**6. lion ... wolf ... leopard** — the strongest, the most ravenous, and the swiftest, respectively, of beasts: illustrating the formidable character of the Babylonians.

**of the evenings** — Others not so well translate, *of the deserts*. The plural means that it goes forth *every evening* to seek its prey (<sup><344D></sup>Psalm 104:20 <sup><300S></sup>Habakkuk 1:8 <sup><311B></sup>Zephaniah 3:3).

**leopard ... watch ... cities** — (<sup><283U></sup>Hosea 13:7). It shall lie in wait about their cities.

**7.** It would not be consistent with God's holiness to let such wickedness pass unpunished.

**sworn by** — (<sup><311B></sup>Jeremiah 5:2 <sup><300E></sup>Jeremiah 4:2); that is, worshipped.

**no gods** — (<sup><352I></sup>Deuteronomy 32:21).

**fed ... to the full** — so the *Keri* (*Hebrew Margin*) reads, God's bountifulness is contrasted with their apostasy (<sup><352S></sup>Deuteronomy 32:15). Prosperity, the gift of God, designed to lead men to Him, often produces the opposite effect. The *Hebrew Chetib* (text), reads: "I bound them (to Me) by oath," namely, in the *marriage covenant*, sealed at Sinai between God and Israel; in contrast to which stands their "adultery"; the antithesis favors this.

**adultery ... harlots' houses** — spiritually: idolatry in temples of idols; but literal prostitution is also included, being frequently part of idol-worship: for example, in the worship of the Babylonian *Mylitta*.

**8. in the morning** — (<sup><235I></sup>Isaiah 5:11). "Rising early in the morning" is a phrase for unceasing eagerness in any pursuit; such was the Jews' avidity after idol-worship. MAURER translates from a different *Hebrew* root, "continually wander to and fro," inflamed with lust (<sup><342S></sup>Jeremiah 2:23). But *English Version* is simpler (compare <sup><343V></sup>Jeremiah 13:27 <sup><352I></sup>Ezekiel 22:11).

**9.** (<sup><245S></sup>Jeremiah 5:29 <sup><349B></sup>Jeremiah 9:9 44:22).

**10.** Abrupt apostrophe to the Babylonians, to take Jerusalem, but *not to destroy the nation utterly* (see on <sup><340Z></sup>Jeremiah 4:27).

**battlements** — rather, *tendrils* [MAURER]: the state being compared to a *vine* (<sup><342I></sup>Jeremiah 12:10), the stem of which was to be spared, while the tendrils (the chief men) were to be removed.

11. (<sup>248D</sup>Jeremiah 3:20).

12. *belied* — denied.

*It is not he* — rather, “(Jehovah) is not HE,” that is, the true and only God (<sup>244D</sup>Jeremiah 14:22 <sup>652D</sup>Deuteronomy 32:39 <sup>236D</sup>Isaiah 43:10,13). By their idolatry they virtually denied Him. Or, referring to what follows, and to <sup>248D</sup>Jeremiah 5:9, “(Jehovah) is not,” namely, about to be the punisher of our sins (<sup>244D</sup>Jeremiah 14:13 <sup>238D</sup>Isaiah 28:15).

13. Continuation of the unbelieving language of the Jews.

*the prophets* — who prophesy punishment coming on us.

*the word* — the Holy Spirit, who speaks through true prophets, is not in them [MAURER]. Or else, “There is no word (divine communication) in them” (<sup>300D</sup>Hosea 1:2) [ROSENMULLER].

*thus*, etc. — Their ill-omened prophecies shall fall on themselves.

14. *ye ... thy ... this people* — He turns away from addressing the people to the prophet; implying that He puts them to a distance from Him, and only communicates with them through His prophet (<sup>248D</sup>Jeremiah 5:19).

*fire ... wood* — Thy denunciations of judgments shall be fulfilled and shall consume them as fire does wood. In <sup>242D</sup>Jeremiah 23:29 it is the *penetrating energy* of fire which is the point of comparison.

15. (<sup>241D</sup>Jeremiah 1:15 6:22). Alluding to <sup>658D</sup>Deuteronomy 28:49, etc.

*Israel* — that is, Judah.

*mighty* — from an *Arabic* root, “enduring.” The fourfold repetition of “nation” heightens the force.

*ancient* — The Chaldeans came originally from the Carduchian and Armenian mountains north of Mesopotamia, whence they immigrated into Babylonia; like all mountaineers, they were brave and hardy (see on <sup>233D</sup>Isaiah 23:13).

*language ... knowest not* — <sup>236D</sup>Isaiah 36:11 shows that *Aramaic* was not understood by the “multitude,” but only by the educated classes [MAURER]. HENDERSON refers it to the *original language* of the Babylonians, which, he thinks, they brought with them from their native hills, akin to the Persic, not to the *Aramaic*, or any other Semitic tongue, the parent of the modern *Kurd*.

**16. *open sepulcher*** — (Compare <sup><4989></sup>Psalm 5:9). Their quiver is all-devouring, as the grave opened to receive the dead: as many as are the arrows, so many are the deaths.

**17.** (<sup><4936></sup>Leviticus 26:16).

**18.** *Not even* in those days of judgments, will God utterly exterminate His people.

***I will not make a full end with you*** — (<sup><2450></sup>Jeremiah 5:10 <sup><2427></sup>Jeremiah 4:27).

**19.** Retribution in kind. As ye have forsaken Me (<sup><2423></sup>Jeremiah 2:13), so shall ye be forsaken by Me. As ye have served strange (foreign) gods in your land, so shall ye serve strangers (foreigners) in a land not yours. Compare the similar retribution in <sup><4537></sup>Deuteronomy 28:47,48.

**21. *eyes ... ears, and*** — Translate, “and yet” (compare <sup><4634></sup>Deuteronomy 29:4 <sup><2469></sup>Isaiah 6:9). Having powers of perception, they did not use them: still they were responsible for the exercise of them.

**22. *sand*** — Though made up of particles easily shifting about, I render it sufficient to curb the violence of the sea. Such is your monstrous perversity, that the raging, senseless sea sooner obeys Me, than ye do who profess to be intelligent [CALVIN], (<sup><4830></sup>Job 26:10 38:10 11 <sup><2429></sup>Proverbs 8:29 <sup><4654></sup>Revelation 15:4).

**23.** (<sup><2458></sup>Jeremiah 6:28).

**24. *rain ... former ... latter*** — The “former” falls from the middle of October to the beginning of December. The “latter,” or spring rain in Palestine, falls before harvest in March and April, and is essential for ripening the crops (<sup><4614></sup>Deuteronomy 11:14 <sup><2423></sup>Joel 2:23).

***weeks of ... harvest*** — the seven weeks between passover and pentecost, beginning on the sixteenth of Nisan (<sup><4649></sup>Deuteronomy 16:9). By God’s special providence no rain fell in Palestine during the harvest weeks, so that harvest work went on without interruption (see <sup><4422></sup>Genesis 8:22).

**25.** National guilt had caused the suspension of these national mercies mentioned in <sup><2424></sup>Jeremiah 5:24 (compare <sup><2433></sup>Jeremiah 3:3).

**26.** (<sup><2411></sup>Proverbs 1:11,17,18 <sup><3115></sup>Habakkuk 1:15).

***as he that setteth snares*** — rather, “as fowlers crouch” [MAURER].

***trap*** — literally, “destruction”: the instrument of destruction.

**catch men** — not as Peter, to save (<sup><480></sup>Luke 5:10), but to destroy men.

**27. full of deceit** — full of treasures got by deceit.

**rich** — (<sup><4752></sup>Psalm 73:12,18-20).

**28. shine** — the effect of fatness on the skin (<sup><4605></sup>Deuteronomy 32:15). They live a life of self-indulgence.

**overpass ... the wicked** — exceed even the Gentiles in wickedness (<sup><4123></sup>Jeremiah 2:33 <sup><3866></sup>Ezekiel 5:6,7).

**judge not ... fatherless** — (<sup><2123></sup>Isaiah 1:23).

**yet ... prosper** — (<sup><2401></sup>Jeremiah 12:1).

**29.** (<sup><2189></sup>Jeremiah 5:9 <sup><3885></sup>Malachi 3:5).

**30.** (<sup><2244></sup>Jeremiah 23:14 <sup><2860></sup>Hosea 6:10).

**31. bear rule by their means** — literally, “according to their hands,” that is, under their guidance (<sup><1328></sup>1 Chronicles 25:3). As a sample of the priests lending themselves to the deceits of the false prophets, to gain influence over the people, see <sup><2244></sup>Jeremiah 29:24-32.

**love to have it so** — (<sup><3211></sup>Micah 2:11).

**end thereof** — the fatal issue of this sinful course when divine judgments shall come.

# CHAPTER 6

## ~~2101~~ JEREMIAH 6:1-30.

### ZION'S FOES PREPARE WAR AGAINST HER: HER SINS ARE THE CAUSE.

1. **Benjamin** — Jerusalem was situated in the tribe of Benjamin, which was here separated from that of Judah by the valley of Hinnom. Though it was inhabited partly by Benjamites, partly by men of Judah, he addresses the former as being his own countrymen.

**blow ... trumpet ... Tekoa** — *Tikehu*, *Tekoa* form a play on sounds. The birthplace of Amos.

**Beth-haccerem** — meaning in *Hebrew*, “vineyard-house.” It and Tekoa were a few miles south of Jerusalem. As the enemy came from the north, the inhabitants of the surrounding country would naturally flee southwards. The fire-signal on the hills gave warning of danger approaching.

2. **likened** — rather, “I lay waste.” Literally, “O comely and delicate one, I lay waste the daughter of Zion,” that is, “thee.” So ~~3819~~ Zechariah 3:9, “before *Joshua*,” that is, “before *thee*” [MAURER].

3. **shepherds** — hostile leaders with their armies (~~2415~~ Jeremiah 1:15 4:17 49:20 50:45).

**feed** — They shall consume each one all that is near him; literally, “his hand,” that is, the *place* which he occupies (~~4017~~ Numbers 2:17; see on ~~2305~~ Isaiah 56:5).

4, 5. The invading soldiers encourage one another to the attack on Jerusalem.

**Prepare** — literally, “Sanctify” war, that is, Proclaim it formally with solemn rites; the invasion was solemnly ordered by God (compare ~~2318~~ Isaiah 13:3).

**at noon** — the hottest part of the day when attacks were rarely made (~~2415~~ Jeremiah 15:8 20:16). Even at this time they wished to attack, such is their eagerness.

**Woe unto us** — The words of the invaders, mourning the approach of *night* which would suspend their hostile operations; still, even in spite of the darkness, at night they renew the attack (<sup>2105</sup>Jeremiah 6:5).

**6. cast** — *Hebrew*, “pour out”; referring to the emptying of the baskets of earth to make the *mound*, formed of “trees” and earthwork, to overtop the city walls. The “trees” were also used to make warlike engines.

**this** — pointing the invaders to Jerusalem.

**visited** — that is, punished.

**wholly oppression** — or join “wholly” with “visited,” that is, she is altogether (in her whole extent) to be punished [MAURER].

**7. fountain** — rather, a *well* dug, from which water springs; distinct from a natural spring or fountain.

**casteth out** — causeth to flow; literally, “causeth to dig,” the cause being put for the effect (<sup>2216</sup>2 Kings 21:16,24 <sup>2571</sup>Isaiah 57:20).

**me** — Jehovah.

**8. Tender appeal in the midst of threats.**

**depart** — *Hebrew*, “be torn away”; Jehovah’s affection making Him unwilling to depart; His attachment to Jerusalem was such that an effort was needed to tear Himself from it (<sup>2338</sup>Ezekiel 23:18; <sup>3992</sup>Hosea 9:12 11:8).

**9. The Jews are the grapes, their enemies the unsparing gleaners.**

**turn back ... hand** — again and again bring freshly gathered handfuls to the baskets; referring to the repeated carrying away of captives to Babylon (<sup>2628</sup>Jeremiah 52:28-30 <sup>2244</sup>2 Kings 24:14 25:11).

**10. ear is uncircumcised** — closed against the precepts of God by the foreskin of carnality (<sup>1334</sup>Leviticus 26:41 <sup>2447</sup>Ezekiel 44:7 <sup>4175</sup>Acts 7:51).

**word ... reproach** — (<sup>2018</sup>Jeremiah 20:8).

**11. fury of ... Lord** — His denunciations against Judah communicated to the prophet.

**weary with holding in** — (<sup>2019</sup>Jeremiah 20:9).

**I will pour** — or else imperative: the command of God (see <sup>2102</sup>Jeremiah 6:12), “Pour it out” [MAURER].

**aged ... full of days** — The former means *one becoming old*; the latter a *decrepit old man* [MAURER] (<sup><38E3></sup>Job 5:26 <sup><2351></sup>Isaiah 65:20).

12. The very punishments threatened by Moses in the event of disobedience to God (<sup><6331></sup>Deuteronomy 28:30).

**turned** — transferred.

13. (<sup><2481></sup>Jeremiah 8:10 <sup><2351></sup>Isaiah 56:11 <sup><3311></sup>Micah 3:11).

14. **hurt** — the spiritual *wound*.

**slightly** — as if it were but a *slight* wound; or, *in a slight manner*, pronouncing all sound where there is no soundness.

**saying** — namely, the prophets and priests (<sup><2483></sup>Jeremiah 6:13). Whereas they ought to warn the people of impending judgments and the need of repentance, they say there is nothing to fear.

**peace** — including soundness. All is *sound* in the nation's moral state, so all will be *peace* as to its political state (<sup><2481></sup>Jeremiah 4:10 8:11 14:13 23:17 <sup><3335></sup>Ezekiel 13:5,10 22:28).

15. ROSENMULLER translates, "They *ought to have been* ashamed, because ... but," etc.; the *Hebrew* verb often expressing, not the action, but the *duty* to perform it (<sup><4111></sup>Genesis 20:9 <sup><3311></sup>Malachi 2:7). MAURER translates, "They shall be put to shame, for they commit abomination; nay (the prophet correcting himself), there is no shame in them" (<sup><2483></sup>Jeremiah 3:3 8:12 <sup><3311></sup>Ezekiel 3:7 <sup><3311></sup>Zephaniah 3:5).

**them that fall** — They shall fall with the rest of their people who are doomed to fall, that is, I will now cease from words; I will execute vengeance [CALVIN].

16. Image from travelers who have lost their road, stopping and inquiring which is the right way on which they once had been, but from which they have wandered.

**old paths** — Idolatry and apostasy are the modern way; the worship of God the *old* way. Evil is not coeval with good, but a *modern degeneracy* from good. The forsaking of God is not, in a true sense, a "way cast up" at all (<sup><2485></sup>Jeremiah 18:15 <sup><1311></sup>Psalms 139:24 <sup><3004></sup>Malachi 4:4).

**rest** — (<sup><2322></sup>Isaiah 28:12 <sup><4112></sup>Matthew 11:29).

17. **watchmen** — prophets, whose duty it was to announce impending calamities, so as to lead the people to repentance (<sup><2311></sup>Isaiah 21:11 58:1 <sup><3311></sup>Ezekiel 3:17 <sup><3311></sup>Habakkuk 2:1).

**18. congregation** — parallel to “nations”; it therefore means *the gathered peoples* who are invited to be witnesses as to how great is the perversity of the Israelites (<sup>2166</sup>Jeremiah 6:16,17), and that they deserve the severe punishment about to be inflicted on them (<sup>2169</sup>Jeremiah 6:19).

**what is among them** — what *deeds* are committed by the *Israelites* (<sup>2166</sup>Jeremiah 6:16,17) [MAURER]. Or, “what *punishments* are about to be inflicted on them” [CALVIN].

**19.** (<sup>2102</sup>Isaiah 1:2).

**fruit of ... thoughts** — (<sup>2103</sup>Proverbs 1:31).

**nor to my law, but rejected it** — literally, “and (as to) My law they have rejected it.” The same construction occurs in <sup>10224</sup>Genesis 22:24. Literally, “To what purpose is this to Me, that incense cometh to Me?”

**incense ... cane** — (<sup>2363</sup>Isaiah 43:24 60:6). No external services are accepted by God without obedience of the heart and life (<sup>2472</sup>Jeremiah 7:21 <sup>4807</sup>Psalms 50:7-9 <sup>2111</sup>Isaiah 1:11 <sup>3169</sup>Micah 6:6, etc.).

**sweet ... sweet** — antithesis. Your *sweet* cane is not *sweet* to Me. The calamus.

**21. stumbling-blocks** — instruments of the Jews’ ruin (compare <sup>4244</sup>Matthew 21:44 <sup>2384</sup>Isaiah 8:14 <sup>1018</sup>1 Peter 2:8). God Himself (“I”) *lays* them before the reprobate (<sup>3622</sup>Psalms 69:22 <sup>8128</sup>Romans 1:28 11:9).

**fathers ... sons ... neighbor ... friend** — indiscriminate ruin.

**22. north ... sides of the earth** — The ancients were little acquainted with the *north*; therefore it is called *the remotest regions* (as the *Hebrew* for “sides” ought to be translated, see on <sup>2343</sup>Isaiah 14:13) *of the earth*. The Chaldees are meant (<sup>2015</sup>Jeremiah 1:15 5:15). It is striking that the very same calamities which the Chaldeans had inflicted on Zion are threatened as the retribution to be dealt in turn to themselves by Jehovah (<sup>2841</sup>Jeremiah 50:41-43).

**23. like the sea** — (<sup>2161</sup>Isaiah 5:30).

**as men for war** — not that they were *like* warriors, for they *were* warriors; but “arrayed *most perfectly as warriors*” [MAURER].

**24. fame thereof** — the report of them.

**25.** He addresses “the daughter of Zion” (<sup>2023</sup>Jeremiah 6:23); caution to the citizens of Jerusalem not to expose themselves to the enemy by going outside of the city walls,

**sword of the enemy** — literally “there is a sword to the enemy”; the enemy hath a sword.

**26. wallow ... in ashes** — (<sup>2453</sup>Jeremiah 25:34 <sup>3101</sup>Micah 1:10). As they usually in mourning only “cast ashes on the head,” *wallowing in them* means something more, namely, so entirely to cover one’s self with ashes as to be like one who had rolled in them (<sup>3273</sup>Ezekiel 27:30).

**as for an only son** — (<sup>3180</sup>Amos 8:10 <sup>3820</sup>Zechariah 12:10).

**lamentation** — literally, “lamentation expressed by beating the breast.”

**27. tower ... fortress** — (<sup>3118</sup>Jeremiah 1:18), rather, “an assayer (and) explorer.” By a metaphor from metallurgy in <sup>3162</sup>Jeremiah 6:27-30, Jehovah, in conclusion, confirms the prophet in his office, and the latter sums up the description of the reprobate people on whom he had to work. The *Hebrew* for “assayer” (*English Version*, “tower”) is from a root “to try” metals. “Explorer” (*English Version*, “fortress”) is from an *Arabic* root, “keen-sighted”; or a *Hebrew* root, “cutting,” that is, separating the metal from the dross [EWALD]. GESENIUS translates as *English Version*, “fortress,” which does not accord with the previous “assayer.”

**28. grievous revolvers** — literally “contumacious of the contumacious,” that is, most contumacious, the *Hebrew* mode of expressing a superlative. So “the strong among the mighty,” that is, the strongest (<sup>3523</sup>Ezekiel 32:21). See <sup>3123</sup>Jeremiah 5:23 <sup>3046</sup>Hosea 4:16.

**walking with slanders** — (<sup>3104</sup>Jeremiah 9:4). “Going about for the purpose of slandering” [MAURER].

**brass**, etc. — that is, copper. It and “iron” being the baser and harder metals express the debased and obdurate character of the Jews (<sup>3804</sup>Isaiah 48:4 60:17).

**29. bellows ... burned** — So intense a heat is made that the very bellows are almost set on fire. ROSENMULLER translates not so well from a *Hebrew* root, “pant” or “snort,” referring to the sound of the bellows blown hard.

**lead** — employed to separate the baser metal from the silver, as quicksilver is now used. In other words, the utmost pains have been used to purify Israel in the furnace of affliction, but in vain (<sup>3118</sup>Jeremiah 5:3 <sup>4007</sup>1 Peter 1:7).

**consumed of the fire** — In the *Chetib*, or *Hebrew* text, the “consumed” is supplied out of the previous “burned.” Translating as ROSENMULLER, “pant,” this will be inadmissible; and the *Keri* (*Hebrew Margin*) division of

the *Hebrew* words will have to be read, to get “is consumed of the fire.” This is an argument for the translation, “are burned.”

*founder* — the refiner.

*wicked ... not plucked away* — answering to the dross which has no good metal to be separated, the mass being all dross.

**30. *Reprobate*** — silver so full of alloy as to be utterly worthless (<sup>-24102</sup>Isaiah 1:22). The Jews were fit only for rejection.

# CHAPTER 7

## 2400E JEREMIAH 7:1-34.

### THE SEVENTH THROUGH NINTH CHAPTERS. DELIVERED IN THE BEGINNING OF JEHOIAKIM'S REIGN, ON THE OCCASION OF SOME PUBLIC FESTIVAL.

The prophet stood at the gate of the temple in order that the multitudes from the country might hear him. His life was threatened, it appears from 2401E Jeremiah 26:1-9, for this prophecy, denouncing the fate of Shiloh as about to befall the temple at Jerusalem. The prophecy given in detail here is summarily referred to there. After Josiah's death the nation relapsed into idolatry through Jehoiakim's bad influence; the worship of Jehovah was, however, combined with it (2401E Jeremiah 7:4,10).

**2. *the gate*** — that is, the gate of the court of Israel within that of the women. Those whom Jeremiah addresses came through the gate leading into the court of the women, and the gate leading into the outer court, or court of the Gentiles ("these gates").

**3. *cause you to dwell*** — permit you still to dwell (2401E Jeremiah 18:11 26:13).

**4.** The Jews falsely thought that because their temple had been chosen by Jehovah as His peculiar dwelling, it could never be destroyed. Men think that ceremonial observances will supersede the need of holiness (2401E Isaiah 48:2 2401E Micah 3:11). The triple repetition of "the temple of Jehovah" expresses the intense confidence of the Jews (see 2402E Jeremiah 22:29 2403E Isaiah 6:3).

***these*** — the temple buildings which the prophet points to with his finger (2401E Jeremiah 7:2).

**5. *For*** — "But" [MAURER].

***judgment*** — justice (2402E Jeremiah 22:3).

**6. *this place*** — this city and land (2401E Jeremiah 7:7).

***to your hurt*** — so 2407E Jeremiah 7:19; "to the confusion or their own faces" (2430E Jeremiah 13:10 2408E Proverbs 8:36).

7. The apodosis to the “if ... if” (<sup>2403</sup>Jeremiah 7:5,6).

*to dwell* — to continue to dwell.

*for ever and ever* — joined with “to dwell,” not with the words “gave to your fathers” (compare <sup>2488</sup>Jeremiah 3:18 <sup>6040</sup>Deuteronomy 4:40).

8. *that cannot profit* — MAURER translates, “so that you profit nothing” (see <sup>2400</sup>Jeremiah 7:4 <sup>2453</sup>Jeremiah 5:31).

9, 10. “Will ye steal ... *and then* come and stand before Me?”

*whom ye know not* — Ye have no grounds of “knowing” that *they* are gods; but I have manifested My Godhead by My law, by benefits conferred, and by miracles. This aggravates their crime [CALVIN] (<sup>0088</sup>Judges 5:8).

10. *And come* — And yet come (<sup>2339</sup>Ezekiel 23:39).

*We are delivered* — namely, from all impending calamities. In spite of the prophet’s threats, we have nothing to fear; we have offered our sacrifices, and therefore Jehovah will “deliver” us.

*to do all these abominations* — namely, those enumerated (<sup>2400</sup>Jeremiah 7:9). These words are not to be connected with “we are delivered,” but thus: “Is it *with this design* that ye come and stand before Me in this house,” in order that having offered your worthless sacrifices ye may be taken into My favor and so do all these abominations (<sup>2400</sup>Jeremiah 7:9) with impunity? [MAURER].

11. *den of robbers* — Do you regard My temple as being what robbers make their den, namely, an asylum wherein ye may obtain impunity for your abominations (<sup>2470</sup>Jeremiah 7:10)?

*seen it* — namely, that ye treat My house as if it were a den of thieves. Jehovah implies more than is expressed, “I have seen *and will punish it*” (<sup>2807</sup>Isaiah 56:7 <sup>4213</sup>Matthew 21:13).

12. *my place ... in Shiloh* — God caused His tabernacle to be set up in Shiloh in Joshua’s days (<sup>6810</sup>Joshua 18:1 <sup>0781</sup>Judges 18:31). In Eli’s time God gave the ark, which had been at Shiloh, into the hands of the Philistines (<sup>2306</sup>Jeremiah 26:6 <sup>0000</sup>1 Samuel 4:10,11 <sup>4786</sup>Psalms 78:56-61). Shiloh was situated between Beth-el and Shechem in Ephraim.

*at the first* — implying that *Shiloh* exceeded the Jewish temple in antiquity. But God’s favor is not tied down to localities (<sup>4074</sup>Acts 7:44).

**my people Israel** — Israel was *God's* people, yet He spared it not when rebellious: neither will He spare Judah, now that it rebels, though heretofore it has been His people.

**13. rising ... early** — implying unwearied earnestness in soliciting them (<sup><4025></sup>Jeremiah 7:25 <sup><24117></sup>Jeremiah 11:17 <sup><4635></sup>2 Chronicles 36:15).

**14. I gave** — and I therefore can revoke the gift for it is still Mine (<sup><4025></sup>Leviticus 25:23), now that ye fail in the only object for which it was given, the promotion of My glory.

**Shiloh** — as I ceased to dwell there, transferring My temple to Jerusalem; so I will cease to dwell at Jerusalem.

**15. your brethren** — children of Abraham, as much as you.

**whole seed of Ephraim** — They were superior to you in numbers and power: they were *ten* tribes: ye but *two*. “Ephraim,” as the leading tribe, stands for the whole ten tribes (<sup><2072></sup>2 Kings 17:23 <sup><4967></sup>Psalms 78:67,68).

**16.** When people are given up to judicial hardness of heart, intercessory prayer for them is unavailing (<sup><24114></sup>Jeremiah 11:14 14:11 15:1 <sup><4020></sup>Exodus 32:10 <sup><4156></sup>1 John 5:16).

**17.** Jehovah leaves it to Jeremiah himself to decide, is there not good reason that prayers should not be heard in behalf of such rebels?

**18. children ... fathers ... women** — Not merely isolated individuals practiced idolatry; young and old, men and women, and whole families, contributed their joint efforts to promote it. Oh, that there were the same zeal for the worship of God as there is for error (<sup><24417></sup>Jeremiah 44:17,19:19:13)!

**cakes ... queen of heaven** — Cakes were made of honey, fine flour, etc., in a round flat shape to resemble the disc of *the moon*, to which they were offered. Others read as *Margin*, “the frame of heaven,” that is, the planets generally; so the *Septuagint* here; but elsewhere the *Septuagint* translates, “queen of heaven.” The Phoenicians called the moon *Ashtoreth* or *Astarte*: the wife of Baal or Moloch, the *king* of heaven. The male and female pair of deities symbolized the generative powers of nature; hence arose the introduction of prostitution in the worship. The Babylonians worshipped *Ashtoreth* as *Mylitta*, that is, generative. Our Monday, or *Moon-day*, indicates the former prevalence of moon worship (see on <sup><24511></sup>Isaiah 65:11).

**that they may provoke me** — implying *design*: in worshipping strange gods they seemed as if *purposely* to provoke Jehovah.

19. Is it I that they provoke to anger? Is it not *themselves*? (<sup>4626</sup>Deuteronomy 32:16,21 <sup>4886</sup>Job 35:6,8 <sup>3086</sup>Proverbs 8:36).

20. *beast ... trees ... ground* — Why doth God vent His fury on these? On account of man, for whom these were created, that the sad spectacle may strike terror into him (<sup>4889</sup>Romans 8:20-22).

21. *Put ... burnt offerings unto ... sacrifices ... eat flesh* — Add the former (which the law required to be *wholly* burnt) to the latter (which were burnt only *in part*), and “eat flesh” even off the holocausts or burnt offerings. As far as I am concerned, saith Jehovah, you may do with one and the other alike. I will have neither (<sup>2311</sup>Isaiah 1:11 <sup>2883</sup>Hosea 8:13 <sup>3052</sup>Amos 5:21,22).

22. Not contradicting the divine obligation of the legal sacrifices. But, “I did not require sacrifices, unless combined with moral obedience” (<sup>4818</sup>Psalms 50:8 51:16,17). The superior claim of the *moral* above the *positive* precepts of the law was marked by the ten commandments having been delivered first, and by the two tables of stone being deposited alone in the ark (<sup>4886</sup>Deuteronomy 5:6). The negative in *Hebrew* often supplies the want of the comparative: not excluding the thing denied, but only implying the prior claim of the thing set in opposition to it (<sup>2809</sup>Hosea 6:6). “I will have mercy, and *not* sacrifice” (<sup>4952</sup>1 Samuel 15:22). Love to God is the supreme *end*, external observances only *means* towards that end. “The mere sacrifice was not *so much* what I commanded, as the sincere submission to My will gives to the sacrifice all its virtue” [MAGEE, *Atonement*, Note 57].

23. (<sup>4956</sup>Exodus 15:26 19:5).

24. *hearkened not* — They did not give even a partial hearing to Me (<sup>4811</sup>Psalms 81:11,12).

*imagination* — rather, as *Margin*, “the stubbornness”

*backward*, etc. — (<sup>2427</sup>Jeremiah 2:27 32:33 <sup>2806</sup>Hosea 4:16).

25. *rising ... early* — (<sup>2473</sup>Jeremiah 7:13).

26. *hardened ... neck* — (<sup>4627</sup>Deuteronomy 31:27 <sup>2804</sup>Isaiah 48:4 <sup>4051</sup>Acts 7:51).

*worse than their fathers* — (<sup>2462</sup>Jeremiah 16:12). In <sup>2472</sup>Jeremiah 7:22 He had said, “*your* fathers”; here He says, “*their* fathers”; the change to the third person marks growing alienation from them. He no longer addresses *themselves*, as it would be a waste of words in the case of such hardened rebels.

**27. *Therefore*** — rather, “*Though* thou speak ... yet they will not hearken” [MAURER], (<sup><3100></sup>Ezekiel 2:7), a trial to the prophet’s faith; though he knew his warnings would be unheeded, still he was to give them in obedience to God.

**28. *unto them*** — that is, in reference to them.

***a nation*** — The word usually applied to the Gentile *nations* is here applied to the Jews, as being east off and classed by God among the Gentiles.

***nor receiveth correction*** — (<sup><2483></sup>Jeremiah 5:3).

***truth ... perished*** — (<sup><2483></sup>Jeremiah 9:3).

**29.** Jeremiah addresses Jerusalem under the figure of a woman, who, in grief for her lost children, deprives her head of its chief ornament and goes up to the hills to weep (<sup><0113></sup>Judges 11:37,38 <sup><2345></sup>Isaiah 15:2).

***hair*** — flowing locks, like those of a Nazarite.

***high places*** — The scene of her idolatries is to be the scene of her mourning (<sup><3083></sup>Jeremiah 3:21).

***generation of his wrath*** — the generation with which He is wroth. So <sup><3005></sup>Isaiah 10:6; “the people of My wrath.”

**30. *set their abominations in the house*** — (<sup><2424></sup>Jeremiah 32:34 <sup><2204></sup>2 Kings 21:4,7 23:4 <sup><3085></sup>Ezekiel 8:5-14).

**31. *high places of Tophet*** — the *altars* [HORSLEY] of Tophet; erected to Moloch, on the heights along the south of the valley facing Zion.

***burn ... sons*** — (<sup><1963></sup>Psalm 106:38).

***commanded ... not*** — put for, “I forbade expressly” (<sup><6173></sup>Deuteronomy 17:3 12:31). See on <sup><3123></sup>Jeremiah 2:23; <sup><2333></sup>Isaiah 30:33.

**32. *valley of slaughter*** — so named because of the great slaughter of the Jews about to take place at Jerusalem: a just retribution of their sin in slaying their children to Moloch in Tophet.

***no place*** — no room, namely, to bury in, so many shall be those slain by the Chaldeans (<sup><2491></sup>Jeremiah 19:11 <sup><3185></sup>Ezekiel 6:5).

**33. *fray*** — *scare* or *frighten* (<sup><1833></sup>Deuteronomy 28:26). Typical of the last great battle between the Lord’s host and the apostasy (<sup><6677></sup>Revelation 19:17,18,21).

**34.** Referring to the joyous songs and music with which the bride and bridegroom were escorted in the procession to the home of the latter from that of the former; a custom still prevalent in the East (<sup>21119</sup>Jeremiah 16:9 <sup>21117</sup>Isaiah 24:7,8 <sup>6183</sup>Revelation 18:23).

# CHAPTER 8

## JEREMIAH 8:1-22.

### THE JEW'S COMING PUNISHMENT; THEIR UNIVERSAL AND INCURABLE IMPENITENCE.

1. The victorious Babylonians were about to violate the sanctuaries of the dead in search of plunder; for ornaments, treasures, and insignia of royalty were usually buried with kings. Or rather, their purpose was to do the *greatest dishonor* to the dead (<sup><2346></sup>Isaiah 14:19).

2. *spread ... before the sun*, etc. — retribution in kind. The very objects which received their idolatries shall unconcernedly witness their dishonor.

*lover ... served ... after ... walked ... sought ... worshipped* — Words are accumulated, as if enough could not be said fully to express the mad fervor of their idolatry to the heavenly host (<sup><1236></sup>2 Kings 23:5).

*nor ... buried* — (<sup><2276></sup>Jeremiah 22:19).

*dung* — (<sup><2122></sup>Jeremiah 9:22 <sup><1880></sup>Psalms 83:10).

3. The survivors shall be still worse off than the dead (<sup><1023></sup>Job 3:21,22 <sup><1106></sup>Revelation 9:6).

*which remain in all the places* — “in all places of them that remain, whither I ... that is, in all places whither I have driven them that remain [MAURER].

4. “Is it not a natural instinct, that if one falls, he *rises again*; if one turns away (that is, wanders from the way), he will *return* to the point from which he wandered? Why then does not Jerusalem do so?” He plays on the double sense of *return*; literal and metaphorical (<sup><2482></sup>Jeremiah 3:12 4:1).

5. *slidden ... backsliding* — rather, as the *Hebrew* is the same as in <sup><2484></sup>Jeremiah 8:4, to which this verse refers, “*turned away with a perpetual turning away.*”

*perpetual* — in contrast to the “arise” (“rise again,” <sup><2484></sup>Jeremiah 8:4).

*refuse to return* — in contrast to, “shall he ... not return” (<sup><2484></sup>Jeremiah 8:4 <sup><2483></sup>Jeremiah 5:3).

**6. *spake not aright*** — that is, not so as *penitently to confess* that they acted wrong. Compare what follows.

***every one ... his course*** — The *Keri* reads “course,” but the *Chetib*, “courses.” “They persevere in the *courses* whatever they have once entered on.” Their wicked *ways* were *diversified*.

***horse rusheth*** — literally, “pours himself forth,” as water that has burst its embankment. The *mad rapidity* of the war horse is the point of comparison (<sup><3899></sup>Job 39:19-25).

**7.** The instinct of the migratory birds leads them with unfailling regularity to return every spring from their winter abodes in summer climes (So 2:12); but God’s people will not return to Him even when the winter of His wrath is past, and He invites them back to the spring of His favor.

***in the heaven*** — emphatical. The birds whose very element is the *air*, in which they are never at rest, yet show a steady sagacity, which God’s people do not.

***times*** — namely, of migrating, and of returning.

***my people*** — This honorable title aggravates the unnatural perversity of the Jews towards *their* God.

***know not***, etc. — (<sup><3184></sup>Jeremiah 5:4 5 <sup><2003></sup>Isaiah 1:3).

**8. *law ... with us*** — (<sup><4127></sup>Romans 2:17). Possessing the law, on which they prided themselves, the Jews might have become the wisest of nations; but by their neglecting its precepts, the law became given “in vain,” as far as they were concerned.

***scribes*** — copyists. “In vain” copies were multiplied. MAURER translates, “The false pen of the scribes hath converted it [the law] into a lie.” See *Margin*, which agrees with *Vulgate*.

**9. *dismayed*** — confounded.

***what wisdom*** — literally, “the wisdom of what?” that is, “wisdom in what respect?” the Word of the Lord being the only true source of wisdom (<sup><4398></sup>Psalms 119:98-100 <sup><1007></sup>Proverbs 1:7 9:10).

**10-12.** Repeated from <sup><3162></sup>Jeremiah 6:12-15. See a similar repetition, <sup><4185></sup>Jeremiah 8:15 <sup><3449></sup>Jeremiah 14:19.

***inherit*** — *succeed to the possession* of them.

**11.** (<sup><2330></sup>Ezekiel 13:10).

**13. *surely consume*** — literally, “gathering I will gather,” or “consuming I will consume.”

***no grapes ... nor figs*** — (<sup>2007</sup>Joel 1:7 <sup>4219</sup>Matthew 21:19).

***things that I have given ... shall pass away*** — rather, “I will appoint to them those who shall overwhelm (pass over) them,” that is, I will send the enemy upon them [MAURER]. *English Version* accords well with the context; Though their grapes and figs ripen, they shall not be allowed to enjoy them.

**14. *assemble*** — for defense.

***let us be silent*** — not assault the enemy, but merely defend ourselves in quiet, until the storm blow over.

***put us to silence*** — brought us to that state that we can no longer resist the foe; implying silent despair.

***water of gall*** — literally, “water of the poisonous plant,” perhaps the poppy (<sup>2403</sup>Jeremiah 9:15 23:15).

**15. Repeated** (<sup>2449</sup>Jeremiah 14:19).

***We looked for*** — owing to the expectations held out by the false prophets.

***health*** — healing; that is, restoration from adversity.

**16. *his horses*** — the Chaldean’s.

***was heard*** — the prophetic past for the future.

***from Daniel*** — bordering on Phoenicia. This was to be Nebuchadnezzar’s route in invading Israel; the *cavalry* in advance of the infantry would scour the country.

***strong ones*** — a poetical phrase for *steeds*, peculiar to Jeremiah (<sup>2403</sup>Jeremiah 47:3; compare <sup>2403</sup>Jeremiah 4:13,29 6:23).

**17. *I*** — Jehovah.

***cockatrices*** — basilisks (<sup>2508</sup>Isaiah 11:8), that is, enemies whose destructive power no means, by persuasion or otherwise, can counteract. Serpent-charmers in the East entice serpents by music, and by a particular pressure on the neck render them incapable of darting (<sup>1804</sup>Psalms 58:4,5).

**18.** (<sup>2204</sup>Isaiah 22:4). The lamentation of the prophet for the impending calamity of his country.

**against sorrow** — or, *with respect to sorrow*. MAURER translates, “Oh, my exhilaration as to sorrow!” that is, “Oh, that exhilaration (‘comfort’, from an *Arabic* root, to *shine* as the rising sun) would shine upon me as to my sorrow!”

**in me** — within me.

19. The prophet in vision hears the cry of the exiled Jews, wondering that God should have delivered them up to the enemy, seeing that He is Zion’s king, dwelling in her (<sup>381B</sup>Micah 3:11). In the latter half of the verse God replies that their own idolatry, not want of faithfulness on His part, is the cause.

**because of them that dwell in a far country** — rather, “from a land of distances,” that is, a distant land (<sup>381B</sup>Isaiah 39:3). *English Version* understands the cry to be of the Jews *in their own land*, because of the enemy *coming from their far-off country*.

**strange vanities** — foreign gods.

20. Proverbial. Meaning: One season of hope after another has passed, but the looked-for deliverance never came, and now all hope is gone.

21. **black** — sad in visage with grief (<sup>381B</sup>Joel 2:6).

22. **balm** — *balsam*; to be applied to the wounds of my people. Brought into Judea first from Arabia Felix, by the queen of Sheba, in Solomon’s time [JOSEPHUS, *Antiquities*, 8.2]. The *opobalsamum* of PLINY; or else [BOCHART] the resin drawn from the terebinth. It abounded in Gilead, east of Jordan, where, in consequence, many “physicians” established themselves (<sup>381B</sup>Jeremiah 46:11 51:8 <sup>037Z</sup>Genesis 37:25 43:11).

**health ... recovered** — The *Hebrew* is literally, “lengthening out ... gone up”; hence, *the long bandage applied* to bind up a wound. So the *Arabic* also [GESENIUS].

# CHAPTER 9

## JEREMIAH 9:1-26.

### JEREMIAH'S LAMENTATION FOR THE JEWS' SINS AND CONSEQUENT PUNISHMENT.

1. This verse is more fitly joined to the last chapter, as <sup><3023></sup>Jeremiah 9:23 in the *Hebrew* (compare <sup><3204></sup>Isaiah 22:4 <sup><3211></sup>Lamentations 2:11 3:48).

2. *lodging-place* — a caravanseral for caravans, or companies travelling in the desert, remote from towns. It was a square building enclosing an open court. Though a lonely and often filthy dwelling, Jeremiah would prefer even it to the comforts of Jerusalem, so as to be removed from the pollutions of the capital (<sup><3557></sup>Psalms 55:7,8).

3. *bend ... tongues ... for lies* — that is, with lies as their arrows; they direct lies on their tongue as their bow (<sup><3668></sup>Psalms 64:3,4).

*not valiant for ... truth* — (<sup><3028></sup>Jeremiah 7:28). MAURER translates, "They do not prevail by truth" or *faith* (<sup><3924></sup>Psalms 12:4). Their *tongue*, not *faith*, is their weapon.

*upon ... earth* — rather, "in the land."

*know not me* — (<sup><3001></sup>Hosea 4:1).

4. *supplant* — literally, "trip up by the heel" (<sup><3028></sup>Hosea 12:3).

*walk with slanders* — (<sup><3068></sup>Jeremiah 6:28).

5. *weary themselves* — *are at laborious pains* to act perversely [MAURER]. Sin is a hard bondage (<sup><3013></sup>Habakkuk 2:13).

6. *Thine* — God addresses Jeremiah, who dwelt in the midst of deceitful men.

*refuse to know me* — Their ignorance of God is wilful (<sup><3008></sup>Jeremiah 9:3 5:4,5).

7. *melt ... try them* — by sending calamities on them.

*for how shall I do* — "What *else* can I do for the sake of the daughter of My people?" [MAURER], (<sup><3025></sup>Isaiah 1:25 <sup><3008></sup>Malachi 3:3).

8. *tongue ... arrow shot out* — rather, “a murdering arrow” [MAURER] (<sup>2498</sup>Jeremiah 9:3).

*speaketh peaceably ... in heart ... layeth ... wait* — layeth his ambush [HENDERSON], (<sup>4852</sup>Psalms 55:21).

9. (<sup>2489</sup>Jeremiah 5:9,29).

10. Jeremiah breaks in upon Jehovah’s threats of wrath with lamentation for his desolated country.

*mountains* — once cultivated and fruitful: the hillsides were cultivated in terraces between the rocks.

*habitations of ... wilderness* — rather, “the pleasant herbage (literally, ‘the choice parts’ of any thing) of the pasture plain.” The *Hebrew* for “wilderness” expresses not a barren desert, but an untilled plain, fit for pasture.

*burned up* — because no one waters them, the inhabitants being all gone.

*none can pass through them* — much less *inhabit* them.

*fowl* — (<sup>2025</sup>Jeremiah 4:25).

11. *And* — omit “And.” Jehovah here resumes His speech from <sup>2489</sup>Jeremiah 9:9.

*heaps* — (see on <sup>2357</sup>Isaiah 25:2).

*dragons* — jackals.

12. Rather, “Who is a wise man? (that is, *Whosoever* has inspired wisdom, <sup>6185</sup>2 Peter 3:15); let him understand this (weigh well the evils impending, and the causes of their being sent); and he to whom the mouth of the Lord hath spoken (that is, *whosoever is prophetically inspired*), let him declare it to his fellow countrymen,” if haply they may be roused to repentance, the only hope of safety.

13. Answer to the “for what the land perisheth” (<sup>2492</sup>Jeremiah 9:12).

14. (<sup>2472</sup>Jeremiah 7:24).

*Baalim* — plural of Baal, to express his supposed manifold powers.

*fathers taught them* — (<sup>8014</sup>Galatians 1:14 <sup>6018</sup>1 Peter 1:18). We are not to follow the errors of the fathers, but the authority of Scripture and of God [JEROME].

15. *feed* — (<sup>2184</sup>Jeremiah 8:14 23:15 <sup>2301</sup>Psalms 80:5).

16. *nor their fathers have known* — alluding to <sup>2194</sup>Jeremiah 9:14, “Their fathers taught them” idolatry; therefore the children shall be scattered to a land which neither their fathers nor they have known.

*send a sword after them* — Not even in flight shall they be safe.

17. *mourning women* — hired to heighten lamentation by plaintive cries baring the breast, beating the arms, and suffering the hair to flow dishevelled (<sup>2135</sup>2 Chronicles 35:25 <sup>2135</sup>Ecclesiastes 12:5 <sup>2102</sup>Matthew 9:23).

*cunning* — skilled in wailing.

18. (<sup>2147</sup>Jeremiah 14:17).

19. The cry of “the mourning women.”

*spoiled* — laid waste.

*dwellings cast us out* — fulfilling <sup>2183</sup>Leviticus 18:28 20:22. CALVIN translates, “*The enemy have cast down our habitations.*”

20. *Yet* — rather, “Only” [HENDERSON]. This particle calls attention to what follows.

*teach ... daughters wailing* — The deaths will be so many that there will be a lack of mourning women to bewail them. The mothers, therefore, must teach their daughters the science to supply the want.

21. *death ... windows* — The death-inflicting soldiery, finding the doors closed, burst in by the windows.

*to cut off ... children from ... streets* — Death cannot be said to enter the *windows* to cut off the children *in* the streets, but to cut them off, so as no more to play in the streets without (<sup>2305</sup>Zechariah 8:5).

22. *saieth the Lord* — continuing the thread of discourse from <sup>2101</sup>Jeremiah 9:20.

*dung* — (<sup>2102</sup>Jeremiah 8:2).

*handful ... none ... gather them* — implying that the handful has been so trodden as to be not worth even the poor *gleaner's* effort to gather it. Or the Eastern custom may be referred to: the reaper cuts the grain and is followed by another who *gathers it*. This grain shall not be worth gathering. How galling to the pride of the Jews to hear that so shall their carcasses be trodden contemptuously under foot!

**23. *wisdom*** — political sagacity; as if *it* could rescue from the impending calamities.

***might*** — military prowess.

**24.** Nothing but an experimental knowledge of God will save the nation.

***understandeth*** — *theoretically*; in the intellect.

***knoweth*** — *practically*: so as to walk in My ways (<sup><3276></sup>Jeremiah 22:16 <sup><3221></sup>Job 22:21 <sup><4131></sup>1 Corinthians 1:31).

***loving kindness*** — God’s mercy is put in the first and highest place, because without it we should flee from God in fear and despair.

***judgment ... righteousness*** — *loving-kindness* towards the godly; *judgment* towards the ungodly; *righteousness* the most perfect fairness in all cases [GROTIUS]. *Faithfulness to His promises* to preserve the godly, as well as stern execution of judgment on the ungodly, is included in “righteousness.”

***in the earth*** — contrary to the dogma of some philosophers, that God does not interfere in terrestrial concerns (<sup><5811></sup>Psalms 58:11).

***in these ... I delight*** — as well in doing them as in seeing them done by others (<sup><3168></sup>Micah 6:8 7:18).

**25. *with the uncircumcised*** — rather, “all that are circumcised *in uncircumcision*” [HENDERSON]. The *Hebrew* is an *abstract* term, not a *concrete*, as *English Version* translates, and as the pious “circumcised” is. The nations specified, Egypt, Judah, etc., were *outwardly* “circumcised,” but *in heart* were “uncircumcised.” The heathen nations were defiled, in spite of their literal circumcision, by idolatry. The Jews, with all their glorying in their spiritual privileges, were no better (<sup><2404></sup>Jeremiah 4:4 <sup><5109></sup>Deuteronomy 10:16 30:6 <sup><4128></sup>Romans 2:28,29 <sup><5121></sup>Colossians 2:11). However, <sup><2518></sup>Ezekiel 31:18 32:19, may imply that the Egyptians were uncircumcised; and it is uncertain as to the other nations specified whether they were at that early time circumcised. HERODOTUS says the Egyptians were so; but others think this applies only to the priests and others having a sacred character, not to the mass of the nation; so *English Version* may be fight (<sup><4128></sup>Romans 2:28,29).

**26. *Egypt*** — put first to degrade Judah, who, though in privileges above the Gentiles, by unfaithfulness sank below them ... Egypt, too, was the power in which the Jews were so prone to trust, and by whose instigation they, as well as the other peoples specified, revolted from Babylon.

***in the utmost corners*** — rather, “having the hair shaven (or *clipped*) in angles,” that is, having the beard on the cheek narrowed or *cut*: a Canaanitish custom, forbidden to the Israelites (<sup>18927</sup>Leviticus 19:27 21:5). The Arabs are hereby referred to (compare <sup>30523</sup>Jeremiah 25:23 49:32), as the words in apposition show, “that dwell in the wilderness.”

***uncircumcised ... uncircumcised in the heart*** — The addition of “in the heart” in *Israel’s* case marks *its* greater guilt in proportion to its greater privileges, as compared with the rest.

# CHAPTER 10

## JEREMIAH 10:1-25.

### CONTRAST BETWEEN THE IDOLS AND JEHOVAH. THE PROPHET'S LAMENTATION AND PRAYER.

1. *Israel* — the Jews, the surviving representatives of the nation.
2. EICHORN thinks the reference here to be to some celestial portent which had appeared at that time, causing the Jews' dismay. Probably the reference is general, namely, to the Chaldeans, famed as astrologers, through contact with whom the Jews were likely to fall into the same superstition.  
*way* — the precepts or ordinances (<sup><0883></sup>Leviticus 18:3 <sup><4402></sup>Acts 9:2).  
*signs of heaven* — The Gentiles did not acknowledge a Great First Cause: many thought events depended on the power of the stars, which some, as PLATO, thought to be endowed with spirit and reason. All heavenly phenomena, eclipses, comets, etc. are included.  
*one cutteth a tree*, etc. — rather, "It (that which they busy themselves about: a sample of their 'customs') is a tree cut out of the forest" [MAURER].
4. *fasten ... move not* — that is, that it may stand upright without risk of falling, which the god (!) would do, if left to itself (<sup><2407></sup>Isaiah 41:7).
5. *upright* — or, "They are of turned work, resembling a palm tree" [MAURER]. The point of comparison between the idol and the palm is in the pillar-like uprightness of the latter, it having no branches except at the top.  
*speak not* — (<sup><4957></sup>Psalms 115:5).  
*cannot go* — that is, walk (<sup><4957></sup>Psalms 115:7 <sup><2401></sup>Isaiah 46:1,7).  
*neither ... do good* — (<sup><2423></sup>Isaiah 41:23).
6. *none* — literally, "no particle of nothing": nothing whatever; the strongest possible denial (<sup><0251></sup>Exodus 15:11 <sup><4908></sup>Psalms 86:8,10).
7. (<sup><6504></sup>Revelation 15:4).

**to thee doth it appertain** — to Thee it properly belongs, namely, that Thou shouldest be “feared” (taken out of the previous “fear Thee”) (compare <sup><327></sup>Ezekiel 21:27). He alone is the *becoming* object of worship. To worship any other is unseemly and an infringement of His inalienable prerogative.

**none** — nothing whatever (see on <sup><240></sup>Jeremiah 10:6; <sup><380></sup>Psalms 89:6).

**8. altogether** — rather, “all alike” [MAURER]. Even the so-called “wise” men (<sup><240></sup>Jeremiah 10:7) of the Gentiles are on a level with the *brutes* and “foolish,” namely, because they connive at the popular idolatry (compare <sup><612></sup>Romans 1:21-28). Therefore, in Daniel and Revelation, the world power is represented under a bestial form. Man divests himself of his true humanity, and sinks to the level of the *brute*, when he severs his connection with God (<sup><135></sup>Psalms 115:8 Jon 2:8).

**stock is a doctrine of vanities** — The stock (put for the worship of *all idols whatever*, made out of a stock) speaks for itself that the whole theory of idolatry is vanity (<sup><240></sup>Isaiah 44:9-11). CASTALIO translates, “the very wood itself confuting the vanity” (of the idol).

**9.** Everything connected with idols is the result of human effort.

**Silver spread** — (See on <sup><312></sup>Isaiah 30:22; <sup><240></sup>Isaiah 40:19).

**Tarshish** — Tartessus, in Spain, famed for precious metals.

**Uphaz** — (<sup><705></sup>Daniel 10:5). As the *Septuagint* in the *Syrian Hexapla* in the *Margin*, THEODOTUS, the *Syrian* and *Chaldee versions* have “*Ophir*,” GESENIUS thinks “Uphaz” a colloquial corruption (one letter only being changed) for “Ophir.” Ophir, in <sup><105></sup>Genesis 10:29, is mentioned among Arabian countries. Perhaps Malacca is the country meant, the natives of which still call their gold mines Ophirs. HEEREN thinks Ophir the general name for the rich countries of the south, on the Arabian, African, and Indian coasts; just as our term, East Indies.

**cunning** — skillful.

**10. true God** — literally, “God Jehovah is truth”; not merely *true*, that is, veracious, but *truth* in the reality of His essence, as opposed to the “vanity” or emptiness which all idols are (<sup><240></sup>Jeremiah 10:3,8,15 <sup><415></sup>2 Chronicles 15:3 <sup><330></sup>Psalms 31:5 <sup><130></sup>1 John 5:20).

**living God** — (<sup><135></sup>John 5:26 <sup><507></sup>1 Timothy 6:17). He hath life *in Himself* which no creature has. All else “live in Him” (<sup><417></sup>Acts 17:28). In contrast to *dead* idols.

**everlasting** — (<sup>3906</sup>Psalm 10:16). In contrast to the *temporary* existence of all other objects of worship.

**11.** This verse is in *Chaldee*, Jeremiah supplying his countrymen with a formula of reply to Chaldee idolaters in the tongue most intelligible to the latter. There may be also derision intended in imitating their barbarous dialect. ROSENMULLER objects to this view, that not merely the words put in the mouths of the Israelites, but *Jeremiah's* own introductory words, “Thus shall ye say to them,” are in *Chaldee*, and thinks it to be a *marginal* gloss. But it is found in all the oldest versions. It was an old *Greek* saying: “Whoever thinks himself a god besides the one God, let him make another world” (<sup>4968</sup>Psalm 96:5).

**shall perish** — (<sup>2318</sup>Isaiah 2:18 <sup>3812</sup>Zechariah 13:2).

**these heavens** — the speaker pointing to them with his fingers.

**12.** Continuation of (<sup>2400</sup>Jeremiah 10:10, after the interruption of the thread of the discourse in <sup>2401</sup>Jeremiah 10:11 (<sup>3905</sup>Psalm 136:5,6).

**13.** Literally, “At the voice of His giving forth,” that is, when He thunders. (<sup>4884</sup>Job 38:34 <sup>4905</sup>Psalm 29:3-5).

**waters** — (<sup>1000</sup>Genesis 1:7) — above the firmament; heavy rains accompany thunder.

**vapours ... ascend** — (<sup>4800</sup>Psalm 135:7).

**treasures** — His stores.

**14. in his knowledge** — “is rendered brutish *by* his skill,” namely, in idol-making (<sup>2408</sup>Jeremiah 10:8,9). Thus the parallel, “confounded by the graven image,” corresponds (so <sup>4817</sup>Jeremiah 51:17). Others not so well translate, “without knowledge,” namely, of God (see <sup>3907</sup>Isaiah 42:17 45:16 <sup>3008</sup>Hosea 4:6).

**15. errors** — deceptions; from a *Hebrew* root, “to stutter”; then meaning “to mock.”

**their visitation they** — When God shall punish the idol-worshippers (namely, by Cyrus), the idols themselves shall be destroyed [ROSENMULLER] (<sup>2401</sup>Jeremiah 10:11).

**16. portion** — from a *Hebrew* root, “to divide.” God is *the all-sufficient Good* of His people (<sup>0830</sup>Numbers 18:20 <sup>4968</sup>Psalm 16:5 73:26 <sup>4934</sup>Lamentations 3:24).

**not like them** — not like the idols, a vain object of trust (<sup><4624></sup>Deuteronomy 32:31).

**former of all things** — the Fashioner (as a potter, <sup><2648></sup>Isaiah 64:8) of the universe.

**rod of his inheritance** — The portion marked off as His inheritance by the measuring rod (<sup><3682></sup>Ezekiel 48:21). As He is their portion, so are they His portion (<sup><4634></sup>Deuteronomy 32:9). A reciprocal tie (compare <sup><4619></sup>Jeremiah 51:19 <sup><4748></sup>Psalms 74:2, *Margin*). Others make “rod” refer to the tribal rod or scepter.

**17. wares** — thine effects or movable goods (<sup><3418></sup>Ezekiel 12:3). Prepare for migrating as captives to Babylon. The address is to Jerusalem, as representative of the whole people.

**inhabitant of the fortress** — rather, “*inhabitr*ess of the fortress.” Though thou now seemest to *inhabit* an impregnable *fortress*, thou shalt have to remove. “The land” is the champaign region opposed to the “fortified” cities. The “fortress” being taken, the whole “land” will share the disaster. HENDERSON translates, “Gather up thy *packages* from the ground.” ROSENMULLER, for “fortress,” translates, “siege,” that is, the besieged city. The various articles, in this view, are supposed to be lying about in confusion on the ground during the siege.

**18. sling out** — expressing the violence and suddenness of the removal to Babylon. A similar image occurs in <sup><2463></sup>Jeremiah 16:13 <sup><4929></sup>1 Samuel 25:29 <sup><3277></sup>Isaiah 22:17,18.

**at this once** — at this time, now.

**find it so** — find it by experience, that is, feel it (<sup><2650></sup>Ezekiel 6:10). MICHAELIS translates, “I will bind them together (as in a sling) that they may reach the goal” (Babylon). *English Version* is best: “that they may find it so as I have said” (<sup><4029></sup>Numbers 23:19 <sup><2650></sup>Ezekiel 6:10).

**19. Judea bewails its calamity.**

**wound** — the stroke I suffer under.

**I must bear** — not humble submission to God’s will (<sup><3009></sup>Micah 7:9), but sullen impenitence. Or, rather, it is prophetic of their ultimate acknowledgment of their guilt as the cause of their calamity (<sup><2389></sup>Lamentations 3:39).

**20. *tabernacle is spoiled*** — metaphor from the tents of nomadic life; as these are taken down in a few moments, so as not to leave a vestige of them, so Judea (<sup>200B</sup>Jeremiah 4:20).

***cords*** — with which the coverings of the tent are extended.

***curtains*** — tent-curtains.

**21. *pastors*** — the rulers, civil and religious. This verse gives the cause of the impending calamity.

**22. *bruit*** — rumor of invasion. The antithesis is between the *voice of God* in His prophets to whom they turned a deaf ear, and the *cry of the enemy*, a new teacher, whom they must hear [CALVIN].

***north country*** — Babylon (<sup>201B</sup>Jeremiah 1:15).

**23.** Despairing of influencing the people, he turns to God.

***way of man not in himself*** — (<sup>202B</sup>Proverbs 16:1 20:24 <sup>203B</sup>James 4:13,14). I know, O Jehovah, that the march of the Babylonian conqueror against me (Jeremiah identifying himself with his people) is not at his own discretion, but is overruled by Thee (<sup>204B</sup>Isaiah 10:5-7; compare <sup>205B</sup>Jeremiah 10:19).

***that walketh*** — when he walketh, that is, sets out in any undertaking.

***direct ... steps*** — to give a prosperous issue to (<sup>206B</sup>Psalms 73:23).

**24, 25.** Since I (my nation) must be corrected (justice requiring it because of the deep guilt of the nation), I do not deprecate all chastisement, but pray only for moderation in it (<sup>207B</sup>Jeremiah 30:11 <sup>208B</sup>Psalms 6:1 38:1); and that the full tide of Thy fury may be poured out on the heathen invaders for their cruelty towards *Thy* people. <sup>209B</sup>Psalms 79:6,7, a psalm to be referred to the time of the captivity, its composer probably repeated this from Jeremiah. The imperative, "Pour out," is used instead of the future, expressing vividly the *certainty* of the prediction, and that the word of God itself effects its own declarations. Accordingly, the Jews were restored after *correction*; the Babylonians were utterly extinguished.

***know thee ... call ... on thy name*** — Knowledge of God is the beginning of piety; *calling* on Him the fruit.

***heathen ... Jacob*** — He reminds God of the distinction He has made between His people whom *Jacob* represents, and the heathen aliens. *Correct* us as Thy adopted sons, the seed of Jacob; *destroy* them as outcasts (<sup>210B</sup>Zechariah 1:14,15,21).

# CHAPTER 11

## JEREMIAH 11:1-23.

### EPITOME OF THE COVENANT FOUND IN THE TEMPLE IN JOSIAH'S REIGN. JUDAH'S REVOLT FROM IT, AND GOD'S CONSEQUENT WRATH.

2. *this covenant* — alluding to the book of the law (<sup><6319></sup>Deuteronomy 31:26) found in the temple by Hilkiah the high priest, five years after Jeremiah's call to the prophetic office (<sup><6218></sup>2 Kings 22:8-23:25).

*Hear ye* — Others besides Jeremiah were to promulgate God's will to the people; it was the duty of the priests to read the law to them (<sup><3117></sup>Malachi 2:7).

3. (<sup><6323></sup>Deuteronomy 27:26 <sup><8810></sup>Galatians 3:10).

4. *in the day* — that is, when. The Sinaitic covenant was made some time after the exodus, but the two events are so connected as to be viewed as one.

*iron furnace* — (<sup><6303></sup>Deuteronomy 4:20 <sup><1051></sup>1 Kings 8:51). "Furnace" expresses the searching ordeal; "iron," the long duration of it. The furnace was *of earth*, not *of iron* (<sup><3916></sup>Psalms 12:6); a furnace, in heat and duration enough to melt even iron. God's deliverance of them from such an ordeal aggravates their present guilt.

*do them* — namely, the words of the covenant (<sup><2113></sup>Jeremiah 11:3).

*so*, etc. — (<sup><6303></sup>Leviticus 26:3,12).

5. *oath* — (<sup><4950></sup>Psalms 105:9,10).

*a land flowing with milk and honey* — (See on <sup><0448></sup>Numbers 14:8).

*as it is this day* — These are the concluding words of God to the Israelites when formerly brought out of Egypt, "Obey ... that I may *at this time* make good the promise I made to your fathers, to give," etc. [MAURER]. *English Version* makes the words apply to *Jeremiah's time*, "As ye know at this time, that God's promise has been fulfilled," namely, in Israel's acquisition of Canaan.

**So be it** — *Hebrew, Amen.* Taken from <sup><6275></sup>Deuteronomy 27:15-26.

Jeremiah hereby solemnly concurs in the justice of the curses pronounced there (see <sup><2418></sup>Jeremiah 11:3).

**6.** Jeremiah was to take a prophetic tour throughout Judah, to proclaim everywhere the denunciations in the book of the law found in the temple.

**Hear ... do** — ( <sup><4103></sup>Romans 2:13 <sup><3022></sup>James 1:22).

**7. rising early** — ( <sup><2073></sup>Jeremiah 7:13).

**8. imagination** — rather, “stubbornness.”

**will bring** — The words, “even unto this day” ( <sup><2410></sup>Jeremiah 11:7), confirm *English Version* rather than the rendering of ROSENMULLER: “I brought upon them.”

**words** — threats ( <sup><2418></sup>Jeremiah 11:3 <sup><6275></sup>Deuteronomy 27:15-26).

**9. conspiracy** — a *deliberate combination* against God and against Josiah’s reformation. Their idolatry is not the result of a hasty impulse ( <sup><3936></sup>Psalms 83:5 <sup><3225></sup>Ezekiel 22:25).

**11. cry unto me** — contrasted with “cry unto the gods,” ( <sup><2412></sup>Jeremiah 11:12).

**not hearken** — ( <sup><3841></sup>Psalms 18:41 <sup><3028></sup>Proverbs 1:28 <sup><2015></sup>Isaiah 1:15 <sup><3304></sup>Micah 3:4).

**12. cry unto the gods ... not save** — ( <sup><6327></sup>Deuteronomy 32:37,38). Compare this verse and beginning of <sup><2413></sup>Jeremiah 11:13 <sup><2028></sup>Jeremiah 2:28.

**in the time of their trouble** — that is, calamity ( <sup><2027></sup>Jeremiah 2:27).

**13. shameful thing** — *Hebrew*, “shame,” namely, the idol, not merely shameful, but the *essence* of all that is shameful ( <sup><2424></sup>Jeremiah 3:24 <sup><3940></sup>Hosea 9:10), which will bring shame and confusion on yourselves [CALVIN].

**14.** There is a climax of guilt which admits of no further intercessory prayer ( <sup><1230></sup>Exodus 32:10, in the *Chaldee version*, “leave off praying”; <sup><2416></sup>Jeremiah 7:16 <sup><3941></sup>1 Samuel 16:1 15:35 <sup><3156></sup>1 John 5:16). Our mind should be at one with God in all that He is doing, even in the rejection of the reprobate.

**for their trouble** — on account of their trouble. Other manuscripts read, “in the time of their trouble” a gloss from <sup><2412></sup>Jeremiah 11:12.

**15. my beloved** — My elect people, Judea; this aggravates their ingratitude ( <sup><2427></sup>Jeremiah 12:7).

**lewdness with many** — (<sup><3165></sup>Ezekiel 16:25). Rather, “that great (or, manifold) enormity”; literally, “the enormity, the manifold”; namely, their idolatry, which made their worship of God in the temple a mockery (compare <sup><3170></sup>Jeremiah 7:10 <sup><3239></sup>Ezekiel 23:39) [HENDERSON].

**holy flesh** — (<sup><3102></sup>Haggai 2:12-14 <sup><3115></sup>Titus 1:15), namely, the sacrifices, which, through the guilt of the Jews, were no longer *holy*, that is, acceptable to God. The sacrifices on which they relied will, therefore, no longer protect them. Judah is represented as a priest’s wife, who, by adultery, has forfeited her share in the flesh of the sacrifices, and yet boasts of her prerogative at the very same time [HORSLEY].

**when thou doest evil** — literally, “when thy evil” (is at hand). PISCATOR translates, “When thy *calamity* is at hand (according to God’s threats), thou gloriest” (against God, instead of humbling thyself). *English Version* is best (compare <sup><3124></sup>Proverbs 2:14).

**16. called thy name** — made thee.

**olive** — (<sup><3138></sup>Psalms 52:8 <sup><3117></sup>Romans 11:17). The “olive” is chosen to represent the adoption of Judah by the *free grace* of God, as its *oil* is the image of *richness* (compare <sup><3216></sup>Psalms 23:5 104:15).

**with ... noise of ... tumult** — or, “at the noise,” etc. namely, at the tumult of the invading army (<sup><2334></sup>Isaiah 13:4) [MAURER]. Or, rather, “with the sound of a mighty voice,” namely, that of God, that is, the thunder; thus there is no confusion of metaphors. The tree stricken with lightning has “*fire kindled* upon it, and the branches are *broken*,” at one and the same time [HOUBIGANT].

**17. that planted thee** — (<sup><3121></sup>Jeremiah 2:21 <sup><3102></sup>Isaiah 5:2).

**against themselves** — The sinner’s sin is to his own hurt (see on <sup><3179></sup>Jeremiah 7:19).

**18, 19.** Jeremiah here digresses to notice the attempt on his life plotted by his townsmen of Anathoth. He had no suspicion of it, until Jehovah revealed it to him (<sup><3116></sup>Jeremiah 12:6).

**the Lord ... thou** — The change of person from the third to the second accords with the excited feelings of the prophet.

**then** — when I was in peril of my life.

**their doings** — those of the men of Anathoth. His thus alluding to them, before he has mentioned their name, is due to his excitement.

**19. *lamb*** — literally, a “pet lamb,” such as the Jews often had in their houses, for their children to play with; and the Arabs still have (<sup><1118></sup>2 Samuel 12:3). His own *familiar* friends had plotted against the prophet. The language is exactly the same as that applied to Messiah (<sup><2511></sup>Isaiah 53:7). Each prophet and patriarch exemplified in his own person some one feature or more in the manifold attributes and sufferings of the Messiah to come; just as the saints have done since His coming (<sup><4121></sup>Galatians 2:20 <sup><1080></sup>Philippians 3:10 <sup><5024></sup>Colossians 1:24). This adapted both the more experimentally to testify of Christ.

***devices*** — (<sup><2488></sup>Jeremiah 18:18).

***tree with ... fruit*** — literally, “in its fruit” or “food,” that is, when it is in fruit. Proverbial, to express the destruction of cause and effect together. The man is the tree; his teaching, the fruit. Let us destroy the prophet and his prophecies; namely, those threatening destruction to the nation, which offended them. Compare <sup><4117></sup>Matthew 7:17, which also refers to *prophets* and their *doctrines*.

**20. *triest ... heart*** — (<sup><6123></sup>Revelation 2:23).

***revealed*** — committed *my cause*. Jeremiah’s wish for vengeance was not personal but ministerial, and accorded with God’s purpose revealed to him against the enemies alike of God and of His servant (<sup><1574></sup>Psalms 37:34 54:7 112:8 118:7).

**21. *Prophecy not*** — (<sup><2307></sup>Isaiah 30:10 <sup><3112></sup>Amos 2:12 <sup><3116></sup>Micah 2:6). If Jeremiah had not uttered his denunciatory predictions, they would not have plotted against him. None were more bitter than his own fellow townsmen. Compare the conduct of the Nazarites towards Jesus of Nazareth (<sup><1108></sup>Luke 4:24-29).

**22.** The retribution of their intended murder shall be in kind; just as in Messiah’s case (<sup><1908></sup>Psalms 69:8-28).

**23.** (<sup><2312></sup>Jeremiah 23:12).

***the year of ... visitation*** — The *Septuagint* translates, “in the year of their,” etc., that is, at the time when I shall visit them in wrath. JEROME supports *English Version*. “Year” often means *a determined time*.

# CHAPTER 12

## <212> JEREMIAH 12:1-17.

### CONTINUATION OF THE SUBJECT AT THE CLOSE OF THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

He ventures to expostulate with Jehovah as to the prosperity of the wicked, who had plotted against his life (<210>Jeremiah 12:1-4); in reply he is told that he will have worse to endure, and that from his own relatives (<210>Jeremiah 12:5,6). The heaviest judgments, however, would be inflicted on the faithless people (<212>Jeremiah 12:7-13); and then on the nations co-operating with the Chaldeans against Judah, with, however, a promise of mercy on repentance (<2124>Jeremiah 12:14-17).

1. (<2504>Psalm 51:4).

*let me talk*, etc. — only let me reason the case with Thee: inquire of Thee the causes why such wicked men as these plotters against my life prosper (compare <2806>Job 12:6 21:7 <2950>Psalm 37:1,35 73:3 <2485>Malachi 3:15). It is right, when hard thoughts of God's providence suggest themselves, to fortify our minds by *justifying God beforehand* (as did Jeremiah), even before we hear the *reasons* of His dealings.

2. *grow* — literally “go on,” “progress.” Thou givest them sure dwellings and increasing prosperity.

*near in ... mouth ... far from ... reins* — (<2203>Isaiah 29:13 <2158>Matthew 15:8). Hypocrites.

3. *knowest me* — (<2904>Psalm 139:1).

*tried ... heart* — (<2113>Jeremiah 11:20).

*toward thee* — rather, “with Thee,” that is, entirely devoted to Thee; contrasted with the hypocrites (<2112>Jeremiah 12:2), “near in ... mouth, and far from ... reins.” This being so, how is it that I fare so ill, they so well?

*pull ... out* — containing the metaphor, from a “rooted tree” (<2112>Jeremiah 12:2).

*prepare* — literally, “separate,” or “set apart as devoted.”

*day of slaughter* — (<sup>3985</sup>James 5:5).

4. *land mourn* — personification (<sup>3442</sup>Jeremiah 14:2 23:10).

*for the wickedness* — (<sup>3978</sup>Psalms 107:34).

*beasts* — (<sup>3008</sup>Hosea 4:3).

*He shall not see our last end* — *Jehovah* knows not what is about to happen to us (<sup>3452</sup>Jeremiah 5:12) [ROSENMULLER]. So the *Septuagint*. (<sup>3901</sup>Psalms 10:11 <sup>3682</sup>Ezekiel 8:12 9:9). Rather, “*The prophet* (Jeremiah, to whom the whole context refers) shall not see our last end.” We need not trouble ourselves about his boding predictions. We shall not be destroyed as he says (<sup>3452</sup>Jeremiah 5:12,13).

5. *Jehovah’s reply to Jeremiah’s complaint.*

*horses* — that is, horsemen: the argument *a fortiori*. A proverbial phrase. The injuries done thee by the men of Anathoth (“the footmen”) are small compared with those which the men of Jerusalem (“the horsemen”) are about to inflict on thee. If the former weary thee out, how wilt thou contend with the king, the court, and the priests at Jerusalem?

*wherein thou trustedst, they wearied thee* — *English Version* thus fills up the sentence with the italicized words, to answer to the parallel clause in the first sentence of the verse. The parallelism is, however, sufficiently retained with a less ellipsis: “If (it is only) in a land of peace thou art confident” [MAURER].

*swelling of Jordan* — In harvest-time and earlier (April and May) it overflows its banks (<sup>1065</sup>Joshua 3:15), and fills the valley called the Ghor. Or, “the *pride* of Jordan,” namely, its wooded banks abounding in lions and other wild beasts (<sup>2499</sup>Jeremiah 49:19 50:44 <sup>3818</sup>Zechariah 11:3; compare <sup>1282</sup>2 Kings 6:2). MAUNDRELL says that between the Sea of Tiberias and Lake Merom the banks are so wooded that the traveler cannot see the river at all without first passing through the woods. If in the campaign country (alone) thou art secure, how wilt thou do when thou fallest into the wooded haunts of wild beasts?

6. *even thy brethren* — as in Christ’s case (<sup>4598</sup>Psalms 69:8 <sup>4611</sup>John 1:11 7:5; compare <sup>3198</sup>Jeremiah 9:4 11:19,21 <sup>4008</sup>Matthew 10:36). Godly faithfulness is sure to provoke the ungodly, even of one’s own family.

*called a multitude after thee* — (<sup>2304</sup>Isaiah 31:4). JEROME translates, “cry after thee with a loud (literally, ‘full’) voice.”

*believe ... not ... though ... speak fair* — (<sup>4025</sup>Proverbs 26:25).

**7. *I have forsaken*** — Jehovah will forsake His temple and the people peculiarly His. The mention of God's close tie to them, as heretofore *His*, aggravates their ingratitude, and shows that their past spiritual privileges will not prevent God from punishing them.

***beloved of my soul*** — image from a *wife* (<sup>34115</sup>Jeremiah 11:15 <sup>2846</sup>Isaiah 54:5).

**8. *is unto me*** — is become unto Me: behaves towards Me as a lion which roars against a man, so that he withdraws from the place where he hears it: so I withdrew from My people, once beloved, but now an object of abhorrence because of their rebellious cries against Me.

**9. *speckled bird*** — Many translate, “a ravenous beast, the hyena”; the corresponding *Arabic* word means *hyena*; so the *Septuagint*. But the *Hebrew* always elsewhere means “a bird of prey.” The *Hebrew* for “speckled” is from a root “to color”; answering to the Jewish *blending together* with paganism the altogether *diverse* Mosaic ritual. The neighboring nations, *birds of prey* like herself (for she had sinfully assimilated herself to them), were ready to pounce upon her.

***assemble ... beasts of ... field*** — The Chaldeans are told to gather the surrounding heathen peoples as allies against Judah (<sup>2809</sup>Isaiah 56:9 <sup>3346</sup>Ezekiel 34:5).

**10. *pastors*** — the Babylonian leaders (compare <sup>34212</sup>Jeremiah 12:12 <sup>2408</sup>Jeremiah 6:3).

***my vineyard*** — (<sup>2100</sup>Isaiah 5:1,5).

***trodden my portion*** — (<sup>2368</sup>Isaiah 63:18).

**11. *mourneth unto me*** — that is, before Me. EICHORN translates, “by reason of Me,” because I have given it to desolation (<sup>3417</sup>Jeremiah 12:7).

***because no man layeth it to heart*** — because none by repentance and prayer seek to deprecate God's wrath. Or, “yet none lays it to heart”; as in <sup>3418</sup>Jeremiah 5:3 [CALVIN].

**12. *high places*** — Before, He had threatened the plains; now, the hills.

***wilderness*** — not an uninhabited desert, but high lands of pasturage, lying between Judea and Chaldea (<sup>3411</sup>Jeremiah 4:11).

**13. Description in detail of the devastation of the land** (<sup>3365</sup>Micah 6:15).

***they shall be ashamed of your*** — The change of persons, in passing from indirect to direct address, is frequent in the prophets. Equivalent to, “Ye

shall be put to the shame of disappointment at the smallness of your produce.”

**14-17.** Prophecy as to the surrounding nations, the Syrians, Ammonites, etc., who helped forward Judah’s calamity: they shall share her fall; and, on their conversion, they shall share with her in the future restoration. This is a brief anticipation of the predictions in the forty-seventh, forty-eighth, and forty-ninth chapters.

**touch** — (<sup><3018></sup>Zechariah 2:8).

**pluck them out ... pluck out ... Judah** — (Compare end of <sup><31216></sup>Jeremiah 12:16). During the thirteen years that the Babylonians besieged Tyre, Nebuchadnezzar, after subduing Coelo-Syria, brought Ammon, Moab, etc., and finally Egypt, into subjection [JOSEPHUS, *Antiquities*, 10:9.7]. On the restoration of these nations, they were to exchange places with the Jews. The latter were now in the midst of them, but on their restoration *they* were to be “in the midst of the Jews,” that is, as proselytes to the true God (compare <sup><3107></sup>Micah 5:7 <sup><33416></sup>Zechariah 14:16). “Pluck *them*,” namely, the Gentile nations: in a bad sense. “Pluck Judah”: in a good sense; used to express the force which was needed to snatch Judah from the tyranny of those nations by whom they had been made captives, or to whom they had fled; otherwise they never would have let Judah go. Previously he had been forbidden to pray for the mass of the Jewish people. But here he speaks consolation to the elect remnant among them. Whatever the Jews might be, God keeps *His* covenant.

**15.** A promise, applying to Judah, as well as to the nations specified (<sup><31044></sup>Amos 9:14). As to Moab, compare <sup><34873></sup>Jeremiah 48:47; as to Ammon, <sup><34816></sup>Jeremiah 49:6.

**16. swear by my name** — (<sup><31002></sup>Jeremiah 4:2 <sup><33985></sup>Isaiah 19:18 65:16); that is, confess solemnly the true God.

**built** — be made spiritually and temporally prosperous: fixed in sure habitations (compare <sup><32016></sup>Jeremiah 24:6 42:10 45:4 <sup><35704></sup>Psalms 87:4,5 <sup><41029></sup>Ephesians 2:20,21 <sup><61051></sup>1 Peter 2:5).

**17.** (<sup><31012></sup>Isaiah 60:12).

# CHAPTER 13

## ~~2417D~~ JEREMIAH 13:1-27.

### SYMBOLICAL PROPHECY (~~2418E~~ JEREMIAH 13:1-7).

Many of these figurative acts being either not possible, or not probable, or decorous, seem to have existed only in the mind of the prophet as part of his inward vision. [So CALVIN]. The world he moved in was not the sensible, but the spiritual, world. Inward acts were, however, when it was possible and proper, materialized by outward performance but not always, and necessarily so. The internal act made a naked statement more impressive and presented the subject when extending over long portions of space and time more concentrated. The interruption of Jeremiah's official duty by a journey of more than two hundred miles twice is not likely to have *literally* taken place.

**1. *put it upon thy loins***, etc. — expressing the close intimacy wherewith Jehovah had joined Israel and Judah to Him (~~2419E~~ Jeremiah 13:11).

***linen*** — implying it was the inner garment next the skin, not the outer one.

***put it not in water*** — signifying the moral filth of His people, like the literal filth of a garment worn constantly next the skin, without being washed (~~2420E~~ Jeremiah 13:10). GROTIUS understands a garment not bleached, but left in its native roughness, just as Judah had no beauty, but was adopted by the sole grace of God (~~2421E~~ Ezekiel 16:4-6). “Neither wast thou washed in water,” etc.

**4. *Euphrates*** — In order to support the view that Jeremiah's act was outward, HENDERSON considers that the *Hebrew Phrath* here is *Ephratha*, the original name of Beth-lehem, six miles south of Jerusalem, a journey easy to be made by Jeremiah. The non-addition of the word “river,” which usually precedes *Phrath*, when meaning Euphrates, favors this view. But I prefer *English Version*. The Euphrates is specified as being near Babylon, the Jews future place of exile.

***hole*** — typical of the prisons in which the Jews were to be confined.

***the rock*** — some well-known rock. A sterile region, such as was that to which the Jews were led away (compare ~~2422E~~ Isaiah 7:19) [GROTIUS].

**6. *after many days*** — Time enough was given for the girdle to become unfit for use. So, in course of time, the Jews became corrupted by the heathen idolatries around, so as to cease to be witnesses of Jehovah; they must, therefore, be cast away as a “marred” or spoiled girdle.

**9.** (<sup><1339></sup>Leviticus 26:19).

**10. *imagination*** — rather, “obstinacy.”

**11.** (<sup><2319></sup>Jeremiah 33:9 <sup><12416></sup>Exodus 19:5).

***glory*** — an ornament to glory in.

**12.** A new image.

***Do we not ... know ... wine*** — The “bottles” are those used in the East, made of skins; our word “hogshead,” originally “oxhide,” alludes to the same custom. As they were used to hold water, milk, and other liquids, what the prophet said (namely, that they should be all filled with wine) was not, as the Jews’ taunting reply implied, a truism even *literally*. The figurative sense which is what Jeremiah chiefly meant, they affected not to understand. As wine intoxicates, so God’s wrath and judgments shall reduce them to that state of helpless distraction that they shall rush on to their own ruin (<sup><24515></sup>Jeremiah 25:15 49:12 <sup><25117></sup>Isaiah 51:17,21,22 63:6).

**13. *upon David’s throne*** — literally, who sit *for David on his throne*; implying the succession of the Davidic family (<sup><3214></sup>Jeremiah 22:4).

***all*** — indiscriminately of every rank.

**14. *dash*** — (<sup><1119></sup>Psalm 2:9). As a potter’s vessel (<sup><1127></sup>Revelation 2:27).

**15. *be not proud*** — Pride was the cause of their contumacy, as humility is the first step to obedience (<sup><2137></sup>Jeremiah 13:17 <sup><1910></sup>Psalm 10:4).

**16. *Give glory*, etc.** — Show by repentance and obedience to God, that you revere His majesty. So Joshua exhorted Achan to “give glory to God” by confessing his crime, thereby showing he revered the All-knowing God.

***stumble*** — image from travelers stumbling into a fatal abyss when overtaken by nightfall (<sup><2313></sup>Isaiah 5:30 59:9,10 <sup><108></sup>Amos 8:9).

***dark mountains*** — literally, “mountains of twilight” or “gloom,” which cast such a gloomy shadow that the traveler stumbles against an opposing rock before he sees it (<sup><3110></sup>John 11:10 12:35).

***shadow of death*** — the densest gloom; death shade (<sup><1449></sup>Psalm 44:19). *Light* and *darkness* are images of prosperity and adversity.

**17. *hear it*** — my exhortation.

***in secret*** — as one mourning and humbling himself for their sin, not self-righteously condemning them (<sup><318></sup>Philippians 3:18).

***pride*** — (see on <sup><2415></sup>Jeremiah 13:15; <sup><1837></sup>Job 33:17).

***flock*** — (<sup><2433></sup>Jeremiah 13:20), just as kings and leaders are called pastors.

**18. *king*** — Jehoiachin or Jeconiah.

***queen*** — the queen mother who, as the king was not more than eighteen years old, held the chief power. Nehushta, daughter of Elnathan, carried away captive with Jehoiachin by Nebuchadnezzar (<sup><1248></sup>2 Kings 24:8-15).

***Humble yourselves*** — that is, Ye shall be humbled, or brought low (<sup><2228></sup>Jeremiah 22:26 28:2).

***your principalities*** — rather, “your *head ornament*.”

**19. *cities of the south*** — namely, south of Judea; farthest off from the enemy, who advanced from the north.

***shut up*** — that is, deserted (<sup><2340></sup>Isaiah 24:10); so that none shall be left to open the gates to travelers and merchants again [HENDERSON]. Rather, *shut up so* closely by Nebuchadnezzar’s forces, sent on before (<sup><1240></sup>2 Kings 24:10,11), that none shall be allowed by the enemy to get out (compare <sup><2433></sup>Jeremiah 13:20).

***wholly*** — literally, “fully”; completely.

**20. *from ... north*** — Nebuchadnezzar and his hostile army (<sup><2414></sup>Jeremiah 1:14 6:22).

***flock ... given thee*** — Jeremiah, amazed at the depopulation caused by Nebuchadnezzar’s forces, addresses Jerusalem (a *noun of multitude*, which accounts for the blending of *plural* and *singular*, *Your eyes ... thee ... thy flock*), and asks where is the population (<sup><2437></sup>Jeremiah 13:17, “flock”) which God had given her?

**21. *captains, and as chief*** — literally, “princes as to headship”; or “over thy head,” namely, the Chaldeans. Rather, translate, “What wilt thou say when God will set them (the enemies, <sup><2433></sup>Jeremiah 13:20) above thee, seeing that thou thyself hast accustomed them (to be) with thee as (thy) *lovers in the highest place* (literally, ‘at thy head’)? Thou canst not say God does thee wrong, seeing it was thou that gave occasion to His dealing so with thee, by so eagerly courting their intimacy.” Compare <sup><2418></sup>Jeremiah 2:18,36 <sup><1239></sup>2 Kings 23:29, as to the league of Judah with Babylon, which

led Josiah to march against Pharaoh-necho, when the latter was about to attack Babylon [MAURER].

**sorrows** — pains, throes.

**22. *if thou say*** — connecting this verse with “What wilt thou say” (<sup>24133</sup>Jeremiah 13:21)?

***skirts discovered*** — that is, are thrown up so as to expose the person (<sup>24133</sup>Jeremiah 13:26 <sup>24187</sup>Isaiah 3:17 Na 3:5).

***heels made bare*** — The sandal was fastened by a thong above the heel to the instep. The *Hebrew*, is, “are violently handled,” or “torn off”; that is, thou art exposed to ignominy. Image from an adulteress.

**23. *Ethiopian*** — the Cushite of Abyssinia. Habit is second nature; as therefore it is morally impossible that the Jews can alter their inveterate habits of sin, nothing remains but the infliction of the extremest punishment, their expatriation (<sup>24133</sup>Jeremiah 13:24).

24. (<sup>25004</sup>Psalms 1:4).

***by the wind*** — *before* the wind.

***of the wilderness*** — where the wind has full sweep, not being broken by any obstacle.

**25. *portion of thy measures*** — the portion which I have measured out to thee (<sup>24119</sup>Job 20:29 <sup>25006</sup>Psalms 11:6).

***falsehood*** — (<sup>24137</sup>Jeremiah 13:27), false gods and alliances with foreign idolaters.

**26. *discover ... upon thy face*** — rather, “throw up thy skirts over thy face,” or head; done by way of ignominy to captive women and to prostitutes (Na 3:5). The Jews’ punishment should answer to their crime. As their sin had been perpetrated in the most public places, so God would expose them to the contempt of other nations most openly (<sup>25008</sup>Lamentations 1:8).

**27. *neighings*** — (<sup>24118</sup>Jeremiah 5:8), image from the lust of horses; the lust after idols degrades to the level of the brute.

***hills*** — where, as being nearer heaven, sacrifices were thought most acceptable to the gods.

***wilt thou not ... ? when*** — literally, “*thou wilt not be made clean after how long a time yet.*” (So <sup>24133</sup>Jeremiah 13:23). Jeremiah *denies* the moral

possibility of one so long hardened in sin becoming *soon* cleansed. But see ~~Jeremiah~~ Jeremiah 32:17 ~~Luke~~ Luke 18:27.

# CHAPTER 14

## ~~(244)~~ JEREMIAH 14:1-22.

### PROPHECIES ON THE OCCASION OF A DROUGHT SENT IN JUDGMENT ON JUDEA.

1. Literally, “That which was the word of Jehovah to Jeremiah concerning the dearth”

**drought** — literally, the “withholdings,” namely, of rain (~~(451)~~ Deuteronomy 11:17 ~~(447)~~ 2 Chronicles 7:13). This word should be used especially of the withholding of rain because rain is in those regions of all things the one chiefly needed (~~(247)~~ Jeremiah 17:8, *Margin*).

2. **gates** — *The place of public concourse* in each city looks sad, as being no longer frequented (~~(238)~~ Isaiah 3:26 24:4).

**black** — that is, they mourn (blackness being indicative of sorrow), (~~(242)~~ Jeremiah 8:21).

**unto the ground** — bowing towards it.

**cry** — of distress (~~(465)~~ 1 Samuel 5:12 ~~(234)~~ Isaiah 24:11).

3. **little ones** — rather, “their inferiors,” that is, domestics.

**pits** — cisterns for collecting rain water, often met with in the *East* where there are no springs.

**covered ... heads** — (~~(453)~~ 2 Samuel 15:30). A sign of humiliation and mourning.

5. The brute creation is reduced to the utmost extremity for the want of food. The “hind,” famed for her affection to her young, abandons them.

6. **wild asses** — They repair to “the high places” most exposed to the winds, which they “snuff in” to relieve their thirst.

**dragons** — jackals [HENDERSON].

**eyes** — which are usually most keen in detecting grass or water from the “heights,” so much so that the traveler guesses from their presence that there must be herbage and water near; but now “their eyes fail.” Rather the

reference is to the great boas and python serpents which raise a large portion of their body up in a vertical column ten or twelve feet high, to survey the neighborhood above the surrounding bushes, while with open jaws they drink in the air. These giant serpents originated the widely spread notions which typified the deluge and all destructive agents under the form of a dragon or monster serpent; hence, the dragon temples always near water, in Asia, Africa, and Britain; for example, at Abury, in Wiltshire; a symbol of the ark is often associated with the dragon as the preserver from the waters [KITTO, *Biblical Cyclopaedia*].

**7. *do thou it*** — what we beg of Thee; interpose to remove the drought. Jeremiah pleads in the name of his nation (<sup><1949></sup>Psalm 109:21). So “work for us,” absolutely used (<sup><1941></sup>1 Samuel 14:6).

***for thy name's sake*** — “for *our* backslidings are so many” that we cannot urge Thee for the sake of *our* doings, but for the glory of *Thy* name; lest, if Thou give us not aid, it should be said it was owing to Thy want of power (<sup><1809></sup>Joshua 7:9 <sup><1949></sup>Psalm 79:9 106:8 <sup><2349></sup>Isaiah 48:9 <sup><3104></sup>Ezekiel 20:44). The same appeal to God’s mercy, “for *His* name’s sake,” as our only hope, since *our* sin precludes trust in ourselves, occurs in <sup><1851></sup>Psalm 25:11.

**8.** The reference is, not to the faith of *Israel* which had almost ceased, but to the promise and everlasting covenant of *God*. None but the true Israel make God their “hope.” (<sup><2473></sup>Jeremiah 17:13).

***turneth aside to tarry*** — The *traveler* cares little for the land he tarries but a night in; but Thou hast promised to  *dwell* always in the midst of Thy people (<sup><4812></sup>2 Chronicles 33:7,8). MAURER translates, “spreadeth,” namely, his tent.

**9. *astonied*** — like a “mighty man,” at other times able to help (<sup><2801></sup>Isaiah 59:1). but now *stunned* by a sudden calamity so as to disappoint the hopes drawn from him.

***art in the midst of us*** — (<sup><1295></sup>Exodus 29:45,46 <sup><1831></sup>Leviticus 26:11,12).

***called by thy name*** — (<sup><2798></sup>Daniel 9:18,19) as Thine own peculiar people (<sup><1819></sup>Deuteronomy 9:29).

**10.** Jehovah’s reply to the prayer (<sup><2447></sup>Jeremiah 14:7-9 <sup><2123></sup>Jeremiah 2:23-25).

***Thus*** — *So greatly*.

***loved*** — (<sup><2163></sup>Jeremiah 5:31).

***not refrained ... feet*** — They did not obey God’s command; “withhold thy foot” (<sup><2425></sup>Jeremiah 2:25), namely, from following after idols.

**remember ... iniquity** — (<sup>2483</sup>Hosea 8:13 9:9). Their sin is so great, God must punish them.

11. (<sup>2476</sup>Jeremiah 7:16 <sup>4020</sup>Exodus 32:10).

12. **not hear** — because their prayers are hypocritical: their hearts are still idolatrous. God never refuses to hear *real* prayer (<sup>2472</sup>Jeremiah 7:21,22 <sup>3103</sup>Proverbs 1:28 <sup>2415</sup>Isaiah 1:15 58:3).

**sword ... famine ... pestilence** — the three sorest judgments at once; any one of which would be enough for their ruin (<sup>4142</sup>2 Samuel 24:12,13).

13. Jeremiah urges that much of the guilt of the people is due to the false prophets' influence.

**assured peace** — solid and lasting peace. Literally, “peace of truth” (<sup>2308</sup>Isaiah 39:8).

14. (<sup>2423</sup>Jeremiah 23:21).

15. (<sup>2452</sup>Jeremiah 5:12,13).

**By sword and famine ... consumed** — retribution in kind both to the false prophets and to their hearers (<sup>2446</sup>Jeremiah 14:16).

16. **none to bury** — (<sup>4948</sup>Psalms 79:3).

**pour their wickedness** — that is, the punishment incurred by their wickedness (<sup>2429</sup>Jeremiah 2:19).

17. (<sup>2404</sup>Jeremiah 9:1 <sup>2416</sup>Lamentations 1:16). Jeremiah is desired to weep ceaselessly for the calamities coming on his nation (called a “virgin,” as being heretofore never under foreign yoke), (<sup>2304</sup>Isaiah 23:4).

18. **go about** — that is, shall have to migrate into a land of exile. HORSLEY translates, “go *trafficking* about the land (see <sup>2451</sup>Jeremiah 5:31, *Margin*; <sup>4042</sup>2 Corinthians 4:2 <sup>6012</sup>2 Peter 2:3), and take no knowledge” (that is, pay no regard to the miseries before their eyes) (<sup>2408</sup>Isaiah 1:3 58:3). If the sense of the *Hebrew* verb be retained, I would with *English Version* understand the words as referring to the exile to Babylon; thus, “the prophet and the priest shall have to go to a strange land to *practice their religious traffic*” (<sup>2361</sup>Isaiah 56:11 <sup>3642</sup>Ezekiel 34:2,3 <sup>3111</sup>Micah 3:11).

19. The people plead with God, Jeremiah being forbidden to do so.

**no healing** — (<sup>2458</sup>Jeremiah 15:18).

**peace ... no good** — (<sup>2485</sup>Jeremiah 8:15).

20. (<sup>2008</sup>Daniel 9:8).

21. *us* — “the throne of Thy glory” may be the object of “abhor not” (“reject not”); or “Zion” (<sup>2449</sup>Jeremiah 14:19).

*throne of thy glory* — Jerusalem, or, *the temple*, called God’s “footstool” and “habitation” (<sup>1330</sup>1 Chronicles 28:2 <sup>1406</sup>Psalm 132:5).

*thy covenant* — (<sup>1966</sup>Psalm 106:45 <sup>2099</sup>Daniel 9:19).

22. *vanities* — idols (<sup>6521</sup>Deuteronomy 32:21).

*rain* — (<sup>3807</sup>Zechariah 10:1,2).

*heavens* — namely, of themselves without God (<sup>1056</sup>Matthew 5:45 <sup>4447</sup>Acts 14:17); they are not the First Cause, and ought not to be deified, as they were by the heathen. The disjunctive “or” favors CALVIN’S explanation: “Not even the heavens themselves can give rain, much less can the idol vanities.”

*art not thou he* — namely, who canst give rain?

# CHAPTER 15

## JEREMIAH 15:1-21.

### GOD'S REPLY TO JEREMIAH'S INTERCESSORY PRAYER.

1. **Moses ... Samuel** — eminent in intercessions (<sup><12311></sup>Exodus 32:11,12 <sup><1310></sup>1 Samuel 7:9 <sup><13106></sup>Psalms 99:6).

**be toward** — could not be favorably inclined toward them.

**out of my sight** — God speaks as if the people were present before Him, along with Jeremiah.

2. **death** — deadly plague (<sup><131821></sup>Jeremiah 18:21 43:11 <sup><131812></sup>Ezekiel 5:2,12 <sup><131107></sup>Zechariah 11:9).

3. **appoint** — (<sup><131307></sup>Leviticus 26:16).

**kinds** — of punishments.

4. **cause ... to be removed** — (<sup><131525></sup>Deuteronomy 28:25 <sup><131346></sup>Ezekiel 23:46). Rather, “I will give them up to vexation,” I will cause them to wander so as nowhere to have repose [CALVIN]; (<sup><131308></sup>2 Chronicles 29:8, “trouble;” Margin, “commotion”).

**because of Manasseh** — He was now dead, but the effects of his sins still remained. How much evil one bad man can cause! The evil fruits remain even after he himself has received repentance and forgiveness. The people had followed his wicked example ever since; and it is implied that it was only through the long-suffering of God that the penal consequences had been suspended up to the present time (compare <sup><131446></sup>1 Kings 14:16 <sup><132111></sup>2 Kings 21:11,23:26 24:3,4).

5. **go aside ... how thou doest** — Who will turn aside (in passing by) to salute thee (to wish thee “peace”)?

6. **weary with repenting** — (<sup><131314></sup>Hosea 13:14 11:8). I have so often *repented* of the evil that I threatened (<sup><131609></sup>Jeremiah 26:19 <sup><131314></sup>Exodus 32:14 <sup><132115></sup>1 Chronicles 21:15), and have spared them, without My forbearance moving them to repentance, that I will not again change My purpose (God speaking in condescension to human modes of thought), but will take vengeance on them now.

**7. fan** — tribulation — from *tribulum*, a threshing instrument, which separates the chaff from the wheat (<sup><4182></sup>Matthew 3:12).

**gates of the land** — that is, the extreme bounds of the land through which the entrance to and exit from it lie. MAURER translates, “I will fan,” that is, cast them forth “to the gates of the land” (Na 3:13). “In the gates”; *English Version* draws the image from a man cleaning corn with a fan; he stands at the gate of the threshing-floor in the open air, to remove the wheat from the chaff by means of the wind; so God threatens to remove Israel out of the bounds of the land [HOUBIGANT].

**8. Their widows** — My people’s (<sup><2457></sup>Jeremiah 15:7).

**have brought** — prophetic past: I will bring.

**mother of the young men** — “mother” is collective; after the “widows,” He naturally mentions bereavement of their sons (“young men”), brought on the “mothers” by “the spoiler”; it was owing to the number of men slain that the “widows” were so many [CALVIN]. Others take “mother,” as in <sup><118></sup>2 Samuel 20:19, of Jerusalem, the metropolis; “I have brought on them, against the ‘mother,’ a young spoiler,” namely, Nebuchadnezzar, sent by his father, Nabopolassar, to repulse the Egyptian invaders (<sup><123></sup>2 Kings 23:29 24:1), and occupy Judea. But <sup><2457></sup>Jeremiah 15:7 shows the future, not the past, is referred to; and “widows” being literal, “mother” is probably so, too.

**at noonday** — the hottest part of the day, when military operations were usually suspended; thus it means *unexpectedly*, answering to the parallel, “suddenly”; *openly*, as others explain it, will not suit the parallelism (compare <sup><910></sup>Psalms 91:6).

**it** — *English Version* seems to understand by “it” the mother city, and by “him” the “spoiler”; thus “it” will be parallel to “city.” Rather, “I will cause to fall upon *them* (the ‘mothers’ about to be bereft of their sons) suddenly *anguish* and terrors.”

**the city** — rather, from a root “heat,” *anguish*, or consternation. So the *Septuagint*.

**9. borne seven** — (<sup><915></sup>1 Samuel 2:5). Seven being the perfect number indicates full fruitfulness.

**languisheth** — because not even one is left of all her sons (<sup><2458></sup>Jeremiah 15:8).

*sun is gone down while ... yet day* — Fortune deserts her at the very height of her prosperity (<sup>300B</sup>Amos 8:9).

*she ... ashamed* — The mothers (*she* being collective) are put to the shame of disappointed hopes through the loss of all their children.

**10.** (<sup>2014F</sup>Jeremiah 20:14 <sup>480E</sup>Job 3:1, etc.). Jeremiah seems to have been of a peculiarly sensitive temperament; yet the Holy Spirit enabled him to deliver his message at the certain cost of having his sensitiveness wounded by the enmities of those whom his words offended.

*man of strife* — exposed to strifes on the part of “the whole earth” (<sup>480E</sup>Psalms 80:6).

*I have neither lent*, etc. — proverbial for, “I have given no cause for strife against me.”

**11. Verily** — literally, “Shall it not be?” that is, “Surely it shall be.”

*thy remnant* — the *final issue* of thy life; thy life, which now seems to thee so sad, shall eventuate in prosperity [CALVIN]. They who think that they shall be the surviving remnant, whereas thou shalt perish, shall themselves fall, whereas *thou shalt remain* and be favored by the conquerors [JUNIUS], (<sup>240E</sup>Jeremiah 40:4,5 39:11,12). The *Keri* reads, “I will *set thee free* (or as MAURER, ‘I will establish thee’) for good” (<sup>244E</sup>Jeremiah 14:11 <sup>450E</sup>Ezra 8:22 <sup>450E</sup>Psalms 119:122).

*to entreat thee well* — literally, “to meet thee”; so “to be placable, nay, of their own accord to *anticipate in meeting* thee with kindness” [CALVIN]. I prefer this translation as according with the event (<sup>290E</sup>Jeremiah 39:11,12 40:4,5). GESENIUS, from <sup>247E</sup>Jeremiah 7:16 27:18 <sup>420E</sup>Job 21:15, translates (not only will I relieve thee from the enemy’s vexations, but) “I will make thine enemy (that now vexeth thee) *apply to thee with prayers*” (<sup>298E</sup>Jeremiah 38:14 42:2-6).

**12. steel** — rather, *brass* or *copper*, which mixed with “iron” (by the Chalybes near the Euxine Pontus, far north of Palestine), formed the hardest metal, like our *steel*. Can *the Jews*, hardy like common iron though they be, break the still hardier *Chaldees* of the north (<sup>2014F</sup>Jeremiah 1:14), who resemble the Chalybian iron hardened with copper? Certainly not [CALVIN]. HENDERSON translates. “Can *one* break iron, (even) the northern iron, and brass,” on the ground that *English Version* makes ordinary *iron* not so hard as brass. But it is not brass, but a particular mixture of iron and *brass*, which is represented as harder than *common iron*, which was probably then of inferior texture, owing to ignorance of modern modes of preparation.

**13. *Thy substance ... sins*** — Judea's, not Jeremiah's.

***without price*** — God casts His people away as a thing *worth naught* (<sup><39412></sup>Psalm 44:12). So, on the contrary, Jehovah, when about to restore His people, says, He will give Egypt, etc., for their “ransom” (<sup><23638></sup>Isaiah 43:3).

***even in all thy borders*** — joined with “Thy substance ... treasures, as also with “all thy sins,” their sin and punishment being commensurate (<sup><34718></sup>Jeremiah 17:3).

**14. *thee*** — MAURER supplies “them,” namely, “thy treasures.” EICHORN, needlessly, from *Syriac* and the *Septuagint*, reads, “I will make thee to serve thine enemies”; a reading doubtless interpolated from <sup><34718></sup>Jeremiah 17:4.

***fire*** — (<sup><46222></sup>Deuteronomy 32:22).

**15. *thou knowest*** — namely, my case; what wrongs my adversaries have done me (<sup><34128></sup>Jeremiah 12:3).

***revenge me*** — (See on <sup><34123></sup>Jeremiah 11:20). The prophet in this had regard to, not his own personal feelings of revenge, but the cause of God; he speaks by inspiration God's will against the ungodly. Contrast in this the law with the gospel (<sup><42334></sup>Luke 23:34 <sup><44761></sup>Acts 7:60).

***take me not away in thy long-suffering*** — By Thy long-suffering towards them, suffer them not meanwhile to take away my life.

***for thy sake I have suffered rebuke*** — the very words of the antitype, Jesus Christ (<sup><45917></sup>Psalm 69:7,22-28), which last compare with Jeremiah's prayer in the beginning of this verse.

**16. *eat*** — (<sup><34188></sup>Ezekiel 2:8 3:1,3 <sup><63109></sup>Revelation 10:9,10). As soon as Thy words were found by me, I eagerly laid hold of and appropriated them. The *Keri* reads, “Thy word.”

***thy word ... joy*** — (<sup><48242></sup>Job 23:12 <sup><48972></sup>Psalm 119:72,111; compare <sup><41344></sup>Matthew 13:44).

***called by thy name*** — I am Thine, Thy minister. So the antitype, Jesus Christ (<sup><42231></sup>Exodus 23:21).

**17. My “rejoicing”** (<sup><34516></sup>Jeremiah 15:16) was not that of the profane mockers (<sup><43001></sup>Psalm 1:1 26:4,5) at feasts. So far from having fellowship with these, he was expelled from society, and made to sit “alone,” because of his faithful prophecies.

**because of thy hand** — that is, Thine inspiration (<sup>2381</sup>Isaiah 8:11 <sup>3008</sup>Ezekiel 1:3 3:14).

**filled me with indignation** — So <sup>2461</sup>Jeremiah 6:11, “full of the fury of the Lord”; so full was he of the subject (God’s “indignation” against the ungodly) with which God had inspired him, as not to be able to contain himself from expressing it. The same comparison by contrast between the effect of *inspiration*, and that of *wine*, both taking a man out of himself, occurs (<sup>4423</sup>Acts 2:13,15,18).

**18.** (<sup>2805</sup>Jeremiah 30:15). “Pain,” namely, the perpetual persecution to which he was exposed, and his being left by God without consolation and “alone.” Contrast his feeling here with that in <sup>2456</sup>Jeremiah 15:16, when he enjoyed the full presence of God, and was inspired by His words. Therefore he utters words of his natural “infirmity” (so David, <sup>4970</sup>Psalms 77:10) here; as before he spoke under the higher spiritual nature given him.

**as a liar, and as** — rather, “as a *deceiving* (river) ... waters that are not sure (lasting)”; opposed to “tiring (perennial) waters” (<sup>3065</sup>Job 6:15). Streams that the thirsty traveler had calculated on being full in winter, but which disappoint him in his sorest need, having run dry in the heat of summer. Jehovah had promised Jeremiah protection from his enemies (<sup>2008</sup>Jeremiah 1:18,19); his infirmity suggests that God had failed to do so.

**19.** God’s reply to Jeremiah.

**return ... bring ... again** — Jeremiah, by his impatient language, had left his proper posture towards God; God saith, “If thou wilt return (to thy former *patient* discharge of thy prophetic function) I will bring thee back” to thy former position: in the *Hebrew* there is a play of words, “return ... turn again” (<sup>2408</sup>Jeremiah 8:4 4:1).

**stand before me** — minister acceptably to Me (<sup>6508</sup>Deuteronomy 10:8 <sup>4170</sup>1 Kings 17:1 18:15).

**take ... precious from ... vile** — image from metals: “If thou wilt separate what is precious *in thee* (the divine graces imparted) from what is vile (thy natural corruptions, impatience, and hasty words), thou shalt be as My mouth”: my mouthpiece (<sup>1046</sup>Exodus 4:16).

**return not thou unto them** — Let not them lead you into their profane ways (as Jeremiah had spoken irreverently, <sup>2458</sup>Jeremiah 15:18), but lead thou them to the ways of godliness (<sup>2456</sup>Jeremiah 15:16,17). <sup>3226</sup>Ezekiel 22:26 accords with the other interpretation, which, however, does not so well suit the context, “If thou wilt separate from the promiscuous mass the better ones, and lead them to conversion by faithful warnings,” etc.

**20, 21.** The promise of <sup><2418></sup>Jeremiah 1:18,19, in almost the same words, but with the addition, adapted to the present attacks of Jeremiah's formidable enemies, "I will deliver thee out of ... wicked ... redeem ... terrible"; the repetition is in order to assure Jeremiah that God is *the same now* as when He first made the promise, in opposition to the prophet's irreverent accusation of unfaithfulness (<sup><2458></sup>Jeremiah 15:18).

# CHAPTER 16

## JEREMIAH 16:1-21.

### CONTINUATION OF THE PREVIOUS PROPHECY.

2. *in this place* — in Judea. The direction to remain single was (whether literally obeyed, or only in prophetic vision) to symbolize the coming calamities of the Jews (<sup><3245></sup>Ezekiel 24:15-27) as so severe that the single state would be then (contrary to the ordinary course of things) preferable to the married (compare <sup><4178></sup>1 Corinthians 7:8,26,29 <sup><1245></sup>Matthew 24:19 <sup><1229></sup>Luke 23:29).

4. *grievous deaths* — rather, “deadly diseases” (<sup><2452></sup>Jeremiah 15:2).

*not ... lamented* — so many shall be the slain (<sup><1228></sup>Jeremiah 22:18).

*dung* — (<sup><1830></sup>Psalms 83:10).

5. (<sup><3247></sup>Ezekiel 24:17,22,23).

*house of mourning* — (<sup><4158></sup>Mark 5:38). *Margin*, “mourning-feast”; such feasts were usual at funerals. The *Hebrew* means, in <sup><3167></sup>Amos 6:7, the *cry of joy* at a banquet; here, and <sup><2129></sup>Lamentations 2:19, the *cry of sorrow*.

6. *cut themselves* — indicating extravagant grief (<sup><2445></sup>Jeremiah 41:5 47:5), prohibited by the law (<sup><1828></sup>Leviticus 19:28).

*bald* — (<sup><2172></sup>Jeremiah 7:29 <sup><3212></sup>Isaiah 22:12).

7. *tear themselves* — rather, “break bread,” namely, that eaten at the funeral-feast (<sup><1534></sup>Deuteronomy 26:14 <sup><1821></sup>Job 42:11 <sup><3247></sup>Ezekiel 24:17 <sup><3304></sup>Hosea 9:4). “Bread” is to be supplied, as in <sup><2104></sup>Lamentations 4:4; compare “take” (food) (<sup><1423></sup>Genesis 42:33).

*give ... cup of consolation ... for ... father* — It was the Oriental custom for friends to send viands and wine (the “cup of consolation”) to console relatives in mourning-feasts, for example, to children upon the death of a “father” or “mother.”

8. *house of feasting* — joyous: as distinguished from mourning-feasts. Have no more to do with this people whether in mourning or joyous feasts.

9. (<sup>2473</sup>Jeremiah 7:34 25:10; <sup>2583</sup>Ezekiel 26:13).

10. (<sup>1624</sup>Deuteronomy 29:24 <sup>1008</sup>1 Kings 9:8,9).

11. (<sup>2159</sup>Jeremiah 5:19 13:22 22:8,9).

12. *ye* — emphatic: so far from avoiding your fathers' bad example, ye have done worse (<sup>2476</sup>Jeremiah 7:26 <sup>1149</sup>1 Kings 14:9).

*imagination* — rather, “stubborn perversity.”

*that they may not hearken* — rather, connected with “ye”; “ye have walked ... so as not to hearken to Me.”

13. *serve other gods* — That which was their sin in their own land was their punishment in exile. Retribution in kind. They *voluntarily* forsook God for idols at home; they were *not allowed* to serve God, if they wished it, in captivity (<sup>2782</sup>Daniel 3:12 6:7).

*day and night* — irony. You may there serve idols, which ye are so mad after, even to satiety, and without intermission.

14. *Therefore* — So severe shall be the Jews' bondage that their deliverance from it shall be a greater benefit than that out of Egypt. The consolation is incidental here; the prominent thought is the *severity* of their punishment, so great that their rescue from it will be greater than that from Egypt [CALVIN]; so the context, <sup>2463</sup>Jeremiah 16:13,17,18, proves (<sup>2237</sup>Jeremiah 23:7,8 <sup>2688</sup>Isaiah 43:18).

15. *the north* — Chaldea. But while the return from Babylon is primarily meant, the return hereafter is the full and final accomplishment contemplated, as “from *all* the lands” proves. “*Israel*” was not, save in a very limited sense, “gathered from all the lands” at the return from Babylon (see on <sup>2016</sup>Jeremiah 24:6; <sup>2818</sup>Jeremiah 30:3; <sup>2695</sup>Jeremiah 32:15).

16. *send for* — translate, “I will send many”; “I will give the commission to many” (<sup>4472</sup>2 Chronicles 17:7).

*fishers ... hunters* — successive invaders of Judea (<sup>3002</sup>Amos 4:2 <sup>3014</sup>Habakkuk 1:14,15). So “net” (<sup>2223</sup>Ezekiel 12:13). As to “hunters,” see <sup>1109</sup>Genesis 10:9 <sup>3107</sup>Micah 7:2. The Chaldees were famous in hunting, as the Egyptians, the other enemy of Judea, were in fishing. “Fishers” expresses the *ease* of their victory over the Jews as that of the angler over fishes; “hunters,” the keenness of their pursuit of them into every cave and nook. It is remarkable, the same image is used in a good sense of the Jews' restoration, implying that just as their enemies were employed by God to take them in hand for destruction, so the same shall be employed for their

restoration (<sup>2670</sup>Ezekiel 47:9,10). So spiritually, those once enemies by nature (*fishermen* many of them literally) were employed by God to be heralds of salvation, “catching men” for life (<sup>4109</sup>Matthew 4:19 <sup>4150</sup>Luke 5:10 <sup>4121</sup>Acts 2:41 4:4); compare here <sup>2169</sup>Jeremiah 16:19, “the Gentiles shall come unto thee” (<sup>4126</sup>2 Corinthians 12:16).

17. (<sup>2629</sup>Jeremiah 32:19 <sup>2152</sup>Proverbs 5:21 15:3).

*their iniquity* — the cause of God’s judgments on them.

18. *first ... double* — HORSLEY translates, “I will recompense ... *once and again*”; literally, “the first time repeated”: alluding to the two captivities — the Babylonian and the Roman. MAURER, “I will recompense their *former* iniquities (those *long ago* committed by their fathers) and their (own) *repeated* sins” (<sup>2161</sup>Jeremiah 16:11,12). *English Version* gives a good sense, “*First* (before ‘I bring them again into their land’), I will doubly (that is, *fully and amply*, <sup>2178</sup>Jeremiah 17:18 <sup>2302</sup>Isaiah 40:2) recompense.”

*carcasses* — not sweet-smelling *sacrifices* acceptable to God, but “carcasses” offered to idols, an offensive odor to God: human victims (<sup>2198</sup>Jeremiah 19:5 <sup>2361</sup>Ezekiel 16:20), and unclean animals (<sup>2384</sup>Isaiah 65:4 66:17). MAURER explains it, “the carcasses” *of the idols*: their images void of sense and life, Compare <sup>2169</sup>Jeremiah 16:19,20. <sup>4331</sup>Leviticus 26:30 favors this.

19, 20. The result of God’s judgments on the Jews will be that both the Jews when restored, and the Gentiles who have witnessed those judgments, shall renounce idolatry for the worship of Jehovah. Fulfilled partly at the return from Babylon, after which the Jews entirely renounced idols, and many proselytes were gathered in from the Gentiles, but not to be realized in its fullness till the final restoration of Israel (<sup>2100</sup>Isaiah 2:1-17).

20. indignant protest of Jeremiah against idols.

*and they (are) no gods* — (<sup>2121</sup>Jeremiah 2:11 <sup>2379</sup>Isaiah 37:19 <sup>4018</sup>Galatians 4:8). “They” refers to the idols. A *man* (a creature himself) making *God* is a contradiction in terms. *Vulgate* takes “they” thus: “Shall man make gods, though *men* themselves are not gods?”

21. *Therefore* — In order that all may be turned from idols to Jehovah, He will now give awful proof of His divine power in the judgments He will inflict.

*this once* — If the punishments I have heretofore inflicted *have* not been severe enough to teach them.

*my name ... Lord* — *Jehovah* (<sup><1818></sup>Psalm 83:18): God's incommunicable name, to apply which to idols would be blasphemy. Keeping His threats and promises (<sup><1118></sup>Exodus 6:3).

# CHAPTER 17

## JEREMIAH 17:1-27.

### THE JEWS' INVETERATE LOVE OF IDOLATRY.

The the *Septuagint* omits the first four verses, but other *Greek* versions have them.

1. The first of the four clauses relates to the third, the second to the fourth, by alternate parallelism. The sense is: They are as keen after idols as if their propensity was “graven with an iron pen (<sup><389D4></sup>Job 19:24) on their hearts,” or as if it were sanctioned by a law “inscribed with a diamond point” on their altars. The names of their gods used to be written on “the horns of the altars” (<sup><417Z></sup>Acts 17:23). As the clause “on their hearts” refers to their *inward* propensity, so “on ... altars,” the *outward* exhibition of it. Others refer “on the horns of ... altars” to their staining them with the blood of victims, in imitation of the Levitical precept (<sup><129C></sup>Exodus 29:12 <sup><134D></sup>Leviticus 4:7,18), but “written ... graven,” would thus be inappropriate.

**table of ... heart** — which God intended to be inscribed very differently, namely, with His truths (<sup><318B></sup>Proverbs 3:3 <sup><418B></sup>2 Corinthians 3:3).

**your** — Though “their” preceded, He directly addresses them to charge the guilt home to them in particular.

2. **children remember** — Instead of forsaking the idolatries of their fathers, they keep them up (<sup><347B></sup>Jeremiah 7:18). This is given as proof that their sin is “graven upon ... altars” (<sup><317E></sup>Jeremiah 17:1), that is, is not merely temporary. They corrupt their posterity after them. CASTALIO less probably translates, “They remember their altars as (fondly as) they do their children.”

**groves** — rather, “images of Astarte,” the goddess of the heavenly hosts, represented as a sacred tree, such as is seen in the Assyrian sculptures (<sup><1217></sup>2 Kings 21:7 <sup><448B></sup>2 Chronicles 24:18). “Image of the grove.” The *Hebrew* for “grove” is *Asherah*, that is, Assarak, Astarte, or Ashtaroth.

**by the green trees** — that is, near them: the sacred trees (idol symbols) of Astarte being placed in the midst of natural trees: “green trees” is thus distinguished from “groves,” *artificial* trees. HENDERSON, to avoid taking the same *Hebrew* particle in the same sentence differently, “by ... upon”

translates “images of Astarte *on* the green trees.” But it is not probable that images, in the form of a sacred tree, should be hung *on* trees, rather than *near* them.

**3. *mountain*** — Jerusalem, and especially Zion and the temple.

***in the field*** — As Jerusalem was surrounded by *mountains* (<sup>4350</sup>Psalm 125:2), the sense probably is, Ye rely on your mountainous position (<sup>2482</sup>Jeremiah 3:23), but I will make “My mountain” to become as if it were *in a plain* (field), so as to give thy substance an easy prey to the enemy [CALVIN]. “Field” may, however, mean *all Judea*; it and “My mountain” will thus express *the country and its capital*. (GESENIUS translates, “together with,” instead of “in”; as the *Hebrew* is translated in <sup>24119</sup>Jeremiah 11:19 <sup>2386</sup>Hosea 5:6; but this is not absolutely needed), “the substance” of both of which God “will give to the spoil.”

***thy high places*** — corresponding in parallelism to “My mountain” (compare <sup>23109</sup>Isaiah 11:9), as “all thy borders,” to “the field” (which confirms the view that “field” means *all Judea*).

***for sin*** — connected with high places” in *English Version*, namely, frequented for sin, that is, for idolatrous sacrifices. But <sup>24513</sup>Jeremiah 15:13 makes the rendering probable, “I will give thy substance ... to ... spoil ... *on account of thy sin throughout all thy borders.*”

**4. *even thyself*** — rather, “owing to thyself,” that is, by thy own fault (<sup>24513</sup>Jeremiah 15:13).

***discontinue from*** — be dispossessed of. Not only thy substance, but thyself shall be carried off to a strange land (<sup>24514</sup>Jeremiah 15:14).

**5.** Referring to the Jews’ proneness to rely on Egypt, in its fear of Assyria and Babylon (<sup>23101</sup>Isaiah 31:1,3).

***trusteth*** — This word is emphatic. We may expect help from men, so far as God enables them to help us, but we must rest our trust in God alone (<sup>23615</sup>Psalm 62:5).

**6. *heath*** — In <sup>19427</sup>Psalm 102:17 <sup>23211</sup>Isaiah 32:11 <sup>23889</sup>Habakkuk 3:9, the *Hebrew* is translated, “bare,” “naked,” “destitute”; but as the parallel in <sup>24708</sup>Jeremiah 17:8 is “tree,” some plant must be meant of which this is the characteristic epithet (<sup>24806</sup>Jeremiah 48:6, *Margin*), “a naked tree.” ROBINSON translates, “the juniper tree,” found in the Arabah or Great Valley, here called “the desert,” south of the Dead Sea. The “heath” was one of the plants, according to PLINY (13.21; 16.26), excluded from religious uses, because it has neither fruit nor seed, and is neither sown nor planted.

*not see ... good* — (<sup><1807></sup>Job 20:17).

*salt land* — (<sup><1225></sup>Deuteronomy 29:23), barren ground.

7. (<sup><1848></sup>Psalms 34:8 <sup><1060></sup>Proverbs 16:20 <sup><2308></sup>Isaiah 30:18). Jeremiah first removed the weeds (false trusts), so that there might be room for the good grain [CALVIN].

8. (<sup><1008></sup>Psalms 1:3).

*shall not see* — that is, feel. Answering to <sup><2476></sup>Jeremiah 17:6; whereas the unbelievers “shall not see (even) when *good* cometh,” the believer “shall not see (so as to be overwhelmed by it even) when heat (fiery trial) cometh.” Trials shall come upon him as on all, nay, upon him especially (<sup><3217></sup>Hebrews 12:6); but he shall not sink under them, because the Lord is his secret strength, just as the “roots spread out by a river” (or, “water-course”) draw hidden support from it (<sup><1008></sup>2 Corinthians 4:8-11).

*careful* — anxious, as one desponding (<sup><1229></sup>Luke 12:29 <sup><1617></sup>1 Peter 5:7).

*drought* — literally, “withholding,” namely, of rain (<sup><2441></sup>Jeremiah 14:1); he here probably alludes to the drought which had prevailed, but makes it the type of all kinds of distress.

9. *deceitful* — from a root, “supplanting,” “tripping up insidiously by the heel,” from which Jacob (<sup><2808></sup>Hosea 12:3) took his name. In speaking of the Jews’ *deceit of heart*, he appropriately uses a term alluding to their forefather, whose deceit, but not whose faith, they followed. *His* “supplanting” was in order to obtain Jehovah’s blessing. They plant Jehovah for “trust in man” (<sup><2476></sup>Jeremiah 17:5), and then think to *deceive God*, as if it could escape His notice, that it is in *man*, not in Him, they trust.

*desperately wicked* — “incurable” [HORSLEY], (<sup><3008></sup>Micah 1:9). Trust in one’s own heart is as foolish as in our fellow man (<sup><1837></sup>Proverbs 28:26).

10. Lest any should infer from <sup><2479></sup>Jeremiah 17:9, “who can know it?” that even *the Lord* does not know, and therefore cannot punish, the hidden treachery of the heart, He says, “I the Lord search the heart,” etc. (<sup><1339></sup>1 Chronicles 28:9 <sup><1009></sup>Psalms 7:9 <sup><1078></sup>Proverbs 17:3 <sup><1123></sup>Revelation 2:23).

*even to give* — *and that* in order that I may give (<sup><2329></sup>Jeremiah 32:19).

11. *partridge* — (<sup><1621></sup>1 Samuel 26:20). *Hebrew, korea*, from a root, “to call,” alluding to its cry; a name still applied to a bustard by the Arabs. Its nest is liable, being on the ground, to be trodden under foot, or robbed by carnivorous animals, notwithstanding all the beautiful manoeuvres of the

parent birds to save the brood. The translation, “sitteth on eggs *which it has not laid*,” alludes to the ancient notion that she stole the eggs of other birds and hatched them as her own; and that the young birds when grown left her for the true mother. It is not needful to make Scripture allude to an exploded notion, as if it were true. MAURER thinks the reference is to Jehoiakim’s grasping cupidity (<sup><3223></sup>Jeremiah 22:13-17). Probably the sense is more general; as previously He condemned trust in man (<sup><2178></sup>Jeremiah 17:5), He now condemns another object of the deceitful hearts’ trust, *unjustly gotten riches* (<sup><3906></sup>Psalms 39:6 49:16,17 55:23).

**fool** — (<sup><3238></sup>Proverbs 23:5 <sup><3221></sup>Luke 12:20); “their folly” (<sup><3903></sup>Psalms 49:13). He himself, and all, shall at last perceive he was not the wise man he thought he was.

**12. throne** — the temple of Jerusalem, the throne of Jehovah. Having condemned false objects of trust, “*high places* for sin” (<sup><2178></sup>Jeremiah 17:3), and an “arm of flesh,” he next sets forth Jehovah, and *His temple*, which was ever open to the Jews, as the true object of confidence, and sanctuary to flee to. HENDERSON makes Jehovah, in <sup><2173></sup>Jeremiah 17:13, the subject, and this verse predicate, “A throne of glory, high from the beginning, the place of our sanctuary, the hope of Israel is Jehovah.” “Throne” is thus used for Him who sits on it; compare *thrones* (<sup><5016></sup>Colossians 1:16). He is called a “sanctuary” to His people (<sup><2184></sup>Isaiah 8:14 <sup><2310></sup>Ezekiel 11:16). So *Syriac* and *Arabic*.

**13. me** — “Jehovah.” Though “Thee” precedes. This sudden transition is usual in the prophetic style, owing to the prophet’s continual realization of Jehovah’s presence.

***all that forsake thee*** — (<sup><3727></sup>Psalms 73:27 <sup><2328></sup>Isaiah 1:28).

***written in the earth*** — in the dust, that is, shall be consigned to oblivion. So Jesus’ significant writing “on the ground (probably the accusers’ names)” (<sup><3806></sup>John 8:6). Names written in the dust are obliterated by a very slight wind. Their hopes and celebrity are wholly *in the earth*, not in the heavenly book of life (<sup><6138></sup>Revelation 13:8 20:12,15). The Jews, though boasting that they were the people of God, had no portion in heaven, no status before God and His angels. Contrast “written in heaven,” that is, in the muster-roll of its blessed citizens (<sup><2101></sup>Luke 10:20). Also, contrast “written in a book,” and “in the rock *for ever*” (<sup><3823></sup>Job 19:23,24).

***living waters*** — (<sup><2113></sup>Jeremiah 2:13).

**14-18.** Prayer of the prophet for deliverance from the enemies whom he excited by his faithful denunciations.

**Heal ... save** — not only *make me whole* (as to the evils of soul as well as body which I am exposed to by contact with ungodly foes, <sup><24518></sup>Jeremiah 15:18), but *keep me so*.

**my praise** — He whom I have to praise for past favors, and therefore to whom alone I look for the time to come.

**15. Where is the word?** — (<sup><21519></sup>Isaiah 5:19 <sup><31518></sup>Amos 5:18). Where is the fulfillment of the threats which thou didst utter as from God? A characteristic of the last stage of apostasy (<sup><61304></sup>2 Peter 3:4).

**16.** I have not refused Thy call of me to be a prophet (Jon 1:3), however painful to me it was to utter what would be sure to irritate the hearers (<sup><21004></sup>Jeremiah 1:4, etc.); therefore Thou shouldest not forsake me (<sup><24515></sup>Jeremiah 15:15, etc.).

**to follow thee** — literally, “after thee”; as an under-pastor following Thee, the Chief Shepherd (<sup><21211></sup>Ecclesiastes 12:11 <sup><41304></sup>1 Peter 5:4).

**neither ... desired** — I have not *wished* for the day of calamity, though I foretell it as about to come on my countrymen; therefore they have no reason for persecuting me.

**thou knowest** — I appeal to Thee for the truth of what I assert.

**that which came out of my lips** — my words (<sup><41223></sup>Deuteronomy 23:23).

**right before thee** — rather, “was before Thee”; was *known to Thee* — (<sup><21321></sup>Proverbs 5:21).

**17. a terror** — namely, by deserting me: all I fear is Thine abandoning me; if Thou art with me, I have no fear of evil from enemies.

**18. destroy ... destruction** — “break them with a double breach,” *Hebrew* (<sup><24477></sup>Jeremiah 14:17). On “double,” see on <sup><24168></sup>Jeremiah 16:18.

**19-27.** Delivered in the reign of Jehoiakim, who undid the good effected by Josiah’s reformation, especially as to the observance of the Sabbath [EICHORN].

**gate of ... children of ... people** — The gate next the king’s palace, called *the gate of David, and the gate of the people*, from its being the principal thoroughfare: now the Jaffa gate. It is probably the same as “the gate of the fountain” at the foot of Zion, near which were the king’s garden and pool (<sup><24304></sup>Jeremiah 39:4 <sup><22504></sup>2 Kings 25:4 <sup><41214></sup>Nehemiah 2:14 3:15 12:37).

**20. kings** — He begins with the kings, as they ought to have repressed such a glaring profanation.

**21. *Take heed to yourselves*** — literally, “to your souls.” MAURER explains, “as ye love your lives”; a phrase used here to give the greater weight to the command.

***sabbath*** — The non-observance of it was a chief cause of the captivity, the number of years of the latter, seventy, being exactly made to agree with the number of Sabbaths which elapsed during the four hundred ninety years of their possession of Canaan from Saul to their removal (<sup>-0334</sup>Leviticus 26:34,35 <sup>-4821</sup>2 Chronicles 36:21). On the restoration, therefore, stress was especially laid on Sabbath observance (<sup>-1639</sup>Nehemiah 13:19).

***Jerusalem*** — It would have been scandalous anywhere; but in the capital, *Jerusalem*, it was an open insult to God. Sabbath-hallowing is intended as a symbol of holiness in general (<sup>-2312</sup>Ezekiel 20:12); therefore much stress is laid on it; the Jews’ gross impiety is manifested in their setting God’s will at naught, in the case of such an easy and positive command.

**23.** (<sup>-2124</sup>Jeremiah 7:24,26).

**24.** A part put for the whole, “If ye keep the Sabbath and *My* other laws.”

**25. *kings ... in chariots*** — The kingdom at this time had been brought so low that this promise here was a special favor.

***remain*** — *Hebrew*, “be inhabited” (<sup>-2476</sup>Jeremiah 17:6 <sup>-2833</sup>Isaiah 13:20).

**26. *plain mountains ... south*** — (<sup>-0651</sup>Joshua 15:1-4). The southern border had extended to the river of Egypt, but was now much curtailed by Egyptian invasions (<sup>-4831</sup>2 Chronicles 35:20 36:3,4). The *Hebrew* for “south” means *dry*; the arid desert *south* of Judea is meant. The enumeration of all the parts of Judea, city, country, plain, hill, and desert, implies that no longer shall there be aught wanting of the integrity of the Jewish land (<sup>-3105</sup>Zechariah 7:7).

***sacrifices*** — As in <sup>-2472</sup>Jeremiah 17:22, one constituent of Judea’s prosperity is mentioned, namely, its *kings* on David’s throne, the pledge of God being its guardian; so in this verse another constituent, namely, its *priests*, a pledge of God being propitious to it (<sup>-3972</sup>Psalms 107:22).

**27. *burden ... in ... gates ... fire in the gates*** — retribution answering to the sin. The scene of their sin shall be the scene of their punishment (<sup>-3523</sup>Jeremiah 52:13 <sup>-1281</sup>2 Kings 25:9).

# CHAPTER 18

## JEREMIAH 18:1-23.

**GOD, AS THE SOLE SOVEREIGN, HAS AN ABSOLUTE RIGHT TO DEAL WITH NATIONS ACCORDING TO THEIR CONDUCT TOWARDS HIM; ILLUSTRATED IN A TANGIBLE FORM BY THE POTTER'S MOULDING OF VESSELS FROM CLAY.**

**2. *go down*** — namely, from the high ground on which the temple stood, near which Jeremiah exercised his prophetic office, to the low ground, where some well-known (this is the force of “the”) potter had his workshop.

**3. *wheels*** — literally, “on *both stones*.” The potter’s horizontal lathe consisted of two round plates, the lower one larger, the upper smaller; of stone originally, but afterwards of wood. On the upper the potter moulded the clay into what shapes he pleased. They are found represented in Egyptian remains. In <sup><3116></sup>Exodus 1:16 alone is the *Hebrew* word found elsewhere, but in a different sense.

**4. *marred*** — spoiled. “*Of clay*” is the true reading, which was corrupted into “*as clay*” (*Margin*), through the similarity of the two *Hebrew* letters, and from <sup><24816></sup>Jeremiah 18:6, “*as the clay*.”

**6.** Refuting the Jews’ reliance on their external privileges as God’s elect people, as if God could never cast them off. But if the potter, a mere creature, has power to throw away a marred vessel and raise up other clay from the ground, *a fortiori* God, the Creator, can cast away the people who prove unfaithful to His election and can raise others in their stead (compare <sup><24819></sup>Isaiah 45:9 64:8 <sup><3117></sup>Romans 9:20,21). It is curious that the *potter’s field* should have been the purchase made with the price of Judas’ treachery (<sup><4170></sup>Matthew 27:9,10: a potter’s vessel dashed to pieces, compare <sup><3118></sup>Psalm 2:8,9 <sup><4127></sup>Revelation 2:27), because of its failing to answer the maker’s design, being the very image to depict God’s sovereign power to give reprobates to destruction, not by caprice, but in the exercise of His righteous judgment. Matthew quotes Zechariah’s words (<sup><3112></sup>Zechariah 11:12,13) *as Jeremiah’s* because the latter (<sup><24813></sup>Jeremiah 18:1-19:15) was the source from

which the former derived his summary in <sup><38112></sup>Zechariah 11:12,13 [HENGSTENBERG].

**7. *At what instant*** — in a moment, when the nation least expects it. Hereby he reminds the Jews how marvellously God had delivered them from their original degradation, that is, In one and the same day ye were the most wretched, and then the most favored of all people [CALVIN].

**8. *their evil*** — in antithesis to, “the evil that *I* thought to do.”

***repent*** — God herein adapts Himself to human conceptions. The change is not in God, but in the circumstances which regulate God’s dealings: just as we say the land recedes from us when we sail forth, whereas it is we who recede from the land (<sup><24821></sup>Ezekiel 18:21 33:11). God’s unchangeable principle is to do the best that can be done under all circumstances; if then He did not take into account the moral change in His people (their prayers, etc.), He would not be acting according to His own unchanging principle (<sup><24839></sup>Jeremiah 18:9,10). This is applied practically to the Jews’ case (<sup><24841></sup>Jeremiah 18:11; see <sup><24843></sup>Jeremiah 26:3 Jon 3:10).

**11. *frame evil*** — alluding to the preceding image of “the potter,” that is, I, Jehovah, am now as it were the potter *framing* evil against you; but in the event of your repenting, it is in My power to *frame anew* My course of dealing towards you.

***return***, etc. — (<sup><24713></sup>2 Kings 17:13).

**12. *no hope*** — Thy threats and exhortations are all thrown away (<sup><24825></sup>Jeremiah 2:25). Our case is desperate; we are hopelessly abandoned to our sins and their penalty. In this and the following clauses, “We will walk after our own devices,” Jeremiah makes them express the *real* state of the case, rather than the hypocritical subterfuges which *they* would have been inclined to put forth. So <sup><23007></sup>Isaiah 30:10,11.

**13.** (<sup><24807></sup>Jeremiah 2:10,11). Even among the heathen it was a thing unheard of, that a nation should lay aside its gods for foreign gods, though their gods are false gods. But Israel forsook the true God for foreign false gods.

***virgin of Israel*** — (<sup><24821></sup>2 Kings 19:21). It enhances their guilt, that Israel was *the virgin* whom God had specially betrothed to Him.

***horrible thing*** — (<sup><24831></sup>Jeremiah 5:30).

**14.** Is there any man (living near it) who would leave the snow of Lebanon (that is, the cool melted snow water of Lebanon, as he presently explains), which cometh from the rock of the field (a poetical name for Lebanon,

which towers aloft above the surrounding *field*, or comparatively plain country)? None. Yet Israel forsakes Jehovah, the living fountain close at hand, for foreign broken cisterns. <sup>(-2173)</sup>Jeremiah 17:13 2:13, accord with *English Version* here. MAURER translates, “Shall the snow of Lebanon cease from the rock to water (literally, ‘forsake’) My fields” (the whole land around being peculiarly *Jehovah’s*)? *Lebanon* means the “white mountain”; so called from the perpetual snow which covers that part called Hermon, stretching northeast of Palestine.

**that come from another place** — that come from far, namely, from the distant lofty rocks of Lebanon. HENDERSON translates, “the *compressed* waters,” namely, contracted within a narrow channel while descending through the gorges of the rocks; “flowing” may in this view be rather “flowing down” (So 4:15). But the parallelism in *English Version* is better, “which cometh from the rock,” “that cometh from another place.”

**be forsaken** — answering to the parallel, “Will a man leave,” etc. MAURER translates, “dry up,” or “fail” (<sup>(-2395)</sup>Isaiah 19:5); the sense thus being, Will nature ever turn aside from its fixed course? The “cold waters” (compare <sup>(-3125)</sup>Proverbs 25:25) refer to the perennial streams, fed from the partial melting of the snow in the hot weather.

**15. Because** — rather, “And yet”; in defiance of the natural order of things.

**forgotten me** — (<sup>(-3123)</sup>Jeremiah 2:32). This implies a previous knowledge of God, whereas He was unknown to the Gentiles; the Jews’ forgetting of God, therefore, arose from determined perversity.

**they have caused ... to stumble** — namely the false prophets and idolatrous priests have.

**ancient paths** — (<sup>(-2166)</sup>Jeremiah 6:16): the paths which their pious ancestors trod. Not antiquity indiscriminately, but the example of the fathers who trod the right way, is here commended.

**them** — the Jews.

**not cast up** — not duly prepared: referring to the raised center of the road. CALVIN translates, “not trodden.” They had no precedent of former saints to induce them to devise for themselves a new worship.

**16. hissing** — (<sup>(-1008)</sup>1 Kings 9:8). In sign of contempt. That which was to be only the *event* is ascribed to the *purpose* of the people, although altogether different from what they would have been likely to hope for. Their *purpose* is represented as being the destruction of their country, because it was the *inevitable result* of their course of acting.

**wag ... head** — in mockery (<sup><1292></sup>2 Kings 19:21 <sup><1073></sup>Matthew 27:39). As “wag ... head” answers to “hissing,” so “astonished” answers to “desolate,” for which, therefore, MUNSTER and others rather translate, “an object of wonder” (<sup><3408></sup>Jeremiah 19:8).

**17. as with an east wind** — literally, “I will scatter them, *as an east wind* (scatters all before it)”: a most violent wind (<sup><8071></sup>Job 27:21 <sup><1980></sup>Psalms 48:7 <sup><3278></sup>Isaiah 27:8). Thirty-two manuscripts read (without *as*), “*with an east wind*.”

**I will show them the back ... not ... face** — just retribution: as “they turned their back unto Me ... not their face” (<sup><2427></sup>Jeremiah 2:27).

**18.** (<sup><24119></sup>Jeremiah 11:19). Let us bring a capital charge against him, as a false prophet; “for (whereas he foretells that this land shall be left without priests to teach the law, <sup><34107></sup>Malachi 2:7; without scribes to explain its difficulties; and without prophets to reveal God’s will), the law shall not perish from the prophet,” etc.; since God has made these a lasting institution in His church, and the law declares they shall never perish (<sup><1068></sup>Leviticus 6:18 10:11; compare <sup><24512></sup>Jeremiah 5:12) [GROTIUS].

**the wise** — scribes and elders joined to the priests. Perhaps they mean to say, we must have right on our side, in spite of Jeremiah’s words against us and our prophets (<sup><24085></sup>Jeremiah 28:15,16 29:25,32 5:31); “for the law shall not perish,” etc. I prefer GROTIUS’ explanation.

**with ... tongue** — by a false accusation (<sup><15704></sup>Psalms 57:4 64:3 12:4 50:19). “For the tongue” (*Margin*), that is, for his speaking against us. “In the tongue,” that is, let us kill him, that he may speak no more against us [CASTALIO].

**19. Give heed** — contrasted with, “let us not give heed” (<sup><24088></sup>Jeremiah 18:18). As *they* give no heed to me, do Thou, O Lord, give heed to me, and let my words at least have their weight with Thee.

**20.** In the particulars here specified, Jeremiah was a type of Jesus Christ (<sup><194904></sup>Psalms 109:4,5 <sup><81525></sup>John 15:25).

**my soul** — my life; me (<sup><198107></sup>Psalms 35:7).

**I stood before thee ... to turn away thy wrath** — so Moses (<sup><194623></sup>Psalms 106:23; compare <sup><32230></sup>Ezekiel 22:30). So Jesus Christ, the antitype of previous partial intercessors (<sup><23546></sup>Isaiah 59:16).

**21. pour out their blood by the force of the sword** — literally, “by the hands of the sword.” So <sup><35818></sup>Ezekiel 35:5. MAURER with JEROME translates,

“*deliver them over to the power of the sword.*” But compare <sup><6610></sup>Psalm 63:10, *Margin*; <sup><2612></sup>Isaiah 53:12. In this prayer he does not indulge in personal revenge, as if it were his own cause that was at stake; but he speaks under the dictation of the Spirit, ceasing to intercede, and speaking prophetically, knowing they were doomed to destruction as reprobates; for those not so, he doubtless ceased not to intercede. *We* are not to draw an example from this, which is a special case.

***put to death*** — or, as in <sup><4140></sup>Jeremiah 15:2, “perish by the *death plague*” [MAURER].

***men ... young men*** — HORSLEY distinguishes the former as *married men* past middle age; the latter, the flower of *unmarried youth*.

**22. *cry*** — by reason of the enemy bursting in: let their houses be no shelter to them in their calamities [CALVIN].

***digged ... pit*** — (<sup><4180></sup>Jeremiah 18:20 <sup><4576></sup>Psalm 57:6 119:85).

**23. *forgive not*** — (<sup><4940></sup>Psalm 109:9,10,14).

***blot out*** — image from an account-book (<sup><6712></sup>Revelation 20:12).

***before thee*** — Hypocrites suppose God is not near, so long as they escape punishment; but when He punishes, they are said to stand before Him, because they can no longer flatter themselves they can escape His eye (compare <sup><4908></sup>Psalm 90:8).

***deal thus*** — exert Thy power against them [MAURER].

***time of thine anger*** — Though He seems to tarry, His time shall come at last (<sup><2081></sup>Ecclesiastes 8:11,12 <sup><4102></sup>2 Peter 3:9,10).

# CHAPTER 19

## JEREMIAH 19:1-15.

### THE DESOLATION OF THE JEWS FOR THEIR SINS FORETOLD IN THE VALLEY OF HINNOM; THE SYMBOL OF BREAKING A BOTTLE.

Referred by MAURER, etc., to the beginning of Zedekiah's reign.

1. **bottle** — *Hebrew, bakuk*, so called from the gurgling sound which it makes when being emptied.

**ancients** — elders. As witnesses of the symbolic action (<sup><2490></sup>Jeremiah 19:10 <sup><2381></sup>Isaiah 8:1,2), that the Jews might not afterwards plead ignorance of the prophecy. The seventy-two elders, composing the Sanhedrim, or Great Council, were taken partly from “the priests,” partly from the other tribes, that is, “the people,” the former presiding over spiritual matters, the latter over civil; the seventy-two represented the whole people.

2. **valley of the son of Hinnom** — or Tophet, south of Jerusalem, where human victims were offered, and children made to pass through the fire, in honor of Molech.

**east gate** — *Margin*, “sun gate,” sunrise being in the *east*. MAURER translates, the “potter’s gate.” Through it lay the road to the valley of Hinnom (<sup><6158></sup>Joshua 15:8). The potters there formed vessels for the use of the temple, which was close by (compare <sup><2490></sup>Jeremiah 19:10,14 <sup><2482></sup>Jeremiah 18:2 <sup><3813></sup>Zechariah 11:13). The same as “*the water gate toward the east*” (<sup><4183></sup>Nehemiah 3:26 12:37); so called from the brook Kedron. CALVIN translates, as *English Version* and *Margin*. “It was monstrous perversity to tread the law under foot in so conspicuous a place, over which the sun daily rising reminded them of the light of God’s law.”

3. The scene of their guilt is chosen as the scene of the denunciation against them.

**kings** — the king and queen (<sup><2418></sup>Jeremiah 13:18); or including the king’s counsellors and governors under him.

**tingle** — as if struck by a thunder peal (<sup><9181></sup>1 Samuel 3:11 <sup><1212></sup>2 Kings 21:12).

4. (<sup>2651</sup>Isaiah 65:11).

*estranged this place* — devoted it to the worship of strange gods: alienating a portion of the sacred city from God, the rightful Lord of the temple, city, and whole land.

*nor their fathers* — namely, the *godly* among them; their *ungodly* fathers God makes no account of.

*blood of innocents* — slain in honor of Molech (<sup>2473</sup>Jeremiah 7:31 <sup>19467</sup>Psalms 106:37).

5. *commanded not* — nay, more, I commanded the opposite (<sup>18821</sup>Leviticus 18:21; see <sup>2473</sup>Jeremiah 7:31,32).

6. *no more ... Tophet* — from *Hebrew*, *toph*, “drum”; for in sacrificing children to Molech drums were beaten to drown their cries. Thus the name indicated the joy of the people at the fancied propitiation of the god by this sacrifice; in antithesis to its joyless name subsequently.

*valley of slaughter* — It should be the scene of slaughter, no longer of children, but of men; not of “innocents” (<sup>2494</sup>Jeremiah 19:4), but of those who richly deserved their fate. The city could not be assailed without first occupying the valley of Hinnom, in which was the only fountain: hence arose the violent battle there.

7. *make void the counsel* — defeat their plans for repelling the enemy (<sup>4312</sup>Chronicles 32:1-4 <sup>2491</sup>Isaiah 19:3 22:9,11). Or their schemes of getting help by having recourse to idols [CALVIN].

*in this place* — The valley of Hinnom was to be the place of the Chaldean encampment; the very place where they looked for help from idols was to be the scene of their own slaughter.

8. (See on <sup>2486</sup>Jeremiah 18:16).

9. (<sup>1885</sup>Deuteronomy 28:53 <sup>2501</sup>Lamentations 4:10).

10. *break ... bottle* — a symbolical action, explained in <sup>2491</sup>Jeremiah 19:11.

*the men* — the elders of the people and of the priests (<sup>2491</sup>Jeremiah 19:1; compare <sup>2506</sup>Jeremiah 51:63,64).

11. *as one breaketh a potters vessel* — expressing God’s absolute sovereignty (<sup>2486</sup>Jeremiah 18:6 <sup>4919</sup>Psalms 2:9 <sup>2314</sup>Isaiah 30:14, *Margin*; <sup>2491</sup>Lamentations 4:2 <sup>4811</sup>Romans 9:20,21).

***cannot be made whole again*** — A broken potter's vessel cannot be restored, but a new one may be made of the same material. So God raised a new Jewish seed, not identical with the destroyed rebels, but by substituting another generation in their stead [GROTIUS].

***no place to bury*** — (<sup>3472</sup>Jeremiah 7:32).

**12. *make this city as Tophet*** — that is, as defiled with dead bodies as Tophet.

**13. *shall be defiled*** — with dead bodies (<sup>3492</sup>Jeremiah 19:12 <sup>4230</sup>2 Kings 23:10).

***because of all the houses*** — Rather, (explanatory of the previous “the houses ... and ... houses”), “*even all the houses,*” etc. [CALVIN].

***roofs*** — being flat, they were used as high places for sacrifices to the sun and planets (<sup>3472</sup>Jeremiah 32:29 <sup>4231</sup>2 Kings 23:11,12 <sup>3005</sup>Zephaniah 1:5). The Nabateans, south and east of the Dead Sea, a nation most friendly to the Jews, according to STRABO, had the same usage.

**14. *court of the Lord's house*** — near Tophet; the largest court, under the open air, where was the greatest crowd (<sup>4015</sup>2 Chronicles 20:5).

**15. *her towns*** — the suburban villages and towns near Jerusalem, such as Bethany.

# CHAPTER 20

## JEREMIAH 20:1-18.

### JEREMIAH'S INCARCERATION BY PASHUR, THE PRINCIPAL OFFICER OF THE TEMPLE, FOR PROPHECYING WITHIN ITS PRECINCTS; HIS RENEWED PREDICTIONS AGAINST THE CITY, ETC., ON HIS LIBERATION.

1. *son* — descendant.

*of Immer* — one of the original “governors of the sanctuary and of the house of God,” twenty-four in all, that is, sixteen of the sons of Eleazar and eight of the sons of Ithamar (<sup><1344></sup>1 Chronicles 24:14). This Pashur is distinct from Pashur, *son of Melchiah* (<sup><2103></sup>Jeremiah 21:1). The “captains” (<sup><2214></sup>Luke 22:4) seem to have been over the twenty-four guards of the temple, and had only the right of *apprehending* any who were guilty of delinquency within it; but the Sanhedrim had the *judicial power* over such delinquents [GROTIUS] (<sup><2618></sup>Jeremiah 26:8,10,16).

2. The fact that Pashur was of the same order and of the same family as Jeremiah aggravates the indignity of the blow (<sup><1224></sup>1 Kings 22:24 <sup><1167></sup>Matthew 26:67).

*stocks* — an instrument of torture with five holes, in which the neck, two hands, and two feet were thrust, the body being kept in a crooked posture (<sup><2926></sup>Jeremiah 29:26). From a *Hebrew* root, to “turn,” or “rack.” This marks Pashur’s cruelty.

*high* — that is, *the upper gate* (<sup><1259></sup>2 Kings 15:35).

*gate of Benjamin* — a gate in the temple wall, corresponding to the gate of Benjamin, properly so called, in the city wall, in the direction of the territory of Benjamin (<sup><2103></sup>Jeremiah 7:2 37:13 38:7). The temple gate of Benjamin, being on a lofty position, was called “the high gate,” to distinguish it from the city wall gate of Benjamin.

3. *Pashur* — compounded of two roots, meaning “largeness (and so ‘security’) *on every side*”; in antithesis to *Magor-missabib*, “terror *round about*” (<sup><2110></sup>Jeremiah 20:10 <sup><2465></sup>Jeremiah 6:25 46:5 49:29 <sup><9813></sup>Psalms 31:13).

**4. terror ... to all thy friends** — who have believed thy false promises (<sup>2406</sup>Jeremiah 20:6). The sense must be in order to accord with “fear round about” (<sup>2408</sup>Jeremiah 20:3). I will bring terror on thee and on all thy friends, that terror arising from thyself, namely, thy false prophecies. Thou and thy prophecies will be seen, to the dismay both of thee and thy dupes, to have caused their ruin and thine. MAURER’S translation is therefore not needed, “I will give up thee and all thy friends to terror.”

**5. strength** — that is, resources.

**labors** — fruits of labor, gain, wealth.

**6. prophesied lies** — namely, that God cannot possibly leave this land without prophets, priests, and teachers (“the wise”) (<sup>2488</sup>Jeremiah 18:18; compare <sup>2433</sup>Jeremiah 5:31).

**7.** Jeremiah’s complaint, not unlike that of Job, breathing somewhat of human infirmity in consequence of his imprisonment. Thou didst promise never to give me up to the will of mine enemies, and yet Thou hast done so. But Jeremiah misunderstood God’s promise, which was not that he should have nothing to suffer, but that God would deliver him out of sufferings (<sup>2419</sup>Jeremiah 1:19).

**deceived** — Others translate as *Margin*, “Thou hast enticed” or “persuaded me,” namely, to undertake the prophetic office, “and I was persuaded,” that is, suffered myself to be persuaded to undertake what I find too hard for me. So the *Hebrew* word is used in a good sense (<sup>4027</sup>Genesis 9:27, *Margin*; <sup>2155</sup>Proverbs 25:15 <sup>2124</sup>Hosea 2:14).

**stronger than I** — Thou whose strength I could not resist hast laid this burden on me, and hast prevailed (hast made me prophesy, in spite of my reluctance) (<sup>2405</sup>Jeremiah 1:5-7); yet, when I exercise my office, I am treated with derision (<sup>2164</sup>Lamentations 3:14).

**8.** Rather, “Whenever I speak, I cry out. Concerning violence and spoil, I (am compelled to) cry out,” that is, complain [MAURER]. *English Version* in the last clause is more graphic, “I cried violence and spoil” (<sup>2407</sup>Jeremiah 6:7)! I could not speak in a calm tone; their desperate wickedness compelled me to “cry out.”

**because** — rather, “therefore,” the apodosis of the previous sentence; *because* in discharging my prophetic functions, I not merely *spoke*, but *cried*; and *cried, violence ...*; *therefore* the word of the Lord was made a reproach to me (<sup>2407</sup>Jeremiah 20:7).

**9. *his word was*** — or literally, “there was in my heart, as it were, a burning fire,” that is, the divine afflatus or impulse to speak was as ... (<sup><3218></sup>Job 32:18,19 <sup><1918></sup>Psalms 39:3).

***weary with forbearing, and I could not*** — “I labored to contain myself, but I could not” (<sup><4816></sup>Acts 18:5; compare <sup><2319></sup>Jeremiah 23:9 <sup><4016></sup>1 Corinthians 9:16,17).

**10. *For*** — not referring to the words immediately preceding, but to “I will not make mention of Him.” The “defaming” or *detractio*n of the enemy on every side (see <sup><5913></sup>Psalms 31:13) tempted him to think of prophesying no more.

***Report ... we will report*** — The words of his adversaries one to the other; give any information against him (true or false) which will give color for accusing him; and “we will report it,” namely, to the Sanhedrim, in order to crush him.

***familiars*** — literally, “men of my peace”; those who pretended to be on peaceable terms with me (<sup><3419></sup>Psalms 41:9). Jeremiah is a type of Messiah, referred to in that Psalm. (See <sup><2822></sup>Jeremiah 38:22 <sup><3919></sup>Job 19:19 <sup><5513></sup>Psalms 55:13,14 <sup><1153></sup>Luke 11:53,54).

***watched for my halting*** — (<sup><1515></sup>Psalms 35:15, *Margin*, “halting”; <sup><1817></sup>Psalms 38:17 71:10, *Margin*). GESENIUS not so well translates, according to *Arabic* idiom, “those guarding my side” (that is, my most intimate friends *always at my side*), in apposition to “familiars,” and the subject of “say” (instead of “saying”). The *Hebrew* means properly “side,” then “halting,” as the halt bend on one side.

***enticed*** — to commit some sin.

**11. *not prevail*** — as they hoped to do (<sup><2110></sup>Jeremiah 20:10 <sup><2410></sup>Jeremiah 15:20).

***prosper*** — in their plot.

**12. *triest the righteous*** — in latent contrast to the hasty judgments of men (<sup><3113></sup>Jeremiah 11:20 17:10).

***opened*** — that is, committed (compare <sup><1214></sup>2 Kings 19:14 <sup><1511></sup>Psalms 35:1).

**13. *delivered ... soul*** — This deliverance took place when Zedekiah succeeded Jeconiah.

**14-18.** The contrast between the spirit of this passage and the preceding *thanksgiving* is to be explained thus: to show how great was the deliverance

(<sup>2013</sup>Jeremiah 20:13), he subjoins a picture of what his wounded spirit *had been* previous to his deliverance; I *had said* in the time of my imprisonment, “Cursed be the day”; my feeling was that of Job (<sup>3008</sup>Job 3:3,10,11, whose words Jeremiah therefore copies). Though Jeremiah’s zeal had been stirred up, not so much for self as for God’s honor trampled on by the rejection of the prophet’s words, yet it was intemperate when he made his birth a subject for *cursing*, which was really a ground for thanksgiving.

**15. *A man child*** — The birth of a son is in the *East* a special subject of joy; whereas that of a daughter is often not so.

**16. *the cities*** — Sodom and Gomorrah.

***cry ... morning ... noontide*** — that is, Let him be kept in alarm the *whole day* (not merely at *night* when terrors ordinarily prevail, but in *daytime* when it is something extraordinary) with terrifying war shouts, as those in a besieged city (<sup>2482</sup>Jeremiah 18:22).

**17. *he*** — “that man” (<sup>2015</sup>Jeremiah 20:15,16).

***from the womb*** — that is, at that time while I was still in the womb.

# CHAPTER 21

## JEREMIAH 21:1-14.

### ZEDEKIAH CONSULTS JEREMIAH WHAT IS TO BE THE EVENT OF THE WAR: GOD'S ANSWER.

Written probably when, after having repulsed the Egyptians who brought succors to the Jews (<sup><3676></sup>Jeremiah 37:5-8 <sup><12475></sup>2 Kings 24:7), the Chaldees were a second time advancing against Jerusalem, but were not yet closely besieging it (<sup><3206></sup>Jeremiah 21:4,13) [ROSENMULLER]. This chapter probably ought to be placed between the thirty-seventh and thirty-eight chapters; since what the “princes,” in <sup><3800></sup>Jeremiah 38:2, represent Jeremiah as having said, is exactly what we find in <sup><3209></sup>Jeremiah 21:9. Moreover, the same persons as here (<sup><3206></sup>Jeremiah 21:1) are mentioned in <sup><3678></sup>Jeremiah 37:3 <sup><3801></sup>Jeremiah 38:1, namely, Pashur and Zephaniah. What is here more fully related is there simply referred to in the historical narrative. Compare <sup><3524></sup>Jeremiah 52:24 <sup><1258></sup>2 Kings 25:18 [MAURER].

**1. *Zedekiah*** — a prince having some reverence for sacred things, for which reason he sends an honorable embassy to Jeremiah; but not having moral courage to obey his better impulses.

***Pashur*** — son of Melchiah, of the fifth order of priests, distinct from Pashur, son of Immer (<sup><3206></sup>Jeremiah 20:1), of the sixteenth order (<sup><4304></sup>1 Chronicles 24:9,14).

***Zephaniah*** — of the twenty-fourth order. They are designated, not by their father, but by their family (<sup><4308></sup>1 Chronicles 24:18).

**2. *Nebuchadrezzar*** — the more usual way of spelling the name in Jeremiah than Nebuchadnezzar. From *Persiac* roots, meaning either “Nebo, the chief of the gods,” or, “Nebo, the god of fire.” He was son of Nabopolassar, who committed the command of the army against Egypt, at Carchemish, and against Judea, to the Brown prince.

***according to all his wondrous works*** — Zedekiah hopes for God's special interposition, such as was vouchsafed to Hezekiah against Sennacherib (<sup><12685></sup>2 Kings 19:35,36).

***he*** — Nebuchadnezzar.

**go up from us** — rise up from the siege which he sat down to lay (<sup>2676</sup>Jeremiah 37:5,11, *Margin*; <sup>4163</sup>Numbers 16:24,27 <sup>1159</sup>1 Kings 15:19, *Margin*).

**4. God of Israel** — Those “wondrous works” (<sup>2902</sup>Jeremiah 21:2) do not belong to you; *God* is faithful; it is *you* who forfeit the privileges of the covenant by unfaithfulness. “God will always remain *the God of Israel*, though He destroy thee and thy people” [CALVIN].

**turn back the weapons** — I will turn them to a very different use from what you intend them. With them you now fight against the Chaldees “without the walls” (the Jewish defenders being as yet able to sally forth more freely, and defend the fountains outside the walls in the valley under Mount Zion; see <sup>2913</sup>Jeremiah 21:13 <sup>3406</sup>Jeremiah 19:6,7); but soon ye shall be driven back within the city [MAURER], and “in the midst” of it, I will cause all your arms to be gathered in one place (“I will assemble *them*,” namely, your arms) by the Chaldean conquerors [GROTIUS], who shall slay you with those very arms [MENOCHIUS].

**5.** The Jews shall have not merely the Chaldees, but Jehovah Himself in wrath at their provocations, fighting against them. Every word enhances the formidable character of God’s opposition, “I myself ... outstretched hand ... strong arm (no longer as in <sup>1069</sup>Exodus 6:6, and in the case of Sennacherib, in your behalf, but) in anger ... fury ... great wrath.”

**7. the people, and such** — rather, explanatory, “the people,” namely, “such as are left.”

**seek their life** — content with nothing short of their death; not content with plundering and enslaving them.

**smite with ... sword** — This was the fate of Zedekiah’s sons and many of the Jewish nobles. Zedekiah himself, though not put to a violent death, died of grief. Compare as to the accurate fulfillment, <sup>2608</sup>Jeremiah 34:4 <sup>2923</sup>Ezekiel 12:13 <sup>226</sup>2 Kings 25:6,7.

**8.** “Life,” if ye surrender; “death,” if ye persist in opposing the Chaldees (compare <sup>609</sup>Deuteronomy 30:19). The individuality of Jeremiah’s mission from God is shown in that he urges to unconditional surrender; whereas all former prophets had urged the people to oppose their invaders (<sup>2376</sup>Isaiah 7:16 37:33,35).

**9.** (<sup>2802</sup>Jeremiah 38:2,17,18).

**falleth to** — deserts to.

**life ... a prey** — proverbial, to make one's escape with life, like a valuable spoil or prey that one carries off; the narrowness of the escape, and the joy felt at it, are included in the idea (<sup><2318></sup>Jeremiah 39:18).

**10. set ... face against** — determined to punish (See on <sup><1870></sup>Leviticus 17:10).

**12. house of David** — the royal family and all in office about the king. He calls them so, because it was the greater disgrace that they had so degenerated from the piety of their forefather, *David*; and to repress their glorying in their descent from him, as if they were therefore inviolable; but God will not spare them as apostates.

**in the morning** — alluding to *the time* of dispensing justice (<sup><1847></sup>Job 24:17 <sup><1948></sup>Psalms 101:8); but the sense is mainly proverbial, for “with promptness” (<sup><1904></sup>Psalms 90:14 143:8). MAURER translates, “every morning.”

**lest my fury ... like fire** — Already it was kindled, and the decree of God gone forth against the city (<sup><2104></sup>Jeremiah 21:4,5), but the king and his house may yet be preserved by repentance and reformation. God urges to righteousness, not as if they can thereby escape punishment wholly, but as the condition of a *mitigation* of it.

**13. inhabitant of the valley, and rock of the plain** — Jerusalem personified; situated for the most part on hills, with valleys at the bottom of them, as the valley of Hinnom, etc.; and beyond the valleys and mountains again, a position most fortified by nature, whence the inhabitants fancied themselves beyond the reach of enemies; but since God is “against” them, their position will avail nothing for them. The “valley” between Mount Zion and Moriah is called Tyropoeon. ROBINSON takes, “rock of the plain” as Mount Zion, *on which* is a *level tract* of some extent. It is appropriately here referred to, being the site of the royal residence of the “house of David,” addressed (<sup><2112></sup>Jeremiah 21:12).

**14. fruit of your doings** — (<sup><2039></sup>Proverbs 1:31 <sup><2180></sup>Isaiah 3:10,11).

**forest thereof** — namely of your city, taken from <sup><2113></sup>Jeremiah 21:13. “Forest” refers to the dense mass of houses built of cedar, etc. brought from Lebanon (<sup><2217></sup>Jeremiah 22:7 52:13 <sup><2239></sup>2 Kings 25:9).

# CHAPTER 22

## JEREMIAH 22:1-30.

### EXHORTATION TO REPENTANCE; JUDGMENT ON SHALLUM, JEHOIAKIM, AND CONIAH.

Belonging to an earlier period than the twenty-first chapter, namely, the reigns of Shallum or Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, and Jeconiah (<sup>22:10</sup>Jeremiah 22:10,13,20). Jeremiah often groups his prophecies, not by chronological order, but by *similarity of subjects*; thus <sup>22:3</sup>Jeremiah 22:3 corresponds to <sup>21:12</sup>Jeremiah 21:12. GROTIUS thinks that Jeremiah here *repeats* to Zedekiah what he had announced to that king's predecessors *formerly* (namely, his brother and brother's son), of a similar bearing, and which had since come to pass; a warning to Zedekiah. Probably, in *arranging* his prophecies they were grouped for the first time in the present order, designed by the Holy Spirit to set forth the series of kings of Judah, all four alike, failing in "righteousness," followed at last by the "King," *a righteous Branch raised unto David*, in the house of Judah, "the Lord our righteousness" (<sup>23:6</sup>Jeremiah 23:6). The unrighteousness of Zedekiah suggested the review of his predecessors' failure in the same respects, and consequent punishment, which ought to have warned him, but did not.

**1. *Go down*** — The temple (where Jeremiah had been prophesying) was higher than the king's palace on Mount Zion (<sup>36:10,12</sup>Jeremiah 36:10,12 <sup>23:20</sup>2 Chronicles 23:20). Hence the phrase, "Go down."

***the king of Judah*** — perhaps including *each of the four successive kings*, to whom it was consecutively addressed, here brought together in one picture: Shallum, Jeremiah 22: 11; Jehoiakim, Jeremiah 22: 13-18; Jeconiah, <sup>22:24</sup>Jeremiah 22:24; Zedekiah, the address to whom (<sup>21:1,11,12</sup>Jeremiah 21:1,11,12) suggests notice of the rest.

**2. *these gates*** — of the king's palace.

**3. *Jehoiakim*** is meant here especially: he, by oppression, levied the tribute imposed on him by Pharaoh-necho, king of Egypt (<sup>36:3</sup>2 Chronicles 36:3), and taxed his people, and took their labor without pay, to build gorgeous palaces for himself (<sup>22:13-17</sup>Jeremiah 22:13-17), and shed innocent blood, for example, that of Urijah the prophet (<sup>26:20-24</sup>Jeremiah 26:20-24 <sup>23:35</sup>2 Kings 23:35 24:4).

**4. upon the throne of David** — literally, “or David on his throne” (see on <sup><2433></sup>Jeremiah 13:13). This verse is repeated substantially from <sup><2475></sup>Jeremiah 17:25.

**his servants** — so the *Keri*. But *Chetib*, singular, “his servant;” that is, distributively, “each with his servants;” <sup><2475></sup>Jeremiah 17:25, “their princes.”

**5. I swear by myself** — (<sup><2663></sup>Hebrews 6:13,17). God swears because it seemed to them incredible that the family of David should be cast off.

**this house** — the king’s, where Jeremiah spake (<sup><2214></sup>Jeremiah 22:4).

**6.** Though thou art as beautiful as Gilead, and as majestic in Mine eyes (before Me) as the summit of Lebanon, yet surely (the *Hebrew* is a formula of swearing to express *certainly*: “If I do not make thee ... believe Me not ever hereafter”: so “as truly as I live,” <sup><0448></sup>Numbers 14:28; “surely,” <sup><0445></sup>Numbers 14:35). The mention of Gilead may allude not only to its past beauty, but covertly also to its desolation by the judgment on Israel; a warning now to Judah and the house of “David.” “Lebanon” is appropriately mentioned, as the king’s house was built of its noble cedars.

**cities** — not other *cities*, but the different *parts* of the *city* of Jerusalem (<sup><1022></sup>Samuel 12:27 <sup><1205></sup>2 Kings 10:25) [MAURER].

**7. prepare** — literally, “sanctify,” or solemnly set apart for a particular work (compare <sup><2318></sup>Isaiah 13:3).

**thy choice cedars** — (<sup><2524></sup>Isaiah 37:24). Thy palaces built of choice cedars (So 1:17).

**8.** (<sup><1324></sup>Deuteronomy 29:24,25). The Gentile nations, more intelligent than you, shall understand that which ye do not, namely, that this city is a spectacle of God’s vengeance [CALVIN].

**9.** (<sup><1227></sup>2 Kings 22:17).

**10, 11. Weep ... not for** — that is, not so much for Josiah, who was taken away by death from the evil to come (<sup><1220></sup>2 Kings 22:20 <sup><2571></sup>Isaiah 57:1); as for Shallum or Jehoahaz, his son (<sup><1230></sup>2 Kings 23:30), who, after a three months’ reign, was carried off by Pharaoh-necho into Egypt, never to see his native land again (<sup><1231></sup>2 Kings 23:31-34). Dying saints are justly to be envied, while living sinners are to be pitied. The allusion is to the great weeping of the people at the death of Josiah, and on each anniversary of it, in which Jeremiah himself took a prominent part (<sup><1434></sup>2 Chronicles 35:24,25). The name “Shallum” is here given in irony to Jehoahaz, who reigned but three months; as if he were a second Shallum, son of Jabesh,

who reigned only *one month* in Samaria (<sup><2153></sup>2 Kings 15:13 <sup><4801></sup>2 Chronicles 36:1-4). Shallum means “retribution,” a name of no good omen to him [GROTIUS]; originally the people called him *Shallom*, indicative of *peace* and prosperity. But Jeremiah applies it in irony. <sup><1185></sup>1 Chronicles 3:15, calls Shallum the *fourth* son of Josiah. The people raised him to the throne before his brother Eliakim or Jehoiakim, though the latter was the older (<sup><2281></sup>2 Kings 23:31,36 <sup><4801></sup>2 Chronicles 36:1); perhaps on account of Jehoiakim’s extravagance (<sup><3223></sup>Jeremiah 22:13,15). Jehoiakim was put in Shallum’s (Jehoahaz’) stead by Pharaoh-necho. Jeconiah, his son, succeeded. Zedekiah (Mattaniah), uncle of Jeconiah, and brother of Jehoiakim and Jehoahaz, was last of all raised to the throne by Nebuchadnezzar.

***He shall not return*** — The people perhaps entertained hopes of Shallum’s return from Egypt, in which case they would replace him on the throne, and thereby free themselves from the oppressive taxes imposed by Jehoiakim.

**13.** Not only did Jehoiakim tax the people (<sup><2235></sup>2 Kings 23:35) for Pharaoh’s tribute, but also took their forced labor, without pay, for building a splendid palace; in violation of <sup><1893></sup>Leviticus 19:13 <sup><5244></sup>Deuteronomy 24:14,15. Compare <sup><3180></sup>Micah 3:10 <sup><3110></sup>Habakkuk 2:9 <sup><3014></sup>James 5:4. God will repay in justice those who will not in justice pay those whom they employ.

**14. *wide*** — literally, “a house of dimensions” (“measures”). Compare <sup><4152></sup>Numbers 13:32, *Margin*, “men of statures.”

***large*** — rather, as *Margin*, “airy” from *Hebrew* root, “to breathe freely.” Upper rooms in the East are the principal apartments.

***cutteth him out windows*** — The *Hebrew*, if a noun, is rather, “my windows”; then the translation ought to be, “and let my windows (Jehoiakim speaking) be cut out for it,” that is, in the house; or, “and let (the workman) cut out my windows for it.” But the word is rather an adjective; “he cutteth it (the house) out for himself, so as to be *full of windows*.” The following words accord with this construction, “and (he makes it) ceiled with cedar,” etc. [MAURER]. Retaining *English Version*, there must be understood something remarkable about the windows, since they are deemed worthy of notice. GESENIUS thinks thinks the word *dual*, “double windows,” the *blinds* being *two-leaved*.

***vermilion*** — *Hebrew*, *shashar*, called so from a people of India beyond the Ganges, by whom it is exported [PLINY, 6.19]. The old vermilion was composed of sulphur and quicksilver; not of red lead, as our vermilion.

**15. *closest thyself*** — rather, “thou viest,” that is, art emulous to surpass thy forefathers in the magnificence of thy palaces.

***eat and drink*** — Did not Josiah, thy father, enjoy all that man *really needs* for his bodily wants? Did he need to build costly palaces to secure his throne? Nay, he *did secure* it by “judgment and justice”; whereas thou, with all thy luxurious building, sittest on a *tottering* throne.

***then*** — on that account, therefore.

**16. *was not this to know me*** — namely, to show by *deeds* that one knows God’s will, as was the case with Josiah (compare <sup><4817></sup>John 13:17; contrast <sup><5016></sup>Titus 1:16).

**17. *thine*** — as opposed to thy father, Josiah.

**18. *Ah my brother! ... sister!*** — addressing him with such titles of affection as one would address to a deceased friend beloved as a *brother* or *sister* (compare <sup><1130></sup>1 Kings 13:30). This expresses, They shall not lament him with the lamentation of *private individuals* [VATABLUS], or of *blood relatives* [GROTIUS]: as “Ah! lord,” expresses *public* lamentation *in the case of a king* [VATABLUS], or that of *subjects* [GROTIUS]. HENDERSON thinks, “Ah! sister,” refers to Jehoiakim’s queen, who, though taken to Babylon and not left unburied on the way, as Jehoiakim, yet was not honored at her death with royal lamentations, such as would have been poured forth over her at Jerusalem. He notices the beauty of Jeremiah’s manner in his prophecy against Jehoiakim. In <sup><3213></sup>Jeremiah 22:13,14 he describes him in general terms; then, in <sup><3215></sup>Jeremiah 22:15-17, he directly addresses him without naming him; at last, in <sup><3218></sup>Jeremiah 22:18, he names him, but in the third person, to imply that God puts him to a distance from Him. The boldness of the Hebrew prophets proves their divine mission; were it not so, their reproofs to the Hebrew kings, who held the throne by divine authority, would have been treason.

***Ah his glory!*** — “Alas! his majesty.”

**19. *burial of an ass*** — that is, he shall have the same burial as an ass would get, namely, he shall be left a prey for beasts and birds [JEROME]. This is not formally narrated. But <sup><4816></sup>2 Chronicles 36:6 states that “Nebuchadnezzar bound him in fetters to carry him to Babylon”; his treatment there is nowhere mentioned. The prophecy here, and in <sup><3630></sup>Jeremiah 36:30, harmonizes these two facts. He was slain by Nebuchadnezzar, who changed his purpose of taking him to Babylon, on the way thither, and left him unburied outside Jerusalem. <sup><2416></sup>2 Kings 24:6, “Jehoiakim slept with his fathers,” does not contradict this; it simply

expresses his being gathered to his fathers by *death*, not his being *buried* with his fathers (<sup><4969></sup>Psalm 49:19). The two phrases are found together, as expressing two distinct ideas (<sup><1258></sup>2 Kings 15:38 16:20).

**20.** Delivered in the reign of Jehoiachin (Jeconiah or Coniah), son of Jehoiakim; appended to the previous prophecy respecting Jehoiakim, on account of the similarity of the two prophecies. He calls on Jerusalem, personified as a mourning female, to go up to the highest points visible from Jerusalem, and lament there (see on <sup><3492></sup>Jeremiah 3:21) the calamity of herself, bereft of allies and of her princes, who are one after the other being cast down.

**Bashan** — north of the region beyond Jordan; the mountains of Anti-libanus are referred to (<sup><4985></sup>Psalm 68:15).

**from the passages** — namely, of the rivers (<sup><4726></sup>Judges 12:6); or else the borders of the country (<sup><4933></sup>1 Samuel 13:23 <sup><2109></sup>Isaiah 10:29). The passes (<sup><4944></sup>1 Samuel 14:4). MAURER translates, “Abarim,” a mountainous tract beyond Jordan, opposite Jericho, and south of Bashan; this accords with the mention of the mountains Lebanon and Bashan (<sup><4072></sup>Numbers 27:12 33:47).

**lovers** — the allies of Judea, especially Egypt, now unable to help the Jews, being crippled by Babylon (<sup><1247></sup>2 Kings 24:7).

**21.** I admonished thee in time. Thy sin has not been a sin of ignorance or thoughtlessness, but wilful.

**prosperity** — given thee by Me; yet thou wouldest not hearken to the gracious Giver. The *Hebrew* is *plural*, to express, “In *the height* of thy prosperity”; so “droughts” (<sup><2881></sup>Isaiah 58:11).

**thou saidst** — not in words, but in thy conduct, virtually.

**thy youth** — from the time that I brought thee out of Egypt, and formed thee into a people (<sup><2475></sup>Jeremiah 7:25 2:2 <sup><2372></sup>Isaiah 47:12).

**22. wind** — the Chaldees, as a parching wind that sweeps over rapidly and withers vegetation (<sup><2441></sup>Jeremiah 4:11,12 <sup><4936></sup>Psalm 103:16 <sup><2107></sup>Isaiah 40:7).

**eat up ... pastors** — that is, thy kings (<sup><2108></sup>Jeremiah 2:8). There is a happy play on words. The *pastors*, whose office it is to feed the sheep, shall themselves be *fed on*. They who should *drive* the flock from place to place for pasture shall be *driven* into exile by the Chaldees.

**23. inhabitant of Lebanon** — namely, Jerusalem, whose temple, palaces, and principal habitations were built of cedars of Lebanon.

**how gracious** — irony. How graciously thou wilt be treated by the Chaldees, when they come on thee suddenly, as pangs on a woman in travail (<sup><2163></sup>Jeremiah 6:24)! Nay, all thy fine buildings will win no favor for thee from them. MAURER translates, “How shalt thou be *to be pitied!*”

**24. As I live** — God’s most solemn formula of oath (<sup><2468></sup>Jeremiah 46:18 4:2 <sup><1630></sup>Deuteronomy 32:40 <sup><1253></sup>1 Samuel 25:34).

**Coniah** — Jeconiah or Jehoiachin. The contraction of the name is meant in contempt.

**signet** — Such ring seals were often of the greatest value (So 8:6 <sup><3122></sup>Haggai 2:23). Jehoiachin’s popularity is probably here referred to.

**right hand** — the hand most valued.

**I would pluck thee thence** — (Compare <sup><3100></sup>Obadiah 1:4); on account of thy father’s sins, as well as thine own (<sup><4802></sup>2 Chronicles 36:9). There is a change here, as often in *Hebrew* poetry, from the third to the second person, to bring the threat more directly home to him. After a three months’ and ten days’ reign, the Chaldees deposed him. In Babylon, however, by God’s favor he was ultimately treated more kindly than other royal captives (<sup><2825></sup>Jeremiah 52:31-34). But none of his direct posterity ever came to the throne.

**25. give ... into ... hand** — “I will pluck thee” from “*my right hand,*” and “will give thee *into the hand of them that seek thy life.*”

**26. thy mother** — Nehushta, the queen dowager (<sup><1216></sup>2 Kings 24:6,8,15; see <sup><2438></sup>Jeremiah 13:18).

**27. they** — Coniah and his mother. He passes from the second person (<sup><2523></sup>Jeremiah 22:26) to the third person here, to express alienation. The king is as it were put out of sight, as if unworthy of being spoken with directly.

**desire** — literally, “lift up their soul” (<sup><2444></sup>Jeremiah 44:14 <sup><2241></sup>Psalms 24:4 25:1). Judea was the land which they in Babylon should pine after in vain.

**28. broken idol** — Coniah was idolized once by the Jews; Jeremiah, therefore, in their person, expresses their astonishment at one from whom so much had been expected being now so utterly cast aside.

**vessel ... no pleasure** — (<sup><1812></sup>Psalms 31:12 <sup><3888></sup>Hosea 8:8). The answer to this is given (<sup><6110></sup>Romans 9:20-23; contrast <sup><5121></sup>2 Timothy 2:21).

**his seed** — (See on <sup><1229></sup>Jeremiah 22:29).

**29, 30. *O earth! earth! earth!*** — Jeconiah was not actually without offspring (compare <sup><4228></sup>Jeremiah 22:28, “his seed”; <sup><4387></sup>1 Chronicles 3:17,18 <sup><4012></sup>Matthew 1:12), but he was to be “written childless,” as a warning to posterity, that is, without a lineal heir to his throne. It is with a reference to the *three* kings, Shallum, Jehoiakim, and Jeconiah, that the earth is *thrice* invoked [BENGEL]. Or, the *triple* invocation is to give intensity to the call for attention to the announcement of the end of the royal line, so far as Jehoiachin’s seed is concerned. Though Messiah (<sup><4003></sup>Matthew 1:1-17), the heir of David’s throne, was lineally descended from Jeconiah, it was only through Joseph, who, though His legal, was not His real father. Matthew gives the legal pedigree through *Solomon* down to Joseph; Luke the real pedigree, from Mary, the real parent, through *Nathan*, brother of Solomon, upwards (<sup><4131></sup>Luke 3:31).

***no man of his seed ... upon the throne*** — This explains the sense in which “childless” is used. Though the succession to the throne failed in his line, still the promise to David (<sup><4389></sup>Psalms 89:30-37) was revived in Zerubbabel and consummated in Christ.

# CHAPTER 23

## JEREMIAH 23:1-40.

### THE WICKED RULERS TO BE SUPERSEDED BY THE KING, WHO SHOULD REIGN OVER THE AGAIN UNITED PEOPLES, ISRAEL AND JUDAH.

This forms the *epilogue* to the denunciations of the four kings, in  
<sup><321></sup>Jeremiah 21:1-22:30.

1. *pastors* — Shallum, Jehoiakim, Jeconiah, and Zedekiah (<sup><340></sup>Ezekiel 34:2).

2. *Ye have not ... visited them ... I will visit upon you* — just retribution. Play upon the double sense of “visit.” “Visit upon,” namely, in wrath (<sup><423></sup>Exodus 32:34).

3, 4. Restoration of Judah from Babylon foretold in language which in its fullness can only apply to the final restoration of *both* “Judah” and “Israel” (compare <sup><226></sup>Jeremiah 23:6); also “out of *all* countries,” in this verse and <sup><228></sup>Jeremiah 23:8; also, “neither shall they be lacking,” that is, none shall be missing or detached from the rest: a prophecy never yet fully accomplished. It holds good also of the spiritual Israel, the elect of both Jews and Gentiles (<sup><319></sup>Malachi 3:16,17 <sup><303></sup>John 10:28 17:12). As to the literal Israel also, see <sup><427></sup>Jeremiah 32:37 <sup><254></sup>Isaiah 54:13 60:21 <sup><264></sup>Ezekiel 34:11-16.

*shepherds ... shall feed them* — (<sup><415></sup>Jeremiah 3:15 <sup><262></sup>Ezekiel 34:23-31). Zerubbabel, Ezra, Nehemiah, and the Maccabees were but typical of the consummating fulfillment of these prophecies under Messiah.

5. As Messianic prophecy extended over many years in which many political changes took place in harmony with these, it displayed its riches by a variety more effective than if it had been manifested all at once. As the moral condition of the Jews required in each instance, so Messiah was exhibited in a corresponding phase, thus becoming more and more the soul of the nation’s life: so that He is represented as the antitypical Israel (<sup><240></sup>Isaiah 49:3).

*unto David* — HENGSTENBERG observes that Isaiah dwells more on His *prophetical* and *priestly* office, which had already been partly set forth

(<sup><688F></sup>Deuteronomy 18:18 <sup><680F></sup>Psalms 110:4). Other prophets dwell more on His *kingly* office. Therefore here He is associated with “David” *the king*: but in <sup><230E></sup>Isaiah 11:1 with the then poor and unknown “Jesse.”

***righteous Branch*** — “the Branch of righteousness” (<sup><263E></sup>Jeremiah 33:15); “The Branch” simply (<sup><380E></sup>Zechariah 3:8 6:12); “The Branch of the Lord” (<sup><200E></sup>Isaiah 4:2).

***prosper*** — the very term applied to Messiah’s undertaking (<sup><292E></sup>Isaiah 52:13, *Margin*; <sup><2530></sup>Isaiah 53:10). *Righteousness* or *justice* is the characteristic of Messiah elsewhere, too, in connection with our *salvation* or *justification* (<sup><2531></sup>Isaiah 53:11 <sup><2024></sup>Daniel 9:24 <sup><380E></sup>Zechariah 9:9). So in the New Testament He is not merely “righteous” Himself, but “righteousness to us” (<sup><403></sup>1 Corinthians 1:30), so that we become “the righteousness of God in Him” (<sup><450E></sup>Romans 10:3,4 <sup><4759></sup>2 Corinthians 5:19-21 <sup><5089></sup>Philippians 3:9).

***execute judgment and justice in the earth*** — (<sup><472E></sup>Psalms 72:2 <sup><230E></sup>Isaiah 9:7 32:1,18). Not merely a spiritual reign in the sense in which He is “our righteousness,” but a righteous reign “in the earth” (<sup><2487></sup>Jeremiah 3:17,18). In some passages He is said to come to *judge*, in others to *reign*. In <sup><4259></sup>Matthew 25:34, He is called “the King.” <sup><4907></sup>Psalms 9:7 unites them. Compare <sup><2022></sup>Daniel 7:22,26,27.

**6. *Judah ... Israel ... dwell safely*** — Compare <sup><263E></sup>Jeremiah 33:16, where “Jerusalem” is substituted for “Israel” here. Only *Judah*, and that only in part, has as yet returned. So far are the Jews from having enjoyed, as yet, the temporal blessings here foretold as the result of Messiah’s reign, that their lot has been, for eighteen centuries, worse than ever before. The accomplishment must, therefore, be still future, when both Judah and Israel in their own land shall dwell safely under a Christocracy, far more privileged than even the old theocracy (<sup><2627></sup>Jeremiah 32:37 <sup><683E></sup>Deuteronomy 33:28 <sup><254E></sup>Isaiah 54:1-17 60:1-22 65:17-25 <sup><384E></sup>Zechariah 14:11).

***shall be called, the Lord*** — that is, shall be (<sup><230E></sup>Isaiah 9:6) “Jehovah,” God’s incommunicable name. Though when applied to created things, it expresses only some peculiar *connection* they have with Jehovah (<sup><4024></sup>Genesis 22:14 <sup><4075></sup>Exodus 17:15), yet when applied to Messiah it must express His *Godhead* manifested in justifying power *towards us* (<sup><5486></sup>1 Timothy 3:16).

***our*** — marks His *manhood*, which is also implied in His being a *Branch raised unto David*, whence His human title, “Son of David” (compare <sup><4022></sup>Matthew 22:42-45).

***Righteousness*** — marks His *Godhead*, for God alone can justify the ungodly (compare <sup><3145></sup>Romans 4:5 <sup><3517></sup>Isaiah 45:17,24,25).

**7, 8.** Repeated from <sup><2164></sup>Jeremiah 16:14,15. The prophet said the same things often, in order that his sayings might make the more impression. The same promise as in <sup><2238></sup>Jeremiah 23:3,4. The wide dispersion of the Jews at the Babylonish captivity prefigures their present wider dispersion (<sup><2311></sup>Isaiah 11:11 <sup><2406></sup>Joel 3:6). Their second deliverance is to exceed far the former one from Egypt. But the deliverance from Babylon was inferior to that from Egypt in respect to the miracles performed and the numbers delivered. The final deliverance under Messiah must, therefore, be meant, of which that from Babylon was the earnest.

**9. *because of the prophets*** — so the Masorites and Targum. But *Vulgate*, *Septuagint*, etc., make this the inscription of the prophecy, CONCERNING THE PROPHETS: as in <sup><2440></sup>Jeremiah 46:2 48:1 49:1. Jeremiah expresses his horror at the so-called “prophets” not warning the people, though iniquity so fearfully abounded, soon to be followed by awful judgments.

***bones shake*** — (<sup><3316></sup>Habakkuk 3:16).

***drunken*** — God’s judgments are represented as stupefying like wine. The effects of the Holy Spirit also are compared to those of wine (<sup><4217></sup>Acts 2:17). In both cases ecstasy was produced. This accounts for the denial of wine to those likely to be inspired, Nazarites, etc. (<sup><4215></sup>Luke 1:15). It was necessary to put it out of men’s power to ascribe inspired ecstasy to the effects of wine.

***because of ... words of ... holiness*** — because of Jehovah’s holy words, wherewith He threatened severe penalties, soon to be inflicted, against the breakers of His law.

**10. *adulterers*** — spiritual, that is, forsakers of God, Israel’s true Husband (<sup><2545></sup>Isaiah 54:5) for idols, at the instigation of the false “prophets” (<sup><2239></sup>Jeremiah 23:9,15). *Literal* adultery and fornication, the usual concomitants of idolatry, are also meant.

***swearing*** — MAURER, etc., translate, “Because of the curse (of God on it), the land mourneth” (<sup><1575></sup>Deuteronomy 27:15-26 28:15-68 <sup><2316></sup>Isaiah 24:6). More than usual notoriety had been given to the curses of the law, by the finding and reading of it in Josiah’s time (<sup><4221></sup>2 Kings 22:11, etc.). But <sup><3040></sup>Hosea 4:2,3, favors *English Version* (compare <sup><2424></sup>Jeremiah 12:4). A drought was sent by God on the pastures (“pleasant places,” oases) in the desert, on account of the “profaneness” of the priests, prophets, and people (<sup><2231></sup>Jeremiah 23:11).

**course ... evil** — They (both prophets and people) rush into wickedness (<sup>2307</sup>Jeremiah 23:21 <sup>2307</sup>Isaiah 59:7).

**force ... not right** — Their *powers* are used not on the side of *rectitude*, but on that of falsehood.

**11. profane** — (<sup>2329</sup>Ezekiel 23:39 <sup>2305</sup>Zephaniah 3:4).

**in my house** — (<sup>2409</sup>Jeremiah 7:30). They built altars to idols in the very temple (<sup>12312</sup>2 Kings 23:12 <sup>2408</sup>Ezekiel 8:3-16). Compare as to covetousness under the roof of the sanctuary, <sup>4213</sup>Matthew 21:13 <sup>2416</sup>John 2:16.

**12. slippery ways in ... darkness** — Their “way” is their false doctrine which proves fatal to them (<sup>2436</sup>Jeremiah 13:16 <sup>2389</sup>Psalms 35:6 <sup>2449</sup>Proverbs 4:19).

**I will bring evil ... visitation** — still more calamities than those already inflicted. See on <sup>2413</sup>Jeremiah 11:23; “visitation,” namely, in wrath.

**13. folly** — literally, “insipidity,” “unsavouriness” (<sup>2406</sup>Job 6:6), not having the salt of godliness (<sup>2406</sup>Colossians 4:6).

**in Baal** — in the name of Baal; in connection with his worship (see <sup>2408</sup>Jeremiah 2:8).

**caused ... to err** — (<sup>2396</sup>Isaiah 9:16).

**14.** “Jerusalem” and Judah were even worse than “Samaria” and the ten tribes; the greater were the privileges of the former, the greater was their guilt. They had the temple in their midst, which the ten tribes had not; yet in the temple itself they practiced idolatry.

**strengthen ... hands of evildoers** — (<sup>2322</sup>Ezekiel 13:22).

**as Sodom** — (<sup>2322</sup>Deuteronomy 32:32 <sup>2310</sup>Isaiah 1:10).

**15. gall** — poison (see on <sup>2484</sup>Jeremiah 8:14; <sup>2495</sup>Jeremiah 9:15).

**16. make you vain** — They seduce you to vanity, that is, idolatry, which will prove a vain trust to you (<sup>2416</sup>Jeremiah 2:5 <sup>2715</sup>2 Kings 17:15 <sup>2416</sup>Jon 2:8), [GESENIUS]. Rather, “they delude you with vain promises of security” (<sup>2237</sup>Jeremiah 23:17; compare <sup>2620</sup>Psalms 62:10) [MAURER].

**of their own heart** — of their own invention (<sup>2421</sup>Jeremiah 23:21 <sup>2444</sup>Jeremiah 14:14).

**17. say still** — *Hebrew*, “say in saying,” that is, say *incessantly*.

**peace** — (<sup>2084</sup>Jeremiah 6:14 <sup>2330</sup>Ezekiel 13:10 <sup>2302</sup>Zechariah 10:2).

**imagination** — *Hebrew*, “obstinacy.”

**no evil** — (<sup><3181></sup>Micah 3:11).

**18.** A reason is given why the false prophets should not be heeded: *They have not stood in the counsels of Jehovah* (an image from ministers present in a *standing* posture at councils of Eastern kings) (compare <sup><2322></sup>Jeremiah 23:22 <sup><3158></sup>Job 15:8). The spiritual man alone has the privilege (<sup><0187></sup>Genesis 18:17 <sup><2514></sup>Psalms 25:14 <sup><3187></sup>Amos 3:7 <sup><3155></sup>John 15:15 <sup><4126></sup>1 Corinthians 2:16).

**19.** So far from all prosperity awaiting the people as the false prophets say (<sup><2317></sup>Jeremiah 23:17), wrath is in store for them.

**grievous** — literally, “eddying,” whirling itself about, a tornado. In <sup><3123></sup>Jeremiah 30:23, “continuing” is substituted for “grievous.”

**fall grievously** — it shall be hurled on.

**20. in ... latter days** — that is, “the year of their visitation” (<sup><2312></sup>Jeremiah 23:12). *Primarily* the meaning is: the Jews will not “consider” now God’s warnings (<sup><3229></sup>Deuteronomy 32:29); but when the prophecies shall be fulfilled in their Babylonish exile, they will consider and see, by bitter experience, their sinful folly. The *ultimate* scope of the prophecy is: the Jews, in their final dispersion, shall at last “consider” their sin and turn to Messiah “perfectly” (<sup><3105></sup>Hosea 3:5 <sup><3115></sup>Zechariah 12:5,10-14 <sup><4135></sup>Luke 13:35).

**21. sent ... spoken** — sent” refers to the primary *call*: “spoken” to the subsequent *charges* given to be executed. A call is required, not only external, on the part of men, but also internal from God, that one should undertake a pastor’s office [CALVIN].

**22. stood in ... counsel** — (<sup><2318></sup>Jeremiah 23:18).

**they should have turned them from their evil way** — They would have given such counsels to the people as would have turned them from their sins (<sup><2315></sup>Jeremiah 25:5 <sup><2511></sup>Isaiah 55:11), and so would have averted punishment. Their not teaching the law in which God’s counsel is set forth proves they are not His prophets, though they boast of being so (<sup><4115></sup>Matthew 7:15-20).

**23.** Let not the false prophets fancy that their devices (<sup><2325></sup>Jeremiah 23:25) are unknown to Me. Are ye so ignorant as to suppose that I can only see things near Me, namely, things in heaven, and not earthly things as being too remote?

**24.** (<sup><3107></sup>Psalms 139:7, etc. <sup><3102></sup>Amos 9:2,3).

**fill heaven and earth** — with My omniscience providence, power, and essential being (<sup><1027></sup>1 Kings 8:27).

**25. dreamed** — I have received a prophetic communication by dream (<sup><0426></sup>Numbers 12:6 <sup><6103></sup>Deuteronomy 13:1, etc. <sup><2128></sup>Joel 2:28).

**26. prophets** — a different *Hebrew* form from the usual one, “prophesiers.” “How long,” cries Jeremiah, impatient of their impious audacity, “shall these *prophecy-mongers* go on prophesying lies?” The answer is given in <sup><2239></sup>Jeremiah 23:29-34.

**27.** They “think” to make My people utterly to forget Me. But I will oppose to those dreamers my true prophets.

**fathers ... for Baal** — (<sup><0787></sup>Judges 3:7 8:33,34).

**28.** God answers the objection which might be stated, “What, then, must we do, when lies are spoken as truths, and prophets oppose prophets?” Do the same as when wheat is mixed with chaff: do not reject the wheat because of the chaff mixed with it, but discriminate between the false and the true revelations. The test is adherence to, or *forgetfulness* of, Me and My law (<sup><2227></sup>Jeremiah 23:27).

**that hath a dream** — that pretends to have a divine communication by dream, let him tell it “faithfully,” that it may be compared with “my word” (<sup><4042></sup>2 Corinthians 4:2). The result will be the former (both the prophets and their fictions) will soon be seen to be *chaff*; the latter (the true prophets and the word of God in their mouth) *wheat* (<sup><1040></sup>Psalms 1:4 <sup><3838></sup>Hosea 13:3).

**29.** As the “fire” consumes the “chaff” (<sup><2238></sup>Jeremiah 23:28), so “My word” will consume the false prophets (<sup><4182></sup>Matthew 3:12 <sup><3042></sup>Hebrews 4:12). “My word” which is “wheat” (<sup><2238></sup>Jeremiah 23:28), that is, food to the true prophet and his hearers, is a consuming “fire,” and a crushing “hammer” (<sup><0144></sup>Matthew 21:44) to false prophets and their followers (<sup><4016></sup>2 Corinthians 2:16). The Word of the false prophets may be known by its promising men *peace* in sin. “My word,” on the contrary, burns and *breaks* the hard-hearted (<sup><2410></sup>Jeremiah 20:9). The “hammer” symbolizes destructive power (<sup><2413></sup>Jeremiah 50:23 Na 2:1, *Margin*).

**30. steal my words** — a twofold plagiarism; one steals from the other, and all steal words from Jehovah’s true prophets, but misapply them (see <sup><2412></sup>Jeremiah 28:2 <sup><6101></sup>John 10:1 <sup><6219></sup>Revelation 22:19).

**31. use** — rather, “take” their tongue: a second class (compare <sup><2230></sup>Jeremiah 23:30) require, in order to bring forth a revelation, nothing more than their *tongues*, wherewith they say, He (Jehovah) saith: they bungle in the very

formula instead of the usual “*Jehovah* saith,” being only able to say “(He) saith.”

**32.** Third class: inventors of lies: the climax, and worst of the three.

***lightness*** — wanton inventions (<sup>3680F</sup>Zephaniah 3:4).

***not profit*** — that is, greatly injure.

**33. *What is the burden*** — play on the double sense of the *Hebrew*: an *oracle* and a *burden*. They scoffingly ask, Has he got any new burden (*burdensome oracle*: for all his prophecies are *disasters*) to announce (<sup>3000</sup>Malachi 1:1)? Jeremiah indignantly repeats their own question, Do you ask, What burden? This, then, it is, “I will forsake you.” My word is burdensome in your eyes, and you long to be rid if it. You shall get your wish. There will be no more prophecy: *I will forsake you*, and that will be a far worse “burden” to you.

**34. *The burden*** — Whoever shall in mockery call the Lord’s word “a burden,” shall be *visited* (*Margin*) in wrath.

**35.** The result of My judgments shall be, ye shall address the prophet more reverentially hereafter, no longer calling his message a *burden*, but a divine *response* or *word*. “What hath the LORD *answered*?”

**36. *every man’s word ... his burden*** — As they mockingly *call* all prophecies *burdens*, as if calamities were the sole subject of prophecy, so it shall prove to them. *God will take them at their own word*.

***living God*** — not lifeless as their dumb idols, ever living so as to be able to punish.

**39. *I will ... forget you*** — just retribution for their *forgetting* Him (<sup>2040F</sup>Hosea 4:6). But God cannot possibly *forget* His children (<sup>2340F</sup>Isaiah 49:15). Rather for “forget” translate, “I will altogether lift you up (like a ‘burden,’ alluding to their mocking term for God’s messages) and cast you off.” God makes their wicked language fall on their own head [CALVIN]. Compare <sup>2420F</sup>Jeremiah 23:36: “every man’s word shall be his burden.”

**40. *not be forgotten*** — If we translate <sup>2430F</sup>Jeremiah 23:39 as *English Version*, the antithesis is, though *I forget you*, your *shame shall not be forgotten*.

# CHAPTER 24

## JEREMIAH 24:1-10.

### THE RESTORATION OF THE CAPTIVES IN BABYLON AND THE DESTRUCTION OF THE REFRACTORY PARTY IN JUDEA AND IN EGYPT, REPRESENTED UNDER THE TYPE OF A BASKET OF GOOD, AND ONE OF BAD, FIGS.

1. *Lord showed me* — <sup><3100></sup>Amos 7:1,4,7 8:1, contains the same formula, with the addition of “thus” prefixed.

*carried ... captive Jeconiah* — (<sup><3024></sup>Jeremiah 22:24 <sup><12412></sup>2 Kings 24:12, etc. <sup><4830></sup>2 Chronicles 36:10).

*carpenters*, etc. — One thousand artisans were carried to Babylon, both to work for the king there, and to deprive Jerusalem of their services in the event of a future siege (<sup><12416></sup>2 Kings 24:16).

2. *figs ... first ripe* — the “boccora,” or early fig (see on <sup><2304></sup>Isaiah 28:4). Baskets of figs used to be offered as first-fruits in the temple. The *good figs* represent Jeconiah and the exiles in Babylon; *the bad*, Zedekiah and the obstinate Jews in Judea. They are called *good* and *bad* respectively, not in an absolute, but a comparative sense, and in reference to the punishment of the latter. This prophecy was designed to encourage the despairing exiles, and to reprove the people at home, who prided themselves as superior to those in Babylon and abused the forbearance of God (compare <sup><3624></sup>Jeremiah 52:31-34).

5. *acknowledge* — *regard with favor*, like as thou lookest on the good figs favorably.

*for their good* — Their removal to Babylon saved them from the calamities which befell the rest of the nation and led them to repentance there: so God bettered their condition (<sup><12205></sup>2 Kings 25:27-30). Daniel and Ezekiel were among these captives.

6. (<sup><34125></sup>Jeremiah 12:15).

*not pull ... down ... not pluck ... up* — only partially fulfilled in the restoration from Babylon; antitypically and fully to be fulfilled hereafter (<sup><3624></sup>Jeremiah 32:41 33:7).

7. (<sup>24312</sup>Jeremiah 30:22 31:33 32:38). Their conversion from idolatry to the one true God, through the chastening effect of the Babylonish captivity, is here expressed in language which, in its fullness, applies to the more complete conversion hereafter of the Jews, “with their whole heart” (<sup>24213</sup>Jeremiah 29:13), through the painful discipline of their present dispersion. The source of their conversion is here stated to be *God’s prevenient grace*.

*for they shall return* — Repentance, though not the cause of pardon, is its invariable accompaniment: it is the effect of God’s *giving a heart to know Him*.

8. *in ... Egypt* — Many Jews had fled for refuge to Egypt, which was leagued with Judea against Babylon.

9. *removed*, etc. — (<sup>24154</sup>Jeremiah 15:4). CALVIN translates, “I will give them up to *agitation*, in all,” etc.; This verse quotes the curse (<sup>45325</sup>Deuteronomy 28:25,37). Compare <sup>24218</sup>Jeremiah 29:18,22 <sup>49413</sup>Psalms 44:13,14.

# CHAPTER 25

## JEREMIAH 25:1-38.

### PROPHECY OF THE SEVENTY YEARS CAPTIVITY; AND AFTER THAT THE DESTRUCTION OF BABYLON, AND OF ALL THE NATIONS THAT OPPRESSED THE JEWS.

1. *fourth year of Jehoiakim* — called the *third* year in <sup>2700f</sup>Daniel 1:1. But probably Jehoiakim was set on the throne by Pharaoh-necho on his return from Carchemish about *July*, whereas Nebuchadnezzar mounted the throne January 21, 604 B.C.; so that Nebuchadnezzar's first year was partly the *third*, partly the *fourth*, of Jehoiakim's. Here first Jeremiah gives specific dates. Nebuchadnezzar had previously entered Judea in the reign of his father Nabopolassar.

3. From the thirteenth year of Josiah, in which Jeremiah began to prophesy (<sup>2400f</sup>Jeremiah 1:1), to the end of Josiah's reign, was nineteen years (<sup>1221f</sup>2 Kings 22:1) of Jehoahaz' reign, with the not quite complete four years of Jehoiakim (<sup>2201f</sup>Jeremiah 25:1), added to the nineteen years, make up twenty-three years in all.

4. *rising early* — (See on <sup>2471f</sup>Jeremiah 7:13). "The prophets" refer to Urijah, Zephaniah, Habakkuk, etc. It aggravates their sin, that God sent not merely one but many messengers, and those messengers, prophets; and, that during all those years specified, Jeremiah and his fellow prophets *spared no effort, late and early*.

5. *Turn ... dwell* — In *Hebrew* there is expressed by sameness of sounds the correspondence between their *turning* to God and God's turning to them to permit them to *dwell* in their land: *Shubu ... shebu*, "Return" ... so shall ye "*remain*."

*every one from ... evil* — *Each must* separately repent and turn from *his* own sin. None is excepted, lest they should think their guilt extenuated because the evil is general.

6. He instances one sin, idolatry, as representative of all their sins; as nothing is dearer to God than a pure worship of Himself.

7. Though ye provoke *Me* to anger (<sup><6321></sup>Deuteronomy 32:21), yet it is not I, but *yourselves*, whom ye thereby hurt (<sup><1089></sup>Proverbs 8:36 20:2).

9. *the north* — (see on <sup><314></sup>Jeremiah 1:14,15). The Medes and other northern peoples, confederate with Babylon, are included with the Chaldeans.

*my servant* — My agent for punishing (<sup><276></sup>Jeremiah 27:6 43:10; compare <sup><346></sup>Jeremiah 40:2). Compare <sup><248></sup>Isaiah 44:28; Cyrus, “My shepherd.” God makes even unbelievers unconsciously to fulfill His designs. A reproof to the Jews, who boasted that they were the *servants of God*; yet a heathen king is to be more the servant of God than they, and that as the agent of their punishment.

10. (<sup><37></sup>Jeremiah 7:34 <sup><682></sup>Revelation 18:23). The land shall be so desolated that even in the houses left standing there shall be no inhabitant; a terrible stillness shall prevail; no sound of the *hand-mill* (two circular stones, one above the other, for grinding corn, worked by two women, <sup><116></sup>Exodus 11:5 <sup><124></sup>Matthew 24:41; in daily use in every house, and therefore forbidden to be taken in pledge, <sup><546></sup>Deuteronomy 24:6); no *night-light*, so universal in the East that the poorest house has it, burning all night.

*candle* — lamp (<sup><3217></sup>Job 21:17 18:6).

11. *seventy years* — (<sup><277></sup>Jeremiah 27:7). The exact number of years of Sabbaths in four hundred ninety years, the period from Saul to the Babylonian captivity; righteous retribution for their violation of the Sabbath (<sup><854></sup>Leviticus 26:34,35 <sup><462></sup>2 Chronicles 36:21). The seventy years probably begin from the fourth year of Jehoiakim, when Jerusalem was first captured, and many captives, as well as the treasures of the temple, were carried away; they end with the first year of Cyrus, who, on taking Babylon, issued an edict for the restoration of the Jews (<sup><500></sup>Ezra 1:1). Daniel’s *seventy prophetic weeks* are based on the seventy years of the captivity (compare <sup><206></sup>Daniel 9:2,24).

13. *all ... written in this book, which Jeremiah ... prophesied against all ... nations* — It follows from this, that the prophecies against foreign nations (forty-sixth through fifty-first chapters) must have been already written. Hence the *Septuagint* inserts here those prophecies. But if they had followed immediately (<sup><253></sup>Jeremiah 25:13), there would have been no propriety in the observation in the verse. The very wording of the reference shows that they existed in some other part of the book, and not in the immediate context. It was in this very year, the fourth of Jehoiakim (<sup><290></sup>Jeremiah 36:1,2), that Jeremiah was directed to write in a regular *book* for the first time all that he had prophesied against Judah and *foreign*

“*nations*” from the beginning of his ministry. Probably, at a subsequent time, when he completed the whole work, including the forty-sixth through fifty-first chapters, Jeremiah himself inserted the clause, “all that is written in this book, which Jeremiah hath prophesied against all the nations.” The prophecies in question may have been repeated, as others in Jeremiah, more than once; so in the original smaller collection they may have stood in an earlier position; and, in the fuller subsequent collection, in their later and present position.

**14. *serve themselves*** — (<sup>207</sup>Jeremiah 27:7 30:8 34:10). Avail themselves of their services as slaves.

***them also*** — the Chaldees, who heretofore have made other nations their slaves, shall *themselves also* in their turn be slaves to them. MAURER translates, “shall impose servitude *on them, even them.*”

***recompense them*** — namely, the Chaldees and other nations against whom Jeremiah had prophesied (<sup>253</sup>Jeremiah 25:13), as having oppressed the Jews.

***their deeds*** — rather, “deed,” namely, their bad treatment of the Jews (<sup>319</sup>Jeremiah 50:29 51:6,24; compare <sup>487</sup>2 Chronicles 36:17).

**15. *wine cup*** — Compare <sup>412</sup>Jeremiah 13:12,13, as to this image, to express *stupefying judgments*; also <sup>442</sup>Jeremiah 49:12 51:7. Jeremiah often embodies the imagery of Isaiah in his prophecies (<sup>202</sup>Lamentations 4:21 <sup>2517</sup>Isaiah 51:17-22 <sup>669</sup>Revelation 16:19 18:6). The wine cup was not literally given by Jeremiah to the representatives of the different nations; but only in symbolical vision.

**16. *be moved*** — reel (Na 3:11).

**18. *Jerusalem*** — put first: for “judgment begins at the house of God”; they being most guilty whose religious privileges are greatest (<sup>4017</sup>1 Peter 4:17).

***kings*** — Jehoiakim, Jeconiah, and Zedekiah.

***as it is this day*** — The accomplishment of the curse had already begun under Jehoiakim. This clause, however, may have been inserted by Jeremiah at his final revision of his prophecies in Egypt.

**19. *Pharaoh*** — put next after Jerusalem, because the Jews had relied most on him, and Egypt and Judea stood on a common footing (<sup>2412</sup>Jeremiah 46:2,25).

**20. *mingled people*** — mercenary foreign troops serving under Pharaoh-hophra in the time of Jeremiah. The employment of these foreigners provoked the native Egyptians to overthrow him. Psammetichus, father of Pharaoh-necho, also had given a settlement in Egypt to Ionian and Carian adventurers [HERODOTUS, 2.152, 154]. See on <sup>2818</sup>Jeremiah 50:37; <sup>2892</sup>Isaiah 19:2,3 20:1 <sup>2815</sup>Ezekiel 30:5. The term is first found in <sup>1023</sup>Exodus 12:38.

**Uz** — in the geographical order here, between Egypt and the states along the Mediterranean; therefore not the “Uz” of <sup>3801</sup>Job 1:1 (north of Arabia-Deserta), but the northern part of Arabia-Petraea, between the sea and Idumea (<sup>2902</sup>Lamentations 4:21; see <sup>1033</sup>Genesis 36:20,28).

***remnant of Ashdod*** — called a “remnant,” because Ashdod had lost most of its inhabitants in the twenty-nine years siege by Psammetichus. Compare also see on <sup>2301</sup>Isaiah 20:1. Gath is not mentioned because it was overthrown in the same war.

**21. *Edom ... Moab ... Ammon*** — joined together, as being related to Israel (see <sup>2481</sup>Jeremiah 48:1-49:39).

**22. *all the kings of Tyrus*** — the petty kings of the various dependencies of Tyre.

***isles*** — a term including all *maritime regions* (<sup>1920</sup>Psalms 72:10).

**23. *Dedan*** — north of Arabia (<sup>1028</sup>Genesis 25:3,4).

***Tema ... Buz*** — neighboring tribes north of Arabia (<sup>832</sup>Job 32:2).

***all ... in ... utmost corners*** — rather, “having the hair cut in angles,” a heathenish custom (see on <sup>2405</sup>Jeremiah 9:26).

**24. *mingled people*** — not in the same sense as in <sup>2051</sup>Jeremiah 25:20; the “motley crowd,” so called in contempt (compare <sup>2448</sup>Jeremiah 49:28,31 50:37). By a different pointing it may be translated the “Arabs”; but the repetition of the name is not likely. BLANEY thinks there were two divisions of what we call Arabia, the west (*Araba*) and the east. The west included Arabia-Petraea and the parts on the sea bordering on Egypt, the land of Cush; the east, Arabia-Felix and Deserta. The latter are “the mixed race” inhabiting the desert.

**25. *Zimri*** — perhaps the *Zabra* mentioned by PTOLEMY between Mecca and Medina. *Zimran* also, as Dedan, was one of Abraham’s sons by Keturah (<sup>1022</sup>Genesis 25:2).

***Elam*** — properly, west of Persia; but used for Persia in general.

**26. *Sheshach*** — Babylon; as the parallelism in <sup><2643></sup>Jeremiah 51:41 proves. In the Cabalistic system (called *Athbash*, the first *Hebrew* letter in the alphabet being expressed by the last) *Sheshach* would exactly answer to *Babel*. *Jeremiah* may have used this system (as perhaps in <sup><2644></sup>Jeremiah 51:41) for concealment at the time of this prediction, in the fourth year of Jehoiakim, while Nebuchadnezzar was before Jerusalem. In <sup><2644></sup>Jeremiah 51:41 there can be no concealment, as Babylon is expressly mentioned. MICHAELIS more simply explains the term “brazen-gated” (compare <sup><2645></sup>Isaiah 45:2); others, “the house of a prince.” Rather, it comes from the Babylonian goddess, *Shach*, by reduplication of the first letter; from her *Misael* was named *Meshach* by the Babylonians. The term *Shace* was applied to a festival at Babylon, alluded to in <sup><2646></sup>Jeremiah 51:39,57 <sup><2647></sup>Isaiah 21:5. It was during this feast that Cyrus took Babylon [HERODOTUS, 1]. Thus *Jeremiah* mystically denotes the time of its capture by this term [GLASSIUS].

**27. *rise no more*** — The heathen nations in question should fall to rise no more. The Jews should fall but for a time, and then rise again. Therefore, the epithet is given, “the God of *Israel*.”

**28. *if they refuse to take the cup*** — No effort of theirs to escape destruction will avail.

**29.** If I spared not Mine elect people on account of sin, much less will I spare you (<sup><2648></sup>Ezekiel 9:6 <sup><2649></sup>Obadiah 1:16 <sup><2650></sup>Luke 23:31 <sup><2651></sup>1 Peter 4:17).

***be unpunished*** — “be treated as innocent.”

**30. *roar*** — image from a destructive lion (<sup><2652></sup>Isaiah 42:13 <sup><2653></sup>Joel 3:16).

***upon his habitation*** — rather, “His pasturage”; keeping up the image of a lion roaring against the flock in the pasture. The roar was first to go forth over Judea wherein were “the sheep of His pasture” (<sup><2654></sup>Psalms 100:3), and thence into heathen lands.

***shout ... tread ... grapes*** — (<sup><2655></sup>Jeremiah 48:33 <sup><2656></sup>Isaiah 16:9,10).

**31. *controversy*** — cause at issue (<sup><2657></sup>Micah 6:2).

***plead with all flesh*** — (<sup><2658></sup>Isaiah 66:16). God shows the whole world that He does what is altogether just in punishing.

**32. *from the coasts*** — rather, “from the uttermost regions.” Like a storm which arises in one region and then diffuses itself far and wide, so God’s judgments shall pass “from nation to nation,” till all has been fulfilled; no distance shall prevent the fulfillment.

**not be lamented** — (<sup>2464</sup>Jeremiah 16:4,6).

**neither gathered** — to their fathers, in their ancestral tombs (<sup>2402</sup>Jeremiah 8:2).

**dung** — (<sup>2830</sup>Psalm 83:10).

**34. shepherds** — princes (<sup>2422</sup>Jeremiah 22:22). Here he returns to *the Jews* and their rulers, using the same image as in <sup>2453</sup>Jeremiah 25:30, “pasture” (see on <sup>2453</sup>Jeremiah 25:30).

**wallow yourselves** — Cover yourselves as thickly with ashes, in token of sorrow, as one who rolls in them (<sup>2463</sup>Jeremiah 6:26 <sup>2473</sup>Ezekiel 27:30) [MAURER].

**principal** — leaders. The *Septuagint* translates “rams,” carrying out the image (compare <sup>2349</sup>Isaiah 14:9, *Margin*; <sup>3102</sup>Zechariah 10:3).

**days of your slaughter ... of ... dispersions** — rather, “your days *for* slaughter (that is, the time of your being slain), and your dispersions (not ‘of your dispersions’), are accomplished (are come).”

**pleasant vessel** — Ye were once a *precious vessel*, but ye shall *fall*, and so be a *broken vessel* (see on <sup>2423</sup>Jeremiah 22:28). “Your past excellency shall not render you safe now. I will turn to your ignominy whatever glory I conferred on you” [CALVIN].

**35.** Literally, “Flight shall fail the shepherds ... escaping (shall fail) the principal,” etc. (<sup>3124</sup>Amos 2:14). The leaders will be the first objects for slaughter; escape by flight will be out of their power.

**37. habitations** — rather, carrying out the image “pastures” (see on <sup>2453</sup>Jeremiah 25:30). The pasturages where, *peaceably* and without incursion of wild beasts, the flocks have fed, shall be destroyed; that is, the regions where, heretofore, there was *peace* and security (alluding to the name *Salem*, or Jerusalem, “possessing *peace*”).

**38. his covert** — the temple, where heretofore, like a lion, as its defender, by the mere terror of His voice He warded off the foe; but now He leaves it a prey to the Gentiles [CALVIN].

**fierceness of ... oppressor** — rather, as the *Hebrew*, for “oppressor” is an adjective *feminine*, the word “sword” is understood, which, in <sup>2416</sup>Jeremiah 46:16 50:16, is expressed (indeed, some manuscripts and the *Septuagint* read “sword” instead of “fierceness” here; probably interpolated from <sup>2416</sup>Jeremiah 46:16), “*the oppressing sword*.” The *Hebrew* for “oppressing” means also a “dove”: there may be, therefore, a covert

allusion to the Chaldean standard bearing a dove on it, in honor of Semiramis, the first queen, said in popular superstition to have been nourished by doves when exposed at birth, and at death to have been transformed into a dove. Her name may come from a root referring to the *cooing* of a dove. That bird was held sacred to the goddess Venus. *Vulgate* so translates “the anger of *the dove*.”

***his ... anger*** — If the anger of Nebuchadnezzar cannot be evaded, how much less that of God (compare ~~2057~~ Jeremiah 25:37)!

# CHAPTER 26

## ◀201▶ JEREMIAH 26:1-24.

### JEREMIAH DECLARED WORTHY OF DEATH, BUT BY THE INTERPOSITION OF AHIKAM SAVED; THE SIMILAR CASES OF MICAH AND URIJAH BEING ADDUCED IN THE PROPHET'S FAVOR.

The prophecies which gave the offense were those given in detail in the seventh, eighth, and ninth chapters (compare ▶201▶ Jeremiah 26:6 here with ▶317▶ Jeremiah 7:12,14); and summarily referred to here [MAURER], probably pronounced at one of the great feasts (that of tabernacles, according to USSHER; for the inhabitants of “all the cities of Judah” are represented as present, ▶201▶ Jeremiah 26:2). See on ▶201▶ Jeremiah 7:1.

**2. *in the court*** — the largest court, from which he could be heard by the whole people.

***come to worship*** — *Worship* is vain without *obedience* (◀095▶ 1 Samuel 15:21,22).

***all the words*** — (▶268▶ Ezekiel 3:10).

***diminish not a word*** — (◀60▶ Deuteronomy 4:2 12:32 ▶281▶ Proverbs 30:6 ▶407▶ Acts 20:27 ▶407▶ 2 Corinthians 2:17 4:2 ▶629▶ Revelation 22:19). Not suppressing or softening aught for fear of giving offense; nor setting forth coldly and indirectly what can only by forcible statement do good.

**3. *if so be*** — expressed according to human conceptions; not as if God did not foreknow all contingencies, but to mark the obstinacy of the people and the difficulty of healing them; and to show His own goodness in making the offer which left them without excuse [CALVIN].

**5. *prophets*** — the inspired interpreters of the *law* (▶201▶ Jeremiah 26:4), who adapted it to the use of the people.

**6. *like Shiloh*** — (see on ▶317▶ Jeremiah 7:12; ▶317▶ Jeremiah 7:14 ▶090▶ 1 Samuel 4:10-12 ▶386▶ Psalm 78:60).

***curse*** — (▶201▶ Jeremiah 24:9 ▶265▶ Isaiah 65:15).

**8. *priests*** — The captain (or prefect) of the temple had the power of apprehending offenders in the temple with the sanction of the priests.

***prophets*** — the false prophets. The charge against Jeremiah was that of uttering falsehood in Jehovah's name, an act punishable with death (<sup><6880></sup>Deuteronomy 18:20). His prophecy against the temple and city (<sup><2011></sup>Jeremiah 26:11) might speciously be represented as contradicting God's own words (<sup><9214></sup>Psalms 132:14). Compare the similar charge against Stephen (<sup><4163></sup>Acts 6:13,14).

**10. *princes*** — members of the Council of State or Great Council, which took cognizance of such offenses.

***heard*** — the clamor of the popular tumult.

***came up*** — from the king's house to the temple, which stood higher than the palace.

***sat*** — as judges, in the gate, the usual place of trying such cases.

***new gate*** — originally built by Jotham ("the higher gate," <sup><2155></sup>2 Kings 15:35) and now recently restored.

**12. *Lord sent me*** — a valid justification against any laws alleged against him.

***against ... against*** — rather, "concerning." Jeremiah purposely avoids saying, "against," which would needlessly irritate. They had used the same Hebrew word (<sup><2011></sup>Jeremiah 26:11), which ought to be translated "concerning," though they meant it in the unfavorable sense. Jeremiah takes up their word in a better sense, implying that there is still room for repentance: that his prophecies aim at the real good of the city; *for or concerning* this house ... city [GROTIUS].

**13.** (<sup><2018></sup>Jeremiah 26:3,19).

**14.** Jeremiah's humility is herein shown, and submission to the powers that be (<sup><5111></sup>Romans 13:1).

**15. *bring ... upon yourselves*** — So far will you be from escaping the predicted evils by shedding my blood, that you will, by that very act, only incur heavier penalties (<sup><4235></sup>Matthew 23:35).

**16. *princes ... all the people*** — The fickle people, as they were previously influenced by the priests to clamor for his death (<sup><2018></sup>Jeremiah 26:8), so now under the princes' influence require that he shall not be put to death. Compare as to Jesus, Jeremiah's antitype, the hosannas of the multitude a

few days before the same people, persuaded by the priests as in this case, cried, Away with Him, crucify Him (<sup>4100F</sup>Matthew 21:1-11 27:20-25). The priests, through envy of his holy zeal, were more his enemies than the princes, whose office was more secular than religious. A prophet could not legally be put to death unless he prophesied *in the name of other gods* (therefore, they say, “in the name of the Lord”), or after his prophecy had failed in its accomplishment. Meanwhile, if he foretold calamity, he might be imprisoned. Compare Micaiah’s case (<sup>4120F</sup>1 Kings 22:1-28).

17. Compare Gamaliel’s interposition (<sup>4165F</sup>Acts 5:34, etc.).

**elders** — some of the “princes” mentioned (<sup>4306F</sup>Jeremiah 26:16) those whose age, as well as dignity, would give weight to the precedents of past times which they adduce.

18. (<sup>4302F</sup>Micah 3:12).

**Morasthite** — called so from a village of the tribe Judah.

**Hezekiah** — The precedent in the reign of such a good king proved that Jeremiah was not the only prophet, or the first, who threatened the city and the temple without incurring death.

**mountain of the house** — Moriah, on which stood the temple (peculiarly called “*the house*”) shall be covered with woods instead of buildings. Jeremiah, in quoting previous prophecies, never does so without alteration; he adapts the language to his own style, showing thereby his authority in his treatment of Scripture, as being himself inspired.

19. Hezekiah, so far from killing him, was led “to fear the Lord,” and pray for remission of the sentence against Judah (<sup>4426F</sup>2 Chronicles 32:26).

**Lord repented** — (<sup>4024F</sup>Exodus 32:14 <sup>4104F</sup>2 Samuel 24:16).

**Thus** — if we kill Jeremiah.

20. As the flight and capture of Urijah must have occupied some time, “the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim” (<sup>4301F</sup>Jeremiah 26:1) must not mean the *very* beginning, but the second or third year of his eleven years’ reign.

**And ... also** — perhaps connected with <sup>4304F</sup>Jeremiah 26:24, as the comment of the writer, not the continuation of the speech of the elders: “And although *also* a man that prophesied ... Urijah ... (proving how great was the danger in which Jeremiah stood, and how wonderful the providence of God in preserving him), *nevertheless* the hand of Ahikam,” etc.

[GLASSIUS]. The context, however, implies rather that the words are the continuation of the previous speech of the elders. They adduce another

instance besides that of Micah, though of a different kind, namely, that of Urijah: he suffered for his prophecies, but they *imply*, though they do not venture to *express* it, that thereby sin has been added to sin, and that it has done no good to Jehoiakim, for that the notorious condition of the state at this time shows that a heavier vengeance is impending if they persevere in such acts of violence [CALVIN].

**22. *Jehoiakim sent ... into Egypt*** — He had been put on the throne by Pharaoh of Egypt (<sup>42784</sup>2 Kings 23:34). This explains the readiness with which he got the Egyptians to give up Urijah to him, when that prophet had sought an asylum in Egypt. Urijah was faithful in delivering his message, but faulty in leaving his work, so God permitted him to lose his life, while Jeremiah was protected in danger. The path of duty is often the path of safety.

**23. *graves of the common people*** — literally, “sons of the people” (compare <sup>42316</sup>2 Kings 23:6). The prophets seem to have had a separate cemetery (<sup>41039</sup>Matthew 23:29). Urijah’s corpse was denied this honor, in order that he should not be regarded as a true prophet.

**24. *Ahikam*** — son of Shaphan the scribe, or royal secretary. He was one of those whom King Josiah, when struck by the words of the book of the law, sent to inquire of the Lord (<sup>41221</sup>2 Kings 22:12,14). Hence his interference here in behalf of Jeremiah is what we should expect from his past association with that good king. His son, Gedaliah, followed in his father’s steps, so that he was chosen by the Babylonians as the one to whom they committed Jeremiah for safety after taking Jerusalem, and on whose loyalty they could depend in setting him over the remnant of the people in Judea (<sup>38914</sup>Jeremiah 39:14 <sup>42522</sup>2 Kings 25:22).

***people to put him to death*** — Princes often, when they want to destroy a good man, prefer it to be done by a popular tumult rather than by their own order, so as to reap the fruit of the crime without odium to themselves (<sup>41221</sup>Matthew 27:20).

# CHAPTER 27

## JEREMIAH 27:1-22.

### THE FUTILITY OF RESISTING NEBUCHADNEZZAR ILLUSTRATED TO THE AMBASSADORS OF THE KING, DESIRING TO HAVE THE KING OF JUDAH CONFEDERATE WITH THEM, UNDER THE TYPE OF YOKES. JEREMIAH EXHORTS THEM AND ZEDEKIAH TO YIELD.

1. **Jehoiakim** — The prophecy that follows was according to this reading given in the fourth year of Jehoiakim, fifteen years before it was published in the reign of Zedekiah to whom it refers; it was thus long deposited in the prophet's bosom, in order that by it he might be supported under trials in his prophetic career in the interim [CALVIN]. But "Zedekiah" *may be* the true reading. So the *Syriac* and *Arabic Versions*. <sup><277></sup>Jeremiah 27:3,12 <sup><281></sup>Jeremiah 28:1, confirm this; also, one of KENNICOTT'S manuscripts. The *English Version* reading *may* have originated from <sup><261></sup>Jeremiah 26:1. "Son of Josiah" applies to Zedekiah as truly as to "Jehoiakim" or "Eliakim." The *fourth year* may, in a general sense here, as in <sup><281></sup>Jeremiah 28:1, be called "the beginning of his reign," as it lasted eleven years (<sup><1218></sup>2 Kings 24:18). It was not long after the fourth year of his reign that he rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar (<sup><255></sup>Jeremiah 51:59 52:3 <sup><1219></sup>2 Kings 24:20), in violation of an oath before God (<sup><1463></sup>2 Chronicles 36:13).

2. **bonds** — by which the yoke is made fast to the neck (<sup><285></sup>Jeremiah 5:5).

**yokes** — literally, the carved piece of wood attached at both ends to the two yokes on the necks of a pair of oxen, so as to connect them. Here the *yoke* itself. The *plural* is used, as he was to wear one himself, and give the others to the ambassadors; (<sup><277></sup>Jeremiah 27:3 28:10,12) proves that the symbolical act was in this instance (though not in others, <sup><255></sup>Jeremiah 25:15) actually done (compare <sup><210></sup>Isaiah 20:2, etc. <sup><312></sup>Ezekiel 12:3,11,18).

3. **And send them to the king of Edom**, etc. — Appropriate symbol, as these ambassadors had come to Jerusalem to consult as to shaking off the yoke of Nebuchadnezzar. According to PHERECYDES in CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA [*Miscellanies*, 567], Idanthura, king of the Scythians, intimated to Darius, who had crossed the Danube, that he would lead an army against him, by sending him, instead of a letter, *a mouse, a frog, a*

*bird, an arrow, and a plough.* The task assigned to Jeremiah required great faith, as it was sure to provoke alike his own countrymen and the foreign ambassadors and their kings, by a seeming insult, at the very time that all were full of confident hopes grounded on the confederacy.

5. God here, as elsewhere, connects with the symbol doctrine, which is as it were its soul, without which it would be not only cold and frivolous, but even dead [CALVIN]. God's mention of His supreme power is in order to refute the pride of those who rely on their own power (<sup><3612></sup>Isaiah 45:12).

*given it unto whom it seemed meet unto me* — (<sup><4815></sup>Psalms 115:15,16 <sup><2017></sup>Daniel 4:17,25,32). Not for his merits, but of My own sole good pleasure [ESTIUS].

6. *beasts of the field* — not merely the horses to carry his Chaldean soldiers, and oxen to draw his provisions [GROTIUS]; not merely the deserts, mountains, and woods, the haunts of wild beasts, implying his unlimited extent of empire [ESTIUS]; but the beasts themselves by a mysterious instinct of nature. A reproof to men that they did not recognize God's will, which the very beasts acknowledged (compare <sup><2108></sup>Isaiah 1:3). As the beasts are to submit to Christ, the Restorer of the dominion over nature, lost by the first Adam (compare <sup><0028></sup>Genesis 1:28 2:19,20 <sup><4808></sup>Psalms 8:6-8), so they were appointed to submit to Nebuchadnezzar, the representative of the world power and prefigurer of Antichrist; this universal power was suffered to be held by him to show the unfitness of any to wield it “until He come whose right it is” (<sup><3217></sup>Ezekiel 21:27).

7. *son ... son's son* — (<sup><4832></sup>2 Chronicles 36:20). Nebuchadnezzar had *four* successors — Evil-merodach, his *son*; Neriglissar, husband of Nebuchadnezzar's daughter; his son, Labosodarchod; and Naboned (with whom his son, Belshazzar, was joint king), *son* of Evil-merodach. But Neriglissar and Labosodarchod were not in the *direct male line*; so that the prophecy held good to “his son and his son's son,” and the intermediate two are omitted.

*time of his land* — that is, of its subjugation or its being “visited” in wrath (<sup><3072></sup>Jeremiah 27:22 <sup><2512></sup>Jeremiah 25:12 29:10 50:27 <sup><2133></sup>Daniel 5:26).

*serve themselves of him* — make him their servant (<sup><2514></sup>Jeremiah 25:14 <sup><2812></sup>Isaiah 13:22). So “his day” for the destined day of his calamity (<sup><3833></sup>Job 18:20).

8. *until I have consumed them by his hand* — until by these consuming visitations I have brought them under his power.

9. *ye* — the Jews especially, for whom the address to the rest was intended.

**enchanters** — augurs [CALVIN], from a root, the “eyes,” that is, lookers at the stars and other means of taking omens of futurity; or another root, a “fixed time,” observers of times: forbidden in the law (<sup><1892></sup>Leviticus 19:26 <sup><1518></sup>Deuteronomy 18:10,11,14).

**10. to remove you** — expressing the *event* which would result. The very thing they profess by their enchantments to avert, they are by them bringing on you. Better to submit to Nebuchadnezzar, and remain in your land, than to rebel, and be removed from it.

**11. serve ... till it** — The same *Hebrew* root expresses “serve” and “till,” or “cultivate.” *Serve* ye the king of Babylon, and the land will *serve* you [CALVIN].

**12. I spake also** — translate, “And I spake,” etc. Special application of the subject to Zedekiah.

**13. Why ... die** — by running on your own ruin in resisting Nebuchadnezzar after this warning (<sup><2681></sup>Ezekiel 18:31).

**14. lie** — (<sup><2444></sup>Jeremiah 14:14).

**15. in my name** — The devil often makes *God's name* the plea for lies (<sup><4048></sup>Matthew 4:6 7:22,23 <sup><2775></sup>Jeremiah 27:15-20, the test whereby to know false prophets).

**16.** The “vessels” had been carried away to Babylon in the reign of Jeconiah (<sup><1243></sup>2 Kings 24:13); also previously in that of Jehoiakim (<sup><4815></sup>2 Chronicles 36:5-7).

**18. at Jerusalem** — that is, in other houses containing such vessels, besides the house of God and the king's palace. Nebuzara-dan, captain of the guard under Nebuchadnezzar, carried all away (<sup><1253></sup>2 Kings 25:13-17 <sup><4838></sup>2 Chronicles 36:18). The more costly vessels had been previously removed in the reigns of Jehoiakim and Jeconiah.

**19.** (<sup><2527></sup>Jeremiah 52:17,20,21).

**22. until ... I visit them** — in wrath by Cyrus (<sup><2835></sup>Jeremiah 32:5). In seventy years from the first carrying away of captives in Jehoiachin's reign (<sup><2490></sup>Jeremiah 29:10 <sup><4821></sup>2 Chronicles 36:21).

**restore them** — by the hand of Cyrus (<sup><1500></sup>Ezra 1:7). By Artaxerxes (<sup><1579></sup>Ezra 7:19).

# CHAPTER 28

## JEREMIAH 28:1-17.

**PROPHECIES IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THOSE IN THE TWENTY-SEVENTH CHAPTER. HANANIAH BREAKS THE YOKES TO SIGNIFY THAT NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S YOKE SHALL BE BROKEN. JEREMIAH FORETELLS THAT YOKES OF IRON ARE TO SUCCEED THOSE OF WOOD, AND THAT HANANIAH SHALL DIE.**

**1. *in the beginning of the reign of Zedekiah*** — The Jews often divided any period into two halves, *the beginning* and *the end*. As Zedekiah reigned eleven years, the fourth year would be called the *beginning* of his reign, especially as during the first three years affairs were in such a disturbed state that he had little power or dignity, being a tributary; but in the fourth year he became strong in power.

***Hananiah*** — Another of this name was one of the three godly youths who braved Nebuchadnezzar's wrath in the fear of God (<sup>2700B</sup>Daniel 1:6,7 3:12). Probably a near relation, for *Azariah* is associated with him; as *Azur* with the Hananiah here. The godly and ungodly are often in the same family (<sup>3384E</sup>Ezekiel 18:14-20).

***Gibeon*** — one of the cities of the priests, to which order he must have belonged.

**2. *broken the yoke*** — *I have determined to break*: referring to Jeremiah's prophecy (<sup>2072</sup>Jeremiah 27:12).

**3. *two full years*** — literally, "years of days." So "a month of days," that is, all its days complete (<sup>0294</sup>Genesis 29:14, *Margin*; <sup>0401</sup>Genesis 41:1). It was marvellous presumption to speak so definitely without having any divine revelation.

**4. *bring again ... Jeconiah*** — not necessarily implying that Hananiah wished Zedekiah to be superseded by Jeconiah. The main point intended was that the restoration from Babylon should be complete. But, doubtless, the false prophet foretold Jeconiah's return (<sup>12422</sup>2 Kings 24:12-15), to ingratiate himself with the populace, with whom Jeconiah was a favorite (see on <sup>3023E</sup>Jeremiah 22:24).

**5. *the prophet Jeremiah*** — the epithet, “*the prophet*,” is prefixed to “Jeremiah” throughout this chapter, to correspond to the same epithet before “Hananiah”; except in <sup><482></sup>Jeremiah 28:12, where “the prophet” has been inserted in *English Version*. The rival claims of the true and the false prophet are thus put in the more prominent contrast.

**6. *Amen*** — Jeremiah prays *for* the people, though constrained to prophesy against them (<sup><103></sup>1 Kings 1:36). The *event* was the appointed test between contradictory predictions (<sup><682></sup>Deuteronomy 18:21,22). “Would that what you say were true!” I prefer the safety of my country even to my own estimation. The prophets had no pleasure in announcing God’s judgment, but did so as a matter of stern duty, not thereby divesting themselves of their natural feelings of sorrow for their country’s woe. Compare <sup><123></sup>Exodus 32:32 <sup><818></sup>Romans 9:3, as instances of how God’s servants, intent only on the glory of God and the salvation of the country, forgot self and uttered wishes in a state of feeling transported out of themselves. So Jeremiah wished not to diminish aught from the word of God, though as a Jew he uttered the wish for his people [CALVIN].

**8. *prophets ... before me*** — Hosea, Joel, Amos, and others.

***evil*** — a few manuscripts, read “*famine*,” which is more usually associated with the specification of *war* and *pestilence* (<sup><245></sup>Jeremiah 15:2 18:21 27:8,13). But *evil* here includes *all* the calamities flowing from *war*, not merely *famine*, but also *desolation*, etc. *Evil*, being the more difficult reading, is less likely to be the interpolated one than *famine*, which probably originated in copying the parallel passages.

**9. *peace*** — Hananiah had given no warning as to the need of conversion, but had foretold *prosperity* unconditionally. Jeremiah does not say that all are true prophets who foretell truths in any instance (which <sup><634></sup>Deuteronomy 13:1,2, disproves); but asserts only the converse, namely, that whoever, as Hananiah, predicts what the event does not confirm, is a false prophet. There are two tests of prophets:

(1) The event, <sup><682></sup>Deuteronomy 18:22.

(2) The word of God, <sup><2181></sup>Isaiah 8:20.

**10. *the yoke*** — (<sup><272></sup>Jeremiah 27:2). Impious audacity to break what God had appointed as a solemn pledge of the fulfillment of His word. Hence Jeremiah deigns no reply (<sup><818></sup>Jeremiah 28:11 <sup><1006></sup>Matthew 7:6).

**11. *neck of all nations*** — opposed to <sup><272></sup>Jeremiah 27:7.

**13. *Thou hast broken ... wood ... thou shalt make ... iron*** — Not here, “*Thou hast broken ... wood*,” and “*I will make ... iron*” (compare <sup>2486</sup>Jeremiah 28:16). The same false prophets who, by urging the Jews to rebel, had caused them to throw off the then comparatively *easy* yoke of Babylon, thereby brought on them a *more severe* yoke imposed by that city. “Yokes of iron,” alluding to <sup>6348</sup>Deuteronomy 28:48. It is better to take up a light cross in our way, than to pull a heavier one on our own heads. We may escape destroying providences by submitting to humbling providences. So, spiritually, contrast the “easy yoke” of Christ with the “yoke of bondage” of the law (<sup>4150</sup>Acts 15:10 <sup>888</sup>Galatians 5:1).

**14. *I have put*** — Though Hananiah and those like him were secondary instruments in bringing the iron yoke on Judea, *God* was the great First Cause (<sup>2704</sup>Jeremiah 27:4-7).

**15. *makest ... trust in a lie*** — (<sup>2486</sup>Jeremiah 29:31 <sup>3632</sup>Ezekiel 13:22).

**16. *this year ... die*** — The prediction was uttered in the *fifth* month (<sup>2486</sup>Jeremiah 28:1); Hananiah’s death took place in the *seventh* month, that is, within *two months* after the prediction, answering with awful significance to the *two years* in which Hananiah had foretold that the yoke imposed by Babylon would end.

***rebellion*** — opposition to God’s plain direction, that all should submit to Babylon (<sup>2486</sup>Jeremiah 29:32).

# CHAPTER 29

## ◀29▶ JEREMIAH 29:1-32.

### LETTER OF JEREMIAH TO THE CAPTIVES IN BABYLON, TO COUNTERACT THE ASSURANCES GIVEN BY THE FALSE PROPHETS OF A SPEEDY RESTORATION.

**1. *residue of the elders*** — those still surviving from the time when they were carried to Babylon with Jeconiah; the other elders of the captives had died by either a natural or a violent death.

**2. *queen*** — Nehushta, the queen mother, daughter of Elnathan (◀24▶2 Kings 24:8,15). (Elnathan, her father, is perhaps the same as the one mentioned in ▶29▶ Jeremiah 26:22). She reigned jointly with her son.

***princes*** — All the men of authority were taken away lest they should organize a rebellion. Jeremiah wrote his letter while the calamity was still recent, to console the captives under it.

**3. *Zedekiah ... sent unto Babylon*** — In ▶519▶ Jeremiah 51:59, Zedekiah himself goes to Babylon; *here* he *sends* ambassadors. Whatever was the object of the embassy, it shows that Zedekiah only reigned at the pleasure of the king of Babylon, who might have restored Jeconiah, had he pleased. Hence, Zedekiah permitted Jeremiah's letter to be sent, not only as being led by Hananiah's death to attach greater credit to the prophet's words, but also as the letter accorded with his own wish that the Jews should remain in Chaldea till Jeconiah's death.

***Hilkiah*** — the high priest who found the book of the law in the house of the Lord, and showed it to "Shaphan" the scribe (the same Shaphan probably as here), who showed it to King Josiah (◀1218▶2 Kings 22:8, etc.). The sons of Hilkiah and Shaphan inherited from their fathers some respect for sacred things. So in ▶3625▶ Jeremiah 36:25, "Gemariah" interceded with King Jehoiakim that the prophet's roll should not be burned.

**5. *Build ... houses*** — In opposition to the false prophets' suggestions, who told the captives that their captivity would soon cease, Jeremiah tells them that it will be of long duration, and that therefore they should build houses, as Babylon is to be for long their home.

**6. *that ye ... be ... not diminished*** — It was God’s will that the seed of Abraham should not fail; thus consolation is given them, and the hope, though not of an immediate, yet of an ultimate, return.

**7.** (<sup><1560></sup>Ezra 6:10 <sup><1530></sup>Romans 13:1 <sup><1512></sup>1 Timothy 2:2). Not only bear the Babylonian yoke patiently, but *pray for* your masters, that is, while the captivity lasts. God’s good time was to come when they were to pray for Babylon’s downfall (<sup><1515></sup>Jeremiah 51:35 <sup><1508></sup>Psalms 137:8). They were not to forestall that time. True religion teaches patient submission, not sedition, even though the prince be an unbeliever. In all states of life let us not throw away the comfort we *may* have, because we have not all we *would* have. There is here a foretaste of gospel love towards enemies (<sup><1544></sup>Matthew 5:44).

**8. *your dreams which ye caused to be dreamed*** — The Latin adage says, “The people wish to be deceived, so let them be deceived.” Not mere credulity misleads men, but their own perverse “love of darkness rather than light.” It was not priests who originated priestcraft, but the people’s own morbid appetite to be deceived; for example, Aaron and the golden calf (<sup><1531></sup>Exodus 32:1-4). So the Jews *caused* or *made* the prophets to tell them encouraging dreams (<sup><1525></sup>Jeremiah 23:25,26 <sup><1510></sup>Ecclesiastes 5:7 <sup><1502></sup>Zechariah 10:2 <sup><1519></sup>John 3:19-21).

**10.** (See on <sup><1511></sup>Jeremiah 25:11; <sup><1512></sup>Jeremiah 25:12 <sup><1502></sup>Daniel 9:2). This proves that the seventy years date from Jeconiah’s captivity, not from the last captivity. The specification of time was to curb the impatience of the Jews lest they should hasten before God’s time.

***good word*** — promise of a return.

**11. *I know*** — *I* alone; not the false prophets who *know* nothing of My purposes, though they pretend to know.

***thoughts ... I think*** — (<sup><1509></sup>Isaiah 55:9). Glancing at the Jews who had no “thoughts of peace,” but only of “evil” (misfortune), because *they* could not conceive how deliverance could come to them. The moral malady of man is twofold — at one time *vain confidence*; then, when that is disappointed, *despair*. So the Jews first laughed at God’s threats, confident that they should speedily return; then, when cast down from that confidence, they sank in inconsolable despondency.

***expected end*** — literally, “end and expectation,” that is, an end, and that such an end as you wish for. Two nouns joined by “and,” standing for a noun and adjective. So in <sup><1527></sup>Jeremiah 36:27, “the roll and the words,” that is, the roll of words; <sup><1516></sup>Genesis 3:16, “sorrow and conception,” that is,

sorrow in conception. Compare <sup><1238></sup>Proverbs 23:18, where, as here “end” means “a happy issue.”

**12. Fulfilled** (<sup><208></sup>Daniel 9:3, etc.). When God designs mercy, He puts it into the hearts of His people to pray for the mercy designed. When such a spirit of prayer is poured out, it is a sure sign of coming mercy.

**go** — to the temple and other places of prayer: contrasted with their previous sloth as to going to seek God.

**13.** (<sup><1341></sup>Leviticus 26:40-42,44,45).

**14. to be found** — (<sup><1316></sup>Psalms 32:6 <sup><2516></sup>Isaiah 55:6).

**turn ... captivity** — play upon sounds, *shabti ... shebith*.

**15. Because** — referring not to the preceding words, but to <sup><1310></sup>Jeremiah 29:10,11, “Jehovah saith this to you” (that is, the prophecy of the continuance of the captivity seventy years), “because ye have said, The Lord hath raised us up prophets in Babylon,” namely, foretelling our *speedy* deliverance (this their prophecy is *supposed*, not *expressed*; accordingly, <sup><1316></sup>Jeremiah 29:16-19 contradict this false hope again, <sup><1318></sup>Jeremiah 29:8,9,21). He, in this fifteenth verse, turns his address from the godly (<sup><1312></sup>Jeremiah 29:12-14) to the ungodly listeners, to false prophets.

**16. people ... in this city ... not gone forth** — So far from your returning to Jerusalem soon, even *your brethren* still left dwelling there shall themselves also be cast into exile. He mentions “the throne of *David*,” lest they should think that, because David’s kingdom was to be perpetual, no severe, though temporary, chastisements could interpose (<sup><1319></sup>Psalms 89:29-36).

**17. vile figs** — *Hebrew*, “horrible,” or nauseous, from a root, “to regard with loathing” (see <sup><1318></sup>Jeremiah 24:8,10).

**18. removed to all ... kingdoms** — (<sup><1314></sup>Jeremiah 15:4 <sup><1325></sup>Deuteronomy 28:25).

**curse**, etc. — (<sup><1315></sup>Jeremiah 29:6 18:16 19:8).

**21. Zedekiah** — brother of Zephaniah (<sup><1325></sup>Jeremiah 29:25), both being sons of Maaseiah; probably of the same family as the false prophet under Ahab in Israel (<sup><1221></sup>1 Kings 22:11,24).

**22. shall be taken ... a curse** — that is, a formula of imprecation.

**Lord make thee like Zedekiah** — (Compare <sup><1481></sup>Genesis 48:20 <sup><2151></sup>Isaiah 65:15).

**roasted in the fire** — a Chaldean punishment (<sup><2786></sup>Daniel 3:6).

**23. villainy** — literally, “sinful folly” (<sup><2316></sup>Isaiah 32:6).

**24-32.** A second communication which Jeremiah sent to Babylon, after the messenger who carried his first letter had brought a letter from the false prophet Shemaiah to Zephaniah, etc., condemning Jeremiah and reproving the authorities for not having apprehended him.

**Nehelamite** — a name derived either from his father or from a place: alluding at the same time to the *Hebrew* meaning, “a dreamer” (compare <sup><2918></sup>Jeremiah 29:8).

**25. in thy name** — without sanction of “the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel,” which words stand in antithesis to “thy name” (<sup><4568></sup>John 5:43).

**Zephaniah** — the second priest, or substitute (*Sagan*) of the high priest. He was one of those sent to consult Jeremiah by Zedekiah (<sup><2001></sup>Jeremiah 21:1). Slain by Nebuchadnezzar at the capture of Jerusalem (<sup><1258></sup>2 Kings 25:18-21). Zephaniah was in particular addressed, as being likely to take up against Jeremiah the prophet’s prediction against his brother Zedekiah at Babylon (<sup><2020></sup>Jeremiah 29:21). Zephaniah was to read it to the *priests*, and in the presence of *all the people*, in the temple.

**26. thee ... in the stead of Jehoiada** — Zephaniah’s promotion as second priest, owing to Jehoiada’s being then in exile, was unexpected. Shemaiah thus accuses him of ingratitude towards God, who had so highly exalted him before his regular time.

**ye should be officers ... for every man** — Ye should, as bearing rule in the temple (see on <sup><2001></sup>Jeremiah 20:1), apprehend every false prophet like Jeremiah.

**mad** — Inspired prophets were often so called by the ungodly (<sup><1211></sup>2 Kings 9:11 <sup><4001></sup>Acts 26:24 2:13,15,17,18). Jeremiah is in this a type of Christ, against whom the same charge was brought (<sup><4000></sup>John 10:20).

**prison** — rather, “the stocks” (see on <sup><2002></sup>Jeremiah 20:2).

**stocks** — from a root, “to confine”; hence rather, “a narrow dungeon.” According to <sup><1578></sup>Deuteronomy 17:8,9, the priest was judge in such cases, but had no right to put into the stocks; this right he had assumed to himself in the troubled state of the times.

**27. of Anathoth** — said contemptuously, as “Jesus of Nazareth.”

***maketh himself*** — as if *God* had not made him one, but he *himself* had done so.

**28.** Referring to Jeremiah's first letter to Babylon (<sup>2015</sup>Jeremiah 29:5).

**29. *Zephaniah ... read ... in the ears of Jeremiah*** — He seems to have been less prejudiced against Jeremiah than the others; hence he reads the charge to the prophet, that he should not be condemned without a hearing. This accords with Shemaiah's imputation against Zephaniah for want of zeal against Jeremiah (<sup>2019</sup>Jeremiah 29:26,27). Hence the latter was chosen by King Zedekiah as one of the deputation to Jeremiah (<sup>2001</sup>Jeremiah 21:1 37:3).

**30.** This resumes the thread of the sentence which began at <sup>2025</sup>Jeremiah 29:25, but was left there not completed. Here, in this thirtieth verse, it is completed, not however in continuity, but by a new period. The same construction occurs in <sup>6512</sup>Romans 5:12-15.

**32. *not ... a man to dwell*** — (<sup>1638</sup>Deuteronomy 28:18).

***not ... behold the good*** — As he despised the lawful time and wished to return before the time God had expressly announced, in just retribution he should not share in the restoration from Babylon at all.

***rebellion*** — going against God's revealed will as to the time (<sup>2016</sup>Jeremiah 28:16).

# CHAPTER 30

## JEREMIAH 30:1-24.

### RESTORATION OF THE JEWS FROM BABYLON AFTER ITS CAPTURE, AND RAISING UP OF MESSIAH.

**2. Write ... in a book** — After the destruction of Jerusalem Jeremiah is not ordered as heretofore to *speak*, but to *write* the succeeding prophecy (<sup>2808</sup>Jeremiah 30:4, etc.), so as thereby it might be read by his countrymen wheresoever they might be in their dispersion.

**3. bring again ... captivity of ... Israel and Judah** — the restoration not merely of the *Jews* (treated of in this thirtieth chapter), but also of the ten tribes (“Israel”; treated in the thirty-first chapter), together forming the whole nation (<sup>2808</sup>Jeremiah 30:18 <sup>2834</sup>Jeremiah 32:44 <sup>2825</sup>Ezekiel 39:25 <sup>2894</sup>Amos 9:14,15). “Israel” is mentioned first because its exile was longer than that of Judah. *Some* captives of the Israelite ten tribes returned with those of Judah (<sup>2829</sup>Luke 2:36; “Aser” is mentioned). But these are only a pledge of the *full* restoration hereafter (<sup>2812</sup>Romans 11:26, “*All* Israel”). Compare <sup>2865</sup>Jeremiah 16:15. This third verse is a brief statement of the subject before the prophecy itself is given.

**5. We have heard ... trembling** — God introduces the Jews speaking that which they will be reduced to at last in spite of their stubbornness. Threat and promise are combined: the former briefly; namely, the misery of the Jews in the Babylonian captivity down to their “trembling” and “fear” arising from the approach of the Medo-Persian army of Cyrus against Babylon; the promise is more fully dwelt on; namely, their “trembling” will issue in a deliverance as speedy as is the transition from a woman’s labor pangs to her joy at giving birth to a child (<sup>2806</sup>Jeremiah 30:6).

**6. Ask** — Consult all the authorities, men or books, you can, you will not find an instance. Yet in that coming day men will be seen with their hands pressed on their loins, as women do to repress their pangs. God will drive men through pain to gestures more fitting a woman than a man (<sup>2861</sup>Jeremiah 4:31 6:24). The metaphor is often used to express the previous pain followed by the sudden deliverance of Israel, as in the case of a woman in childbirth (<sup>2807</sup>Isaiah 66:7-9).

**pale<sup>n</sup>ess** — properly the color of herbs blasted and fading: the *green pale<sup>n</sup>ess* of one in jaundice: the *sickly pale<sup>n</sup>ess* of terror.

**7. great** — marked by great calamities (<sup>2011</sup> Joel 2:11,31 <sup>3058</sup> Amos 5:18 <sup>3014</sup> Zephaniah 1:14).

**none like it ... but he shall be saved** — (<sup>2701</sup> Daniel 12:1). The partial deliverance at Babylon's downfall prefigures the final, complete deliverance of Israel, literal and spiritual, at the downfall of the mystical Babylon (<sup>6801</sup> Revelation 18:1-19:21).

**8. his yoke ... thy neck** — his, that is, Jacob's (<sup>3811</sup> Jeremiah 30:7), the yoke imposed *on him*. The transition to the second person is frequent, God speaking *of* Jacob or Israel, at the same time addressing him directly. So "him" rightly follows; "foreigners shall no more make him their servant" (<sup>2534</sup> Jeremiah 25:14). After the deliverance by Cyrus, Persia, Alexander, Antiochus, and Rome made Judah their servant. The full of deliverance meant must, therefore, be still future.

**9.** Instead of *serv<sup>n</sup>g strangers* (<sup>3818</sup> Jeremiah 30:8), they shall serve the Lord, their rightful King in the theocracy (<sup>3227</sup> Ezekiel 21:27).

**David, their king** — No *king* of David's seed has held the scepter since the captivity; for Zerubbabel, though of David's line, never claimed the title of "king." The *Son of David*, Messiah, must therefore be meant; so the *Targum* (compare <sup>2508</sup> Isaiah 55:3,4 <sup>3323</sup> Ezekiel 34:23,24 37:24 <sup>3818</sup> Hosea 3:5 <sup>6123</sup> Romans 11:25-32). He was appointed to the throne of David (<sup>2307</sup> Isaiah 9:7 <sup>4012</sup> Luke 1:32). He is here joined with Jehovah as claiming equal allegiance. God is our "King," only when we are subject to Christ; God rules us not immediately, but through His Son (<sup>812</sup> John 5:22,23,27).

**raise up** — applied to the judges whom God *raised up* as *deliverers* of Israel out of the hand of its oppressors (<sup>0126</sup> Judges 2:16 3:9). So Christ was *raised up* as the antitypical Deliverer (<sup>1916</sup> Psalm 2:6 <sup>4069</sup> Luke 1:69 <sup>4023</sup> Acts 2:30 13:23).

**10. from afar** — Be not afraid as if the distance of the places whither ye are to be dispersed precludes the possibility of return.

**seed** — Though through the many years of captivity intervening, you yourselves may not see the restoration, the promise shall be fulfilled to your *seed*, primarily at the return from Babylon, fully at the final restoration.

**quiet ... none ... make ... afraid** — (<sup>2236</sup> Jeremiah 23:6 <sup>3841</sup> Zechariah 14:11).

**11. *though ... full end of all nations ... yet ... not ... of thee*** — (<sup>3008</sup>Amos 9:8). The punishment of reprobates is final and fatal; that of God's people temporary and corrective. Babylon was utterly destroyed: Israel after chastisement was delivered.

***in measure*** — literally, “with judgment,” that is, moderation, not in the full rigor of justice (<sup>2402</sup>Jeremiah 10:24 46:28 <sup>4901</sup>Psalms 6:1 <sup>2378</sup>Isaiah 27:8).

***not ... altogether unpunished*** — (<sup>0230</sup>Exodus 34:7).

**12.** The desperate circumstances of the Jews are here represented as an incurable wound. Their sin is so grievous that their hope of the punishment (their exile) soon coming to an end is vain (<sup>2402</sup>Jeremiah 8:22 15:18 <sup>4866</sup>2 Chronicles 36:16).

**13. *none to plead*** — a new image from a court of justice.

***bound up*** — namely, with the *bandages* applied to tie up a wound.

***no healing medicines*** — literally, “medicines of healing,” or else applications, (literally, “ascensions”) of medicaments.

**14. *lovers*** — the peoples formerly allied to thee, Assyria and Egypt (compare <sup>2302</sup>Lamentations 1:2).

***seek thee not*** — have cast away all concern for thee in thy distress.

***wound of an enemy*** — a wound such as an enemy would inflict. God condescends to employ language adapted to human conceptions. He is incapable of “enmity” or “cruelty”; it was their grievous sin which righteously demanded a grievous punishment, *as though* He were an “enemy” (<sup>2406</sup>Jeremiah 5:6 <sup>3834</sup>Job 13:24 30:21).

**15. *Why criest thou*** — as if God's severity was excessive. Thou hast no reason to complain, for thine affliction is just. Thy cry is too late, for the time of repentance and mercy is past [CALVIN].

**16. *Therefore*** — connected with <sup>2403</sup>Jeremiah 30:13, because “There is none to plead thy cause ... *therefore*” I will plead thy cause, and heal thy wound, by overwhelming thy foes. This fifteenth verse is inserted to amplify what was said at the close of <sup>2404</sup>Jeremiah 30:14. When the false ways of peace, suggested by the so-called prophets, had only ended in the people's irremediable ruin, the true prophet comes forward to announce the grace of God as bestowing repentance and healing.

*devour thee ... be devoured ... spoil ... be a spoil ... prey upon ... give for a prey* — retribution in kind (see on <sup><2418></sup>Jeremiah 2:3; <sup><1232></sup>Exodus 23:22 <sup><2311></sup>Isaiah 33:1).

17. (<sup><2482></sup>Jeremiah 8:22 33:6).

*Outcast* — as a wife put away by her husband (<sup><2314></sup>Isaiah 62:4, contrasted with <sup><2412></sup>Jeremiah 30:12).

*Zion* — alluding to its *Hebrew* meaning, “dryness”; “sought after” by none, as would be the case with an *arid* region (<sup><2312></sup>Isaiah 62:12). The extremity of the people, so far from being an obstacle to, will be the chosen opportunity of, God’s grace.

18. *bring again ... captivity* — (<sup><2617></sup>Jeremiah 33:7,11).

*tents* — used to intimate that their present dwellings in Chaldea were but temporary as *tents*.

*have mercy on dwelling-places* — (<sup><1942></sup>Psalm 102:13).

*own heap* — on the same hill, that is, site, a hill being the usual site chosen for a city (compare <sup><2611></sup>Joshua 11:13, *Margin*). This better answers the parallel clause, “after the manner thereof” (that is, in the same becoming ways as formerly), than the rendering, “its own heap of *ruins*,” as in <sup><2442></sup>Jeremiah 49:2.

*palace* — the king’s, on Mount Zion.

*remain* — rather, “shall be inhabited” (see on <sup><2476></sup>Jeremiah 17:6, <sup><2475></sup>Jeremiah 17:25). This confirms *English Version*, “palace,” not as others translate, “the temple” (see <sup><1168></sup>1 Kings 16:18 <sup><1255></sup>2 Kings 15:25).

19. *thanksgiving* — The *Hebrew* word includes *confession* as well as *praise*; for, in the case of God, the highest *praises* we can bestow are only *confessing* what God really is [BENGEL], (<sup><2475></sup>Jeremiah 17:26 31:12,13 33:11 <sup><2310></sup>Isaiah 35:10 51:11).

*multiply them* — (<sup><2305></sup>Zechariah 10:8).

20. *as aforetime* — as flourishing as in the time of David.

21. *their nobles* — rather, “their Glorious One,” or “Leader” (compare <sup><4185></sup>Acts 3:15 <sup><2020></sup>Hebrews 2:10), answering to “their Governor” in the parallel clause.

*of themselves* — of their own nation, a Jew, not a foreigner; applicable to Zerubbabel, or J. Hyrcanus (hereditary high priest and governor), only as

types of Christ (<sup><0490></sup>Genesis 49:10 <sup><318E></sup>Micah 5:2 <sup><049E></sup>Romans 9:5), the antitypical “David” (<sup><2R09></sup>Jeremiah 30:9).

**cause him to draw near** — as the great Priest (<sup><0492></sup>Exodus 19:22 <sup><0217></sup>Leviticus 21:17), through whom believers also have access to God (<sup><3109></sup>Hebrews 10:19-22). His priestly and kingly characters are similarly combined (<sup><0404></sup>Psalms 110:4 <sup><3163></sup>Zechariah 6:13).

**who ... engaged ... heart to approach** — literally, “pledged his heart,” that is, his life; a thing unique; Messiah alone has made His life responsible as the surety (<sup><3122></sup>Hebrews 7:22 9:11-15), in order to gain access not only for Himself, but for us to God. *Heart* is here used for *life*, to express the *courage* which it needed to undertake such a tremendous suretyship. The question implies admiration at one being found competent by His twofold nature, as God and man, for the task. Compare the interrogation (<sup><2611></sup>Isaiah 63:1-3).

**22. ye shall be my people**, etc. — The covenant shall be renewed between God and His people through Messiah’s mediation (<sup><2R21></sup>Jeremiah 30:21 31:1,33 32:38 <sup><3113></sup>Ezekiel 11:20 36:28).

**23, 24.** (<sup><2C39></sup>Jeremiah 23:19). Vengeance upon God’s foes always accompanies manifestations of His grace to His people.

**continuing** — literally, “sojourning,” abiding constantly; appropriately here in the case of Babylon, which was to be *permanently* destroyed, substituted for “whirling itself about” (“grievous” in *English Version*) (see on <sup><2C39></sup>Jeremiah 23:19,20), where the *temporary* downfall of Judea is spoken of.

# CHAPTER 31

## JEREMIAH 31:1-40.

### CONTINUATION OF THE PROPHECY IN THE THIRTIETH CHAPTER.

As in that chapter the restoration of Judah, so in this the restoration of Israel's ten tribes is foretold.

1. *At the same time* — “In the latter days” (<sup>261B</sup>Jeremiah 30:24).

*the God of* — manifesting My *grace* to (<sup>417C</sup>Genesis 17:7 <sup>412C</sup>Matthew 22:32 <sup>621B</sup>Revelation 21:3).

*all ... Israel* — not the exiles of the *south* kingdom of Judah only, but also the *north* kingdom of the ten tribes; and not merely Israel in general, but “*all* the families of Israel.” Never yet fulfilled (<sup>612B</sup>Romans 11:26).

2. Upon the grace manifested to Israel “in the wilderness” God grounds His argument for renewing His favors to them *now* in their exile; because His covenant is “everlasting” (<sup>261B</sup>Jeremiah 31:3), and changes not. The same argument occurs in <sup>281B</sup>Hosea 13:5,9,10 14:4,5,8. Babylon is fitly compared to the “wilderness,” as in both alike Israel was as a stranger far from his appointed “rest” or home, and Babylon is in <sup>230B</sup>Isaiah 40:3 called a “desert” (compare <sup>261C</sup>Jeremiah 50:12).

*I went to cause him to rest* — namely, in the pillar of cloud and fire, the symbol of God's presence, which *went* before Israel to *search a resting-place* (<sup>401B</sup>Numbers 10:33 <sup>231A</sup>Isaiah 63:14) for the people, both a temporary one at each halt in the wilderness, and a permanent one in Canaan (<sup>123A</sup>Exodus 33:14 <sup>461B</sup>Deuteronomy 3:20 <sup>421A</sup>Joshua 21:44 <sup>491B</sup>Psalms 95:11 <sup>311B</sup>Hebrews 3:11).

3. Israel gratefully acknowledges in reply God's *past* grace; but at the same time tacitly implies by the expression “of old,” that God does not appear to her *now*. “God appeared to me *of old*, but now I am forsaken!” God replies, Nay, I love thee with the same love now as of old. My love was not a momentary impulse, but *from* “everlasting” in My counsels, and *to* “everlasting” in its continuance; hence originated the covenant whereby I gratuitously adopted thee (<sup>310B</sup>Malachi 1:2 <sup>612B</sup>Romans 11:28,29). *Margin*

translates, “from afar,” which does not answer so well as “of old,” to “in the wilderness” (<sup>2610</sup>Jeremiah 31:2), which refers to the *olden* times of Israel’s history.

**with loving kindness ... drawn** — (<sup>2810</sup>Hosea 11:4). Rather, “I have drawn out continually My loving kindness toward thee.” So <sup>4960</sup>Psalms 36:10, “Continue (*Margin*, ‘Draw out at length’) Thy loving kindness.” By virtue of My everlasting love I will still extend My loving kindness to thee. So <sup>2421</sup>Isaiah 44:21, “O Israel, thou shalt not be forgotten of Me.”

**4. I will build ... thou shalt be built** — The combination of the *active* and *passive* to express the same fact implies the infallible certainty of its accomplishment. “Build,” that is, establish in prosperity (<sup>2610</sup>Jeremiah 33:7).

**adorned with ... tabrets** — (<sup>4986</sup>1 Samuel 18:6). Or, “adorn thyself with thy timbrels”; used by damsels on occasions of public rejoicings (<sup>4250</sup>Exodus 15:20 <sup>4713</sup>Judges 11:34). Israel had cast away all instruments of joy in her exile (<sup>4570</sup>Psalms 137:4).

**dances** — holy joy, not carnal mirth.

**5. Samaria** — the metropolis of the ten tribes; here equivalent to *Israel*. The *mountainous* nature of their country suited the growth of the *vine*.

**eat ... as common** — literally, “shall profane,” that is, shall put to common use. For the first three years after planting, the vine was “not to be eaten of”; on the fourth year the fruit was to be “holy to praise the Lord withal”; on the fifth year the fruit was to be *eaten as common*, no longer restricted to *holy* use (<sup>4823</sup>Leviticus 19:23-25; compare <sup>4310</sup>Deuteronomy 20:6 28:30, *Margin*). Thus the idea here is, “The same persons who plant shall reap the fruits”; it shall no longer be that one shall plant and another reap the fruit.

**6.** The watchmen stationed on eminences (types of the preachers of the gospel), shall summon the ten tribes to go up to the annual feasts at Jerusalem (“Zion”), as they used to do before the revolt and the setting up of the idol calves at Daniel and Beer-sheba (<sup>3571</sup>Ezekiel 37:21,22).

**Mount Ephraim** — not one single mountain, but the whole mountainous region of the ten tribes.

**our God** — from whom we formerly revolted, but who is now *our* God. An earnest of that good time to come is given in the partial success of the gospel in its first preaching in Samaria (<sup>4800</sup>John 4:1-42 <sup>4485</sup>Acts 8:5-25).

7. The people are urged with praises and prayers to supplicate for their universal restoration. Jehovah is represented in the context (<sup>2300B</sup>Jeremiah 31:1,8), as promising immediately to restore Israel. They therefore praise God for the restoration, being as certain of it as if it were actually accomplished; and at the same time *pray for* it, as prayer was a means to the desired end. Prayer does not move God to grant our wishes, but when God has determined to grant our wishes, He puts it into our hearts to pray for the thing desired. Compare (<sup>39A2B</sup>Psalm 102:13-17, as to the connection of Israel's restoration with the prayers of His people (<sup>2301E</sup>Isaiah 62:1-6).

**for Jacob** — on account of Jacob; on account of his approaching deliverance by Jehovah.

**among** — “for,” that is, on account of, would more exactly suit the parallelism to “for Jacob.”

**chief of the nations** — Israel: as the parallelism to “Jacob” proves (compare (<sup>2205E</sup>Exodus 19:5 (<sup>49A2B</sup>Psalm 135:4 (<sup>3101E</sup>Amos 6:1)). God estimates the greatness of nations not by man's standard of material resources, but by His electing favor.

8. **north** — Assyria, Media, etc. (see on (<sup>2482J</sup>Jeremiah 3:12; (<sup>2488B</sup>Jeremiah 3:18 23:8).

**gather from ... coasts of ... earth** — (<sup>2301B</sup>Ezekiel 20:34,41,34:13).

**blind ... lame**, etc. — Not even the most infirm and unfit persons for a journey shall be left behind, so universal shall be the restoration.

**a great company** — or, they shall return “in a great company” [MAURER].

9. **weeping** — for their past sins which caused their exile (<sup>4605E</sup>Psalm 126:5,6). Although they come with weeping, they shall return with joy (<sup>2501B</sup>Jeremiah 50:4,5).

**supplications** — (Compare (<sup>2618B</sup>Jeremiah 31:18,19 (<sup>2482J</sup>Jeremiah 3:21-25 (<sup>3820F</sup>Zechariah 12:10)). *Margin* translates “favors,” as in (<sup>6112J</sup>Joshua 11:20 (<sup>4508B</sup>Ezra 9:8; thus God's *favors* or *compassions* are put in opposition to the people's *weeping*; their tears shall be turned into joy. But *English Version* suits the parallelism best.

**I will cause ... to walk by ... waters ... straight way** — (<sup>2381E</sup>Isaiah 35:6-8 43:19 49:10,11). God will give them waters to satisfy their thirst as in the wilderness journey from Egypt. So spiritually (<sup>4106B</sup>Matthew 5:6 (<sup>6107J</sup>John 7:37).

**Ephraim** — the ten tribes no longer severed from Judah, but forming one people with it.

**my first-born** — (<sup><1042></sup>Exodus 4:22 <sup><2810></sup>Hosea 11:1 <sup><6104></sup>Romans 9:4). So the elect Church (<sup><4768></sup>2 Corinthians 6:18 <sup><5018></sup>James 1:18).

**10.** The tidings of God's interposition in behalf of Israel will arrest the attention of even the uttermost Gentile nations.

**He that scattered will gather** — He who scattered knows where to find Israel; He who smote can also heal.

**keep** — not only will *gather*, but *keep safely* to the end (<sup><6134></sup>John 13:1 17:11).

**shepherd** — (<sup><2311></sup>Isaiah 40:11 <sup><2612></sup>Ezekiel 34:12-14).

**11. ransomed ... from ... hand of ... stronger** — No strength of the foe can prevent the Lord from delivering Jacob (<sup><2344></sup>Isaiah 49:24,25).

**12. height of Zion** — (<sup><2473></sup>Ezekiel 17:23).

**flow** — There shall be a *conflux* of worshippers to the temple on Zion (<sup><2110></sup>Isaiah 2:2 <sup><3004></sup>Micah 4:1).

**to the goodness of ... Lord** — (See <sup><2614></sup>Jeremiah 31:14). *Beneficence*, that is, to the Lord as the *source of all good things* (<sup><2385></sup>Hosea 3:5), to pray to Him and praise Him for these blessings of which He is the Fountainhead.

**watered garden** — (<sup><2581></sup>Isaiah 58:11). Not merely for a time, but continually full of holy comfort.

**not sorrow any more** — referring to the Church triumphant, as well as to literal Israel (<sup><2350></sup>Isaiah 35:10 65:19 <sup><6204></sup>Revelation 21:4).

**13. young ... old** — (<sup><3004></sup>Zechariah 8:4,5).

**14. my goodness** — (<sup><2612></sup>Jeremiah 31:12).

**15. Ramah** — In Benjamin, east of the great northern road, two hours' journey from Jerusalem. Rachel, who all her life had pined for children (<sup><0301></sup>Genesis 30:1), and who died with "sorrow" in giving birth to Benjamin (<sup><0358></sup>Genesis 35:18,19, *Margin*; <sup><0101></sup>1 Samuel 10:2), and was buried at Ramah, near Beth-lehem, is represented as raising her head from the tomb, and as breaking forth into "weeping" at seeing the whole land depopulated of her sons, the Ephraimites. Ramah was the place where Nebuzara-dan collected all the Jews in chains, previous to their removal to Babylon (<sup><2401></sup>Jeremiah 40:1). God therefore consoles her with the promise of their

restoration. <sup><4127></sup>Matthew 2:17,18 quotes this as fulfilled in the massacre of the innocents under Herod. “A lesser and a greater event, of different times, may answer to the single sense of one passage of Scripture, until the prophecy is *exhausted*” [BENJEL]. Besides the temporary reference to the exiles in Babylon, the Holy Spirit foreshadowed ultimately Messiah’s exile in Egypt, and the desolation caused in the neighborhood of Rachel’s tomb by Herod’s massacre of the children, whose mothers had “sons of sorrow” (*Ben-oni*), just as Rachel had. The return of Messiah (the representative of Israel) from Egypt, and the future restoration of Israel, both the literal and the spiritual (including the innocents), at the Lord’s second advent, are antitypical of the restoration of Israel from Babylon, which is the ground of consolation held out here by Jeremiah. The clause, “They were not,” that is, were dead (<sup><4423></sup>Genesis 42:13), does not apply so strictly to the exiles in Babylon as it does to the history of Messiah and His people — past, present, and future. So the words, “There is hope in thine end,” are to be fulfilled ultimately, when Rachel shall meet her murdered children at the resurrection, at the same time that literal Israel is to be restored. “They were not,” in *Hebrew*, is *singular*; *each was not*: each mother at the Beth-lehem massacre had but *one* child to lament, as the limitation of age in Herod’s order, “two years and under,” implies; this use of the *singular* distributively (the mothers weeping severally, *each for her own* child), is a coincidence between the prophecy of the Beth-lehem massacre and the event, the more remarkable as not being obvious: the *singular*, too, is appropriate as to *Messiah* in His Egyptian exile, who was to be a leading object of Rachel’s lamentation.

**16. *thy work*** — thy parental weeping for thy children [ROSENMULLER]. Thine affliction in the loss of thy children, murdered for Christ’s sake, shall not be fruitless to thee, as was the case in thy giving birth to the “child of thy sorrow,” Benjamin. Primarily, also, thy grief shall not be perpetual: the exiles shall return, and the land be inhabited again [CALVIN].

***come again*** — (<sup><3011></sup>Hosea 1:11).

**17. *hope in ... end*** — All thy calamities shall have a prosperous issue.

**18. *Ephraim*** — representing the ten tribes.

***bemoaning himself*** — The spirit of penitent supplication shall at last be poured on Israel as the necessary forerunner of their restoration (<sup><3227></sup>Zechariah 12:10-14).

***Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised*** — In the first clause the chastisement itself is meant; in the second the *beneficial effect* of it in teaching the penitent true wisdom.

**bullock unaccustomed to ... yoke** — A similar image occurs in <sup><625></sup>Deuteronomy 32:15. Compare “stiff-necked,” <sup><475></sup>Acts 7:51 <sup><625></sup>Exodus 32:9, an image from *refractory* oxen. Before my chastisement I needed the severe correction I received, as much as an untamed bullock needs the goad. Compare <sup><405></sup>Acts 9:5, where the same figure is used of Saul while unconverted. Israel has had a longer chastisement than Judah, not having been restored even at the Jews’ return from Babylon. Hereafter, at its restoration, it shall confess the sore discipline was all needed to “accustom” it to God’s “easy yoke” (<sup><1129></sup>Matthew 11:29,30).

**turn thou me** — by Thy converting Spirit (<sup><251></sup>Lamentations 5:21). But why does Ephraim pray for conversion, seeing that he is already converted? Because we are converted by progressive steps, and need the same power of God to carry forward, as to originate, our conversion (<sup><8144></sup>John 6:44,65; compare with <sup><2708></sup>Isaiah 27:3 <sup><1005></sup>1 Peter 1:5 <sup><1006></sup>Philippians 1:6).

**19. after that I was turned, I repented** — Repentance in the full sense follows, not precedes, our being turned to God by God (<sup><3027></sup>Zechariah 12:10). The Jews’ “*looking to Him whom they pierced*” shall result in their “*mourning for Him*.” Repentance is the tear that flows from the eye of faith turned to Jesus. He Himself gives it: we give it not of ourselves, but must come to Him for it (<sup><4151></sup>Acts 5:31).

**instructed** — made to learn by chastisement. God’s Spirit often works through the corrections of His providence.

**smote upon ... thigh** — (<sup><3212></sup>Ezekiel 21:12). A token of indignant remorse, shame, and grief, because of his past sin.

**bear ... reproach of ... youth** — “because the calamities which I bore were the just punishment of my *scandalous wantonness* against God in *my youth*”; alluding to the idols set up at Daniel and Beth-el immediately after the ten tribes revolted from Judah. His sense of *shame* shows that he no longer delights in his sin.

**20. Is Ephraim my dear son?** etc. — The question implies that a negative answer was to be expected. Who would have thought that one so undutiful to His heavenly Father as Ephraim had been should still be regarded by God as a “pleasant child?” Certainly he was not so in respect to his sin. But by virtue of God’s “everlasting love” (<sup><3103></sup>Jeremiah 31:3) on Ephraim’s being “turned” to God, he was immediately welcomed as God’s “dear son.” This verse sets forth God’s readiness to welcome the penitent (<sup><3118></sup>Jeremiah 31:18,19), anticipating his return with prevenient grace and love. Compare <sup><2120></sup>Luke 15:20: “When he was *yet a great way off*, his father saw him and had compassion,” etc.

*spake against* — threatened him for his idolatry.

*remember* — with favor and concern, as in <sup><0001></sup>Genesis 8:1 30:22.

*bowels ... troubled for him* — (<sup><0526></sup>Deuteronomy 32:36 <sup><2619></sup>Isaiah 63:15 <sup><2808></sup>Hosea 11:8) — namely, with the yearnings of compassionate love. The “bowels” include the region of the heart, the seat of the affections.

**21. waymarks** — *pillars* to mark the road for the returning exiles. Caravans set up *pillars*, or pointed *heaps* of stones, to mark the way through the desert against their return. So Israel is told by God to mark the way by which they went in leaving their country for exile; for by the same way they shall return.

*highway* — (<sup><2888></sup>Isaiah 35:8,10).

**22. go about** — namely, after human helps (<sup><2028></sup>Jeremiah 2:18,23,36). Why not return immediately to me? MAURER translates, as in <sup><2161></sup>Song of Solomon 5:6, “How long wilt thou *withdraw thyself*?” Let thy past backslidings suffice thee now that a *new* era approaches. What God finds fault with in them is, that they looked *hither and thither*, leaning on contingencies, instead of at once trusting the word of God, which promised their restoration. To assure them of this, God promises to *create a new thing in their land, A woman shall compass a man*. CALVIN explains this: Israel, who is feeble as a woman, shall be superior to the warlike Chaldeans; the captives shall reduce their captors to captivity. HENGSTENBERG makes the “woman” the Jewish Church, and the “man” Jehovah, her husband, whose love she will again seek (<sup><2806></sup>Hosea 2:6,7). MAURER, A woman shall protect (<sup><0520></sup>Deuteronomy 32:10, *Margin*; <sup><0820></sup>Psalms 32:10) a man, that is, You need fear no foes in returning, for all things shall be so peaceful that a *woman* would be able to take man’s part, and act as his *protector*. But the Christian fathers [AUGUSTINE, etc.]. almost unanimously interpreted it of *the Virgin Mary compassing Christ in her womb*. This view is favored: —

- (1) By the connection; it gives a reason why the exiles should desire a return to their country, namely, because Christ was conceived there.
- (2) The word “created” implies a divine power put forth in the creation of a body in the Virgin’s womb by the Holy Ghost for the second Adam, such as was exerted in creating the first Adam (<sup><4035></sup>Luke 1:35 <sup><2806></sup>Hebrews 10:5).
- (3) The phrase, “a *new* thing,” something unprecedented; a man whose like had never existed before, at once God and man; a mother out of the

ordinary course of nature, at once mother and virgin. An extraordinary mode of generation; one conceived by the Holy Ghost without man.

(4) The specification “in the land” (not “earth,” as *English Version*), namely, of *Judah*, where probably Christ was *conceived*, in *Hebron* (compare <sup><4139></sup>Luke 1:39,42,44, with <sup><6211></sup>Joshua 21:11) or else in *Nazareth*, “in the territory” of *Israel*, to whom <sup><3805></sup>Jeremiah 31:5,6,15,18,21 refer; His *birth* was at Beth-lehem (<sup><3809></sup>Micah 5:2 <sup><4085></sup>Matthew 2:5,6). As the place of His nativity, and of His being reared (<sup><4123></sup>Matthew 2:23), and of His preaching (<sup><3709></sup>Haggai 2:7 <sup><3808></sup>Malachi 3:1), are specified, so it is likely the Holy Spirit designated the place of His being conceived.

(5) The *Hebrew* for “woman” implies an *individual*, as the Virgin Mary, rather than a *collection of persons*.

(6) The restoration of Israel is grounded on God’s covenant in *Christ*, to whom, therefore, allusion is naturally made as the foundation of Israel’s hope (compare <sup><2714></sup>Isaiah 7:14). The *Virgin Mary*’s conception of Messiah in the womb answers to the “Virgin of Israel” (therefore so called, <sup><3821></sup>Jeremiah 31:21), that is, Israel and her sons at their final restoration, receiving Jesus as Messiah (<sup><3820></sup>Zechariah 12:10).

(7) The reference to the conception of the *child* Messiah accords with the mention of the massacre of “children” referred to in <sup><3815></sup>Jeremiah 31:15 (compare <sup><4127></sup>Matthew 2:17).

(8) The *Hebrew* for “man” is properly “mighty man,” a term applied to *God* (<sup><5107></sup>Deuteronomy 10:17); and to *Christ* (<sup><3835></sup>Zechariah 13:7; compare <sup><988></sup>Psalms 45:3 <sup><2906></sup>Isaiah 9:6) [CALOVIUS].

23. Jerusalem again shall be the metropolis of the whole nation, the seat of “justice” (<sup><825></sup>Psalms 122:5-8 <sup><2103></sup>Isaiah 1:26), and of sacred worship (“holiness,” <sup><3808></sup>Zechariah 8:3) on “Mount” Moriah.

24. *Judah ... cities ... husbandmen ... they with flocks* — Two classes, Citizens and countrymen, the latter divided into agriculturists and shepherds, all alike in security, though the latter were to be outside the protection of city walls. “Judah” here stands for the *country*, as distinguished from its *cities*.

25. The “weary, sorrowful,” and indigent state of Israel will prove no obstacle in the way of My helping them.

26. The words of Jeremiah: *Upon this* (or, *By reason of this*) announcement of a happy restoration, “I awaked” from the prophetic

*dream* vouchsafed to me (<sup><3225></sup>Jeremiah 23:25) with the “sweet” impression thereof remaining on my mind. “Sleep” here means *dream*, as in <sup><3915></sup>Psalms 90:5.

27. He shows how a land so depopulated shall again be peopled. God will cause both *men* and *beasts* in it to increase to a multitude (<sup><3809></sup>Ezekiel 36:9-11 <sup><3223></sup>Hosea 2:23).

28. (<sup><3407></sup>Jeremiah 44:27). The same God who, as it were (in human language), was *on the watch* for all means to destroy, shall be as much on the watch for the means of their restoration.

29. *In those days* — after their punishment has been completed, and mercy again visits them.

*fathers ... eaten ... sour grape ... children's teeth ... on edge* — the proverb among the exiles' children born in Babylon, to express that they suffered the evil consequences of their fathers' sins rather than of their own (<sup><3807></sup>Lamentations 5:7 <sup><3802></sup>Ezekiel 18:2,3).

30. (<sup><3806></sup>Galatians 6:5,7).

31. *the days ... new covenant with ... Israel ... Judah* — The new covenant is made with literal *Israel* and *Judah*, not with the *spiritual* Israel, that is, believers, except secondarily, and as grafted on the stock of Israel (<sup><3116></sup>Romans 11:16-27). For the *whole* subject of the thirtieth and thirty-first chapters is the restoration of the Hebrews (<sup><3808></sup>Jeremiah 30:4,7,10,18 31:7,10,11,23,24,27,36). With the “remnant according to the election of grace” in Israel, the new covenant has already taken effect. But with regard to the whole nation, its realization is reserved for the last days, to which Paul refers this prophecy in an abridged form (<sup><3127></sup>Romans 11:27).

32. *Not ... the covenant that I made with ... fathers* — the Old Testament covenant, as contrasted with our gospel covenant (<sup><3808></sup>Hebrews 8:8-12 10:16,17, where this prophecy is quoted to prove the abrogation of the law by the gospel), of which the distinguishing features are its securing by an adequate atonement the forgiveness of sins, and by the inworking of effectual grace ensuring permanent obedience. An earnest of this is given partially in the present eclectic or elect Church gathered out of Jews and Gentiles. But the promise here to Israel in the last days is national and universal, and effected by an extraordinary outpouring of the Spirit (<sup><3833></sup>Jeremiah 31:33,34 <sup><3117></sup>Ezekiel 11:17-20), independent of any merit on their part (<sup><3825></sup>Ezekiel 36:25-32 37:1-28 39:29 <sup><3223></sup>Joel 2:23-28 <sup><3820></sup>Zechariah 12:10 <sup><3206></sup>2 Corinthians 3:16).

*took ... by ... hand* — (<sup><3813></sup>Deuteronomy 1:31 <sup><3818></sup>Hosea 11:3).

**although I was an husband** — (compare <sup>2184</sup>Jeremiah 3:14 <sup>2107</sup>Hosea 2:7,8). But the *Septuagint*, *Syriac*, and St. Paul (<sup>2009</sup>Hebrews 8:9) translate, “I regarded them not”; and GESENIUS, etc., justify this rendering of the *Hebrew* from the *Arabic*. The Hebrews *regarded not* God, so God *regarded them not*.

**33. will be their God** — (<sup>2828</sup>Jeremiah 32:38).

**34.** True, specially of Israel (<sup>2543</sup>Isaiah 54:13); secondarily, true of believers (<sup>2165</sup>John 6:45 <sup>2120</sup>1 Corinthians 2:10 <sup>2121</sup>1 John 2:20).

**forgive ... iniquity ... remember ... no more** — (<sup>2638</sup>Jeremiah 33:8 50:20 <sup>2178</sup>Micah 7:18); applying peculiarly to Israel (<sup>2612</sup>Romans 11:27).  
Secondarily, all believers (<sup>2103</sup>Acts 10:43).

**35. divideth ... sea when ... waves ... roar ... Lord of hosts ... name** — quoted from <sup>2515</sup>Isaiah 51:15, the genuineness of which passage is thus established on Jeremiah’s authority.

**36. a nation** — Israel’s *national* polity has been broken up by the Romans. But their preservation as a *distinct people* amidst violent persecutions, though scattered among all nations for eighteen centuries, *unamalgamated*, whereas all other peoples under such circumstances have become incorporated with the nations in which they have been dispersed, is a perpetual standing miracle (compare <sup>2630</sup>Jeremiah 33:20 <sup>2300</sup>Psalms 148:6 <sup>2509</sup>Isaiah 54:9,10).

**37.** (Compare <sup>2622</sup>Jeremiah 33:22).

**for all that they have done** — namely, all the sins. God will regard His own covenant promise, rather than their merits.

**38. tower of Hananeel** — The city shall extend beyond its former bounds (<sup>2100</sup>Nehemiah 3:1 12:39 <sup>2340</sup>Zechariah 14:10).

**gate of ... corner** — (<sup>2143</sup>2 Kings 14:13 <sup>2109</sup>2 Chronicles 26:9).

**39. measuring-line** — (<sup>2308</sup>Ezekiel 40:8 <sup>2305</sup>Zechariah 2:1).

**Gareb** — from a *Hebrew* root, “to scrape”; *Syriac*, “leprosy”; the locality outside of the city, to which *lepers* were removed.

**Goath** — from a root, “to toil,” referring to the *toilsome* ascent there: outside of the city of David, towards the southwest, as Gareb was northwest [JUNIUS].

**40. valley of ... dead** — Tophet, where the bodies of malefactors were cast (<sup>2339</sup>Isaiah 30:33), south of the city.

*fields ... Kidron* — so <sup><1234></sup>2 Kings 23:4. Fields in the suburbs reaching as far as Kidron, east of the city.

*horse gate* — Through it the king's horses were led forth for watering to the brook Kidron (<sup><12116></sup>2 Kings 11:16 <sup><14183></sup>Nehemiah 3:28).

*for ever* — The city shall not only be spacious, but both “holy to the Lord,” that is, freed from all pollutions, and *everlasting* (<sup><2187></sup>Joel 3:17,20 <sup><1611></sup>Revelation 21:2,10,27).

# CHAPTER 32

## ◀381▶ JEREMIAH 32:1-14.

### JEREMIAH, IMPRISONED FOR HIS PROPHECY AGAINST JERUSALEM, BUYS A PATRIMONIAL PROPERTY (HIS RELATIVE HANAMEEL'S), IN ORDER TO CERTIFY TO THE JEWS THEIR FUTURE RETURN FROM BABYLON.

1. *tenth year* — The siege of Jerusalem had already begun, in the tenth month of the ninth year of Zedekiah (◀381▶ Jeremiah 39:1 ▶1271▶ 2 Kings 25:1).
2. *in ... court of ... prison* — that is, in the open space occupied by the guard, from which he was not allowed to depart, but where any of his friends might visit him (◀381▶ Jeremiah 32:12 ▶383▶ Jeremiah 38:13,28). Marvellous obstinacy, that at the time when they were experiencing the truth of Jeremiah's words in the pressure of the siege, they should still keep the prophet in confinement [CALVIN]. The circumstances narrated (◀381▶ Jeremiah 32:3-5) occurred at the beginning of the siege, when Jeremiah foretold the capture of the city (◀381▶ Jeremiah 32:1 ▶381▶ Jeremiah 34:1-7 ▶39:1). He was at that time put into free custody in the court of the prison. At the raising of the siege by Pharaoh-hophra, Jeremiah was on the point of repairing to Benjamin, when he was cast into "the dungeon," but obtained leave to be removed again to the court of the prison (◀381▶ Jeremiah 37:12-21). When there he urged the Jews, on the second advance of the Chaldeans to the siege, to save themselves by submission to Nebuchadnezzar (◀381▶ Jeremiah 38:2,3); in consequence of this the king, at the instigation of the princes, had him cast into a miry dungeon (◀381▶ Jeremiah 38:4-6); again he was removed to the prison court at the intercession of a courtier (◀381▶ Jeremiah 32:7-13), where he remained till the capture of the city (◀381▶ Jeremiah 32:28), when he was liberated (◀381▶ Jeremiah 39:11, etc. ▶411▶ Jeremiah 40:1, etc.).
4. *his eyes shall behold his eyes* — that is, only *before* reaching Babylon, which he was *not to see*. ▶381▶ Jeremiah 39:6,7 harmonizes this prophecy (◀381▶ Jeremiah 32:4) with the seemingly opposite prophecy, ▶321▶ Ezekiel 12:13, "He shall *not see*."

5. *visit him* — in a good sense (<sup>3072</sup>Jeremiah 27:22); referring to the honor paid Zedekiah at his death and burial (<sup>3604</sup>Jeremiah 34:4,5). Perhaps, too, before his death he was treated by Nebuchadnezzar with some favor.

*though ye fight ... shall not prosper* — (<sup>2204</sup>Jeremiah 21:4).

6. *Jeremiah said* — resuming the thread of <sup>2616</sup>Jeremiah 32:1, which was interrupted by the parenthesis (<sup>2612</sup>Jeremiah 32:2-5).

7. *son of Shallum thine uncle* — therefore, Jeremiah's first cousin.

*field ... in Anathoth* — a sacerdotal city: and so having one thousand cubits of suburban fields outside the wall attached to it (<sup>4834</sup>Numbers 35:4,5). The prohibition to sell these suburban fields (<sup>4824</sup>Leviticus 25:34) applied merely to their alienating them from Levites to another tribe; so that this chapter does not contravene that prohibition. Besides, what is here meant is only the purchase of the use of the field till the year of jubilee. On the failure of the owner, the next of kin had the right of redeeming it (<sup>4825</sup>Leviticus 25:25, etc. <sup>4848</sup>Ruth 4:3-6).

8. *Then I knew* — Not that Jeremiah previously doubted the reality of the divine communication, but, the effect following it, and the prophet's experimentally knowing it, confirmed his faith and was the seal to the vision. The Roman historian, FLORUS (2.6), records a similar instance: During the days that Rome was being besieged by Hannibal, the very ground on which he was encamped was put up for sale at Rome, and found a purchaser; implying the calm confidence of the ultimate issue entertained by the Roman people.

9. *seventeen shekels of silver* — As the shekel was only about fifty cents, the whole would be under \$10, a rather small sum, even taking into account the fact of the Chaldean occupation of the land, and the uncertainty of the time when it might come to Jeremiah or his heirs. Perhaps the "seven shekels," which in the *Hebrew* (see *Margin*) are distinguished from the "ten pieces of silver," were shekels of *gold* [MAURER].

10. *subscribed* — *I wrote* in the deed, "book of purchase" (<sup>2612</sup>Jeremiah 32:12).

*weighed* — coined money was not in early use; hence money was "weighed" (<sup>4236</sup>Genesis 23:16).

11. *evidence ... sealed ... open* — Two deeds were drawn up in a contract of sale; the one, the original copy, witnessed and sealed with the public seal; the other not so, but open, and therefore less authoritative, being but a *copy*. GATAKER thinks that the purchaser sealed the one with *his own* seal; the

other he showed to witnesses that they might write their names on the back of it and know the contents; and that some details, for example, the conditions and time of redemption were in the *sealed* copy, which the parties might not choose to be known to the witnesses, and which were therefore not in the *open* copy. The sealed copy, when opened after the seventy years' captivity, would greatly confirm the faith of those living at that time. The "law and custom" refer, probably, not merely to the sealing up of the conditions and details of purchase, but also to the law of redemption, according to which, at the return to Judea, the deed would show that Jeremiah had bought the field by his right as next of kin (<sup><4833></sup>Leviticus 25:13-16), [LUDOVICUS DE DIEU].

**12. *Baruch*** — Jeremiah's amanuensis and agent (<sup><2804></sup>Jeremiah 36:4, etc.).

***before all*** — In sales everything clandestine was avoided; publicity was required. So here, in the court of prison, where Jeremiah was confined, there were soldiers and others, who had free access to him, present (<sup><2801></sup>Jeremiah 38:1).

**14. *in an earthen vessel*** — that the documents might not be injured by the moisture of the surrounding earth; at the same time, being buried, they could not be stolen, but would remain as a pledge of the Jews' deliverance until God's time should come.

**15.** (Compare <sup><2824></sup>Jeremiah 32:24,25,37,43,44).

**16.** Jeremiah, not comprehending how God's threat of destroying Judah could be reconciled with God's commanding him to purchase land in it as if in a free country, has recourse to his grand remedy against perplexities, prayer.

**17. *hast made ... heaven*** — Jeremiah extols God's creative power, as a ground of humility on his part as man: It is not my part to call Thee, the mighty God, to account for Thy ways (compare <sup><2411></sup>Jeremiah 12:1).

***too hard*** — In <sup><2627></sup>Jeremiah 32:27 God's reply exactly accords with Jeremiah's prayer (<sup><0184></sup>Genesis 18:14 <sup><3805></sup>Zechariah 8:6 <sup><0137></sup>Luke 1:37).

**18.** (<sup><0347></sup>Exodus 34:7 <sup><2816></sup>Isaiah 65:6). This is taken from the decalogue (<sup><0205></sup>Exodus 20:5,6). This is a second consideration to check hasty judgments as to God's ways: Thou art the gracious and righteous Judge of the world.

**19. *counsel ... work*** — devising ... executing (<sup><2829></sup>Isaiah 28:29).

***eyes ... open upon all*** — (<sup><1321></sup>Job 34:21 <sup><0121></sup>Proverbs 5:21).

*to give ... according to ... ways* — (<sup>2470</sup>Jeremiah 17:10).

**20. *even unto this day*** — Thou hast given “signs” of Thy power from the day when Thou didst deliver Israel out of Egypt by mighty miracles, down to the present time [MAURER]. CALVIN explains it, “memorable even unto this day.”

*among other men* — not in Israel only, but among foreign peoples also. Compare for “other” understood, (<sup>4938</sup>Psalm 73:5).

*made thee a name* — (<sup>1096</sup>Exodus 9:16 <sup>4372</sup>1 Chronicles 17:21 <sup>2382</sup>Isaiah 63:12).

*as at this day* — *a name* of power, such as Thou hast at this day.

**21.** (<sup>4961</sup>Psalm 136:11,12).

**22. *given ... didst swear*** — God gave it by a gratuitous covenant, not for their deserts.

*a land flowing with milk and honey* — (See on <sup>4448</sup>Numbers 14:8).

**23. *all ... thou commandedst ... all this evil*** — Their punishment was thus exactly commensurate with their sin. It was not fortuitous.

**24. *mounds*** — mounds of earth raised as breastworks by the besieging army, behind which they employed their engines, and which they gradually pushed forward to the walls of the city.

*behold, thou seest it* — connected with <sup>3825</sup>Jeremiah 32:25. Thou seest all this with Thine own eyes, and yet (what seems inconsistent with it) Thou commandest me to buy a field.

**25. *for the city***, etc. — rather, “though,” etc.

**27.** Jehovah retorts Jeremiah’s own words: I am indeed, as thou sayest (Jeremiah 32: 17), the God and Creator of “all flesh,” and “nothing is too hard for Me”; thine own words ought to have taught thee that, though Judea and Jerusalem are given up to the Chaldeans now for the sins of the Jews, yet it will not be *hard* to Me, when I please, to restore the state so that houses and lands therein shall be possessed in safety (<sup>2826</sup>Jeremiah 32:36-44).

**29. *burn ... houses upon whose roofs ... incense unto Baal*** — retribution in kind. They *burnt incense to Baal, on the houses*, so the *houses* shall be *burnt* (<sup>2493</sup>Jeremiah 19:13). The god of fire was the object of their worship; so fire shall be the instrument of their punishment.

**to provoke me** — indicating the *design*, not merely the *event*. They seemed to court God’s “anger,” and *purposely* to “provoke” Him.

**30. have ... done** — literally, “have been doing”; implying *continuous* action.

**only ... evil ... only provoked me** — They have been doing *nothing else but* evil; their *sole* aim seems to have been to provoke Me.

**their youth** — the time when they were in the wilderness, having just before come into national existence.

**31. provocation of mine anger** — literally, “*for* mine anger.” CALVIN, therefore, connects those words with those at the end of the verse, “this city has been to me an *object for mine anger* (namely, by reason of the provocations mentioned, <sup><4820></sup>Jeremiah 32:30, etc.), that I should remove it,” etc. Thus, there will not be the repetition of the sentiment, <sup><4821></sup>Jeremiah 32:30, as in *English Version*; the *Hebrew* also favors this rendering. However, Jeremiah delights in repetitions. In *English Version* the words, “that I should remove it,” etc., stand independently, as the result of what precedes. The time is ripe for taking vengeance on them (<sup><4822></sup>2 Kings 23:27).

**from the day that they built it** — Solomon completed the building of the city; and it was he who, first of the Jewish kings, turned to idolatry. It was originally built by the idolatrous Canaanites.

**32. priests ... prophets** — (<sup><4823></sup>Nehemiah 9:32,34). Hence, learn, though ministers of God apostatize, we must remain faithful.

**33.** (<sup><4824></sup>Jeremiah 2:27 7:13).

**34.** (<sup><4825></sup>Jeremiah 7:30 31 <sup><4826></sup>Ezekiel 8:5-17).

**35. cause ... pass through ... fire** — By way of purification, they passed through with bare feet (<sup><4827></sup>Leviticus 18:21).

**Molech** — meaning “king”; the same as *Milcom* (<sup><4828></sup>1 Kings 11:33).

**I commanded ... not** — This cuts off from the superstitious the plea of a good intention. All “will-worship” exposes to God’s wrath (<sup><4829></sup>Colossians 2:18,23).

**36. And now therefore** — rather, “But now, nevertheless.” Notwithstanding that their guilt deserves lasting vengeance, God, for the elect’s sake and for His covenant’s sake, will, contrary to all that might have been expected, restore them.

*ye say, It shall be delivered into ... king of Babylon* — The reprobate pass from the extreme of self-confidence to that of despair of God's fulfilling His promise of restoring them.

37. (See on <sup><2465></sup>Jeremiah 16:15). The "all" countries implies a future restoration of Israel more universal than that from Babylon.

38. (<sup><2402></sup>Jeremiah 30:22 24:7).

39. *one heart* — all seeking the Lord *with one accord*, in contrast to their state when only scattered individuals sought Him (<sup><3419></sup>Ezekiel 11:19,20 <sup><3409></sup>Zephaniah 3:9).

*for ... good of them* — (<sup><3942></sup>Psalm 34:12-15).

40. (<sup><2433></sup>Jeremiah 31:31,33 <sup><2508></sup>Isaiah 55:3).

*not depart from me* — never yet fully realized as to the Israelites.

*I will not turn away from them ... good* — (<sup><2301></sup>Isaiah 30:21). Jehovah compares Himself to a sedulous preceptor following his pupils everywhere to direct their words, gestures.

*put my fear in ... hearts ... not depart from me* — Both the conversion and perseverance of the saints are the work of God alone, by the operation of the Holy Spirit.

41. *rejoice over them* — (<sup><4509></sup>Deuteronomy 30:9 <sup><2635></sup>Isaiah 62:5 65:19 <sup><3407></sup>Zephaniah 3:17).

*plant ... assuredly* — rather, "in stability," that is, permanently, for ever (<sup><2448></sup>Jeremiah 24:6 <sup><3095></sup>Amos 9:15).

42. (<sup><2428></sup>Jeremiah 31:28). The restoration from Babylon was only a slight foretaste of the grace to be expected by Israel at last through Christ.

43. (<sup><2425></sup>Jeremiah 32:15).

*whereof ye say, It is desolate* — (<sup><2430></sup>Jeremiah 33:10).

44. Referring to the forms of contract (<sup><2420></sup>Jeremiah 32:10-12):

*Benjamin* — specified as Anathoth; Jeremiah's place of residence where the field lay (<sup><2418></sup>Jeremiah 32:8), was in it.

# CHAPTER 33

## ◀331▶ JEREMIAH 33:1-26.

### PROPHECY OF THE RESTORATION FROM BABYLON, AND OF MESSIAH AS KING AND PRIEST.

1. *shut up* — (◀332▶ Jeremiah 32:2,3 ▶333▶ 2 Timothy 2:9). Though Jeremiah was shut up in bondage, the word of God was “not bound.”

2. *maker thereof* — rather, “the doer of it,” namely, that which Jeremiah is about to prophesy, the restoration of Israel, an act which is thought now impossible, but which the Almighty will effect.

*formed it* — namely, Jerusalem (◀334▶ Jeremiah 32:44) [CALVIN]. Rather, “that formed,” that is, moulds *His purpose* into due shape for execution (◀335▶ Isaiah 37:26).

*Lord ... his name* — (◀336▶ Exodus 3:14,15).

3. *Call ... I will answer* — (◀337▶ Jeremiah 29:12 ▶338▶ Psalm 91:15). Jeremiah, as the representative of the people of God, is urged by God to pray for that which God has determined to grant; namely, the restoration. God’s promises are not to slacken, but to quicken the prayers of His people (◀339▶ Psalm 132:13,17 ▶340▶ Isaiah 62:6,7).

*mighty things* — *Hebrew*, “inaccessible things,” that is, incredible, hard to man’s understanding [MAURER], namely, the restoration of the Jews, an event despaired of. “Hidden,” or “recondite” [PISCATOR].

*thou knowest not* — Yet God had revealed those things to Jeremiah, but the unbelief of the people in rejecting the grace of God had caused him to forget God’s promise, as though the case of the people admitted of no remedy.

4. *houses ... thrown down by the mounds* — namely, by the missiles cast from the besiegers’ *mounds* (◀341▶ Jeremiah 32:24); “and by the sword” follows properly, as, after missiles had prepared the way, the foe next advanced to close quarters “with the sword.”

5. *They* — the Jews; the defenders of the “houses” (◀342▶ Jeremiah 33:4), “come forward to fight with the Chaldeans,” who burst into the city

through the “thrown-down houses,” but all the effect that they produce “is, to fill them (the houses) with their own “dead bodies.”

6. (<sup>2817</sup>Jeremiah 30:17). The answer to Jeremiah’s mournful question (<sup>2482</sup>Jeremiah 8:22).

**cure** — literally, the long linen bandage employed in dressing wounds.

**truth** — that is, stability; I will bring forth for them abundant and *permanent* peace, that is, prosperity.

7. **cause ... to return** — that is, reverse (<sup>2831</sup>Jeremiah 33:11 <sup>2834</sup>Jeremiah 32:44). The specification, both of “Judah” and “Israel,” can only apply fully to the future restoration.

**as at the first** — (<sup>2905</sup>Isaiah 1:26).

8. **cleanse** — (<sup>2865</sup>Ezekiel 36:25 <sup>2815</sup>Zechariah 13:1 <sup>2803</sup>Hebrews 9:13,14). Alluding to the legal rites of purification.

**all their iniquity ... all their iniquities** — both the *principle* of sin within, and its outward manifestations in *acts*. The repetition is in order that the Jews may consider how great is the grace of God in not merely *pardon*ing (as to the punishment), but also *cleansing* them (as to the pollution of guilt); not merely one iniquity, but *all* (<sup>2978</sup>Micah 7:18).

9. **it** — the city.

**a name ... a praise** — (<sup>2831</sup>Jeremiah 13:11 <sup>2817</sup>Isaiah 62:7).

**them** — the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

**they shall fear ... for all the goodness** — (<sup>2804</sup>Psalms 130:4). The Gentiles shall be led to “fear” God by the proofs of His power displayed in behalf of the Jews; the ungodly among them shall “tremble” for fear of God’s judgments on them; the penitent shall reverentially fear and be converted to Him (<sup>2925</sup>Psalms 102:15 <sup>2818</sup>Isaiah 60:3).

10. **ye say ... desolate** — (<sup>2836</sup>Jeremiah 32:43).

11. (<sup>2973</sup>Jeremiah 7:34 16:9).

**Praise the Lord**, etc. — the words of <sup>2801</sup>Psalms 136:1, which were actually used by the Jews at their restoration (<sup>2831</sup>Ezra 3:11).

**sacrifice of praise** — (<sup>2972</sup>Psalms 107:22 116:17). This shall continue when all other sacrifices shall be at an end.

**12. habitation of shepherds ... flocks** — in contrast to <sup><2630></sup>Jeremiah 33:10, “without man ... *inhabitant* ... without *beast*” (<sup><2634></sup>Jeremiah 32:43; compare <sup><2624></sup>Jeremiah 31:24 <sup><2650></sup>50:19 <sup><2650></sup>Isaiah 65:10).

**13. pass ... under ... hands of him that telleth them** — Shepherds, in sending forth and bringing back their sheep to the folds, *count* them by striking each as it passes with a rod, implying the shepherd’s provident care that not one should be lost (<sup><1273></sup>Leviticus 27:32 <sup><3174></sup>Micah 7:14; compare <sup><3103></sup>John 10:28,29 <sup><1712></sup>17:12).

**14. perform** — “I will make to *rise*”; God’s promise having for a time seemed to “lie” dead and abortive [CALVIN].

**15.** Repeated from <sup><2275></sup>Jeremiah 23:5.

**the land** — the Holy Land: Israel and Judah (<sup><2216></sup>Jeremiah 23:6).

**16. Jerusalem** — In <sup><2216></sup>Jeremiah 23:6, instead of this, it is “Israel.” “*The name*” in the *Hebrew* has here to be supplied from that passage; and for “he” (Messiah, the antitypical “Israel”), the antecedent there (<sup><2403></sup>Isaiah 49:3), we have “she” here, that is, Jerusalem. She is called by the same name as Messiah, “The Lord Our Righteousness,” by virtue of the mystical oneness between her (as the literal representative of the spiritual Church) and her Lord and Husband. Thus, whatever belongs to the Head belongs also to the members (<sup><4050></sup>Ephesians 5:30,32). Hence, the Church is called “Christ” (<sup><5407></sup>Romans 16:7 <sup><4221></sup>1 Corinthians 12:12). The Church hereby professes to draw all her righteousness from Christ (<sup><2452></sup>Isaiah 45:24,25). It is for the sake of Jerusalem, literal and spiritual, that God the Father gives this name (*Jehovah, Tsidkenu*, “The Lord our Righteousness”) to Christ.

**17.** The promises of perpetuity of the throne of David fulfilled in Messiah, the son of David (<sup><1076></sup>2 Samuel 7:16 <sup><1104></sup>1 Kings 2:4 <sup><3904></sup>Psalms 89:4,29,36; compare <sup><4033></sup>Luke 1:32,33).

**18.** Messiah’s literal priesthood (<sup><3077></sup>Hebrews 7:17,21,24-28), and His followers’ spiritual priesthood and sacrifices (<sup><2631></sup>Jeremiah 33:11 <sup><5121></sup>Romans 12:1 <sup><1516></sup>15:16 <sup><4015></sup>1 Peter 2:5,9 <sup><6009></sup>Revelation 1:6), shall never cease, according to the *covenant* with Levi, broken by the priests, but fulfilled by Messiah (<sup><4252></sup>Numbers 25:12,13 <sup><3404></sup>Malachi 2:4,5,8).

**20. covenant of the day** — that is, covenant *with* the day: answering to “covenant *with* David” (<sup><2622></sup>Jeremiah 33:21, also <sup><2625></sup>Jeremiah 33:25, “*with* day”; compare <sup><2635></sup>Jeremiah 31:35,36 <sup><1352></sup>Leviticus 26:42 <sup><3924></sup>Psalms 89:34,37).

22. (<sup><015F></sup>Genesis 15:5 22:17). The blessing there promised belonged to *all* the tribes; here it is restricted to the family of David and the tribe of Levi, because it was on these that the welfare of the whole people rested. When the kingdom and priesthood flourish in the person of Messiah, the whole nation shall temporally and spiritually prosper.

24. *this people* — certain of the Jews, especially those who spoke with Jeremiah in the court of the prison (<sup><042D></sup>Jeremiah 32:12 38:1).

*the two families* — Judah and Israel.

*before them* — in their judgment. They suppose that I have utterly cast off Israel so as to be no more a nation. The expression, “My people,” of itself, shows God has not cast off Israel for ever.

25. (<sup><2615F></sup>Jeremiah 31:35,36 <sup><00822></sup>Genesis 8:22 <sup><15740></sup>Psalms 74:16,17). I who have established the laws of nature am the same God who has made a covenant with the Church.

26. *Isaac* — (<sup><09A50></sup>Psalms 105:9 <sup><01009></sup>Amos 7:9,16).

# CHAPTER 34

## ◀341▶ JEREMIAH 34:1-22.

### CAPTIVITY OF ZEDEKIAH AND THE PEOPLE FORETOLD FOR THEIR DISOBEDIENCE AND PERFDY.

The prophecy (◀341▶ Jeremiah 34:1-7) as to Zedekiah is an amplification of that in ◀341▶ Jeremiah 32:1-5, in consequence of which Jeremiah was then shut up in the court of the prison. The prophecy (◀341▶ Jeremiah 34:8-22) refers to the Jews, who, afraid of the capture of the city, had, in obedience to the law, granted freedom to their servants at the end of seven years, but on the intermission of the siege forced them back into bondage.

1. *Jerusalem and ... all the cities thereof* — (see on ▶341▶ Jeremiah 19:15). It was amazing blindness in the king, that, in such a desperate position, he should reject admonition.

3. (◀341▶ Jeremiah 32:4).

4, 5. Mitigation of Zedekiah's punishment.

5. *the burnings of thy fathers* — Thy funeral shall be honored with the same burning of aromatic spices as there was at the funerals of thy fathers (◀444▶ 2 Chronicles 16:14 21:19). The honors here mentioned were denied to Jehoiakim (◀222▶ Jeremiah 22:18).

*Ah, lord!* — The Hebrews in their chronology (*Sederolam*) mention the wailing used over him, "Alas! King Zedekiah is dead, drinking the dregs (that is, paying the penalty for the sins) of former ages."

7. *these ... retained* — alone (compare ▶441▶ 2 Chronicles 11:5,9).

8. By the law a *Hebrew*, after having been a bond-servant for six years, on the seventh was to be let go free (◀122▶ Exodus 21:22 ▶512▶ Deuteronomy 15:12).

*Zedekiah made a covenant* — with solemn ceremonial in the temple (◀341▶ Jeremiah 34:15,18,19).

*them* — bond-servants (▶341▶ Jeremiah 34:9).

9. *none ... serve himself of a Jew* — (◀125▶ Leviticus 25:39-46).

**11.** During the interruption of the siege by Pharaoh-hophra (compare <sup><282></sup>Jeremiah 34:21,22, with <sup><260></sup>Jeremiah 37:5-10), the Jews reduced their servants to bondage again.

**13.** The last year of Zedekiah was the sabbatical year. How just the retribution, that they who, against God's law and their own covenant, enslaved their brethren, should be doomed to bondage themselves: and that the bond-servants should enjoy the sabbatical freedom at the hands of the foe (<sup><252></sup>Jeremiah 52:16) which their own countrymen denied them!

**14. *At the end of seven years*** — that is, not on the *eighth* year, but within the limit of the seventh year, not later than the end of the seventh year (<sup><121></sup>Exodus 21:2 23:10 <sup><652></sup>Deuteronomy 15:12). So “at the end of three years” (<sup><643></sup>Deuteronomy 14:28 <sup><280></sup>2 Kings 18:10), and “*after three days*, I will rise again” (<sup><123></sup>Matthew 27:63), that is, on the *third day* (compare <sup><126></sup>Matthew 27:64).

**15. *in the house ... called by my name*** — the usual place of making such covenants (<sup><228></sup>2 Kings 23:3; compare <sup><108></sup>1 Kings 8:31 <sup><109></sup>Nehemiah 10:29).

**16. *polluted my name*** — by violating your oath (<sup><221></sup>Exodus 20:7).

**17. *not ... proclaiming liberty*** — Though the Jews had ostensibly emancipated their bond-servants, they *virtually* did not do so by revoking the liberty which they had granted. God looks not to outward appearances, but to the sincere intention.

***I proclaim a liberty*** — retribution answering to the offense (<sup><102></sup>Matthew 7:2 18:32,33 <sup><817></sup>Galatians 6:7 <sup><321></sup>James 2:13). The Jews who would not give liberty to their brethren shall themselves receive “a liberty” calamitous to them. God will manumit them from His happy and safe service (<sup><818></sup>Psalm 121:3), which is real “liberty” (<sup><985></sup>Psalm 119:45 <sup><836></sup>John 8:36 <sup><187></sup>2 Corinthians 3:17), only to pass under the terrible bondage of other taskmasters, the “sword,” etc.

***to be removed*** — The *Hebrew* expresses *agitation* (see on <sup><245></sup>Jeremiah 15:4). Compare <sup><625></sup>Deuteronomy 28:25,48,64,65, as to the *restless agitation* of the Jews in their ceaseless removals from place to place in their dispersion.

**18. *passed between the parts thereof*** — The contracting parties in the “covenant” (not here the law in general, but their *covenant* made before God in His house to emancipate their slaves, <sup><248></sup>Jeremiah 34:8,9) passed through the parts of the animal cut in two, implying that they prayed so to be cut in sunder (<sup><425></sup>Matthew 24:51; *Greek*, “cut in two”) if they should break the covenant (<sup><150></sup>Genesis 15:10,17).

**20. *I will even give*** — resuming the sentence begun, but not completed (<sup>2648</sup>Jeremiah 34:18), “I will give,” etc.

***seek their life*** — implacably: satisfied with nothing short of their blood; not content with booty.

***dead bodies*** — The breakers of the covenant shall be cut in pieces, as the calf between whose parts they passed.

**21. *gone up*** — that is, raised the siege in order to meet Pharaoh-hophra (<sup>2650</sup>Jeremiah 37:7-10). The departure of the Chaldeans was a kind of manumission of the Jews; but as their manumission of their bond-servants was recalled, so God revoked His manumission of them from the Chaldeans.

**22. *I will command*** — Nebuchadnezzar, impelled unconsciously by a divine instigation, returned on the withdrawal of the Egyptians.

# CHAPTER 35

## JEREMIAH 35:1-19.

### PROPHECY IN THE REIGN OF JEHOIAKIM, WHEN THE CHALDEANS, IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE SYRIANS AND MOABITES, INVADED JUDEA.

By the obedience of the Rechabites to their father, Jeremiah condemns the disobedience of the Jews to God their Father. The Holy Spirit has arranged Jeremiah's prophecies by the *moral* rather than the chronological connection. From the history of an event fifteen years before, the Jews, who had brought back their manumitted servants into bondage, are taught how much God loves and rewards obedience, and hates and punishes disobedience.

2. **Rechabites** — a nomadic tribe belonging to the Kenites of Hemath (<sup><1255></sup>1 Chronicles 2:55), of the family of Jethro, or Hobab, Moses' father-in-law (<sup><1289></sup>Exodus 18:9, etc. <sup><14129></sup>Numbers 10:29-32 <sup><17016></sup>Judges 1:16). They came into Canaan with the Israelites, but, in order to preserve their independence, chose a life in tents without a fixed habitation (<sup><19516></sup>1 Samuel 15:6). Besides the branch of them associated with Judah and extending to Amalek, there was another section at Kadesh, in Naphtali (<sup><17011></sup>Judges 4:11,17). They seem to have been proselytes of the gate, Jonadab, son of Rechab, whose charge not to drink wine they so strictly obeyed, was zealous for God (<sup><12015></sup>2 Kings 10:15-23). The Nabatheans of Arabia observed the same rules [DIODORUS SICULUS, 19.94].

**bring ... into ... house of ... Lord** — because there were suitable witnesses at hand there from among the priests and chief men, as also because he had the power immediately to address the people assembled there (<sup><26513></sup>Jeremiah 35:13). It may have been also as a reproof of the priests, who drank wine freely, though commanded to refrain from it when in the discharge of their duties [CALVIN].

**chambers** — which were round about the temple, applied to various uses, for example, to contain the vestments, sacred vessels, etc.

3. **Jaazaniah** — the elder and chief of the clan.

**4. *man of God*** — a prophet (<sup><6530></sup>Deuteronomy 33:1 <sup><4027></sup>1 Samuel 2:27 <sup><1122></sup>1 Kings 12:22 <sup><1007></sup>2 Kings 4:7), also “a servant of God” in general (<sup><5461></sup>1 Timothy 6:11), one not his own, but God’s; one who has parted with all right in himself to give himself wholly to God (<sup><5187></sup>2 Timothy 3:17). He was so revered that none would call in question what was transacted in his chamber.

***keeper of the door*** — *Hebrew*, “of the vessel.” Probably the office meant is that of the priest who kept in charge the capitation money paid for the use of the temple and the votive offerings, such as silver vessels, etc. There were seven such keepers [GROTIUS]. Compare <sup><1219></sup>2 Kings 12:9 25:18 <sup><1398></sup>1 Chronicles 9:18,19, which support *English Version*.

***I said ... Drink*** — Jeremiah does not say, *The Lord* saith, Drink: for then they would have been bound to obey. Contrast the case in <sup><1137></sup>1 Kings 13:7-26.

**6. *Jonadab ... our father*** — that is, forefather and director, three hundred years before (<sup><1205></sup>2 Kings 10:15). They were called Rechabites, not Jonadabites, having received their name from Rechab *the father*, previously to their adopting the injunctions of Jonadab his *son*. This case affords no justification for slavish deference to the religious opinions of the Christian fathers: for Jonadab’s injunction only affected matters of the present life; moreover, it was not binding on their consciences, for they deemed it not unlawful to go to Jerusalem in the invasion (<sup><4551></sup>Jeremiah 35:11). What is praised here is not the father’s injunction, but the obedience of the sons [CALVIN].

**7. *tents*** — (<sup><1047></sup>Judges 4:17).

***live many days*** — according to the promise connected with the fifth commandment (<sup><1202></sup>Exodus 20:12 <sup><4109></sup>Ephesians 6:2,3).

***strangers*** — They were not of the stock of Jacob, but sojourners in Israel. Types of the children of God, pilgrims on earth, looking for heaven as their home: having little to lose, so that losing times cost them little alarm; sitting loose to what they have (<sup><5034></sup>Hebrews 10:34 11:9,10,13-16).

**8. *all that he ... charged us ... all our days, we ... wives ... sons ... daughters*** — unreserved obedience in all particulars, at all times, and on the part of all, without exception: in these respects Israel’s obedience to God was wanting. Contrast <sup><9153></sup>1 Samuel 15:20,21 <sup><4784></sup>Psalms 78:34-37,41,56,57.

**11. *Chaldeans ... Syrians*** — when Jehoiakim revolted from Nebuchadnezzar (<sup><1241></sup>2 Kings 24:1,2). Necessity sets aside all other laws. This is the Rechabites’ excuse for their seeming disobedience to Jonadab in

temporarily settling in a city. Herein was seen the prescient wisdom of Jonadab's commands; they could at a moment's notice migrate, having no land possessions to tie them.

**14. obey ... father's commandment: notwithstanding I** — (<sup><3008></sup>Malachi 1:6).

**rising early and speaking** — *God Himself speaking* late and early by His various ways of providence and grace.

**15.** In <sup><2655></sup>Jeremiah 35:15 and in <sup><4865></sup>2 Chronicles 36:15, a distinct mode of address is alluded to, namely, *God sending His servants*. (<sup><2481></sup>Jeremiah 18:11 25:5,6). I enjoined nothing unreasonable, but simply to serve Me, and I attached to the command a gracious promise, but in vain. If Jonadab's commands, which were arbitrary and not moral obligations in themselves, were obeyed, much more ought Mine, which are in themselves right.

**17. because I have spoken ... not heard ... I ... called ... not answered** — (<sup><3024></sup>Proverbs 1:24 <sup><2362></sup>Isaiah 65:12).

**19. not want a man to stand before me** — There shall always be left representatives of the clan *to worship Me* (<sup><2451></sup>Jeremiah 15:1,19); or, "before Me" means simple *existence*, for all things in existence are *in God's sight* (<sup><1889></sup>Psalms 89:36). The Rechabites returned from the captivity. WOLFF found traces of them in Arabia.

# CHAPTER 36

## ◀36▶ JEREMIAH 36:1-32.

### BARUCH WRITES, AND READS PUBLICLY JEREMIAH'S PROPHECIES COLLECTED IN A VOLUME. THE ROLL IS BURNT BY JEHOIAKIM, AND WRITTEN AGAIN BY BARUCH AT JEREMIAH'S DICTATION.

1. *fourth year* — The command to write the roll was given in the fourth year, but it was not read publicly till the fifth year. As Isaiah subjoined to his predictions a history of events confirming his prophecies (◀280▶ Isaiah 36:1-22 37:1-38 38:1-22 39:1-8), so Jeremiah also in the thirty-seventh through forty-third chapters; but he prefaces his history with the narrative of an incident that occurred some time ago, showing that he, not only by word, but in writing, and that twice, had testified all that he about to state. as having subsequently come to pass [GROTIUS]. At the end of Jehoiakim's third year, Nebuchadnezzar enrolled an army against Jerusalem and took it in the end of the fifth or beginning of the sixth year, carrying away captive Jehoiakim, Daniel, etc. Jehoiakim returned the same year, and for three years was tributary: then he withheld tribute. Nebuchadnezzar returned and took Jerusalem, and carried off Jehoiakim, who died on the road. This harmonizes this chapter with ▶220◀ 2 Kings 24:1-20 and ▶200◀ Daniel 1:1-21. See on ▶229◀ Jeremiah 22:19.

2. *roll of a book* — a book formed of prepared skins made into a roll. Compare “volume of the book,” that is, the Pentateuch (◀340▶ Psalm 40:7). It does not follow that his prophecies were not before committed to writing; what is implied is, they were now written together in *one* volume, so as to be read continuously to the Jews in the temple.

*against ... nations* — (◀255▶ Jeremiah 25:15, etc.).

*from ... days of Josiah* — (◀253▶ Jeremiah 25:3). From Josiah's thirteenth year (◀340▶ Jeremiah 1:2).

3. *hear* — consider seriously.

*return ... from ... evil way* — (Jon 3:8).

**4. *all ... words of ... Lord*** — God specially suggesting what might otherwise have escaped his memory, and directing the choice of words, as well as the substance (<sup><484></sup>John 14:26 16:13).

**5. *I am shut up*** — not in prison, for there is no account of his imprisonment under Jehoiakim, and <sup><2889></sup>Jeremiah 36:19,26 are inconsistent with it: but, “*I am prevented*,” namely, by some hindrance; or, through fear of the king, to whose anger Baruch was less exposed, as not being the author of the prophecy.

**6. *go*** — on the following year (<sup><2889></sup>Jeremiah 36:9).

***fasting day*** — (See <sup><2889></sup>Jeremiah 36:9). An extraordinary fast, in the *ninth* month (whereas the fast on the great day of atonement was on the tenth day of the *seventh* month, <sup><1862></sup>Leviticus 16:29 23:27-32), appointed to avert the impending calamity, when it was feared Nebuchadnezzar, having in the year before (that is, the fourth of Jehoiakim), smitten Pharaoh-necho at Carchemish, would attack Judea, as the ally of Egypt (<sup><1234></sup>2 Kings 23:34,35). The fast was likely to be an occasion on which Jeremiah would find the Jews more softened, as well as a larger number of them met together.

**7. *present ... supplication*** — literally, “supplication shall fall”; alluding to the *prostrate attitude* of the supplicants (<sup><1825></sup>Deuteronomy 9:25 <sup><1858></sup>Matthew 26:39), as petitioners fall at the feet of a king in the East. So *Hebrew*, <sup><4835></sup>Jeremiah 38:26 <sup><2098></sup>Daniel 9:18, *Margin*.

**9. *they proclaimed ... to all the people ... to all***, etc. — rather, “all the people ... all the people proclaimed a fast” [MICHAELIS]. The chiefs appointed the fast by the wish of the people. In either version the ungodly king had no share in appointing the fast.

**10. *chamber*** — Baruch read from the window or balcony of the chamber looking into the court where the people were assembled. However, some of the chambers were large enough to contain a considerable number (<sup><4318></sup>Nehemiah 13:5).

***Gemariah*** — distinct from the Gemariah, son of Hilkiah, in <sup><2888></sup>Jeremiah 29:3.

***Shaphan*** — the same person as in <sup><1228></sup>2 Kings 22:3.

***scribe*** — secretary of state, or he who presided over the public records.

***higher court*** — that of the priests, the court of the people being lower (<sup><1408></sup>2 Chronicles 4:9).

*new gate* — (<sup>2830</sup>Jeremiah 26:10). The east gate.

**12. scribe's chamber** — an apartment in the palace occupied by the secretary of state.

*princes* — holding a counsel of state at the time.

*Elnathan* — who had already been an instrument of evil in Jehoiakim's hand (<sup>2832</sup>Jeremiah 26:22,23).

*Hananiah* — the false prophet (<sup>2830</sup>Jeremiah 28:10-17).

**14. Jehudi** — of a good family, as appears from his pedigree being given so fully, but in a subordinate position.

*come* — Instead of requiring Baruch to *come* to them, they ought to have *gone* to the temple, and there professed their penitence. But pride forbade it [CALVIN].

**16. afraid, both one and other** — *Hebrew*, “fear-stricken,” they turned to one another (compare <sup>4128</sup>Genesis 42:28). This showed, on their part, hesitancy, and some degree of fear of God, but not enough to make them willing to sacrifice the favor of an earthly king. We will surely tell the king — not the language of threatening but implying that the matter is of such moment that the king ought to be made acquainted with it, so as to seek some remedy against the divine anger.

**17.** What they wished to know was, whether what Baruch had read to them was written by him from memory after hearing Jeremiah repeating his prophecies continuously, or accurately from the prophet's own dictation.

**18. his mouth** — Baruch replies it was by the *oral* dictation of the prophet; <sup>2832</sup>Jeremiah 36:2 accords with this view, rather than with the notion that Jeremiah repeated his prophecies from manuscripts.

*ink* — his specification of the “ink” implies: I added nothing save the hand, pen, and ink.

**19.** Showing that they were not altogether without better feelings (compare <sup>2836</sup>Jeremiah 36:16,25).

**20. chamber** — There were chambers in the king's palace round the court or great hall, as in the temple (<sup>2830</sup>Jeremiah 36:10). The roll was “laid up” there for safekeeping, with other public records.

**21. sent Jehudi** — Note how unbelievers flee from God, and yet seek Him through some kind of involuntary impulse [CALVIN]. Jehudi seems to have been the king's ready tool for evil.

**22. *winter house*** — (<sup>3185</sup>Amos 3:15).

***ninth month*** — namely, of the religious year, that is, November or December.

***fire on ... hearth*** — rather, *the stove* was burning before him. In the East neither chimneys nor ovens are used, but, in cold weather, a brazen vessel containing burning charcoal; when the wood has burned to embers, a cover is placed over the pot to make it retain the heat.

**23. *three or four leaves*** — not distinct leaves as in a book, but the consecutive spaces on the long roll in the shape of *doors* (whence the *Hebrew* name is derived), into which the writing is divided: as the books of Moses in the synagogue in the present day are written in a long parchment rolled round a stick, the writing divided into columns, like pages.

***pen-knife*** — the writer's knife with which the reed, used as a pen, was mended. "He" refers to the king (<sup>2872</sup>Jeremiah 36:22). As often as Jehudi read three or four columns, the king cut asunder the part of the roll read; and so he treated the whole, until all the parts read consecutively were cut and burnt; <sup>2874</sup>Jeremiah 36:24, "*all these words*," implies that the *whole* volume was read through, not merely the first three or four columns (<sup>1218</sup>1 Kings 22:8).

**24.** The king and his "servants" were more hardened than the "princes" and councillors (see on <sup>2872</sup>Jeremiah 36:12; <sup>2874</sup>Jeremiah 36:14; <sup>2876</sup>Jeremiah 36:16). Contrast the humble fear exhibited by Josiah at the reading of the law (<sup>2211</sup>2 Kings 22:11).

**25.** (See on <sup>2876</sup>Jeremiah 36:16). The "nevertheless" aggravates the king's sin; though God would have drawn him back through their intercession, he persisted: judicial blindness and reprobation!

**26. *Hammelech*** — not as *Margin*, "of the king." Jehoiakim at this time (the fifth year of his reign) had no grown-up son: Jeconiah, his successor, was then a boy of eleven (compare <sup>1239</sup>2 Kings 23:36, with <sup>1218</sup>2 Kings 24:8).

***hid them*** — (<sup>1812</sup>Psalms 31:20 83:3 <sup>2371</sup>Isaiah 26:20).

**27. *roll, and ... words*** — that is, the roll of words.

**28. *all the former words*** — It is in vain that the ungodly resist the power of Jehovah: not one of His words shall fall to the ground (<sup>4158</sup>Matthew 5:18 <sup>4185</sup>Acts 9:5 5:39).

**29. *say to Jehoiakim*** — not in person, as Jeremiah was “hidden” (<sup>-3433</sup>Jeremiah 36:26), but by the written word of prophecy.

***saying, Why*** — This is what the king had desired to be said to Jeremiah if he should be found; kings often dislike the truth to be told them.

**30. *He shall have none to sit upon the throne*** — fulfilled (<sup>-12218</sup>2 Kings 24:8, etc. <sup>-12312</sup>2 Kings 25:1-30). He had *successors*, but not directly of his posterity, *except his son Jeconiah*, whose three months’ reign is counted as nothing. Zedekiah was not the son, but the uncle of Jeconiah, and was raised to the throne in contempt of him and his father Jehoiakim (<sup>-3423</sup>Jeremiah 22:30).

***dead body ... cast out*** — (<sup>-34218</sup>Jeremiah 22:18,19).

***day ... heat ... night ... frost*** — There are often these variations of temperature in the East between night and day (<sup>-1334</sup>Genesis 31:40).

**32. *added besides ... many like words*** — Sinners gain nothing but additional punishment by setting aside the word of Jehovah. The law was similarly rewritten after the first tables had been broken owing to Israel’s idolatry (<sup>-12219</sup>Exodus 32:19,34:1).

# CHAPTER 37

## ⌋<sup>357</sup> JEREMIAH 37:1-21.

**HISTORICAL SECTIONS, THIRTY-SEVENTH THROUGH FORTY-FOURTH CHAPTERS. THE CHALDEANS RAISE THE SIEGE TO GO AND MEET PHARAOH-HOPHRA. ZEDEKIAH SENDS TO JEREMIAH TO PRAY TO GOD IN BEHALF OF THE JEWS: IN VAIN, JEREMIAH TRIES TO ESCAPE TO HIS NATIVE PLACE, BUT IS ARRESTED. ZEDEKIAH ABATES THE RIGOR OF HIS IMPRISONMENT.**

1. *Coniah* — curtailed from Jeconiah by way of reproach.

*whom* — referring to Zedekiah, not to Coniah (⌋<sup>1247</sup>2 Kings 24:17).

2. Amazing stupidity, that they were not admonished by the punishment of Jeconiah [CALVIN], (⌋<sup>462</sup>2 Chronicles 36:12,14)!

3. *Zedekiah ... sent* — fearing lest, in the event of the Chaldeans overcoming Pharaoh-hophra, they should return to besiege Jerusalem. See on ⌋<sup>201</sup>Jeremiah 21:1; that chapter chronologically comes in between the thirty-seventh and thirty-eighth chapter. The message of the king to Jeremiah here in the thirty-seventh chapter is, however, somewhat earlier than that in the twenty-first chapter; here it is while the issue between the Chaldeans and Pharaoh was undecided; there it is when, after the repulse of Pharaoh, the Chaldeans were again advancing against Jerusalem; hence, while Zephaniah is named in both embassies, *Jehucal* accompanies him here, *Pashur* there. But, as Pashur and Jehucal are both mentioned in ⌋<sup>381</sup>Jeremiah 38:1,2, as hearing Jeremiah's reply, which is identical with that in ⌋<sup>209</sup>Jeremiah 21:9, it is probable the two messages followed one another at a short interval; that in this ⌋<sup>373</sup>Jeremiah 37:3, and the answer, ⌋<sup>377</sup>Jeremiah 37:7-10, being the earlier of the two.

*Zephaniah* — an abettor of rebellion against God (⌋<sup>325</sup>Jeremiah 29:25), though less virulent than many (⌋<sup>329</sup>Jeremiah 29:29), punished accordingly (⌋<sup>352</sup>Jeremiah 52:24-27).

4. *Jeremiah ... not put ... into prison* — He was no longer in the prison court, as he had been (⌋<sup>331</sup>Jeremiah 32:2 33:1), which passages refer to the

beginning of the siege, not to the time when the Chaldeans renewed the siege, after having withdrawn for a time to meet Pharaoh.

5. After this temporary diversion, caused by Pharaoh in favor of Jerusalem, the Egyptians returned no more to its help (<sup><1224></sup>2 Kings 24:7). Judea had the misfortune to lie between the two great contending powers, Babylon and Egypt, and so was exposed to the alternate inroads of the one or the other. Josiah, taking side with Assyria, fell in battle with Pharaoh-necho at Megiddo (<sup><1229></sup>2 Kings 23:29). Zedekiah, seeking the Egyptian alliance in violation of his oath, was now about to be taken by Nebuchadnezzar (<sup><1483></sup>2 Chronicles 36:13 <sup><3375></sup>Ezekiel 17:15,17).

7. **shall return** — without accomplishing any deliverance for you.

8. (<sup><362></sup>Jeremiah 34:22).

9. **yourselves** — *Hebrew*, “souls.”

10. **yet ... they** — Even a few wounded men would suffice for your destruction.

11. **broken up** — “gone up.”

12. **Benjamin** — to his own town, Anathoth.

**to separate himself** — *Margin* translates, “to slip away,” from a *Hebrew* root, “to be smooth,” so, to slip away as a slippery thing that cannot be held. But it is not likely the prophet of God would flee in a dishonorable way; and “in the midst of the people” rather implies open departure along with others, than clandestine slipping away by mixing with the crowd of departing people. Rather, it means, *to separate himself*, or *to divide his place of residence*, so as to live partly here, partly there, without fixed habitation, going to and fro among the people [LUDOVICUS DE DIEU]. MAURER translates, “to take his portion thence,” to realize the produce of his property in Anathoth [HENDERSON], or to take possession of the land which he bought from Hanameel [MAURER].

13. **ward** — that is, the “guard,” or “watch.”

**Hananiah** — whose death Jeremiah predicted (<sup><2036></sup>Jeremiah 28:16). The grandson in revenge takes Jeremiah into custody on the charge of *deserting* (“thou fallest away,” <sup><3689></sup>Jeremiah 38:19 <sup><1218></sup>1 Samuel 29:3) to the enemy. His prophecies gave color to the charge (<sup><2010></sup>Jeremiah 21:9 <sup><384></sup>4).

15. **scribe** — one of the court secretaries; often in the East part of the private house of a public officer serves as a prison.

**16. *dungeon ... cabins*** — The prison consisted of a *pit* (the “dungeon”) with *vaulted* cells round the sides of it. The “cabins,” from a root, “to bend one’s self.”

**17. *secretly*** — Zedekiah was ashamed to be seen by his courtiers consulting Jeremiah (<sup><4828></sup>John 12:43 5:44 19:38).

***thou shalt be delivered*** — Had Jeremiah consulted his earthly interests, he would have answered very differently. Contrast <sup><4064></sup>Jeremiah 6:14 <sup><2900></sup>Isaiah 30:10 <sup><2630></sup>Ezekiel 13:10.

**18. *What*** — In what respect have I offended?

**19. *Where are now your prophets*** — The event has showed them to be liars; and, as surely as the king of Babylon has come already, notwithstanding their prophecy, so surely shall he return.

**20. *be accepted*** — rather, “Let my supplication *be humbly presented*” (see on <sup><2407></sup>Jeremiah 36:7), [HENDERSON].

***lest I die there*** — in the subterranean dungeon (<sup><2576></sup>Jeremiah 37:16), from want of proper sustenance (<sup><2472></sup>Jeremiah 37:21). The prophet *naturally* shrank from death, which makes his *spiritual* firmness the more remarkable; he was ready to die rather than swerve from his duty [CALVIN].

**21. *court of the prison*** — (<sup><2612></sup>Jeremiah 32:2 38:13,28).

***bakers’ street*** — Persons in the same business in cities in the East commonly reside in the same street.

***all the bread ... spent*** — Jeremiah had bread supplied to him until he was thrown into the dungeon of Malchiah, at which time the bread in the city was spent. Compare this verse with <sup><2489></sup>Jeremiah 38:9; that time must have been very shortly before the capture of the city (<sup><2416></sup>Jeremiah 52:6). God saith of His children, “In the days of famine they shall be satisfied” (<sup><4579></sup>Psalms 37:19 <sup><2356></sup>Isaiah 33:16). Honest reproof (<sup><2477></sup>Jeremiah 37:17), in the end often gains more favor than flattery (<sup><2183></sup>Proverbs 28:23).

# CHAPTER 38

## JEREMIAH 38:1-28.

### JEREMIAH PREDICTS THE CAPTURE OF JERUSALEM, FOR WHICH HE IS CAST INTO A DUNGEON, BUT IS TRANSFERRED TO THE PRISON COURT ON THE INTERCESSION OF EBED-MELECH, AND HAS A SECRET INTERVIEW WITH ZEDEKIAH.

All this was subsequent to his imprisonment in Jonathan's house, and his release on his interview with Zedekiah. The latter occurred *before* the return of the Chaldeans to the siege; the similar events in this chapter occurred *after* it.

1. *Jucal* — Jehucal (<sup>267B</sup>Jeremiah 37:3).

*Pashur* — (<sup>200E</sup>Jeremiah 21:1; compare <sup>200B</sup>Jeremiah 21:9 with <sup>267D</sup>Jeremiah 38:2). The deputation in <sup>200E</sup>Jeremiah 21:1, to whom Jeremiah gave this reply, if not identical with the hearers of Jeremiah (<sup>267D</sup>Jeremiah 38:1), must have been sent just before the latter "heard" him speaking the same words. *Zephaniah* is not mentioned here as in <sup>200E</sup>Jeremiah 21:1, but is so in <sup>267B</sup>Jeremiah 37:3. *Jucal* is mentioned here and in the previous deputation (<sup>267B</sup>Jeremiah 37:3), but not in <sup>200E</sup>Jeremiah 21:1. *Shephatiah* and *Gedaliah* here do not occur either in <sup>200E</sup>Jeremiah 21:1 or <sup>267B</sup>Jeremiah 37:3. The identity of his words in both cases is natural, when uttered, at a very short interval, and one of the hearers (*Pashur*) being present on both occasions.

*unto all the people* — They had free access to him in the court of the prison (<sup>267D</sup>Jeremiah 32:12).

2. *life ... a prey* — He shall escape with his life; though losing all else in a shipwreck, he shall carry off his life as his gain, saved by his going over to the Chaldeans. (See on <sup>200B</sup>Jeremiah 21:9).

4. Had Jeremiah not had a divine commission, he might justly have been accused of treason; but having one, which made the result of the siege certain, he acted humanely as interpreter of God's will under the theocracy, in advising surrender (compare <sup>200E</sup>Jeremiah 26:11).

**5. *the king is not he*** — Zedekiah was a weak prince, and now in his straits afraid to oppose his princes. He hides his dislike of their overweening power, which prevented him shielding Jeremiah as he would have wished, under complimentary speeches. “It is not right that the king should deny aught to such faithful and wise statesmen”; the king is not such a one as to deny you your wishes [JEROME].

**6. *dungeon*** — literally, the “cistern.” It was not a subterranean prison as that in Jonathan’s house (<sup>2875</sup>Jeremiah 37:15), but a pit or cistern, which had been full of water, but was emptied of it during the siege, so that only “mire” remained. Such empty cisterns were often used as prisons (<sup>3811</sup>Zechariah 9:11); the depth forbade hope of escape.

***Hammelech*** — (<sup>2825</sup>Jeremiah 36:26). His son followed in the father’s steps, a ready tool for evil.

***sunk in the mire*** — Jeremiah herein was a type of Messiah (<sup>3881</sup>Psalms 69:2,14). “I sink in deep mire,” etc.

**7. *Ebed-melech*** — The *Hebrew* designation given this Ethiopian, meaning “king’s servant.” Already, even at this early time, God wished to show what good reason there was for calling the Gentiles to salvation. An Ethiopian stranger saves the prophet whom his own countrymen, the Jews, tried to destroy. So the Gentiles believed in Christ whom the Jews crucified, and Ethiopians were among the earliest converts (<sup>4120</sup>Acts 2:10,41 8:27-39). Ebed-melech probably was keeper of the royal harem, and so had private access to the king. The eunuchs over harems in the present day are mostly from Nubia or Abyssinia.

**8. *went forth ... and spake*** — not privately, but in public; a proof of fearless magnanimity.

**9. *die for hunger in the place where he is; for ... no ... bread in ... city*** — (Compare <sup>2872</sup>Jeremiah 37:21). He had heretofore got a piece of bread supplied to him. “Seeing that there is the *utmost want of bread* in the city, so that even if he were at large, there could *no more* be regularly supplied to him, much less now in a place where none remember or pity him, so that he is likely to die for hunger.” “No more bread,” that is, no more left of the *public store* in the city (<sup>2872</sup>Jeremiah 37:21); or, *all but* no bread left anywhere [MAURER].

**10. *with thee*** — *Hebrew*, “in thine hand,” that is, at “thy disposal” (<sup>3841</sup>1 Samuel 16:2). “From hence,” that is, from the gate of Benjamin where the king was sitting (<sup>2837</sup>Jeremiah 38:7).

**thirty men** — not merely to draw up Jeremiah, but to guard Ebed-melech against any opposition on the part of the princes (<sup><280E></sup>Jeremiah 38:1-4), in executing the king's command. Ebed-melech was rewarded for his faith, love, and courage, exhibited at a time when he might well fear the wrath of the princes, to which even the king had to yield (<sup><2896></sup>Jeremiah 39:16-18).

**11. cast clouts** — “torn clothes” [HENDERSON].

**rotten rags** — “worn-out garments.” God can make the meanest things His instruments of goodness to His people (<sup><4027></sup>1 Corinthians 1:27-29).

**under ... armholes** — “under the joints of thine hands,” that is, where the fingers join the hand, the clothes being in order that the hands should not be cut by the cords [MAURER].

**13. court of ... prison** — Ebed-melech prudently put him there to be out of the way of his enemies.

**14. third entry** — The Hebrews in determining the position of places faced the *east*, which they termed “that which is in front”; the *south* was thus called “that which is on the right hand”; the *north*, “that which is on the left hand”; the *west*, “that which is behind.” So beginning with the *east* they might term it the *first* or principal entry; the *south* the *second* entry; the *north* the “*third* entry” of the outer or inner court [MAURER]. The third gate of the temple facing the palace; for through it the entrance lay from the palace into the temple (<sup><1105></sup>1 Kings 10:5,12). It was westward (<sup><1336></sup>1 Chronicles 26:16,18 <sup><3491></sup>2 Chronicles 9:11) [GROTIUS]. But in the future temple it is eastward (<sup><260E></sup>Ezekiel 46:1,2,8).

**15. wilt thou not hearken unto me** — Zedekiah does not answer this last query; the former one he replies to in <sup><2836></sup>Jeremiah 38:16. Rather translate, “Thou wilt not hearken to me.” Jeremiah judges so from the past conduct of the king. Compare <sup><2687></sup>Jeremiah 38:17 with <sup><2889></sup>Jeremiah 38:19.

**16. Lord ... made us this soul** — (<sup><2576></sup>Isaiah 57:16). Implying, “may my life (soul) be forfeited if I deceive thee” [CALVIN].

**17. princes** — (<sup><2818></sup>Jeremiah 39:3). He does not say “to the king himself,” for he was at Riblah, in Hamath (<sup><2815></sup>Jeremiah 39:5 <sup><1276></sup>2 Kings 25:6). “If thou go forth” (namely, to surrender; <sup><1242></sup>2 Kings 24:12 <sup><2936></sup>Isaiah 36:16), God foreknows future conditional contingencies, and ordains not only the end, but also the *means* to the end.

**19. afraid of the Jews** — more than of God (<sup><1025></sup>Proverbs 29:25 <sup><4102></sup>John 9:22 12:43).

**mock me** — treat me injuriously (<sup><0304></sup>1 Samuel 31:4).

**22. women** — The very evil which Zedekiah wished to escape by disobeying the command to go forth shall befall him in its worst form thereby. Not merely the Jewish deserters shall “mock” him (<sup><0309></sup>Jeremiah 38:19), but the very “women” of his own palace and harem, to gratify their new lords, will taunt him. A noble king in sooth, to suffer thyself to be so imposed on!

**Thy friends** — *Hebrew*, “men of thy peace” (see <sup><0300></sup>Jeremiah 20:10 <sup><0409></sup>Psalms 41:9, *Margin*). The king’s ministers and the false prophets who misled him.

**sunk in ... mire** — proverbial for, Thou art involved by “thy friends” counsels in inextricable difficulties. The phrase perhaps alludes to <sup><0306></sup>Jeremiah 38:6; a just retribution for the treatment of Jeremiah, who literally “sank in the mire.”

**they are turned ... back** — Having involved thee in the calamity, they themselves shall provide for their own safety by deserting to the Chaldeans (<sup><0309></sup>Jeremiah 38:19).

**23. children** — (<sup><0306></sup>Jeremiah 39:6 41:10). “wives ... children ... thou”; an ascending climax.

**24. Let no man know** — If thou wilt not tell this to the people, I will engage thy safety.

**25.** Kings are often such only in title; they are really under the power of their subjects.

**26. presented** — literally, “made my supplication to fall”; implying supplication with humble prostration (see on <sup><0307></sup>Jeremiah 36:7).

**Jonathan’s house** — (<sup><0305></sup>Jeremiah 37:15), different from Malchiah’s dungeon (<sup><0306></sup>Jeremiah 38:6). This statement was true, though not the whole truth; the princes had no right to the information; no sanction is given by Scripture here to Jeremiah’s representation of this being the cause of his having come to the king. Fear drove him to it. Compare <sup><0100></sup>Genesis 20:2,12; on the other hand, <sup><0902></sup>1 Samuel 16:2,5.

**left off speaking with** — *Hebrew*, “were silent from him,” that is, withdrawing from him they left him quiet (<sup><0008></sup>1 Samuel 7:8, *Margin*).

**28. he was there when Jerusalem was taken** — These words are made the beginning of the thirty-ninth chapter by many; but the accents and sense support *English Version*.

# CHAPTER 39

## JEREMIAH 39:1-18.

### JERUSALEM TAKEN. ZEDEKIAH'S FATE. JEREMIAH CARED FOR. EBED-MELECH ASSURED.

This chapter consists of two parts: the first describes the capture of Jerusalem, the removal of the people to Babylon, and the fate of Zedekiah, and that of Jeremiah. The second tells of the assurance of safety to Ebed-melech.

1. *ninth year ... tenth month* — and on the tenth day of it (<sup>383H</sup>Jeremiah 52:4 <sup>221K</sup>2 Kings 25:1-4). From <sup>384E</sup>Jeremiah 39:2, “eleventh year ... fourth month ... ninth day,” we know the siege lasted one and a half years, excepting the suspension of it caused by Pharaoh. Nebuchadnezzar was present in the beginning of the siege, but was at Riblah at its close (<sup>384B</sup>Jeremiah 39:3,6; compare <sup>387F</sup>Jeremiah 38:17).

3. *sat* — expressing military occupation or encampment.

*middle gate* — the gate from the upper city (comprehending Mount Zion) to the lower city (*north* of the former and much lower); it was into the latter (the *north* side) that the Chaldeans forced an entry and took up their position opposite the gate of the “middle” wall, between the lower and upper city. Zedekiah fled in the opposite, that is, the south direction (<sup>384E</sup>Jeremiah 39:4).

*Nergalsharezer, Samgarnebo* — proper names formed from those of the idols, Nergal and Nebo (<sup>273K</sup>2 Kings 17:30 <sup>240E</sup>Isaiah 46:1).

*Rab-saris* — meaning “chief of the eunuchs.”

*Rab-mag* — chief of the magi; brought with the expedition in order that its issue might be foreknown through his astrological skill. *Mag* is a Persian word, meaning “great,” “powerful.” The magi were a sacerdotal caste among the Medes, and supported the Zoroastrian religion.

4. *the king's garden* — The “gate” to it from the upper, city above was appropriated to the kings alone; stairs” led down from Mount Zion and the palace to the king's garden below (<sup>448S</sup>Nehemiah 3:15).

**two walls** — Zedekiah might have held the upper city longer, but want of provisions drove him to flee by the double wall south of Zion, towards the plains of Jericho (<sup>2805</sup>Jeremiah 39:5), in order to escape beyond Jordan to Arabia-Deserta. He broke an opening in the wall to get out (<sup>2922</sup>Ezekiel 12:12).

**5. Riblah** — north of Palestine (see <sup>2014</sup>Jeremiah 1:14 <sup>0641</sup>Numbers 34:11). Hamath is identified by commentators with Antioch, in Syria, on the Orontes, called Epiphania, from Antiochus Epiphanes.

**gave judgment upon him** — literally, “spake judgments with him,” that is, brought him to trial as a common criminal, not as a king. He had violated his oath (<sup>2673</sup>Ezekiel 17:13-19 <sup>1432</sup>2 Chronicles 36:13).

**6. slew ... sons ... before his eyes** — previous to his eyes being “put out” (<sup>2807</sup>Jeremiah 39:7); literally, “dug out.” The Assyrian sculptures depict the delight with which the kings struck out, often with their own hands, the eyes of captive princes. This passage reconciles <sup>2834</sup>Jeremiah 32:4, “his eyes shall behold his eyes”; with <sup>2623</sup>Ezekiel 12:13, “he shall not see Babylon, though he shall die there.”

**slew all ... nobles** — (<sup>2671</sup>Jeremiah 27:20).

**8. burned ... the houses** — (<sup>2822</sup>Jeremiah 52:12,13). Not immediately after the taking of the city, but in the month after, namely, the fifth month (compare <sup>2805</sup>Jeremiah 39:2). The delay was probably caused by the princes having to send to Riblah to know the king’s pleasure as to the city.

**9. remnant** — excepting the poorest (<sup>2830</sup>Jeremiah 39:10), who caused Nebuchadnezzar no apprehensions.

**those ... that fell to him** — the *deserters* were distrusted; or they may have been removed at their own request, lest the people should vent their rage on them as traitors, after the departure of the Chaldeans.

**rest ... that remained** — distinct from the previous “remnant”; *there* he means the remnant of those besieged in the city, whom Nebuchadnezzar spared; here, those scattered through various districts of the country which had not been besieged [CALVIN].

**10. left ... the poor ... which had nothing** — The poor have least to lose; one of the providential compensations of their lot. They who before had been stripped of their possessions by the wealthier Jews obtain, not only their own, but those of others.

**11.** Jeremiah's prophecies were known to Nebuchadnezzar through deserters (<sup>239D</sup>Jeremiah 39:9 38:19), also through the Jews carried to Babylon with Jeconiah (compare <sup>240E</sup>Jeremiah 40:2). Hence the king's kindness to him.

**12.** *look well to him* — *Hebrew*, “set thine eyes upon him”; provide for his well-being.

**13.** *Nebuzara-dan ... sent* — He was then at Ramah (<sup>240H</sup>Jeremiah 40:1).

**14.** *Gedaliah* — son of Ahikam, the former supporter of Jeremiah (<sup>239B</sup>Jeremiah 26:24). Gedaliah was the chief of the deserters to the Chaldeans, and was set over the remnant in Judea as one likely to remain faithful to Nebuchadnezzar. His residence was at Mizpah (<sup>240F</sup>Jeremiah 40:5).

*home* — the house of Gedaliah, wherein Jeremiah might remain as in a safe asylum. As in <sup>240E</sup>Jeremiah 40:1 Jeremiah is represented as “bound in chains” when he came to Ramah among the captives to be carried to Babylon, this release of Jeremiah is thought by MAURER to be distinct from that in <sup>240F</sup>Jeremiah 40:5,6. But he seems first to have been released from the court of the prison and to have been taken to Ramah, still in chains, and then committed in freedom to Gedaliah.

*dwelt among the people* — that is, was made free.

**15-18.** Belonging to the time when the city was not yet taken, and when Jeremiah was still in the court of the prison (<sup>238B</sup>Jeremiah 38:13). This passage is inserted here because it was now that Ebed-melech's good act (<sup>238D</sup>Jeremiah 38:7-12 <sup>205B</sup>Matthew 25:43) was to be rewarded in his deliverance.

**16.** *Go* — not literally, for he was in confinement, but figuratively.

*before thee* — in thy sight.

**17.** *the men of whom thou art afraid* — (<sup>238D</sup>Jeremiah 38:1,4-6). The courtiers and princes hostile to thee for having delivered Jeremiah shall have no power to hurt. Heretofore intrepid, he was now afraid; this prophecy was therefore the more welcome to him.

**18.** *life ... for a prey* — (See on <sup>239D</sup>Jeremiah 21:9; <sup>238E</sup>Jeremiah 38:2; <sup>240E</sup>Jeremiah 45:5).

*put ... trust in me* — (<sup>238D</sup>Jeremiah 38:7-9). Trust in God was the root of his fearlessness of the wrath of men, in his humanity to the prophet (<sup>239D</sup>1 Chronicles 5:20 <sup>237A</sup>Psalms 37:40). The “life” he thus risked was to be his

reward, being spared beyond all hope, when the lives of his enemies should be forfeited (“for a prey”).

# CHAPTER 40

## ☞ JEREMIAH 40:1-16.

### JEREMIAH IS SET FREE AT RAMAH, AND GOES TO GEDALIAH, TO WHOM THE REMNANT OF JEWS REPAIR. JOHANAN WARNS GEDALIAH OF ISHMAEL'S CONSPIRACY IN VAIN.

1. **word that came** — the heading of a new part of the book (the forty-first through forty-fourth chapters), namely, the prophecies to the Jews in Judea and Egypt after the *taking* of the city, blended with history. The prophecy does not begin till ☞Jeremiah 42:7, and the previous history is introductory to it.

**bound in chains** — Though released from the court of the prison (see on ☞Jeremiah 39:14), in the confusion at the burning of the city he seems to have been led away in chains with the other captives, and not till he reached Ramah to have gained full liberty. Nebuzara-dan had his quarters at Ramah, in Benjamin; and there he collected the captives previous to their removal to Babylon (☞Jeremiah 31:15). He in releasing Jeremiah obeyed the king's commands (☞Jeremiah 39:11). Jeremiah's "chains" for a time were due to the negligence of those to whom he had been committed; or else to Nebuzara-dan's wish to upbraid the people with their perverse ingratitude in imprisoning Jeremiah [CALVIN]; hence he addresses the people (*ye ... you*) as much as Jeremiah (☞Jeremiah 40:2,3).

2. The Babylonians were in some measure aware, through Jeremiah's prophecies (☞Jeremiah 39:11), that they were the instruments of God's wrath on His people.

3. **ye** — (See on ☞Jeremiah 40:1). His address is directed to the Jews as well as to Jeremiah. God makes the very heathen testify for Him against them (☞Deuteronomy 29:24,25).

4. **look well unto thee** — the very words of Nebuchadnezzar's charge (☞Jeremiah 39:12).

**all the land is before thee ... seemeth good** — (☞Genesis 20:15, Margin). Jeremiah alone had the option given him of staying where he pleased, when all the rest were either carried off or forced to remain there.

5. *while he was not yet gone back* — parenthetical. When Jeremiah hesitated whether it would be best for him to go, Nebuzara-dan proceeded to say, “Go, *then*, to Gedaliah,” (not as *English Version*, “Go back, *also*”), if thou preferrest (as Nebuzara-dan inferred from Jeremiah’s hesitancy) to stop here rather than go with me.

*victuals* — (<sup>2336</sup>Isaiah 33:16).

*reward* — rather, “a present.” This must have been a seasonable relief to the prophet, who probably lost his all in the siege.

6. *Mizpah* — in Benjamin, northwest of Jerusalem (<sup>2405</sup>Jeremiah 41:5,6,9). Not the Mizpah in Gilead, beyond Jordan (<sup>4707</sup>Judges 10:17). Jeremiah showed his patriotism and piety in remaining in his country amidst afflictions and notwithstanding the ingratitude of the Jews, rather than go to enjoy honors and pleasures in a heathen court (<sup>5812</sup>Hebrews 11:24-26). This vindicates his purity of motive in his withdrawal (<sup>2672</sup>Jeremiah 37:12-14).

7. *captains ... in the fields* — The leaders of the Jewish army had been “scattered” throughout the country on the capture of Zedekiah (<sup>2618</sup>Jeremiah 52:8), in order to escape the notice of the Chaldeans.

8. *Netophathite* — from Netophah, a town in Judah (<sup>1732</sup>2 Samuel 23:28).

*Maachathite* — from Maachathi, at the foot of Mount Hermon (<sup>4834</sup>Deuteronomy 3:14).

9. *Fear not* — They were afraid that they should not obtain pardon from the Chaldeans for their acts. He therefore assured them of safety by an oath.

*serve* — literally, “to stand before” (<sup>2400</sup>Jeremiah 40:10 <sup>2622</sup>Jeremiah 52:12), that is, to be at hand ready to execute the commands of the king of Babylon.

10. *Mizpah* — lying on the way between Babylon and Judah, and so convenient for transacting business between the two countries.

*As for me ... but ye* — He artfully, in order to conciliate them, represents the burden of the service to the Chaldeans as falling on *him*, while *they* may freely gather their wine, fruits, and oil. He does not now add that these very fruits were to constitute the chief part of the tribute to be paid to Babylon: which, though fruitful in corn, was less productive of grapes, figs, and olives [HERODOTUS, 1.193]. The grant of “vineyards” to the “poor” (<sup>2690</sup>Jeremiah 39:10) would give hope to the discontented of enjoying the best fruits (<sup>2402</sup>Jeremiah 40:12).

**11. *Jews ... in Moab*** — who had fled thither at the approach of the Chaldeans. God thus tempered the severity of His vengeance that a remnant might be left.

**13. *in the fields*** — not in the city, but scattered in the country (<sup><240></sup>Jeremiah 40:7).

**14. *Baalis*** — named from the idol Baal, as was often the case in heathen names.

***Ammonites*** — So it was to them that Ishmael went after murdering Gedaliah (<sup><2410></sup>Jeremiah 41:10).

***slay*** — literally, “strike thee in the soul,” that is, a deadly stroke.

***Ishmael*** — Being of the royal seed of David (<sup><240></sup>Jeremiah 41:1), he envied Gedaliah the presidency to which he thought himself entitled; therefore he leagued himself with the ancient heathen enemy of Judah.

***believed ... not*** — generous, but unwise unsuspectingness (<sup><2196></sup>Ecclesiastes 9:16).

**16. *thou speakest falsely*** — a mystery of providence that God should permit the righteous, in spite of warning, thus to rush into the trap laid for them! <sup><250></sup>Isaiah 57:1 suggests a solution.

# CHAPTER 41

## ◀340▶ JEREMIAH 41:1-18.

**ISHMAEL MURDERS GEDALIAH AND OTHERS, THEN FLEES TO THE AMMONITES. JOHANAN PURSUES HIM, RECOVERS THE CAPTIVES, AND PURPOSES TO FLEE TO EGYPT FOR FEAR OF THE CHALDEANS.**

**1. *seventh month*** — the second month after the burning of the city (◀352▶ Jeremiah 52:12,13).

***and the princes*** — not the nominative. And the princes *came*, for the “princes” are not mentioned either in ▶340▶ Jeremiah 41:2 or in ▶42552▶ 2 Kings 25:25: but, “Ishmael being of the seed royal and of the princes of the king” [MAURER]. But the *ten men* were the “princes of the king”; thus MAURER’S objection has no weight: so *English Version*.

***eat bread together*** — Ishmael murdered Gedaliah, by whom he was hospitably received, in violation of the sacred right of hospitality (◀3409▶ Psalm 41:9).

**2. *slew him whom the king of Babylon had made governor*** — This assigns a reason for their slaying him, as well as showing the magnitude of their crime (◀2721▶ Daniel 2:21 ▶6101▶ Romans 13:1).

**3. *slew all the Jews*** — namely, the attendants and ministers of Gedaliah; or, the military alone, about his person; translate, “*even* (not ‘and,’ as *English Version*) the men of war.” The main portion of the people with Gedaliah, including Jeremiah, Ishmael carried away captive (◀3410▶ Jeremiah 41:10,16).

**4. *no man knew it*** — that is, outside Mizpah. Before tidings of the murder had gone abroad.

**5. *beards shaven***, etc. — indicating their deep sorrow at the destruction of the temple and city.

***cut themselves*** — a heathen custom, forbidden (◀6927▶ Leviticus 19:27,28 ▶6441▶ Deuteronomy 14:1). These men were mostly from Samaria, where the ten tribes, previous to their deportation, had fallen into heathen practices.

**offerings** — unbloody. They do not bring sacrificial victims, but “incense,” etc., to testify their piety.

**house of ... Lord** — that is, the place where the house of the Lord had stood (<sup><259></sup>2 Kings 25:9). The place in which a temple had stood, even when it had been destroyed, was held sacred [PAPINIAN]. Those “from Shiloh” would naturally seek the house of the Lord, since it was at Shiloh it originally was set up (<sup><680></sup>Joshua 18:1).

**6. weeping** — pretending to weep, as they did, for the ruin of the temple.

**Come to Gedaliah** — as if he was one of Gedaliah’s retinue.

**7. and cast them into ... pit** — He had not killed them in the pit (compare <sup><2409></sup>Jeremiah 41:9); these words are therefore rightly supplied in *English Version*. “The pit” or cistern made by Asa to guard against a want of water when Baasha was about to besiege the city (<sup><1152></sup>1 Kings 15:22). The trench or fosse round the city [GROTIUS]. Ishmael’s motive for the murder seems to have been a suspicion that they were coming to live under Gedaliah.

**8. treasures** — It was customary to hide grain in cavities underground in troubled times. “We have treasures,” which we will give, if our lives be spared.

**slew ... not** — (<sup><2138></sup>Proverbs 13:8). Ishmael’s avarice and needs overcame his cruelty.

**9. because of Gedaliah** — rather, “near Gedaliah,” namely, those intercepted by Ishmael on their way from Samaria to Jerusalem and killed at Mizpah, where Gedaliah had lived. Song of Solomon <sup><475></sup>2 Chronicles 17:15, “next”; <sup><681></sup>Nehemiah 3:2, *Margin*, literally, as here, “at his hand.” “In the reign of Gedaliah” [CALVIN]. However, *English Version* gives a good sense: Ishmael’s reason for killing them was *because* of his supposing them to be connected with Gedaliah.

**10. the king’s daughters** — (<sup><2416></sup>Jeremiah 43:6). Zedekiah’s. Ishmael must have got additional followers (whom the hope of gain attracted), besides those who originally set out with him (<sup><2401></sup>Jeremiah 41:1), so as to have been able to carry off all the residue of the people. He probably meant to sell them as slaves to the Ammonites (see on <sup><2404></sup>Jeremiah 40:14).

**11. Johanan** — the friend of Gedaliah who had warned him of Ishmael’s treachery, but in vain (<sup><2408></sup>Jeremiah 40:8,13).

**12. the ... waters** — (<sup><4013></sup>2 Samuel 2:13); a large reservoir or lake.

**in Gibeon** — on the road from Mizpah to Ammon: one of the sacerdotal cities of Benjamin, four miles northwest of Jerusalem, now *Eljib*.

**13. glad** — at the prospect of having a deliverer from their captivity.

**14. cast about** — came round.

**16. men of war** — “The men of war,” stated in <sup><24HB></sup>Jeremiah 41:3 to have been slain by Ishmael, must refer to the military about Gedaliah’s person; “the men of war” here to those not so.

**eunuchs** — The kings of Judah had adopted the bad practice of having harems and eunuchs from the surrounding heathen kingdoms.

**17. dwelt** — for a time, until they were ready for their journey to Egypt (<sup><24HE></sup>Jeremiah 42:1-22).

**habitation to Chimham** — his “caravanserai” close by Beth-lehem. David, in reward for Barzillai’s loyalty, took Chimham his son under his patronage, and made over to him his own patrimony in the land of Beth-lehem. It was thence called the habitation of Chimham (Geruth-Chimham), though it reverted to David’s heirs in the year of jubilee. “Caravanserais” (a compound *Persian* word, meaning “the house of a company of travelers”) differ from our inns, in that there is no host to supply food, but each traveler must carry with him his own.

**18. afraid** — lest the Chaldeans should suspect all the Jews of being implicated in Ishmael’s treason, as though the Jews sought to have a prince of the house of David (<sup><24HE></sup>Jeremiah 41:1). Their better way towards gaining God’s favor would have been to have laid the blame on the real culprit, and to have cleared themselves. A tortuous policy is the parent of fear. Righteousness inspires with boldness (<sup><45BE></sup>Psalms 53:5 <sup><21BE></sup>Proverbs 28:1).

# CHAPTER 42

## ◀40▶ JEREMIAH 42:1-22.

**THE JEWS AND JOHANAN INQUIRE OF GOD, THROUGH JEREMIAH, AS TO GOING TO EGYPT, PROMISING OBEDIENCE TO HIS WILL. THEIR SAFETY ON CONDITION OF STAYING IN JUDEA, AND THEIR DESTRUCTION IN THE EVENT OF GOING TO EGYPT, ARE FORETOLD. THEM HYPOCRISY IN ASKING FOR COUNSEL WHICH THEY MEANT NOT TO FOLLOW, IF CONTRARY TO THEIR OWN DETERMINATION, IS REPROVED.**

**2. *Jeremiah*** — He probably was one of the number carried off from Mizpah, and dwelt with Johanan (◀4116▶ Jeremiah 41:16). Hence the expression is, “came near” (◀401▶ Jeremiah 42:1), not “sent.”

***Let ... supplication be accepted*** — literally, “fall” (see on ▶3617▶ Jeremiah 36:7; ▶3720▶ Jeremiah 37:20).

***pray for us*** — (◀1017▶ Genesis 20:7 ▶3304▶ Isaiah 37:4 ▶3156▶ James 5:16).

***thy God*** — (◀405▶ Jeremiah 42:5). The Jews use this form to express their belief in the peculiar relation in which *Jeremiah* stood to God as His accredited prophet. Jeremiah in his reply reminds them that God is *their* God (“*your* God”) as well as his as being the covenant people (◀404▶ Jeremiah 42:4). They in turn acknowledge this in ▶406▶ Jeremiah 42:6, “the Lord *our* God.”

***few of many*** — as had been foretold (◀10322▶ Leviticus 26:22).

**3.** They consulted God, like many, not so much to know what was right, as wishing Him to authorize what they had already determined on, whether agreeable to His will or not. So Ahab in consulting Micaiah (◀1223▶ 1 Kings 22:13). Compare Jeremiah’s answer (◀404▶ Jeremiah 42:4) with Micaiah’s (◀1224▶ 1 Kings 22:14).

**4. *I have heard*** — that is, I accede to your request.

***your God*** — Being His by adoption, ye are not your own, and are bound to whatever He wills (◀1095▶ Exodus 19:5,6; ▶4019▶ 1 Corinthians 6:19,20).

*answer you* — that is, through me.

*keep nothing back* — (<sup><0918></sup>1 Samuel 3:18 <sup><4111></sup>Acts 20:20).

**5. Lord be a true ... witness** — (<sup><0639></sup>Genesis 31:50 <sup><1887></sup>Psalms 89:37 <sup><6016></sup>Revelation 1:5 3:14 19:11).

**6. evil** — not moral evil, which God cannot command (<sup><5013></sup>James 1:13), but what may be *disagreeable* and *hard* to us. Piety obeys God, without questioning, at all costs. See the instance defective in this, that it obeyed only so far as was agreeable to itself (<sup><0951></sup>1 Samuel 15:3,9,13-15,20-23).

**7. ten days** — Jeremiah did not speak of himself, but waited God's time and revelation, showing the reality of his inspiration. Man left to himself would have given an immediate response to the people, who were impatient of delay. The delay was designed to test the sincerity of their professed willingness to obey, and that they should have full time to deliberate (<sup><1882></sup>Deuteronomy 8:2). True obedience bows to God's time, as well as His way and will.

**10. If ye ... abide** — namely, under the Babylonian authority, to which God hath appointed that all should be subject (<sup><2137></sup>Daniel 2:37,38). To resist was to resist God.

*build ... plant* — metaphor for, *I will firmly establish you* (<sup><2806></sup>Jeremiah 24:6).

*I repent ... of the evil* — (<sup><2488></sup>Jeremiah 18:8 <sup><6236></sup>Deuteronomy 32:36). *I am satisfied with the punishment I have inflicted on you*, if only you add not a new offense [GROTIUS]. God is said to "repent," when He alters His outward ways of dealing.

**12. show mercies** — rather, *I will excite* (in him) *feelings of mercy* towards you [CALVIN].

*cause you to return* — permit you to return to the peaceable enjoyment of the possessions from which you are wishing to withdraw through fear of the Chaldeans. By departing in disobedience they should incur the very evils they wished thereby to escape; and by staying they should gain the blessings which they feared to lose by doing so.

**13. if ye say**, etc. — avowed rebellion against God, who had often (<sup><1576></sup>Deuteronomy 17:16), as now, forbidden their going to Egypt, lest they should be entangled in its idolatry.

14. *where we shall see no war* — Here they betray their impiety in not believing God's promise (<sup>-3420J</sup>Jeremiah 42:10,11), as if He were a liar (<sup>-3150J</sup>John 5:10).

15. *wholly set your faces* — *firmly resolve* (<sup>-4158J</sup>Luke 9:51) in spite of all warnings (<sup>-3442J</sup>Jeremiah 44:12).

## JEREMIAH 42:16.

### **SWORD, WHICH YE FEARED, SHALL OVERTAKE YOU — THE VERY EVILS WE THINK TO ESCAPE BY SIN, WE BRING ON OURSELVES THEREBY.**

What our hearts are most set on often proves fatal to us. Those who think to escape troubles by changing their place will find them wherever they go (<sup>-3108J</sup>Ezekiel 11:8). The "sword" here is that of Nebuchadnezzar, who fulfilled the prediction in his expedition to Africa (according to MEGASTHENES, a heathen writer), 300 B.C.

17. *all the men* — excepting the "small number" mentioned (<sup>-3444J</sup>Jeremiah 44:14,28); namely, those who were forced into Egypt against their will, Jeremiah, Baruch, etc., and those who took Jeremiah's advice and fled from Egypt before the arrival of the Chaldeans.

18. *As mine anger*, etc. — As ye have already, to your sorrow, found Me true to My word, so shall ye again (<sup>-3172J</sup>Jeremiah 7:20 18:16).

*shall see this place no more* — Ye shall not return to Judea, as those shall who have been removed to Babylon.

19. *I have admonished* — literally, "testified," that is, solemnly admonished, having yourselves as My *witnesses*; so that if ye perish, ye yourselves will have to confess that it was through your own fault, not through ignorance, ye perished.

20. *dissembled in your hearts* — rather, "ye have used deceit against your (own) souls." It is not God, but yourselves, whom ye deceive, to your own ruin, by your own dissimulation (<sup>-3167J</sup>Galatians 6:7) [CALVIN]. But the words following accord best with *English Version*, *ye have dissembled in your hearts* (see on <sup>-3418J</sup>Jeremiah 42:3) towards me, *when ye sent me* to consult God for you.

21. *declared it* — namely, the divine will.

***I ... but ye*** — antithesis. *I* have done my part; *but ye* do not yours. It is no fault of mine that ye act not rightly.

**22. *sojourn*** — *for a time*, until they could return to their country. They expected, therefore, to be restored, in spite of God's prediction to the contrary.

# CHAPTER 43

## ⚔️ JEREMIAH 43:1-13.

### THE JEWS CARRY JEREMIAH AND BARUCH INTO EGYPT. JEREMIAH FORETELLS BY A TYPE THE CONQUEST OF EGYPT BY NEBUCHADNEZZAR, AND THE FATE OF THE FUGITIVES.

2. *Azariah* — the author of the project of going into Egypt; a very different man from the Azariah in Babylon (⚔️ Daniel 1:7 3:12-18).

*proud* — Pride is the parent of disobedience and contempt of God.

3. *Baruch* — He being the younger spake out the revelations which he received from Jeremiah more vehemently. From this cause, and from their knowing that he was in favor with the Chaldeans, arose their suspicion of him. Their perverse fickleness was astonishing. In the forty-second chapter they acknowledged the trustworthiness of Jeremiah, of which they had for so long so many proofs; yet here they accuse him of a lie. The mind of the unregenerate man is full of deceits.

5. *remnant ... returned from all nations* — (⚔️ Jeremiah 40:11,12).

6. *the king's daughters* — Zedekiah's (⚔️ Jeremiah 41:10).

7. *Tahpanhes* — (See on ⚔️ Jeremiah 2:16); Daphne on the Tanitic branch of the Nile, near Pelusium. They naturally came to it first, being on the frontier of Egypt, towards Palestine.

9. *stones* — to be laid as the foundation beneath Nebuchadnezzar's throne (⚔️ Jeremiah 43:10).

*clay* — mortar.

*brick-kiln* — Bricks in that hot country are generally dried in the sun, not burned. The palace of Pharaoh was being built or repaired at this time; hence arose the mortar and brick-kiln at the entry. Of the same materials as that of which Pharaoh's house was built, the substructure of Nebuchadnezzar's throne should be constructed. By a visible symbol implying that the throne of the latter shall be raised on the downfall of the

former. Egypt at that time contended with Babylon for the empire of the East.

**10. *my servant*** — God often makes one wicked man or nation a scourge to another (<sup><3328></sup>Ezekiel 29:18,19,20).

***royal pavilion*** — the rich tapestry (literally, “ornament”) which hung round the throne from above.

**11. *such as are for death to death*** — that is, the deadly plague. Some he shall cause to die by the plague arising from insufficient or bad food; others, by the sword; others he shall lead captive, according as God shall order it (see on <sup><3452></sup>Jeremiah 15:2).

**12. *houses of ... gods*** — He shall not spare even the temple, such will be His fury. A reproof to the Jews that they betook themselves to Egypt, a land whose own safety depended on helpless idols.

***burn ... carry ... captives*** — *burn* the Egyptian idols of wood, *carry* to Babylon those of gold and other metals.

***array himself with the land***, etc. — <sup><3495></sup>Isaiah 49:18 has the same metaphor.

***as a shepherd***, etc. — He shall become master of Egypt as speedily and easily as a shepherd, about to pass on with his flock to another place, puts on his garment.

**13. *images*** — statues or obelisks.

***Beth-shemesh*** — that is, “the house of the sun,” in *Hebrew*; called by the Greeks “Heliopolis”; by the Egyptians, “On” (<sup><1445></sup>Genesis 41:45); east of the Nile, and a few miles north of Memphis. Ephraim Syrus says, the statue rose to the height of sixty cubits; the base was ten cubits. Above there was a miter of a thousand pounds weight. Hieroglyphics are traced around the only obelisk remaining in the present day, sixty or seventy feet high. On the fifth year after the overthrow of Jerusalem, Nebuchadnezzar, leaving the siege of Tyre, undertook his expedition to Egypt [JOSEPHUS, *Antiquities*, 10.9,7]. The Egyptians, according to the Arabs, have a tradition that their land was devastated by Nebuchadnezzar in consequence of their king having received the Jews under his protection, and that it lay desolate forty years. But see on <sup><3328></sup>Ezekiel 29:2; <sup><3328></sup>Ezekiel 29:13.

***shall he burn*** — Here the act is attributed to *Nebuchadnezzar*, the instrument, which in <sup><3462></sup>Jeremiah 43:12 is attributed to God. If even the temples be not spared, much less private houses.

# CHAPTER 44

## JEREMIAH 44:1-30.

### JEREMIAH REPROVES THE JEWS FOR THEIR IDOLATRY IN EGYPT, AND DENOUNCES GOD'S JUDGMENTS ON THEM AND EGYPT ALIKE.

1. *Migdol* — meaning a “tower.” A city east of Egypt, towards the Red Sea (<sup><2442></sup>Exodus 14:2 <sup><0637></sup>Numbers 33:7).

*Noph* — Memphis, now Cairo (<sup><2126></sup>Jeremiah 2:16).

*Pathros* — Upper Egypt (<sup><2311></sup>Isaiah 11:11).

2. *evil ... upon Jerusalem* — If I spared not My own sacred city, much less shall ye be safe in Egypt, which I loathe.

3. *they went* — implying perverse assiduity: they *went out of their way* to burn incense (one species of idolatry put for all kinds), etc.

4. (<sup><4852></sup>2 Chronicles 36:15).

7. *now* — after so many warnings.

*commit ... this ... evil against your souls* — (<sup><2079></sup>Jeremiah 7:19 <sup><0468></sup>Numbers 16:38 <sup><2185></sup>Proverbs 8:36). It is not God whom you injure, but yourselves.

8. *in ... Egypt* — where they polluted themselves to ingratiate themselves with the Egyptians.

*ye be gone* — not compelled by fear, but of your own accord, when I forbade you, and when it was free to you to stay in Judea.

*that ye might cut yourselves off* — They, as it were, *purposely* courted their own ruin.

9. Have you forgotten how the *wickednesses* of your fathers were the source of the greatest calamities to you?

*their wives* — The Jews' worldly queens were great promoters of idolatry (<sup><1100></sup>1 Kings 11:1-8 15:13 16:31).

*the land of Judah* — They defiled the land which was holy unto God.

**10. *They ... you*** — The third person puts them to a distance from God on account of their alienating themselves from Him. The second person implies that God formerly had directly addressed them.

***humbled*** — literally, “contrite” (<sup><1517></sup>Psalm 51:17).

***neither ... feared*** — (<sup><184></sup>Proverbs 28:14).

**11. *Behold, I will set my face against you for evil*** — (See on <sup><1370></sup>Leviticus 17:10).

***and to cut off all Judah*** — that is, all the idolaters; <sup><3408></sup>Jeremiah 44:28 shows that some returned to Judea (compare <sup><3407></sup>Jeremiah 42:17).

**14. *none ... shall escape ... that they should return***, etc. — The Jews had gone to Egypt *with the idea* that a return to Judea, which they thought hopeless to their brethren in Babylon, would be an easy matter to themselves in Egypt: the exact reverse should happen in the case of each respectively. The Jews whom God sent to Babylon were there weaned from idolatry, and were restored; those who went to Egypt by their perverse will were hardened in idolatry, and perished there.

***have a desire*** — literally, “lift up (their) soul,” that is, their hopes (compare <sup><3027></sup>Jeremiah 22:27, *Margin*; <sup><1245></sup>Deuteronomy 24:15, *Margin*).

***none shall return but such as shall escape*** — namely, the “small number” (<sup><3408></sup>Jeremiah 44:28) who were brought by force into Egypt, as Jeremiah and Baruch, and those who, in accordance with Jeremiah’s advice, should flee from Egypt before the arrival of the Chaldeans (see on <sup><3407></sup>Jeremiah 42:17). CALVIN less probably refers the words to the return of the exiles in Babylon, which the Jews in Egypt regarded as hopeless.

**15. *their wives*** — The idolatry began with them (<sup><1104></sup>1 Kings 11:4 <sup><5124></sup>1 Timothy 2:14). Their husbands’ connivance implicated them in the guilt.

**16. *we will not*** — (<sup><3166></sup>Jeremiah 6:16).

**17. *whatsoever ... goeth ... out of our ... mouth*** — whatever *vow* we have uttered to our gods (<sup><3405></sup>Jeremiah 44:25 <sup><1223></sup>Deuteronomy 23:23 <sup><1136></sup>Judges 11:36). The source of all superstitions is that men oppose their own will and fancies to God’s commands.

***queen of heaven*** — (See on <sup><1718></sup>Jeremiah 7:18); Ashtaroth or Astarte.

***we ... fathers ... king***, etc. — The evil was restricted to no one class: all from the highest to the lowest shared the guilt.

**then had we plenty** — Fools attribute their seeming prosperity to God's connivance at their sin: but see <sup><3103></sup>Proverbs 1:32 <sup><2081></sup>Ecclesiastes 8:11-13. In fact, God had often chastised them for their idolatry (see <sup><0024></sup>Judges 2:14); but it is the curse of impiety not to perceive the hand of God in calamities.

**victuals** — Men cast away the bread of the soul for the bread that perisheth (<sup><0808></sup>Deuteronomy 8:3 <sup><0327></sup>John 6:27). So Esau (<sup><3216></sup>Hebrews 12:16).

**18.** They impute their calamities to their service of God, but these are often marks of His favor, not of wrath, to do His people good at their latter end (<sup><0816></sup>Deuteronomy 8:16).

**19. make ... cakes to worship her** — MAURER translates, "to form her image." *Crescent-shaped cakes* were offered to the moon. *Vulgate* supports *English Version*.

**without our men** — The women mentioned (<sup><3445></sup>Jeremiah 44:15); "a great multitude" here speak: we have not engaged in secret night orgies which might justly be regarded unfavorably by *our husbands*: our sacred rites have been open, and with their privacy. They wish to show how unreasonable it is that Jeremiah should oppose himself alone to the act of all, not merely women, but *men* also. The guilty, like these women, desire to shield themselves under the complicity of others. Instead of helping one another towards heaven, husband and wife often ripen one another for hell.

**21. The incense ... did not the Lord remember** — Jeremiah owns that they did as they said, but in retort asks, did not God repay their own evil-doing? Their very land in its present desolation attests this (<sup><3442></sup>Jeremiah 44:22), as was foretold (<sup><2511></sup>Jeremiah 25:11,18,38).

**23. law** — the moral precepts.

**statutes** — the ceremonial.

**testimonies** — the judicial (<sup><2911></sup>Daniel 9:11,12).

**25. Ye ... have both spoken with ... mouths, and fulfilled with ... hand** — ironical praise. They had pleaded their obligation to fulfill their vows, in excuse for their idolatry. He answers, no one can accuse you of unsteadiness as to your idolatrous vows; but steadfastness towards God ought to have prevented you from making, or, when made, from keeping such vows.

**ye will surely accomplish ... vows** — Jeremiah hereby gives them up to their own fatal obstinacy.

**26. *I have sworn*** — *I*, too have made a *vow* which I will fulfill. Since ye will not hear Me speaking and warning, hear Me *swearing*.

**by my great name** — that is, by Myself (<sup>01216</sup>Genesis 22:16), the greatest by whom God can swear (<sup>3063</sup>Hebrews 6:13,14).

**my name shall no more be named** — The Jews, heretofore, amidst all their idolatry, had retained the form of appeal to the name of God and the law, the distinctive glory of their nation; God will allow this no more (<sup>3319</sup>Ezekiel 20:39): there shall be none left there to profane His name thus any more.

**27. *watch over ... for evil*** — (<sup>3110</sup>Jeremiah 1:10 <sup>3106</sup>Ezekiel 7:6). The God, whose providence is ever solicitously watching over His people for good, shall solicitously, as it were, watch for their hurt. Contrast <sup>3613</sup>Jeremiah 31:28 32:41.

**28. *small number*** — (see on <sup>3444</sup>Jeremiah 44:14; and <sup>3427</sup>Jeremiah 42:17 <sup>3273</sup>Isaiah 27:13); compare “all-consumed” (<sup>3427</sup>Jeremiah 44:27). A *band easily counted*, whereas they were expecting to return triumphantly in large numbers.

**shall know** — most of them experimentally, and to their cost.

**whose words ... mine, or theirs** — *Hebrew*, “that from Me and them.” Jehovah’s words are His threats of destruction to the Jews; theirs, the assertion that they expected all goods from their gods (<sup>3447</sup>Jeremiah 44:17), etc. “Mine”; by which I predict ruin to them. “Theirs”; by which they give themselves free scope in iniquity.

**shall stand** — (<sup>3311</sup>Psalms 33:11).

**29. *this ... sign unto you*** — The calamity of Pharaoh-hophra (see on <sup>3440</sup>Jeremiah 44:30) shall be a sign to you that as he shall fall before his enemy, so you shall subsequently fall before Nebuchadnezzar (<sup>4148</sup>Matthew 24:8) [GROTIUS]. CALVIN makes the “sign” to be simultaneous with the event signified, not antecedent to it, as in <sup>0182</sup>Exodus 3:12. The Jews believed Egypt impregnable, so shut in was it by natural barriers. The Jews being “punished *in this place*” will be a sign that their view is false, and God’s threat true. He calls it “a sign *unto you*,” because God’s prediction is equivalent to the event, so that they may even now take it as a sign. When fulfilled it would cease to be a sign *to them*: for they would be dead.

**30. *Hophra*** — in HERODOTUS called Apries. He succeeded Psammis, the successor of Pharaoh-necho, who was beaten by Nebuchadnezzar at

Carchemish, on the Euphrates. Amasis rebelled against, and overcame him, in the city Sais.

*them that seek his life* — HERODOTUS, in curious accordance with this, records that Amasis, after treating Hophra well at first, was instigated, by persons who thought they could not be safe unless he were put to death, to strangle him. “His enemies” refer to Amasis, etc.; the words are accurately chosen, so as not to refer to Nebuchadnezzar, who is not mentioned till the end of the verse, and in connection with Zedekiah (<sup>30:18</sup>Ezekiel 20:3 30:21). Amasis’ civil war with Hophra pioneered the way for Nebuchadnezzar’s invasion in the twenty-third year of his reign [JOSEPHUS, *Antiquities*, 10.11].

# CHAPTER 45

## ◀45:1▶ JEREMIAH 45:1-5.

### JEREMIAH COMFORTS BARUCH.

After the completion of the prophecies and histories appertaining to the Jewish people and kings, Jeremiah subjoins one referring to an individual, Baruch; even as there are subjoined to the epistles of Paul addressed to churches, epistles to individuals, some of which were prior in date to the former. Afterwards follow the prophecies referring to other nations, closing the book [GROTIUS]. The date of the events here told is eighteen years before the taking of the city; this chapter in point of time follows the thirty-sixth chapter. Baruch seems to have been regularly employed by Jeremiah to commit his prophecies to writing (◀36:1▶ Jeremiah 36:1,4,32).

**1. *these words*** — his prophecies from the thirteenth year of Josiah to the fourth of Jehoiakim.

**3. *Thou didst say***, etc. — Jeremiah does not spare his disciple, but unveils his fault, namely, fear for his life by reason of the suspicions which he incurred in the eyes of his countrymen (compare ▶36:17▶ Jeremiah 36:17), as if he was in sympathy with the Chaldeans (▶43:3▶ Jeremiah 43:3), and instigator of Jeremiah; also ingratitude in speaking of his “grief,” etc., whereas he ought to deem himself highly blessed in being employed by God to record Jeremiah’s prophecies.

***added*** — rescued from the peril of my first writing (▶36:26▶ Jeremiah 36:26). I am again involved in a similar peril. He upbraids God as dealing harshly with him.

***I fainted*** — rather, “I am weary.”

***no rest*** — no quiet resting-place.

**4. *that which I have built ... planted I will pluck up*** — (▶5:5▶ Isaiah 5:5). This whole nation (the Jews) which I founded and planted with such extraordinary care and favor, I will overthrow.

**5. *seekest thou great things for thyself*** — Thou art over-fastidious and self-seeking. When My own peculiar people, a “whole” nation (▶45:4▶ Jeremiah 45:4), and the temple, are being given to ruin, dost *thou* expect

to be exempt from all hardship? Baruch had raised his expectations too high in this world, and this made his distresses harder to be borne. The frowns of the world would not disquiet us if we did not so eagerly covet its smiles. What folly to seek great things for ourselves here, where everything is little, and nothing certain!

***all flesh*** — the whole Jewish nation and even foreign peoples (<sup>253</sup>Jeremiah 25:26).

***but thy life ... for a prey*** — Esteem it enough at such a general crisis that thy life shall be granted thee. Be content with this boon of life which I will rescue from imminent death, even as when all things are given up to plunder, if one escape with aught, he has a something saved as his “prey” (<sup>219</sup>Jeremiah 21:9). It is striking how Jeremiah, who once used such complaining language himself, is enabled now to minister the counsel requisite for Baruch when falling into the same sin (<sup>211</sup>Jeremiah 12:1-5 15:10-18). This is part of God’s design in suffering His servants to be tempted, that their temptations may adapt them for ministering to their fellow servants when tempted.

# CHAPTER 46

## JEREMIAH 46:1-28.

### THE PROPHECIES, FORTY-SIXTH THROUGH FIFTY-SECOND CHAPTERS, REFER TO FOREIGN PEOPLES.

He begins with Egypt, being the country to which he had been removed. The forty-sixth chapter contains two prophecies concerning it: the discomfiture of Pharaoh-necho at Carchemish by Nebuchadnezzar, and the long subsequent conquest of Egypt by the same king; also the preservation of the Jews (<sup><2467></sup>Jeremiah 46:27,28).

1. General heading of the next six chapters of prophecies concerning the Gentiles; the prophecies are arranged according to nations, not by the dates.
2. Inscription of the first prophecy.

**Pharaoh-necho** — He, when going against Carchemish (Cercusium, near the Euphrates), encountered Josiah, king of Judah (the ally of Assyria), at Megiddo, and slew him there (<sup><2209></sup>2 Kings 23:29 <sup><4631></sup>2 Chronicles 35:20-24); but he was four years subsequently overcome at Carchemish, by Nebuchadnezzar, as is foretold here; and lost all the territory which had been subject to the Pharaohs west of the Euphrates, and between it and the Nile. The prediction would mitigate the Jews' grief for Josiah, and show his death was not to be unavenged (<sup><2247></sup>2 Kings 24:7). He is famed as having fitted out a fleet of discovery from the Red Sea, which doubled the Cape of Good Hope and returned to Egypt by the Mediterranean.

3. Derisive summons to battle. With all your mighty preparation for the invasion of Nebuchadnezzar, when ye come to the encounter, ye shall be “dismayed” (<sup><2445></sup>Jeremiah 46:5). Your mighty threats shall end in nothing.

**buckler** — smaller, and carried by the light-armed cavalry.

**shield** — of larger size, and carried by the heavily armed infantry.

4. **Harness the horses** — namely, to the war chariots, for which Egypt was famed (<sup><2147></sup>Exodus 14:7 15:4).

**get up, ye horsemen** — *get up* into the chariots. MAURER, because of the parallel “horses,” translates, “Mount the *steeds*.” But it is rather describing the successive steps in equipping the war chariots; first *harness* the horses to them, then let the horsemen *mount* them.

**brigandines** — cuirasses, or coats of mail.

5. (See on <sup>241B</sup>Jeremiah 46:3). The language of astonishment, that an army so well equipped should be driven back in “dismay.” The prophet sees this in prophetic vision.

**fled apace** — literally, “fled a flight,” that is, flee precipitately.

**look not back** — They do not even dare to look back at their pursuers.

6. **Let not** — equivalent to the strongest *negation*. *Let not* any of the Egyptian warriors think to *escape by swiftness or by might*.

**toward the north** — that is, in respect to Egypt or Judea. In the northward region, by the Euphrates (see <sup>241D</sup>Jeremiah 46:2).

7. **as a flood** — (<sup>241D</sup>Jeremiah 47:2 <sup>238E</sup>Isaiah 8:7,8 <sup>271D</sup>Daniel 11:22). The figure is appropriate in addressing Egyptians, as the Nile, their great river, yearly overspreads their lands with a turbid, muddy flood. So their army, swelling with arrogance, shall overspread the region south of Euphrates; but it, like the Nile, shall retreat as fast as it advanced.

8. Answer to the question in <sup>241F</sup>Jeremiah 46:7.

**waters ... moved like the rivers** — The rise of the Nile is gentle; but at the mouth it, unlike most rivers, is much agitated, owing to the sandbanks impeding its course, and so it rushes into the sea like a cataract.

9. Ironical exhortation, as in <sup>241B</sup>Jeremiah 46:3. The Egyptians, owing to the heat of their climate and abstinence from animal food, were physically weak, and therefore employed mercenary soldiers.

**Ethiopians** — *Hebrew, Cush*: Abyssinia and Nubia.

**Libyans** — *Phut*, Mauritania, west of Egypt (compare <sup>410F</sup>Genesis 10:6).

**shield** — The Libyans borrowed from Egypt the use of the long shield extending to the feet [XENOPHON, *Cyropaedia*, 6 and 7].

**Lydians** — not the Lydians west of Asia Minor (<sup>410D</sup>Genesis 10:22 <sup>350E</sup>Ezekiel 30:5), but the *Ludim*, an African nation descended from Egypt (Mizraim) (<sup>410E</sup>Genesis 10:13 <sup>350E</sup>Ezekiel 30:5 Na 3:9).

**handle and bend the bow** — The employment of *two* verbs expresses the manner of bending the bow, namely, the foot being pressed on the center, and the hands holding the ends of it.

**10. vengeance** — for the slaughter of Josiah (<sup><12239></sup>2 Kings 23:29).

**sword shall devour ... be ... drunk** — poetical personification (<sup><1632></sup>Deuteronomy 32:42).

**a sacrifice** — (<sup><23407></sup>Isaiah 34:6 <sup><25917></sup>Ezekiel 39:17). The slaughter of the Egyptians is represented as a sacrifice to satiate His righteous vengeance.

**11. Gilead ... balm** — (See on <sup><3432></sup>Jeremiah 8:22); namely, for curing the wounds; but no medicine will avail, so desperate shall be the slaughter.

**virgin** — Egypt is so called on account of her effeminate luxury, and as having never yet been brought under foreign yoke.

**thou shalt not be cured** — literally, “there shall be no cure for thee” (<sup><3413></sup>Jeremiah 30:13 <sup><3521></sup>Ezekiel 30:21). Not that the kingdom of Egypt should cease to exist, but it should not recover its former strength; the blow should be irretrievable.

**12. mighty ... stumbled against ... mighty ... fallen both together** — Their very multitude shall prove an impediment in their confused flight, one treading on the other.

**13-26.** Prophecy of the invasion of Egypt by Nebuchadnezzar, which took place sixteen years after the taking of Jerusalem. Having spent thirteen years in the siege of Tyre, and having obtained nothing for his pains, he is promised by God Egypt for his reward in humbling Tyre (<sup><35917></sup>Ezekiel 29:17-20 30:1-31:18). The intestine commotions between Amasis and Pharaoh-hophra prepared his way (compare *Note*, see on <sup><3901></sup>Isaiah 19:1, etc.).

**14. Declare ... publish** — as if giving sentence from a tribunal.

**Migdol ... Noph ... Tahpanhes** — east, south, and north. He mentions the three other quarters, but omits the west, because the Chaldeans did not advance thither. These cities, too, were the best known to the Jews, as being in their direction.

**sword shall devour round about thee** — namely, the Syrians, Jews, Moabites, and Ammonites (see on <sup><3480></sup>Jeremiah 48:1). The exhortation is ironical, as in <sup><3401></sup>Jeremiah 46:4,10 15.

**thy valiant men** — manuscripts, the *Septuagint*, and *Vulgate* read, “thy valiant one,” Apis, the bull-shaped Egyptian idol worshipped at Noph or Memphis. The contrast thus is between the palpable impotence of the idol and the *might* attributed to it by the worshippers. The *Hebrew* term, “strong,” or “valiant,” is applied to bulls (<sup><3222></sup>Psalm 22:12). Cambyses in his invasion of Egypt destroyed the sacred bull.

**drive them** — (Compare <sup><3415></sup>Jeremiah 46:5). The *Hebrew* word is used of a sweeping rain (<sup><1018></sup>Proverbs 28:3).

**16. He** — Jehovah.

**made many to fall** — literally, “multiplied the faller,” that is, fallers.

**one fell upon another** — (<sup><2416></sup>Jeremiah 46:6,12):even before the enemy strikes them (<sup><1037></sup>Leviticus 26:37).

**let us go again to our own people** — the language of the confederates and mercenaries, exhorting one another to desert the Egyptian standard, and return to their respective homes (<sup><2419></sup>Jeremiah 46:9,21).

**from the oppressing sword** — from the cruel sword, namely, of the Chaldeans (compare <sup><2538></sup>Jeremiah 25:38).

**17. there** — in their own country severally, the foreign soldiers (<sup><2416></sup>Jeremiah 46:16) cry, “Pharaoh is,” etc.

**but a noise** — He threatens great things, but when the need arises, he does nothing. His threats are mere “noise” (compare <sup><1031></sup>1 Corinthians 13:1). MAURER translates, “is ruined,” literally (in appropriate abruptness of language), “Pharaoh, king ... ruin.” The context favors *English Version*. His vauntings of what he would do when the time of battle should come have proved to be *empty sounds; he hath passed the time appointed* (namely, for battle with the Chaldeans).

**18.** As the mountains Tabor and Carmel tower high above the other hills of Palestine, so Nebuchadnezzar (<sup><2426></sup>Jeremiah 46:26) when he comes shall prove himself superior to all his foes. Carmel forms a bold promontory jutting out into the Mediterranean. Tabor is the higher of the two; therefore it is said to be “among the *mountains*”; and Carmel “by the *sea*.”

**the King ... Lord of hosts** — (<sup><2415></sup>Jeremiah 48:15); in contrast to “Pharaoh king of Egypt ... but a noise” (<sup><2417></sup>Jeremiah 46:17). God the true “*King ... the Lord of hosts*,” shall cause Nebuchadnezzar to come. Whereas Pharaoh shall not come to battle *at the time appointed*, notwithstanding his boasts, Nebuchadnezzar *shall come* according to the prediction of the *King*, who

has all *hosts* in His power, however ye Egyptians may despise the prediction.

**19. furnish thyself** — literally, “make for thyself vessels” (namely, to contain food and other necessities for the journey) for captivity.

**daughter** — so in <sup><2461></sup>Jeremiah 46:11.

**dwelling in Egypt** — that is, the *inhabitants* of Egypt, the Egyptians, represented as *the daughter of Egypt* (<sup><2463></sup>Jeremiah 48:18 <sup><2462></sup>2 Kings 19:21). “Dwelling” implies that they thought themselves to be securely fixed in their habitations beyond the reach of invasion.

**20. heifer** — wanton, like a fat, untamed heifer (<sup><3011></sup>Hosea 10:11). Appropriate to Egypt, where Apis was worshipped under the form of a fair bull marked with spots.

**destruction** — that is, a destroyer: Nebuchadnezzar. *Vulgate* translates, “a goader,” answering to the metaphor, “one who will *goad* the *heifer*” and tame her. The *Arabic* idiom favors this [ROSENMULLER].

**cometh ... cometh** — The repetition implies, it cometh surely and quickly (<sup><1913></sup>Psalms 96:13).

**out of the north** — (See on <sup><2014></sup>Jeremiah 1:14; <sup><2470></sup>Jeremiah 47:2).

**21.** Translate, “Also her hired men (mercenary soldiers, <sup><2419></sup>Jeremiah 46:9,16), who are in the midst of her like fatted bullocks, even they also are turned back,” that is, shall turn their backs to flee. The same image, “heifer ... bullocks” (<sup><2463></sup>Jeremiah 46:20,21), is applied to Egypt’s foreign mercenaries, as to *herself*. Pampered with the luxuries of Egypt, they become as enervated for battle as the natives themselves.

**22.** The cry of Egypt when invaded shall be like the hissing of a serpent roused by the woodcutters from its lair. No longer shall she loudly roar like a heifer, but with a low murmur of fear, as a serpent hissing.

**with axes** — the Scythian mode of armor. The Chaldeans shall come with such confidence as if not about to have to fight with soldiers, but merely to cut down trees offering no resistance.

**23. her forest** — (<sup><2108></sup>Isaiah 10:34).

**though it cannot be searched** — They cut down her forest, dense and unsearchable (<sup><3019></sup>Job 5:9 9:10 36:26) as it may seem: referring to the thickly set cities of Egypt, which were at that time a thousand and twenty. The *Hebrew* particle is properly, “for,” “because.”

**because** — the reason why the Chaldeans shall be able to cut down so dense a forest of cities as Egypt: they themselves are countless in numbers.

**grasshoppers** — locusts (<sup>406B</sup>Judges 6:5).

**25. multitude** — Hebrew, “Amon” (Na 3:8, *Margin*, “No-Ammon”), the same as Thebes or Diospolis in Upper Egypt, where Jupiter Ammon had his famous temple. In *English Version*, “multitude” answers to “populous No” (Na 3:8 <sup>406E</sup>Ezekiel 30:15). The reference to “their gods” which follows, makes the translation more likely, “Ammon of No,” that is, No and her idol Ammon; so the *Chaldee Version*. So called either from Ham, the son of Noah; or, the “nourisher,” as the word means.

**their kings** — the kings of the nations in league with Egypt.

**26. afterward ... inhabited** — Under Cyrus forty years after the conquest of Egypt by Nebuchadnezzar, it threw off the Babylonian yoke but has never regained its former prowess (<sup>446E</sup>Jeremiah 46:11 <sup>439E</sup>Ezekiel 29:11-15).

**27, 28.** Repeated from <sup>480D</sup>Jeremiah 30:10,11. When the Church (and literal Israel) might seem utterly consumed, there still remains hidden hope, because God, as it were, raises His people from the dead (<sup>461E</sup>Romans 11:15). Whereas the godless “nations” are consumed even though they survive, as are the Egyptians after their overthrow; because they are radically accursed and doomed [CALVIN].

# CHAPTER 47

## JEREMIAH 47:1-7.

### PROPHECY AGAINST THE PHILISTINES.

1. *Pharaoh-necho* probably smote Gaza on his return after defeating Josiah at Megiddo (<sup>465D</sup>2 Chronicles 35:20) [GROTIUS]. Or, *Pharaoh-hophra* (<sup>457B</sup>Jeremiah 37:5,7) is intended: probably on his return from his fruitless attempt to save Jerusalem from the Chaldeans, he smote Gaza in order that his expedition might not be thought altogether in vain [CALVIN] (Amos 1:6,7).

2. *waters* — (<sup>230D</sup>Isaiah 8:7). The Chaldeans from the north are compared to the overwhelming waters of their own Euphrates. The smiting of Gaza was to be only the prelude of a greater disaster to the Philistines. Nebuzara-dan was left by Nebuchadnezzar, after he had taken Jerusalem, to subdue the rest of the adjoining cities and country.

3. (Compare <sup>209B</sup>Jeremiah 4:29).

*fathers ... not look back to ... children* — Each shall think only of his own safety, not even the fathers regarding their own children. So desperate shall be the calamity that men shall divest themselves of the natural affections.

*for feebleness of hands* — The hands, the principal instruments of action, shall have lost all power; their whole hope shall be in their feet.

4. *every helper* — The Philistines, being neighbors to the Phoenicians of Tyre and Sidon, would naturally make common cause with them in the case of invasion. These cities would have no *helper* left when the Philistines should be destroyed.

*Caphtor* — the Caphtorim and Philistines both came from Mizraim (<sup>0103</sup>Genesis 10:13,14). The Philistines are said to have been delivered by God from Caphtor (<sup>309D</sup>Amos 9:7). Perhaps before the time of Moses they dwelt near and were subjugated by the Caphtorim (<sup>623</sup>Deuteronomy 2:23) and subsequently delivered. “The remnant” means here those still left after the Egyptians had attacked Gaza and Palestine; or rather, those left of the Caphtorim after the Chaldeans had attacked them previous to their attack on the Philistines. Some identify Caphtor with Cappadocia; GESENIUS, with

Crete (<sup><3256></sup>Ezekiel 25:16, Cherethims); KITTO, Cyprus. Between Palestine and Idumea there was a city Caparorsa; and their close connection with Palestine on the one hand, and Egypt (Mizraim, <sup><1103></sup>Genesis 10:13,14) on the other hand, makes this locality the most likely.

**5. Baldness ... cut thyself** — Palestine is represented as a female who has torn off her hair and cut her flesh, the heathenish (<sup><6933></sup>Leviticus 19:28) token of mourning (<sup><2437></sup>Jeremiah 48:37).

**their valley** — the long strip of low plain occupied by the Philistines along the Mediterranean, west of the mountains of Judea. The *Septuagint* reads *Anakim*, the remains of whom were settled in those regions (<sup><04339></sup>Numbers 13:28). Joshua dislodged them so that none were left but in Gaza, Gath, and Ashdod (<sup><6112></sup>Joshua 11:21,22). But the parallel (<sup><2477></sup>Jeremiah 47:7), “Ashkelon ... the *sea-shore*,” established *English Version* here, “Ashkelon ... their *valley*.”

**6. Jeremiah, in the person of the Philistines afflicting themselves** (<sup><2475></sup>Jeremiah 47:5), apostrophizes the “sword of the Lord,” entreating mercy (compare <sup><6244></sup>Deuteronomy 32:41 <sup><3213></sup>Ezekiel 21:3-5,9,10).

**up thyself** — *Hebrew*, “Gather thyself,” that is, retire or return.

**7. Jeremiah, from addressing the sword in the second person, turns to his hearers and speaks of it in the third person.**

**Lord ... given it a charge** — (<sup><2347></sup>Ezekiel 14:17).

**the sea-shore** — the strip of land between the mountains and Mediterranean, held by the Philistines: “their valley” (see on <sup><2475></sup>Jeremiah 47:5).

**there hath he appointed it** — (<sup><3109></sup>Micah 6:9). There hath He ordered it to rage.

# CHAPTER 48

## JEREMIAH 48:1-47.

### PROPHECY AGAINST MOAB.

It had taken part with the Chaldeans against Judea (<sup><1241></sup>2 Kings 24:2). Fulfilled by Nebuchadnezzar five years after the destruction of Jerusalem, when also he attacked Egypt (<sup><248></sup>Jeremiah 43:8-13) and Ammon (<sup><249></sup>Jeremiah 49:1-6). [JOSEPHUS, *Antiquities*, 10:9,7]. Jeremiah in this prophecy uses that of <sup><248></sup>Isaiah 15:1-16:14, amplifying and adapting it to his purpose under inspiration, at the same time confirming its divine authority. Isaiah, however, in his prophecy refers to the devastation of Moab by the Assyrian king, *Shalmaneser*; Jeremiah refers to that by *Nebuchadnezzar*.

1. **Nebo** — a mountain and town of Moab; its meaning is “that which fructifies.”

**Kiriathaim** — a city of Moab, *consisting of two cities*, as the word signifies; originally held by the Emim (<sup><144></sup>Genesis 14:5).

**Misgab** — meaning “elevation.” It lay on an elevation.

2. **no more praise** — (<sup><2364></sup>Isaiah 16:14).

**in Heshbon** — The foe having taken Heshbon, the chief city of Moab (<sup><248></sup>Jeremiah 48:45), in it *devise evil against Moab* (“it”) saying, Come,” etc. Heshbon was midway between the rivers Arnon and Jabbok; it was the residence of Sihon, king of the Amorites, and afterwards a Levitical city in Gad (<sup><1213></sup>Numbers 21:26). There is a play on words in the *Hebrew*, “*Heshbon, Hashbu.*” *Heshbon* means a place of *devising* or *counsel*. The city, heretofore called the *seat of counsel*, shall find other *counsellors*, namely, those who devise its destruction.

**thou shall be cut down ... Madmen** — rather, by a play on words on the meaning of *madmen* (“silence”), *Thou shalt be brought to silence*, so as well to deserve thy name (<sup><2351></sup>Isaiah 15:1). Thou shalt not dare to utter a sound.

3. **Horonaim** — the same as the city Avara, mentioned by PTOLEMY. The word means “double caves” (<sup><1210></sup>Nehemiah 2:10 <sup><2355></sup>Isaiah 15:5).

4. *little ones ... cry* — heightening the distress of the scene. The foe does not spare even infants.

5. *going up of Luhith ... going down of Horonaim* — Horonaim lay in a plain, Luhith on a height. To the latter, therefore, the Moabites would flee with “continual weeping,” as a place of safety from the Chaldeans. Literally, “Weeping shall go up upon weeping.”

6. They exhort one another to flee.

*heath* — or the juniper (see on <sup><3470></sup>Jeremiah 17:6). MAURER translates, “Be like one *naked* in the wilderness.” But the sense is, Live *in the wilderness like the heath*, or juniper; do not “*trust in*” walls (<sup><2487></sup>Jeremiah 48:7) [GROTIUS]. (Compare <sup><4246></sup>Matthew 24:16-18).

7. *thy works* — namely, fortifications built by thy work. Moab was famous for its fortresses (<sup><2488></sup>Jeremiah 48:18). The antithesis is to <sup><2486></sup>Jeremiah 48:6, “Be ... in the wilderness,” where there are no fortified cities.

*thou ... also* — like the rest of the surrounding peoples, Judah, etc.

*Chemosh* — the tutelary god of Moab (<sup><0229></sup>Numbers 21:29 <sup><07124></sup>Judges 11:24 <sup><1110></sup>1 Kings 11:7 <sup><2233></sup>2 Kings 23:13). When a people were vanquished, their gods also were taken away by the victors (<sup><2482></sup>Jeremiah 43:12).

8. *the valley ... shall perish* — that is, those dwelling in the valley.

9. *Give wings*, etc. — (<sup><4516></sup>Psalms 55:6). Unless it get wings, it cannot escape the foe. “Wings,” the *Hebrew* root meaning is a “flower” (<sup><1842></sup>Job 14:2); so the flower-like *plumage* of a bird.

10. *work of ... Lord* — the divinely appointed utter devastation of Moab. To represent how entirely this is God’s will, a curse is pronounced on the Chaldeans, the instrument, if they do it *negligently* (*Margin*) or by halves (<sup><0623></sup>Judges 5:23); compare Saul’s sin as to Amalek (<sup><0933></sup>1 Samuel 15:3,9), and Ahab’s as to Syria (<sup><1122></sup>1 Kings 20:42).

11. *settled on ... lees* — (See on <sup><2216></sup>Isaiah 25:6; <sup><3012></sup>Zephaniah 1:12). As wine left to settle on its own lees retains its flavor and strength (which it would lose by being poured from one vessel into another), so Moab, owing to its never having been dislodged from its settlements, retains its pride of strength unimpaired.

*emptied from vessel*, etc. — To make it fit for use, it used to be filtered from vessel to vessel.

*scent* — retaining the image: the bouquet or perfume of the wine.

**12. wanderers** — rather, “pourers out,” retaining the image of <sup><2481></sup>Jeremiah 48:11, that is, the Chaldeans who shall remove Moab from his settlements, as men pour wine from off the lees into other vessels. “His vessels” are the cities of Moab; the broken “bottles” the men slain [GROTIUS]. The *Hebrew* and the kindred *Arabic* word means, “to turn on one side,” so as to empty a vessel [MAURER].

**13. ashamed** — have the shame of disappointment as to the hopes they entertained of aid from Chemosh, their idol.

**Beth-el** — (<sup><1127></sup>1 Kings 12:27,29) — that is, *the golden calf* set up there by Jeroboam.

**15. gone up ... gone down** — in antithesis.

**out of her cities** — Rather, “Moab ... and her cities are gone up,” namely, pass away in the ascending smoke of their conflagration (<sup><1682></sup>Joshua 8:20,21 <sup><1724></sup>Judges 20:40). When this took place, the young warriors would *go down* from the burning citadels only to meet their own *slaughter* [GROTIUS]. *English Version* is somewhat favored by the fact that “gone out” is *singular*, and “cities” *plural*. The antithesis favors GROTIUS.

**16. near** — to the prophet’s eye, though probably twenty-three years elapsed between the utterance of the prophecy in the fourth year of Jehoiakim (<sup><1210></sup>2 Kings 24:2) and its fulfillment in the fifth year of Nebuchadnezzar.

**17. bemoan** — Not that Moab deserves pity, but this mode of expression pictures more vividly the grievousness of Moab’s calamities.

**all ye that know his name** — those at a greater distance whom the fame of Moab’s “name” had reached, as distinguished from those “about him,” that is, near.

**strong staff ... rod** — Moab is so called as striking terror into and oppressing other peoples (<sup><2304></sup>Isaiah 9:4 14:4,5); also because of its dignity and power (<sup><3102></sup>Psalms 110:2 <sup><3107></sup>Zechariah 11:7).

**18.** (<sup><2301></sup>Isaiah 47:1).

**dost inhabit** — now so securely settled as if in a lasting habitation.

**thirst** — Dibon, being situated on the Arnon, abounded in water (<sup><2339></sup>Isaiah 15:9). In sad contrast with this, and with her “glory” in general, she shall be reduced not only to shame, but to the want of the commonest necessities (“thirst”) in the arid wilderness (<sup><2486></sup>Jeremiah 48:6).

**19. Aroer** — on the north bank of the Arnon, a city of Ammon

(<sup><0819></sup>Deuteronomy 2:36 <sup><312></sup>12). As it was on “*the way*” of the Moabites who fled into the desert, its inhabitants “ask” what is the occasion of Moab’s flight, and so learn the lot that awaits themselves (compare <sup><0043></sup>1 Samuel 4:13,16).

**20.** Answer of the fleeing Moabites to the Ammonite inquirers

(<sup><3889></sup>Jeremiah 48:19 <sup><2342></sup>Isaiah 16:2). He enumerates the Moabite cities at length, as it seemed so incredible that all should be so utterly ruined. Many of them were assigned to the Levites, while Israel stood.

**in Arnon** — the north boundary between Moab and Ammon (<sup><3889></sup>Jeremiah 48:19 <sup><0213></sup>Numbers 21:13).

**21. plain** — (<sup><3883></sup>Jeremiah 48:8). Not only the mountainous regions, but also the plain, shall be wasted.

**Holon** — (Compare <sup><0653></sup>Joshua 15:51).

**Jahazah** — (<sup><0213></sup>Numbers 21:23 <sup><2504></sup>Isaiah 15:4).

**Mephaath** — (<sup><0338></sup>Joshua 13:18 <sup><2137></sup>21:37).

**22. Beth-diblathaim** — “the house of Diblathaim”: Almon-diblathaim (<sup><0836></sup>Numbers 33:46); “Diblath” (<sup><2063></sup>Ezekiel 6:13); not far from Mount Nebo (<sup><0836></sup>Numbers 33:46,47).

**23. Beth-gamul** — meaning “the city of camels.”

**Beth-meon** — “the house of habitation”: Beth-baalmeon (<sup><0337></sup>Joshua 13:17). Now its ruins are called Miun.

**24. Kerioth** — (<sup><0653></sup>Joshua 15:25 <sup><3012></sup>Amos 2:2).

**Bozrah** — (See on <sup><2346></sup>Isaiah 34:6); at one time under the dominion of Edom, though belonging originally to Moab (<sup><0373></sup>Genesis 36:33 <sup><2601></sup>Isaiah 63:1). Others think the Bozrah in Edom distinct from that of Moab. “Bezer” (<sup><0233></sup>Joshua 21:36).

**25. horn** — the emblem of strength and sovereignty: it is the horned animal’s means of offense and defense (<sup><1973></sup>Psalms 75:5,10 <sup><2018></sup>Lamentations 2:3).

**26. drunken** — (see on <sup><3432></sup>Jeremiah 13:12; <sup><3257></sup>Jeremiah 25:17). Intoxicated with the cup of divine wrath, so as to be in helpless distraction.

**magnified ... against ... Lord** — boasted arrogantly against *God's people*, that whereas Israel was fallen, Moab remained flourishing.

**wallow in ... vomit** — following up the image of a drunken man, that is, shall be so afflicted by God's wrath as to *disgorge* all his past pride, riches, and vainglory, and *fall* in his shameful abasement.

**he also ... derision** — He in his disaster shall be an object of derision to us, as we in ours have been to him (<sup>24827</sup>Jeremiah 48:27). Retribution in kind.

27. (<sup>3108</sup>Zephaniah 2:8).

**a derision** — The *Hebrew* has the article: referring to <sup>24826</sup>Jeremiah 48:26, "Was not Israel (*the whole nation*) *the* object of derision to thee?" Therefore, Moab is to suffer as formerly for its exultation over the calamity (<sup>4270</sup>2 Kings 17:6) of the ten tribes under the Assyrian Shalmaneser (<sup>2851</sup>Isaiah 15:1-16:14), so now for its exultation over the fall of Judah, under the Chaldean Nebuchadnezzar. God takes up His people's cause as His own (<sup>3018</sup>Obadiah 1:13-18).

**was he ... among thieves** — (<sup>2426</sup>Jeremiah 2:26). Proverbial. What did Israel do to deserve such derision? *Was he detected in theft*, that thou didst so *exult* over him *in speaking of him*? Though guilty before God, Israel was guiltless towards thee.

**since** — "since ever" thou didst begin speaking of him.

**skippedst for joy** — at Israel's calamity [CALVIN]; or, "thou didst *shake thy head*" in "derision" [MAURER].

28. Doves often have their nests in the "sides" of caverns. No longer shalt thou have cities to shelter thee: thou shalt have to flee for shelter to caves and deserts (<sup>4876</sup>Psalms 55:6,8 <sup>2124</sup>Song of Solomon 2:14).

29. **pride** — (<sup>2369</sup>Isaiah 16:6,7). Moab was the trumpeter of his own fame. Jeremiah adds "loftiness and arrogancy" to Isaiah's picture, so that Moab had not only not been bettered by the chastisement previously endured as foretold by Isaiah, but had even become worse; so that his guilt, and therefore his sentence of punishment, are increased now. Six times Moab's pride (or the synonyms) are mentioned, to show the exceeding hatefulness of his sin.

30. **I know** — Moab's "proud arrogancy" (<sup>2489</sup>Jeremiah 48:29) or "wrath," against My people, is not unknown to Me.

**it shall not be so** — The result shall *not* be so as he thinks: *his lies shall not so effect* what he aims at by them. CALVIN translates, "his lies are not right

(that is, his vauntings are vain because God will not give them effect); they shall not do so” as they project in their minds, for God will set at naught their plans.

**31. *I will cry ... for ... Moab*** — Not that it deserves pity, but the prophet’s “crying” for it vividly represents the greatness of the calamity.

***Kir-heres*** — Kir-hareseth, in <sup>2367</sup>Isaiah 16:7; see on <sup>2367</sup>Isaiah 16:7. It means “the city of potters,” or else “the city of the sun” [GROTIUS]. Here “the *men* of Kir-heres” are substituted for “the *foundations* of Kir-hareseth,” in <sup>2367</sup>Isaiah 16:7. The change answers probably to the different bearing of the disaster under Nebuchadnezzar, as compared with that former one under Shalmaneser.

**32. *with the weeping*** — with the same weeping as Jazer, now vanquished, wept with for the destruction of its vines. The same calamity shall befall thee, Sibmah, as befell Jazer. The *Hebrew* preposition here is different from that in <sup>2369</sup>Isaiah 16:9, for which reason MAURER translates, “with *more than* the weeping of Jazer.” *English Version* understands it of the *continuation* of the weeping; after they have wept for Jazer, fresh subject of lamentation will present itself for the wasting of the vine-abounding Sibmah.

***plants ... gone over ... sea of Jazer*** — As the *Septuagint* reads “*cities* of Jazer,” and as no traces of a lake near Jazer are found, the reading of *English Version* is doubtful. Retaining the present reading, we avoid the difficulty by translating [GROTIUS], “Thy plants (that is, *citizens*: alluding to the ‘vine’) are gone over the sea (that is, shall be transported beyond the sea to Cyprus, and such distant lands subject to Babylon; and this, too, in summertime), whereas Jazer (that is, the men of Jazer) reached the sea” (shore only, but are not transported beyond the sea); so that worse shall befall thee than befalls Jazer.

***spoiler*** — Nebuzara-dan.

**33. *the plentiful field*** — rather, “Carmel”: as the parallel “land of Moab” requires, though in <sup>2369</sup>Isaiah 16:10, it is “the plentiful field.” Joy is taken away as from the nearer regions (Canaan and Palestine), so from the farther “land of Moab”; what has happened to Judah shall befall Moab, too (<sup>2489</sup>Jeremiah 48:26,27) [MAURER]. However, Moab alone seems to be spoken of here; nor does the parallelism forbid “plentiful field” answering to “Moab.” *English Version* is therefore better.

***shouting*** — repeated; as at the conclusion of the vintage, men sing over and over again the same cry of joy. A shouting shall be heard, but not the

joyous shouting of laborers treading the grapes, but the terrible battle cry of the foe.

**34. *From the cry of Heshbon***, etc. — Those who fly from Heshbon on its capture shall continue the cry even as far as Elealeh ...&nbsp;. There will be continued cries in all quarters, from one end to the other, everywhere slaughter and wasting.

***as an heifer of three years old*** — Moab heretofore not having known foreign yoke, and in its full strength, is compared to an heifer of three years old, never yet yoked, nor as yet worn out with many birth-givings (compare *Note*, see on <sup><2315></sup>Isaiah 15:5).

***waters ... of Nimrim*** — that is, the *well-watered* and therefore luxuriant pastures of Nimrim.

***desolate*** — The *Hebrew* is stronger: not merely shall be “desolate,” but *desolation* itself multiplied: *plural*, “desolations.” The most fertile tracts shall be dried up.

**35. *him that offereth*** — namely, *whole burnt offerings* as the *Hebrew* requires [GROTIUS]. Compare the awful burnt offering of the king of Moab (<sup><1012></sup>2 Kings 3:27).

***high places*** — (<sup><2362></sup>Isaiah 16:12).

**36.** (See on <sup><2317></sup>Isaiah 15:7; <sup><2311></sup>Isaiah 16:11).

***like pipes*** — a plaintive instrument, therefore used at funerals and in general mourning.

***riches ... gotten*** — literally, *the abundance ... that which is over and above* the necessities of life. GROTIUS translates, “They who have been left remaining shall perish”; they who have not been slain by the enemy shall perish by disease and famine.

**37.** (See on <sup><2415></sup>Jeremiah 47:5; <sup><2312></sup>Isaiah 15:2,3).

***upon all ... hands*** — that is, arms, in which such cuttings used to be made in token of grief (compare <sup><2817></sup>Zechariah 13:6).

**38. *vessel ... no pleasure*** — (See <sup><2228></sup>Jeremiah 22:28); a vessel cast aside by the potter as refuse, not answering his design.

**39. *it*** — Moab.

***How ... how*** — prodigious, yet sure to happen.

*turned the back* — not daring to show her face.

*derision ... dismaying to all* — a derision to some; a dismaying to others in beholding such a judgment of God, fearing a like fate for themselves.

40. *he* — Nebuzara-dan, the captain of Nebuchadnezzar.

*as ... eagle* — not to bear them “on eagles’ wings” (<sup><1294></sup>Exodus 19:4 <sup><1521></sup>Deuteronomy 32:11,12), as God does His people, but to pounce on them as a prey (<sup><2422></sup>Jeremiah 49:22 <sup><1534></sup>Deuteronomy 28:49 <sup><3108></sup>Habakkuk 1:8).

41. *as ... woman in ... pangs* — (<sup><2138></sup>Isaiah 13:8).

42. (See on <sup><2483></sup>Jeremiah 48:26).

43, 44. (See on <sup><2347></sup>Isaiah 24:17; <sup><2348></sup>Isaiah 24:18).

44. When thou thinkest thou hast escaped one kind of danger, a fresh one will start up.

45. *under ... shadow of Heshbon* — They thought that they would be safe in Heshbon.

*because of the force* — that is, “they that fled because of the force” of *the enemy*: they that fled *from* it. GLASSIUS translates, “through want of strength.” So the *Hebrew* particle is translated (<sup><1942></sup>Psalm 109:24), “faileth of fatness,” that is, “faileth through *want* of fatness”; also <sup><2749></sup>Lamentations 4:9.

*but a fire*, etc. — copied in part from Sihon’s hymn of victory (<sup><1017></sup>Numbers 21:27,28). The old “proverb” shall hold good again. As in ancient times Sihon, king of the Amorites, issued forth from his city, Heshbon, as a devouring “flame” and consumed Moab, so now the Chaldeans, making Heshbon their starting-point, shall advance to the destruction of Moab.

*midst of Sihon* — that is, the city of Sihon.

*corner of Moab* — that is, Moab from one corner to the other.

*crown of ... head* — the most *elevated* points of Moab. Making some alterations, he here copies Balaam’s prophecy (<sup><1047></sup>Numbers 24:17). *Margin* there translates “princes” for corners; if so, “crown of ... head” here refers to the nobles.

*tumultuous ones* — *sons of tumult*; those who have tumultuously revolted from Babylon. Heshbon passed from the Amorite to the Israelite sway.

Moab had wrested it from Israel and helped the Chaldeans against the Jews; but revolting from Babylon, they brought ruin on themselves in turn.

**46.** Copied from <sup><0213></sup>Numbers 21:29.

**47.** Restoration promised to Moab, for the sake of righteous Lot, their progenitor (<sup><0137></sup>Genesis 19:37 <sup><0206></sup>Exodus 20:6 <sup><0880></sup>Psalms 89:30-33).

Compare as to Egypt, <sup><0466></sup>Jeremiah 46:26; Ammon, <sup><0406></sup>Jeremiah 49:6; Elam, <sup><0439></sup>Jeremiah 49:39. Gospel blessings, temporal and spiritual, to the Gentiles in the last days, are intended.

# CHAPTER 49

## JEREMIAH 49:1-39.

### PREDICTIONS AS TO AMMON, IDUMEA, DAMASCUS, KEDAR, HAZOR, AND ELAM.

The event of the prophecy as to Ammon preceded that as to Moab (see on <sup><440></sup>Jeremiah 49:3); and in <sup><300></sup>Ezekiel 21:26-28, the destruction of Ammon is subjoined to the deposition of Zedekiah.

**1. *Hath Israel ... no heir?*** — namely, to occupy the land of Gad, after it itself has been carried away captive by Shalmaneser. Ammon, like Moab, descended from Lot, lay north of Moab, from which it was separated by the river Arnon, and east of Reuben and Gad (<sup><613></sup>Joshua 13:24,25) on the same side of Jordan. It seized on Gad when Israel was carried captive. Judah was by the right of kindred the heir, not Ammon; but Ammon joined with Nebuchadnezzar against Judah and Jerusalem (<sup><124></sup>2 Kings 24:2) and exulted over its fall (<sup><880></sup>Psalms 83:4-7,8 <sup><310></sup>Zephaniah 2:8,9). It had already, in the days of Jeroboam, in Israel's affliction, tried to "enlarge its border" (<sup><124></sup>2 Kings 14:26 <sup><300></sup>Amos 1:1,13).

***their king*** — (<sup><300></sup>Amos 1:15); referring to Melchom, their tutelary idol (<sup><300></sup>Zephaniah 1:5); and so the *Septuagint* reads it here as a proper name (<sup><110></sup>1 Kings 11:5,33 <sup><123></sup>2 Kings 23:13). The Ammonite god is said to do what *they* do, namely, occupy the Israelite land of Gad. To Jehovah, the theocratic "King" of Israel, the land belonged of right; so that their Molech or Melchom was a usurper-*king*.

***his people*** — the people of Melchom, "their king." Compare "people of Chemosh," <sup><486></sup>Jeremiah 48:46.

**2. *Rabbah*** — "the great," metropolis of Ammon (<sup><102></sup>2 Samuel 12:26-30). Its destruction is foretold also in <sup><325></sup>Ezekiel 25:5 <sup><300></sup>Amos 1:14,15.

***her daughters*** — the towns and villages, dependencies of the metropolis (<sup><655></sup>Joshua 15:45).

***shall ... be heir*** — shall *possess* those who possessed him. The full accomplishment of this is still future; partially fulfilled under the Maccabees (I Maccabees 5:6).

3. **Heshbon ... Ai** — Nebuchadnezzar, coming from the north, first attacked Ammon, then its brother and neighbor, Moab. As Ai of Ammon had already suffered destruction, Heshbon of Moab being near it might well fear the same fate.

**hedges** — Their cities being destroyed, the outcasts have no place of shelter save behind the “hedges” of vineyards and gardens; or else the *enclosures* of their villages.

**their king** — Melchom, the idol, as the mention of “his priests” shows (compare <sup><2487></sup>Jeremiah 48:7).

4. **thy flowing valley** — rather, “thy valley shall flow,” namely with the blood of the slain; in sad contrast to their “valleys” in which they had heretofore “gloried,” as *flowing* with milk and honey [GROTIUS]. Or else, as *Margin*, “shall flow away.”

**backsliding** — apostate from Jehovah, the God of their father Lot, to Molech.

**treasures** — her resources for resisting the foe.

**Who shall**, etc. — Who can come ... (<sup><2213></sup>Jeremiah 21:13).

5. **every man right forth** — whithersoever chance may lead him (<sup><2465></sup>Jeremiah 46:5 <sup><0197></sup>Genesis 19:17); straight *before him*, onwards at random (<sup><3043></sup>Amos 4:3).

**none ... gather up him**, etc. — There shall be none to *gather* together the *wandering* fugitives, so as to care for them and restore them to their own homes.

6. (Compare <sup><2487></sup>Jeremiah 48:47). For the sake of “righteous” Lot their progenitor. Partially fulfilled under Cyrus; in gospel times more fully.

7. **Concerning Edom** — a distinct prophecy, copied in part from Obadiah, but with the freedom of one himself inspired and foretelling a later calamity. Obadiah’s was fulfilled probably in Sennacherib’s time (compare <sup><2345></sup>Isaiah 34:5 <sup><3001></sup>Amos 1:11); Jeremiah’s about the same time as his preceding prophecies (<sup><2492></sup>Jeremiah 49:12 <sup><2522></sup>Ezekiel 25:12).

**wisdom** — for which the Arabs and the people of Teman (a city of Edom) in particular, were famed (<sup><0335></sup>Genesis 36:15 <sup><1030></sup>1 Kings 4:30; see Job, everywhere; <sup><3008></sup>Obadiah 1:8).

**vanished** — literally “poured out,” that is, exhausted (compare <sup>230B</sup>Isaiah 19:3, *Margin*) [MAURER]. Or, as the kindred Ethiopic word means, “worn out” [LUDOVICUS DE DIEU].

8. **turn** — namely, your backs in flight.

**dwell deep** — in deep defiles and caves [GROTIUS], which abound in Idumea. Others refer it to the Arab custom of retiring into the depth of the desert when avoiding an offended foe (<sup>240B</sup>Jeremiah 49:30).

**Dedan** — a tribe bordering on and made subject by Idumea; descended from Jokshan, son of Abraham and Keturah (<sup>123A</sup>Genesis 25:1-3).

**Esau** — The naming of Edom’s progenitor, reprobated by God, recalls the remembrance of the old curse on him for his profanity, both his sin and its punishment being perpetuated in his descendants (<sup>326</sup>Hebrews 12:16,17).

9. (<sup>305B</sup>Obadiah 1:5). *Grape gatherers, yea even thieves, leave something behind them; but the Chaldeans will sweep Idumea clean of everything.*

10. Edom became politically extinct after the time of the Romans.

**uncovered his secret places** — where he hid himself (<sup>240B</sup>Jeremiah 49:8) and his treasures (<sup>248B</sup>Isaiah 45:3). I have caused that nothing should be so hidden as that the conqueror should not find it.

**brethren** — Ammon.

**neighbors** — the Philistines.

11. Thy fatherless and widows must rest their hope in God alone, as none of the adult males shall be left alive, so desperate will be the affairs of Edom. The verse also, besides this threat, implies a promise of mercy to Esau in God’s good time, as there was to Moab and Ammon (<sup>240B</sup>Jeremiah 49:6 <sup>248B</sup>Jeremiah 48:47); the extinction of the adult males is the prominent idea (compare <sup>240B</sup>Jeremiah 49:12).

12. (Compare <sup>225B</sup>Jeremiah 25:15,16,29).

**they whose judgment was not to drink of the cup** — the Jews to whom, by virtue of the covenant relation, it did not belong to drink the cup. It might have been expected that they would be spared. He regards not the merits of the Jews, for they were as bad or worse than others: but the grace and adoption of God; it is just and natural (“judgment”) that God should pardon His sons sooner than aliens [CALVIN].

13. **Bozrah** — (See on <sup>240B</sup>Jeremiah 48:24).

14. (<sup>3000</sup>Obadiah 1:1-3).

*ambassador ... unto the heathen* — a messenger from God to stir up the Chaldeans against Edom.

15. David and Joab had already humbled Edom (<sup>4084</sup>2 Samuel 8:14).

16. *terribleness* — the terror which thou didst inspire into others.

*deceived thee* — rendered thee proudly confident, as if none would dare to assail thee.

*dwellest in ... rock* — Petra, the chief of Idumea, was cut in the rocks; its ruins are very remarkable. The whole south of Idumea abounds in cave dwellings and rocks.

*though ... nest ... eagle* — (<sup>4897</sup>Job 39:27 <sup>3008</sup>Obadiah 1:3,4). The eagle builds its nest in the highest craggy eyry.

17. (Compare <sup>4081</sup>1 Kings 9:8).

18. (<sup>2804</sup>Jeremiah 50:40 <sup>4623</sup>Deuteronomy 29:23 <sup>3041</sup>Amos 4:11).

*no man shall abide there* — that is, of the Idumeans. The Romans had a garrison there.

19. *he* — Nebuchadnezzar, or Nebuzara-dan; the name would at once suggest itself to the minds of the hearers (<sup>2489</sup>Jeremiah 48:40 46:18).

*swelling* — as a lion which the overflow of the Jordan forced out of his lair on the banks, to ascend the neighboring heights [CALVIN]. See as to the translation, “pride of the Jordan,” see on <sup>2426</sup>Jeremiah 12:5.

*habitation of ... strong* — the fastnesses of Idumea (compare <sup>0221</sup>Numbers 24:21). MAURER translates, “An ever verdant (literally, ‘perennial’) pasturage,” that is, Idumea heretofore having enjoyed uninterrupted tranquillity; so in <sup>2440</sup>Jeremiah 49:20 the image is retained, the Idumeans being compared to “a flock,” and their king to “a shepherd,” in this verse, and the enemy to “a lion” (compare <sup>2807</sup>Jeremiah 50:17-19). *English Version* accords more with the *Hebrew*.

*suddenly* — “in the twinkling of an eye,” as the *Hebrew* implies.

*Vim ... her* — I will make *Nebuzara-dan* enter *Idumea*, and then, having in the twinkling of an eye effected the conquest, go away *speedily*: elsewhere. Instead of “but,” translate, “for.” GROTIUS translates, “run upon her,” or “to her,” instead of “run away from her.” MAURER understands it, “I will make him (the Idumean) run away from her” (that is, from his own

land); the similar change of reference of the pronouns (<sup>2604</sup>Jeremiah 50:44) favors this.

*who is a chosen man*, etc. — God calls the *choicest* warriors to Him, to set “*over*” the work of devastating Idumea. God will surely execute His purpose, for He can call forth from all sides the agents He chooses.

*who is like me?* — (<sup>1051</sup>Exodus 15:11).

*who will appoint me the time?* — namely, for entering into a trial in judgment with Me (see *Margin*). Image from law courts (<sup>3099</sup>Job 9:19).

*shepherd* — leader of the Idumeans; following up the previous image, “a lion”; no Idumean shepherd shall withstand the lion sent by Jehovah (<sup>3410</sup>Job 41:10), or save the Idumean flock.

**20. *least of the flock*** — the weakest and humblest of the Chaldean host. Compare <sup>2063</sup>Jeremiah 6:3, where the hostile leaders and their hosts are called “shepherds and their flocks.”

*draw ... out* — “shall drag them away captive” [GROTIUS]; *shall drag them to and fro*, as a lion (<sup>3409</sup>Jeremiah 49:19) does feeble sheep [MAURER].

*with them* — that is, the habitation which they possess.

**21. *was heard in*** — that is, shall be heard *at*.

*Red Sea* — a considerable distance from Idumea; though the district at the Elantic bay of the Red Sea originally belonged to Idumea, and the sea itself was called from Edom, that is, “red” (<sup>1023</sup>Genesis 25:30, *Margin*). Others translate, “the weedy sea” (*Margin*), and derive the name, “Red Sea,” from its red weeds; the former view is preferable.

**22.** (Compare <sup>2480</sup>Jeremiah 48:40,41).

*Bozrah* — (See on <sup>2483</sup>Jeremiah 48:24).

**23.** Prophecy as to Damascus, etc. (<sup>2370</sup>Isaiah 17:1 10:9). The *kingdom* of Damascus was destroyed by Assyria, but the *city* revived, and it is as to the latter Jeremiah now prophesies. The fulfillment was probably about five years after the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar [JOSEPHUS, *Antiquities*, 10.9,7].

*Hamath is confounded* — at the tidings of the overthrow of the neighboring Damascus.

**on the sea** — that is, at the sea; the dwellers there are alarmed. Other manuscripts read, “like the sea.” “There is anxiety (restless) as is the sea: they cannot quiet it,” that is, it cannot be quieted (<sup><2574></sup>Isaiah 57:20).

**it** — Whatever dwellers are there “cannot be quiet.”

**25. city of praise** — The prophet, in the person of a citizen of Damascus deploring its calamity, calls it “the city of praise,” that is, celebrated with praises everywhere for its beauty (<sup><4849></sup>Jeremiah 33:9 51:41). “How is it possible that such a city *has not been left whole* — has not been spared by the foe?” Compare *left*, <sup><4775></sup>Luke 17:35,36. So Israel “left” standing some of the Canaanite cities (<sup><6113></sup>Joshua 11:13).

**of my joy** — that is, in which I delighted.

**26. Therefore** — that is, Since Damascus is doomed to fall, *therefore*, etc.

**27. palaces of Ben-hadad** — that palace from which so many evils and such cruelty to Israel emanated; thus implying the *cause* of Damascus’ overthrow. Not the Ben-hadad of <sup><4232></sup>2 Kings 13:3 Amos 1:4; it was a common name of the Syrian kings (compare <sup><1158></sup>1 Kings 15:18; meaning “son of Hadad,” the idol).

**28. Kedar** — son of Ishmael (<sup><4253></sup>Genesis 25:13). The Kedarenes led a wandering predatory life in Arabia-Petraea, as the Bedouin Arabs (<sup><4216></sup>2 Chronicles 21:16,17 <sup><3005></sup>Psalms 120:5). Kedar means “blackness” (So 1:5).

**Hazor** — not the city in Palestine, but a district in Arabia-Petraea. “Kingdoms” refer to the several combinations of clans, each under its own sheik.

**men of the east** — Kedar and Hazor were east of Judea (<sup><4768></sup>Judges 6:3 <sup><3003></sup>Job 1:3).

**29. tents** — in which they dwelt, from which they are called Scenites, that is, tent dwellers.

**curtains** — namely, with which the tents were covered (<sup><3404></sup>Jeremiah 4:20 10:20 <sup><4942></sup>Psalms 104:2).

**they shall cry unto them, Fear**, etc. — *The foe*, on crying, Fear ..., shall discomfit them (the Kedarenes) by their mere cry.

**30.** (See on <sup><3408></sup>Jeremiah 49:8). No conqueror would venture to follow them into the desert.

**31. wealthy** — rather, “tranquil” (<sup><1344></sup>1 Chronicles 4:40).

**neither gates nor bars** — The Arabs, lying out of the track of the contending powers of Asia and Africa, took no measures of defense and had neither walled cities nor gates (<sup>2581</sup>Ezekiel 38:11). They thought their scanty resources and wilderness position would tempt no foe.

**alone** — separated from other nations, without allies; and from one another scattered asunder. So as to Israel's isolation (<sup>4023</sup>Numbers 23:9 <sup>6538</sup>Deuteronomy 33:28 <sup>3074</sup>Micah 7:14).

**32. camels** — their chief possessions; not fields or vineyards.

**in utmost ... corners** — who seemed least likely to be dispersed. Or else, "having the hair shaven (or clipped) in angles" (<sup>2405</sup>Jeremiah 9:26,25:23) [GROTIUS].

**calamity from all sides** — which will force even those in "corners" to "scatter" themselves.

**33.** (<sup>3008</sup>Malachi 1:3).

**34. Elam** — part of Susiana, west of Persia proper, but used to designate Persia in general. Elam proper, or Elymais, nearer Judea than Persia, is probably here meant; it had helped Nebuchadnezzar against Judea; hence its punishment. It may have been idolatrous, whereas Persia proper was mainly monotheistic.

**35. bow** — Elam was famed for its bowmen (<sup>2206</sup>Isaiah 22:6).

**chief of their might** — in opposition to "bow," that is, bowmen, who constituted their main strength.

**36. four winds**, etc. — Nebuchadnezzar's army containing soldiers from the four quarters.

**37. consumed** — as a distinct nation (<sup>2708</sup>Daniel 8:2-27). Fulfilled under Alexander and his successors.

**38.** I will show Myself King by My judgments there, as though My tribunal were erected there. The throne of Cyrus, God's instrument, set up over Media, of which Elam was a part, may be meant [GROTIUS]; or rather, that of Nebuchadnezzar (<sup>2400</sup>Jeremiah 43:10). Then the restoration of Elam (<sup>2409</sup>Jeremiah 49:39) will refer *partly* to that which took place on the reduction of Babylon by Cyrus, prince of Persia and Media.

**39. latter days** — The *full* restoration belongs to gospel times. Elamites were among the first who heard and accepted it (<sup>4019</sup>Acts 2:9).

# CHAPTER 50

## ~~281D~~ JEREMIAH 50:1-46.

### BABYLON'S COMING DOWNFALL; ISRAEL'S REDEMPTION.

After the predictions of judgment to be inflicted on other nations by Babylon, follows this one against Babylon itself, the longest prophecy, consisting of one hundred verses. The date of utterance was the fourth year of Zedekiah, when Seraiah, to whom it was committed, was sent to Babylon (~~2619~~ Jeremiah 51:59,60). The repetitions in it make it likely that it consists of prophecies uttered at different times, now collected by Jeremiah to console the Jews in exile and to vindicate God's ways by exhibiting the final doom of Babylon, the enemy of the people of God, after her long prosperity. The style, imagery, and dialogues prove its genuineness in opposition to those who deny this. It shows his faithfulness; though under obligation to the king of Babylon, he owed a higher one to God, who directed him to prophesy against Babylon.

1. Compare ~~281E~~ Isaiah 45:1-47:15. But as the time of fulfillment drew nearer, the prophecies are now proportionally more distinct than then.

2. **Declare ... among ... nations** — who would rejoice at the fall of Babylon their oppressor.

**standard** — to indicate the place of meeting to the nations where they were to hear the good news of Babylon's fall [ROSENMULLER]; or, the signal to summon the nations together against Babylon (~~261D~~ Jeremiah 51:12,27), [MAURER].

**Bel** — the tutelary god of Babylon; the same idol as the Phoenician Baal, that is, lord, the sun (~~281E~~ Isaiah 46:1).

**confounded** — because unable to defend the city under their protection.

**Merodach** — another Babylonian idol; meaning in Syria "little lord"; from which Merodach-baladan took his name.

3. **a nation** — the Medes, north of Babylon (~~2618~~ Jeremiah 51:48). The devastation of Babylon here foretold includes not only that by Cyrus, but also that more utter one by Darius, who took Babylon by artifice when it

had revolted from Persia, and mercilessly slaughtered the inhabitants, hanging four thousand of the nobles; also the final desertion of Babylon, owing to Seleucia having been built close by under Seleucus Nicanor.

4. Fulfilled only in part when some few of the ten tribes of “Israel” joined Judah in a “covenant” with God, at the restoration of Judah to its land (<sup><4088></sup>Nehemiah 9:38 10:29). The full event is yet to come (<sup><2609></sup>Jeremiah 31:9 <sup><3011></sup>Hosea 1:11 <sup><3210></sup>Zechariah 12:10).

**weeping** — with joy at their restoration beyond all hope; and with sorrow at the remembrance of their sins and sufferings (<sup><4182></sup>Ezra 3:12,13 <sup><4305></sup>Psalms 126:5,6).

**seek ... Lord** — (<sup><2075></sup>Hosea 3:5).

5. **thitherward** — rather, “hitherward,” Jeremiah’s prophetic standpoint being at Zion. “Faces hitherward” implies their steadfastness of purpose not to be turned aside by any difficulties on the way.

**perpetual covenant** — in contrast to the old covenant “which they brake” (<sup><2631></sup>Jeremiah 31:31, etc. <sup><2630></sup>Jeremiah 32:40). They shall return to their God first, then to their own land.

6. (<sup><2516></sup>Isaiah 53:6).

**on the mountains** — whereon they sacrificed to idols (<sup><3121></sup>Jeremiah 2:20 3:6,23).

**resting-place** — for the “sheep,” continuing the image; *Jehovah* is the resting-place of His sheep (<sup><4123></sup>Matthew 11:28). They rest in His “bosom” (<sup><2301></sup>Isaiah 40:11). Also *His temple* at Zion, their “rest,” because it is His (<sup><4128></sup>Psalms 132:8,14).

7. **devoured** — (<sup><4946></sup>Psalms 79:7). “Found them” implies that they were exposed to the attacks of those who ever happened to meet them.

**adversaries said** — for instance, Nebuzara-dan (<sup><2410></sup>Jeremiah 40:2,3; compare Zechariah 11:5). The Gentiles acknowledged some supreme divinity. The Jews’ guilt was so palpable that they were condemned even in the judgment of heathens. Some knowledge of God’s peculiar relation to Judea reached its heathen invaders from the prophets (<sup><2418></sup>Jeremiah 2:3 <sup><2196></sup>Daniel 9:16); hence the strong language they use of *Jehovah* here, not as worshippers of Him themselves, but as believing Him to be the tutelary God of Judah (“the hope of *their* fathers,” <sup><4224></sup>Psalms 22:4; they do not say *our* hope), as each country was thought to have its *local god*, whose power extended no farther.

**habitation** — (<sup><900P</sup>Psalm 90:1 91:1). Alluding to the tabernacle, or, as in <sup><544E</sup>Ezekiel 34:14, “fold,” which carries out the image in <sup><280J</sup>Jeremiah 50:6, “resting-place” of the “sheep.” But it can only mean “habitation” (<sup><280J</sup>Jeremiah 31:23), which confirms *English Version* here.

**hope of their fathers** — This especially condemned the Jews that their apostasy was from that God whose faithfulness their fathers had experienced. At the same time these “adversaries” unconsciously use language which corrects their own notions. The covenant with the Jews’ “fathers” is not utterly set aside by their sin, as their adversaries thought; there is still “a habitation” or refuge for them with the God of *their fathers*.

8. (<sup><250J</sup>Jeremiah 51:6,45 <sup><280I</sup>Isaiah 48:20 Zechariah 2:6,7 <sup><680R</sup>Revelation 18:4). Immediately avail yourselves of the opportunity of escape.

**be as ... he-goats before ... flocks** — Let each try to be foremost in returning, animating the weak, as he-goats lead the flock; such were the companions of Ezra (<sup><500E</sup>Ezra 1:5,6).

9. **from thence** — that is, from the north country.

**expert** — literally, “prosperous.” Besides “might,” “expertness” is needed, that an arrow may do execution. The *Margin* has a different *Hebrew* reading; “destroying,” literally, “bereaving, childless-making” (<sup><245J</sup>Jeremiah 15:7). The *Septuagint* and *Syriac* support *English Version*.

**In vain** — without killing him at whom it was aimed (<sup><102S</sup>2 Samuel 1:22).

11. (<sup><240I</sup>Isaiah 47:6).

**grown fat** — and so, skip wantonly.

**at grass** — fat and frisky. But there is a disagreement of gender in *Hebrew* reading thus. The *Keri* is better: “a heifer *threshing*”; the strongest were used for threshing, and as the law did not allow their mouth to be muzzled in threshing (<sup><120D</sup>Deuteronomy 25:4), they waxed wanton with eating.

**bellow as bulls** — rather, “neigh as *steeds*,” literally, “strong ones,” a poetical expression for *steeds* (see on <sup><248J</sup>Jeremiah 8:16) [MAURER].

12. **Your mother** — Babylon, the metropolis of the empire.

**hindermost** — marvellous change, that Babylon, once the queen of the world, should be now the hindermost of nations, and at last, becoming “a desert,” cease to be a nation!

13. (<sup><230I</sup>Isaiah 13:20).

14. Summons to the Median army to attack Babylon.

*against the Lord* — By oppressing His people, their cause is His cause. Also by profaning His sacred vessels (<sup><27012></sup>Daniel 5:2).

15. *Shout* — Inspirit one another to the onset with the battle cry.

*given ... hand* — an idiom for, “submitted to” the conquerors (<sup><13204></sup>1 Chronicles 29:24, *Margin*; <sup><27019></sup>Lamentations 5:6).

*as she hath done, do unto her* — just retribution in kind. She had destroyed many, so must she be destroyed (<sup><13078></sup>Psalms 137:8). So as to spiritual Babylon (<sup><68016></sup>Revelation 18:6). This is right because “it is the vengeance of the Lord”; but this will not justify *private* revenge in kind (<sup><10544></sup>Matthew 5:44 <sup><19021></sup>Romans 12:19-21); even the Old Testament law forbade this, though breathing a sterner spirit than the New Testament (<sup><12204></sup>Exodus 23:4,5 <sup><12521></sup>Proverbs 25:21,22).

16. Babylon had the extent rather of a nation than of a city. Therefore grain was grown within the city wall sufficient to last for a long siege [ARISTOTLE, *Politics*, 3.2; PLINY, 18.17]. Conquerors usually spare agriculturists, but in this case *all* alike were to be “cut off.”

*for fear of ... oppressing sword* — because of the sword of the oppressor.

*every one to his people* — from which they had been removed to Babylon from all quarters by the Chaldean conquerors (<sup><25019></sup>Jeremiah 51:9 <sup><23014></sup>Isaiah 13:14).

17. *lions* — hostile kings (<sup><24017></sup>Jeremiah 4:7 <sup><49019></sup>49:19).

*Assyria* — (<sup><12706></sup>2 Kings 17:6, Shalmaneser; <sup><15012></sup>Ezra 4:2, Esar-haddon).

*Nebuchadnezzar* — (<sup><12402></sup>2 Kings 24:10,14).

18. *punish ... king of Babylon* — Nabonidus, or Labynitus.

*as ... punished ... Assyrian* — Sennacherib and other kings [GROTIUS] (<sup><12652></sup>2 Kings 19:37).

19. (<sup><26501></sup>Isaiah 65:10 <sup><15413></sup>Ezekiel 34:13,14).

20. The specification of “Israel,” as well as Judah, shows the reference is to times yet to come.

*iniquity ... none* — not merely idolatry, which ceased among the Jews ever since the Babylonian captivity, but chiefly their rejection of Messiah. As in a cancelled debt, it shall be as if it had never been; God, for Christ’s sake,

shall treat them as innocent (<sup>2834</sup>Jeremiah 31:34). Without cleansing away of sin, remission of punishment would be neither to the honor of God nor to the highest interests of the elect.

**whom I reserve** — the elect “remnant” (<sup>2009</sup>Isaiah 1:9). The “residue” (Zechariah 14:2 13:8,9).

**21. Merathaim** — a symbolical name for Babylon, the doubly rebellious, namely, against God. Compare <sup>2814</sup>Jeremiah 50:24, “thou hast striven against the Lord”; and <sup>2819</sup>Jeremiah 50:29, “proud against the Lord.” The “doubly” refers to: first, the *Assyrian’s* oppression of Israel; next, the kindred *Chaldean’s* oppression of Judah (compare <sup>2807</sup>Jeremiah 50:17-20,33; especially <sup>2808</sup>Jeremiah 50:18).

**Pekod** — (<sup>2829</sup>Ezekiel 23:23); a chief province of Assyria, in which Nineveh, now overthrown, once lay. But, as in Merathaim, the allusion is to the meaning of *Pekod*, namely, “visitation”; the inhabitants whose time of deserved visitation in punishment is come; not, however, without reference to the now Babylonian province, Pekod. The visitation on Babylon was a following up of that on Assyria.

**after them** — even *their posterity*, and all that is still left of Babylon, until the very name is extinct [GROTIUS]. Devastate the city, *after* its inhabitants have deserted it.

**all ... I ... commanded** — by Isaiah (<sup>2311</sup>Isaiah 13:1, etc.).

**23. hammer** — that is, Babylon, so called because of its ponderous destructive power; just as “Martel,” that is, “a little hammer,” was the surname of a king of the Franks (<sup>2346</sup>Isaiah 14:6).

**24. I** — Thou hast to do with God, not merely with men.

**taken ... not aware** — HERODOTUS relates that one half of the city was taken before those in the other half were “aware” of it. Cyrus turned the waters of the Euphrates where it was defended into a different channel, and so entered the city by the dried-up channel at night, by the upper and lower gates (<sup>2131</sup>Daniel 5:30,31).

**25. weapons of his indignation** — the Medes and Persians (<sup>2805</sup>Isaiah 13:5).

**26. from the utmost border** — namely, of the earth. Or, from all sides LUDOVICUS DE DIEU].

**storehouses** — or, “her houses filled with men and goods” [MICHAELIS]. When Cyrus took it, the provisions found there were enough to have lasted for many years.

**as heaps** — make of the once glorious city *heaps* of ruins. Vast mounds of rubbish now mark the site of ancient Babylon. “Tread her as heaps of corn which are wont to be trodden down in the threshing-floor” [GROTIUS].

**27. bullocks** — that is, princes and strong warriors (<sup><2462></sup>Jeremiah 46:21 <sup><4922></sup>Psalms 22:12 <sup><23407></sup>Isaiah 34:7).

**go down to ... slaughter** — The slaughterhouses lay low beside the river; therefore it is said, “go down”; appropriate to Babylon on the Euphrates, the avenue through which the slaughterers entered the city.

**28. declare in Zion ... temple** — Some Jews “fleeing” from Babylon at its fall shall tell in Judea how God avenged the cause of Zion and her temple that had been profaned (<sup><2523></sup>Jeremiah 52:13 <sup><2700></sup>Daniel 1:2 5:2).

**29. archers** — literally, “very many and powerful”; hence the *Hebrew* word is used of *archers* (<sup><2863></sup>Job 16:13) from the multitude and force of their arrows.

**according to all that she hath done** — (See on <sup><2515></sup>Jeremiah 50:15).

**proud against the Lord** — not merely cruel towards men (<sup><24701></sup>Isaiah 47:10).

**30.** (See on <sup><2422></sup>Jeremiah 49:26).

**in the streets** — The Babylonians were so discouraged by having lost some battles that they retired within their walls and would not again meet Cyrus in the field.

**31. most proud** — literally, “pride”; that is, man of pride; the king of Babylon.

**visit** — punish (<sup><28127></sup>Jeremiah 50:27).

**33. Israel and ... Judah were oppressed** — He anticipates an objection, in order to answer it: Ye have been, no doubt, “oppressed,” therefore ye despair of deliverance; but, remember your “Redeemer is strong,” and therefore can and will deliver you.

**34. strong** — as opposed to the power of Israel’s oppressor (<sup><4688></sup>Revelation 18:8).

**plead ... cause** — as their advocate. Image from a court of justice; appropriate as God delivers His people not by mere might, but by *righteousness*. His plea against Satan and all their enemies is His own everlasting love, reconciling mercy and justice in the Redeemer's work and person (<sup>3709</sup>Micah 7:9 Zechariah 3:1-5 <sup>3111</sup>1 John 2:1).

**give rest ... disquiet** — There is a play on the similarity of sounds in the two *Hebrew* verbs to express more vividly the contrast: “that He may give quiet to the land of Judah (heretofore disquieted by Babylon); but disquiet to the inhabitants of Babylon” (heretofore quietly secure) (<sup>2340F</sup>Isaiah 14:6-8).

**35-37.** The repetition of “A sword” in the beginning of each verse, by the figure *anaphora*, heightens the effect; the reiterated judgment is universal; the same sad stroke of the sword is upon each and all connected with guilty Babylon.

**wise men** — (<sup>2371B</sup>Isaiah 47:13). Babylon boasted that it was the peculiar seat of wisdom and wise men, especially in astronomy and astrology.

**36. liars** — Those whom he before termed “wise men,” he here calls “liars” (impostors), namely, the astrologers (compare <sup>2342C</sup>Isaiah 44:25 <sup>6102</sup>Romans 1:21-25 <sup>4012</sup>1 Corinthians 1:20).

**37. as women** — divested of all manliness (Na 3:13).

**38. drought** — Altering the pointing, this verse will begin as the three previous verses, “A sword.” However, all the pointed manuscripts read, “A drought,” as *English Version*. Cyrus turned off the waters of the Euphrates into a new channel and so marched through the dried-up bed into the city (<sup>2513C</sup>Jeremiah 51:32). Babylonia once was famed for its corn, which often yielded from one to two hundredfold [HERODOTUS]. This was due to its network of water-courses from the Euphrates for irrigation, traces of which [LAYARD] are seen still on all sides, but dry and barren (<sup>2342F</sup>Isaiah 44:27).

**their idols** — literally, “terrors.” They are mad after idols that are more calculated to *frighten* than to attract (<sup>25144</sup>Jeremiah 51:44,47,52 <sup>2701F</sup>Daniel 3:1). Mere bugbears with which to frighten children.

**39. wild beasts of the desert** — wild cats, remarkable for their howl [BOCHART].

**wild beasts of the islands** — jackals (See on <sup>2313D</sup>Isaiah 13:21).

**owls** — rather, “female ostriches”; they delight in solitary places. Literally, “daughters of crying.” Compare as to spiritual Babylon, <sup>6802</sup>Revelation 18:2.

***no more inhabited for ever*** — The accumulation of phrases is to express the final and utter extinction of Babylon; fulfilled not immediately, but by degrees; Cyrus took away its supremacy. Darius Hystaspes deprived it, when it had rebelled, of its fortifications. Seleucus Nicanor removed its citizens and wealth to Seleucia, which he founded in the neighborhood; and the Parthians removed all that was left to Ctesiphon. Nothing but its walls was left under the Roman emperor Adrian.

40. (<sup>2339</sup>Isaiah 13:19). Repeated from <sup>2448</sup>Jeremiah 49:18.

41-43. (Compare <sup>2022</sup>Jeremiah 6:22-24). The very language used to describe the calamities which Babylon inflicted on Zion is that here employed to describe Babylon's own calamity inflicted by the Medes. Retribution in kind.

***kinds*** — the allies and satraps of the various provinces of the Medo-Persian empire: Armenia, Hyrcania, Lydia, etc.

***coasts*** — the remote parts.

42. ***cruel*** — the character of the Persians, and even of Cyrus, notwithstanding his wish to be thought magnanimous (<sup>2338</sup>Isaiah 13:18).

***like a man*** — So orderly and united is their "array," that the whole army moves to battle as *one man* [GROTIUS].

43. ***hands waxed feeble*** — attempted no resistance; immediately was overcome, as HERODOTUS tells us.

44-46. Repeated mainly from <sup>2499</sup>Jeremiah 49:19-21. The identity of God's principle in His dealing with Edom, and in that with Babylon, is implied by the similarity of language as to both.

46. ***cry ... among the nations*** — In Edom's case it is, "at the cry the noise thereof was heard *in the Red Sea*." The change implies the wider extent to which the crash of Babylon's downfall shall be heard.

# CHAPTER 51

## JEREMIAH 51:1-64.

### CONTINUATION OF THE PROPHECY AGAINST BABYLON BEGUN IN THE FIFTIETH CHAPTER.

1. *in the midst of them that rise ... against me* — literally, “in the heart” of them. Compare <sup><2941P></sup>Psalm 46:2, “the midst of the sea,” *Margin*; <sup><3704E></sup>Ezekiel 27:4, “the *heart* of the seas”; *Margin*; <sup><4020M></sup>Matthew 12:40. In the center of the Chaldeans. “Against Me,” because they persecute My people. The cabalistic mode of interpreting *Hebrew* words (by taking the letters in the inverse order of the alphabet, the last letter representing the first, and so on, <sup><2535J></sup>Jeremiah 25:26) would give the very word *Chaldeans* here; but the *mystical* method cannot be intended, as “Babylon” is plainly so called in the immediately preceding parallel clause.

*wind* — God needs not warlike weapons to “destroy” His foes; a *wind* or blast is sufficient; though, no doubt, the “wind” here is the invading host of Medes and Persians (<sup><3041J></sup>Jeremiah 4:11 <sup><29072K></sup>2 Kings 19:7).

2. *fanners* — (See on <sup><2457J></sup>Jeremiah 15:7). The farmers separate the wheat from the chaff; so God’s judgments shall sweep away guilty Babylon as chaff (<sup><3004P></sup>Psalm 1:4).

3. *Against him that bendeth* — namely, the bow; that is, the Babylonian archer.

*let the archer bend* — that is, the Persian archer (<sup><2504J></sup>Jeremiah 50:4). The *Chaldean version* and JEROME, by changing the vowel points, read, “Let not him (the Babylonian) who bendeth his bow bend it.” But the close of the verse is addressed to the Median invaders; therefore it is more likely that the first part of the verse is addressed to them, as in *English Version*, not to the *Babylonians*, to warn them against resistance as vain, as in the *Chaldean version*. The word “bend” is thrice repeated: “Against him that bendeth let him that bendeth bend,” to imply the utmost straining of the bow.

4. (See on <sup><2425J></sup>Jeremiah 49:26; <sup><2530J></sup>Jeremiah 50:30; <sup><2537J></sup>Jeremiah 50:37).

5. *forsaken* — as a widow (*Hebrew*). Israel is not severed from her husband, Jehovah (<sup>2516</sup>Isaiah 54:5-7), by a perpetual divorce.

*though ... sin* — though the land of *Israel* has been filled with sin, that is, with the *punishment of their sin*, devastation. But, as the *Hebrew* means “for,” or “and therefore,” not “though,” translate, “and therefore their (the Chaldeans’) land has been filled with (the penal consequences of) their sin” [GROTIUS].

6. Warning to the Israelite captives to flee from Babylon, lest they should be involved in the punishment of her “iniquity.” So as to spiritual Babylon and her captives (<sup>6684</sup>Revelation 18:4).

7. Babylon is compared to a *cup*, because she was the vessel in the hand of God, to make drunken with His vengeance the other peoples (<sup>2432</sup>Jeremiah 13:12 25:15,16). Compare as to spiritual Babylon, (<sup>6448</sup>Revelation 14:8 17:4). The cup is termed “golden,” to express the splendor and opulence of Babylon; whence also in the image seen by Nebuchadnezzar (<sup>2128</sup>Daniel 2:38) the *head* representing Babylon is of *gold* (compare <sup>2349</sup>Isaiah 14:4).

8, 9. Her friends and confederates, who behold her fall, are invited to her aid. They reply, her case is incurable, and that they must leave her to her fate. (<sup>2319</sup>Isaiah 21:9 <sup>6448</sup>Revelation 14:8 18:2,9).

*balm* — (<sup>2482</sup>Jeremiah 8:22 46:11).

9. *We would have healed* — We attempted to heal.

*her judgment* — *her crimes* provoking God’s “judgments” [GROTIUS].

*reacheth unto heaven* — (<sup>4182</sup>Genesis 18:21 Jon 1:2 <sup>6685</sup>Revelation 18:5). Even the heathen nations perceive that her awful fall must be God’s judgment for her crying sins (<sup>3916</sup>Psalms 9:16 64:9).

10. Next after the speech of the confederates of Babylon, comes that of the Jews celebrating with thanksgivings the promise-keeping faithfulness of their covenant God.

*brought forth*, etc. — (<sup>4576</sup>Psalms 37:6).

*our righteousness* — not the Jews’ merits, but God’s faithfulness to Himself and to His covenant, which constituted the “righteousness” of His people, that is, their *justification* in their controversy with Babylon, the cruel enemy of God and His people. Compare <sup>2316</sup>Jeremiah 23:6, “The Lord *our righteousness*”; <sup>3309</sup>Micah 7:9. *Their* righteousness is *His* righteousness.

*declare in Zion* — (<sup>4923</sup>Psalms 102:13-21).

**11. *Make bright*** — literally, “pure.” Polish and sharpen.

***gather*** — literally, “fill”; that is, gather in full number, so that none be wanting. So, “gave in *full tale*” (<sup>49827</sup>1 Samuel 18:27). GESENIUS, not so well, translates, “Fill *with your bodies* the shields” (compare <sup>2008</sup>Song of Solomon 4:4). He means to tell the Babylonians, Make what preparations you will, all will be in vain (compare <sup>2448</sup>Jeremiah 46:3-6).

***kings of ... Medes*** — He names the Medes rather than the Persians, because Darius, or Cyaxares, was above Cyrus in power and the greatness of his kingdom.

***temple*** — (<sup>2818</sup>Jeremiah 50:28).

**12.** With all your efforts, your city shall be taken.

***standard*** — to summon the defenders together to any point threatened by the besiegers.

**13. *waters*** — (<sup>2612</sup>Jeremiah 51:32,36; see on <sup>2908</sup>Isaiah 21:1). The Euphrates surrounded the city and, being divided into many channels, formed islands. Compare as to spiritual Babylon “waters,” that is, “many peoples,” (<sup>6718</sup>Revelation 17:1,15. A large lake also was near Babylon.

***measure*** — literally, “cubit,” which was the most common measure, and therefore is used for a *measure* in general. The time for putting a *limit* to thy covetousness [GESENIUS]. There is no “and” in the *Hebrew*: translate, “thine end, the *retribution* for thy covetousness” [GROTIUS]. MAURER takes the image to be from weaving: “the cubit where thou art to be cut off”; for the web is cut off, when the required number of cubits is completed (<sup>2382</sup>Isaiah 38:12).

**14. *by himself*** — literally, “by His soul” (<sup>1052</sup>2 Samuel 15:21 <sup>3083</sup>Hebrews 6:13).

***fill ... with caterpillars*** — locusts (Na 3:15). Numerous as are the citizens of Babylon, the invaders shall be more numerous.

**15-19.** Repeated from <sup>2402</sup>Jeremiah 10:12-16; except that “Israel” is not in the *Hebrew* of <sup>2619</sup>Jeremiah 51:19, which ought, therefore, to be translated, “He is the Former of all things, and (therefore) of the rod of His inheritance” (that is, of the nation peculiarly His own). In the tenth chapter the contrast is between the *idols* and God; here it is between the power of populous *Babylon* and that of God: “*Thou* dwellest upon many waters” (<sup>2613</sup>Jeremiah 51:13); but God can, by merely “uttering His voice,” create “many waters” (<sup>2616</sup>Jeremiah 51:16). The “earth” (in its *material* aspect) is

the result of His “power”; the “world” (viewed in its *orderly system*) is the result of His “wisdom,” etc. (<sup>2615</sup>Jeremiah 51:15). Such an Almighty Being can be at no loss for resources to effect His purpose against Babylon.

**20.** (See on <sup>2613</sup>Jeremiah 50:23). “Break in pieces” refers to the “hammer” there (compare Na 2:1, *Margin*). The *club* also was often used by ancient warriors.

**22. *old and young*** — (<sup>4837</sup>2 Chronicles 36:17).

**24.** The detail of particulars (<sup>2611</sup>Jeremiah 51:20-23) is in order to express the indiscriminate slaughters perpetrated by Babylon on Zion, which, in just retribution, are all to befall her in turn (<sup>2615</sup>Jeremiah 50:15,29).

***in your sight*** — addressed to the Jews.

**25. *destroying mountain*** — called so, not from its position, for it lay low (<sup>2613</sup>Jeremiah 51:13 <sup>4111</sup>Genesis 11:2,9), but from its eminence above other nations, many of which it had “destroyed”; also, because of its lofty palaces, towers, hanging gardens resting on arches, and walls, fifty royal cubits broad and two hundred high.

***roll thee down from the rocks*** — that is, from thy rock-like fortifications and walls.

***burnt mountain*** — (<sup>6688</sup>Revelation 8:8). A volcano, which, after having spent itself in pouring its “destroying” lava on all the country around, falls into the vacuum and becomes extinct, the surrounding “rocks” alone marking where the crater had been. Such was the appearance of Babylon after its destruction, and as the pumice stones of the volcano are left in their place, being unfit for building, so Babylon should never rise from its ruins.

**26. *corner ... stone ... foundations*** — The *corner-stone* was the most important one in the building, the *foundation-stones* came next in importance (<sup>4120</sup>Ephesians 2:20). So the sense is, even as there shall be no stones useful for building left of thee, so no leading *prince*, or *governors*, shall come forth from thy inhabitants.

**27.** (<sup>2619</sup>Jeremiah 50:29). As in <sup>2612</sup>Jeremiah 51:12 the Babylonians were told to “set up the standard,” so here her foes are told to do so: the latter, to good purpose; the former, in vain.

***Ararat*** — Upper or Major Armenia, the regions about Mount Ararat.

***Minni*** — Lower or Lesser Armenia. RAWLINSON says that Van was the capital of Minni. It was conquered by Tettarrassa, the general of Tetembar

II, the Assyrian king whose wars are recorded on the black obelisk now in the British Museum.

**Ashchenaz** — a descendant of Japheth (<sup>411B</sup>Genesis 10:3), who gave his name to the sea now called the Black Sea; the region bordering on it is probably here meant, namely, Asia Minor, including places named Ascania in Phrygia and Bithynia. Cyrus had subdued Asia Minor and the neighboring regions, and from these he drew levies in proceeding against Babylon.

**rough caterpillars** — The horsemen in multitude, and in appearance bristling with javelins and with crests, resemble “rough caterpillars,” or locusts of the hairy-crested kind (Na 3:15).

**28. kings of ... Medes** — (<sup>251B</sup>Jeremiah 51:11). The satraps and tributary kings under Darius, or Cyaxares.

**his dominion** — the king of Media’s dominion.

**land shall tremble ... every purpose of ... Lord shall be performed** — elegant antithesis between the *trembling* of the *land* or earth, and the stability of “every purpose of the Lord” (compare <sup>981</sup>Psalms 46:1-3).

**30. forborne to fight** — for the city was not taken by force of arms, but by stratagem, according to the counsel given to Cyrus by two eunuchs of Belshazzar who deserted.

**remained in ... holds** — not daring to go forth to fight; many, with Nabonidus, withdrew to the fortified city Borsippa.

**31.** (See on <sup>281B</sup>Jeremiah 50:24).

**One post** — *One courier* after another shall announce the capture of the city. The couriers despatched from the walls, where Cyrus enters, shall “meet” those sent by the king. Their confused running to and fro would result from the sudden panic at the entrance of Cyrus into the city, which he had so long besieged ineffectually; the Babylonians had laughed at his attempts and were feasting at the time without fear.

**taken at one end** — which was not known for a long time to the king and his courtiers feasting in the middle of the city; so great was its extent that, when the city was already three days in the enemy’s hands, the fact was not known in some parts of the city [ARISTOTLE, *Politics*, 3.2].

**32. passages are stopped** — The guarded fords of the Euphrates are occupied by the enemy (see on <sup>281B</sup>Jeremiah 50:38).

**reeds ... burned** — literally, “the marsh.” After draining off the river, Cyrus “burned” the stockade of dense tree-like “reeds” on its banks, forming the outworks of the city’s fortifications. The burning of these would give the appearance of the *marsh* or river itself being on “fire.”

**33. like a threshing-floor, it is time to thresh her** — rather, “like a threshing-floor at the time of threshing,” or “at the time when it is trodden.” The *treading*, or *threshing*, here put before the *harvest*, out of the natural order, because the prominent thought is the *treading down* or destruction of Babylon. In the East the treading out of the corn took place only at harvest-time. Babylon is like a threshing-floor not trodden for a long time; but the time of harvest, when her citizens shall be trodden under foot, shall come [CALVIN]. “Like a threshing-floor full of corn, so is Babylon now full of riches, but the time of harvest shall come, when all her prosperity shall be cut off” [LUDOVICUS DE DIEU]. GROTIUS distinguishes the “harvest” from the “threshing”; the former is the slaying of her citizens, the latter the pillaging and destruction of the city (compare <sup><28183></sup>Joel 3:13 <sup><6445></sup>Revelation 14:15,18).

**34. me** — Zion speaks. Her groans are what bring down retribution in kind on Babylon (<sup><28117></sup>Jeremiah 50:17 <sup><84213></sup>Psalm 102:13,17,20).

**empty vessel** — He has drained me out.

**dragon** — The serpent often “swallows” its prey whole; or a sea monster [GROTIUS].

**filled his belly ... cast me out** — like a beast, which, having “filled” himself to satiety, “casts out” the rest [CALVIN]. After filling all his storehouses with my goods, he has *cast me out of this land* [GROTIUS].

**35. my flesh** — which Nebuchadnezzar hath “devoured” (<sup><28134></sup>Jeremiah 51:34). Zion thus calls her *kinsmen* (<sup><61144></sup>Romans 11:14) slain throughout the country or carried captives to Babylon [GROTIUS]. Or, as “my blood” follows, it and “my flesh” constitute the *whole man*: Zion, in its totality, its citizens and all its substance, have been a prey to Babylon’s violence (<sup><49708></sup>Psalm 137:8).

**36. plead ... cause** — (<sup><28184></sup>Jeremiah 50:34).

**sea** — the Euphrates (<sup><28113></sup>Jeremiah 51:13 <sup><28188></sup>Jeremiah 50:38). Compare <sup><28185></sup>Isaiah 19:5, “sea,” that is, the Nile (<sup><29011></sup>Isaiah 21:1).

**37.** (<sup><28185></sup>Jeremiah 50:26,39 <sup><68102></sup>Revelation 18:2).

**38, 39.** The capture of Babylon was effected on the night of a festival in honor of its idols.

**roar ... yell** — The Babylonians were *shouting* in drunken revelry (compare <sup>2789f</sup>Daniel 5:4).

**39. In their heat I will make their feasts** — In the midst of their being heated with wine, I will give them “their” potions, — a very different cup to drink, but one which is *their due*, the wine cup of My stupefying wrath (<sup>2555</sup>Jeremiah 25:15 <sup>49:12</sup> <sup>2517f</sup>Isaiah 51:17 <sup>2502f</sup>Lamentations 4:21).

**rejoice, and sleep ... perpetual**, etc. — that they may *exult*, and in the midst of their jubilant exultation sleep the sleep of death (<sup>2515f</sup>Jeremiah 51:57 <sup>2304f</sup>Isaiah 21:4,5).

**41. Sheshach** — Babylon (compare *Note*, see <sup>2235f</sup>Jeremiah 25:26); called so from the goddess Shach, to whom a five days’ festival was kept, during which, as in the Roman Saturnalia, the most unbridled licentiousness was permitted; slaves ruled their masters, and in every house one called Zogan, arrayed in a royal garment, was chosen to rule all the rest. He calls Babylon “Sheshach,” to imply that it was during this feast the city was taken [SCALIGER].

**42. The sea** — the host of Median invaders. The image (compare <sup>2470f</sup>Jeremiah 47:2 <sup>2387f</sup>Isaiah 8:7,8) is appropriately taken from the Euphrates, which, overflowing in spring, is like a “sea” near Babylon (<sup>2513f</sup>Jeremiah 51:13,32,36).

**43. Her cities** — the cities, her dependencies. So, “Jerusalem and the cities thereof” (<sup>2340f</sup>Jeremiah 34:1). Or, the “cities” are the inner and outer cities, the two parts into which Babylon was divided by the Euphrates [GROTIUS].

**44. Bel ... swallowed** — in allusion to the many sacrifices to the idol which its priests pretended it swallowed at night; or rather, the precious gifts taken from other nations and offered to it (which it is said to have “swallowed”; compare “devoured,” “swallowed,” <sup>2534f</sup>Jeremiah 51:34 <sup>2507f</sup>Jeremiah 50:17), which it should have to disgorge (compare <sup>2513f</sup>Jeremiah 51:13 <sup>2515f</sup>Jeremiah 50:37). Of these gifts were the vessels of Jehovah’s temple in Jerusalem (<sup>4307f</sup>2 Chronicles 36:7 <sup>2700f</sup>Daniel 1:2). The restoration of these, as foretold here, is recorded in <sup>4500f</sup>Ezra 1:7-11.

**flow** — as a river; fitly depicting the *influx* of pilgrims of all “nations” to the idol.

**45, 46.** (See on <sup>2516f</sup>Jeremiah 51:6).

**46. *And lest*** — Compare, for the same ellipsis, <sup><082></sup>Genesis 3:22 <sup><037></sup>Exodus 13:17 <sup><082></sup>Deuteronomy 8:12. “And in order that your heart may not faint at the (first) rumor” (of war), I will give you some intimation of the time. In the first “year” there shall “come a rumor” that Cyrus is preparing for war against Babylon. “After that, in another year, shall come a rumor,” namely, that Cyrus is approaching, and has already entered Assyria. Then is your time to “go out” (<sup><515></sup>Jeremiah 51:45). Babylon was taken the following or third year of Belshazzar’s reign [GROTIUS].

***violence in the land*** — of Babylon (<sup><376></sup>Psalms 7:16).

***ruler against ruler*** — or, “ruler upon ruler,” a continual change of rulers in a short space. Belshazzar and Nabonidus, supplanted by Darius or Cyaxares, who is succeeded by Cyrus.

**47.** GROTIUS translates, “Because then (namely, on the third year) the time shall have come that,” etc.

***confounded*** — at seeing their gods powerless to help them.

***her slain*** — in retribution for “*Israel’s* slain” (<sup><514></sup>Jeremiah 51:49) who fell by her hand. GROTIUS translates, “her dancers,” as in <sup><2121></sup>Judges 21:21,23 <sup><0816></sup>1 Samuel 18:6, the same *Hebrew* word is translated, alluding to the dancing revelry of the festival during which Cyrus took Babylon.

**48. *heaven ... earth ... sing for Babylon*** — (<sup><247></sup>Isaiah 14:7-13 44:23 <sup><0820></sup>Revelation 18:20).

**49. *caused ... to fall*** — literally, “has been for the falling,” that is, as Babylon made this its one aim to fill all places with the slain of Israel, so at Babylon shall all the slain of *that whole land* (not as *English Version*, “of all the *earth*”) [MAURER]. HENDERSON translates, “Babylon also shall fall, ye slain of Israel. Those also of Babylon shall fall, O ye slain of all the earth.” But, “in the midst of her,” <sup><517></sup>Jeremiah 51:47, plainly answers to “at Babylon,” <sup><514></sup>Jeremiah 51:49, *English Version*.

**50. *escaped ... sword*** — namely, of the Medes. So great will be the slaughter that even some of God’s people shall be involved in it, as they had deserved.

***afar off*** — though ye are banished far off from where ye used formerly to worship God.

***let Jerusalem come into your mind*** — While in exile remember your temple and city, so as to prefer them to all the rest of the world wherever ye may be (<sup><206></sup>Isaiah 62:6).

**51.** The prophet anticipates the Jews' reply; I know you will say in despair, "We are confounded," etc. "Wherefore (God saith to you) behold, I will," etc. (<sup>26152</sup>Jeremiah 51:52) [CALVIN]. I prefer taking (<sup>26151</sup>Jeremiah 51:51) as the *prayer* which the Jews are directed to offer in exile (<sup>26150</sup>Jeremiah 51:50), "let Jerusalem come into your mind" (and say in prayer to God), "We are confounded." This view is confirmed by <sup>39445</sup>Psalms 44:15, 16 79:4 102:17-20 <sup>23016</sup>Isaiah 62:6,7.

*for strangers* — The "reproach," which especially has stung us, came when they taunted us with the fact that they had burned the temple, our peculiar glory, as though our religion was a thing of naught.

**52. Wherefore** — because of these sighs of the Jews directed to God (<sup>26121</sup>Jeremiah 51:21).

*I ... judgment upon ... images* — in opposition to the Babylonian taunt that Jehovah's religion was a thing of naught, since they had burned His temple (<sup>26151</sup>Jeremiah 51:51): I will show that, though I have thus visited the Jews neglect of Me, yet those gods of Babylon cannot save themselves, much less their votaries, who shall "through all her land" lie and "groan" with wounds.

**53.** We are not to measure God's power by what seems to our perceptions natural or probable. Compare <sup>31004</sup>Obadiah 1:4 as to Edom (<sup>31012</sup>Amos 9:2).

**55. great voice** — Where once was the *great din* of a mighty city. there shall be the silence of death [VATABLUS]. Or, the "great voice" of the revellers (<sup>26138</sup>Jeremiah 51:38,39 <sup>23212</sup>Isaiah 22:2). Or, the voice of *mighty boasting* [CALVIN], (compare <sup>26153</sup>Jeremiah 51:53).

*her waves* — "when" her calamities shall cause her to give forth a widely different "voice," even such a one as the waves give that lash the shores (<sup>26142</sup>Jeremiah 51:42) [GROTIUS]. Or, "when" is connected thus: "the great voice" in her, when her "waves," etc. (compare <sup>26113</sup>Jeremiah 51:13). CALVIN translates, "*their waves*," that is, the Medes bursting on her as impetuous waves; so <sup>26142</sup>Jeremiah 51:42. But the parallel, "a great voice," belongs to *her*, therefore the wave-like "roar" of "their voice" ought also belong to *her* (compare <sup>26154</sup>Jeremiah 51:54). The "great voice" of commercial din, boasting, and feasting, is "destroyed"; but in its stead there is the wave-like roar of *her voice* in her "destruction" (<sup>26154</sup>Jeremiah 51:54).

**56. taken** — when they were least expecting it, and in such a way that resistance was impossible.

**57.** (<sup>26139</sup>Jeremiah 51:39 <sup>27101</sup>Daniel 5:1, etc.).

**58. *broad walls*** — eighty-seven feet broad [ROSENMULLER]; fifty cubits [GROTIUS]. A chariot of four horses abreast could meet another on it without collision. The walls were two hundred cubits high, and four hundred and eighty-five stadia, or sixty miles in extent.

***gates*** — one hundred in number, of brass; twenty-five on each of the four sides, the city being square; between the gates were two hundred and fifty towers. BEROSUS says triple walls encompassed the outer, and the same number the inner city. Cyrus caused the outer walls to be demolished. Taking the extent of the walls to be three hundred and sixty-five stadia, as DIODORUS states, it is said two hundred thousand men completed a stadium each day, so that the whole was completed in one year.

***labor ... in the fire*** — The event will show that the builders of the walls have “labored” only for the “fire” in which they shall be consumed, “In the fire” answers to the parallel, “burned with fire.” Translate, “*shall have labored in vain,*” etc. Compare <sup><3084></sup>Job 3:14, “built desolate places for themselves,” that is, grand places, soon about to be desolate ruins. Jeremiah has in view here <sup><3113></sup>Habakkuk 2:13.

**59-64.** A special copy of the prophecy prepared by Jeremiah was delivered to Seraiah, to console the Jews in their Babylonian exile. Though he was to throw it into the Euphrates, a symbol of Babylon’s fate, no doubt he retained the substance in memory, so as to be able orally to communicate it to his countrymen.

***went with Zedekiah*** — rather, “in behalf of Zedekiah”; sent by Zedekiah to appease Nebuchadnezzar’s anger at his revolt [CALVIN].

***fourth year*** — so that Jeremiah’s prediction of Babylon’s downfall was thus solemnly written and sealed by a symbolical action, six whole years before the capture of Jerusalem by the Babylonians.

***quiet prince*** — Compare <sup><3209></sup>1 Chronicles 22:9, “a man of rest.” Seraiah was not one of the courtiers hostile to God’s prophets, but “quiet” and docile; ready to execute Jeremiah’s commission, notwithstanding the risk attending it. GLASSIUS translates, “prince of Menuchah” (compare <sup><3152></sup>1 Chronicles 2:52, *Margin*). MAURER translates, “commander of the caravan,” on whom it devolved to appoint the resting-place for the night. *English Version* suits the context best.

**61. *read*** — not in public, for the Chaldeans would not have understood *Hebrew*; but in private, as is to be inferred from his addressing himself altogether to God (<sup><2503></sup>Jeremiah 51:62) [CALVIN].

**62. *O Lord, thou*** — and not merely Jeremiah or any man is the author of this prophecy; I therefore here in Thy presence embrace as true all that I read.

**63. *bind a stone***, etc. — (<sup><66821></sup>Revelation 18:21). So the Phoceans in leaving their country, when about to found Marseilles, threw lead into the sea, binding themselves not to return till the lead should swim.

**64. *they shall be weary*** — The Babylonians shall be worn out, so as not to be able to recover their strength.

***Thus far ... Jeremiah*** — Hence it is to be inferred that the last chapter is not included in Jeremiah's writings but was added by some inspired man, mainly at <sup><1248></sup>2 Kings 24:18-25:30 to explain and confirm what precedes [CALVIN].

# CHAPTER 52

## ◀511▶ JEREMIAH 52:1-34.

### WRITTEN BY SOME OTHER THAN JEREMIAH (PROBABLY EZRA) AS AN HISTORICAL SUPPLEMENT TO THE PREVIOUS PROPHECIES

(See on ▶510 Jeremiah 51:64). Jeremiah, having already (thirty-ninth and fortieth chapters) given the history in the proper place, was not likely to repeat it here. Its canonical authority as inspired is shown by its being in the *Septuagint version*. It contains the capture and burning of Jerusalem, etc., Zedekiah's punishment, and the better treatment of Jehoiachin under Evil-merodach, down to his death. These last events were probably subsequent to Jeremiah's time.

**3. *through ... anger of ... Lord ... Zedekiah rebelled*** — His “anger” against Jerusalem, determining Him to “cast out” His people “from His presence” heretofore manifested there, led Him to permit Zedekiah to rebel (◀1239 2 Kings 23:26,27; compare ▶1199 Exodus 9:12 10:1 ▶698 Romans 9:18). That rebellion, being in violation of his oath “by God,” was sure to bring down God's vengeance (◀483 2 Chronicles 36:13 ▶2475 Ezekiel 17:15,16,18).

**4. *forts*** — rather, *towers* of wood [KIMCHI], for watching the movements of the besieged from the height and annoying them with missiles.

**7.** (See on ▶390 Jeremiah 39:4).

**9. *gave judgment upon him*** — as guilty of rebellion and perjury (▶3218 Jeremiah 52:3; compare ▶3224 Ezekiel 23:24).

**11.** ▶3123 Ezekiel 12:13: “I will bring him to Babylon ... yet shall he not *see it*.”

***prison*** — literally, “the house of visitations,” or “punishments,” that is, where there was penal work enforced on the prisoners, such as grinding. Hence the *Septuagint* renders it “the house of the mill.” So Samson, after his eyes were put out, “ground” in the Philistine prison-house (▶762 Judges 16:21).

**12. *tenth day*** — But in ▶1288 2 Kings 25:8, it is said “the *seventh day*.” Nebuzara-dan *started* from Riblah on the “seventh” day and *arrived* in

Jerusalem on the “tenth” day. Seeming discrepancies, when cleared up, confirm the genuineness of Scripture; for they show there was no collusion between the writers; as in all God’s works there is latent harmony under outward varieties.

**13. *all the houses ... and all the houses of the great*** — the “and” defines what houses especially are meant, namely, the houses of the great men.

**15. *poor of ... people*** — added to the account in <sup><12511></sup>2 Kings 25:11. “The poor of the people” are *of the city*, as distinguished from “the poor of the land,” that is, *of the country*.

**17. *brake*** — that they might be more portable. Fulfilling the prophecy (<sup><32719></sup>Jeremiah 27:19). See <sup><11075></sup>1 Kings 7:15,23,27,50. Nothing is so particularly related here as the carrying away of the articles in the temple. The remembrance of their beauty and preciousness heightens the bitterness of their loss and the evil of sin which caused it.

***brass ... brazen*** — rather “copper ... of copper.”

**18.** (<sup><12278></sup>Exodus 27:3).

**19. *of gold in gold*** — implying that the articles were of solid gold and silver respectively, not of a different metal inside, or alloyed [GROTIUS]. *Whole*: not breaking them as was done to the “brass” (<sup><3627></sup>Jeremiah 52:17).

**20. *bulls ... under the bases*** — But the bulls were not “*under the bases*,” but under the *sea* (<sup><11025></sup>1 Kings 7:25,27,38); the ten bases were not under the sea, but under the ten lavers. In *English Version*, “bases,” therefore, must mean the *lower parts of the sea* under which the bulls were. Rather, translate, “the bulls were *in the place of* (that is, ‘by way of’; so the *Hebrew*, <sup><0949></sup>1 Samuel 14:9), bases,” or supports to the sea [BUXTORF]. So the *Septuagint*. <sup><12516></sup>2 Kings 25:16 omits the “bulls,” and has “*and the bases*”; so GROTIUS here reads “the bulls (which were) under (the sea) *and the bases*.”

**21. *eighteen cubits*** — but in <sup><1485></sup>2 Chronicles 3:15, it is “thirty-five cubits.” The discrepancy is thus removed. *Each* pillar was eighteen common cubits. The two together, deducting the base, were thirty-five, as stated in <sup><1485></sup>2 Chronicles 3:15 [GROTIUS]. Other ways (for example, by reference to the difference between the common and the sacred cubit) are proposed: though we are not able positively to decide now which is the true way, at least those proposed do show that *the discrepancies are not irreconcilable*.

**22. *five cubits*** — so <sup><11716></sup>1 Kings 7:16. But <sup><12517></sup>2 Kings 25:17 has “three cubits.” There were two parts in the chapter: the one lower and plain, of

two cubits; the other, higher and curiously carved, of three cubits. The former is omitted in <sup><12517></sup>2 Kings 25:17, as belonging to the shaft of the pillar; the latter alone is there mentioned. Here the *whole* chapter of five cubits is referred to.

**23. on a side** — literally, (on the side) *towards the air* or *wind*, that is, the outside of the capitals of the pillars conspicuous to the eye, opposed to the four remaining pomegranates which were not seen from the outside. The pomegranates here are ninety-six; but in <sup><11073></sup>1 Kings 7:20 they are two hundred on each chapter, and four hundred on the two (<sup><34013></sup>2 Chronicles 4:13). It seems there were *two* rows of them, one above the other, and in each row a hundred. They are here said to be ninety-six, but immediately following one hundred, and so in <sup><11073></sup>1 Kings 7:20. *Four* seem to have been unseen to one looking from one point; and the ninety-six are only those that could be seen [VATABLUS]; or, the *four* omitted here are those separating the four sides, one pomegranate at each point of separation (or at the four corners) between the four sides [GROTIUS].

**24. Seraiah** — different from the Seraiah (<sup><26159></sup>Jeremiah 51:59), son of Neriah; probably son of Azariah (<sup><131644></sup>1 Chronicles 6:14).

**Zephaniah** — son of Maaseiah (see on <sup><22010></sup>Jeremiah 21:1; <sup><29225></sup>Jeremiah 29:25).

**25. seven men** — but in <sup><12519></sup>2 Kings 25:19 it is “*five*.” Perhaps two were less illustrious persons and are therefore omitted.

**principal scribe of the host** — (<sup><23318></sup>Isaiah 33:18). His office was to preside over the levy and enroll recruits. RAWLINSON observes that the Assyrian records are free from the exaggerated expressions found in the Egyptian. A minute account was taken of the spoil. Two “scribes of the host” are seen in every bas-relief, writing down the various objects brought to them: the heads of the slain, the prisoners, cattle, sheep, etc.

**28. seventh year** — in <sup><12412></sup>2 Kings 24:12,14,16, it is said “the *eighth year*” of Nebuchadnezzar. No doubt it was in part about the end of the seventh year, in part about the beginning of the eighth. Also in <sup><12412></sup>2 Kings 24:1-20, ten thousand (<sup><26244></sup>Jeremiah 52:14), and seven thousand men of might, and a thousand craftsmen (<sup><26216></sup>Jeremiah 52:16), are said to have been carried away, But here three thousand twenty-three. Probably the latter three thousand twenty-three were of the tribe of Judah, the remaining seven thousand out of the ten thousand were of the other tribes, out of which many Israelites still had been left in the land. The a thousand “craftsmen” were exclusive of the ten thousand, as appears, by comparing <sup><12414></sup>2 Kings 24:14 with <sup><26216></sup>Jeremiah 52:16. Probably the three thousand twenty-three of

Judah were first removed in the end of “the seventh year”; the seven thousand and a thousand craftsmen in the “eighth year.” This was at the first captivity under Jehoiachin.

**29. *eighteenth year*** — when Jerusalem was taken. But in <sup><3625></sup>Jeremiah 52:15, and <sup><12318></sup>2 Kings 25:8, “the nineteenth year.” Probably it was at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth [LYRA].

***eight hundred and thirty and two*** — The most illustrious persons are meant, who no doubt were carried away first, at the end of the eighteenth year.

**30.** Not recorded in Kings or Chronicles. Probably it took place during the commotions that followed the death of Gedaliah (<sup><3418></sup>Jeremiah 41:18 <sup><12319></sup>2 Kings 25:26).

***four thousand and six hundred*** — The exact sum-total of the numbers specified here, namely, three thousand twenty-three, eight hundred thirty-two, seven hundred forty-five, not including the general multitude and the women and children (<sup><3625></sup>Jeremiah 52:15 <sup><3449></sup>Jeremiah 39:9 <sup><12519></sup>2 Kings 25:11).

**31.** (<sup><1257></sup>2 Kings 25:27-30).

***five and twentieth day*** — but in <sup><1257></sup>2 Kings 25:27, it is “the twenty-seventh day.” Probably on the twenty-fifth the decree for his elevation was given, and the preparations for it made by releasing him from prison; and on the twenty-seventh day it was carried into effect.

***Evil-merodach*** — son and successor of Nebuchadnezzar [LYRA]; and the *Hebrew* writers say that during Nebuchadnezzar’s exclusion from men among beasts, Evil-merodach administered the government. When Nebuchadnezzar at the end of seven years was restored, hearing of his son’s misconduct and that he had exulted in his father’s calamity, he threw him into prison, where the latter met Jeconiah and contracted a friendship with him, whence arose the favor which subsequently he showed him. God, in his elevation, rewarded his having surrendered to Nebuchadnezzar (compare <sup><3687></sup>Jeremiah 38:17 with <sup><1242></sup>2 Kings 24:12).

***lifted up ... head*** — (Compare <sup><1413></sup>Genesis 40:13,20 <sup><4188></sup>Psalms 3:3 27:6).

**32. *set his throne above*** — a mark of respect.

***the kings*** — The *Hebrew* text reads (the other) kings.” “The kings” is a Masoretic correction.

**33. *changed ... garments*** — gave him garments suitable to a king.

*did ... eat bread before him* — (~~1093~~2 Samuel 9:13).

**34.** *every day a portion* — rather, “*its* portion,” (compare ~~1089~~1 Kings 8:59, *Margin*).

# LAMENTATIONS

## OF JEREMIAH

Commentary by **A. R. FAUSSETT**

### INTRODUCTION

In the Hebrew Bible these Elegies of Jeremiah, five in number, are placed among the *Chetuvim*, or “Holy Writings” (“the Psalms,” etc., <sup><4244></sup>Luke 24:44), between Ruth and Ecclesiastes. But though in classification of compositions it belongs to the *Chetuvim*, it probably followed the prophecies of Jeremiah originally. For thus alone can we account for the prophetic books being enumerated by JOSEPHUS [*Against Apion*, 1.1.8] as *thirteen*: he must have reckoned Jeremiah and Lamentations as one book, as also Judges and Ruth, the two books of Samuel, etc., Ezra and Nehemiah. The Lamentations naturally follow the book which sets forth the circumstances forming the subject of the Elegies. Similar lamentations occur in <sup><4019></sup>2 Samuel 1:19, etc. <sup><4033></sup>2 Samuel 3:33. The Jews read it in their synagogues on the ninth of the month Ab, which is a fast for the destruction of their holy city. As in <sup><4455></sup>2 Chronicles 35:25, “lamentations” are said to have been “*written*” by Jeremiah on the death of Josiah, besides it having been made “an ordinance in Israel” that “singing women” should “*speak*” of that king in lamentations; JOSEPHUS [*Antiquities*, 10.5.1], JEROME, etc., thought that they are contained in the present collection. But plainly the subject here is the overthrow of the Jewish city and people, as the *Septuagint* expressly states in an introductory verse to their version. The probability is that there is embodied in these Lamentations much of the *language* of Jeremiah’s original Elegy on Josiah, as <sup><4455></sup>2 Chronicles 35:25 states; but it is now applied to the more universal calamity of the whole state, of which Josiah’s sad death was the forerunner. Thus <sup><5040></sup>Lamentations 4:20, originally applied to Josiah, was “written,” in its subsequent reference, not so much of him, as of the *throne of Judah in general*, the last representative of which, Zedekiah, had just been carried away. The language, which is true of good Josiah, is too strong in favor of Zedekiah, except when viewed as representative of the crown in general. It was natural to embody the language of the Elegy on Josiah in the more

general lamentations, as his death was the presage of the last disaster that overthrew the throne and state.

The title more frequently given by the Jews to these Elegies is, "How" (*Hebrew, Eechah*), from the first word, as the Pentateuch is similarly called by the first *Hebrew* word of <sup><0000></sup>Genesis 1:1. The *Septuagint* calls it "Lamentations," from which we derive the name. It refers not merely to the events which occurred at the capture of the city, but to the sufferings of the citizens (the penalty of national sin) from the very beginning of the siege; and perhaps from before it, under Manasseh and Josiah (<sup><4631></sup>2 Chronicles 33:11 35:20-25); under Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, and Zedekiah (<sup><4812></sup>2 Chronicles 36:3,4,6,7,10,11, etc.). LOWTH says, "Every letter is written with a tear, every word the sound of a broken heart." The style is midway between the simple elevation of prophetic writing and the loftier rhythm of Moses, David, and Habakkuk. Terse conciseness marks the *Hebrew* original, notwithstanding Jeremiah's diffuseness in his other writings. The Elegies are grouped in stanzas as they arose in his mind, without any artificial system of arrangement as to the thoughts. The five Elegies are acrostic: each is divided into twenty-two stanzas or verses. In the first three Elegies the stanzas consist of triplets of lines (excepting <sup><5007></sup>Lamentations 1:7 2:19, which contain each four lines) each beginning with the letters of the *Hebrew* alphabet in regular order (twenty-two in number). In three instances (<sup><5216></sup>Lamentations 2:16,17 3:46-51 4:16,17) two letters are transposed. In the third Elegy, each line of the three forming every stanza begins with the same letter. The stanzas in the fourth and fifth Elegies consist of two lines each. The fifth Elegy, though having twenty-two stanzas (the number of letters in the *Hebrew* alphabet), just as the first four, yet is not alphabetical; and its lines are shorter than those of the others, which are longer than are found in other *Hebrew* poems, and contain twelve syllables, marked by a caesura about the middle, dividing them into two somewhat unequal parts. The alphabetical arrangement was adopted originally to assist the memory. GROTIUS thinks the reason for the inversion of two of the *Hebrew* letters in <sup><5216></sup>Lamentations 2:16,17 3:46-51 4:16,17, is that the Chaldeans, like the Arabians, used a different order from the Hebrews; in the first Elegy, Jeremiah speaks as a Hebrew, in the following ones, as one subject to the Chaldeans. This is doubtful.

# CHAPTER (ELEGY) 1

## LAMENTATIONS 1:1-22.

### ALEPH.

1. *how is she ... widow! she that was great*, etc. — *English Version* is according to the accents. But the members of each sentence are better balanced in antithesis, thus, “how is she that was great among the nations become as a widow! (how) she who was princess among the provinces (that is, she who ruled over the surrounding provinces from the Nile to the Euphrates, <sup><1518></sup>Genesis 15:18 <sup><1001></sup>1 Kings 4:21 <sup><4028></sup>2 Chronicles 9:26 <sup><4500></sup>Ezra 4:20) become tributary!” [MAURER].

*sit* — on the ground; the posture of mourners (<sup><2000></sup>Lamentations 2:10 <sup><4508></sup>Ezra 9:3). The coin struck on the taking of Jerusalem by Titus, representing Judea as a female sitting solitary under a palm tree, with the inscription, *Judaea Capta*, singularly corresponds to the image here; the language therefore must be prophetic of her state subsequent to Titus, as well as referring retrospectively to her Babylonian captivity.

### BETH.

2. *in the night* — even in the night, the period of rest and oblivion of griefs (<sup><8008></sup>Job 7:3).

*lovers ... friends* — the heathen states allied to Judah, and their idols. The idols whom she “loved” (<sup><2420></sup>Jeremiah 2:20-25) *could* not comfort her. Her former allies *would* not: nay, some “treacherously” joined her enemies against her (<sup><1242></sup>2 Kings 24:2,7 <sup><4307></sup>Psalms 137:7).

### GIMEL.

3. (<sup><2627></sup>Jeremiah 52:27).

*because of great servitude* — that is, in a state “of great servitude,” endured from the Chaldeans. “Because” is made by VATABLUS indicative of the *cause* of her captivity; namely, her having “afflicted” and unjustly brought into “servitude” the manumitted bond-servants (<sup><2608></sup>Jeremiah 34:8-22). MAURER explains it, “Judah has *left her land* (not literally ‘gone into captivity’) because of the yoke imposed on it by Nebuchadnezzar.”

*no rest* — (<sup>4526</sup>Deuteronomy 28:64,65).

*overtook her between ... straits* — image from robbers, who in the East intercept travelers at the narrow passes in hilly regions.

### DALETH.

4. *feasts* — the passover, pentecost (or the feast of weeks), and the feast of tabernacles.

*gates* — once the place of concourse.

### HE.

5. *the chief* — rule her (<sup>4526</sup>Deuteronomy 28:43,44).

*adversaries ... prosper; for the Lord* — All the foes' attempts would have failed, had not God delivered His people into their hands (<sup>3915</sup>Jeremiah 30:15).

### VAU.

6. *beauty ... departed* — her temple, throne, and priesthood.

*harts that find no pasture* — an animal timid and fleet, especially when seeking and not able to "find pasture."

### ZAIN.

7. *remembered* — rather, "remembers," now, in her afflicted state. In the days of her prosperity she did not appreciate, as she ought, the favors of God to her. Now, awakening out of her past lethargy, she feels from what high privileges she has fallen.

*when her people fell*, etc. — that is, after which days of prosperity "her people fell."

*mock at her sabbaths* — The heathen used to mock at the Jews' Sabbath, as showing their idleness, and term them *Sabbatarians* [MARTIAL, 4.4]. Now, said they ironically, ye may keep a continuous Sabbath. So God appointed the length of the captivity (seventy years) to be exactly that of the sum of the Sabbaths in the four hundred ninety years in which the land was denied its Sabbaths (<sup>4933</sup>Leviticus 26:33-35). MAURER translates it "ruin." But *English Version* better expresses the point of their "mocking," namely, their involuntary "Sabbaths," that is, the *cessation* of all national

movements. A fourth line is added in this stanza, whereas in all the others there are but three. So in <sup><1086></sup>Lamentations 2:19.

## CHETH.

8. (<sup><1086></sup>1 Kings 8:46).

*is removed* — as a woman separated from the congregation of God for legal impurity, which is a type of moral impurity. So <sup><2017></sup>Lamentations 1:17 <sup><6117></sup>Leviticus 12:2 15:19, etc.

*her nakedness* — They have treated her as contumeliously as courtesans from whom their clothes are stripped.

*turneth backward* — as modest women do from shame, that is, she is cast down from all hope of restoration [CALVIN].

## TETH.

9. Continuation of the image in <sup><2108></sup>Lamentations 1:8. Her ignominy and misery cannot be concealed but are apparent to all, as if a woman were suffering under such a flow as to reach the end of her skirts.

*remembereth not ... last end* — (<sup><6229></sup>Deuteronomy 32:29 <sup><2407></sup>Isaiah 47:7). She forgot how fatal must be the end of her iniquity. Or, as the words following imply: She, in despair, cannot lift herself up to lay hold of God's promises as to her "latter end" [CALVIN].

*wonderfully* — *Hebrew*, "wonders," that is, with amazing dejection.

*O Lord, behold* — Judah here breaks in, speaking for herself.

*for the enemy hath magnified himself* — What might seem ground for despair, the elated insulting of the enemy, is rather ground for good hope.

## JOD.

10. *for* — *surely* she hath seen, etc.

*heathen ... command ... not enter ... congregation* — for instance, the Ammonites and Moabites (<sup><6238></sup>Deuteronomy 23:3 <sup><4631></sup>Nehemiah 13:1,2). If the heathen, as such, were not allowed to enter the sanctuary for worship, much less were they allowed to enter in order to rob and destroy.

## CAPH.

11. (<sup><2472></sup>Jeremiah 37:21 38:9 52:6).

*given ... pleasant things for meat* — (<sup>4165</sup>2 Kings 6:25 <sup>8014</sup>Job 2:4).

*relieve ... soul* — literally, “to cause the soul or life to return.”

*for I am become vile* — Her sins and consequent sorrows are made the plea in craving God’s mercy. Compare the like plea in <sup>4251</sup>Psalm 25:11.

## LAMED.

**12.** The pathetic appeal of Jerusalem, not only to her neighbors, but even to the strangers “passing by,” as her sorrow is such as should excite the compassion even of those unconnected with her. She here prefigures Christ, whom the language is prophetically made to suit, more than Jerusalem. Compare Israel, that is, Messiah, <sup>2348</sup>Isaiah 49:3. Compare with “pass by,” <sup>4179</sup>Matthew 27:39 <sup>4159</sup>Mark 15:29. As to Jerusalem, <sup>2792</sup>Daniel 9:12. MAURER, from the *Arabic* idiom, translates, “do not go off on your way,” that is, stop, whoever ye are that pass by. *English Version* is simpler.

## MEM.

**13. bones** — a fire which not only consumes the skin and flesh, but penetrates even to my “bones” (that is, my vital powers).

*prevaileth against* — not as ROSENMULLER, “He (Jehovah) hath *broken* them”; a sense not in the *Hebrew*.

*net* — (<sup>3423</sup>Ezekiel 12:13); image from hunting wild beasts. He has so entangled me in His judgments that I cannot escape.

*turned me back* — so that I cannot go forward and get free from His meshes.

## NUN.

**14. yoke ... is bound by his hand** — (<sup>4528</sup>Deuteronomy 28:48). Metaphor from husbandmen, who, after they have bound the yoke to the neck of oxen, hold the rein firmly twisted *round the hand*. Thus the translation will be, “*in His hand*.” Or else, “the yoke of my transgressions” (that is, of punishment for my transgressions) is held so fast fixed on me “*by*” God, that there is no loosening of it; thus *English Version*, “*by His hand*.”

*wreathed* — My sins are like the withes *entwined* about the neck to fasten the yoke to.

*into their hands, from whom* — into the hands of those, from whom, etc. MAURER translates, “*before whom I am not able to stand*.”

## SAMECH.

15. *trodden*, etc. — MAURER, from *Syriac* root, translates, “cast away”; so <sup><12372></sup>2 Kings 23:27. But <sup><13918></sup>Psalm 119:118, supports *English Version*.

*in ... midst of me* — They fell not on the battlefield, but in the heart of the city; a sign of the divine wrath.

*assembly* — the collected forces of Babylon; a very different “assembly” from the solemn ones which once met at Jerusalem on the great feasts. The *Hebrew* means, literally, such a solemn “assembly” or feast (compare <sup><25122></sup>Lamentations 2:22).

*trodden ... virgin ... in a wine-press* — hath forced her blood to burst forth, as the red wine from the grapes trodden in the press (<sup><23318></sup>Isaiah 63:3 <sup><6449></sup>Revelation 14:19,20 19:15).

## AIN.

16. (<sup><24377></sup>Jeremiah 13:17 14:17). Jerusalem is the speaker.

*mine eye, mine eye* — so <sup><25418></sup>Lamentations 4:18, “our end ... our end”; repetition for emphasis.

## PE.

17. Like a woman in labor-throes (<sup><24361></sup>Jeremiah 4:31).

*menstruous woman* — held unclean, and shunned by all; separated from her husband and from the temple (compare <sup><25008></sup>Lamentations 1:8 <sup><6449></sup>Leviticus 14:19, etc.).

## TZADDI.

18. The sure sign of repentance; justifying God, condemning herself (<sup><14383></sup>Nehemiah 9:33 <sup><15104></sup>Psalm 51:4 <sup><27007></sup>Daniel 9:7-14).

*his commandment* — literally, “mouth”; His word in the mouth of the prophets.

## KOPH.

19. *lovers* — (<sup><25002></sup>Lamentations 1:2 <sup><24347></sup>Jeremiah 30:14).

*elders* — in dignity, not merely age.

*sought ... meat* — Their dignity did not exempt them from having to go and seek bread (<sup><2011></sup>Lamentations 1:11).

## RESH.

**20.** *bowels ... troubled* — (<sup><1817></sup>Job 30:27; <sup><2361></sup>Isaiah 16:11 <sup><2019></sup>Jeremiah 4:19 31:20). Extreme mental distress affects the bowels and the whole internal frame.

*heart ... turned* — (<sup><2108></sup>Hosea 11:8); is agitated or fluttered.

*abroad ... sword ... at home ... as death* — (<sup><1625></sup>Deuteronomy 32:25 <sup><2075></sup>Ezekiel 7:15). The “as” does not modify, but intensifies. “Abroad the sword bereaveth, at home *as it were death itself*” (personified), in the form of famine and pestilence (<sup><2282></sup>2 Kings 25:3 <sup><2448></sup>Jeremiah 14:18 52:6). So Habakkuk 2:5, “as death” [MICHAELIS].

## SCHIN.

**21.** *they are glad that thou hast done it* — because they thought that therefore Judah is irretrievably ruined (<sup><2408></sup>Jeremiah 40:3).

*the day ... called* — (but) thou wilt bring on them the day of calamity which thou hast *announced*, namely, by the prophets (<sup><2601></sup>Jeremiah 50:1-46 48:27).

*like ... me* — in calamities (<sup><1508></sup>Psalms 137:8,9 <sup><2625></sup>Jeremiah 51:25, etc.).

## TAU.

**22.** Such prayers against foes are lawful, if the foe be an enemy of God, and if our concern be not for our own personal feeling, but for the glory of God and the welfare of His people.

*come before thee* — so <sup><6169></sup>Revelation 16:19, “Babylon *came in remembrance before God*” (compare <sup><1995></sup>Psalms 109:15).

# CHAPTER (ELEGY) 2

## LAMENTATIONS 2:1-22.

### ALEPH.

1. **How** — The title of the collection repeated here, and in <sup><2001></sup>Lamentations 4:1.

**covered ... with a cloud** — that is, with the darkness of ignominy.

**cast down from heaven unto ... earth** — (<sup><41123></sup>Matthew 11:23); dashed down from the highest prosperity to the lowest misery.

**beauty of Israel** — the beautiful temple (<sup><1920></sup>Psalm 29:2 74:7 96:9, *Margin*; <sup><2401></sup>Isaiah 60:7 64:11).

**his footstool** — the ark (compare <sup><1330></sup>1 Chronicles 28:2, with <sup><1991></sup>Psalm 99:5 132:7). They once had gloried more in the ark than in the God whose symbol it was; they now feel it was but His “footstool,” yet that it had been a great glory to them that God deigned to use it as such.

### BETH.

2. **polluted** — by delivering it into the hands of the profane foe. Compare <sup><1889></sup>Psalm 89:39, “*profaned ... crown.*”

### GIMEL.

3. **horn** — worn in the East as an ornament on the forehead, and an emblem of power and majesty (<sup><9120></sup>1 Samuel 2:10 <sup><19217></sup>Psalm 132:17; see on <sup><1485></sup>Jeremiah 48:25).

**drawn back ... fight hand** — (<sup><19711></sup>Psalm 74:11). God has withdrawn the help which He before gave them. Not as HENDERSON, “He has turned back his (*Israel’s*) right hand” (<sup><1898></sup>Psalm 89:43).

### DALETH.

4. (<sup><2501></sup>Isaiah 63:10).

**stood with ... right hand** — He took His stand so as to use His right hand as an adversary. HENDERSON makes the image to be that of an archer *steadying* his right hand to take aim. Not only did He *withdraw* His help, but also took arms against Israel.

**all ... pleasant to ... eye** — (<sup><3825></sup>Ezekiel 24:25). All that were conspicuous for youth, beauty, and rank.

**in ... tabernacle** — the dwellings of Jerusalem.

## HE.

**5. an enemy** — (<sup><2614></sup>Jeremiah 30:14).

**mourning and lamentation** — There is a play of similar sounds in the original, “sorrow and sadness,” to heighten the effect (<sup><8318></sup>Job 30:3, *Hebrew*; <sup><3818></sup>Ezekiel 35:3, *Margin*).

## VAU.

**6. tabernacle** — rather, “He hath violently taken away His *hedge* (the hedge of the place sacred to Him, <sup><9312></sup>Psalm 80:12 89:40 <sup><2315></sup>Isaiah 5:5), as that of a garden” [MAURER]. CALVIN supports *English Version*, “His tabernacle (that is, temple) as (one would take away the temporary cottage or booth) of a garden.” <sup><2108></sup>Isaiah 1:8 accords with this (<sup><8278></sup>Job 27:18).

**places of ... assembly** — the temple and synagogues (<sup><9417></sup>Psalm 74:7,8).

**solemn feasts** — (<sup><2104></sup>Lamentations 1:4).

## ZAIN.

**7. they ... made a noise in ... house of ... Lord, as in ... feast** — The foe’s shout of triumph in the captured temple bore a resemblance (but oh, how sad a contrast as to the *occasion* of it!) to the joyous thanksgivings we used to offer in the same place at our “solemn feasts” (compare <sup><2122></sup>Lamentations 2:22).

## CHETH.

**8. stretched ... a line** — The Easterns used a measuring-line not merely in building, but in destroying edifices (<sup><1213></sup>2 Kings 21:13 <sup><2341></sup>Isaiah 34:11); implying here the unsparing rigidity with which He would exact punishment.

**TETH.**

9. Her gates cannot oppose the entrance of the foe into the city, for they are sunk under a mass of rubbish and earth.

*broken ... bars* — (<sup><26133></sup>Jeremiah 51:30).

*her king ... among ... Gentiles* — (<sup><15286></sup>Deuteronomy 28:36).

*law ... no more* — (<sup><44518></sup>2 Chronicles 15:3). The civil and religious laws were one under the theocracy. “All the legal ordinances (prophetical as well as priestly) of the theocracy, are no more” (<sup><497419></sup>Psalms 74:9 <sup><31723></sup>Ezekiel 7:26).

**JOD.**

10. (<sup><8122></sup>Job 2:12,13). The “elders,” by their example, would draw the others to violent grief.

*the virgins* — who usually are so anxious to set off their personal appearances to advantage.

**CAPH.**

11. *liver is poured*, etc. — that is, as the liver was thought to be the seat of the passions, “all my feelings are poured out and prostrated for,” etc. The “liver,” is here put for the bile (“gall,” <sup><18163></sup>Job 16:13; “bowels,” <sup><12214></sup>Psalms 22:14) in a bladder on the surface of the liver, copiously discharged when the passions are agitated.

*swoon* — through faintness from the effects of hunger.

**LAMED.**

12. *as the wounded* — famine being as deadly as the sword (<sup><26116></sup>Jeremiah 52:6).

*soul ... poured ... into ... mothers bosom* — Instinctively turning to their mother’s bosom, but finding no milk there, they *breathe out their life* as it were “into her bosom.”

**MEM.**

13. *What thing shall I take to witness* — What can I bring forward as a witness, or instance, to prove that others have sustained as grievous ills as thou? I cannot console thee as mourners are often consoled by showing that thy lot is only what others, too, suffer. The “sea” affords the only suitable

emblem of thy woes, by its boundless extent and depth (<sup><2112></sup>Lamentations 1:12 <sup><2192></sup>Daniel 9:12).

## NUN.

**14. *Thy prophets*** — not God's (<sup><2326></sup>Jeremiah 23:26).

***vain ... for thee*** — to gratify thy appetite, not for truth, but for false things.

***not discovered thine iniquity*** — in opposition to God's command to the true prophets (<sup><2301></sup>Isaiah 58:1). Literally, "*They have not taken off (the veil) which was on thine iniquity, so as to set it before thee.*"

***burdens*** — Their prophecies were soothing and flattering; but the result of them was *heavy* calamities to the people, worse than even what the prophecies of Jeremiah, which they in derision called "burdens," threatened. Hence he terms their pretended prophecies "false burdens," which proved to the Jews "causes of their banishment" [CALVIN].

## SAMECH.

**15. *clap ... hands*** — in derision (<sup><18723></sup>Job 27:23 34:37).

***wag ... head*** — (<sup><12921></sup>2 Kings 19:21 <sup><19444></sup>Psalms 44:14).

***perfection of beauty ... joy of ... earth*** — (<sup><19802></sup>Psalms 48:2 50:2). The Jews' enemies quote their very words in scorn.

## PE.

**16, 17.** For the transposition of *Hebrew* letters (*Pe* and *Ain*, <sup><25126></sup>Lamentations 2:16,17) in the order of verses, see *Introduction*.

***opened ... mouth*** — as ravening, roaring wild beasts (<sup><18119></sup>Job 16:9,10 <sup><19713></sup>Psalms 22:13). Herein Jerusalem was a type of Messiah.

***gnash ... teeth*** — in vindictive malice.

***we have seen it*** — (<sup><19521></sup>Psalms 35:21).

## AIN.

**17. *Lord*** — Let not the foe exult as if it was *their* doing. It was "the Lord" who thus fulfilled the threats uttered by His prophets for the guilt of Judea (<sup><18361></sup>Leviticus 26:16-25 <sup><18386></sup>Deuteronomy 28:36-48,53 <sup><24191></sup>Jeremiah 19:9).

## TZADDI.

**18. wall** — (<sup><2108></sup>Lamentations 2:8). Personified. “*Their heart*,” that is, the Jews’; while their heart is lifted up to the Lord in prayer, their speech is addressed to the “wall” (the part being put for *the whole city*).

**let tears**, etc. — (<sup><2447></sup>Jeremiah 14:17). The wall is called on to weep for its own ruin and that of the city. Compare the similar personification (<sup><2104></sup>Lamentations 1:4).

**apple** — the pupil of the eye (<sup><9708></sup>Psalms 17:8).

## KOPH.

**19. cry ... in ... night** — (<sup><9947></sup>Psalms 119:147).

**beginning of ... watches** — that is, the *first* of the three equal divisions (four hours each) into which the ancient Jews divided the night; namely, from sunset to ten o’clock. The second was called “the middle watch” (<sup><0079></sup>Judges 7:19), from ten till two o’clock. The third, “the morning watch,” from two to sunrise (<sup><0149></sup>Exodus 14:24 <sup><0111></sup>1 Samuel 11:11). Afterwards, under the Romans, they had *four* watches (<sup><0425></sup>Matthew 14:25 <sup><0238></sup>Luke 12:38).

**for ... thy ... children** — that God, if He will not spare thee, may *at least* preserve “thy young children.”

**top of ... street** — (<sup><2510></sup>Isaiah 51:20 <sup><Na 3:10></sup>Na 3:10).

*Resh.*

**20. women eat ... fruit** — as threatened (<sup><0329></sup>Leviticus 26:29 <sup><0329></sup>Deuteronomy 28:53,56,57 <sup><2499></sup>Jeremiah 19:9).

**children ... span long** — or else, “children whom they carry in their arms” [MAURER].

## SCHIN.

**21.** (<sup><4872></sup>2 Chronicles 36:17).

## TAU.

**22. Thou hast called as in ... solemn day ... terrors** — Thou hast summoned my enemies against me from all quarters, just as multitudes used to be convened to Jerusalem, on the solemn feast days. The objects, for which the enemies and the festal multitude respectively met, formed a

sad contrast. Compare ~~2015~~ Lamentations 1:15: “called an assembly against me.”

# CHAPTER (ELEGY) 3

## LAMENTATIONS 3:1-66.

Jeremiah proposes his own experience under afflictions, as an example as to how the Jews should behave under theirs, so as to have hope of a restoration; hence the change from *singular* to *plural* (<sup><A182></sup>Lamentations 3:22,40-47). The stanzas consist of three lines, each of which begins with the same *Hebrew* letter.

### ALEPH.

**1-3. *seen affliction*** — his own in the dungeon of Malchiah (<sup><A1816></sup>Jeremiah 38:6); that of his countrymen also in the siege. Both were types of that of Christ.

**2. *darkness*** — calamity.

***light*** — prosperity.

**3. *turneth ... hand*** — to inflict again and again new strokes. “His hand,” which once used to protect me. “Turned ... turneth” implies *repeated* inflictions.

### BETH.

**4-6.** (<sup><B168></sup>Job 16:8).

**5. *builed*** — mounds, as against a besieged city, so as to allow none to escape (so <sup><A1814></sup>Lamentations 3:7,9).

**6. *set me*** — HENDERSON refers this to the custom of placing the dead in a sitting posture.

***dark places*** — sepulchers. As those “dead long since”; so Jeremiah and his people are consigned to oblivion (<sup><B1816></sup>Psalm 88:5,6 143:3 <sup><A1813></sup>Ezekiel 37:13).

### GIMEL.

**7-9. *hedged*** — (<sup><B1823></sup>Job 3:23 <sup><A1816></sup>Hosea 2:6).

***chain*** — literally, “chain of *brass*.”

8. *shutteth out* — image from a door *shutting out* any entrance (<sup><1810></sup>Job 30:20). So the antitype. Christ (<sup><1921></sup>Psalm 22:2).

9. *hewn stone* — which coheres so closely as not to admit of being broken through.

*paths crooked* — thwarted our plans and efforts so that none went right.

### DALETH.

10-13. (<sup><1806></sup>Job 10:16 <sup><2837></sup>Hosea 13:7,8).

11. *turned aside* — made me wander out of the right way, so as to become a prey to wild beasts.

*pulled in pieces* — (<sup><2001></sup>Hosea 6:1), as a “bear” or a “lion” (<sup><2180></sup>Lamentations 3:10).

12. (<sup><1021></sup>Job 7:20).

### HE.

13-15. *arrows* — literally, “sons” of His quiver (compare <sup><1004></sup>Job 6:4).

14. (<sup><2007></sup>Jeremiah 20:7).

*their song* — (<sup><1912></sup>Psalm 69:12). Jeremiah herein was a type of Messiah. “All my people” (<sup><1011></sup>John 1:11).

15. *wormwood* — (<sup><2095></sup>Jeremiah 9:15). There it is regarded as *food*, namely, the leaves: here as *drink*, namely, the juice.

### VAU.

16-18. *gravel* — referring to the *grit* that often mixes with bread baked in ashes, as is the custom of baking in the East (<sup><1017></sup>Proverbs 20:17). We fare as hardly as those who eat such bread. The same allusion is in “Covered me with ashes,” namely, as bread.

17. Not only present, but all hope of future prosperity is removed; so much so, that I am as one who never was prosperous (“I forgot prosperity”).

18. *from the Lord* — that is, my hope derived from Him (<sup><1912></sup>Psalm 31:22).

**ZAIN.**

**19-21.** This gives the reason why he gave way to the temptation to despair. The *Margin*, “Remember” does not suit the sense so well.

*wormwood ... gall* — (<sup>2495</sup>Jeremiah 9:15).

**20.** As often as *my soul calls them to remembrance, it is humbled* or bowed down in me.

**21. *This*** — namely, what follows; the view of the divine character (<sup>2182</sup>Lamentations 3:22,23). CALVIN makes “this” refer to Jeremiah’s infirmity. His very weakness (<sup>2389</sup>Lamentations 3:19,20) gives him hope of God interposing His strength for him (compare <sup>1521</sup>Psalms 25:11,17 42:5,8 <sup>4719</sup>2 Corinthians 12:9,10).

**CHETH.**

**22-24.** (Malachi 3:6).

**23.** (<sup>2381</sup>Isaiah 33:2).

**24.** (<sup>4883</sup>Numbers 18:20 <sup>1901</sup>Psalms 16:5 73:26 119:57 <sup>2406</sup>Jeremiah 10:16). To have God for our portion is the one only foundation of hope.

**TETH.**

**25-27.** The repetition of “good” at the beginning of each of the three verses heightens the effect.

*wait* — (<sup>2388</sup>Isaiah 30:18).

**26. *quietly wait*** — literally, “be in silence.” Compare <sup>2133</sup>Lamentations 3:28 and <sup>1391</sup>Psalms 39:2,9, that is, to be patiently quiet under afflictions, resting in the will of God (<sup>1971</sup>Psalms 37:7). So Aaron (<sup>1801</sup>Leviticus 10:2,3); and Job (<sup>1808</sup>Job 40:4,5).

**27. *yoke*** — of the Lord’s *disciplinary* teaching (<sup>1902</sup>Psalms 90:12 119:71). CALVIN interprets it, The Lord’s *doctrine* (<sup>4119</sup>Matthew 11:29,30), which is to be received in a docile spirit. The earlier the better; for the old are full of prejudices (<sup>2187</sup>Proverbs 8:17 <sup>2111</sup>Ecclesiastes 12:1). Jeremiah himself received the yoke, both of doctrine and chastisement in his youth (<sup>2103</sup>Jeremiah 1:6,7).

**JOD.**

**28-30.** The fruit of true docility and patience. He does not fight against the yoke (<sup><3618></sup>Jeremiah 31:18 <sup><4095></sup>Acts 9:5), but accommodates himself to it.

*alone* — The heathen applauded magnanimity, but they looked to display and the praise of men. The child of God, in the absence of any witness, “alone,” silently submits to the will of God.

*borne it upon him* — that is, because he is used to bearing it on him. Rather, “because He (the Lord, <sup><2183></sup>Lamentations 3:26) *hath laid it on him*” [VATABLUS].

**29.** (<sup><8006></sup>Job 42:6). The mouth in the dust is the attitude of suppliant and humble submission to God’s dealings as righteous and loving in design (compare <sup><3306></sup>Ezra 9:6 <sup><4025></sup>1 Corinthians 14:25).

*if so be there may be hope* — This does not express doubt as to whether GOD be willing to receive the penitent, but the *penitent’s* doubt as to himself; he whispers to himself this consolation, “Perhaps there may be hope for me.”

**30.** Messiah, the Antitype, fulfilled this; His practice agreeing with His precept (<sup><2806></sup>Isaiah 50:6 <sup><4039></sup>Matthew 5:39). Many take patiently afflictions from God, but when man wrongs them, they take it impatiently. The godly bear resignedly the latter, like the former, as sent by God (<sup><1973></sup>Psalms 17:13).

**CAPH.**

**31-33.** True repentance is never without hope (<sup><1944></sup>Psalms 94:14).

**32.** The punishments of the godly are but for a time.

**33.** He does not afflict any willingly (literally, “from His heart,” that is, as if He had any pleasure in it, <sup><3511></sup>Ezekiel 33:11), much less the godly (<sup><3020></sup>Hebrews 12:10).

**LAMED.**

**34-36.** This triplet has an infinitive in the beginning of each verse, the governing finite verb being in the end of <sup><2183></sup>Lamentations 3:36, “the Lord approveth not,” which is to be repeated in each verse. Jeremiah here anticipates and answers the objections which the Jews might start, that it was by His connivance they were “crushed under the feet” of those who “turned aside the right of a man.” God approves (literally, “seeth,” <sup><3013></sup>Habakkuk 1:13; so “behold,” “look on,” that is, look on *with approval*)

not of such unrighteous acts; and so the Jews may look for deliverance and the punishment of their foes.

**35. *before ... face of ... most High*** — Any “turning aside” of justice in court is done *before the face of God*, who is present, and “regardeth,” though unseen (<sup>2168</sup>Ecclesiastes 5:8).

**36. *subvert*** — to wrong.

### MEM.

**37-39.** Who is it that can (as God, <sup>4889</sup>Psalm 33:9) effect by a word anything, without the will of God?

**38. *evil ... good*** — *Calamity* and prosperity alike proceed from God (<sup>820</sup>Job 2:10 <sup>2367</sup>Isaiah 45:7 <sup>3086</sup>Amos 3:6).

**39. *living*** — and so having a time yet given him by God for repentance. If sin were punished as it deserves, *life* itself would be forfeited by the sinner. “Complaining” (murmuring) ill becomes him who enjoys such a favor as life (<sup>2168</sup>Proverbs 19:3).

***for the punishment of his sins*** — Instead of blaming God for his sufferings, he ought to recognize in them God’s righteousness and the just rewards of his own sin.

### NUN.

**40-42. *us*** — Jeremiah and his fellow countrymen in their calamity.

***search*** — as opposed to the torpor wherewith men rest only on their outward sufferings, without attending to the cause of them (<sup>4923</sup>Psalm 139:23,24).

**41. *heart with ... hands*** — the antidote to hypocrisy (<sup>4804</sup>Psalm 86:4 <sup>4081</sup>Timothy 2:8).

**42. *not pardoned*** — The Babylonian captivity had not yet ended.

### SAMECH.

**43-45. *covered*** — namely, thyself (so <sup>2184</sup>Lamentations 3:44), so as not to see and pity our calamities, for even the most cruel in seeing a sad spectacle are moved to pity. Compare as to God “hiding His face,” <sup>4901</sup>Psalm 10:11 22:25.

44. (<sup><2188></sup>Lamentations 3:8). The “cloud” is our sins, and God’s wrath because of them (<sup><2342></sup>Isaiah 44:22 59:2).

45. So the apostles were treated; but, instead of murmuring, they rejoiced at it (<sup><4043></sup>1 Corinthians 4:13).

## PE.

46-48. *Pe* is put before *Ain* (<sup><2186></sup>Lamentations 3:43,46), as in <sup><2126></sup>Lamentations 2:16,17 4:16,17. (<sup><2126></sup>Lamentations 2:16.)

47. Like animals fleeing in fear, we fall into the snare laid for us.

48. (<sup><2049></sup>Jeremiah 4:19).

## AIN.

49-51. *without ... intermission* — or else, “because there is no intermission” [PISCATOR], namely, Of my miseries.

50. *Till* — His prayer is not without hope, wherein it differs from the blind grief of unbelievers.

*look down*, etc. — (<sup><2365></sup>Isaiah 63:15).

51. *eye affecteth mine heart* — that is, causeth me grief with continual tears; or, “affecteth my *life*” (literally, “soul,” *Margin*), that is, my health [GROTIUS].

*daughters of ... city* — the towns around, dependencies of Jerusalem, taken by the foe.

## TZADDI.

52-54. *a bird* — which is destitute of counsel and strength. The allusion seems to be to <sup><2017></sup>Proverbs 1:17 [CALVIN].

*without cause* — (<sup><4904></sup>Psalms 69:4 109:3,4). Type of Messiah (<sup><4855></sup>John 15:25).

53. *in ... dungeon* — (<sup><2676></sup>Jeremiah 37:16).

*stone* — usually put at the mouth of a dungeon to secure the prisoners (<sup><6108></sup>Joshua 10:18 <sup><2067></sup>Daniel 6:17 <sup><4261></sup>Matthew 27:60).

54. *Waters* — not literally, for there was “no water” (<sup><2806></sup>Jeremiah 38:6) in the place of Jeremiah’s confinement, but emblematical of overwhelming calamities (<sup><4902></sup>Psalms 69:2 124:4,5).

**cut off** — (<sup><2330></sup>Isaiah 38:10,11). I am abandoned by God. He speaks according to carnal sense.

## KOPH.

**55-57. *I called out of dungeon*** — Thus the spirit resists the flesh, and faith spurns the temptation [CALVIN], (<sup><300E></sup>Psalm 130:1 Jon 2:2).

**56. *Thou hast heard*** — namely formerly (so in <sup><2157></sup>Lamentations 3:57,58).

***breathing ... cry*** — two kinds of prayer; the sigh of a prayer silently *breathed* forth, and the loud, earnest cry (compare “prayer,” “*secret speech*,” <sup><2306></sup>Isaiah 26:16, *Margin*; with “cry aloud,” <sup><4517></sup>Psalm 55:17).

**57. *Thou drewest near*** — with Thy help (<sup><3008></sup>James 4:8).

## RESH.

**58-60.** Jeremiah cites God’s gracious answers to his prayers as an encouragement to his fellow countrymen, to trust in Him.

***pleaded*** — (<sup><451E></sup>Psalm 35:1 <sup><3109></sup>Micah 7:9).

**59.** God’s past deliverances and His knowledge of Judah’s wrongs are made the grounds of prayer for relief.

**60. *imagination*** — devices (<sup><2419></sup>Jeremiah 11:19).

***Their vengeance*** — means *their malice*. Jeremiah gives his conduct, when plotted against by his foes, as an example how the Jews should bring their wrongs at the hands of the Chaldeans before God.

## SCHIN.

**61-63. *their reproach*** — their reproachful language against me.

**62. *lips*** — speeches.

**63. *sitting down ... rising up*** — whether they sit or rise, that is, whether they be actively engaged or sedentary, and at rest “all the day” (<sup><2162></sup>Lamentations 3:62), I am the subject of their derisive songs (<sup><2164></sup>Lamentations 3:14).

## TAU.

**64-66.** (<sup><241D></sup>Jeremiah 11:20 <sup><5144></sup>2 Timothy 4:14).

**65. *sorrow*** — rather, *blindness* or *hardness*; literally, “a veil” covering their heart, so that they may rush on to their own ruin (<sup><2360></sup>Isaiah 6:10 <sup><4084></sup>2 Corinthians 3:14,15).

**66. *from under ... heavens of ... Lord*** — *destroy* them so that it may be seen everywhere *under heaven* that thou sittest above as Judge of the world.

# CHAPTER (ELEGY) 4

## LAMENTATIONS 4:1-22.

### THE SAD CAPTURE OF JERUSALEM, THE HOPE OF RESTORATION, AND THE RETRIBUTION AWAITING IDUMEA FOR JOINING BABYLON AGAINST JUDEA.

#### ALEPH.

1. *gold* — the splendid adornment of the temple [CALVIN] (<sup>25110</sup>Lamentations 1:10 <sup>11022</sup>1 Kings 6:22 <sup>35219</sup>Jeremiah 52:19); or, *the principal men* of Judea [GROTIUS] (<sup>25042</sup>Lamentations 4:2).

*stones of ... sanctuary* — the gems on the breastplate of the high priest; or, metaphorically, the priests and Levites.

#### BETH.

2. *comparable to ... gold* — (<sup>38316</sup>Job 28:16,19).

*earthen pitchers* — (<sup>23044</sup>Isaiah 30:14 <sup>24911</sup>Jeremiah 19:11).

#### GIMEL.

3. *sea monsters ... breast* — Whales and other cetaceous monsters are mammalian. Even they suckle their young; but the Jewish women in the siege, so desperate was their misery, ate theirs (<sup>25010</sup>Lamentations 4:10 <sup>25122</sup>Lamentations 2:20). Others translate, “jackals.”

*ostriches* — see on <sup>18344</sup>Job 39:14; <sup>18316</sup>Job 39:16, on their forsaking their young.

#### DALETH.

4. *thirst* — The mothers have no milk to give through the famine.

#### HE.

5. *delicately* — on dainties.

*are desolate* — or, “perish.”

**in scarlet embrace dunghills** — Instead of the *scarlet* couches on which the grandees were nursed, they must lie on *dunghills*.

**embrace** — They who once shrank sensitively from any soil, gladly *cling close* to heaps of filth as their only resting-place. Compare “embrace the rock” (<sup><K248></sup>Job 24:8).

## VAU.

**6. greater than ... Sodom** — (<sup><0123></sup>Matthew 11:23). No prophets had been sent to Sodom, as there had been to Judea; therefore the punishment of the latter was heavier than that of the former.

**overthrown ... in a moment** — whereas the Jews had to endure the protracted and manifold hardships of a siege.

**no hands stayed on her** — No *hostile force*, as the Chaldeans in the case of Jerusalem, *continually pressed on her* before her overthrow. Jeremiah thus shows the greater severity of Jerusalem’s punishment than that of Sodom.

## ZAIN.

**7. Nazarites** — literally, “separated ones” (<sup><0002></sup>Numbers 6:2). They were held once in the highest estimation, but now they are degraded. God’s blessing formerly caused their body not to be the less fair and ruddy for their abstinence from strong drink. Compare the similar case of Daniel, etc. (<sup><2008></sup>Daniel 1:8-15). Also David (<sup><0912></sup>1 Samuel 16:12 17:42). Type of Messiah (So 5:10).

**rubies** — GESENIUS translates, “corals,” from a *Hebrew* root, “to divide into branches,” from the branching form of corals.

**polishing** — They were like exquisitely cut and *polished sapphires*. The “sapphires” may represent the *blue* veins of a healthy person.

## CHETH.

**8. blacker than ... coal** — or, “than blackness” itself (<sup><2008></sup>Joel 2:6 Na 2:10).

**like a stick** — as withered as a dry stick.

## TETH.

**9.** The speedy death by the sword is better than the lingering death by famine.

*pine away* — literally, “flow out”; referring to the flow of blood. This expression, and “stricken through,” are drawn from death by “the sword.”

*want of ... fruits* — The words in italics have to be supplied in the original (<sup><0183></sup>Genesis 18:28 <sup><19021></sup>Psalms 109:24).

## JOD.

10. (<sup><2121></sup>Lamentations 2:20 <sup><1336></sup>Deuteronomy 28:56,57).

*pitiful* — naturally at other times compassionate (<sup><305></sup>Isaiah 49:15).

JOSEPHUS describes the unnatural act as it took place in the siege under Titus.

*sodden* — boiled.

## CAPH.

11. *fire ... devoured ... foundations* — (<sup><1322></sup>Deuteronomy 32:22 <sup><2114></sup>Jeremiah 21:14). A most rare event. Fire usually consumes only the surface; but this reached even to the *foundation*, cutting off all hope of restoration.

## LAMED.

12. Jerusalem was so fortified that all thought it impregnable. It therefore could only have been the hand of God, not the force of man, which overthrew it.

## MEM.

13. *prophets* — the false prophets (<sup><2031></sup>Jeremiah 23:11,21). Supply the sense thus: “For the sins ... *these calamities have befallen her.*”

*shed the blood of the just* — (<sup><1231></sup>Matthew 23:31,37). This received its full fulfillment in the slaying of Messiah and the Jews’ consequent dispersion (<sup><3116></sup>James 5:6).

## NUN.

14. *blind* — with mental aberration.

*polluted ... with blood* — both with blood of one another mutually shed (for example, <sup><1031></sup>Jeremiah 2:34), and with their blood shed by the enemy [GLASSIUS].

**not touch ... garments** — as being defiled with blood (<sup><4019></sup>Numbers 19:16).

## SAMECH.

**15. They ... them** — “They,” that is, “men” (<sup><23044></sup>Lamentations 4:14). Even the very *Gentiles*, regarded as unclean by *the Jews*, who were ordered most religiously to avoid all defilements, cried unto the *latter*, “depart,” as being unclean: so universal was the defilement of the city by blood.

**wandered** — As the false prophets and their followers had “wandered” blind with infatuated and idolatrous crime in the city (<sup><23044></sup>Lamentations 4:14), so they must now “wander” among the heathen in blind consternation with calamity.

**they said** — that is, the Gentiles said: *it was said* among the heathen, “The Jews shall no more sojourn in their own land” [GROTIUS]; or, wheresoever they go in their wandering exile, “they shall not stay long” [LUDOVICUS DE DIEU], (<sup><1526></sup>Deuteronomy 28:65).

## PE.

**16. Ain and Pe** are here transposed (<sup><23016></sup>Lamentations 4:16,17), as in <sup><23016></sup>Lamentations 2:16,17 3:46-51.

**anger** — literally, “face”; it is the countenance which, by its expression, manifests anger (<sup><13816></sup>Psalms 34:16). GESENIUS translates, “the *person* of Jehovah”; Jehovah present; Jehovah Himself (<sup><12334></sup>Exodus 33:14 <sup><10712></sup>Samuel 17:11).

**divided** — dispersed the Jews.

**they respected not ... priests** — This is the language of the *Gentiles*. “The Jews have no hope of a return: for *they respected not* even good *priests*” (<sup><12492></sup>2 Chronicles 24:19-22) [GROTIUS]. MAURER explains it, “They (the victorious foe) regard not the (Jewish) priests when imploring their pity” (<sup><2312></sup>Lamentations 5:12). The evident antithesis to “As for *us*” (<sup><20471></sup>Lamentations 4:17) and the language of “the heathen” at the close of <sup><23015></sup>Lamentations 4:15, of which <sup><2016></sup>Lamentations 4:16 is the continuation, favor the former view.

## AIN.

**17. As for us** — This translation forms the best antithesis to the language of *the heathen* (<sup><23015></sup>Lamentations 4:15,16). CALVIN translates, “While as yet we stood as a state, our eyes failed,” etc.

*watched for a nation that could not save us* — Egypt (<sup><1241></sup>2 Kings 24:7  
<sup><2307></sup>Isaiah 30:7 <sup><2676></sup>Jeremiah 37:5-11).

## TZADDI.

18. *They* — the Chaldeans.

*cannot go* — without danger.

## KOPH.

19. The last times just before the taking of the city. There was no place of escape; the foe intercepted those wishing to escape from the famine-stricken city, “on the mountains and in the wilderness.”

*swifter ... than ... eagles* — the Chaldean cavalry (<sup><2013></sup>Jeremiah 4:13).

*pursued* — literally, “to be hot”; then, “to pursue hotly” (<sup><0833></sup>Genesis 31:36). Thus they pursued and overtook Zedekiah (<sup><2618></sup>Jeremiah 52:8,9).

## RESH.

20. *breath ... anointed of ... Lord* — our king, with whose life ours was bound up. The original reference seems to have been to Josiah (<sup><4852></sup>2 Chronicles 35:25), killed in battle with Pharaoh-necho; but the language is here applied to Zedekiah, who, though worthless, was still lineal representative of David, and type of Messiah, the “Anointed.” Viewed *personally* the language is too favorable to apply to him.

*live among the heathen* — Under him we hoped to live securely, even in spite of the surrounding heathen nations [GROTIUS].

## SCHIN.

21. *Rejoice* — at our calamities (<sup><4970></sup>Psalms 137:7). This is a *prophecy* that Edom should exult over the fall of Jerusalem. At the same time it is implied, Edom’s joy shall be short-lived. *Ironically* she is told, Rejoice while thou mayest (<sup><2109></sup>Ecclesiastes 11:9).

*cup* — for this image of the confounding effects of God’s wrath, see <sup><2432></sup>Jeremiah 13:12 25:15,16,21; as to Edom, <sup><2407></sup>Jeremiah 49:7-22.

## TAU.

22. (<sup><2012></sup>Isaiah 40:2). Thou hast been punished enough: the end of thy punishment is at hand.

*no more carry thee ... into captivity* — that is, by the Chaldeans. The Romans carried them away subsequently. The *full* accomplishment of this prophecy must therefore refer to the Jews' final restoration.

*discover* — By the severity of His punishments on thee, God shall let men see how great was thy sin (<sup><3490></sup>Jeremiah 49:10). God “covers” sin when He forgives it (<sup><4911></sup>Psalm 32:1,5). He “discovers,” or “reveals,” it, when He punishes it (<sup><4317></sup>Job 20:27). <sup><2490></sup>Jeremiah 49:10 shows that *Margin* is wrong, “carry captive” (this rendering is as in Na 2:7; compare “discovered,” *Margin*).

# CHAPTER (ELEGY) 5

## LAMENTATIONS 5:1-22.

### EPIPHONEMA, OR A CLOSING RECAPITULATION OF THE CALAMITIES TREATED IN THE PREVIOUS ELEGIES.

1. (<sup><1887></sup>Psalm 89:50,51).
  2. *Our inheritance* — “Thine inheritance” (<sup><1591E></sup>Psalm 79:1). The land given of old to us by Thy gift.
  3. *fatherless* — Our whole land is full of orphans [CALVIN]. Or, “we are fatherless,” being abandoned by Thee our “Father” (<sup><2189></sup>Jeremiah 3:19), [GROTIUS].
  4. *water for money* — The Jews were compelled to pay the enemy for the water of their own cisterns after the overthrow of Jerusalem; or rather, it refers to their sojourn in Babylon; they had to pay tax for access to the rivers and fountains. Thus, “our” means the water which we need, the commonest necessary of life.
- our wood* — In Judea each one could get wood without pay; in Babylon, “our wood,” the wood we need, must be paid for.
5. Literally, “On our necks we are persecuted”; that is, Men tread on our necks (<sup><1862></sup>Psalm 66:12 <sup><2523></sup>Isaiah 51:23; compare <sup><16024></sup>Joshua 10:24). The extremest oppression. The foe not merely galled the Jews face, back, and sides, but their neck. A just retribution, as they had been stiff in neck against the yoke of God (<sup><1818></sup>2 Chronicles 30:8, *Margin*; <sup><1619></sup>Nehemiah 9:29 <sup><380E></sup>Isaiah 48:4).
  6. *given ... hand to* — in token of submission (see on <sup><2515></sup>Jeremiah 50:15).
- to ... Egyptians* — at the death of Josiah (<sup><1862></sup>2 Chronicles 36:3,4).
- Assyrians* — that is, the Chaldeans who occupied the empire which Assyria had held. So <sup><2128></sup>Jeremiah 2:18.
- to be satisfied with bread* — (<sup><1638></sup>Deuteronomy 28:48).
7. (<sup><2623></sup>Jeremiah 31:29).

**borne their iniquities** — that is, the punishment of them. The accumulated sins of our fathers from age to age, as well as our own, are visited on us. They say this as a plea why God should pity them (compare <sup><3819></sup>Ezekiel 18:2, etc.).

**8. Servants ... ruled ... us** — Servants under the Chaldean governors ruled the Jews (<sup><4165></sup>Nehemiah 5:15). Israel, once a “kingdom of priests” (<sup><02916></sup>Exodus 19:6), is become like Canaan, “a servant of servants,” according to the curse (<sup><00025></sup>Genesis 9:25). The Chaldeans were designed to be “servants” of Shem, being descended from Ham (<sup><00026></sup>Genesis 9:26). Now through the Jews’ sin, their positions are reversed.

**9. We gat our bread with ... peril** — that is, those of us left in the city after its capture by the Chaldeans.

**because of ... sword of ... wilderness** — because of the liability to attack by the robber Arabs of the wilderness, through which the Jews had to pass to get “bread” from Egypt (compare <sup><25116></sup>Lamentations 5:6).

**10.** As an oven is scorched with too much fire, so our skin with the hot blast of famine (*Margin*, rightly, “storms,” like the hot simoom). Hunger dries up the pores so that the skin becomes like as if it were scorched by the sun (<sup><33113></sup>Job 30:30 <sup><11833></sup>Psalms 119:83).

**11.** So in just retribution Babylon itself should fare in the end. Jerusalem shall for the last time suffer these woes before her final restoration (*Zechariah* 14:2).

**12. hanged ... by their hand** — a piece of wanton cruelty invented by the Chaldeans. GROTIUS translates, “Princes were hung by the hand of the enemy”; hanging was a usual mode of execution (<sup><04019></sup>Genesis 40:19).

**elders** — officials (<sup><25116></sup>Lamentations 4:16).

**13. young men ... grind** — The work of the lowest *female* slave was laid on young men (<sup><07621></sup>Judges 16:21 <sup><18310></sup>Job 31:10).

**children fell under ... wood** — Mere children had to bear burdens of wood so heavy that they sank beneath them.

**14.** Aged men in the East meet in the open space round the gate to decide judicial trials and to hold social converse (<sup><18217></sup>Job 29:7,8).

**16. The crown** — all our glory, the kingdom and the priesthood (<sup><18813></sup>Job 19:9 <sup><18833></sup>Psalms 89:39,44).

**17.** (<sup><25112></sup>Lamentations 1:22 2:11).

18. *foxes* — They frequent desolate places where they can freely and fearlessly roam.

19. (<sup>19A212</sup>Psalm 102:12). The perpetuity of God's rule over human affairs, however He may seem to let His people be oppressed for a time, is their ground of hope of restoration.

20. *for ever* — that is, for “so long a time.”

21. (<sup>21B118</sup>Psalm 80:3 <sup>21B18</sup>Jeremiah 31:18). “Restore us to favor with Thee, and so we shall be restored to our old position” [GROTIUS]. Jeremiah is not speaking of spiritual conversion, but of that outward turning whereby God receives men into His fatherly favor, manifested in bestowing prosperity [CALVIN]. Still, as Israel is a type of the Church, temporal goods typify spiritual blessings; and so the sinner may use this prayer for God to convert him.

22. Rather, “Unless haply Thou hast utterly rejected us, and art beyond measure wroth against us,” that is, Unless Thou art implacable, which is impossible, hear our prayer [CALVIN]. Or, as *Margin*, “For wouldest Thou utterly reject us?” etc. — No; that cannot be. The Jews, in this book, and in Isaiah and Malachi, to avoid the ill-omen of a mournful closing sentence, repeat the verse immediately preceding the last [CALVIN].

## THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET

# EZEKIEL

Commentary by **A. R. FAUSSETT**

## INTRODUCTION

The name Ezekiel means “(whom) God will strengthen” [GESENIUS]; or, “God will prevail” [ROSENMULLER]. His father was Buzi (<sup><2008></sup>Ezekiel 1:3), a priest, and he probably exercised the priestly office himself at Jerusalem, previous to his captivity, as appears from the matured priestly character to be seen in his prophecies, a circumstance which much increased his influence with his captive fellow countrymen at Babylon. Tradition represents Sarera as the land of his nativity. His call to prophesy was in the fifth year from the date of his being carried away with Jehoiachin (see <sup><12241></sup>2 Kings 24:11-15) by Nebuchadnezzar, 599 B.C. The best portions of the people seem to have been among the first carried away (<sup><3116></sup>Ezekiel 11:16 <sup><2412></sup>Jeremiah 24:2-7,8,10). The ungodly were willing to do anything to remain in their native land; whereas the godly believed the prophets and obeyed the first summons to surrender, as the only path of safety. These latter, as adhering to the theocratic principle, were among the earliest to be removed by the Chaldeans, who believed that, if they were out of the way, the nation would fall to pieces of itself. They were despised by their brethren in the Holy Land not yet captives, as having no share in the temple sacrifices. Thus Ezekiel’s sphere of labor was one happier and less impeded by his countrymen than that of Jeremiah at home. The vicinity of the river Chebar, which flows into the Euphrates near Circeslum, was the first scene of his prophecies (<sup><3001></sup>Ezekiel 1:1). Tel-Abib there (now Thallaba) was his place of residence (<sup><2185></sup>Ezekiel 3:15), whither the elders used to come to inquire as to God’s messages through him. They were eager to return to Jerusalem, but he taught them that they must first return to their God. He continued to prophesy for at least twenty-two years, that is, to the twenty-seventh year of the captivity (<sup><3247></sup>Ezekiel 29:17), and probably remained with the captives by the Chebar the rest of his life. A treatise, falsely attributed to EPIPHANIUS, states a tradition that he was killed at Babylon by a prince of his people whom he had reproved for idolatry.

He was contemporary with Jeremiah and Daniel. The former had prophesied for thirty-four years before Ezekiel, and continued to do so for six or seven years after him. The call of Ezekiel followed the very next year after the communication of Jeremiah's predictions to Babylon (<sup>26159</sup>Jeremiah 51:59), and was divinely intended as a sequel to them. Daniel's predictions are mostly later than Ezekiel's but his piety and wisdom had become proverbial in the early part of Ezekiel's ministry (<sup>26448</sup>Ezekiel 14:14, 16 28:3). They much resemble one another, especially in the visions and grotesque images. It is a remarkable proof of genuineness that in Ezekiel no prophecies against Babylon occur among those directed against the enemies of the covenant-people. Probably he desired not to give needless offense to the government under which he lived. The effect of his labors is to be seen in the improved character of the people towards the close of the captivity, and their general cessation from idolatry and a return to the law. It was little more than thirty years after the close of his labors when the decree of the Jews' restoration was issued. His leading characteristic is realizing, determined energy; this admirably adapted him for opposing the "rebellious house" "of stubborn front and hard heart," and for maintaining the cause of God's Church among his countrymen in a foreign land, when the external framework had fallen to pieces. His style is plain and simple. His conceptions are definite, and the details even of the symbolical and enigmatical parts are given with lifelike minuteness. The obscurity lies in the substance, not in the form, of his communications. The priestly element predominates in his prophecies, arising from his previous training as a priest. He delights to linger about the temple and to find in its symbolical forms the imagery for conveying his instructions. This was divinely ordered to satisfy the spiritual want felt by the people in the absence of the outward temple and its sacrifices. In his images he is magnificent, though austere and somewhat harsh. He abounds in repetitions, not for ornament, but for force and weight. Poetical parallelism is not found except in a few portions, as in the seventh, twenty-first, twenty-seventh, twenty-eighth, twenty-ninth through thirty-first chapters. His great aim was to stimulate the dormant minds of the Jews. For this end nothing was better suited than the use of mysterious symbols expressed in the plainest words. The superficial, volatile, and wilfully unbelieving would thereby be left to judicial blindness (<sup>26060</sup>Isaiah 6:10 <sup>26131</sup>Matthew 13:11-13, etc.); whereas the better-disposed would be awakened to a deeper search into the things of God by the very obscurity of the symbols. Inattention to this divine purpose has led the modern Jews so to magnify this obscurity as to ordain that no one shall read this book till he has passed his thirtieth year.

RABBI HANANIAS is said to have satisfactorily solved the difficulties (*Mischna*) which were alleged against its canonicity. Ecclesiasticus 49:8

refers to it, and JOSEPHUS [*Antiquities*, 10.5.1]. It is mentioned as part of the canon in MELITO'S catalogue [EUSEBIUS, *Ecclesiastical History*, 4.26]; also in ORIGEN, JEROME, and the *Talmud*. The oneness of tone throughout and the repetition of favorite expressions exclude the suspicion that separate portions are not genuine. The earlier portion, the first through the thirty-second chapters, which mainly treats of sin and judgment, is a key to interpret the latter portion, which is more hopeful and joyous, but remote in date. Thus a unity and an orderly progressive character are imparted to the whole. The destruction of Jerusalem is the central point. Previous to this he calls to repentance and warns against blind confidence in Egypt (<sup>3175</sup>Ezekiel 17:15-17; compare <sup>3502</sup>Jeremiah 37:7) or other human stay. After it he consoles the captives by promising them future deliverance and restoration. His prophecies against foreign nations stand between these two great divisions, and were uttered in the interval between the intimation that Nebuchadnezzar was besieging Jerusalem and the arrival of the news that he had taken it (<sup>3522</sup>Ezekiel 33:21). HAVERNICK marks out nine sections: —

(1) Ezekiel's call to prophesy (<sup>3002</sup>Ezekiel 1:1-3:15).

(2) Symbolical predictions of the destruction of Jerusalem (<sup>31816</sup>Ezekiel 3:16-7:27).

(3) A year and two months later a vision of the temple polluted by Tammuz or Adonis worship; God's consequent scattering of fire over the city and forsaking of the temple to reveal Himself to an inquiring people in exile; happier and purer times to follow (<sup>3100</sup>Ezekiel 8:1-11:25).

(4) Exposure of the particular sins prevalent in the several classes — priests, prophets, and princes (<sup>3502</sup>Ezekiel 12:1-19:14).

(5) A year later the warning of judgment for national guilt repeated with greater distinctness as the time drew nearer (<sup>3510</sup>Ezekiel 20:1-23:49).

(6) Two years and five months later — the very day on which Ezekiel speaks — is announced as the day of the beginning of the siege; Jerusalem shall be overthrown (<sup>3510</sup>Ezekiel 24:1-27).

(7) Predictions against foreign nations during the interval of his silence towards his own people; if judgment begins at the house of God, much more will it visit the ungodly world (<sup>3520</sup>Ezekiel 25:1-32:32). Some of these were uttered much later than others, but they all *began* to be given after the fall of Jerusalem.

(8) In the twelfth year of the captivity, when the fugitives from Jerusalem (<sup>3521</sup>Ezekiel 33:21) had appeared in Chaldea, he foretells

better times and the re-establishment of Israel and the triumph of God's kingdom on earth over its enemies, Seir, the heathen, and Gog (Ezekiel 33:1-39:29).

(9) After an interval of thirteen years the closing vision of the order and beauty of the restored kingdom (Ezekiel 40:1-48:35). The particularity of details as to the temple and its offerings rather discountenances the view of this vision being only symbolical, and not at all literal. The event alone can clear it up. At all events it has not yet been fulfilled; it must be future. Ezekiel was the only *prophet* (in the strict sense) among the Jews at Babylon. Daniel was rather a *seer* than a prophet, for the spirit of prophecy was given him to qualify him, not for a spiritual office, but for disclosing future events. His position in a heathen king's palace fitted him for revelations of the *outward* relations of God's kingdom to the kingdoms of the world, so that his book is ranked by the Jews among the Hagiographa or "Sacred Writings," not among the prophetic Scriptures. On the other hand, Ezekiel was distinctively a *prophet*, and one who had to do with the *inward* concerns of the divine kingdom. As a priest, when sent into exile, his service was but transferred from the visible temple at Jerusalem to the spiritual temple in Chaldea.

# CHAPTER 1

## EZEKIEL 1:1-28.

### EZEKIEL'S VISION BY THE CHEBAR. FOUR CHERUBIM AND WHEELS.

1. *Now it came to pass* — rather, “*And it came,*” etc. As this formula in <sup><600E></sup>Joshua 1:1 has reference to the *written* history of previous times, so here (and in <sup><600E></sup>Ruth 1:1, and <sup><700E></sup>Esther 1:1), it refers to the *unwritten* history which was before the mind of the writer. The prophet by it, as it were, continues the history of the preceding times. In the fourth year of Zedekiah’s reign (<sup><2615></sup>Jeremiah 51:59), Jeremiah sent by Seraiah a message to the captives (<sup><260E></sup>Jeremiah 29:1-32) to submit themselves to God and lay aside their flattering hopes of a speedy restoration. This communication was in the next year, the fifth, and the fourth month of the same king (for Jehoiachin’s captivity and Zedekiah’s accession coincide in time), *followed up* by a prophet raised up among the captives themselves, the energetic Ezekiel.

*thirtieth year* — that is, counting from the beginning of the reign of Nabopolassar, father of Nebuchadnezzar, the era. of the Babylonian empire, 625 B.C., which epoch coincides with the eighteenth year of Josiah, that in which the book of the law was found, and the consequent reformation began [SCALIGER]; or the thirtieth year of Ezekiel’s life. As the Lord was about to be a “little sanctuary” (<sup><2611E></sup>Ezekiel 11:16) to the exiles on the Chebar, so Ezekiel was to be the ministering priest; therefore he marks his priestly relation to God and the people at the outset; the close, which describes the future temple, thus answering to the beginning. By designating himself expressly as “the priest” (<sup><260E></sup>Ezekiel 1:3), and as having reached his thirtieth year (the regular year of priests commencing their office), he marks his office as the priest among the prophets. Thus the opening vision follows naturally as the formal institution of that spiritual temple in which he was to minister [FAIRBAIRN].

*Chebar* — the same as Chabor or Habor, whither the ten tribes had been transported by Tiglath-pileser and Shalmaneser (<sup><271E></sup>2 Kings 17:6 <sup><33E></sup>1 Chronicles 5:26). It flows into the Euphrates near Carchemish or Circesium, two hundred miles north of Babylon.

**visions of God** — Four expressions are used as to the revelation granted to Ezekiel, the three first having respect to what was presented from without, to assure him of its *reality*, the fourth to his being internally made fit to receive the revelation; “the heavens were opened” (so <sup><4036></sup>Matthew 3:16 <sup><4076></sup>Acts 7:56 <sup><6917></sup>Revelation 19:11); “he saw visions of God”; “the word of Jehovah came *verily* (as the meaning is rather than ‘expressly, *English Version*, <sup><3103></sup>Ezekiel 1:3) unto him” (it was no unreal hallucination); and “the hand of Jehovah was upon him” (<sup><2381></sup>Isaiah 8:11 <sup><2700></sup>Daniel 10:10,18 <sup><6017></sup>Revelation 1:17; the Lord by His touch strengthening him for his high and arduous ministry, that he might be able to witness and report aright the revelations made to him).

**2. Jehoiachin’s captivity** — In the third or fourth year of Jehoiakim, father of Jehoiachin, the *first* carrying away of Jewish captives to Babylon took place, and among them was Daniel. The *second* was under Jehoiachin, when Ezekiel was carried away. The *third* and final one was at the taking of Jerusalem under Zedekiah.

**4. whirlwind** — emblematic of God’s judgments (<sup><2339></sup>Jeremiah 23:19 25:32).

**out of the north** — that is, from Chaldea, whose hostile forces would invade Judea from a *northerly* direction. The prophet conceives himself in the temple.

**fire infolding itself** — laying hold on whatever surrounds it, drawing it to itself, and devouring it. Literally, “catching itself,” that is, kindling itself [FAIRBAIRN]. The same *Hebrew* occurs in <sup><0124></sup>Exodus 9:24, as to the “fire mingled with the hail.”

**brightness ... about it** — that is, about the “cloud.”

**out of the midst thereof** — that is, out of the midst of the “fire.”

**color of amber** — rather, “the glancing brightness (literally, ‘the eye’, and so *the glancing appearance*) of polished brass. The *Hebrew*, *chasmal*, is from two roots, “smooth” and “brass” (compare <sup><3107></sup>Ezekiel 1:7 <sup><6015></sup>Revelation 1:15) [GESENIUS]. The *Septuagint* and *Vulgate* translate it, “*electrum*”; a brilliant metal compounded of gold and silver.

**5.** Ezekiel was himself of a “gigantic nature, and thereby suited to counteract the Babylonish spirit of the times, which loved to manifest itself in gigantic, grotesque forms” [HENGSTENBERG].

**living creatures** — So the *Greek* ought to have been translated in the parallel passage, <sup><6016></sup>Revelation 4:6, not as *English Version*, “beasts”; for

one of the “four” is *a man*, and man cannot be termed “beast.” <sup>(2300)</sup>Ezekiel 10:20 shows that it is the cherubim that are meant.

***likeness of a man*** — Man, the noblest of the four, is the ideal model after which they are fashioned (<sup>(2300)</sup>Ezekiel 1:10 <sup>(2304)</sup>Ezekiel 10:14). The point of comparison between him and them is the erect posture of their bodies, though doubtless including also the general mien. Also the *hands* (<sup>(2302)</sup>Ezekiel 10:21).

**6.** Not only were there four distinct living creatures, but each of the four had four faces, making sixteen in all. The four living creatures of the cherubim answer by contrast to the four world monarchies represented by four *beasts*, Assyria, Persia, Greece, and Rome (<sup>(2004)</sup>Daniel 7:1-28). The Fathers identified them with the four Gospels: Matthew the lion, Mark the ox, Luke the man, John the eagle. Two cherubim only stood over the ark in the temple; two more are now added, to imply that, while the law is retained as the basis, a new form is needed to be added to impart new life to it. The number four may have respect to the four quarters of the world, to imply that God’s angels execute His commands everywhere. Each head in front had the face of a man as the primary and prominent one: on the right the face of a lion, on the left the face of an ox, above from behind the face of an eagle. The Mosaic cherubim were similar, only that the human faces were put looking towards each other, and towards the mercy seat between, being formed out of the same mass of pure gold as the latter (<sup>(1025)</sup>Exodus 25:19,20). In <sup>(2012)</sup>Isaiah 6:2 two wings are added to cover their countenances; because there they stand by the throne, here under the throne; there God deigns to consult them, and His condescension calls forth their humility, so that they veil their faces before Him; here they execute His commands. The face expresses their intelligence; the wings, their rapidity in fulfilling God’s will. The Shekinah or flame, that signified God’s presence, and the written name, JEHOVAH, occupied the intervening space between the cherubim <sup>(1004)</sup>Genesis 4:14,16 3:24 (“placed”; properly, “to place in *a tabernacle*”), imply that the cherubim were appointed at the fall as symbols of God’s presence in a consecrated place, and that man was to worship there. In the patriarchal dispensation when the flood had caused the removal of the cherubim from Eden, *seraphim* or *teraphim* (*Chaldean* dialect) were made as models of them for domestic use (<sup>(1019)</sup>Genesis 31:19, *Margin*; <sup>(1030)</sup>Genesis 31:30). The silence of the twenty-fifth and twenty-sixth chapters of Exodus to their configuration, whereas everything else is minutely described, is because their form was so well-known already to Bezaleel and all Israel by tradition as to need no detailed description. Hence Ezekiel (<sup>(2300)</sup>Ezekiel 10:20) at once knows them, for he had seen them repeatedly in the carved work of the outer sanctuary of Solomon’s temple (<sup>(1023)</sup>1 Kings 6:23-29). He

therefore consoles the exiles with the hope of having the same cherubim in the renovated temple which should be reared; and he assures them that the same God who dwelt between the cherubim of the temple would be still with His people by the Chebar. But they were not in Zerubbabel's temple; therefore Ezekiel's foretold temple, if literal, is yet future. The ox is selected as chief of the tame animals, the lion among the wild, the eagle among birds, and man the head of all, in his ideal, realized by the Lord Jesus, combining all the excellencies of the animal kingdom. The cherubim probably represent the ruling powers by which God acts in the natural and moral world. Hence they sometimes answer to the ministering angels; elsewhere, to the redeemed saints (the elect Church) through whom, as by the angels, God shall hereafter rule the world and proclaim the manifold wisdom of God (<sup>1628</sup>Matthew 19:28 <sup>1629</sup>1 Corinthians 6:2 <sup>1630</sup>Ephesians 3:10 <sup>1631</sup>Revelation 3:21 4:6-8). The "lions" and "oxen," amidst "palms" and "open flowers" carved in the temple, were the four-faced cherubim which, being traced on a flat surface, presented only one aspect of the four. The human-headed winged bulls and eagle-headed gods found in Nineveh, sculptured amidst palms and tulip-shaped flowers, were borrowed by corrupted tradition from the cherubim placed in Eden near its fruits and flowers. So the Aaronic calf (<sup>1632</sup>Exodus 32:4,5) and Jeroboam's calves at Daniel and Beth-el, a schismatic imitation of the sacred symbols in the temple at Jerusalem. So the ox figures of Apis on the sacred arks of Egypt.

**7. *straight feet*** — that is, straight *legs*. Not protruding in any part as the legs of an ox, but straight like a man's [GROTIUS]. Or, like solid pillars; *not bending*, as man's, at the knee. They glided along, rather than walked. Their movements were all sure, right, and without effort [KITTO, *Cyclopaedia*].

***sole ... calf's foot*** — HENDERSON hence supposes that "*straight feet*" implies that they did not project horizontally like men's feet, but vertically as calves' feet. The *solid firmness* of the round foot of a calf seems to be the point of comparison.

***color*** — *the glittering appearance*, indicating God's purity.

**8.** The hands of each were the hands of a man. The hand is the symbol of *active power*, *guided by skilfulness* (<sup>1633</sup>Psalms 78:72).

***under their wings*** — signifying their operations are hidden from our too curious prying; and as the "wings" signify something more than human, namely, the secret prompting of God, it is also implied that they are moved by it and not by their own power, so that they do nothing at random, but all with divine wisdom.

**they four had ... faces and ... wings** — He returns to what he had stated already in <sup>2306</sup>Ezekiel 1:6; this gives a reason why they had hands on their four sides, namely, because they had faces and wings on the four sides. They moved whithersoever they would, not by active energy merely, but also by knowledge (expressed by their *faces*) and divine guidance (expressed by their “wings”).

**9. they** — had no occasion to turn themselves round when changing their direction, for they had a face (<sup>2306</sup>Ezekiel 1:6) looking to each of the four quarters of heaven. They made no mistakes; and their work needed not be gone over again. Their wings were joined above in pairs (see <sup>23011</sup>Ezekiel 1:11).

**10. they ... had the face of a man** — namely, in front. The human face was the primary and prominent one and the fundamental part of the composite whole. On its right was the lion’s face; on the left, the ox’s (called “cherub,” <sup>23014</sup>Ezekiel 10:14); at the back from above was the eagle’s.

**11.** The tips of the two outstretched wings reached to one another, while the other two, in token of humble awe, formed a veil for the lower parts of the body.

**stretched upward** — rather, “were parted from above” (compare *Margin*; see on <sup>23012</sup>Isaiah 6:2). The joining together of their wings above implies that, though the movements of Providence on earth may seem conflicting and confused, yet if one lift up his eyes to heaven, he will see that they admirably conspire towards the one end at last.

**12.** The same idea as in <sup>23009</sup>Ezekiel 1:9. The repetition is because we men are so hard to be brought to acknowledge the wisdom of God’s doings; they seem tortuous and confused to us, but they are all tending steadily to one aim.

**the spirit** — the secret impulse whereby God moves His angels to the end designed. They do not turn back or aside till they have fulfilled the office assigned them.

**13. likeness ... appearance** — not tautology. “Likeness” expresses the general form; “appearance,” the particular aspect.

**coals of fire** — denoting the intensely pure and burning justice wherewith God punishes by His angels those who, like Israel, have hardened themselves against His long-suffering. So in <sup>23016</sup>Isaiah 6:2,6, instead of cherubim, the name “seraphim,” *the burning ones*, is applied, indicating God’s consuming righteousness; whence their cry to Him is, “Holy! holy! holy!” and the burning coal is applied to his lips, for the message through

his mouth was to be one of judicial severance of the godly from the ungodly, to the ruin of the latter.

**lamps** — torches. The fire emitted sparks and flashes of light, as torches do.

**went up and down** — expressing the marvellous vigor of God's Spirit, in all His movements never resting, never wearied.

**fire ... bright** — indicating the glory of God.

**out of the fire ... lightning** — God's righteousness will at last cause the bolt of His wrath to fall on the guilty; as now, on Jerusalem.

**14. ran and returned** — Incessant, restless motion indicates the plenitude of life in these cherubim; so in <sup>(2018)</sup>Revelation 4:8, "they rest not day or night" (<sup>(3010)</sup>Zechariah 4:10).

**flash of lightning** — rather, as distinct from "lightning" (<sup>(2013)</sup>Ezekiel 1:13), "the meteor flash," or sheet lightning [FAIRBAIRN].

**15. one wheel** — The "dreadful height" of the wheel (<sup>(2018)</sup>Ezekiel 1:18) indicates the gigantic, terrible energy of the complicated revolutions of God's providence, bringing about His purposes with unerring certainty. One wheel appeared transversely within another, so that the movement might be without turning, whithersoever the living creatures might advance (<sup>(2017)</sup>Ezekiel 1:17). Thus each wheel was composed of two circles cutting one another at right angles, "one" only of which appeared to touch the ground ("upon the earth"), according to the direction the cherubim desired to move in.

**with his four faces** — rather, "according to its four faces" or sides; as there was a side or direction to each of the four creatures, so there was a wheel for each of the sides [FAIRBAIRN]. The four sides or semicircles of each composite wheel pointed, as the four faces of each of the living creatures, to the four quarters of heaven. HAVERNICK refers "his" or "its" to *the wheels*. The cherubim and their wings and wheels stood in contrast to the symbolical figures, somewhat similar, then existing in Chaldea, and found in the remains of Assyria. The latter, though derived from the original revelation by tradition, came by corruption to symbolize the astronomical zodiac, or the sun and celestial sphere, by a circle with wings or irradiations. But Ezekiel's cherubim rise above natural objects, the gods of the heathen, to the representation of the one true God, who made and continually upholds them.

**16. appearance ... work** — their *form* and the *material* of their work.

**beryl** — rather, “the glancing appearance of the Tarshish stone”; the chrysolite or topaz, brought from Tarshish or Tartessus in Spain. It was one of the gems in the breastplate of the high priest (<sup><2830></sup>Exodus 28:20 <sup><2154></sup>Song of Solomon 5:14 <sup><706></sup>Daniel 10:6).

**four had one likeness** — The similarity of the wheels to one another implies that there is no inequality in all God’s works, that all have a beautiful analogy and proportion.

**17. went upon their four sides** — Those faces or sides of the four wheels moved which answered to the direction in which the cherubim desired to move; while the transverse circles in each of the four composite wheels remained suspended from the ground, so as not to impede the movements of the others.

**18. rings** — that is, felloes or circumferences of the wheels.

**eyes** — The multiplicity of eyes here in the wheels. and <sup><3002></sup>Ezekiel 10:12, in the cherubim themselves, symbolizes the *plenitude of intelligent life*, the eye being the window through which “the spirit of the living creatures” in the wheels (<sup><3003></sup>Ezekiel 1:20) looks forth (compare <sup><3005></sup>Zechariah 4:10). As the wheels signify the providence of God, so the eyes imply that He sees all the circumstances of each case, and does nothing by blind impulse.

**19. went by them** — went *beside* them.

**20. the spirit was to go** — that is, their will was for going whithersoever the Spirit was for going.

**over against them** — rather, *beside* or *in conjunction with them*.

**spirit of the living creature** — put collectively for “the living *creatures*”; the cherubim. Having first viewed them separately, he next views them in the aggregate as the composite living *creature* in which the Spirit resided. The life intended is that connected with God, holy, spiritual life, in the plenitude of its active power.

**21. over against** — rather, “along with” [HENDERSON]; or, “beside” [FAIRBAIRN].

**22. upon the heads** — rather, “above the heads” [FAIRBAIRN].

**color** — glitter.

**terrible crystal** — dazzling the spectator by its brightness.

**23. straight** — erect [FAIRBAIRN], expanded upright.

**two ... two ... covered ... bodies** — not, as it might seem, contradicting <sup><3011></sup>Ezekiel 1:11. The two wings expanded upwards, though chiefly used for flying, yet up to the summit of the figure where they were parted from each other, covered the upper part of the body, while the other two wings covered the lower parts.

**24. voice of ... Almighty** — the thunder (<sup><4208></sup>Psalm 29:3,4).

**voice of speech** — rather, “the voice” or “sound of *tumult*,” as in <sup><2116></sup>Jeremiah 11:16. From an *Arabic* root, meaning the “impetuous rush of heavy rain.”

**noise of ... host** — (<sup><2338></sup>Isaiah 13:4 <sup><2716></sup>Daniel 10:6).

**25. let down ... wings** — While the Almighty gave forth His voice, they reverently let their wings fall, to listen stilly to His communication.

**26.** The Godhead appears in the likeness of enthroned humanity, as in <sup><0240></sup>Exodus 24:10. Besides the “paved work of a sapphire stone, as it were the body of heaven in clearness,” there, we have here the “throne,” and God “as a man,” with the “appearance of fire round about.” This last was a prelude of the incarnation of Messiah, but in His character as Savior and as Judge (<sup><6611></sup>Revelation 19:11-16). The azure sapphire answers to the color of the sky. As others are called “sons of God,” but He “the Son of God,” so others are called “sons of man” (<sup><3011></sup>Ezekiel 2:1,3), but He “the Son of man” (<sup><0613></sup>Matthew 16:13), being the embodied representative of humanity and the whole human race; as, on the other hand, He is the representative of “the fullness of the Godhead” (<sup><5019></sup>Colossians 2:9). While the cherubim are movable, the throne above, and Jehovah who moves them, are firmly fixed. It is good news to man, that the throne above is filled by One who even there appears as “a man.”

**27. color of amber** — “the glitter of chasnal” [FAIRBAIRN]. See on <sup><3011></sup>Ezekiel 1:4; rather, “polished brass” [ENDERSON]. Messiah is described here as in <sup><2716></sup>Daniel 10:5,6 <sup><6614></sup>Revelation 1:14,15.

**28. the bow ... in ... rain** — the symbol of the sure covenant of mercy to God’s children remembered amidst judgments on the wicked; as in the flood in Noah’s days (<sup><6613></sup>Revelation 4:3). “Like hanging out from the throne of the Eternal a fang of peace, assuring all that the purpose of Heaven was to preserve rather than to destroy. Even if the divine work should require a deluge of wrath, still the faithfulness of God would only shine forth the more brightly at last to the children of promise, in consequence of the *tribulations* needed to prepare for the ultimate good” [FAIRBAIRN]. (<sup><2508></sup>Isaiah 54:8-10).

*I fell upon ... face* — the right attitude, spiritually, before we enter on any active work for God (<sup>3012</sup>Ezekiel 2:2 3:23,24 <sup>6017</sup>Revelation 1:17). In this first chapter God gathered into one vision the substance of all that was to occupy the prophetic agency of Ezekiel; as was done afterwards in the opening vision of the Revelation of Saint John.

# CHAPTER 2

## EZEKIEL 2:1-10.

### EZEKIEL'S COMMISSION.

**1. *Son of man*** — often applied to Ezekiel; once only to Daniel (<sup>2087</sup>Daniel 8:17), and not to any other prophet. The phrase was no doubt taken from Chaldean usage during the sojourn of Daniel and Ezekiel in Chaldea. But the spirit who sanctioned the words of the prophet implied by it the *lowliness and frailty* of the prophet as man “lower than the angels,” though now admitted to the vision of angels and of God Himself, “lest he should be exalted through the abundance of the revelations” (<sup>2712</sup>2 Corinthians 12:7). He is appropriately so called as being type of the divine “Son of man” here revealed as “man” (see on <sup>2023</sup>Ezekiel 1:26). That title, as applied to Messiah, implies at once His *lowliness* and His *exaltation*, in His manifestations as *the Representative man*, at His first and second comings respectively (<sup>2906</sup>Psalm 8:4-8 <sup>2163</sup>Matthew 16:13 20:18; and on the other hand, <sup>2073</sup>Daniel 7:13,14 <sup>2166</sup>Matthew 26:64 <sup>2152</sup>John 5:27).

**2. *spirit entered ... when he spake*** — The divine word is ever accompanied by the Spirit (<sup>2002</sup>Genesis 1:2,3).

***set ... upon ... feet*** — He had been “upon his face” (<sup>2023</sup>Ezekiel 1:28). Humiliation on our part is followed by exaltation on God’s part (<sup>2023</sup>Ezekiel 3:23,24 <sup>2229</sup>Job 22:29 <sup>2906</sup>James 4:6 <sup>2165</sup>1 Peter 5:5). “On the feet” was the fitting attitude when he was called on to walk and work for God (<sup>2188</sup>Ephesians 5:8 6:15).

***that I heard*** — rather, “*then* I heard.”

**3. *nation*** — rather, “nations”; the word usually applied to the *heathen* or *Gentiles*; here to the Jews, as being altogether *heathenized* with idolatries. So in <sup>2011</sup>Isaiah 1:10, they are named “Sodom” and “Gomorrhah.” They were now become “Lo-ammi,” not the *people* of God (<sup>2009</sup>Hosea 1:9).

**4. *impudent*** — literally, “hard-faced” (<sup>2107</sup>Ezekiel 3:7,9).

***children*** — resumptive of “they” (<sup>2011</sup>Ezekiel 2:3); the “children” walk in their “fathers’” steps.

**I ... send thee** — God opposes His command to all obstacles. Duties are ours; events are God's.

**Thus saith the Lord God** — God opposes His name to the obstinacy of the people.

**5. forbear** — namely, to hear.

**yet shall know** — Even if they will not hear, at least they will not have ignorance to plead as the cause of their perversity (<sup>2333</sup>Ezekiel 33:33).

**6. briers** — not as the *Margin* and GESENIUS, “rebels,” which would not correspond so well to “thorns.” The *Hebrew* is from a root meaning “to sting” as *nettles* do. The wicked are often so called (<sup>1219</sup>2 Samuel 23:6 <sup>2111</sup>Song of Solomon 2:2 <sup>2398</sup>Isaiah 9:18).

**scorpions** — a reptile about six inches long with a deadly sting at the end of the tail.

**be not afraid** — (<sup>2138</sup>Luke 12:4 <sup>1134</sup>1 Peter 3:14).

**7. most rebellious** — literally, “rebellion” itself: its very essence.

**8. eat** — (See on <sup>2456</sup>Jeremiah 15:16; <sup>6009</sup>Revelation 10:9,10). The idea is to possess himself fully of the message and digest it in the mind; not literal *eating*, but such an *appropriation* of its unsavory contents that they should become, as it were, part of himself, so as to impart them the more vividly to his hearers.

**9. roll** — the form in which ancient books were made.

**10. within and without** — on the face and the back. Usually the parchment was written only on its *inside* when rolled up; but so full was God's message of impending woes that it was written also on the back.

# CHAPTER 3

## ⋈ EZEKIEL 3:1-27.

**EZEKIEL EATS THE ROLL. IS COMMISSIONED TO GO TO THEM OF THE CAPTIVITY AND GOES TO TEL-ABIB BY THE CHEBAR: AGAIN BEHOLDS THE SHEKINAH GLORY: IS TOLD TO RETIRE TO HIS HOUSE, AND ONLY SPEAK WHEN GOD OPENS HIS MOUTH.**

**1. *eat ... and ... speak*** — God’s messenger must first inwardly appropriate God’s truth himself, before he “speaks” it to others (see on ⋈ Ezekiel 2:8). Symbolic actions were, when possible and proper, performed outwardly; otherwise, internally and in spiritual vision, the action so narrated making the naked statement more intuitive and impressive by presenting the subject in a concentrated, embodied form.

**3. *honey for sweetness*** — Compare ⋈ Psalm 19:10 119:103 ⋈ Revelation 10:9, where, as here in ⋈ Ezekiel 3:14, the “sweetness” is followed by “bitterness.” The former being due to the painful nature of the message; the latter because it was the Lord’s service which he was engaged in; and his eating the roll and finding it sweet, implied that, divesting himself of carnal feeling, he made God’s will his will, however painful the message that God might require him to announce. The fact that God would be glorified was his greatest pleasure.

**5.** See *Margin, Hebrew*, “deep of lip, and heavy of tongue,” that is, men speaking an obscure and unintelligible tongue. Even they would have listened to the prophet; but the Jews, though addressed in their own tongue, will not hear him.

**6. *many people*** — It would have increased the difficulty had he been sent, not merely to one, but to “many people” differing in tongues, so that the missionary would have needed to acquire a new tongue for addressing each. The after mission of the apostles to many peoples, and the gift of tongues for that end, are foreshadowed (compare ⋈ 1 Corinthians 14:21 with ⋈ Isaiah 28:11).

***had I sent thee to them, they would have hearkened*** — (⋈ Matthew 11:21,23).

**7. *will not hearken unto thee: for ... not ... me*** — (<sup><615D></sup>John 15:20). Take patiently their rejection of thee, for I thy Lord bear it along with thee.

**8.** Ezekiel means one “strengthened by God.” Such he was in godly firmness, in spite of his people’s opposition, according to the divine command to the priest tribe to which he belonged (<sup><630D></sup>Deuteronomy 33:9).

**9. *As ... flint*** — so Messiah the antitype (<sup><280D></sup>Isaiah 50:7; compare <sup><300B></sup>Jeremiah 1:8,17).

**10. *receive in ... heart ... ears*** — The transposition from the natural order, namely, first receiving with the *ears*, then in the *heart*, is designed. The preparation of the heart for God’s message should precede the reception of it with the ears (compare <sup><300B></sup>Proverbs 16:1 <sup><300D></sup>Psalms 10:17).

**11. *thy people*** — who ought to be better disposed to hearken to thee, their fellow countryman, than hadst thou been a foreigner (<sup><300B></sup>Ezekiel 3:5,6).

**12.** (<sup><408B></sup>Acts 8:39). Ezekiel’s abode heretofore had not been the most suitable for his work. He, therefore, is guided by the Spirit to Tel-Abib, the chief town of the Jewish colony of captives: there he sat on the ground, “the throne of the miserable” (<sup><300B></sup>Ezra 9:3 <sup><250D></sup>Lamentations 1:1-3), seven days, the usual period for manifesting deep grief (<sup><300B></sup>Job 2:13; see <sup><300D></sup>Psalms 137:1), thus winning their confidence by sympathy in their sorrow. He is accompanied by the cherubim which had been manifested at Chebar (<sup><300B></sup>Ezekiel 1:3,4), after their departure from Jerusalem. They now are heard moving with the “*voice of a great rushing* (compare <sup><400D></sup>Acts 2:2), *saying*, Blessed be the glory of the Lord from His place,” that is, moving *from the place* in which it had been at Chebar, to accompany Ezekiel to his new destination (<sup><300B></sup>Ezekiel 9:3); or, “from His place” may rather mean, *in His place and manifested “from” it*. Though God may seem to have forsaken His temple, He is still in it and will restore His people to it. His glory is “blessed,” in opposition to those Jews who spoke evil of Him, as if He had been unjustly rigorous towards their nation [CALVIN].

**13. *touched*** — literally, “kissed,” that is, closely embraced.

***noise of a great rushing*** — typical of great disasters impending over the Jews.

**14. *bitterness*** — sadness on account of the impending calamities of which I was required to be the unwelcome messenger. But the “hand,” or powerful impulse of Jehovah, urged me forward.

**15. *Tel-Abib*** — *Tel* means an “elevation.” It is identified by MICHAELIS with *Thallaba* on the Chabor. Perhaps the name expressed the Jew’s hopes

of restoration, or else the fertility of the region. *Abib* means the *green ears* of corn which appeared in the month Nisan, the pledge of the harvest.

***I sat***, etc. — This is the *Hebrew Margin* reading. The *text* is rather, “I beheld them sitting there” [GESENIUS]; or, “And those that were settled there,” namely, the older settlers, as distinguished from the more recent ones alluded to in the previous clause. The ten tribes had been long since settled on the Chabor or Habor (<sup><1276></sup>2 Kings 17:6) [HAVERNICK].

**17. *watchman*** — Ezekiel alone, among the prophets, is called a “watchman,” not merely to sympathize, but to give timely warning of danger to his people where none was suspected. Habakkuk (Habakkuk 2:1) speaks of standing upon his “watch,” but it was only in order to be on the lookout for the manifestation of God’s power (so <sup><2518></sup>Isaiah 52:8 62:6); not as Ezekiel, to act as a watchman to others.

**18. *warning ... speakest to warn*** — The repetition implies that it is not enough to warn once in passing, but that the warning is to be inculcated continually (<sup><502></sup>2 Timothy 4:2, “in season, out of season”; <sup><421></sup>Acts 20:31, “night and day with tears”).

***save*** — <sup><1015></sup>Ezekiel 2:5 had seemingly taken away all hope of salvation; but the reference there was to the mass of the people whose case was hopeless; a few individuals, however, were reclaimable.

***die in ... iniquity*** — (<sup><812></sup>John 8:21,24). Men are not to flatter themselves that their ignorance, owing to the negligence of their teachers, will save them (<sup><812></sup>Romans 2:12, “As many as have sinned without law, shall also perish without law”).

**19. *wickedness ... wicked way*** — *internal* wickedness of *heart*, and *external* of the *life*, respectively.

***delivered thy soul*** — (<sup><2301></sup>Isaiah 49:4,5 <sup><4015></sup>Acts 20:26).

**20. *righteous ... turn from ... righteousness*** — not one “righteous” as to the *root* and *spirit of regeneration* (<sup><1883></sup>Psalm 89:33 138:8 <sup><2362></sup>Isaiah 26:12 27:3 <sup><603></sup>John 10:28 <sup><5005></sup>Philippians 1:6), but as to its *outward appearance* and performances. So the “righteous” (<sup><1887></sup>Proverbs 18:17 <sup><4193></sup>Matthew 9:13). As in <sup><1189></sup>Ezekiel 3:19 the minister is required to lead the wicked to good, so in <sup><1120></sup>Ezekiel 3:20 he is to confirm the well-disposed in their duty.

***commit iniquity*** — that is, give himself up *wholly* to it (<sup><1008></sup>1 John 3:8,9), for even the best often fall, but not *wilfully* and *habitually*.

***I lay a stumbling-block*** — not that God tempts to sin (<sup>3013</sup>James 1:13,14), but God gives men over to judicial blindness, and to *their own* corruptions (<sup>3196</sup>Psalms 9:16,17 94:23) when they “like not to retain God in their knowledge” (<sup>3102</sup>Romans 1:24,26); just as, on the contrary, God makes “the way of the righteous plain” (<sup>3041</sup>Proverbs 4:11,12 15:19), so that they do “not stumble.” CALVIN refers “stumbling-block” not to the *guilt*, but to its *punishment*; “I bring *ruin* on him.” The former is best. Ahab, after a kind of righteousness (<sup>1127</sup>1 Kings 21:27-29), relapsed and consulted lying spirits in false prophets; so God permitted one of these to be his “stumbling-block,” both to sin and its corresponding punishment (<sup>1122</sup>1 Kings 22:21-23).

***his blood will I require*** — (<sup>3857</sup>Hebrews 13:17).

**22. *hand of the Lord*** — (<sup>3008</sup>Ezekiel 1:3).

***go ... into the plain*** — in order that he might there, in a place secluded from unbelieving men, receive a fresh manifestation of the divine glory, to inspirit him for his trying work.

**23. *glory of the Lord*** — (<sup>3103</sup>Ezekiel 1:28).

**24. *set me upon my feet*** — having been previously prostrate and unable to rise until raised by the divine power.

***shut thyself within ... house*** — implying that in the work he had to do, he must look for no sympathy from man but must be often alone with God and draw his strength from Him [FAIRBAIRN]. “Do not go out of thy house till I reveal the future to thee by signs and words,” which God does in the following chapters, down to the eleventh. Thus a representation was given of the city shut up by siege [GROTIUS]. Thereby God proved the obedience of His servant, and Ezekiel showed the reality of His call by proceeding, not through rash impulse, but by the directions of God [CALVIN].

**25. *put bands upon thee*** — not literally, but spiritually, the binding, depressing influence which their rebellious conduct would exert on his spirit. Their perversity, like bands, would repress his freedom in preaching; as in <sup>402</sup>2 Corinthians 6:12, Paul calls himself “straitened” because his teaching did not find easy access to them. Or else, it is said to console the prophet for being shut up; if thou wert now at once to announce God’s message, they *would* rush on thee and *bind* them with “bands” [CALVIN].

**26. *I will make my tongue ... dumb*** — Israel had rejected the prophets; therefore God deprives Israel of the prophets and of His word — God’s sorest judgment (<sup>602</sup>1 Samuel 7:2 <sup>3081</sup>Amos 8:11,12).

**27. *when I speak ... I will open thy mouth*** — opposed to the silence imposed on the prophet, to punish the people (<sup>3183</sup>Ezekiel 3:26). After the interval of silence has awakened their attention to the cause of it, namely, their sins, they may then hearken to the prophecies which they would not do before.

***He that heareth, let him hear ... forbear*** — that is, thou hast done thy part, whether they hear or forbear. He who shall forbear to hear, it shall be at his own peril; he who hears, it shall be to his own eternal good (compare <sup>6211</sup>Revelation 22:11).

# CHAPTER 4

## EZEKIEL 4:1-17.

### SYMBOLICAL VISION OF THE SIEGE AND THE INIQUITY-BEARING.

1. *tile* — a sun-dried brick, such as are found in Babylon, covered with cuneiform inscriptions, often two feet long and one foot broad.

2. *forth* — rather, “watch tower” (<sup>2950</sup>Jeremiah 52:4) wherein the besieges could watch the movements of the besieged [GESENIUS]. A wall of circumvallation [*Septuagint* and ROSENMULLER]. A kind of battering-ram [MAURER]. The first view is best.

*a mount* — wherewith the Chaldeans could be defended from missiles.

*battering-rams* — literally, “through-borers.” In <sup>2922</sup>Ezekiel 21:22 the same *Hebrew* is translated “captains.”

3. *iron pan* — the divine decree as to the Chaldean army investing the city.

*set it for a wall of iron between thee and the city* — Ezekiel, in the person of God, represents the wall of separation between him and the people as one of iron: and the Chaldean investing army. His instrument of separating them from him, as one impossible to burst through.

*set ... face against it* — inexorably (<sup>2936</sup>Psalm 34:16). The exiles envied their brethren remaining in Jerusalem, but exile is better than the straitness of a siege.

4. Another symbolical act performed at the same time as the former, in vision, not in external action, wherein it would have been only puerile: narrated as a thing ideally done, it would make a vivid impression. The second action is supplementary to the first, to bring out more fully the same prophetic idea.

*left side* — referring to the *position* of the ten tribes, the *northern* kingdom, as Judah, the *southern*, answers to “the right side” (<sup>2908</sup>Ezekiel 4:6). The Orientals facing the east in their mode, had the north on their *left*, and the south on their *right* (<sup>2936</sup>Ezekiel 16:46). Also the right was more honorable

than the left: so Judah as being the seat of the temple, was more so than Israel.

**bear the iniquity** — iniquity being regarded as a *burden*; so it means, “bear the *punishment* of their iniquity” (<sup><0146></sup>Numbers 14:34). A type of Him who was the great *sin-bearer*, not in mimic show as Ezekiel, but in reality (<sup><2504></sup>Isaiah 53:4,6,12).

**5. three hundred and ninety days** — The three hundred ninety years of punishment appointed for Israel, and forty for Judah, cannot refer to the siege of Jerusalem. That siege is referred to in <sup><300></sup>Ezekiel 4:1-3, and in a sense restricted to the literal siege, but comprehending the *whole* train of punishment to be inflicted for their sin; therefore we read here merely of its sore pressure, not of its result. The sum of three hundred ninety and forty years is four hundred thirty, a period famous in the history of the covenant-people, being that of their sojourn in Egypt (<sup><0234></sup>Exodus 12:40,41 <sup><4877></sup>Galatians 3:17). The forty alludes to the forty years in the wilderness. Elsewhere (<sup><0268></sup>Deuteronomy 28:68 <sup><3008></sup>Hosea 9:3), God threatened to bring them back to Egypt, which must mean, not Egypt literally, but a bondage as bad as that one in Egypt. So now God will reduce them to a kind of new Egyptian bondage to the world: Israel, the greater transgressor. for a longer period than Judah (compare <sup><3485></sup>Ezekiel 20:35-38). Not the whole of the four hundred thirty years of the Egypt state is appointed to Israel; but this shortened by the forty years of the wilderness sojourn, to imply, that a way is open to their return to life by their having the Egypt state merged into that of the wilderness; that is, by ceasing from idolatry and seeking in their sifting and sore troubles, through God’s covenant, a restoration to righteousness and peace [FAIRBAIRN]. The three hundred ninety, in reference to the *sin* of Israel, was also literally true, being the years from the setting up of the calves by Jeroboam (<sup><1120></sup>1 Kings 12:20-33), that is, from 975 to 583 B.C.: *about* the year of the Babylonians captivity; and perhaps the forty of Judah refers to that part of Manasseh’s fifty-five year’s reign in which he had not repented, and which, we are expressly told, was the cause of God’s removal of Judah, notwithstanding Josiah’s reformation (<sup><1210></sup>1 Kings 21:10-16 <sup><1236></sup>2 Kings 23:26,27).

**6. each day for a year** — literally, “a day for a year, a day for a year.” Twice repeated, to mark more distinctly the reference to <sup><0146></sup>Numbers 14:34. The picturing of the future under the image of the past, wherein the meaning was far from lying on the surface, was intended to arouse to a less superficial mode of thinking, just as the partial veiling of truth in Jesus’ parables was designed to stimulate inquiry; also to remind men that God’s dealings in the past are a key to the future, for He moves on the same everlasting *principles*, the *forms* alone being transitory.

**7. arm ... uncovered** — to be ready for action, which the long Oriental garment usually covered it would prevent (<sup>2570</sup>Isaiah 52:10).

**thou shalt prophesy against it** — This gesture of thine will be a tacit prophecy against it.

**8. bands** — (<sup>2085</sup>Ezekiel 3:25).

**not turn from ... side** — to imply the impossibility of their being able to shake off the punishment.

**9. wheat ... barley**, etc. — Instead of simple flour used for delicate cakes (<sup>4086</sup>Genesis 18:6), the Jews should have a coarse mixture of six different kinds of grain, such as the poorest alone would eat.

**fitches** — spelt or *dhourra*.

**three hundred and ninety** — The forty days are omitted, since these latter typify the *wilderness period* when Israel stood *separate from the Gentiles and their pollution*, though partially chastened by stint of bread and water (<sup>2046</sup>Ezekiel 4:16), whereas the eating of the polluted bread in the three hundred ninety days implies a forced residence “*among the Gentiles*” who were polluted with idolatry (<sup>2043</sup>Ezekiel 4:13). This last is said of “Israel” primarily, as being the most debased (<sup>2049</sup>Ezekiel 4:9-15); they had *spiritually* sunk to a level with the heathen, therefore God will make their condition *outwardly* to correspond. Judah and Jerusalem fare less severely, being less guilty: they are to “eat bread by weight and with care,” that is, have a stinted supply and be chastened with the milder discipline of the wilderness period. But Judah also is secondarily referred to in the three hundred ninety days, as having fallen, like Israel, into Gentile defilements; if, then, the Jews are to escape from the exile *among Gentiles*, which is their just punishment, they must submit again to the wilderness probation (<sup>2046</sup>Ezekiel 4:16).

**10. twenty shekels** — that is, little more than ten ounces; a scant measure to sustain life (<sup>2536</sup>Jeremiah 52:6). But it applies not only to the siege, but to their whole subsequent state.

**11. sixth ... of ... hin** — about a pint and a half.

**12. dung** — as fuel; so the Arabs use beasts’ dung, wood fuel being scarce. But to use human dung so implies the most cruel necessity. It was in violation of the law (<sup>4548</sup>Deuteronomy 14:3 23:12-14); it must therefore have been done only *in vision*.

**13.** Implying that Israel's peculiar distinction was to be abolished and that they were to be outwardly blended with the idolatrous heathen (<sup><1538></sup>Deuteronomy 28:68 <sup><2008></sup>Hosea 9:3).

**14.** Ezekiel, as a priest, had been accustomed to the strictest abstinence from everything legally impure. Peter felt the same scruple at a similar command (<sup><4104></sup>Acts 10:14; compare <sup><2604></sup>Isaiah 65:4). *Positive precepts*, being dependent on a particular command can be set aside at the will of the divine ruler; but *moral precepts* are everlasting in their obligation because God cannot be inconsistent with His unchanging moral nature.

***abominable flesh*** — literally, “flesh that stank from putridity.” Flesh of animals three days killed was prohibited (<sup><0777></sup>Leviticus 7:17,18 19:6,7).

**15. *cow's dung*** — a mitigation of the former order (<sup><3042></sup>Ezekiel 4:12); no longer “the dung of man”; still the bread so baked is “defiled,” to imply that, whatever partial abatement there might be for the prophet's sake, the main decree of God, as to the pollution of Israel by exile among Gentiles, is unalterable.

**16. *staff of bread*** — bread by which life is supported, as a man's weight is by the staff he leans on (<sup><0333></sup>Leviticus 26:26 <sup><0456></sup>Psalms 105:16 <sup><2303></sup>Isaiah 3:1).

***by weight, and with care*** — in scant measure (<sup><3040></sup>Ezekiel 4:10).

**17. *astonied one with another*** — mutually regard one another with astonishment: the stupefied look of despairing want.

# CHAPTER 5

## EZEKIEL 5:1-17.

### VISION OF CUTTING THE HAIRS, AND THE CALAMITIES FORESHADOWED THEREBY.

1. *knife ... razor* — the sword of the foe (compare <sup><2004></sup>Isaiah 7:20). This vision implies even severer judgments than the Egyptian afflictions foreshadowed in the former, for their guilt was greater than that of their forefathers.

*thine head* — as representative of the Jews. The whole hair being shaven off was significant of severe and humiliating (<sup><2004></sup>2 Samuel 10:4,5) treatment. Especially in the case of a priest; for priests (<sup><2004></sup>Leviticus 21:5) were forbidden “to make baldness on their head,” their hair being the token of consecration; hereby it was intimated that the ceremonial must give place to the moral.

*balances* — implying the *just discrimination* with which Jehovah weighs out the portion of punishment “divided,” that is, allotted to each: the “hairs” are the Jews: the divine scales do not allow even one hair to escape accurate weighing (compare <sup><2004></sup>Matthew 10:30).

2. Three classes are described. The sword was to destroy one third of the people; famine and plague another third (“fire” in <sup><2004></sup>Ezekiel 5:2 being explained in <sup><2004></sup>Ezekiel 5:12 to mean pestilence and famine); that which remained was to be scattered among the nations. A few only of the last portion were to escape, symbolized by the hairs bound in Ezekiel’s skirts (<sup><2004></sup>Ezekiel 5:3 <sup><2004></sup>Jeremiah 40:6 <sup><2004></sup>52:16). Even of these some were to be thrown into the fiery ordeal again (<sup><2004></sup>Ezekiel 5:4 <sup><2004></sup>Jeremiah 41:1,2, etc. <sup><2004></sup>Jeremiah 44:14, etc.). The “skirts” being able to contain but few express that extreme limit to which God’s goodness can reach.

5, 6. Explanation of the symbols:

*Jerusalem* — not the mere city, but the people of Israel generally, of which it was the center and representative.

*in ... midst* — Jerusalem is regarded in God’s point of view as center of the whole earth, designed *to radiate the true light over the nations in all*

*directions*. Compare *Margin* (“navel”), <sup><382></sup>Ezekiel 38:12 <sup><382></sup>Psalm 48:2 <sup><387></sup>Jeremiah 3:17. No center in the ancient heathen world could have been selected more fitted than Canaan to be a vantage ground, whence the people of God might have acted with success upon the heathenism of the world. It lay midway between the oldest and most civilized states, Egypt and Ethiopia on one side, and Babylon, Nineveh, and India on the other, and afterwards Persia, Greece, and Rome. The Phoenician mariners were close by, through whom they might have transmitted the true religion to the remotest lands; and all around the Ishmaelites, the great *inland* traders in South Asia and North Africa. Israel was thus placed, not for its own selfish good, but to be the spiritual benefactor of the whole world. Compare <sup><360></sup>Psalm 67:1-7 throughout. Failing in this, and falling into idolatry, its guilt was far worse than that of the heathen; not that Israel *literally* went beyond the heathen in abominable idolatries. But “*corruptio optimi pessima*”; the perversion of that which in itself is the best is worse than the perversion of that which is less perfect: is in fact the worst of all kinds of perversion. Therefore their punishment was the severest. So the position of the Christian professing Church now, if it be not a light to the heathen world, its condemnation will be sorer than theirs (<sup><403></sup>Matthew 5:13 11:21-24 <sup><303></sup>Hebrews 10:28,29).

**6. *changed ... into*** — rather, “hath *resisted* My judgments wickedly”; “hath *rebelled* against My ordinances for wickedness” [BUXTORF]. But see on <sup><307></sup>Ezekiel 5:7, end.

**7. *multiplied*** — rather, “have been more abundantly outrageous”; literally, “to tumultuate”; to have an extravagant rage for idols.

***neither have done according to the judgments of the nations*** — have not been as tenacious of the true religion as the nations have been of the false. The heathen “changed” not their gods, but the Jews changed Jehovah for idols (see <sup><316></sup>Ezekiel 5:6, “changed My judgments into wickedness,” that is, idolatry, <sup><421></sup>Jeremiah 2:11). The *Chaldean version* and the *Masora* support the negative. Others omit it (as it is omitted in <sup><312></sup>Ezekiel 11:12), and translate, “*but* have done according to the judgments,” etc. However, both <sup><312></sup>Ezekiel 11:12 and also this verse are true. They in one sense “did according to the heathen,” namely, in all that was bad; in another, namely, in that which was good, zeal for religion, they did *not*. <sup><319></sup>Ezekiel 5:9 also proves the negative to be genuine; because in changing their religion, they have *not* done as the nations which have not changed theirs, “*I* (also) will do in thee that which I have not done.”

**8. *I, even I*** — awfully emphatic. I, even I, whom thou thinkest to be asleep, but who am ever reigning as the Omnipotent Avenger of sin, will

vindicate My righteous government before the nations by judgments on thee.

9. See on <sup><1887></sup>Ezekiel 5:7.

**that which I have not done** — worse than any former judgments (<sup><2009></sup>Lamentations 4:6 <sup><1902></sup>Daniel 9:12). The prophecy includes the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, and the final one by Antichrist (Zechariah 13:8,9 14:2), as well as that by Nebuchadnezzar. Their doom of evil was not exhausted by the Chaldean conquest. There was to be a germinating evil in their destiny, because there would be, as the Lord foresaw, a germinating evil in their character. As God connected Himself peculiarly with Israel, so there was to be a peculiar manifestation of God's wrath against sin in their case [FAIRBAIRN]. The higher the privileges the greater the punishment in the case of abuse of them. When God's greatest favor, the gospel, was given, and was abused by them, then "the wrath was to come on them to the uttermost" (<sup><2061></sup>1 Thessalonians 2:16).

10. **fathers ... eat ... sons** — alluding to Moses words (<sup><1839></sup>Leviticus 26:29 <sup><1838></sup>Deuteronomy 28:53), with the additional sad feature, that "the sons should eat their fathers" (see <sup><1838></sup>2 Kings 6:28 <sup><1849></sup>Jeremiah 19:9 <sup><1829></sup>Lamentations 2:20 4:10).

11. **as I five** — the most solemn of oaths, pledging the self-existence of God for the certainty of the event.

**defiled my sanctuary** — the climax of Jewish guilt: their defiling Jehovah's temple by introducing idols.

**diminish** — literally "withdraw," namely, Mine "eye" (which presently follows), that is, My favors; <sup><1807></sup>Job 36:7 uses the *Hebrew* verb in the same way. As the Jews had *withdrawn* from God's sanctuary its sacredness by "defiling" it, so God *withdraws* His countenance from them. The significance of the expression lies in the allusion to <sup><1840></sup>Deuteronomy 4:2, "Ye shall not *diminish* aught from the word which I command you"; they had done so, therefore God *diminishes* them. The reading found in six manuscripts, "I will cut thee off," is not so good.

12. Statement in plain terms of what was intended by the symbols (<sup><1887></sup>Ezekiel 5:2; see <sup><1882></sup>Ezekiel 6:12 <sup><1845></sup>Jeremiah 15:2 21:9).

**draw out ... sword after them** — (<sup><1839></sup>Leviticus 26:33). Skeptics object; no such thing happened under Zedekiah, as is here foretold; namely, that a third part of the nation should die by pestilence, a third part by the sword, and a third be scattered unto all winds, and a sword sent after them. But the prophecy is not restricted to Zedekiah's time. It includes all that Israel

suffered, or was still to suffer, for their sins, especially those committed at that period (<sup>2672</sup>Ezekiel 17:21). It only received its primary fulfillment under Zedekiah: numbers then died by the pestilence and by the sword; and numbers were scattered in all quarters and not carried to Babylonia alone, as the objectors assert (compare <sup>2304</sup>Ezra 1:4 <sup>2788</sup>Esther 3:8 <sup>3014</sup>Obadiah 1:14).

**pestilence ... and famine** — signified by the symbol “fire” (<sup>2682</sup>Ezekiel 5:2). Compare <sup>2308</sup>Isaiah 13:8 <sup>2560</sup>Lamentations 5:10; plague and famine burning and withering the countenance, as fire does.

**13. cause my fury to rest upon them** — as on its proper and permanent resting-place (<sup>2302</sup>Isaiah 30:32, *Margin*).

**I will be comforted** — expressed in condescension to man’s conceptions; signifying His *satisfaction* in the vindication of His justice by His righteous judgments (<sup>6285</sup>Deuteronomy 28:63 <sup>2025</sup>Proverbs 1:26 <sup>2024</sup>Isaiah 1:24).

**they shall how** — by bitter experience.

**14. reproach among the nations** — They whose idolatries Israel had adopted, instead of comforting, would only exult in their calamities brought on by those idolatries (compare <sup>2155</sup>Luke 15:15).

**15. instruction** — literally, “a corrective chastisement,” that is, a striking *example* to warn all of the fatal consequences of sin. For “*it shall be*”; all ancient versions have “*thou*,” which the connection favors.

**16. arrows of famine** — hail, rain, mice, locusts, mildew (see <sup>6523</sup>Deuteronomy 32:23,24).

**increase the famine** — literally, “congregate” or “collect.” When ye think your harvest safe because ye have escaped drought, mildew, etc., I will find other means [CALVIN], which I will *congregate* as the *forces of an invading army*, to bring famine on you.

**17. beasts** — perhaps meaning destructive conquerors (<sup>2004</sup>Daniel 7:4). Rather, literal “beasts,” which infest *desolated* regions such as Judea was to become (compare <sup>2348</sup>Ezekiel 34:28 <sup>2229</sup>Exodus 23:29 <sup>6524</sup>Deuteronomy 32:24 <sup>2175</sup>2 Kings 17:25). The same threat is repeated in manifold forms to awaken the careless.

**sword** — civil war.

# CHAPTER 6

## EZEKIEL 6:1-14.

### CONTINUATION OF THE SAME SUBJECT.

2. *mountains of Israel* — that is, of Palestine in general. The *mountains* are addressed by personification; implying that the Israelites themselves are incurable and unworthy of any more appeals; so the prophet sent to Jeroboam did not deign to address the king, but addressed the altar (<sup>4113E1</sup> Kings 13:2). The mountains are specified as being the scene of Jewish idolatries on “the high places” (<sup>2008E</sup> Ezekiel 6:3 <sup>0353L</sup> Leviticus 26:30).

3. *rivers* — literally, the “channels” of torrents. Rivers were often the scene and objects of idolatrous worship.

4. *images* — called so from a *Hebrew* root, “to wax hot,” implying the mad *ardor* of Israel after idolatry [CALVIN]. Others translate it, “sun images”; and so in <sup>2006E</sup> Ezekiel 6:6 (see <sup>4231E2</sup> Kings 23:11 <sup>4604E2</sup> Chronicles 34:4 <sup>2308E</sup> Isaiah 17:8, *Margin*).

*cast your slain men before your idols* — The foolish objects of their trust in the day of evil should witness their ruin.

5. *carcasses ... before ... idols* — polluting thus with the dead bones of you, the worshippers, the idols which seemed to you so sacrosanct.

6. *your works* — not gods, as you supposed, but the mere work of men’s hands (<sup>2308E</sup> Isaiah 40:18-20).

7. *ye shall know that I am the Lord* — and not your idols, lords. Ye shall know Me as the all-powerful Punisher of sin.

8. Mitigation of the extreme severity of their punishment; still their life shall be a wretched one, and linked with exile (<sup>2002E</sup> Ezekiel 5:2, 12 12:16 14:22 <sup>2443E</sup> Jeremiah 44:28).

9. *they that escape of you shall remember me* — The object of God’s chastisements shall at last be effected by working in them true contrition. This partially took place in the complete eradication of idolatry from the Jews ever since the Babylonian captivity. But they have yet to repent of their crowning sin, the crucifixion of Messiah; their full repentance is

therefore future, after the ordeal of trials for many centuries, ending with that foretold in Zechariah 10:9 13:8,9 14:1-4,11. “They shall *remember* me in far countries” (<sup><2176></sup>Ezekiel 7:16 <sup><1501></sup>Deuteronomy 30:1-8).

***I am broken with their whorish heart*** — FAIRBAIRN translates, actively, “I will break” their whorish heart; *English Version* is better. In their exile they shall remember how long I bore with them, but was at last compelled to punish, after I was “broken” (My long-suffering wearied out) by their desperate (<sup><0453></sup>Numbers 15:39) spiritual whorishness [CALVIN], (<sup><4981></sup>Psalms 78:40 <sup><2173></sup>Isaiah 7:13 43:24 63:10).

***loathe themselves*** — (<sup><1379></sup>Leviticus 26:39-45 <sup><3806></sup>Job 42:6). They shall not wait for men to condemn them but shall condemn themselves (<sup><2048></sup>Ezekiel 20:43 36:31 <sup><3006></sup>Job 42:6 <sup><4131></sup>1 Corinthians 11:31).

**11.** Gesticulations vividly setting before the hearers the greatness of the calamity about to be inflicted. In indignation at the abominations of Israel extend thine hand towards Judea, as if about to “strike,” and “stamp,” shaking off the dust with thy foot, in token of how God shall “stretch out His hand upon them,” and *tread* them down (<sup><2014></sup>Ezekiel 6:14 <sup><2114></sup>Ezekiel 21:14).

**12. *He that is far off*** — namely, from the foe; those who in a distant exile fear no evil.

***he that remaineth*** — *he that is left* in the city; not carried away into captivity, nor having escaped into the country. Distinct from “he that is near,” namely, those outside the city who are within reach of “the sword” of the foe, and so fall by it; not by “famine,” as those left in the city.

**14. *Diblath*** — another form of Diblathaim, a city in Moab (<sup><0636></sup>Numbers 33:46 <sup><2482></sup>Jeremiah 48:22), near which, east and south of the Dead Sea, was the wilderness of Arabia-Deserta.

# CHAPTER 7

## EZEKIEL 7:1-27.

### LAMENTATION OVER THE COMING RUIN OF ISRAEL; THE PENITENT REFORMATION OF A REMNANT; THE CHAIN SYMBOLIZING THE CAPTIVITY.

2. *An end, the end* — The indefinite “an” expresses the general fact of God bringing His long-suffering towards the whole of Judea to an end; “the,” following, marks it as more definitely fixed (<sup>310E</sup>Amos 8:2).

4. *thine abominations* — the punishment of thine abominations.

*shall be in the midst of thee* — shall be manifest to all. They and thou shall recognize the fact of thine abominations by thy punishment which shall everywhere befall thee, and that manifestly.

5. *An evil, an only evil* — a peculiar calamity such as was never before; unparalleled. The abruptness of the style and the repetitions express the agitation of the prophet’s mind in foreseeing these calamities.

6. *watcheth for thee* — rather, “waketh for thee.” It awakes up from its past slumber against thee (<sup>328E</sup>Psalms 78:65,66).

7. *The morning* — so *Chaldean* and *Syriac versions* (compare <sup>310E</sup>Joel 2:2). Ezekiel wishes to awaken them from their lethargy, whereby they were promising to themselves an uninterrupted *night* (<sup>318E</sup>1 Thessalonians 5:5-7), as if they were never to be called to account [CALVIN]. The expression, “morning,” refers to the fact that this was the usual time for magistrates giving sentence against offenders (compare <sup>317E</sup>Ezekiel 7:10, below; <sup>319A</sup>Psalms 101:8 <sup>321D</sup>Jeremiah 21:12). GESENIUS, less probably, translates, “the *order* of fate”; thy turn to be punished.

*not the sounding again* — not an empty *echo*, such as is produced by the reverberation of *sounds* in “the mountains,” but a real cry of tumult is coming [CALVIN]. Perhaps it alludes to the joyous cries of the grape-gatherers at vintage on the hills [GROTIUS], or of the idolaters in their dances on their festivals in honor of their false gods [TIRINUS]. HAVERNICK translates, “no *brightness*.”

**8, 9.** Repetition of <sup>2100B</sup>Ezekiel 7:3,4; sadly expressive of accumulated woes by the monotonous sameness.

**10. *rod ... blossomed, pride ... budded*** — The “rod” is the Chaldean Nebuchadnezzar, the instrument of God’s vengeance (<sup>2300B</sup>Isaiah 10:5 <sup>2512B</sup>Jeremiah 51:20). The rod *sprouting* (as the word ought to be translated), etc., implies that God does not move precipitately, but in successive steps. He as it were has planted the ministers of His vengeance, and leaves them to grow till all is ripe for executing His purpose. “Pride” refers to the insolence of the Babylonian conqueror (<sup>2681B</sup>Jeremiah 50:31,32). The parallelism (“pride” answering to “rod”) opposes JEROME’S view, that “pride” refers to the *Jews* who despised God’s threats; (also CALVIN’S, “though the *rod* grew in Chaldea, the *root* was with the Jews”). The “rod” cannot refer, as GROTIUS thought, to the *tribe* of Judah, for it evidently refers to the “smiteth” (<sup>2410B</sup>Ezekiel 7:9) as the instrument of smiting.

**11.** *Violence* (that is, the violent foe) *is risen up as a rod of* (that is, to punish the Jews’) *wickedness* (Zechariah 5:8).

***theirs*** — their possessions, or all that belongs to them, whether children or goods. GROTIUS translates from a different *Hebrew* root, “their nobles,” literally, “their *tumultuous* trains” (*Margin*) which usually escorted the nobles. Thus “nobles” will form a contrast to the general “multitude.”

***neither ... wailing*** — (<sup>2410B</sup>Jeremiah 16:4-7 25:33). GESENIUS translates, “nor shall there be left any *beauty* among them.” *English Version* is supported by the old Jewish interpreters. So general shall be the slaughter, none shall be left to mourn the dead.

**12. *let not ... buyer rejoice*** — because he has bought an estate at a bargain price.

***nor ... seller mourn*** — because he has had to sell his land at a sacrifice through poverty. The Chaldeans will be masters of the land, so that neither shall the buyer have any good of his purchase, nor the seller any loss; nor shall the latter (<sup>2410B</sup>Ezekiel 7:13) return to his inheritance at the jubilee year (see <sup>4825B</sup>Leviticus 25:13). Spiritually this holds good now, seeing that “the time is short”; “they that rejoice should be as though they rejoiced not, and they that buy as though they possessed not”: Paul (<sup>4173B</sup>1 Corinthians 7:30) seems to allude to Ezekiel here. <sup>3625B</sup>Jeremiah 32:15,37,43, seems to contradict Ezekiel here. But Ezekiel is speaking of the parents, and of the present; Jeremiah, of the children, and of the future. Jeremiah is addressing believers, that they should hope for a restoration; Ezekiel, the reprobate, who were excluded from hope of deliverance.

**13. *although they were yet alive*** — although they should live to the year of jubilee.

***multitude thereof*** — namely, of the Jews.

***which shall not return*** — answering to “the seller shall not return”; not only he, but *the whole multitude*, shall not return. CALVIN omits “is” and “which”: “the vision touching the whole multitude shall not return” void (<sup>2591</sup>Isaiah 55:11).

***neither shall any strengthen himself in the iniquity of his life*** — No hardening of one’s self in iniquity will avail against God’s threat of punishment. FAIRBAIRN translates, “no one by his iniquity shall invigorate his life”; referring to the jubilee, which was regarded as a revivification of the whole commonwealth, when, its disorders being rectified, the body politic sprang up again into renewed life. That for which God thus provided by the institution of the jubilee and which is now to cease through the nation’s iniquity, let none think to bring about by his iniquity.

**14. *They have blown the trumpet*** — rather, “Blow the trumpet,” or, “Let them blow the trumpet” to collect soldiers as they will, “to make all ready” for encountering the foe, it will be of no avail; none will have the courage to go to the battle (compare <sup>2103</sup>Jeremiah 6:1), [CALVIN].

**15.** No security should anywhere be found (<sup>4625</sup>Deuteronomy 32:25). Fulfilled (<sup>2109</sup>Lamentations 1:20); also at the Roman invasion (<sup>4246</sup>Matthew 24:16-18).

**16.** (<sup>2106</sup>Ezekiel 6:6).

***like doves*** — which, though usually frequenting the valleys, mount up to the mountains when fearing the bird-catcher (<sup>4910</sup>Psalms 11:1). So Israel, once dwelling in its peaceful valleys, shall flee from the foe to the mountains, which, as being the scene of its idolatries, were justly to be made the scene of its flight and shame. The plaintive note of the dove (<sup>2591</sup>Isaiah 59:11) represents the mournful repentance of Israel hereafter (<sup>3320</sup>Zechariah 12:10-12).

**17. *shall be weak as water*** — literally, “shall go (as) waters”; incapable of resistance (<sup>4005</sup>Joshua 7:5 <sup>4224</sup>Psalms 22:14 <sup>2337</sup>Isaiah 13:7).

**18. *cover them*** — as a garment.

***baldness*** — a sign of mourning (<sup>2324</sup>Isaiah 3:24 <sup>2487</sup>Jeremiah 48:37 <sup>3100</sup>Micah 1:16).

**19. cast ... silver in ... streets** — just retribution; they had abused their silver and gold by converting them into idols, “the stumbling-block of their iniquity” (<sup>314B</sup>Ezekiel 14:3,4, that is, an occasion of sinning); so these silver and gold idols, so far from “being able to deliver them in the day of the Lord’s wrath” (see <sup>3110B</sup>Proverbs 11:4), shall, in despair, be cast by them into the streets as a prey to the foe, by whom they shall be “removed” (GROTIUS translates as the *Margin*, “shall be despised as an *unclean* thing”); or rather, as suits the parallelism, “shall be put away from them” *by the Jews* [CALVIN]. “They (the silver and gold) shall not satisfy their souls,” that is, their cravings of appetite and other needs.

**20. beauty of his ornament** — the temple of Jehovah, the especial glory of the Jews, as a bride glories in her ornaments (the very imagery used by God as to the temple, <sup>3160</sup>Ezekiel 16:10,11). Compare <sup>330E</sup>Ezekiel 24:21: “My sanctuary, the excellency of your strength, the desire of your eyes.”

**images ... therein** — namely, in the temple (<sup>308B</sup>Ezekiel 8:3-17).

**set it far from them** — God had “set” the temple (their “beauty of ornament”) “for His majesty”; but they had set up “abominations therein”; therefore God, in just retribution, “set it far from them,” (that is, removed them far from it, or took it away from them [VATABLUS]). The *Margin* translates, “Made it unto them an *unclean thing*” (compare *Margin* on <sup>3179</sup>Ezekiel 7:19, “removed”); what I designed for their glory they turned to their shame, therefore I will make it turn to their ignominy and ruin.

**21. strangers** — barbarous and savage nations.

**22. pollute my secret place** — just retribution for the Jews’ pollution of the temple. “Robbers shall enter and defile” the holy of holies, the place of God’s manifested presence, entrance into which was denied even to the Levites and priests and was permitted to the high priest only once a year on the great day of atonement.

**23. chain** — symbol of the captivity (compare <sup>327E</sup>Jeremiah 27:2). As they enchained the land with violence, so shall they be chained themselves. It was customary to lead away captives in a row with a chain passed from the neck of one to the other. Therefore translate as the *Hebrew* requires, “*the chain*,” namely, that usually employed on such occasions. CALVIN explains it, that the Jews should be dragged, whether they would or no, before God’s tribunal to be tried as culprits in chains. The next words favor this: “bloody crimes,” rather, “*judgment of bloods*,” that is, with blood sheddings deserving the extreme judicial penalty. Compare <sup>3519</sup>Jeremiah 51:9: “Her *judgment* reacheth unto heaven.”

**24. *worst of the heathen*** — literally, “wicked of the nations”; the giving up of Israel to their power will convince the Jews that this is a final overthrow.

***pomp of ... strong*** — the *pride* wherewith men “stiff of forehead” despise the prophet.

***holy places*** — the sacred compartments of the temple (<sup>1885</sup>Psalm 68:35 <sup>3651</sup>Jeremiah 51:51) [CALVIN]. God calls it “*their* holy places,” because they had so defiled it that He regarded it no longer as *His*. However, as the defilement of the temple has already been mentioned (<sup>3071</sup>Ezekiel 7:20,22), and “their sacred places” are introduced as a new subject, it seems better to understand this of *the places dedicated to their idols*. As they defiled God’s sanctuary, He will defile their self-constituted “sacred places.”

**25. *peace, and ... none*** — (<sup>3183</sup>1 Thessalonians 5:3).

**26. *Mischief ... upon ... mischief*** — (<sup>6523</sup>Deuteronomy 32:23 <sup>2403</sup>Jeremiah 4:20). This is said because the Jews were apt to fancy, at every abatement of suffering, that their calamities were about to cease; but God will accumulate woe on woe.

***rumor*** — of the advance of the foe, and of his cruelty (<sup>4165</sup>Matthew 24:6).

***seek a vision*** — to find some way of escape from their difficulties (<sup>2369</sup>Isaiah 26:9). So Zedekiah consulted Jeremiah (<sup>2673</sup>Jeremiah 37:17 38:14).

***law shall perish*** — fulfilled (<sup>2301</sup>Ezekiel 20:1,3 <sup>3749</sup>Psalm 74:9 <sup>2319</sup>Lamentations 2:9; compare <sup>3181</sup>Amos 8:11); God will thus set aside the idle boast, “The law shall not perish from the priest” (<sup>2488</sup>Jeremiah 18:18).

***ancients*** — the ecclesiastical rulers of the people.

**27. *people of the land*** — the general multitude, as distinguished from the “king” and the “prince.” The consternation shall pervade all ranks. The king, whose duty it was to animate others and find a remedy for existing evils, shall himself be in the utmost anxiety; a mark of the desperate state of affairs.

***clothed with desolation*** — Clothing is designed to keep off shame; but in this case shame shall be the clothing.

***after their way*** — because of their wicked ways.

***deserts*** — literally, “judgments,” that is, what just judgment awards to them; used to imply the exact correspondence of God’s judgment with the

judicial penalties they had incurred: they oppressed the poor and deprived them of liberty; therefore they shall be oppressed and lose their own liberty.

# CHAPTER 8

## EZEKIEL 8:1-18.

This eighth chapter begins a new stage of Ezekiel's prophecies and continues to the end of the eleventh chapter. The connected visions at <sup><3182></sup>Ezekiel 3:12-7:27 comprehended Judah and Israel; but the visions (<sup><3183></sup>Ezekiel 8:1-11:25) refer immediately to Jerusalem and the remnant of Judah under Zedekiah, as distinguished from the Babylonian exiles.

**1. *sixth year*** — namely, of the captivity of Jehoiachin, as in <sup><3184></sup>Ezekiel 1:2, the “fifth year” is specified. The lying on his sides three hundred ninety and forty days (<sup><3185></sup>Ezekiel 4:5,6) had by this time been completed, at least *in vision*. That event was naturally a memorable epoch to the exiles; and the computation of years from it was to humble the Jews, as well as to show their perversity in not having repented, though so long and severely chastised.

***elders*** — namely, those carried away with Jehoiachin, and now at the Chebar.

***sat before me*** — to hear the word of God from me, in the absence of the temple and other public places of Sabbath worship, during the exile (<sup><3186></sup>Ezekiel 33:30,31). It was so ordered that they were present at the giving of the prophecy, and so left without excuse.

***hand of ... Lord God fell ... upon me*** — God's mighty operation *fell*, like a thunderbolt, *upon me* (in <sup><3187></sup>Ezekiel 1:3, it is less forcible, “was upon him”); whatever, therefore, he is to utter is not his own, for he has put off the mere man, while the power of God reigns in him [CALVIN].

**2. *likeness*** — understand, “of a man,” that is, of Messiah, the Angel of the covenant, in the person of whom alone God manifests Himself (<sup><3188></sup>Ezekiel 1:26 <sup><3189></sup>John 1:18). The “fire,” from “His loins downward,” betokens the vengeance of God kindled against the wicked Jews, while searching and purifying the remnant to be spared. The “brightness ... upward” betokens His unapproachable majesty (<sup><3190></sup>1 Timothy 6:16). For *Hebrew*, *eesh*, “fire,” the *Septuagint*, etc., read *ish*, “a man.”

***color of amber*** — the glitter of chasmal [FAIRBAIRN], (see on <sup><3191></sup>Ezekiel 1:4, “polished brass”).

3. Instead of prompting him to address directly the elders before him, the Spirit carried him away *in vision* (not in person bodily) to the temple at Jerusalem; he proceeds to report to them what he witnessed: his message thus falls into two parts:

(1) The abominations reported in <sup><3180></sup>Ezekiel 8:1-18.

(2) The dealings of judgment and mercy to be adopted towards the impenitent and penitent Israelites respectively (<sup><3181></sup>Ezekiel 9:1-11:25).

The exiles looked hopefully towards Jerusalem and, so far from believing things there to be on the verge of ruin, expected a return in peace; while those left in Jerusalem eyed the exiles with contempt, as if cast away from the Lord, whereas they themselves were near God and ensured in the possessions of the land (<sup><3115></sup>Ezekiel 11:15). Hence the vision here of what affected those in Jerusalem immediately was a seasonable communication to the exiles away from it.

*door of the inner gate* — facing the north, the direction in which he came from Chebar, called the “altar-gate” (<sup><3185></sup>Ezekiel 8:5); it opened into the inner court, wherein stood the altar of burnt offering; the inner court (<sup><1035></sup>1 Kings 6:36) was that of the priests; the outer court (<sup><3105></sup>Ezekiel 10:5), that of the people, where they assembled.

*seat* — the *pedestal* of the image.

*image of jealousy* — Astarte, or Asheera (as the *Hebrew* for “grove” ought to be translated, <sup><1215></sup>2 Kings 21:3,7 23:4,7), set up by Manasseh as a rival to Jehovah in His temple, and arresting the attention of all worshippers as they entered; it was the Syrian Venus, worshipped with licentious rites; the “queen of heaven,” wife of Phoenician Baal. HAVERNICK thinks all the scenes of idolatry in the chapter are successive portions of the festival held in honor of Tammuz or Adonis (<sup><3184></sup>Ezekiel 8:14). Probably, however, the scenes are separate proofs of Jewish idolatry, rather than restricted to one idol.

*provoketh to jealousy* — calleth for a visitation in wrath of the “jealous God,” who will not give His honor to another (compare the second commandment, <sup><1215></sup>Exodus 20:5). JEROME refers this verse to a statue of Baal, which Josiah had overthrown and his successors had replaced.

4. The Shekinah cloud of Jehovah’s glory, notwithstanding the provocation of the idol, still remains in the temple, like that which Ezekiel saw “in the plain” (<sup><3182></sup>Ezekiel 3:22,23); not till <sup><3104></sup>Ezekiel 10:4,18 did it leave the temple at Jerusalem, showing the long-suffering of God, which ought to move the Jews to repentance.

**5. *gate of ... altar*** — the principal avenue to the altar of burnt offering; as to the *northern* position, see <sup>(264)</sup>2 Kings 16:14. Ahaz had removed the brazen altar from the front of the Lord's house to the north of the altar which he had himself erected. The locality of the idol before God's own altar enhances the heinousness of the sin.

**6. *that I should go far off from my sanctuary*** — “that I should (be compelled by their sin to) go far off from my sanctuary” — (<sup>(308)</sup>Ezekiel 10:18); the sure precursor of its destruction.

**7. *door of the court*** — that is, of the inner court (<sup>(308)</sup>Ezekiel 8:3); the court of the priests and Levites, into which now others were admitted in violation of the law [GROTIUS].

***hole in ... wall*** — that is, an aperture or window in the wall of the priests' chambers, through which he could see into the various apartments, wherein was the idolatrous shrine.

**8. *dig*** — for it had been blocked up during Josiah's reformation. Or rather, the vision is not of an actual scene, but an ideal pictorial representation of the Egyptian idolatries into which the covenant-people had relapsed, practising them in secret places where they shrank from the light of day [FAIRBAIRN], (<sup>(41)</sup>John 3:20). But compare, as to the *literal* introduction of idolatries into the temple, <sup>(41)</sup>Ezekiel 5:11 <sup>(47)</sup>Jeremiah 7:30 32:34.

**10. *creeping things ... beasts*** — worshipped in Egypt; still found portrayed on their chamber walls; so among the Troglodytae.

***round about*** — On every side they surrounded themselves with incentives to superstition.

**11. *seventy men*** — the seventy members composing the Sanhedrim, or great council of the nation, the origination of which we find in the seventy elders, representatives of the congregation, who went up with Moses to the mount to behold the glory of Jehovah, and to witness the secret transactions relating to the establishment of the covenant; also, in the seventy elders appointed to share the burden of the people with Moses. How awfully it aggravates the national sin, that the seventy, once admitted to the Lord's secret council (<sup>(154)</sup>Psalms 25:14), should now, “in the dark,” enter “the secret” of the wicked (<sup>(40)</sup>Genesis 49:6), those judicially bound to suppress idolatry being the ringleaders of it!

***Jaazaniah*** — perhaps chief of the seventy: son of Shaphan, the scribe who read to Josiah the book of the law; the spiritual privileges of the son (<sup>(22)</sup>2 Kings 22:10-14) increased his guilt. The very name means, “Jehovah hears,” giving the lie to the unbelief which virtually said (<sup>(309)</sup>Ezekiel 9:9),

“The Lord seeth us not,” etc. (compare <sup><901></sup>Psalm 10:11, 14 50:21 94:7,9). The offering of incense belonged not to the elders, but to the priests; this usurpation added to the guilt of the former.

**cloud of incense** — They spared no expense for their idols. Oh, that there were the same liberality toward the cause of God!

**12. every man in ... chambers of ... imagery** — The elders (“ancients”) are here the representatives of the people, rather than to be regarded literally. Mostly, the *leaders* of heathen superstitions laughed at them secretly, while publicly professing them in order to keep the people in subjection. Here what is meant is that the *people* generally addicted themselves to secret idolatry, led on by their elders; there is no doubt, also, allusion to *the mysteries*, as in the worship of Isis in Egypt, the Eleusinian in Greece, etc., to which the initiated alone were admitted. “The chambers of imagery” are their own *perverse imaginations*, answering to the *priests’ chambers* in the vision, whereon the pictures were portrayed (<sup><2180></sup>Ezekiel 8:10).

**Lord ... forsaken ... earth** — They infer this because God has left them to their miseries, without succoring them, so that they seek help from other gods. Instead of repenting, as they ought, they bite the curb [CALVIN].

**14.** From the *secret* abominations of the chambers of imagery, the prophet’s eye is turned to the *outer court* at the *north door*; *within* the outer court women were not admitted, but only to the *door*.

**sat** — the attitude of mourners (<sup><8213></sup>Job 2:13 <sup><2181></sup>Isaiah 3:26).

**Tammuz** — from a *Hebrew* root, “to melt down.” Instead of weeping for the national sins, they wept for the idol. Tammuz (the *Syrian* for *Adonis*), the paramour of Venus, and of the same name as the river flowing from Lebanon; killed by a wild boar, and, according to the fable, permitted to spend half the year on earth, and obliged to spend the other half in the lower world. An annual feast was celebrated to him in June (hence called Tammuz in the Jewish calendar) at Byblos, when the Syrian women, in wild grief, tore off their hair and yielded their persons to prostitution, consecrating the hire of their infamy to Venus; next followed days of rejoicing for his return to the earth; the former feast being called “the disappearance of Adonis,” the latter, “the finding of Adonis.” This Phoenician feast answered to the similar Egyptian one in honor of Osiris. The idea thus fabled was that of the waters of the river and the beauties of spring destroyed by the summer during the half year when the sun is in the upper heat. Or else, the earth being clothed with beauty, hemisphere, and losing it when he departs to the lower. The name *Adonis* is not here used, as *Adon* is the appropriated title of Jehovah.

**15, 16.** The next are “*greater* abominations,” not in respect to the idolatry, but in respect to the place and persons committing it. In “the inner court,” immediately before the door of the temple of Jehovah, between the porch and the altar, where the priests advanced only on extraordinary occasions (<sup>-2017</sup>Joel 2:17), twenty-five men (the leaders of the twenty-four courses or orders of the priests, <sup>-1308</sup>1 Chronicles 24:18,19, with the high priest, “the princes of the sanctuary,” <sup>-2363</sup>Isaiah 43:28), representing the whole priesthood, as the seventy elders represented the people, stood with their backs turned on the temple, and their faces towards the east, making obeisance to the rising sun (contrast <sup>-1084</sup>1 Kings 8:44). Sun-worship came from the Persians, who made the sun the eye of their god Ormuzd. It existed as early as Job (<sup>-892</sup>Job 31:26; compare <sup>-1749</sup>Deuteronomy 4:19). Josiah could only suspend it for the time of his reign (<sup>-1236</sup>2 Kings 23:5,11); it revived under his successors.

**16. worshipped** — In the *Hebrew* a corrupt form is used to express Ezekiel’s sense of the foul corruption of such worship.

**17. put ... branch to ... nose** — proverbial, for “they turn up the nose in scorn,” expressing their insolent security [*Septuagint*]. Not content with outraging “with their violence” the second table of the law, namely, that of duty towards one’s neighbor, “they have returned” (that is, they turn back afresh) to provoke Me by violations of the first table [CALVIN]. Rather, they held up a branch or bundle of tamarisk (called *barsom*) to their nose at daybreak, while singing hymns to the rising sun [STRABO, 1.15, p. 733]. Sacred trees were frequent symbols in idol-worship. CALVIN translates, “to their own ruin,” literally, “to their nose,” that is, with the effect of rousing *My anger* (of which the *Hebrew* is “nose”) to their ruin.

**18. though they cry ... yet will I not hear** — (<sup>-2028</sup>Proverbs 1:28 <sup>-2015</sup>Isaiah 1:15).

# CHAPTER 9

## EZEKIEL 9:1-11.

### CONTINUATION OF THE PRECEDING VISION: THE SEALING OF THE FAITHFUL.

1. *cried* — contrasted with their “cry” for mercy (<sup>2088</sup>Ezekiel 8:18) is the “cry” here for vengeance, showing how vain was the former.

*them that have charge* — literally, *officers*; so “officers” (<sup>2307</sup>Isaiah 60:17), having the city in charge, not to guard, but to punish it. The angels who as “watchers” fulfill God’s judgments (<sup>2083</sup>Daniel 4:13,17,23 10:20,21); the “princes” (<sup>2303</sup>Jeremiah 39:3) of Nebuchadnezzar’s army were under their guidance.

*draw near* — in the *Hebrew* intensive, “to draw near quickly.”

2. *clothed with linen* — (<sup>2705</sup>Daniel 10:5 12:6,7). His clothing marked his office as distinct from that of the six officers of vengeance; “linen” characterized the high priest (<sup>6106</sup>Leviticus 16:4); emblematic of purity. The same garment is assigned to the angel of the Lord (for whom Michael is but another name) by the contemporary prophet Daniel (<sup>2705</sup>Daniel 10:5 12:6,7). Therefore the intercessory High Priest in heaven must be meant (<sup>3012</sup>Zechariah 1:12). The six with Him are His subordinates; therefore He is said to be “among them,” literally, “in the midst of them,” *as their recognized Lord* (<sup>3006</sup>Hebrews 1:6). He appears as a “man,” implying His incarnation; as “one” (compare <sup>5051</sup>1 Timothy 2:5). Salvation is peculiarly assigned to Him, and so He bears the “inkhorn” in order to “mark” His elect (<sup>2304</sup>Ezekiel 9:4; compare <sup>6207</sup>Exodus 12:7 <sup>6008</sup>Revelation 7:3 9:4 13:16,17 20:4), and to write their names in His book of life (<sup>6038</sup>Revelation 13:8). As Oriental scribes suspend their inkhorn at their side in the present day, and as a “scribe of the host is found in Assyrian inscriptions accompanying the host” to number the heads of the slain, so He stands ready for the work before Him. “The higher gate” was probably where now the gate of Damascus is. The six with Him make up the sacred and perfect number, *seven* (Zechariah 3:9 <sup>6006</sup>Revelation 5:6). The executors of judgment on the wicked, in Scripture teaching, are good, not bad, angels; the bad have permitted to them the trial of the pious (<sup>8012</sup>Job 1:12 <sup>6720</sup>2 Corinthians 12:7). The judgment is executed by Him (<sup>2302</sup>Ezekiel 10:2,7

<sup><4362></sup>John 5:22,27) through the six (<sup><4034></sup>Matthew 13:41 25:31); so beautifully does the Old Testament harmonize with the New Testament. The seven come “from the way of the north”; for it was there the idolatries were seen, and from the same quarter must proceed the judgment (Babylon lying northeast of Judea). So <sup><4248></sup>Matthew 24:28.

**stood** — the attitude of waiting reverently for Jehovah’s commands.

**brazen altar** — the altar of burnt offerings, not the altar of incense, which was of gold. They “stood” there to imply reverent obedience; for there God gave His answers to prayer [CALVIN]; also as being about to slay victims to God’s justice, they stand where sacrifices are usually slain [GROTIUS], (<sup><2347></sup>Ezekiel 39:17 <sup><2346></sup>Isaiah 34:6 <sup><2428></sup>Jeremiah 12:3 46:10).

**3. glory of ... God** — which had heretofore, as a bright cloud, rested on the mercy seat between the cherubim in the holy of holies (<sup><4062></sup>2 Samuel 6:2 <sup><4801></sup>Psalms 80:1); its departure was the presage of the temple being given up to ruin; its going from the inner sanctuary to the threshold without, towards the officers standing at the altar outside, was in order to give them the commission of vengeance.

**4. midst of ... city ... midst of Jerusalem** — This twofold designation marks more emphatically the scene of the divine judgments.

**a mark** — literally, the Hebrew letter *Tau*, the last in the alphabet, used as a mark (“my sign,” <sup><4813></sup>Job 31:35, *Margin*); literally, *Tau*; originally written in the form of a cross, which TERTULLIAN explains as referring to the badge and only means of salvation, the cross of Christ. But nowhere in Scripture are the words which are now employed as names of letters used to denote the letters themselves or their figures [VITRINGA]. The noun here is cognate to the verb, “mark a mark.” So in <sup><4608></sup>Revelation 7:3 no particular mark is specified. We seal what we wish to guard securely. When all things else on earth are confounded, God will secure His people from the common ruin. God gives the *first* charge as to their safety before He orders the punishment of the rest (<sup><4810></sup>Psalms 31:20 <sup><2331></sup>Isaiah 26:20,21). So in the case of Lot and Sodom (<sup><4122></sup>Genesis 19:22); also the Egyptian first-born were not slain till Israel had time to sprinkle the blood-mark, ensuring their safety (compare <sup><4608></sup>Revelation 7:3 <sup><4109></sup>Amos 9:9). So the early Christians had Pella provided as a refuge for them, before the destruction of Jerusalem.

**upon the foreheads** — the most conspicuous part of the person, to imply how their safety would be manifested to all (compare <sup><2451></sup>Jeremiah 15:11 39:11-18). It was customary thus to mark worshippers (<sup><4616></sup>Revelation 13:16 14:1,9) and servants. So the Church of England marks the forehead with the sign of the cross in baptizing. At the exodus the mark was on the

*houses*, for then it was families; here, it is on the *foreheads*, for it is individuals whose safety is guaranteed.

***sigh and ... cry*** — similarly sounding verbs in *Hebrew*, as in *English Version*, expressing the prolonged sound of their grief. “Sigh” implies their *inward grief* (“groanings which cannot be uttered,” <sup><4133></sup>Romans 8:26); “cry,” the outward expression of it. So Lot (<sup><4117></sup>2 Peter 2:7,8). Tenderness should characterize the man of God, not harsh sternness in opposing the ungodly (<sup><4353></sup>Psalms 119:53,136 <sup><4137></sup>Jeremiah 13:17 <sup><4121></sup>2 Corinthians 12:21); at the same time zeal for the honor of God (<sup><4359></sup>Psalms 69:9,10 <sup><4159></sup>1 John 5:19).

**5. *the others*** — the six officers of judgment (<sup><4192></sup>Ezekiel 9:2).

**6. *come not near any ... upon whom ... mark*** — (<sup><4194></sup>Revelation 9:4). It may be objected that Daniel, Jeremiah, and others were carried away, whereas many of the vilest were left in the land. But God does not promise believers exemption from all suffering, but only from what will prove really and lastingly hurtful to them. His sparing the ungodly turns to their destruction and leaves them without excuse [CALVIN]. However, the prophecy waits a fuller and final fulfillment, for <sup><4193></sup>Revelation 7:3-8, in ages long after Babylon, foretells, as still future, the same sealing of a remnant (one hundred forty-four thousand) of Israel previous to the final outpouring of wrath on the rest of the nation; the correspondence is exact; the same pouring of fire from the altar follows the marking of the remnant in both (compare <sup><4195></sup>Revelation 8:5, with <sup><4310></sup>Ezekiel 10:2). So Zechariah 13:9 14:2, distinguish the remnant from the rest of Israel.

***begin at ... sanctuary*** — For in it the greatest abominations had been committed; it had lost the reality of consecration by the blood of victims sacrificed to idols; it must, therefore, lose its semblance by the dead bodies of the slain idolaters (<sup><4192></sup>Ezekiel 9:7). God’s heaviest wrath falls on those who have sinned against the highest privileges; these are made to feel it first (<sup><4117></sup>1 Peter 4:17,18). He hates sin most in those nearest to Him; for example, the priests, etc.

***ancient men*** — the seventy elders.

**8. *I was left*** — literally “there was left I.” So universal seemed the slaughter that Ezekiel thought himself the only one left [CALVIN]. He was the only one left *of the priests* “in the sanctuary.”

***fell upon my face*** — to intercede for his countrymen (so <sup><4122></sup>Numbers 16:22).

***all the residue*** — a plea drawn from God’s covenant promise to save the elect *remnant*.

**9. *exceeding*** — literally, “very, very”; doubled.

***perverseness*** — “apostasy” [GROTIUS]; or, “wresting aside of justice.”

***Lord ... forsaken ... earth ... seeth not*** — The order is reversed from <sup><B182></sup>Ezekiel 8:12. There they speak of His neglect of His people in their misery; here they go farther and deny His providence (<sup><B1011></sup>Psalm 10:11), so that they may sin fearlessly. God, in answer to Ezekiel’s question (<sup><B108></sup>Ezekiel 9:8), leaves the difficulty unsolved; He merely vindicates His justice by showing it did not exceed their sin: He would have us humbly acquiesce in His judgments, and wait and trust.

**10. *mine eye*** — to show them their mistake in saying, “The Lord *seeth* not.”

***recompense their way upon their head*** — (<sup><B1031></sup>Proverbs 1:31). Retribution in kind.

**11. *I have done as thou hast commanded*** — The characteristic of Messiah (<sup><B1704></sup>John 17:4). So the angels (<sup><B14321></sup>Psalm 103:21); and the apostles report their fulfillment of their orders (<sup><B1030></sup>Mark 6:30).

# CHAPTER 10

## EZEKIEL 10:1-22.

### VISION OF COALS OF FIRE SCATTERED OVER THE CITY: REPETITION OF THE VISION OF THE CHERUBIM.

1. The throne of Jehovah appearing in the midst of the judgments implies that whatever intermediate agencies be employed, He controls them, and that the whole flows as a necessary consequence from His essential holiness (<sup>2022</sup>Ezekiel 1:22,26).

*cherubim* — in <sup>2008</sup>Ezekiel 1:5, called “living creatures.” The repetition of the vision implies that the judgments are approaching nearer and nearer. These two visions of Deity were granted in the beginning of Ezekiel’s career, to qualify him for witnessing to God’s glory amidst his God-forgetting people and to stamp truth on his announcements; also to signify the removal of God’s manifestation from the visible temple (<sup>2008</sup>Ezekiel 10:18) for a long period (<sup>2582</sup>Ezekiel 43:2). The feature (<sup>2012</sup>Ezekiel 10:12) mentioned as to the cherubim that they were “full of eyes,” though omitted in the former vision, is not a difference, but a more specific detail observed by Ezekiel now on closer inspection. Also, here, there is no rainbow (the symbol of *mercy* after the flood of wrath) as in the former; for here *judgment* is the prominent thought, though the *marking* of the remnant in <sup>2008</sup>Ezekiel 9:4,6 shows that there was mercy in the background. The cherubim, perhaps, represent redeemed humanity combining in and with itself the highest forms of subordinate creaturely life (compare <sup>2132</sup>Romans 8:20). Therefore they are associated with the twenty-four elders and are distinguished from the angels (<sup>2102</sup>Revelation 5:1-14). They stand on the mercy seat of the ark, and *on that ground* become the habitation of God from which His glory is to shine upon the world. The different forms symbolize the different phases of the Church. So the quadriform Gospel, in which the incarnate Savior has lodged the revelation of Himself in a fourfold aspect, and from which His glory shines on the Christian world, answers to the emblematic throne from which He shone on the Jewish Church.

2. *he* — Jehovah; He who sat on the “throne.”

**the man** — the Messenger of mercy becoming the Messenger of judgment (see on <sup><3012></sup>Ezekiel 9:2). *Human* agents of destruction shall fulfill the will of “the Man,” who is Lord of men.

**wheels** — *Hebrew, galgal*, implying *quick* revolution; so *the impetuous onset of the foe* (compare <sup><3024></sup>Ezekiel 23:24 <sup><3026></sup>26:10); whereas “*ophan*,” in <sup><3015></sup>Ezekiel 1:15,16 implies mere revolution.

**coals of fire** — the wrath of God about to *burn the city*, as His sword had previously *slain* its guilty inhabitants. This “fire,” how different from *the fire on the altar never going out* (<sup><3062></sup>Leviticus 6:12,13), whereby, in type, peace was made with God! Compare <sup><3032></sup>Isaiah 33:12,14. It is therefore not taken from the altar of reconciliation, but from between the wheels of the cherubim, representing the providence of God, whereby, and not by chance, judgment is to fall.

**3. right ... of ... house** — The scene of the locality whence judgment emanates is the temple, to mark God’s vindication of His holiness injured there. The cherubim here are not those in the holy of holies, for the latter had not “wheels.” They stood on “the right of the house,” that is, the south, for the Chaldean power, guided by them, had already advanced from the north (the direction of Babylon), and had destroyed *the men in the temple*, and was now proceeding to destroy the *city*, which lay south and west.

**the cherubim ... the man** — There was perfect concert of action between the cherubic representative of the angels and “the Man,” to minister to whom they “stood” there (<sup><3007></sup>Ezekiel 10:7).

**cloud** — emblem of God’s displeasure; as the “glory” or “brightness” (<sup><3004></sup>Ezekiel 10:4) typifies His majesty and clearness in judgment.

**4.** The court outside was full of the Lord’s *brightness*, while it was only the *cloud* that filled the *house inside*, the scene of idolatries, and therefore of God’s displeasure. God’s throne was *on the threshold*. The temple, once filled with brightness, is now darkened with cloud.

**5. sound of ... wings** — prognostic of great and awful changes.

**voice of ... God** — the thunder (<sup><3003></sup>Psalms 29:3, etc.).

**6. went in** — not into the temple, but between the cherubim. Ezekiel sets aside the Jews’ boast of the presence of God with them. The cherubim, once the ministers of grace, are now the ministers of vengeance. When “commanded,” He without delay obeys (<sup><3005></sup>Psalms 40:8 <sup><3007></sup>Hebrews 10:7).

**7.** See on <sup><3003></sup>Ezekiel 10:3.

**one cherub** — one of the four cherubim.

**his hand** — (<sup>2008</sup>Ezekiel 1:8).

**went out** — to burn the city.

8. The “wings” denote alacrity, the “hands” efficacy and aptness, in executing the functions assigned to them.

9. **wheels** — (See on <sup>2015</sup>Ezekiel 1:15,16). The things which, from <sup>2008</sup>Ezekiel 10:8 to the end of the chapter, are repeated from the first chapter are expressed more decidedly, now that he gets a nearer view: the words “as it were,” and “as if,” so often occurring in the first chapter, are therefore mostly omitted. The “wheels” express the manifold changes and revolutions in the world; also that in the chariot of His providence God transports the Church from one place to another and everywhere can preserve it; a truth CALCULATED to alarm the people in Jerusalem and to console the exiles [POLANUS].

10. **four had one likeness** — In the wonderful variety of God’s works there is the greatest harmony: —

*“In human works, though labored on with pain,  
One thousand movements scarce one purpose gain;  
In God’s one single doth its end produce,  
Yet serves to second, too, some other use.  
(See on <sup>2016</sup>Ezekiel 1:16).*

**wheel ... in ... a wheel** — cutting one another at right angles, so that the whole might move in any of the four directions or quarters of the world. God’s doings, however involved they seem to us, cohere, so that lower causes subserve the higher.

11. (See on <sup>2017</sup>Ezekiel 1:17).

**turned not** — without accomplishing their course (<sup>2511</sup>Isaiah 55:11) [GROTIUS]. Rather, “they moved *straight on* without turning” (so <sup>2009</sup>Ezekiel 1:9). Having a face towards each of the four quarters, they needed not to turn around when changing their direction.

**whither ... head looked** — that is, “whither the head” of the animal cherub-form, belonging to and directing each wheel, “looked,” thither the wheel “followed.” The wheels were not guided by some external adventitious impetus, but by some secret divine impulse of the cherubim themselves.

12. **body** — literally, “flesh,” because a body consists of flesh.

*wheels ... full of eyes* — The description (<sup><3018></sup>Ezekiel 1:18) attributes eyes to the “wheels” alone; here there is added, on closer observation, that the *cherubim* themselves had them. The “eyes” imply that God, by His wisdom, beautifully reconciles seeming contrarities (compare <sup><3462></sup>2 Chronicles 16:9 <sup><3153></sup>Proverbs 15:3 <sup><3040></sup>Zechariah 4:10).

**13. *O wheel*** — rather, “they were called, whirling,” that is, they were *most rapid in their revolutions* [MAURER]; or, better, “It was cried unto them, The whirling” [FAIRBAIRN]. *Galgal* here used for “wheel,” is different from *ophan*, the simple word for “wheel.” *Galgal* is the whole *wheelwork* machinery with its *whirlwind-like rotation*. Their being so addressed is in order to call them immediately to put themselves in rapid motion.

**14. *cherub*** — but in <sup><3010></sup>Ezekiel 1:10 it is *an ox*. The chief of the four cherubic forms was not the *ox*, *but man*. Therefore “cherub” cannot be synonymous with “ox.” Probably Ezekiel, standing in front of one of the cherubim (namely, that which handed the coals to the man in linen), saw of him, not merely the ox-form, but the *whole fourfold* form, and therefore calls him simply “cherub”; whereas of the other three, having only a side view, he specifies the form of each which met his eye [FAIRBAIRN]. As to the likelihood of the lower animals sharing in “the restoration of all things,” see <sup><3106></sup>Isaiah 11:6 <sup><6525></sup>65:25 <sup><6181></sup>Romans 8:20,21; this accords with the animal forms combined with the human to typify redeemed man.

**15.** The repeated declaration of the identity of the vision with that at the Chebar is to arouse attention to it (<sup><3022></sup>Ezekiel 10:22 3:23).

*the living creature* — used collectively, as in <sup><3007></sup>Ezekiel 10:17,20 1:20.

**16.** (See on <sup><3011></sup>Ezekiel 10:11; <sup><3019></sup>Ezekiel 1:19).

*lifted up ... wings* — to depart, following “the glory of the Lord” which was on the point of departing (<sup><3008></sup>Ezekiel 10:18).

**17.** (<sup><3012></sup>Ezekiel 1:12,20,21).

*stood* — God never *stands* still (<sup><6177></sup>John 5:17), therefore neither do the angels; but to human perceptions He seems to do so.

**18.** The departure of the symbol of God’s presence from the temple preparatory to the destruction of the city. Foretold in <sup><6517></sup>Deuteronomy 31:17. Woe be to those from whom God departs (<sup><3012></sup>Hosea 9:12)! Compare <sup><6285></sup>1 Samuel 28:15,16 4:21: “I-chabod, Thy glory is departed.” Successive steps are marked in His departure; so slowly and reluctantly does the merciful God leave His house. First He leaves the sanctuary (<sup><3018></sup>Ezekiel 9:3); He elevates His throne above the threshold of the house

(<sup><300></sup>Ezekiel 10:1); leaving the cherubim He sits on the throne (<sup><300></sup>Ezekiel 10:4); He and the cherubim, after *standing* for a time *at the door of the east gate* (where was the exit to the lower court of the people), leave the house altogether (<sup><300></sup>Ezekiel 10:18,19), not to return till <sup><300></sup>Ezekiel 43:2.

**20. *I knew ... cherubim*** — By the second sight of the cherubim, he learned to identify them with the angelic forms situated above the ark of the covenant in the temple, which as a priest, he “knew” about from the high priest.

**21.** The repetition is in order that the people about to live without the temple might have, instead, the knowledge of the temple mysteries, thus preparing them for a future restoration of the covenant. So perverse were they that they would say, “Ezekiel fancies he saw what has no existence.” He, therefore, repeats it over and over again.

**22. *straight forward*** — intent upon the object they aimed at, not deviating from the way nor losing sight of the end (<sup><100></sup>Luke 9:52).

# CHAPTER 11

## ~~2100~~ EZEKIEL 11:1-25.

### PROPHECY OF THE DESTRUCTION OF THE CORRUPT “PRINCES OF THE PEOPLE;” PELATIAH DIES; PROMISE OF GRACE TO THE BELIEVING REMNANT; DEPARTURE OF THE GLORY OF GOD FROM THE CITY; EZEKIEL’S RETURN TO THE CAPTIVES.

1. *east gate* — to which the glory of God had moved itself (~~2309~~Ezekiel 10:19), the chief entrance of the sanctuary; the portico or porch of Solomon. The Spirit moves the prophet thither, to witness, in the presence of the divine glory, a new scene of destruction.

*five and twenty men* — The same as the twenty-five (that is, twenty-four heads of courses, and the high priest) sun-worshippers seen in ~~2316~~Ezekiel 8:16. The leading *priests* were usually called “princes of the sanctuary” (~~2363~~Isaiah 43:28) and “chiefs of the priests” (~~3434~~2 Chronicles 36:14); but here two of them are called “princes of the people,” with irony, as using their priestly influence to be ringleaders of the people in sin (~~2310~~Ezekiel 11:2). Already the wrath of God had visited the *people* represented by the *elders* (~~2106~~Ezekiel 9:6); also the glory of the Lord had left its place in the holy of holies, and, like the cherubim and flaming sword in Eden, had occupied the gate into the deserted sanctuary. The judgment on the representatives of the *priesthood* naturally follows here, just as the *sin* of the priests had followed in the description (~~2102~~Ezekiel 8:12,16) after the sin of the elders.

*Jaazaniah* — signifying “God hears.”

*son of Azur* — different from Jaazaniah the son of Shaphan (~~2181~~Ezekiel 8:11). *Azur* means “help.” He and Pelatiah (“God delivers”), son of Benaiah (“God builds”), are singled out as Jaazaniah, son of Shaphan, in the case of the seventy elders (~~2181~~Ezekiel 8:11,12), because their names ought to have reminded them that “God” would have “heard” had they sought His “help” to “deliver” and “build” them up. But, neglecting this, they incurred the heavier judgment by the very relation in which they stood to God [FAIRBAIRN].

2. *he* — the Lord sitting on the cherubim (~~2302~~Ezekiel 10:2).

**wicked counsel** — in opposition to the prophets of God (<sup><2310B></sup>Ezekiel 11:3).

**3. *It is not near*** — namely, the destruction of the city; therefore “let us build houses,” as if there was no fear. But the *Hebrew* opposes *English Version*, which would require the infinitive absolute. Rather, “Not at hand is the building of houses.” They sneer at Jeremiah’s letter to the captives, among whom Ezekiel lived (<sup><2310B></sup>Jeremiah 29:5). “*Build ye houses, and dwell in them,*” that is, do not fancy, as many persuade you, that your sojourn in Babylon is to be short; it will be for seventy years (<sup><2310B></sup>Jeremiah 25:11,12 29:10); therefore build houses and settle quietly there. The scorners in Jerusalem reply, Those far off in exile may build if they please, but it is *too remote* a concern for us to trouble ourselves about [FAIRBAIRN], (Compare <sup><2310B></sup>Ezekiel 12:22,27 <sup><2310B></sup>2 Peter 3:4).

**this city ... caldron ... we ... flesh** — sneering at <sup><2310B></sup>Jeremiah 1:13, when he compared the city to a caldron with its mouth towards the north. “Let Jerusalem be so if you will, and we the flesh, exposed to the raging foe from the north, still its fortifications will secure us from the flame of war outside; the city must stand for our sakes, just as the pot exists for the safety of the flesh in it.” In opposition to this God says (<sup><2310B></sup>Ezekiel 11:11), “This city shall not be your caldron, to defend you *in* it from the foe *outside*: nay, ye shall be driven out of your imaginary sanctuary and slain *in the border of the land*. “But,” says God, in <sup><2310B></sup>Ezekiel 11:7, “your slain are the flesh, and this city the caldron; but (not as you fancy, shall ye be kept safe *inside*) I will bring you forth *out of the midst of it*”; and again, in <sup><2310B></sup>Ezekiel 24:3, “Though not a caldron in *your* sense, Jerusalem shall be so in the sense of its being exposed to a consuming foe, and you yourselves in it and with it.”

**4. *prophecy ... prophecy*** — The repetition marks emphatic earnestness.

**5. *Spirit ... fell upon me*** — stronger than “entered into me” (<sup><2310B></sup>Ezekiel 2:2 3:24), implying the zeal of the Spirit of God roused to immediate indignation at the contempt of God shown by the scorners.

***I know*** — (<sup><2310B></sup>Psalms 139:1-4). Your scornful jests at My word escape not My notice.

**6. *your slain*** — those on whom you have brought ruin by your wicked counsels. Bloody crimes within the city brought on it a bloody foe from without (<sup><2310B></sup>Ezekiel 7:23,24). They had made it a caldron in which to boil the flesh of God’s people (<sup><2310B></sup>Micah 3:1-3), and eat it by unrighteous oppression; therefore God will make it a caldron in a different sense, one not wherein they may be safe in their guilt, but “out of the midst of” which they shall be “brought forth” (<sup><2310B></sup>Jeremiah 34:4,5).

7. The city is a caldron to them, but it shall not be so to you. Ye shall meet your doom on the frontier.

8. The Chaldean sword, to escape which ye abandoned your God, shall be brought on you by God because of that very abandonment of Him.

9. *out of the midst thereof* — that is, of the city, as captives led into the open plain for judgment.

10. *in the border of Israel* — on the frontier: at Riblah, in the land of Hamath (compare <sup><259></sup>2 Kings 25:19-21, with <sup><108></sup>1 Kings 8:65).

*ye shall know that I am the Lord* — by the judgments I inflict (<sup><996></sup>Psalm 9:16).

11. (See on <sup><310></sup>Ezekiel 11:3).

12. (<sup><623></sup>Deuteronomy 12:30,31).

13. *Pelaliah* — probably the ringleader of the scorers (<sup><310></sup>Ezekiel 11:1) was an earnest of the destruction of the rest of the twenty-five, as Ezekiel had foretold, as also of the general ruin.

*fell ... upon ... face* — (See on <sup><908></sup>Ezekiel 9:8).

*wilt thou make a full end of the remnant* — Is Pelatiah's destruction to be the token of the destruction of all, even of the remnant? The people regarded Pelatiah as a mainstay of the city. His name (derived from a *Hebrew* root, "a remnant," or else "God delivers") suggested hope. Is that hope, asks Ezekiel, to be disappointed?

15. *thy brethren ... brethren* — The repetition implies, "Thy real brethren" are no longer the priests at Jerusalem with whom thou art connected by the *natural* ties of blood and common temple service, but thy fellow exiles on the Chebar, and the house of Israel whosoever of them. belong to the remnant to be spared.

*men of thy kindred* — literally, "of thy redemption," that is, the nearest relatives, whose duty it was to do the part of Goel, or vindicator and redeemer of a forfeited inheritance (<sup><825></sup>Leviticus 25:25). Ezekiel, seeing the priesthood doomed to destruction, as a priest, felt anxious to vindicate their cause, as if they were his nearest kinsmen and he their Goel. But he is told to look for his true kinsmen in those, his fellow exiles, whom his natural kinsmen at Jerusalem despised, and he is to be their vindicator. Spiritual ties, as in the case of Levi (<sup><539></sup>Deuteronomy 33:9), the type of Messiah (<sup><124></sup>Matthew 12:47-50) are to supersede natural ones where the two clash. The hope of better days was to rise from the despised exiles. The gospel

principle is shadowed forth here, that the despised of men are often the chosen of God and the highly esteemed among men are often an abomination before Him (<sup><21615></sup>Luke 16:15 <sup><41015></sup>1 Corinthians 1:26-28). “No door of hope but in the valley of Achor” (“trouble,” <sup><3015></sup>Hosea 2:15), [FAIRBAIRN].

**Get you far ... unto us is this land** — the contemptuous words of those left still in the city at the carrying away of Jeconiah to the exiles, “However far ye be outcasts from the Lord and His temple, *we* are secure in our possession of the land.”

**16. Although** — anticipating the objection of the priests at Jerusalem, that the exiles were “cast far off.” Though this be so, and they are far from the outer temple at Jerusalem, I will be their asylum or sanctuary instead (<sup><3900></sup>Psalm 90:1 91:9 <sup><2384></sup>Isaiah 8:14). My shrine is the humble heart: a preparation for gospel catholicity when the local and material temple should give place to the spiritual (<sup><2575></sup>Isaiah 57:15 66:1 Malachi 1:1 <sup><6011></sup>1 John 4:21-24 <sup><4478></sup>Acts 7:48,49). The trying discipline of the exile was to chasten the outcasts so as to be meet recipients of God’s grace, for which the carnal confidence of the priests disqualified them. The dispersion served the end of spiritualizing and enlarging the views even of the better Jews, so as to be able to worship God *everywhere* without a material temple; and, at the same time, it diffused some knowledge of God among the greatest Gentile nations, thus providing materials for the gathering in of the Christian Church among the Gentiles; so marvellously did God overrule a present evil for an ultimate good. Still more does all this hold good in the present much longer dispersion which is preparing for a more perfect and universal restoration (<sup><2102></sup>Isaiah 2:2-4 <sup><2416></sup>Jeremiah 3:16-18). Their long privation of the temple will prepare them for appreciating the more, but without Jewish narrowness, the temple that is to be (<sup><3501></sup>Ezekiel 40:1-44:31).

**a little** — rather, “for a little season”; No matter how long the captivity may be, the seventy years will be but as a little season, compared with their long subsequent settlement in their land. This holds true only partially in the case of the first restoration; but as in a few centuries they were dispersed again, the full and permanent restoration is yet future (<sup><2406></sup>Jeremiah 24:6).

**17.** (<sup><3325></sup>Ezekiel 28:25 34:13 36:24).

**18.** They have eschewed every vestige of idolatry ever since their return from Babylon. But still the Shekinah glory had departed, the ark was not restored, nor was the second temple strictly inhabited by God until He came who made it more glorious than the first temple (Haggai 2:9); even then His stay was short, and ended in His being rejected; so that the full realization of the promise must still be future.

**19. *I will give them*** — lest they should claim to *themselves* the praise given them in <sup><3118></sup>Ezekiel 11:18, God declares it is to be *the free gift of His Spirit*.

***one heart*** — not *singleness*, that is, uprightness, but *oneness* of heart in all, *unanimously* seeking Him in contrast to their state at that time, when only single scattered individuals sought God (<sup><3429></sup>Jeremiah 32:39 <sup><3429></sup>Zephaniah 3:9) [HENGSTENBERG]. Or, “content with *one God*,” not distracted with “the many detestable things” (<sup><3118></sup>Ezekiel 11:18 <sup><1182></sup>1 Kings 18:21 <sup><3802></sup>Hosea 10:2) [CALVIN].

***new spirit*** — (<sup><3510></sup>Psalms 51:10 <sup><3633></sup>Jeremiah 31:33). Realized fully in the “new creature” of the New Testament (<sup><4052></sup>2 Corinthians 5:17); having new motives, new rules, new aims.

***stony heart*** — like “adamant” (<sup><3072></sup>Zechariah 7:12); the natural heart of every man.

***heart of flesh*** — impressible to what is good, tender.

**20. *walk in my statutes*** — Regeneration shows itself by its fruits (<sup><4052></sup>Galatians 5:22,25).

***they ... my people, ... I ... their God*** — (<sup><3441></sup>Ezekiel 14:11 36:28 37:27 <sup><3441></sup>Jeremiah 24:7). In its fullest sense still future (Zechariah 13:9).

**21. *whose heart ... after ... heart of ... detestable things*** — The repetition of “heart” is emphatic, signifying that the heart of those who so obstinately clung to idols, impelled itself to fresh superstitions in one continuous tenor [CALVIN]. Perhaps it is implied that they and their idols are much alike in character (<sup><3838></sup>Psalms 115:8). The *heart* walks astray first, the feet follow.

***recompense ... way upon ... heads*** — They have abandoned Me, so will I abandon them; they profaned My temple, so will I profane it by the Chaldeans (<sup><3090></sup>Ezekiel 9:10).

**23.** The Shekinah glory now moves from the east gate (<sup><3304></sup>Ezekiel 10:4,19) to the Mount of Olives, altogether abandoning the temple. The mount was chosen as being the height whence the missiles of the foe were about to descend on the city. So it was from it that Jesus ascended to heaven when about to send His judgments on the Jews; and from it He predicted its overthrow before His crucifixion (<sup><4243></sup>Matthew 24:3). It is also to be the scene of His return in person to deliver His people (Zechariah 14:4), when He shall come by the same way as He went, “the way of the east” (<sup><3302></sup>Ezekiel 43:2).

**24. *brought me in a vision*** — not in actual fact, but in ecstatic vision. He had been as to the outward world all the time before the elders (<sup>348B</sup>Ezekiel 8:3) in Chaldea; he now reports what he had witnessed with the inner eye.

**25. *things ... showed me*** — literally, “words”; an appropriate expression; for the word communicated to him was not simply a word, but one clothed with outward symbols “shown” to him as in the sacrament, which AUGUSTINE terms “the visible word” [CALVIN].

# CHAPTER 12

## ⚔EZEKIEL 12:1-28.

### EZEKIEL'S TYPICAL MOVING TO EXILE: PROPHECY OF ZEDEKIAH'S CAPTIVITY AND PRIVATION OF SIGHT: THE JEWS' UNBELIEVING SURMISE AS TO THE DISTANCE OF THE EVENT REPROVED.

**1, 2. *eyes to see, and see not, ... ears to hear, and hear not*** — fulfilling the prophecy of <sup>(4520)</sup>Deuteronomy 29:4, here quoted by Ezekiel (compare <sup>(2169)</sup>Isaiah 6:9 <sup>(2162)</sup>Jeremiah 5:21). Ezekiel needed often to be reminded of the people's perversity, lest he should be discouraged by the little effect produced by his prophecies. Their "not seeing" is the result of perversity, not incapacity. They are wilfully blind. The persons most interested in this prophecy were those dwelling at Jerusalem; and it is among them that Ezekiel was transported in spirit, and performed in vision, not outwardly, the typical acts. At the same time, the symbolical prophecy was designed to warn the exiles at Chebar against cherishing hopes, as many did in opposition to God's revealed word, of returning to Jerusalem, as if that city was to stand; externally living afar off, their hearts dwelt in that corrupt and doomed capital.

**3. *stuff for removing*** — rather, "an exile's outfit," the articles proper to a person going as an exile, a staff and knapsack, with a supply of food and clothing; so "instruments of captivity," <sup>(3469)</sup>Jeremiah 46:19, *Margin*, that is, the needful equipments for it. His simple announcements having failed, he is symbolically to give them an ocular demonstration conveyed by a word-painting of actions performed in vision.

***consider*** — (<sup>(4629)</sup>Deuteronomy 32:29).

**4. *by day*** — in broad daylight, when all can see thee.

***at even*** — not contradicting the words "by day." The baggage was to be sent before *by day*, and Ezekiel was to follow *at nightfall* [GROTIUS]; or, the preparations were to be made by day, the actual departure was to be effected at night [HENDERSON].

***as they that go forth into captivity*** — literally, "as the goings forth of the captivity," that is, of the captive band of exiles, namely, amid the silent

darkness: typifying Zedekiah's flight by night on the taking of the city (<sup>2308</sup>Jeremiah 39:4 52:7).

**5. Dig** — as Zedekiah was to escape like one digging through a wall, furtively to effect an escape (<sup>2322</sup>Ezekiel 12:12).

**carry out** — namely, “thy stuff” (<sup>2326</sup>Ezekiel 12:4).

**thereby** — by the opening in the wall. Zedekiah escaped “by the gate betwixt the two walls” (<sup>2308</sup>Jeremiah 39:4).

**6. in ... twilight** — rather, “in the dark.” So in <sup>0157</sup>Genesis 15:17, “it” refers to “thy stuff.”

**cover thy face** — as one who muffles his face, afraid of being recognized by anyone meeting him. So the Jews and Zedekiah should make their exit stealthily and afraid to look around, so hurried should be their fight [CALVIN].

**sign** — rather, “a portent,” namely, for evil.

**9. What doest thou?** — They ask not in a docile spirit, but making a jest of his proceedings.

**10. burden** — that is, weighty oracle.

**the prince** — The very man Zedekiah, in whom they trust for safety, is to be the chief sufferer. JOSEPHUS [*Antiquities*, 10.7] reports that Ezekiel sent a copy of this prophecy to Zedekiah. As Jeremiah had sent a letter to the captives at the Chebar, which was the means of calling forth at first the agency of Ezekiel, so it was natural for Ezekiel to send a message to Jerusalem confirming the warnings of Jeremiah. The prince, however, fancying a contradiction between <sup>2323</sup>Ezekiel 12:13; “he shall not see Babylon,” and <sup>2308</sup>Jeremiah 24:8,9, declaring he should be carried to Babylon, believed neither. Seeming discrepancies in Scripture on deeper search prove to be hidden harmonies.

**11. sign** — *portent of evil* to come (<sup>2307</sup>Ezekiel 24:27 Zechariah 3:8, *Margin*). Fulfilled (<sup>1251</sup>2 Kings 25:1-7 <sup>2313</sup>Jeremiah 52:1-11).

**12. prince ... among them** — literally, “that is in the midst of them,” that is, on whom the eyes of all are cast, and “under whose shadow” they hope to live (<sup>2302</sup>Lamentations 4:20).

**shall bear** — namely, his “stuff for removing”; his equipments for his journey.

*cover his face, that he see not the ground* — See on <sup><3626></sup>Ezekiel 12:6; the symbol in <sup><3616></sup>Ezekiel 12:6 is explained in this verse. He shall muffle his face so as not to be recognized: a humiliation for a king!

**13. My net** — the Chaldean army. He shall be inextricably entangled in it, as in the meshes of a net. It is *God's net* (<sup><3896></sup>Job 19:6). Babylon was God's instrument (<sup><3105></sup>Isaiah 10:5). Called "a net" (<sup><3114></sup>Habakkuk 1:14-16).

*bring him to Babylon ... ; yet shall he not see it* — because he should be deprived of sight before he arrived there (<sup><3211></sup>Jeremiah 52:11).

**14. all ... about him** — his satellites: his bodyguard.

*bands* — literally, "the wings" of an army (<sup><3188></sup>Isaiah 8:8).

*draw out ... sword after them* — (See on <sup><3616></sup>Ezekiel 5:2; <sup><3612></sup>Ezekiel 5:12).

**16. I will leave a few ... that they may declare ... abominations** — God's purpose in scattering a remnant of Jews among the Gentiles; namely, not only that they themselves should be weaned from idolatry (see <sup><3215></sup>Ezekiel 12:15), but that by their own *word*, as also *by their whole state as exiles*, they should make God's righteousness manifest among the Gentiles, as vindicated in their punishment for their sins (compare <sup><3610></sup>Isaiah 43:10 <sup><3183></sup>Zechariah 8:13).

**18.** Symbolical representation of the famine and fear with which they should eat their scanty morsel, in their exile, and especially at the siege.

**19. people of the land** — the Jews "in the land" of Chaldea who thought themselves miserable as being exiles and envied the Jews left in Jerusalem as fortunate.

*land of Israel* — contrasted with "the people in the land" of Chaldea. So far from being fortunate as the exiles in Chaldea regarded them, the Jews in Jerusalem are truly miserable, for the worst is before them, whereas the exiles have escaped the miseries of the coming siege.

*land ... desolate from all that is therein* — literally "that the land (namely, Judea) may be despoiled of the fullness thereof"; emptied of the inhabitants and abundance of flocks and corn with which it was filled.

*because of ... violence* — (<sup><3973></sup>Psalm 107:34).

**20. the cities** — left in Judea after the destruction of Jerusalem.

**22. proverb** — The infidel scoff, that the threatened judgment was so long in coming, it would not come at all, had by frequent repetition come to be a "proverb" with them. This skeptical habit contemporary prophets testify to

(<sup><3475></sup>Jeremiah 17:15 20:7 <sup><3012></sup>Zephaniah 1:12). Ezekiel, at the Chebar, thus sympathizes with Jeremiah and strengthens his testimony at Jerusalem. The *tendency* to the same scoff showed itself in earlier times, but had not then developed into a settled “proverb” (<sup><3159></sup>Isaiah 5:19 <sup><3158></sup>Amos 5:18). It shall again be the characteristic of the last times, when “faith” shall be regarded as an antiquated thing (<sup><2988></sup>Luke 18:8), seeing that it remains stationary, whereas worldly arts and sciences progress, and when the “continuance of all things from creation” will be the argument against the possibility of their being suddenly brought to a standstill by the coming of the Lord (<sup><2365></sup>Isaiah 66:5 <sup><608></sup>2 Peter 3:3,4). The very long-suffering of God, which ought to lead men to repentance, is made an argument against His word (<sup><2081></sup>Ecclesiastes 8:11 <sup><3068></sup>Amos 6:3).

*days ... prolonged ... vision faileth* — their twofold argument:

- (1) The predictions shall not come to pass till long after our time.
- (2) They shall fail and prove vain shadows. God answers both in <sup><3128></sup>Ezekiel 12:23,25.

**23. effect** — literally, “the word,” namely, fulfilled; that is, the effective fulfillment of whatever the prophets have spoken is at hand.

**24. no more ... vain vision ... flattering divination** — All those false prophets (<sup><2944></sup>Lamentations 2:14), who “flattered” the people with promises of peace and safety, shall be detected and confounded by the event itself.

**25. word ... shall come to pass** — in opposition to their scoff “the vision faileth” (<sup><3122></sup>Ezekiel 12:22). The repetition, “I will speak ... speak,” etc. (or as FAIRBAIRN, “For I, Jehovah, will speak whatever word I shall speak, and it shall be done”) implies that whenever God speaks, the effect must follow; for God, who speaks, is not divided in Himself (<sup><3128></sup>Ezekiel 12:28 <sup><2551></sup>Isaiah 55:11 <sup><2192></sup>Daniel 9:12 <sup><2133></sup>Luke 21:33).

*no more prolonged* — in opposition to the scoff (<sup><3122></sup>Ezekiel 12:22), “The days are prolonged.”

*in your days* — while you are living (compare <sup><1284></sup>Matthew 24:34).

**27.** Not a mere repetition of the scoff (<sup><3122></sup>Ezekiel 12:22); there the *scoffers* asserted that the evil was so often threatened and postponed, it must have no reality; here *formalists* do not go so far as to deny that a day of evil is coming, but assert it is still far off (<sup><3068></sup>Amos 6:3). The transition is easy from this carnal security to the gross infidelity of the former class.

# CHAPTER 13

## EZEKIEL 13:1-23.

### DENUNCIATION OF FALSE PROPHETS AND PROPHETESSES; THEIR FALSE TEACHINGS, AND GOD'S CONSEQUENT JUDGMENTS.

1. As the twelfth chapter denounced the false expectations of the people, so this denounces the false leaders who fed those expectations. As an independent witness, Ezekiel confirms at the Chebar the testimony of Jeremiah (<sup>2021</sup>Jeremiah 29:21,31) in his letter from Jerusalem to the captive exiles, against the false prophets; of these some were conscious knaves, others fanatical dupes of their own frauds; for example, Ahab, Zedekiah, and Shemaiah. Hananiah must have believed his own lie, else he would not have specified so *circumstantial* details (<sup>2023</sup>Jeremiah 28:2-4). The conscious knaves gave only *general* assurances of peace (<sup>2453</sup>Jeremiah 5:31 6:14 14:13). The language of Ezekiel has plain references to the similar language of Jeremiah (for example, <sup>2029</sup>Jeremiah 23:9-38); the bane of false prophecy, which had its stronghold in Jerusalem, having in some degree extended to the Chebar; this chapter, therefore, is primarily intended as a message to those still in the Jewish metropolis; and, secondarily, for the good of the exiles at the Chebar.

2. *that prophesy* — namely, a speedy return to Jerusalem.

*out of ... own hearts* — alluding to the words of Jeremiah (<sup>2036</sup>Jeremiah 23:16,26); that is, what they prophesied was what they and the people *wished*; the wish was father to the thought. The people *wished* to be deceived, and so were deceived. They were inexcusable, for they had among them true prophets (who spoke not *their own* thoughts, but as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, <sup>6022</sup>2 Peter 1:21), whom they might have known to be such, but they did not wish to know (<sup>4019</sup>John 3:19).

3. *foolish* — though vaunting as though exclusively possessing “wisdom” (<sup>4019</sup>1 Corinthians 1:19-21); the fear of God being the only beginning of wisdom (<sup>4010</sup>Psalms 111:10).

*their own spirit* — instead of the Spirit of God. A threefold distinction lay between the false and the true prophets:

(1) The source of their messages respectively; of the false, “their own hearts”; of the true, an object presented to the spiritual sense (named from the noblest of the senses, a *seeing*) by the Spirit of God as from without, not produced by their own natural powers of reflection. The word, the body of the thought, presented itself not audibly to the natural sense, but directly to the spirit of the prophet; and so the perception of it is properly called a *seeing*, he perceiving that which thereafter forms itself in his soul as the cover of the external word [DELITZSCH]; hence the peculiar expression, “seeing the word of God” (<sup>2104</sup>Isaiah 2:1 13:1 <sup>2105</sup>Amos 1:1 <sup>2106</sup>Micah 1:1).

(2) The point aimed at; the false “walking after their own spirit”; the true, after the Spirit of God.

(3) The result; the false saw nothing, but spake as if they had seen; the true had a vision, not subjective, but objectively real [FAIRBAIRN]. A refutation of those who set the *inward* word above the *objective*, and represent the Bible as flowing subjectively from the inner light of its writers, not from the revelation of the Holy Ghost from without. “They are impatient to get possession of the kernel without its fostering shell — they would have Christ without the Bible” [BENGEL].

4. *foxes* — which cunningly “spoil the vines” (So 2:15), Israel being the vineyard (<sup>2108</sup>Psalm 80:8-15 <sup>2109</sup>Isaiah 5:1-7 27:2 <sup>2110</sup>Jeremiah 2:21); their duty was to have guarded it from being spoiled, whereas they themselves spoiled it by corruptions.

*in ... deserts* — where there is nothing to eat; whence the foxes become so ravenous and crafty in their devices to get food. So the prophets wander in Israel, a moral desert, unrestrained, greedy of gain which they get by craft.

5. *not gone up into ... gaps* — metaphor from *breaches* made in a wall, to which the defenders ought to betake themselves in order to repel the entrance of the foe. The breach is that made in the theocracy through the nation’s sin; and, unless it be made up, the vengeance of God will break in through it. Those who would advise the people to repentance are the restorers of the breach (<sup>2123</sup>Ezekiel 22:30 <sup>2124</sup>Psalm 106:23,30).

*hedge* — the law of God (<sup>2102</sup>Psalm 80:12 <sup>2103</sup>Isaiah 5:2,5); by violating it, the people stripped themselves of the *fence* of God’s protection and lay exposed to the foe. The false prophets did not try to repair the evil by bringing back the people to the law with good counsels, or by checking the bad with reproofs. These two duties answer to the double office of defenders in case of a breach made in a wall:

(1) To repair the breach from within;

(2) To oppose the foe from without.

*to stand* — that is, that the city may “stand.”

*in ... day of ... Lord* — In the day of the battle which God wages against Israel for their sins, ye do not try to stay God’s vengeance by prayers, and by leading the nation to repentance.

6. *made others to hope*, etc. — rather, “they *hoped*” to confirm (that is, ‘make good’) their word, by the event corresponding to their prophecy. The *Hebrew* requires this [HAVERNICK]. Also the parallel clause, “they have *seen* vanity,” implies that they believed their own lie (<sup><301></sup>2 Thessalonians 2:11). Subjective revelation is false unless it rests on the objective.

8. *I am against you* — rather understand, “I *come* against you,” to punish your wicked profanation of My name (compare <sup><615></sup>Revelation 2:5,16).

9. *mine hand* — My power in vengeance.

*not ... in ... assembly* — rather, the “council”; “They shall not occupy the honorable office of *councillors* in the senate of elders after the return from Babylon” (<sup><610></sup>Ezra 2:1,2).

*neither ... written in ... Israel* — They shall not even have a place in the *register* kept of all *citizens*’ names; they shall be erased from it, just as the names of those who died in the year, or had been deprived of citizenship for their crimes. were at the annual revisal erased. Compare <sup><217></sup>Jeremiah 17:13 <sup><210></sup>Luke 10:20 <sup><615></sup>Revelation 3:5, as to those *spiritually* Israelites; <sup><614></sup>John 1:47, and those not so. Literally fulfilled (<sup><529></sup>Ezra 2:59,62; compare <sup><615></sup>Nehemiah 7:5 <sup><528></sup>Psalms 69:28).

*neither ... enter ... land* — They shall not so much as be allowed to come back at all to their country.

10. *Because, even because* — The repetition heightens the emphasis.

*Peace* — *safety* to the nation. Ezekiel confirms <sup><214></sup>Jeremiah 6:14 8:11.

*one* — literally, “this one”; said contemptuously, as in <sup><402></sup>2 Chronicles 28:22.

*a wall* — rather, “a loose wall.” Ezekiel had said that the false prophets did not “go up into the gaps, or make up the breaches” (<sup><315></sup>Ezekiel 13:5), as good architects do; now he adds that they make a bustling show of anxiety about repairing the wall; but it is without right mortar, and therefore of no use.

**one ... others** — besides *individual* effort, they *jointly co-operated* to delude the people.

**daubed ... with untempered mortar** — as sand without lime, mud without straw [GROTIUS]. FAIRBAIRN translates, “plaster it with whitewash.” But besides the hypocrisy of merely *outwardly* “daubing” to make the wall look fair (<sup>4127</sup>Matthew 23:27,29 <sup>4213</sup>Acts 23:3), there is implied the unsoundness of the wall from the absence of *true uniting cement*; the “untempered cement” answering to *the lie* of the prophets, who say, *in support of their prophecies*, “Thus saith the Lord, when the Lord hath not spoken” (<sup>3228</sup>Ezekiel 22:28).

**11. overflowing** — *inundating*; such as will at once wash away the mere clay mortar. The three most destructive agents shall co-operate against the wall — wind, rain, and hailstones. These last in the East are more out of the regular course of nature and are therefore often particularly specified as the instruments of God’s displeasure against His foes (<sup>1098</sup>Exodus 9:18 <sup>601</sup>Joshua 10:11 <sup>882</sup>Job 38:22 <sup>19812</sup>Psalms 18:12,13 <sup>23417</sup>Isaiah 28:2 30:30 <sup>6121</sup>Revelation 16:21). The *Hebrew* here is, literally, “stones of ice.” They fall in Palestine at times an inch thick with a destructive velocity. The personification heightens the vivid effect, “O ye hail stones.” The Chaldeans will be the violent agency whereby God will unmask and refute them, overthrowing their edifice of lies.

**12. shall it not be said** — Your vanity and folly shall be so manifested that it shall pass into a proverb, “Where is the daubing?”

**13.** God repeats, *in His own name*, as the Source of the coming calamity, what had been expressed generally in <sup>3331</sup>Ezekiel 13:11.

**14.** The repetition of the same threat (see on <sup>3331</sup>Ezekiel 13:11) is to awaken the people out of their dream of safety by the *certainty* of the event.

**foundation** — As the “wall” represents the security of the nation, so the “foundation” is *Jerusalem*, on the fortifications of which they rested their confidence. GROTIUS makes the “foundation” refer to *the false principles* on which they rested; <sup>3336</sup>Ezekiel 13:16 supports the former view.

**16. prophesy concerning Jerusalem** — With all their “seeing visions of peace for her,” they cannot ensure peace or safety to themselves.

**17. set thy face** — put on a bold countenance, fearlessly to denounce them (<sup>3188</sup>Ezekiel 3:8,9 <sup>23107</sup>Isaiah 50:7).

**daughters** — the false prophetesses; alluded to only here; elsewhere the guilt specified in the women is the active share they took in maintaining

idolatry (<sup><2084></sup>Ezekiel 8:14). It was only in extraordinary emergencies that God bestowed prophecy on women, for example on Miriam, Deborah, Huldah (<sup><2150></sup>Exodus 15:20 <sup><1006></sup>Judges 4:4 <sup><224></sup>2 Kings 22:14); so in the last days to come (<sup><2128></sup>Joel 2:28). The rareness of such instances enhanced their guilt in pretending inspiration.

**18. *sew pillows to ... armholes*** — rather, *elbows and wrists*, for which the false prophetesses made cushions to lean on, as a symbolical act, typifying the perfect tranquility which they foretold to those consulting them. Perhaps they made their dupes rest on these cushions in a fancied state of ecstasy after they had made them at first *stand* (whence the expression, “every *stature*,” is used for “men of every *age*”). As the men are said to have built a wall (<sup><2310></sup>Ezekiel 13:10), so the women are said to sew pillows, etc., both alike typifying the “peace” they promised the impenitent.

***make kerchiefs*** — magical *veils*, which they put over the heads of those consulting them, as if to fit them for receiving a response, that they might be rapt in spiritual trance above the world.

***head of every stature*** — “men of every age,” old and young, great and small, if only these had pay to offer them.

***hunt souls*** — eagerly trying to allure them to the love of yourselves (<sup><2085></sup>Proverbs 6:26 <sup><1014></sup>2 Peter 2:14), so as unwarily to become your prey.

***will ye save ... souls ... that come unto you*** — Will ye haul after souls, and when they are yours (“come unto you”), will ye *promise them life*? “Save” is explained (<sup><2632></sup>Ezekiel 13:22), “promising life” [GROTIUS]. CALVIN explains, “Will ye hunt My people’s souls and yet will ye save *your own* souls”; I, the Lord God, will not allow it. But “save” is used (<sup><2319></sup>Ezekiel 13:19) of the false prophetesses *promising life* to the impenitent, so that *English Version* and GROTIUS explain it best.

**19. *handfuls*** — expressing the paltry gain for which they bartered immortal souls (compare <sup><3315></sup>Micah 3:5,11 <sup><3216></sup>Hebrews 12:16). They “polluted” God by making His name the cloak under which they uttered falsehoods.

***among my people*** — an aggravation of their sin, that they committed it “among the people” whom God had chosen as peculiarly *His own*, and among whom He had His temple. It would have been a sin to have done so even among the Gentiles, who knew not God; much more so among the people of God (compare <sup><1821></sup>Proverbs 28:21).

***slay ... souls that should not die***, etc. — to *predict* the slaying or perdition of the godly whom I will save. As true ministers are said to save and slay

their hearers, according to the spirit respectively in which these receive their message (<sup><4065></sup>2 Corinthians 2:15,16), so false ministers imitate them; but they promise safety to those on the broad way to ruin and predict ruin to those on the narrow way of God.

**my people that hear your lies** — who are therefore *wilfully* deceived, so that their guilt lies at their own door (<sup><4189></sup>John 3:19).

**20. I am against your pillows** — that is, against your lying ceremonial tricks by which ye cheat the people.

**to make them fly** — namely, into their snares, as fowlers disturb birds so as to be suddenly caught in the net spread for them. “Fly” is peculiarly appropriate as to those lofty spiritual *flights* to which they pretended to raise their dupes when they veiled their heads with kerchiefs and made them rest on luxurious arm-cushions (<sup><2638></sup>Ezekiel 13:18).

**let ... souls go** — “Ye make them fly” in order to destroy them; “I will let them go” in order to save them (<sup><1906></sup>Psalms 91:3 <sup><2105></sup>Proverbs 6:5 <sup><3008></sup>Hosea 9:8).

**21. in your hand** — in your power. “My people” are the elect remnant of Israel to be saved.

**ye shall know** — by the judgments which ye shall suffer.

**22. ye have made ... the righteous sad** — by *lying* predictions of calamities impending ever the godly.

**strengthened ... wicked** — (<sup><2634></sup>Jeremiah 23:14).

**heart of ... righteous ... hands of ... wicked** — *Heart* is applied to the righteous because the terrors foretold penetrated to their inmost feelings; *hands*, to the wicked because they were so hardened as not only to despise God in their minds, but also to manifest it in their whole *acts*, as if avowedly waging war with Him.

**23. ye shall see no more vanity** — The event shall confute your lies, involving yourselves in destruction (<sup><2639></sup>Ezekiel 13:9 <sup><3418></sup>Ezekiel 14:8 15:7 <sup><3306></sup>Micah 3:6).

# CHAPTER 14

## ~~340~~ EZEKIEL 14:1-23.

### HYPOCRITICAL INQUIRERS ARE ANSWERED ACCORDING TO THEIR HYPOCRISY. THE CALAMITIES COMING ON THE PEOPLE; BUT A REMNANT IS TO ESCAPE.

1. *elders* — persons holding that dignity among the exiles at the Chebar. GROTIUS refers this to Seraiah and those sent with him *from Judea* (~~2619~~ Jeremiah 51:59). The prophet's reply, first, reflecting on the character of the inquirers, and, secondly, foretelling the calamities coming on Judea, may furnish an idea of the subject of their inquiry.

*sat before me* — not at once able to find a beginning of their speech; indicative of anxiety and despondency.

3. *heart ... face* — The *heart* is first corrupted, and then the *outward manifestation* of idol-worship follows; they set their idols *before their eyes*. With all their pretense of consulting God now, they have not even put away their idols *outwardly*; implying gross contempt of God. "Set up," literally, "aloft"; implying that their idols had gained the supreme *ascendancy* over them.

*stumbling-block of ... iniquity* — See ~~3182~~ Proverbs 3:21,23, "Let not them (God's laws) depart *from thine eyes*, then ... thy foot shall not *stumble*." Instead of God's law, which (by being kept before their eyes) would have saved them from stumbling, they set up their idols before their eyes, which proved a stumbling-block, causing them to stumble (~~3079~~ Ezekiel 7:19).

*inquired of at all* — literally, "should I with inquiry be inquired of" by such hypocrites as they are? (~~968~~ Psalm 66:18 ~~3159~~ Proverbs 15:29 28:9).

4. *and cometh* — *and yet cometh*, reigning himself to be a true worshipper of Jehovah.

*him that cometh* — so the *Hebrew Margin* reads. But the *Hebrew text* reading is, "according to it, according to the multitude of his idols"; the anticipative clause with the pronoun not being pleonastic, but increasing the emphasis of the following clause with the noun. "I will answer," literally, reflexively, "I will Myself (or *for Myself*) answer him."

**according to ... idols** — thus, “answering a fool according to his folly”; making the sinner’s sin his punishment; retributive justice (<sup>3103</sup>Proverbs 1:31 26:5).

**5. That I may take** — that is, unveil and *overtake with punishment* the dissimulation and impiety of Israel hid *in their own heart*. Or, rather, “That I may punish them by answering them *after their own hearts*”; corresponding to “according to the multitude of his idols” (see on <sup>3340</sup>Ezekiel 14:4); an instance is given in <sup>3340</sup>Ezekiel 14:9 <sup>8103</sup>Romans 1:28 <sup>3101</sup>2 Thessalonians 2:11, God giving them up in wrath to their own lie.

**idols** — though pretending to “inquire” of Me, “in their hearts” they are “estranged from Me,” and love “idols.”

**6.** Though God so threatened the people for their idolatry (<sup>3340</sup>Ezekiel 14:5), yet He would rather they should avert the calamity by “repentance.”

**turn yourselves** — CALVIN translates, “turn *others*” (namely, the stranger proselytes in the land). As ye have been the advisers of others (see <sup>3340</sup>Ezekiel 14:7, “the stranger that sojourneth in Israel”) to idolatry, so bestow at least as much pains in turning them to the truth; the surest proof of repentance. But the parallelism to <sup>3340</sup>Ezekiel 14:3,4 favors *English Version*. Their sin was twofold:

- (1) “In their *heart*” or *inner man*;
- (2) “Put before their *face*,” that is, exhibited *outwardly*.

So their repentance is generally expressed by “repent,” and is then divided into:

- (1) “Turn *yourselves* (inwardly) from your idols”;
- (2) “Turn away your *faces* (outwardly) from all your abominations.” It is not likely that an exhortation to convert others should come *between* the two affecting themselves.

**7. stranger** — the proselyte, tolerated in Israel only on condition of worshipping no God but Jehovah (<sup>81708</sup>Leviticus 17:8,9).

**inquire of him concerning me** — that is, concerning My will.

**by myself** — not by word, but by deed, that is, by *judgments, marking My hand and direct agency*; instead of answering him through the prophet he consults. FAIRBAIRN translates, as it is the same *Hebrew* as in the previous clause, “concerning Me,” it is natural that God should use *the same expression* in His reply as was used in the consultation of Him. But the

sense, I think, is the same. The hypocrite inquires of the prophet *concerning God*; and God, instead of replying through the prophet, replies for Himself *concerning Himself*.

**8. *And I will set my face against that man*** — (See on <sup><6770></sup>Leviticus 17:10).

***and will make him a sign*** — literally, “I will destroy him so as to become a sign”; it will be no ordinary destruction, but such as will make him be an object pointed at with wonder by all, as Korah, etc. (<sup><4230></sup>Numbers 26:10 <sup><6387></sup>Deuteronomy 28:37).

**9. *I the Lord have deceived that prophet*** — not directly, but through Satan and his ministers; not merely permissively, but by overruling their evil to serve the purposes of *His righteous judgment*, to be a touchstone to separate the precious from the vile, and to “prove” His people (<sup><6313></sup>Deuteronomy 13:3 <sup><1223></sup>1 Kings 22:23 <sup><3040></sup>Jeremiah 4:10 <sup><3211></sup>2 Thessalonians 2:11,12). Evil comes not from God, though God overrules it to serve His will (<sup><8126></sup>Job 12:16 <sup><5003></sup>James 1:3). This declaration of God is intended to answer their objection, “Jeremiah and Ezekiel are but two opposed to the many prophets who announce ‘peace to us.’” “Nay, deceive not yourselves, those prophets of yours are deluding you, and I permit them to do so as a righteous judgment on your wilful blindness.”

**10.** As they dealt deceitfully with God by seeking answers of peace without repentance, so God would let them be dealt with deceitfully by the prophets whom they consulted. God would chastise their sin with a corresponding sin; as they rejected the safe directions of the true light, He would send the pernicious delusions of a false one; prophets would be given them who should re-echo the deceitfulness that already wrought in their own bosom, to their ruin [FAIRBAIRN]. The people had themselves alone to blame, for they were long ago forewarned how to discern and to treat a false prophet (<sup><6313></sup>Deuteronomy 13:3); the very existence of such deceivers among them was a sign of God’s judicial displeasure (compare in Saul’s case, <sup><9641></sup>Samuel 16:14 28:6,7). They and the prophet, being dupes of a common delusion, should be involved in a common ruin.

**11.** Love was the spring of God’s very judgments on His people, who were incurable by any other process (<sup><3120></sup>Ezekiel 11:20 37:27).

**12.** The second part of the chapter: the effect which the presence of a few righteous persons was to have on the purposes of God (compare <sup><4134></sup>Genesis 18:24-32). God had told Jeremiah that the guilt of Judah was too great to be pardoned even for the intercession of Moses and Samuel (<sup><9901></sup>Psalms 99:6 <sup><2442></sup>Jeremiah 14:2 15:1), which had prevailed formerly (<sup><4231></sup>Exodus 32:11-14 <sup><0443></sup>Numbers 14:13-20 <sup><9008></sup>1 Samuel 7:8-12), implying

the extraordinary heinousness of their guilt, since in *ordinary* cases “the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man (for others) availeth much” (<sup>2301F</sup>James 5:16). Ezekiel supplements Jeremiah by adding that not only those two once successful *intercessors*, but not even the three pre-eminently *righteous* men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, could stay God’s judgments by their righteousness.

**13. *staff of ... bread*** — on which man’s existence is supported as on a staff (<sup>2304E</sup>Ezekiel 4:16 5:16 <sup>2303B</sup>Leviticus 26:26 <sup>2341S</sup>Psalms 104:15 <sup>2301E</sup>Isaiah 3:1). I will send a famine.

**14. *Noah, Daniel ... Job*** — specified in particular as having been saved from overwhelming calamities for their personal righteousness. Noah had the members of his family alone given to him, amidst the general wreck. Daniel saved from the fury of the king of Babylon the three youths (<sup>2307E</sup>Daniel 2:17,18,48,49). Though his *prophecies* mostly were later than those of Ezekiel, his *fame for piety and wisdom* was already established, and the events recorded in <sup>2300E</sup>Daniel 1:1-2:49 had transpired. The Jews would naturally, in their fallen condition, pride themselves on one who reflected such glory on his nation at the heathen capital, and would build vain hopes (here set aside) on his influence in averting ruin from them. Thus the objection to the authenticity of Daniel from this passage vanishes. “Job” forms the climax (and is therefore put out of chronological order), having not even been left a son or a daughter, and having had himself to pass through an ordeal of suffering before his final deliverance, and therefore forming the most simple instance of the righteousness of God, which would save the righteous themselves alone in the nation, and that after an ordeal of suffering, but not spare even a son or daughter for their sake (<sup>2344E</sup>Ezekiel 14:16,18,20; compare <sup>2307E</sup>Jeremiah 7:16 11:14 14:11).

***deliver ... souls by ... righteousness*** — (<sup>2300E</sup>Proverbs 11:4); not the righteousness of works, but that of grace, a truth less clearly understood under the law (<sup>2300B</sup>Romans 4:3).

**15-21.** The argument is cumulative. He first puts the case of the land sinning so as to fall under the judgment of a famine (<sup>2341E</sup>Ezekiel 14:13); then (<sup>2341E</sup>Ezekiel 14:15) “noisome beasts” (<sup>2302E</sup>Leviticus 26:22); then “the sword”; then, worst of all, “pestilence.” The three most righteous of men should deliver only themselves in these several four cases. In <sup>2341E</sup>Ezekiel 14:21 he concentrates the whole in one mass of condemnation. If Noah, Daniel, Job, could not deliver the land, when deserving only *one* judgment, “how much more” when all *four* judgments combined are justly to visit the land for sin, shall these three righteous men not deliver it.

**19. *in blood*** — not literally. In *Hebrew*, “blood” expresses every premature kind of death.

**21. *How much more*** — literally, “Surely shall it be so now, when I send,” etc. If none could avert *the one only* judgment incurred, *surely now*, when all four are incurred by sin, *much more* impossible it will be to deliver the land.

**22. *Yet ... a remnant*** — not of righteous persons, but some of the guilty who should “come forth” from the destruction of Jerusalem to Babylon, to lead a, life of hopeless exile there. The reference here is to judgment, not mercy, as <sup><31423</sup>Ezekiel 14:23 shows.

***ye shall see their ... doings; and ... be comforted*** — Ye, the exiles at the Chebar, who now murmur at God’s judgment about to be inflicted on Jerusalem as harsh, when ye shall see the wicked “ways” and character of the escaped remnant, shall acknowledge that both Jerusalem and its inhabitants deserved their fate; his recognition of the righteousness of the judgment will reconcile you to it, and so ye shall be “comforted” under it [CALVIN]. Then would follow mercy to the elect remnant, though *that* is not referred to here, but in <sup><31443</sup>Ezekiel 20:43.

**23. *they shall comfort you*** — not in words, but by your recognizing in their manifest guilt, that God had not been unjustly severe to them and the city.

# CHAPTER 15

## EZEKIEL 15:1-8.

### THE WORTHLESSNESS OF THE VINE AS WOOD ESPECIALLY WHEN BURNT, IS THE IMAGE OF THE WORTHLESSNESS AND GUILT OF THE JEWS, WHO SHALL PASS FROM ONE FIRE TO ANOTHER.

This chapter represents, in the way of a brief introduction, what the sixteenth chapter details minutely.

**2, 3.** What has the *vine-wood* to make it pre-eminent above other forest-*wood*? Nothing. Nay, the reverse. Other trees yield useful timber, but vine-wood is soft, brittle, crooked, and seldom large; not so much as a “pin” (the large wooden peg used inside houses in the East to hang household articles on, <sup><3223></sup>Isaiah 22:23-25) can be made of it. Its sole excellency is that it should bear fruit; when it does not bear fruit, it is not only not better, but inferior to other trees: so if God’s people lose their distinctive excellency by not bearing fruits of righteousness, they are more unprofitable than the worldly (<sup><6323></sup>Deuteronomy 32:32), for they are the vine; the sole end of their being is to bear fruit to His glory (<sup><808></sup>Psalm 80:8,9 <sup><351></sup>Isaiah 5:1, etc. <sup><4021></sup>Jeremiah 2:21 <sup><3011></sup>Hosea 10:1 <sup><41233></sup>Matthew 21:33). In all respects, except in their being planted by God, the Jews were inferior to other nations, as Egypt, Babylon, etc., for example, in antiquity, extent of territory, resources, military power, attainments in arts and sciences.

***or than a branch*** — rather, in apposition with “the vine tree.” Omit “*or than.*” What superiority has the vine *if it be but a branch among the trees of the forest*, that is, if, as having no fruit, it lies cut down among other woods of trees?

**4. *cast into ... fire*** — (<sup><816></sup>John 15:6).

***both the ends*** — the north kingdom having been already overturned by Assyria under Tiglath-pileser; the south being pressed on by Egypt (<sup><12392></sup>Kings 23:29-35).

***midst of it is burned*** — rather, “is on flame”; namely, Jerusalem, which had now caught the flame by the attack of Nebuchadnezzar.

*Is it meet for any work* — “it,” that is, the scorched part still remaining.

5. If useless before, much more so when almost wholly burnt.

6. So will I give the inhabitants of Jerusalem, as being utterly unprofitable (<sup><4233></sup>Matthew 21:33-41 25:30 <sup><4112></sup>Mark 11:12-14 <sup><236></sup>Luke 13:6-9) in answering God’s design that they should be witnesses for Jehovah before the heathen (<sup><180></sup>Matthew 3:10 5:13).

7. *And I will set my face against them* — (See on <sup><870></sup>Leviticus 17:10).

*from one fire ... another* — (Compare <sup><2348></sup>Isaiah 24:18). “Fire” means here every kind of calamity (<sup><362></sup>Psalms 66:12). The Jewish fugitives shall escape from the ruin of Jerusalem, only to fall into some other calamity.

8. *trespass* — rather, “they have perversely fallen into perverse rebellion.” The Jews were not merely *sinner*s as the other nations, but *revolters* and *apostates*. It is one thing to neglect what we know not, but quite another thing to despise what we profess to worship [JEROME], as the Jews did towards God and the law.

# CHAPTER 16

## EZEKIEL 16:1-63.

### DETAILED APPLICATION OF THE PARABOLICAL DELINEATION OF THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER TO JERUSALEM PERSONIFIED AS A DAUGHTER.

- (1) Taken up by God's gratuitous favor from infancy (<sup>2301</sup>Ezekiel 16:1-7);
- (2) and, when grown up, joined to Him in spiritual marriage (<sup>2308</sup>Ezekiel 16:8-14);
- (3) her unfaithfulness, her sin (<sup>2305</sup>Ezekiel 16:15-34);
- (4) the judgment (<sup>2308</sup>Ezekiel 16:35-52);
- (5) her unlooked-for restoration (<sup>2303</sup>Ezekiel 16:53 to the close).

**2. *cause Jerusalem to know*** — Men often are so blind as not to perceive their guilt which is patent to all. "Jerusalem" represents the whole kingdom of Judah.

**3. *birth ... nativity*** — thy origin and birth; literally, "thy diggings" (compare <sup>2501</sup>Isaiah 51:1) "and thy bringings forth."

***of ... Canaan*** — in which Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob sojourned before going to Egypt, and from which thou didst derive far more of thy innate characteristics than from the virtues of those thy progenitors (<sup>2603</sup>Ezekiel 21:30).

***an Amorite ... an Hittite*** — These, being the most powerful tribes, stand for the whole of the Canaanite nations (compare <sup>0606</sup>Joshua 1:4 <sup>3019</sup>Amos 2:9), which were so abominably corrupt as to have been doomed to utter extermination by God (<sup>0154</sup>Leviticus 18:24,25,28 <sup>0582</sup>Deuteronomy 18:12). Translate rather, "*the Amorite ... the Canaanite,*" that is, these two tribes personified; their wicked characteristics, respectively, were concentrated in the parentage of Israel (<sup>0156</sup>Genesis 15:16). "The Hittite" is made their "mother"; alluding to Esau's wives, daughters of *Heth*, whose ways vexed Rebekah (<sup>0234</sup>Genesis 26:34,35 27:46), but pleased the degenerate

descendants of Jacob, so that these are called, in respect of morals, children of the Hittite (compare <sup><2365></sup>Ezekiel 16:45).

4. Israel's helplessness in her first struggling into national existence, under the image of an infant (<sup><3088></sup>Hosea 2:3) cast forth without receiving the commonest acts of parental regard. Its very life was a miracle (<sup><0015></sup>Exodus 1:15-22).

**navel ... not cut** — Without proper attention to the navel cord, the infant just born is liable to die.

**neither ... washed in water to supple thee** — that is, to make the skin soft. Rather, “for purification”; from an *Arabic* root [MAURER]. GESENIUS translates as the *Margin*, “that thou mightest (be presented to thy parents to) be *looked upon*,” as is customary on the birth of a child.

**salted** — Anciently they rubbed infants with salt to make the skin firm.

5. **cast ... in ... open field** — The exposure of infants was common in ancient times.

**to the loathing of thy person** — referring to the unsightly aspect of the exposed infant. FAIRBAIRN translates, “With contempt (or disdainful indifference) of thy *life*.”

6. **when I passed by** — as if a traveler.

**polluted in ... blood** — but PISCATOR, “ready to be trodden on.”

**I said** — In contrast to Israel's helplessness stands God's omnipotent word of grace which bids the outcast little one “live.”

**in thy blood** — Though thou wast foul with blood, I said, “Live” [GROTIUS]. “Live in thy blood,” that is, Live, but live a life exposed to many deaths, as was the case in the beginnings of Israel's national existence, in order to magnify the grace of God [CALVIN]. The former view is preferable. Spiritually, till the sinner is made sensible of his abject helplessness, he will not appreciate the provisions of God's grace.

7. **caused ... to multiply** — literally, “I ... made thee a myriad.”

**bud of ... field** — the produce of the field. In two hundred fifty years they increased from seventy-five persons to eight hundred thousand (<sup><4074></sup>Acts 7:14) [CALVIN]. But see <sup><0125></sup>Exodus 12:37,38.

**excellent ornaments** — literally, “ornament of ornaments.”

**naked ... bare** — (<sup><2018></sup>Hosea 2:3). Literally, “nakedness ... bareness” itself; more emphatic.

**8. thy time of love** — literally, “loves” (compare <sup><2101></sup>Song of Solomon 2:10-13). Thou wast of marriageable age, but none was willing to marry thee, naked as thou wast. I then regarded thee with a look of grace when the full time of thy deliverance was come (<sup><0153></sup>Genesis 15:13,14 <sup><4006></sup>Acts 7:6,7). It is not she that makes the advance to God, but God to her; she has nothing to entitle her to such notice, yet He regards her not with mere benevolence, but with *love*, such as one cherishes to the person of his wife (So 1:3-6 <sup><2618></sup>Jeremiah 31:3 Malachi 1:2).

**spread my skirt over thee** — the mode of espousals (<sup><0809></sup>Ruth 3:9). I betrothed thee (<sup><0657></sup>Deuteronomy 4:37 10:15 <sup><2100></sup>Hosea 11:1). The cloak is often used as a bed coverlet in the East. God explains what He means, “I entered into ... covenant with thee,” that is, at Sinai. So Israel became “the wife of God’s covenant” (<sup><2545></sup>Isaiah 54:5 <sup><2184></sup>Jeremiah 3:14 <sup><2129></sup>Hosea 2:19,20 <sup><3124></sup>Malachi 2:14).

**thou ... mine** — (<sup><0915></sup>Exodus 19:5 <sup><2102></sup>Jeremiah 2:2).

**9. washed I thee** — as brides used to pass through a preparatory purification (<sup><1012></sup>Esther 2:12). So Israel, before the giving of the law at Sinai (<sup><0294></sup>Exodus 19:14); “Moses sanctified the people, and they washed their clothes.” So believers (<sup><4011></sup>1 Corinthians 6:11).

**oil** — emblem of the Levitical priesthood, the type of Messiah (<sup><0957></sup>Psalms 45:7).

**10.** <sup><0513></sup>Psalms 45:13,14, similarly describes the Church (Israel, the appointed mother of Christendom) adorned as a bride (so <sup><2310></sup>Isaiah 61:10). It is Messiah who provides the wedding garment (<sup><6188></sup>Revelation 3:18 19:8).

**badgers’ skin** — *tahash*; others translate, “seal skins.” They formed the over-covering of the tabernacle, which was, as it were, the nuptial tent of God and Israel (<sup><0234></sup>Exodus 26:14), and the material of the shoes worn by the Hebrews on festival days. (See on <sup><0235></sup>Exodus 25:5).

**fine linen** — used by the priests (<sup><0800></sup>Leviticus 6:10); emblem of purity.

**11.** The marriage gifts to Rebekah (<sup><0222></sup>Genesis 24:22,47).

**12. jewel on thy forehead** — rather, “a ring in thy nose” (<sup><2121></sup>Isaiah 3:21).

**a crown** — at once the badge of a bride, and of her being made a queen, as being consort of the King; the very name *Israel* meaning “a prince of God.” So they are called “a kingdom of priests” (<sup><0216></sup>Exodus 19:6; compare

<sup><6006></sup>Revelation 1:6). Though the external blessings bestowed on Israel were great, yet not these, but the internal and spiritual, form the main reference in the kingly marriage to which Israel was advanced.

**13. flour ... honey ... oil** — These three mixed form the sweetest cakes; not dry bread and leeks as in Egypt. From raiment He passes to food (<sup><6013></sup>Deuteronomy 32:13,14).

**exceeding beautiful** — <sup><6014></sup>Psalms 48:2, the city; also, <sup><6015></sup>Psalms 29:2, the temple.

**prosper into a kingdom** — exercising empire over surrounding nations.

**14. thy renown ... among ... heathen** — The theocracy reached its highest point under Solomon, when distant potentates heard of his “fame” (<sup><6016></sup>1 Kings 10:1, etc.), for example, the queen of Sheba, Hiram, etc. (<sup><6017></sup>Lamentations 2:15).

**my comeliness** — It was not thine own, but imparted by Me.

**15.** Instead of attributing the glory of her privileges and gifts to God, Israel prided herself on them as her own (<sup><6018></sup>Deuteronomy 32:15 <sup><6019></sup>Jeremiah 7:4 <sup><6020></sup>Micah 3:11), and then wantonly devoted them to her idols (<sup><6021></sup>Hosea 2:8; compare <sup><6022></sup>Luke 15:12,13).

**playedst ... harlot because of thy renown** — “didst play the wanton upon thy name” [FAIRBAIRN], namely, by allowing thy renown to lead thee into idolatry and leagues with idolaters (<sup><6023></sup>Isaiah 1:21 57:8 <sup><6024></sup>Jeremiah 3:2,6). *English Version* is better, “because of thy renown,” that is, relying on it; answering to “thou didst *trust* in thine own beauty.”

**his it was** — Thy beauty was yielded up to every passer-by Israel’s zest for the worship of foul idols was but an anxiety to have the approbation of heaven for their carnal lusts, of which the idols were the personification; hence, too, their tendency to wander from Jehovah, who was a restraint on corrupt nature.

**16. deckedst ... with divers colors** — or, “didst make ... of divers colors” [FAIRBAIRN]; the metaphor and the literal are here mixed. The high places whereon they sacrificed to Astarte are here compared to *tents of divers colors*, which an impudent harlot would spread to show her house was open to all [CALVIN]. Compare as to “woven hangings for Astarte” (the right translation for “grove”) <sup><6025></sup>2 Kings 23:7.

*the like ... shall not come, neither shall ... be* — rather, “have not come, nor shall be.” These thy doings are unparalleled in the past, and shall be so in the future.

**17. *my gold ... my silver*** — (Haggai 2:8).

*images of men* — rather, “of the *phallus*,” the Hindu *lingam*, or *membrum virile* [HAVERNICK], deified as the emblem of fecundity; man making his lust his god. *English Version*, however, is appropriate; Israel being represented as a *woman* playing the harlot with “*male images*,” that is, images of male gods, as distinguished from female deities.

**18. *tookest thy ... garments ... coveredst them*** — that is, the idols, as if an adulteress were to cover her paramours with garments which she had received from the liberality of her husband.

*my oil* — the holy anointing oil sacred to God (<sup><BR></sup>Exodus 30:22-25). Also that used in sacrifices (<sup><BR></sup>Leviticus 2:1,2).

**19. *My meat ... I gave*** — (<sup><BR></sup>Hosea 2:8).

*set it before them* — as a *minchah* or “meat offering” (<sup><BR></sup>Leviticus 2:1).

*a sweet savor* — literally “a savor of rest,” that is, whereby they might be propitiated, and be at peace (“rest”) with you; how ridiculous to seek to propitiate gods of wood!

*thus it was* — The fact cannot be denied, for I saw it, and say it was so, saith Jehovah.

**20, 21. *sons and ... daughters borne unto me*** — Though “thy children,” yet they belong “unto Me,” rather than to thee, for they were born under the immutable covenant with Israel, which even Israel’s sin could not set aside, and they have received the sign of adoption as Mine, namely, circumcision. This aggravates the guilt of sacrificing them to Molech.

*to be devoured* — not merely to *pass through* the fire, as sometimes children were made to do (<sup><BR></sup>Leviticus 18:21) *without hurt*, but to pass through so as to be made *the food* of the flame in honor of idols (see on <sup><BR></sup>Isaiah 57:5; <sup><BR></sup>Jeremiah 7:31; <sup><BR></sup>Jeremiah 19:5; <sup><BR></sup>Jeremiah 32:35).

***Is this of thy whoredoms a small matter, that thou hast slain my children*** — rather, “Were thy whoredoms a small matter (that is, not enough, but) that thou hast slain (that is, must also slay),” etc. As if thy unchastity was not enough, thou hast added this unnatural and sacrilegious cruelty (<sup><BR></sup>Micah 6:7).

**22. *not remembered ... youth*** — Forgetfulness of God's love is the source of all sins. Israel forgot her deliverance by God in the infancy of her national life. See <sup><3168></sup>Ezekiel 16:43, to which <sup><3169></sup>Ezekiel 16:60 forms a lovely contrast (<sup><3170></sup>Jeremiah 2:2 <sup><3171></sup>Hosea 11:1).

**23. *woe, woe unto thee***, etc. — This parenthetical exclamation has an awful effect coming like a lightning flash of judgment amidst the black clouds of Israel's guilt.

**24. *eminent place*** — rather, “a fornication-chamber,” often connected with the impure rites of idolatry; spiritual fornication, on “an eminent place,” answering to “fornication-chamber,” is mainly meant, with an allusion also to the literal fornication associated with it (<sup><3172></sup>Jeremiah 2:20 3:2).

**25. *at every head of the way*** — in the most frequented places (<sup><3173></sup>Proverbs 9:14).

***thy beauty ... abhorred, ... opened ... feet to every one*** — The wanton advances were all on Israel's part; the idolatrous nations yielded to her nothing in return. She had yielded so much that, like a worn-out prostitute, her tempters became weary of her. When the Church lowers her testimony for God to the carnal tastes of the world, with a view to conciliation, she loses everything and gains nothing.

**26. *fornication with ... Egyptians*** — alliances with Egypt, cemented by sharing their idolatries.

***great of flesh*** — of powerful virile parts; figuratively for the gross and lustful religion of Egypt (for example, Isis, etc.), which alone could satisfy the abominable lust of Israel (<sup><3174></sup>Ezekiel 20:7,8 23:19,20,21).

***to provoke me*** — wantonly and purposely.

**27.** The consequent judgments, which, however, proved of no avail in reforming the people (<sup><3175></sup>Isaiah 9:13 <sup><3176></sup>Jeremiah 5:3).

***delivered thee unto ... Philistines*** — (<sup><3177></sup>2 Kings 16:6 <sup><3178></sup>2 Chronicles 28:18,19).

***ashamed of thy lewd way*** — The Philistines were less wanton in idolatry, in that they did not, like Israel, adopt the idols of every foreign country but were content with their own (<sup><3179></sup>Ezekiel 16:57 <sup><3180></sup>Jeremiah 2:11).

**28. *unsatiable*** — Not satisfied with whoredoms with neighbors, thou hast gone off to the distant Assyrians, that is, hast sought a league with them, and with it adopted their idolatries.

**29. *multiplied ... fornication in ... Canaan unto Chaldea*** — Thou hast multiplied thy idolatries “in Canaan” by sending “unto Chaldea” to borrow from thence the Chaldean rites, to add to the abominations already practiced “in Canaan,” before the carrying away of Jehoiachin to Chaldea. The name “Canaan” is used to imply that they had made Judea as much the scene of abominations as it was in the days of the corrupt Canaanites. The land had become utterly Canaanitish (<sup>23:14</sup>Ezekiel 23:14, etc.).

**30. *weak ... heart*** — Sin weakens the *intellect* (“heart”) as, on the contrary, “the way of the Lord is strength to the upright” (<sup>10:29</sup>Proverbs 10:29).

**31.** Repetition of <sup>16:24</sup>Ezekiel 16:24.

***not ... as ... harlot ... thou scornest hire*** — Unlike an ordinary harlot thou dost prostitute thy person gratis, merely to satisfy thy lust. JEROME translates, “Thou hast not been as a harlot in scorning (that is, who ordinarily scorns) a hire offered,” *in order to get a larger one*: nay, thou hast offered hire thyself to thy lovers (<sup>16:33,34</sup>Ezekiel 16:33,34). But these verses show *English Version* to be preferable, for they state that Israel prostituted herself, not merely for *any small reward without demanding more*, but for “no reward.”

**32. *instead of her husband*** — referring to <sup>5:19,20,29</sup>Numbers 5:19,20,29. FAIRBAIRN translates, “whilst under her husband.”

**33, 34.** Israel hired her paramours, instead of being, like other harlots, hired by them; she also followed them without their following her.

**35.** Here begins the threat of wrath to be poured out on her.

**36. *filthiness*** — literally, “brass”; metaphor for *the lowest part of the person* [CALVIN]. *English Version* is better: thy filthy lewdness is poured out without restraint (compare <sup>13:27</sup>Jeremiah 13:27). As silver is an emblem of purity, *brass* typifies “filthiness,” because it easily contracts rust. HENDERSON explains it, “Because thy *money* was lavished on thy lovers” (<sup>16:31,33,34</sup>Ezekiel 16:31,33,34).

***blood of thy children*** — (<sup>16:20</sup>Ezekiel 16:20 <sup>2:34</sup>Jeremiah 2:34).

**37. *thy lovers*** — the Chaldeans and the Assyrians. The law of retribution is the more signally exemplified by God employing, as His instruments of judgment on Israel, those very nations whose alliance and idols Israel had so eagerly sought, besides giving her up to those who had been always her enemies. “God will make him, who leaves God for the world, disgraced even in the eyes of the world, and indeed the more so the nearer he

formerly stood to Himself” [HENGSTENBERG], (<sup>2347B</sup>Isaiah 47:3 <sup>2443B</sup>Jeremiah 13:26 <sup>2412B</sup>Hosea 2:12 Na 3:5).

**all ... thou hast hated** — the Edomites and Philistines; also Moab and Ammon especially (<sup>624B</sup>Deuteronomy 23:3).

**I ... will discover thy nakedness** — punishment in kind, as she had “discovered her nakedness through whoredoms” (<sup>2466B</sup>Ezekiel 16:36); the sin and its penalty corresponded. I will expose thee to public infamy.

**38-40. judge thee, as women that break wedlock** — (<sup>630B</sup>Leviticus 20:10; compare <sup>2347B</sup>Ezekiel 16:2). In the case of *individual* adulteresses, *stoning* was the penalty (<sup>640B</sup>John 8:4,5). In the case of *communities*, the *sword*. Also apostasy (<sup>653B</sup>Deuteronomy 13:10) and sacrificing children to Molech (<sup>640B</sup>Leviticus 20:1-5) incurred stoning. Thus the penalty was doubly due to Israel; so the other which was decreed against an apostate city (<sup>653B</sup>Deuteronomy 13:15,16) is added, “they shall stone thee with stones and thrust thee through with ... swords.” The Chaldeans hurled *stones* on Jerusalem at the siege and slew with the *sword* on its capture.

**shed blood ... judged** — (<sup>600B</sup>Genesis 9:6).

**jealousy** — image taken from the fury of a husband in jealousy shedding the blood of an unfaithful wife, such as Israel had been towards God, her husband spiritually. Literally, “I will *make thee* (to become) *blood* of fury and jealousy.”

**39. thine eminent place** — literally, “fornication-chamber” (see on <sup>2466B</sup>Ezekiel 16:24), the temple which Israel had converted into a place of spiritual fornication with idols, to please the Chaldeans (<sup>2324B</sup>Ezekiel 23:14-17).

**strip thee of ... clothes** — (<sup>2324B</sup>Ezekiel 23:26 <sup>2412B</sup>Hosea 2:3). They shall *dismantle* thy city of its walls.

**fair jewels** — literally, “vessels of thy fairness” or beauty; the vessels of the temple [GROTIUS]. All the gifts wherewith God hath adorned thee [CALVIN].

**40.** (<sup>2324B</sup>Ezekiel 23:10,47). Compare as to the destruction under Titus, <sup>2493B</sup>Luke 19:43,44.

**41.** The result of the awful judgment shall be, when divine vengeance has run its course, it shall cease.

**burn** — (<sup>613B</sup>Deuteronomy 13:16 <sup>4230B</sup>2 Kings 25:9).

**women** — the surrounding Gentile nations to whom thou shalt be an object of mocking (<sup>49707</sup>Psalm 137:7).

**I will cause thee to cease ... harlot** — (<sup>26227</sup>Ezekiel 23:27). Thou shalt *no longer be able* to play the harlot through *My judgments*.

**thou ... shall give ... no hire ... any more** — Thou shalt have none to give.

**42. my fury ... rest** — when My justice has exacted the full penalty commensurate with thy awful guilt (see on <sup>21613</sup>Ezekiel 5:13). It is not a mitigation of the penalty that is here foretold, but such an utter destruction of *all* the guilty that there shall be no need of further punishment [CALVIN].

**43.** (<sup>23622</sup>Ezekiel 16:22 <sup>49782</sup>Psalm 78:42). In gratitude for God's favors to her in her early history.

**fretted me** — (<sup>25301</sup>Isaiah 63:10 <sup>40433</sup>Ephesians 4:30).

**thou shalt not commit this lewdness above all thine abominations** — that is, this the wickedness (compare Zechariah 5:8), peculiarly hateful to God, namely, spiritual unchastity or idolatry, over and “above” (that is, besides) all thine other abominations. I will put it out of thy power to commit it by cutting thee off. FAIRBAIRN translates, “I will not do what is scandalous (namely, encouraging thee in thy sin by letting it pass with impunity) upon all thine abominations”; referring to <sup>48929</sup>Leviticus 19:29, the conduct of a father who encouraged his daughter in harlotry. *English Version* is much better.

**44. As ... mother ... her daughter** — “*Is,*” and “*so is,*” are not in the original; the ellipsis gives the proverb (but two words in the *Hebrew*) epigrammatic brevity. Jerusalem proved herself a true daughter of the Hittite mother in sin (<sup>23613</sup>Ezekiel 16:3).

**45. mother's ... that loatheth her husband** — that is, God (“haters of God,” <sup>48103</sup>Romans 1:30); therefore the knowledge of the true God had originally been in Canaan, handed down from Noah (hence we find Melchisedek, king of Salem, in Canaan, “priest of the most high God,” <sup>01448</sup>Genesis 14:18), but Canaan apostatized from it; this was what constituted the blackness of the Canaanites' guilt.

**loathed ... children** — whom she put to death in honor of Saturn; a practice common among the Phoenicians.

**sister of thy sisters** — Thou art akin in guilt to Samaria and Sodom, to which thou art akin by birth. Moab and Ammon, the incestuous children of Lot, nephew of Abraham, Israel's progenitor, had their origin from Sodom;

so Sodom might be called Judah's sister. Samaria, answering to the ten tribes of Israel, is, of course, sister to Judah.

**46. elder sister ... Samaria** — *older* than Sodom, to whom Judah was *less nearly related by kindred* than she was to Samaria. Sodom is therefore called her *younger* sister; Samaria, her “elder sister” [GROTIUS]. Samaria is called the “elder,” because *in a moral respect more nearly related* to Judah [FAIRBAIRN]. Samaria had made the calves at Daniel and Beth-el in imitation of the cherubim.

**her daughters** — the inferior towns subject to Samaria (compare <sup><0125></sup>Numbers 21:25, *Margin*).

**left** — The Orientals faced the east in marking the directions of the sky; thus the north was “left,” the south “right.”

**Sodom ... daughters** — Ammon and Moab, offshoots from Sodom; also the towns subject to it.

**47. their abominations** — Milcom and Chemosh, the “abominations of Ammon and Moab” (<sup><1116></sup>1 Kings 11:5,7).

**corrupted more than they** — So it is expressly recorded of Manasseh (<sup><1210></sup>2 Kings 21:9).

**48. Sodom** — (<sup><0124></sup>Matthew 11:24). Judah's guilt was not positively, but *relatively*, greater than Sodom's; because it was in the midst of such higher privileges, and such solemn warnings; *a fortiori*, the guilt of unbelievers in the midst of the highest of all lights, namely, the Gospel, is the greatest.

**49. pride** — inherited by Moab, her offspring (<sup><2316></sup>Isaiah 16:6 <sup><2435></sup>Jeremiah 48:26), and by Ammon (<sup><2404></sup>Jeremiah 49:4). God, the heart-searcher, here specifies as Sodom's sin, not merely her notorious lusts, but the secret spring of them, “pride” flowing from “fullness of bread,” caused by the fertility of the soil (<sup><0130></sup>Genesis 13:10), and producing “idleness.”

**abundance of idleness** — literally, “the secure carelessness of ease” or idleness.

**neither did she strengthen ... the poor** — Pride is always cruel; it arrogates to itself all things, and despises brethren, for whose needs it therefore has no feeling; as Moab had not for the outcast Jews (<sup><2313></sup>Isaiah 16:3,4 <sup><2427></sup>Jeremiah 48:27 <sup><0169></sup>Luke 16:19-21 <sup><0101></sup>James 5:1-5).

**50. haughty** — puffed up with prosperity.

**abomination before me** — “sinners *before the Lord*” (<sup>(-0133)</sup>Genesis 13:13); said of those whose sin is so heinous as to cry out to God for immediate judgments; presumptuous sins, daring God *to the face* (<sup>(-0182)</sup>Genesis 18:20 19:5).

**I took them away** — (<sup>(-0182)</sup>Genesis 19:24).

**as I saw good** — rather, “according to what I saw”; referring to <sup>(-0182)</sup>Genesis 18:21, where God says, “I will go down, and *see* whether they have done altogether *according* to the cry of it which is come unto Me.”

**51. Samaria** — the kingdom of the ten tribes of Israel less guilty than Judah; for Judah betrayed greater ingratitude, having greater privileges, namely, the temple, the priesthood, and the regular order of kings.

**justified thy sisters** — made them appear almost innocent by comparison with thy guilt (<sup>(-2481)</sup>Jeremiah 3:11 <sup>(-0124)</sup>Matthew 12:41,42).

**52. Thou ... which hast judged ... bear thine own** — (<sup>(-4001)</sup>Matthew 7:1,2 <sup>(-4810)</sup>Romans 2:1,17-23). Judah had judged Sodom (representing “the heathen nations”) and Samaria (Israel), saying they were justly punished, as if she herself was innocent (<sup>(-0212)</sup>Luke 13:2).

**thy shame** — ignominious punishment.

**53.** Here follows a promise of restoration. Even the sore chastisements coming on Judah would fail to reform its people; God’s returning goodness alone would effect this, to show how entirely of grace was to be their restoration. The restoration of her erring sisters is mentioned before hers, even as their punishment preceded her punishment; so all self-boasting is excluded [FAIRBAIRN]. “Ye shall, indeed, at some time or other return, but Moab and Ammon shall return with you, and some of the ten tribes” [GROTIUS].

**bring again ... captivity** — that is, change the affliction into prosperity (so <sup>(-4820)</sup>Job 42:10). Sodom itself was not so restored (<sup>(-2416)</sup>Jeremiah 20:16), but Ammon and Moab (her representatives, as sprung from Lot who dwelt in Sodom) were (<sup>(-2487)</sup>Jeremiah 48:47 49:6); probably most of the ten tribes and the adjoining nations, Ammon and Moab, etc., were in part restored under Cyrus; but the full realization of the restoration is yet future; *the heathen nations* to be brought to Christ being typified by “Sodom,” whose sins they now reproduce (<sup>(-4822)</sup>Deuteronomy 32:32).

**captivity of thy captives** — literally, “of thy captivities.” However, the gracious promise rather begins with the “nevertheless” (<sup>(-2360)</sup>Ezekiel 16:60), not here; for <sup>(-2469)</sup>Ezekiel 16:59 is a threat, not a promise. The sense here thus

is, Thou shalt be restored when Sodom and Samaria are, but not till then (<sup>2365</sup>Ezekiel 16:55), that is, *never*. This applies to the guilty who should be utterly destroyed (<sup>2364</sup>Ezekiel 16:41,42); but it does not contradict the subsequent promise of restoration to their posterity (<sup>4042</sup>Numbers 14:29-33), and to the elect remnant of grace [CALVIN].

**54. *bear thine own shame*** — by being put on a level with those whom thou hast so much despised.

***thou art a comfort unto them*** — since they see thee as miserable as themselves. It is a kind of melancholy “comfort” to those chastised to see others as sorely punished as themselves (<sup>2342</sup>Ezekiel 14:22,23).

**55.** (See on <sup>2365</sup>Ezekiel 16:53).

**56. *Sodom was not mentioned*** — literally, “was not for a report.” Thou didst not deign to mention her name as if her case could possibly apply as a warning to thee, but it did apply (<sup>6002</sup>2 Peter 2:6).

**57. *Before thy wickedness was discovered*** — manifested to all, namely, by the punishment inflicted on thee.

***thy reproach of ... Syria and ... Philistines*** — the indignity and injuries done thee by Syria and the Philistines (<sup>1262</sup>2 Kings 16:5 <sup>1438</sup>2 Chronicles 28:18 <sup>2391</sup>Isaiah 9:11,12).

**58. *borne thy lewdness*** — that is, the punishment of it (<sup>2339</sup>Ezekiel 23:49). I do not treat thee with excessive rigor. Thy sin and punishment are exactly commensurate.

**59. *the oath*** — the covenant between God and Israel (<sup>1592</sup>Deuteronomy 29:12,14). As thou hast despised it, so will I despise thee. No covenant is one-sided; where Israel broke faith, God’s promise of favor ceased.

**60.** The promise here bursts forth unexpectedly like the sun from the dark clouds. With all her forgetfulness of God, God still remembers her; showing that her redemption is altogether of grace. Contrast “I will remember,” with “thou hast not remembered” (<sup>2362</sup>Ezekiel 16:22,43); also “My covenant,” with “Thy covenant” (<sup>2361</sup>Ezekiel 16:61 <sup>1946</sup>Psalms 106:45); then the effect produced on her is (<sup>2363</sup>Ezekiel 16:63) “that thou mayest remember.” God’s promise was one of *promise* and of *grace*. The law, *in its letter*, was *Israel’s* (thy) *covenant*, and in this restricted view was long subsequent (<sup>4887</sup>Galatians 3:17). Israel interpreted it as a covenant of works, which she while boasting of, failed to fulfill, and so fell under its condemnation (<sup>4002</sup>2 Corinthians 3:3,6). The law, *in its spirit*, contains the germ of the Gospel; the New Testament is the full development of the Old,

the husk of the outer form being laid aside when the inner spirit was fulfilled in Messiah. God's covenant with Israel, in the person of Abraham, was the reason why, notwithstanding all her guilt, mercy was, and is, in store for her. Therefore the heathen or Gentile nations must come to her for blessings, not she to them.

**everlasting covenant** — (<sup>3576</sup>Ezekiel 37:26 <sup>4235</sup>2 Samuel 23:5 <sup>2819</sup>Isaiah 55:3). The temporary forms of the law were to be laid aside, that in its permanent and “everlasting” spirit it might be established (<sup>2631</sup>Jeremiah 31:31-37 32:40 50:4,5 <sup>3888</sup>Hebrews 8:8-13).

**61. thou shalt remember** — It is God who first remembers her before she remembers Him and her own ways before Him (<sup>2360</sup>Ezekiel 16:60 <sup>3748</sup>Ezekiel 20:43 36:31).

**ashamed** — the fruit of repentance (<sup>4702</sup>2 Corinthians 7:10,11). None please God unless those who displease themselves; a foretaste of the Gospel (<sup>2889</sup>Luke 18:9-14).

**I will give them unto thee for daughters** — (<sup>2541</sup>Isaiah 54:1 60:3,4 <sup>4023</sup>Galatians 4:26, etc.). All the heathen nations, not merely Sodom and Samaria, are meant by “thy sisters, elder and younger.” In Jerusalem first, *individual* believers were gathered into the elect Church. From Jerusalem the Gospel went forth to gather in *individuals* of the Gentiles; and Judah with Jerusalem shall also be the first *nation* which, as such, shall be converted to Christ; and to her the other *nations* shall attach themselves as believers in Messiah, Jerusalem's King (<sup>3802</sup>Psalms 110:2 <sup>2302</sup>Isaiah 2:2,3). “The king's daughter” in <sup>3612</sup>Psalms 45:12-14 is Judah; her “companions,” as “the daughter of Tyre,” are the nations given to her as converts, here called “daughters.”

**not by thy covenant** — This does not set aside the Old Testament in its spirit, but in its mere letter on which the Jews had rested, while they broke it: the latter (“thy covenant”) was to give place to *God's* covenant of grace and promise in Christ who “fulfilled” the law. God means, “not that thou on thy part hast stood to the covenant, but that ‘I am the Lord, I change not’ (Malachi 3:6) from My original love to thee in thy youth” (see <sup>4188</sup>Romans 3:3).

**62.** (<sup>3129</sup>Hosea 2:19,20).

**thou shalt know that I am the Lord** — not, as elsewhere, by the judgments falling on thee, but by My so marvellously restoring thee through grace.

**63. *never open thy mouth*** — in vindication, or even palliation, of thyself, or expostulation with God for His dealings ( <4159>Romans 3:19), when thou seest thine own exceeding unworthiness, and My superabounding grace which has so wonderfully overcome with love thy sin ( <4160>Romans 5:20). “If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged” ( <4131>1 Corinthians 11:31).

***all that thou hast done*** — enhancing the grace of God which has pardoned so many and so great sins. Nothing so melts into love and humility as the sense of the riches of God’s pardoning grace ( <4147>Luke 7:47).

# CHAPTER 17

## EZEKIEL 17:1-24.

**PARABLE OF THE TWO GREAT EAGLES, AND THE CROPPING OF THE CEDAR OF LEBANON. JUDAH IS TO BE JUDGED FOR REVOLTING FROM BABYLON, WHICH HAD SET UP ZEDEKIAH INSTEAD OF JEHOIACHIN, TO EGYPT; GOD HIMSELF, AS THE RIVAL OF THE BABYLONIAN KING, IS TO PLANT THE GOSPEL CEDAR OF MESSIAH.**

The date of the prophecy is between the sixth month of Zedekiah's sixth year of reign and the fifth month of the seventh year after the carrying away of Jehoiachin, that is, five years before the destruction of Jerusalem [HENDERSON].

**2. riddle** — a continued allegory, expressed enigmatically, requiring more than common acumen and serious thought. The *Hebrew* is derived from a root, “sharp,” that is, calculated to stimulate attention and whet the intellect. Distinct from “fable,” in that it teaches not fiction, but fact. Not like the ordinary riddle, designed to puzzle, but to instruct. The “riddle” is here identical with the “parable,” only that the former refers to the obscurity, the latter to the likeness of the figure to the thing compared.

**3. eagle** — the king of birds. The literal *Hebrew* is, “the great eagle.” The symbol of the Assyrian supreme god, *Nisroch*; so applied to “the great king” of Babylon, his vicegerent on earth (<sup>2480</sup>Jeremiah 48:40 49:22). His “wings” are his great forces. Such symbols were familiar to the Jews, who saw them portrayed on the great buildings of Babylon; such as are now seen in the Assyrian remains.

**long-winged** — implying the wide extent of his empire.

**full of feathers** — when they have been renewed after moulting; and so in the full freshness of renovated youth (<sup>2431B</sup>Psalm 103:5 <sup>2418B</sup>Isaiah 40:31). Answering to the many peoples which, as tributaries, constituted the strength of Babylon:

**divers colors** — the golden Eagle, marked with star-like spots, supposed to be the largest of eagles [BOCHART]. Answering to the variety of languages, habits, and costumes of the peoples subject to Babylon.

**came unto Lebanon** — continuing the metaphor: as the eagle frequents mountains, not cities. The temple at Jerusalem was called “Lebanon” by the Jews [EUSEBIUS], because its woodwork was wholly of cedars of Lebanon. “The mountain of the Lord’s house” (<sup><2310></sup>Isaiah 2:2). *Jerusalem*, however, is chiefly meant, the chief seat of civil honor, as Lebanon was of external elevation.

**took the highest branch** — King Jeconiah, then but eighteen years old, and many of the chiefs and people with him (<sup><1218></sup>2 Kings 24:8,12-16). The *Hebrew* for “highest branch” is, properly, the *fleece-like tuft* at the top of the tree. (So in <sup><3518></sup>Ezekiel 31:3-14). The cedar, as a tall tree, is the symbol of highest elevation (compare <sup><2010></sup>Daniel 4:10-12).

**4. land of traffic ... merchants** — Babylon (<sup><1215></sup>2 Kings 24:15,16), famous for its transport traffic on the Tigris and Euphrates. Also, by its connection with the Persian Gulf, it carried on much commerce with India.

**5. seed of the land** — not a foreign production, but one native in the region; a son of the soil, not a foreigner: Zedekiah, uncle of Jehoiachin, of David’s family.

**in a fruitful field** — literally, a “field of seed”; that is, fit for propagating and continuing the seed of the royal family.

**as a willow** — derived from a *Hebrew* root, “to overflow,” from its fondness for water (<sup><2340></sup>Isaiah 44:4). Judea was “a land of brooks of water and fountains” (<sup><1810></sup>Deuteronomy 8:7-9; compare <sup><1823></sup>John 3:23).

**6. vine of low stature** — not now, as before, a stately “cedar”; the kingdom of Judah was to be prosperous, but not elevated.

**branches turned toward him** — expressing the fealty of Zedekiah as a vassal looking up to Nebuchadnezzar, to whom Judah owed its peace and very existence as a separate state. The “branches” mean his sons and the other princes and nobles.

**The roots ... under him** — The stability of Judah depended on Babylon. The repetition “branches” and “springs” is in order to mark the ingratitude of Zedekiah, who, not content with moderate prosperity, revolted from him to whom he had sworn allegiance.

**7. another ... eagle** — the king of Egypt (<sup><2575></sup>Ezekiel 17:15). The “long-winged” of <sup><2578></sup>Ezekiel 17:3 is omitted, as Egypt had not such a wide empire and large armies as Babylon.

**vine ... bend ... roots towards him** — literally, “thirsted after him with its roots”; expressing the longings after Egypt in the Jewish heart. Zedekiah sought the alliance of Egypt, as though by it he could throw off his dependence on Babylon (<sup><1210></sup>2 Kings 24:7,20 <sup><14813></sup>2 Chronicles 36:13 <sup><3575></sup>Jeremiah 37:5,7).

**water it by ... furrows of ... plantation** — that is, *in* the garden beds (Judea) wherein (the vine) it was planted. Rather, “*by*” or “*out of* the furrows.” It refers to the waters of Egypt, the Nile being made to water the fields by means of small canals or “furrows”; these waters are the figure of the auxiliary forces wherewith Egypt tried to help Judah. See the same figure, <sup><2301></sup>Isaiah 8:7. But see on <sup><2370></sup>Ezekiel 17:10, “furrows *where it grew*.”

**8. It was planted in a good soil** — It was not want of the necessities of life, nor oppression on the part of Nebuchadnezzar, which caused Zedekiah to revolt: it was gratuitous ambition, pride, and ingratitude.

**9. Shall it prosper?** — Could it be that gratuitous treason should prosper? God will not allow it. “It,” that is, the vine.

**he ... pull up** — that is, the first eagle, or Nebuchadnezzar.

**in all ... leaves of her spring** — that is, all its springing (sprouting) leaves.

**without great power or many** — It shall not need all the forces of Babylon to destroy it; a small division of the army will suffice because God will deliver it into Nebuchadnezzar’s hand (<sup><2570></sup>Jeremiah 37:10).

**10. being planted** — that is, “*though* planted.”

**east wind** — The east wind was noxious to vegetation in Palestine; a fit emblem of Babylon, which came from the northeast.

**wither in ... furrows where it grew** — Zedekiah was taken at Jericho, on Jewish soil (<sup><2508></sup>Jeremiah 52:8). “It shall wither, although it has furrows from which it expects continual waterings” [CALVIN], (<sup><2692></sup>Ezekiel 19:12 <sup><2815></sup>Hosea 13:15).

**12. Know ye not** — He upbraided them with moral, leading to intellectual, stupidity.

**hath taken the king** — Jeconiah or Jehoiachin (<sup><12411></sup>2 Kings 24:11,12-16).

**13. the king’s seed** — Zedekiah, Jeconiah’s uncle.

**taken ... oath of him** — swearing fealty as a vassal to Nebuchadnezzar (<sup><14813></sup>2 Chronicles 36:13).

**also taken the mighty** — as hostages for the fulfillment of the covenant; whom, therefore, Zedekiah exposed to death by his treason.

**14. That the kingdom might be base** — that is, low as to national elevation by being Nebuchadnezzar's dependent; but, at the same time, safe and prosperous, if faithful to the "oath." Nebuchadnezzar dealt sincerely and openly in proposing conditions, and these moderate ones; therefore Zedekiah's treachery was the baser and was a counterpart to their treachery towards God.

**15. he rebelled** — God permitted this because of His wrath against Jerusalem (<sup><230></sup>2 Kings 24:20).

**horses** — in which Egypt abounded and which were forbidden to Israel to seek from Egypt, or indeed to "multiply" at all (<sup><4570></sup>Deuteronomy 17:16 <sup><2301></sup>Isaiah 31:1,3; compare <sup><2309></sup>Isaiah 36:9). DIODORUS SICULUS [1.45] says that the whole region from Thebes to Memphis was filled with royal stalls, so that twenty thousand chariots with two horses in each could be furnished for war.

**Shall he prosper?** — The third time this question is asked, with an indignant denial understood (<sup><2570></sup>Ezekiel 17:9,10). Even the heathen believed that breakers of an oath would not "escape" punishment.

**16. in the place where the king dwelleth** — righteous retribution. He brought on himself in the worst form the evil which, in a mild form, he had sought to deliver himself from by perjured treachery, namely, vassalage (<sup><2213></sup>Ezekiel 12:13 <sup><2415></sup>Jeremiah 32:5 34:3 52:11).

**17. Pharaoh** — Pharaoh-hophra (<sup><2470></sup>Jeremiah 37:7 44:30), the successor of Necho (<sup><1230></sup>2 Kings 23:29).

**Neither ... make for him** — literally, "effect (anything) with him," that is, be of any avail to Zedekiah. Pharaoh did not *act in concert with him*, for he was himself compelled to retire to Egypt.

**by casting up mounts**, etc. — So far from Pharaoh doing so for Jerusalem, this was what Nebuchadnezzar did *against* it (<sup><2570></sup>Jeremiah 52:4). CALVIN MAURER, etc., refer it to *Nebuchadnezzar*, "when Nebuchadnezzar shall cast up mounts."

**18. given his hand** — in ratification of the oath (<sup><1205></sup>2 Kings 10:15 <sup><4509></sup>Ezra 10:19), and also in token of subjection to Nebuchadnezzar (<sup><1324></sup>1 Chronicles 29:24, *Margin*; <sup><4108></sup>2 Chronicles 30:8, *Margin*; <sup><2166></sup>Lamentations 5:6).

**19. *mine oath*** — The “covenant” being sworn in God’s name was really *His* covenant; a new instance in relation to man of the treacherous spirit which had been so often betrayed in relation to God. God Himself must therefore avenge the violation of *His covenant* “on the head” of the perjurer (compare <sup><3076></sup>Psalm 7:16).

**20. *my net*** — (<sup><3123></sup>Ezekiel 12:13 32:3). God entraps him as he had tried to entrap others (<sup><3075></sup>Psalm 7:15). This was spoken at least upwards of three years before the fall of Jerusalem (compare <sup><3001></sup>Ezekiel 8:1, with <sup><3101></sup>Ezekiel 20:1).

**21. *all his fugitives*** — the soldiers that accompany him in his flight.

**22.** When the state of Israel shall seem past recovery, Messiah, Jehovah Himself, will unexpectedly appear on the scene as Redeemer of His people (<sup><2315></sup>Isaiah 63:5).

***I ... also*** — God opposes Himself to Nebuchadnezzar: “*He* took of the seed of the land and planted it (<sup><3073></sup>Ezekiel 17:3,5), so will *I*, but with better success than he had. The branch he plucked (Zedekiah) and planted, flourished but for a time, to perish at last; *I* will plant a scion of the same tree, the house of David, to whom the kingdom belongs by an everlasting covenant, and it shall be the shelter of the whole world, and shall be for ever.”

***branch*** — the peculiar title of Messiah (Zechariah 3:8 6:12 <sup><2310></sup>Isaiah 11:1 4:2 <sup><2325></sup>Jeremiah 23:5 33:15).

***a tender one*** — Zerubbabel never reigned as a universal (<sup><3072></sup>Ezekiel 17:23) king, nor could the great things mentioned here be said of him, except as a type of Messiah. Messiah alone can be meant: originally “a *tender* plant and root out of a dry ground” (<sup><2311></sup>Isaiah 53:2); the beginning of His kingdom being humble, His reputed parents of lowly rank, though King David’s lineal representatives; yet, even then, God here calls Him, in respect to His everlasting purpose, “the highest ... of the high” (<sup><3027></sup>Psalm 89:27).

***I ... will plant it upon an high mountain*** — Zion; destined to be the *moral* center and eminence of grace and glory shining forth to the world, out-topping all mundane elevation. The kingdom, typically begun at the return from Babylon, and the rebuilding of the temple, fully began with Christ’s appearing, and shall have its highest manifestation at His reappearing to reign on Zion, and thence over the whole earth (<sup><3006></sup>Psalm 2:6,8 <sup><2311></sup>Isaiah 2:2,3 <sup><2317></sup>Jeremiah 3:17).

**23. *under it ... all fowl*** — the Gospel “mustard tree,” small at first, but at length receiving all under its covert (<sup><4032></sup>Matthew 13:32); the antithesis to

Antichrist, symbolized by Assyria, of which the same is said (<sup><2510></sup>Ezekiel 31:6), and Babylon (<sup><2012></sup>Daniel 4:12). Antichrist assumes in mimicry the universal power really belonging to Christ.

**24. I ... *brought down the high*** — the very attribute given to God by the virgin mother of Him, under whom this was to be accomplished.

***high ... low tree*** — that is, princes elevated ... lowered. All the empires of the world, represented by Babylon, once flourishing (“green”), shall be brought low before the once depressed (“dry”), but then exalted, kingdom of Messiah and His people, the head of whom shall be Israel (<sup><2184></sup>Daniel 2:44).

# CHAPTER 18

## EZEKIEL 18:1-32.

### THE PARABLE OF THE SOUR GRAPES REPROVED.

Vindication of God's moral government as to His retributive righteousness from the Jewish imputation of injustice, as if they were suffering, not for their own sin, but for that of their fathers. As in the seventeenth chapter he foretold Messiah's happy reign in Jerusalem, so now he warns them that its blessings can be theirs only upon their individually turning to righteousness.

**2. *fathers ... eaten sour grapes, ... children's teeth ... set on edge*** — Their unbelieving calumnies on God's justice had become so common as to have assumed a proverbial form. The sin of Adam in eating the forbidden fruit, visited on his posterity, seems to have suggested the peculiar form; noticed also by Jeremiah (<sup>2812</sup>Jeremiah 31:29); and explained in <sup>2811</sup>Lamentations 5:7, "Our fathers have sinned, and are not; and we have borne their iniquities." They mean by "the children," *themselves*, as though they were innocent, whereas they were far from being so. The partial reformation effected since Manasseh's wicked reign, especially among the exiles at Chebar, was their ground for thinking so; but the improvement was only superficial and only fostered their self-righteous spirit, which sought anywhere but in themselves the cause of their calamities; just as the modern Jews attribute their present dispersion, not to their own sins, but to those of their forefathers. It is a universal mark of corrupt nature to lay the blame, which belongs to ourselves, on others and to arraign the justice of God. Compare <sup>2812</sup>Genesis 3:12, where Adam transfers the blame of his sin to Eve, and even to God, "The *woman* whom *thou* gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat."

**3. *ye shall not have occasion any more to use this proverb*** — because I will let it be seen by the whole world in the very fact that you are not righteous, as ye fancy yourselves, but wicked, and that you suffer only the just penalty of your guilt; while the elect righteous remnant alone escapes.

**4. *all souls are mine*** — Therefore I can deal with all, being My own creation, as I please (<sup>2816</sup>Jeremiah 18:6). As the Creator of all alike I can have no reason, but the principle of equity, according to men's works, to

make any difference, so as to punish some, and to save others (<sup><1825></sup>Genesis 18:25). “The soul that sinneth it shall die.” The curse descending from father to son assumes guilt shared in by the son; there is a natural tendency in the child to follow the sin of his father, and so he shares in the father’s punishment: hence the principles of God’s government, involved in <sup><1215></sup>Exodus 20:5 and <sup><2154></sup>Jeremiah 15:4, are justified. The sons, therefore (as the Jews here), cannot complain of being unjustly afflicted by God (<sup><2107></sup>Lamentations 5:7); for they filled up the guilt of their fathers (<sup><1232></sup>Matthew 23:32,34-36). The same God who “recompenses the iniquity of the fathers into the bosom of their children,” is immediately after set forth as “giving to every man according to his ways” (<sup><2128></sup>Jeremiah 32:18,19) which “visited the iniquities of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation” (where the explanation is added, “of them that *hate me*,” that is, the *children hating God*, as well as their fathers: the former being too likely to follow their parents, sin going down with cumulative force from parent to child), we find (<sup><1516></sup>Deuteronomy 24:16), “the fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither the children for the fathers: every man shall be put to death for his own sin.” The inherited guilt of sin in infants (<sup><1514></sup>Romans 5:14) is an awful *fact*, but one met by the atonement of Christ; but it is of adults that he speaks here. Whatever penalties fall on *communities* for connection with sins of their fathers, *individual* adults who repent shall escape (<sup><1225></sup>2 Kings 23:25,26). This was no new thing, as some misinterpret the passage here; it had been *always* God’s principle to punish only the guilty, and not also the innocent, for the sins of their fathers. God does not here *change* the principle of His administration, but is merely about to *manifest* it so personally to each that the Jews should no longer throw on God and on their fathers the blame which was their own.

***soul that sinneth, it shall die*** — and it *alone* (<sup><1523></sup>Romans 6:23); not also the innocent.

5. Here begins the illustration of God’s impartiality in a series of supposed cases. The first case is given in <sup><2107></sup>Ezekiel 18:5-9, the just man. The excellencies are selected in reference to the prevailing sins of the age, from which such a one stood aloof; hence arises the omission of some features of righteousness, which, under different circumstances, would have been desirable to be enumerated. Each age has *its own* besetting temptations, and the just man will be distinguished by his guarding against the peculiar defilements, inward and outward, of his age.

***just ... lawful ... right*** — the duties of the second table of the law, which flow from the fear of God. Piety is the root of all charity; to render to each his own, as well to our neighbor, as to God.

**6. *not eaten upon ... mountains*** — the high places, where altars were reared. A double sin: sacrificing elsewhere than at the temple, where only God sanctioned sacrifice (<sup><6213></sup>Deuteronomy 12:13,14); and this to idols instead of to Jehovah. “Eaten” refers to the feasts which were connected with the sacrifices (see <sup><6316></sup>Exodus 32:6 <sup><6528></sup>Deuteronomy 32:38 <sup><6027></sup>Judges 9:27 <sup><6184></sup>1 Corinthians 8:4,10 10:7).

***lifted ... eyes to*** — namely, in adoration (<sup><6316></sup>Psalms 121:1). The superstitious are compared to harlots; their eyes go eagerly after spiritual lusts. The righteous man not merely refrains from the act, but from the *glance* of spiritual lust (<sup><6316></sup>Job 31:1 <sup><6183></sup>Matthew 5:28).

***idols of ... Israel*** — not merely those of the Gentiles, but even those of Israel. The fashions of his countrymen could not lead him astray.

***defiled ... neighbour's wife*** — Not only does he shrink from spiritual, but also from carnal, adultery (compare <sup><6183></sup>1 Corinthians 6:18).

***neither ... menstruous woman*** — Leprosy and elephantiasis were said to be the fruit of such a connection [JEROME]. Chastity is to be observed even towards one's own wife (<sup><6183></sup>Leviticus 18:19 20:18).

**7. *restored ... pledge*** — that which the poor debtor absolutely needed; as his raiment, which the creditor was bound to restore before sunset (<sup><6223></sup>Exodus 22:26,27), and his millstone, which was needed for preparing his food (<sup><6346></sup>Deuteronomy 24:6,10-13).

***bread to ... hungry ... covered ... naked*** — (<sup><2381></sup>Isaiah 58:7 <sup><6183></sup>Matthew 25:35,36). After duties of justice come those of benevolence. It is not enough to refrain from doing a wrong to our neighbor, we must also do him good. The bread owned by a man, though “his,” is given to him, not to keep to himself, but to impart to the needy.

**8. *usury*** — literally, “biting.” The law forbade the Jew to take interest from brethren but permitted him to do so from a foreigner (<sup><6223></sup>Exodus 22:25 <sup><6349></sup>Deuteronomy 23:19,20 <sup><6183></sup>Nehemiah 5:7 <sup><6183></sup>Psalms 15:5). The letter of the law was restricted to the Jewish polity, and is not binding now; and indeed the principle of taking interest was even then sanctioned, by its being allowed in the case of a foreigner. The *spirit* of the law still binds us, that we are not to take advantage of our neighbor's necessities to enrich ourselves, but be satisfied with moderate, or even no, interest, in the case of the needy.

***increase*** — in the case of *other* kinds of wealth; as “usury” refers to *money* (<sup><6223></sup>Leviticus 25:36).

*withdrawn ... hand*, etc. — Where he has the opportunity and might find a plausible plea for promoting his own gain at the cost of a wrong to his neighbor, he keeps back his hand from what selfishness prompts.

*judgment* — justice.

9. *truly* — with integrity.

*surely live* — literally, “live in life.” Prosper in this life, but still more in the life to come (<sup><3101></sup>Proverbs 3:1,2 <sup><3104></sup>Amos 5:4).

10-13. The second case is that of an impious son of a pious father. His pious parentage, so far from excusing, aggravates his guilt.

*robber* — or literally, “a breaker,” namely, through all constraints of right.

*doeth the like to any one* — The *Hebrew* and the parallel (<sup><3388></sup>Ezekiel 18:18) require us to translate rather, “doeth to his *brother* any of these things,” namely, the things which follow in <sup><3381></sup>Ezekiel 18:11, etc. [MAURER].

11. *those duties* — which his father did (<sup><3385></sup>Ezekiel 18:5,9).

12. *oppressed the poor* — an aggravation to his oppressions, that they were practiced against *the poor*; whereas in <sup><3387></sup>Ezekiel 18:7 the expression is simply “oppressed *any*.”

*abomination* — singular number referring to the particular one mentioned at the end of <sup><3386></sup>Ezekiel 18:6.

13. *shall he ... live?* — because of the merits of his father; answering, by contrast, to “die for the iniquity of his father” (<sup><3387></sup>Ezekiel 18:17).

*his blood shall be upon him* — The cause of his bloody death shall rest with himself; God is not to blame, but is vindicated as just in punishing him.

14-18. The third case: a son who walks not in the steps of an unrighteous father, but in the ways of God; for example, Josiah, the pious son of guilty Amon; Hezekiah, of Ahaz (<sup><3212></sup>2 Kings 16:1-20 18:1-37 21:1-22:20).

*seeth ... and considereth* — The same *Hebrew* stands for both verbs, “seeth ... yea, seeth.” The repetition implies the attentive observation needed, in order that the son may not be led astray by his father’s bad example; as sons generally are blind to parents sins, and even imitate them as if they were virtues.

17. *taken off his hand from the poor* — that is, *abstained* from oppressing the poor, when he had the opportunity of doing so with

impunity. The different sense of the phrase in <sup>3369</sup>Ezekiel 16:49, in reference to *relieving* the poor, seems to have suggested the reading followed by FAIRBAIRN, but not sanctioned by the *Hebrew*, “hath *not* turned his hand from,” etc. But <sup>3372</sup>Ezekiel 20:22 uses the phrase in a somewhat similar sense to *English Version* here, *abstained from hurting*.

**19.** Here the Jews object to the prophet’s word and in their objection seem to seek a continuance of that very thing which they had originally made a matter of complaint. Therefore translate, “Wherefore doth not the son bear the iniquity of his father?” It now would seem a consolation to them to think the son might suffer for his father’s misdeeds; for it would soothe their self-love to regard themselves as innocent sufferers for the guilt of others and would justify them in their present course of life, which they did not choose to abandon for a better. In reply, Ezekiel reiterates the truth of each being dealt with according to his own merits [FAIRBAIRN]. But GROTIUS supports *English Version*, wherein the Jews contradict the prophet, “Why (sayest thou so) doth not the son (often, as in our case, though innocent) bear (that is, suffer for) the iniquity of their father?” Ezekiel replies, It is not as you say, but as I in the name of God say: “When the son hath done,” etc. *English Version* is simpler than that of FAIRBAIRN.

**20.** *son shall not bear ... iniquity of ... father* — (<sup>4246</sup>Deuteronomy 24:16 <sup>246</sup>2 Kings 14:6).

*righteousness ... wickedness* — that is, the reward for righteousness ... the punishment of wickedness. “Righteousness” is not used as if any were *absolutely* righteous; but, of such as have it *imputed* to them for Christ’s sake, though not under the Old Testament themselves understanding the ground on which they were regarded as righteous, but sincerely seeking after it in the way of God’s appointment, so far as they then understood this way.

**21-24.** Two last cases, showing the equity of God:

- (1) The penitent sinner is dealt with according to his new obedience, not according to his former sins.
- (2) The righteous man who turns from righteousness to sin shall be punished for the latter, and his former righteousness will be of no avail to him.

*he shall surely live* — Despair drives men into hardened recklessness; God therefore allures men to repentance by holding out hope [CALVIN].

*“To threats the stubborn sinner oft is hard,  
Wrapt in his crimes, against the storm prepared,  
But when the milder beams of mercy play,  
He melts, and throws the cumbrous cloak away.”*

Hitherto the cases had been of a change from bad to good, or vice versa, in one generation compared with another. Here it is such a change in one and the same individual. This, as practically affecting the persons here addressed, is properly put last. So far from God laying on men the penalty of others' sins, He will not even punish them for their own, if they turn from sin to righteousness; but if they turn from righteousness to sin, they must expect in justice that their former goodness will not atone for subsequent sin (<sup><S008></sup>Hebrews 10:38,39 <sup><G020></sup>2 Peter 2:20-22). The exile in Babylon gave a season for repentance of those sins which would have brought death on the perpetrator in Judea while the law could be enforced; so it prepared the way for the Gospel [GROTIUS].

**22. *in his righteousness ... he shall live*** — *in* it, not *for* it, as if that atoned for his former sins; but “*in his righteousness*” he shall live, as the *evidence* of his being already in favor with God through the merit of Messiah, who was to come. The Gospel clears up for us many such passages (<sup><A012></sup>1 Peter 1:12), which were dimly understood at the time, while men, however, had light enough for salvation.

**23.** (<sup><S008></sup>1 Timothy 2:4 <sup><G009></sup>2 Peter 3:9). If men perish, it is because they *will not* come to the Lord for salvation; not that the Lord is not willing to save them (<sup><B040></sup>John 5:40). They trample on not merely justice, but mercy; what farther hope can there be for them, when even mercy is against them? (<sup><S008></sup>Hebrews 10:26-29).

**24. *righteous*** — one *apparently* such; as in <sup><A003></sup>Matthew 9:13, “I came not to call the righteous,” etc., that is, those who fancy themselves righteous. Those alone are true saints who by the grace of God persevere (<sup><A043></sup>Matthew 24:13 <sup><G002></sup>1 Corinthians 10:12 <sup><G003></sup>John 10:28,29).

***turneth away from ... righteousness*** — an utter apostasy; not like the exceptional offenses of the godly through infirmity or heedlessness, which they afterwards mourn over and repent of.

***not be mentioned*** — not be taken into account so as to save them.

***his trespass*** — utter apostasy.

**25.** Their plea for saying, “The way of the Lord is not equal,” was that God treated different classes in a different way. But it was really their way that was unequal, since living in sin they expected to be dealt with as if they

were righteous. God's way was invariably to deal with different men according to their deserts.

**26-28.** The two last instances repeated in inverse order. God's emphatic statement of His principle of government needs no further proof than the simple statement of it.

**in them** — in the actual *sins*, which are the manifestations of the principle of "iniquity," mentioned just before.

**27. he shall save his soul** — that is, he shall have it saved upon his repentance.

**28. considereth** — the first step to repentance; for the ungodly do not consider either God or themselves (<sup><3629></sup>Deuteronomy 32:29 <sup><4389></sup>Psalms 119:59,60 <sup><4577></sup>Luke 15:17,18).

**29.** Though God's justice is so plainly manifested, sinners still object to it because they do not wish to see it (<sup><3107></sup>Micah 2:7 <sup><4118></sup>Matthew 11:18,19).

**30-32.** As God is to judge them "according to their ways" (<sup><1031></sup>Proverbs 1:31), their only hope is to "repent"; and this is a sure hope, for God takes no delight in judging them in wrath, but graciously desires their salvation on repentance.

**I will judge you** — Though ye cavil, it is a sufficient answer that I, your Judge, declare it so, and will judge you according to My will; and then your cavils must end.

**Repent** — *inward* conversion (<sup><4015></sup>Revelation 2:5). In the *Hebrew* there is a play of like sounds, "Turn ye and return."

**turn yourselves**, etc. — the *outward* fruits of repentance. Not as the *Margin*, "turn others"; for the parallel clause (<sup><2681></sup>Ezekiel 18:31) is, "cast away from you all your transgressions." Perhaps, however, the omission of the object after the verb in the *Hebrew* implies that *both* are included: Turn alike yourselves and all whom you can influence.

**from all ... transgressions** — not as if believers are perfect; but they sincerely aim at perfection, so as to be habitually and wilfully on terms with no sin (<sup><4386></sup>1 John 3:6-9):

**your ruin** — literally, "your snare," entangling you in ruin.

**31. Cast away from you** — for the cause of your evil rests with yourselves; your sole way of escape is to be reconciled to God (<sup><4022></sup>Ephesians 4:22,23).

***make you a new heart*** — This shows, not what men *can* do, but what they *ought* to do: what God requires of us. God alone can make us a new heart (<sup><3119></sup>Ezekiel 11:19 36:26,27). The command to do what men cannot themselves do is designed to drive them (instead of laying the blame, as the Jews did, elsewhere rather than on themselves) to feel their own helplessness, and to seek God’s Holy Spirit (<sup><3511></sup>Psalm 51:11,12). Thus the outward exhortation is, as it were, the organ or instrument which God uses for conferring grace. So we may say with AUGUSTINE, “Give what thou requirest, and (then) require what thou wilt.” Our strength (which is weakness in itself) shall suffice for whatever He exacts, if only He gives the supply [CALVIN].

***spirit*** — the *understanding*: as the “heart” means *the will and affections*. The root must be changed before the fruit can be good.

***why will ye die*** — bring on your own selves your ruin. God’s decrees are secret to us; it is enough for us that He invites all, and will reject none that seek Him.

32. (<sup><2133></sup>Lamentations 3:33 <sup><6101></sup>2 Peter 3:9). God is “slow to anger”; punishment is “His strange work” (<sup><2321></sup>Isaiah 28:21).

# CHAPTER 19

## EZEKIEL 19:1-14.

### ELEGY OVER THE FALL OF DAVID'S HOUSE.

There is a tacit antithesis between this lamentation and that of the Jews for their own miseries, into the causes of which, however, they did not inquire.

**1. *princes of Israel*** — that is, Judah, whose “princes” alone were recognized by prophecy; those of the ten tribes were, in respect to the theocracy, usurpers.

**2. *thy mother*** — the mother of Jehoiachin, the representative of David's line in exile with Ezekiel. The “mother” is Judea: “a lioness,” as being fierce in catching prey (<sup>390B</sup>Ezekiel 19:3), referring to her heathenish practices. Jerusalem was called Ariel (the lion of God) in a good sense (<sup>230E</sup>Isaiah 29:1); and Judah “a lion's whelp ... a lion ... an old lion” (<sup>040B</sup>Genesis 49:9), to which, as also to <sup>023B</sup>Numbers 23:24 24:9, this passage alludes.

***nourished ... among young lions*** — She herself had “lain” among lions, that is, had intercourse with the corruptions of the surrounding heathen and had brought up the royal young ones similarly: utterly degenerate from the stock of Abraham.

***Lay down*** — or “couched,” is appropriate to the lion, the Arab name of which means “the coucher.”

**3. *young lion*** — Jehoahaz, son of Josiah, carried captive from Riblah to Egypt by Pharaoh-necho (<sup>1238E</sup>2 Kings 23:33).

**4. *The nations*** — Egypt, in the case of Jehoahaz, who probably provoked Pharaoh by trying to avenge the death of his father by assailing the bordering cities of Egypt (<sup>1239E</sup>2 Kings 23:29,30).

***in their pit*** — image from the *pitfalls* used for catching wild beasts (<sup>321E</sup>Jeremiah 22:11,12).

***chains*** — or hooks, which were fastened in the noses of wild beasts (see on <sup>390B</sup>Ezekiel 19:9).

5. *saw that she had waited, and her hope was lost* — that is, that her long-awaited-for hope was disappointed, Jehoahaz not being restored to her from Egypt.

*she took another of her whelps* — Jehoiakim, brother of Jehoahaz, who was placed on the throne by Pharaoh (<sup><12734></sup>2 Kings 23:34), according to the wish of Judah.

6. *went up and down among the lions* — imitated the recklessness and tyranny of the surrounding kings (<sup><12023></sup>Jeremiah 22:13-17).

*catch ... prey* — to do evil, gratifying his lusts by oppression (<sup><12237></sup>2 Kings 23:37).

7. *knew ... desolate palaces* — that is, *claimed as his own* their palaces, which he then proceeded to “desolate.” The *Hebrew*, literally “widows”; hence *widowed palaces* (<sup><23102></sup>Isaiah 13:22). VATABLUS (whom FAIRBAIRN follows) explains it, “He knew (carnally) the widows of those whom he devoured” (<sup><23106></sup>Ezekiel 19:6). But thus the metaphor and the literal reality would be blended: the *lion* being represented as *knowing widows*. The reality, however, often elsewhere thus breaks through the veil.

*fullness thereof* — all that it contained; its inhabitants.

8. *the nations* — the Chaldeans, Syrians, Moab, and Ammon (<sup><12412></sup>2 Kings 24:2).

9. *in chains* — (<sup><14106></sup>2 Chronicles 36:6 <sup><21218></sup>Jeremiah 22:18). *Margin*, “hooks”; perhaps referring to the hook often passed through the nose of beasts; so, too, through that of captives, as seen in the Assyrian sculptures (see on <sup><23104></sup>Ezekiel 19:4).

*voice* — that is, his roaring.

*no more be heard upon the mountains* — carrying on the metaphor of the lion, whose roaring on the mountains frightens all the other beasts. The insolence of the prince, not at all abated though his kingdom was impaired, was now to cease.

10. A new metaphor taken from the *vine*, the chief of the fruit-bearing trees, as the *lion* is of the beasts of prey (see <sup><23106></sup>Ezekiel 17:6).

*in thy blood* — “planted when thou wast in thy blood,” that is, in thy very infancy; as in <sup><23106></sup>Ezekiel 16:6, when thou hadst just come from the womb, and hadst not yet the blood washed from thee. The Jews from the first were planted in Canaan to take root there [CALVIN]. GROTIUS translates as the *Margin*, “in thy quietness,” that is, in the period when Judah had not yet

fallen into her present troubles. *English Version* is better. GLASSIUS explains it well, retaining the metaphor, which CALVIN'S explanation breaks, "in the blood of thy grapes," that is, in her full strength, as the red wine is the strength of the grape. <sup><1491></sup>Genesis 49:11 is evidently alluded to.

**many waters** — the well-watered land of Canaan (<sup><1831></sup>Deuteronomy 8:7-9).

**11. strong rods** — princes of the royal house of David. The vine shot forth her branches like so many scepters, not creeping lowly on the ground like many vines, but trained aloft on a tree or wall. The mention of their former royal dignity, contrasting sadly with her present sunken state, would remind the Jews of their sins whereby they had incurred such judgments.

**stature** — (<sup><2701></sup>Daniel 4:11).

**among the thick branches** — that is, the central stock or trunk of the tree shot up highest "among its own branches" or offshoots, surrounding it. Emblematic of the numbers and resources of the people. HENGSTENBERG translates, "among the clouds." But <sup><2318></sup>Ezekiel 31:3,10,14, supports *English Version*.

**12. plucked up** — not *gradually* withered. The *sudden* upturning of the state was designed to awaken the Jews out of their torpor to see the hand of God in the national judgment.

**east wind** — (See on <sup><2370></sup>Ezekiel 17:10).

**13. planted** — that is, transplanted. Though already "dried up" in regard to the nation generally, the vine is said to be "transplanted" as regards God's mercy to the remnant in Babylon.

**dry ... ground** — Chaldea was well-watered and fertile; but it is the condition of the captive people, not that of the land, which is referred to.

**14. fire ... out of a rod of her branches** — The Jews' disaster was to be ascribed, not so much to the Chaldeans as to *themselves*; the "fire out of the rod" is *God's wrath* kindled by the perjury of Zedekiah (<sup><2378></sup>Ezekiel 17:18). "The anger of the Lord" against Judah is specified as the cause why Zedekiah was permitted to rebel against Babylon (<sup><1221></sup>2 Kings 24:20; compare <sup><1095></sup>Judges 9:15), thus bringing Nebuchadnezzar against Jerusalem.

**no strong rod ... scepter to rule** — No more kings of David's stock are now to rule the nation. Not at least until "the Lord shall send the rod of His strength ("Messiah," <sup><1810></sup>Psalms 110:2 <sup><2103></sup>Isaiah 11:1) out of Zion," to reign first as a spiritual, then hereafter as a literal king.

*is ... and shall be for a lamentation* — Part of the lamentation (that as to Jehoahaz and Jehoiakim) was matter of history as already accomplished; part (as to Zedekiah) was yet to be fulfilled; or, this prophecy both is a subject for lamentation, and shall be so to distant posterity.

# CHAPTER 20

## EZEKIEL 20:1-49.

### REJECTION OF THE ELDERS' APPLICATION TO THE PROPHET: EXPOSURE OF ISRAEL'S PROTRACTED REBELLIONS, NOTWITHSTANDING GOD'S LONG- SUFFERING GOODNESS: YET WILL GOD RESTORE HIS PEOPLE AT LAST.

1. *seventh year*, etc. — namely, from the carrying away of Jeconiah (<sup>300E</sup>Ezekiel 1:2 8:1). This computation was calculated to make them cherish the more ardently the hope of the restoration promised them in seventy years; for, when prospects are hopeless, years are not computed [CALVIN].

*elders ... came to inquire* — The object of their inquiry, as in <sup>340E</sup>Ezekiel 14:1, is not stated; probably it was to ascertain the cause of the national calamities and the time of their termination, as their false prophets assured them of a speedy restoration.

3. The chapter falls into two great parts: <sup>320E</sup>Ezekiel 20:1-32, the recital of the people's rebellions during five distinct periods: in Egypt, the wilderness, on the borders of Canaan when a new generation arose, in Canaan, and in the time of the prophet.

*I will not be inquired of by you* — because their moral state precluded them from capability of knowing the will of God (<sup>668E</sup>Psalms 66:18 <sup>1089E</sup>Proverbs 28:9 <sup>407E</sup>John 7:17).

4. *Wilt thou judge? ... judge* — The emphatical repetition expresses, "Wilt thou *not* judge? yes, judge them. There is a loud call for immediate judgment." The *Hebrew* interrogative here is a *command*, not a prohibition [MAURER]. Instead of spending time in *teaching* them, tell them of the abomination of their fathers, of which their own are the complement and counterpart, and which call for *judgment*.

5, 6. The thrice lifting up of God's hand (the sign of His *oath*, <sup>605E</sup>Revelation 10:5,6 <sup>1068E</sup>Exodus 6:8, *Margin*; <sup>404E</sup>Numbers 14:30; to which passages the form of words here alludes) implies the solemn earnestness of God's purpose of grace to them.

***made myself known unto them*** — proving Myself faithful and true by the actual fulfillment of My promises (<sup><1061></sup>Exodus 4:31 6:3); revealing Myself as “Jehovah,” that is, not that the *name* was unknown before, but that then first the *force* of that name was manifested in the promises of God then being realized in performances.

**6. *espied for them*** — as though God had spied out all other lands, and chose Canaan as the best of all lands (<sup><1819></sup>Deuteronomy 8:7,8). See <sup><2719></sup>Daniel 8:9 11:16,41, “the glorious land”; see *Margin*, “land of delight,” or, “ornament”; “the pleasant land,” or “land of desire,” <sup><3074></sup>Zechariah 7:14, *Margin*.

***glory of all lands*** — that is, *Canaan* was “the beauty of all lands”; the most lovely and delightful land; “milk and honey” are not the antecedents to “which.”

**7.** Moses gives no formal statement of idolatries practiced by Israel in Egypt. But it is implied in their readiness to worship the golden calf (resembling the Egyptian ox, Apis) (<sup><1236></sup>Exodus 32:4), which makes it likely they had worshipped such idols in Egypt. Also, in <sup><1877></sup>Leviticus 17:7, “They shall *no more* offer their sacrifices unto devils (literally, *seirim*, ‘he-goats,’ the symbol of the false god, Pan), after whom they have gone awhoring.” The call of God by Moses was as much to them to separate from idols and follow Jehovah, as it was to Pharaoh to let them go forth. <sup><1066></sup>Exodus 6:6,7 and <sup><1314></sup>Joshua 24:14, expressly mention their idolatry “in Egypt.” Hence the need of their being removed out of the contagion of Egyptian idolatries by the exodus.

***every man*** — so universal was the evil.

***of his eyes*** — It was not fear of their Egyptian masters, but their own *lust of the eye* that drew them to idols (<sup><3109></sup>Ezekiel 6:9 18:6).

**8, 9. *then I said, I will ... But***, etc. — that is, (God speaking in condescension to human modes of conception) their spiritual degradation *deserved* I should destroy them, “but I wrought (namely, the deliverance ‘out of ... Egypt’) for My name’s sake”; not for their merits (a rebuke to their national pride). God’s “name” means the sum-total of His perfections. To manifest these, His gratuitous mercy abounding above their sins, yet without wrong to His justice, and so to set forth His glory, was and is the ultimate end of His dealings (<sup><2314></sup>Ezekiel 20:14,22 <sup><1023></sup>2 Samuel 7:23 <sup><2762></sup>Isaiah 63:12 <sup><1977></sup>Romans 9:17).

**11. *which if a man do, he shall ... five in them*** — not “by them,” as though they could justify a man, seeing that man cannot render the faultless

obedience required (<sup><R16></sup>Leviticus 18:5 <sup><R12></sup>Galatians 3:12). “By them” is the expression indeed in <sup><S15></sup>Romans 10:5; but there the design is to show that, *if man could* obey all God’s laws, he would be justified “by them” (<sup><R12></sup>Galatians 3:21); but he cannot; he therefore needs to have justification by “the Lord our righteousness” (<sup><R18></sup>Jeremiah 23:6); then, having thus received life, he “lives,” that is, maintains, enjoys, and exercises this life only in so far as he walks “*in*” the laws of God. So <sup><R15></sup>Deuteronomy 30:15,16. The Israelites, *as a nation*, had life already freely given to them by God’s covenant of promise; the laws of God were designed to be the means of the outward expression of their spiritual life. As the natural life has its healthy manifestation in the full exercise of its powers, so their spiritual being as a nation was to be developed in vigor, or else decay, according as they did, or did not, walk in God’s laws.

**12. *sabbaths, ... a sign between me and them*** — a kind of sacramental pledge of the covenant of adoption between God and His people. The Sabbath is specified as a sample of the whole law, to show that the law is not merely precepts, but privileges, of which the Sabbath is one of the highest. Not that the Sabbath was first instituted at Sinai, as if it were an exclusively Jewish ordinance (<sup><R11></sup>Genesis 2:2,3), but it was then more formally enacted, when, owing to the apostasy of the world from the original revelation, one people was called out (<sup><R15></sup>Deuteronomy 5:15) to be the covenant-people of God.

***sanctify them*** — The observance of the Sabbath contemplated by God was not a mere *outward* rest, but a *spiritual* dedication of the day to the glory of God and the good of man. Otherwise it would not be, as it is made, the pledge of universal *sanctification* (<sup><R13></sup>Exodus 31:13-17 <sup><R13></sup>Isaiah 58:13,14). Virtually it is said, all sanctity will flourish or decay, according as this ordinance is observed in its full spirituality or not.

**13. *in the wilderness*** — They “rebelled” in the very place where death and terror were on every side and where they depended on My miraculous bounty every moment!

**15. I swore against them** (<sup><R11></sup>Psalm 95:11 106:26) that I would not permit the generation that came out of Egypt to enter Canaan.

**16. The *special* reason** is stated by Moses (<sup><R13></sup>Numbers 13:32,33 14:4) to be that they, through fear arising from the false report of the spies, wished to return to Egypt; the *general* reasons are stated here which lay at the root of their rejection of God’s grace; namely, contempt of God and His laws, and love of idols.

***their heart*** — The fault lay in it (<sup><R13></sup>Psalm 78:37).

**17. *Nevertheless*** — How marvellous that God should spare such sinners! His everlasting covenant explains it, His long-suffering standing out in striking contrast to their rebellions (<sup><4938></sup>Psalm 78:38 <sup><2811></sup>Jeremiah 30:11).

**18. *I said unto their children*** — being unwilling to speak any more to the fathers as being incorrigible.

***Walk ye not in ... statutes of ... fathers*** — The traditions of the fathers are to be carefully weighed, not indiscriminately followed. He forbids the imitation of not only their gross sins, but even their plausible statutes [CALVIN].

**19.** It is an indirect denial of God, and a robbing Him of His due, to add man's inventions to His precepts.

**20.** (<sup><2472></sup>Jeremiah 17:22).

**21.** Though warned by the judgment on their fathers, the next generation also rebelled against God. The “kindness of Israel’s youth and love of her espousals in the wilderness” (<sup><2410></sup>Jeremiah 2:2,3) were only comparative (the corruption in later times being more general), and confined to the minority; as a whole, Israel at no time fully served God. The “children” it was that fell into the fearful apostasy on the plains of Moab at the close of the wilderness sojourn (<sup><4251></sup>Numbers 25:1,2 <sup><4512></sup>Deuteronomy 31:27).

**23.** It was to that generation the threat of dispersion was proclaimed (<sup><4564></sup>Deuteronomy 28:64; compare <sup><3204></sup>Ezekiel 29:4).

**25. *I gave them ... statutes ... not good*** — Since they would not follow My statutes that were good, “I gave them” their own (<sup><2618></sup>Ezekiel 20:18) and their fathers’ “which were not good”; statutes spiritually corrupting, and, finally, as the consequence, destroying them. Righteous retribution (<sup><4812></sup>Psalm 81:12 <sup><2811></sup>Hosea 8:11 <sup><4512></sup>Romans 1:24 <sup><2112></sup>2 Thessalonians 2:11). <sup><2719></sup>Ezekiel 20:39 proves this view to be correct (compare <sup><2617></sup>Isaiah 63:17). Thus on the plains of Moab (<sup><4251></sup>Numbers 25:1-18), in chastisement for the secret unfaithfulness to God in their hearts, He permitted Baal’s worshippers to tempt them to idolatry (the ready success of the tempters, moreover, proving the inward unsoundness of the tempted); and this again ended necessarily in punitive judgments.

**26. *I polluted them*** — not directly; “but I judicially *gave them up* to pollute themselves.” A just retribution for their “polluting My sabbaths” (<sup><2614></sup>Ezekiel 20:24). This <sup><2615></sup>Ezekiel 20:26 is explanatory of <sup><2615></sup>Ezekiel 20:25. Their own sin I made their punishment.

**caused to pass through the fire** — FAIRBAIRN translates, “In their *presenting* (literally, ‘the causing to pass over’) all their first-born,” namely, *to the Lord*; referring to the command (<sup>ⲉⲃⲓⲃⲏ</sup>Exodus 13:12, *Margin*, where the very same expression is used). The lustration of children by passing through the fire was a *later abomination* (<sup>ⲉⲃⲓⲃⲏ</sup>Ezekiel 20:31). The evil here spoken of was the admixture of heathenish practices. with Jehovah’s worship, which made Him regard all as “polluted.” Here, “to the Lord” is omitted purposely, to imply, “They kept up the outward service indeed, but I did not own it as done unto Me, since it was mingled with such *pollutions*.” But *English Version* is supported by the similar phraseology in <sup>ⲉⲃⲓⲃⲏ</sup>Ezekiel 20:31, see on <sup>ⲉⲃⲓⲃⲏ</sup>Ezekiel 20:31. They made *all* their children pass through the fire; but he names the *first-born*, in aggravation of their guilt; that is, “I had willed that the first-born should be redeemed as being Mine, but they imposed on themselves the cruel rites of offering them to Molech” (<sup>ⲉⲃⲓⲃⲏ</sup>Deuteronomy 18:10).

**might know ... the Lord** — that they may be compelled to know Me as a powerful Judge, since they were unwilling to know Me as a gracious Father.

**27-29.** The next period, namely, that which followed the settlement in Canaan: the fathers of the generation existing in Ezekiel’s. time walked in the same steps of apostasy as the generation in the wilderness.

**Yet in this** — Not content with past rebellions, and not moved with gratitude for God’s goodness, “yet in this,” *still further* they rebelled.

**blasphemed** — “have insulted me” [CALVIN]. Even those who did not sacrifice to heathen gods have offered “their sacrifices” (<sup>ⲉⲃⲓⲃⲏ</sup>Ezekiel 20:28) in forbidden places.

**28. provocation of their offering** — an offering as it were purposely made to provoke God.

**sweet savor** — What ought to have been *sweet* became offensive by their corruptions. He specifies the various kinds of offerings, to show that in *all* alike they violated the law.

**29. What is the high place whereunto ye go?** — What is the meaning of this name? For My *altar* is not so called. What excellence do ye see in it, that ye go there, rather than to My temple, the only lawful place of sacrificing? The very name, “high place,” convicts you of sinning, not from ignorance but perverse rebellion.

**is called ... unto this day** — whereas this name ought to have been long since laid aside, along with the custom of sacrificing on high places which it

represents, being borrowed from the heathen, who so called their places of sacrifice (the Greeks, for instance, called them by a cognate term, *Bomoi*), whereas I call mine *Mizbeaach*, “altar.” The very name implies the place is not that sanctioned by Me, and therefore your sacrifices even to ME there (much more those you offer to idols) are only a “provocation” to Me (<sup>Ⓢ</sup>Ezekiel 20:28 <sup>Ⓢ</sup>Deuteronomy 12:1-5). David and others, it is true, sacrificed to God on high places, but it was under exceptional circumstances, and before the altar was set up on Mount Moriah.

**30.** The interrogation implies a strong affirmation, as in <sup>Ⓢ</sup>Ezekiel 20:4, “Are ye *not* polluted ... ? Do ye *not* commit?” etc. Or, connecting this verse with <sup>Ⓢ</sup>Ezekiel 20:31, “Are ye thus polluted ... and yet (do ye expect that) I shall be inquired of by you?”

**31. *through the fire*** — As “the fire” is omitted in <sup>Ⓢ</sup>Ezekiel 20:26, FAIRBAIRN represents the generation here referred to (namely, that of Ezekiel’s day) as attaining the climax of guilt (see on <sup>Ⓢ</sup>Ezekiel 20:26), in making their children pass through the fire, which that former generation did not. The reason, however, for the omission of “the fire” in <sup>Ⓢ</sup>Ezekiel 20:26 is, perhaps, that there it is implied the children only “*passed through the fire*” for purification, whereas here they are actually *burnt to death* before the idol; and therefore “the fire” is specified in the latter, not in the former case (compare <sup>Ⓢ</sup>2 Kings 3:27).

**32. *We will be as the heathen*** — and so escape the odium to which we are exposed, of having a peculiar God and law of our own. “We shall live. on better terms with them by having a similar worship. Besides, we get from God nothing but threats and calamities, whereas the heathen, Chaldeans, etc., get riches and power from their idols.” How literally God’s words here (“that ... shall not be at all”) are fulfilled in the modern Jews! Though the Jews seemed so likely (had Ezekiel spoken as an uninspired man) to have blended with the rest of mankind and laid aside their distinctive peculiarities, as was their wish at that time, yet they have remained for eighteen centuries dispersed among all nations and without a home, but still distinct: a standing witness for the truth of the prophecy given so long ago.

**33.** Here begins the second division of the prophecy. Lest the covenant people should abandon their distinctive hopes and amalgamate with the surrounding heathen, He tells them that, as the wilderness journey from Egypt was made subservient to discipline and also to the taking from among them the rebellious, so a severe discipline (such as the Jews are now for long actually undergoing) should be administered to them during the next exodus for the same purpose (<sup>Ⓢ</sup>Ezekiel 20:38), and so to prepare them for the restored possession of their land (<sup>Ⓢ</sup>Hosea 2:14,15). This was

only partially fulfilled before, and at the return from Babylon: its full and final accomplishment is future.

**with a mighty hand, ... will I rule over you** — I will assert My right over you in spite of your resistance (<sup>אֶזְכִּיאל</sup>Ezekiel 20:32), as a master would in the case of his slave, and I will not let you be wrested from Me, because of My regard to My covenant.

**34.** The Jews in exile might think themselves set free from the “rule” of God (<sup>אֶזְכִּיאל</sup>Ezekiel 20:33); therefore, He intimates, He will reassert His right over them by chastening judgments, and these, with an ultimate view, not to destroy, but to restore them.

**people** — rather, “peoples.”

**35. wilderness of the people** — rather, “peoples,” the various *peoples* among whom they were to be scattered, and about whom God saith (<sup>אֶזְכִּיאל</sup>Ezekiel 20:34), “I will bring you out.” In contrast to the literal “wilderness of Egypt” (<sup>אֶזְכִּיאל</sup>Ezekiel 20:36), “the wilderness of the peoples” is their *spiritual* wilderness period of trial, discipline, and purification while exiled among the nations. As the state when they are “brought into the wilderness of the peoples” and that when they were among the peoples “from” which God was to “bring them out” (<sup>אֶזְכִּיאל</sup>Ezekiel 20:34) are distinguished, the wilderness state probably answers partially to the transition period of discipline from the first decree for their restoration by Cyrus to the time of their complete settlement in their land, and the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the temple. But the full and final fulfillment is future; the wilderness state will comprise not only the transition period of their restoration, but the beginning of their occupancy of Palestine, a time in which they shall endure the sorest of all their chastisements, to “purge out the rebels” (<sup>אֶזְכִּיאל</sup>Ezekiel 20:38 <sup>דָּנִיֵּאל</sup>Daniel 12:1); and then the remnant (Zechariah 13:8,9 14:2,3) shall “all serve God in the land” (<sup>אֶזְכִּיאל</sup>Ezekiel 20:40). Thus the wilderness period does not denote *locality*, but their *state* intervening between their rejection and future restoration.

**plead** — bring the matter in debate between us to an issue. Image is from a plaintiff in a law court meeting the defendant “face to face.” Appropriate, as God in His dealings acts not arbitrarily, but in most *righteous justice* (<sup>אֶזְכִּיאל</sup>Jeremiah 2:9 Micah 6:2).

**36.** (<sup>בְּרָאשִׁית</sup>Numbers 14:21-29). Though God saved them out of Egypt, He afterwards destroyed in the wilderness them that believed not (<sup>אֶזְכִּיאל</sup>Jude 1:5); so, though He brought the exiles out of Babylon, yet their wilderness state of chastening discipline continued even after they were again in Canaan.

**37. *pass under the rod*** — metaphor from a shepherd who makes his sheep *pass under his rod* in counting them (<sup><02732></sup>Leviticus 27:32 <sup><4313></sup>Jeremiah 33:13). Whether you will or not, ye shall be counted as Mine, and so shall be subjected to My chastening discipline (<sup><3174></sup>Micah 7:14), with a view to My ultimate saving of the chosen remnant (compare <sup><6127></sup>John 10:27-29).

***bond of ... covenant*** — I will constrain you by sore chastisements to submit yourselves to the *covenant* to which ye are lastingly *bound*, though now you have cast away God's bond from you. Fulfilled in part, <sup><608></sup>Nehemiah 9:8,26,32-38 10:1-39; fully hereafter (<sup><2540></sup>Isaiah 54:10-13 52:1,2).

**38.** (Zechariah 13:9 14:2).

***purge out*** — or, “separate.” *Hebrew, barothi*, forming a designed alliteration with “*berith*,” *the covenant*; not a promise of grace, but a threat against those Jews who thought they could in exile escape the observation and “rule” of God.

***land of Israel*** — Though brought out of the country of their sojourn or exile (Babylon formerly, and the various lands of their exile hereafter) into the literal land of *Palestine*, even it shall be to them an exile state, “they shall not enter into the land of *Israel*,” that is, the spiritual state of restored favor of God to His covenant people, which shall only be given to the remnant to be saved (Zechariah 13:8,9).

**39.** Equivalent to, “I would rather have you open idolaters than hypocrites, fancying you can worship Me and yet at the same time serve idols” (<sup><3122></sup>Amos 5:21,22,25,26; compare <sup><1182></sup>1 Kings 18:21 <sup><1274></sup>2 Kings 17:41 <sup><1025></sup>Matthew 6:24 <sup><615></sup>Revelation 3:15,16).

***Go ye, serve*** — This is not a *command* to serve idols, but a judicial declaration of God's giving up of the half-idol, half-Jehovah worshippers to utter idolatry, if they will not serve Jehovah alone (<sup><5812></sup>Psalms 81:12 <sup><621></sup>Revelation 22:11).

***hereafter also*** — God anticipates the same apostasy *afterwards*, as *now*.

**40. *For*** — Though ye, the rebellious portion, withdraw from My worship, others, even the believing remnant, will succeed after you perish, and will serve Me purely.

***in mine holy mountain*** — (<sup><2102></sup>Isaiah 2:2,3). Zion, or Moriah, “the height of Israel” (pre-eminent above all mountains because of the manifested presence of God there with *Israel*), as opposed to their “high places,” the worship on which was an abomination to God.

**all** — not merely individuals, such as constitute the elect Church now; but the whole *nation*, to be followed by the conversion of the Gentile *nations* (<sup>2310E</sup>Isaiah 2:2, “all nations;” <sup>4512E</sup>Romans 11:26 <sup>6611E</sup>Revelation 11:15).

**with** — rather, “in all your holy things” [MAURER].

**41. with** — that is, in respect to your sweet savor (literally, “savor of rest,” see on <sup>2369E</sup>Ezekiel 16:19). Or, I will accept you (your worship) “as a sweet savor” [MAURER], (<sup>408E</sup>Ephesians 5:2 <sup>304E</sup>Philippians 4:18). God first accepts the *person* in Messiah, then the *offering* (<sup>2340E</sup>Ezekiel 20:40 <sup>4004E</sup>Genesis 4:4).

**bring ... out from ... people**, etc. — the same words as in <sup>2318E</sup>Ezekiel 20:34; but there applied to the bringing forth of the hypocrites, as well as the elect; here restricted to the saved remnant, who alone shall be at last restored literally and spiritually in the fullest sense.

**sanctified in you before ... heathen** — (<sup>2319E</sup>Jeremiah 33:9). All the nations will acknowledge My power displayed in restoring you, and so shall be led to seek Me (<sup>2368E</sup>Isaiah 66:18 <sup>3344E</sup>Zechariah 14:16-19).

**43. there** — not merely in exile when suffering punishment which makes even reprobates sorry for sin, but when received into favor *in your own land*.

**remember** — (<sup>236E</sup>Ezekiel 16:61,63). The humiliation of Judah (<sup>400E</sup>Nehemiah 9:1-38) is a type of the future penitence of the whole nation (<sup>231E</sup>Hosea 5:15 6:1 <sup>3320E</sup>Zechariah 12:10-14). God’s goodness realized by the sinner is the only thing that leads to true repentance (<sup>238E</sup>Hosea 3:5 <sup>415E</sup>Luke 7:37,38).

**44.** The *English Version* chapter ought to have ended here, and the twenty-first chapter begun with “Moreover,” etc. as in the *Hebrew Bible*.

**for my name’s sake** — (<sup>2322E</sup>Ezekiel 36:22). Gratuitously; according to My compassion, not your merits. After having commented on this verse, CALVIN was laid on his death bed, and his commentary ended.

**45-49.** An introductory brief description in enigma of the destruction by fire and sword, detailed more explicitly in <sup>2301E</sup>Ezekiel 21:1-32.

**46. south ... south ... south** — three different *Hebrew* words, to express the certainty of the divine displeasure resting on the region specified. The third term is from a root meaning “dry,” referring to the sun’s heat in the south; representing the burning judgments of God on the southern parts of Judea, of which Jerusalem was the capital.

**set thy face** — determinately. The prophets used to turn themselves towards those who were to be the subjects of their prophecies.

**drop** — as the rain, which *flows* in a continuous stream, sometimes gently (<sup><463E</sup>Deuteronomy 32:2), sometimes violently (<sup><307G</sup>Amos 7:16 <sup><308B</sup>Micah 2:6, *Margin*), as here.

**forest** — the densely populated country of Judea; trees representing people.

**47. fire** — every kind of judgment (<sup><269D</sup>Ezekiel 19:12 21:3, “my sword”; <sup><2214</sup>Jeremiah 21:14).

**green tree ... dry** — fit and unfit materials for fuel alike; “the righteous and the wicked,” as explained in <sup><320B</sup>Ezekiel 21:3,4 <sup><423E</sup>Luke 23:31. Unsparring universality of the judgment!

**flaming flame** — one continued and unextinguished flame. “The glowing flame” [FAIRBAIRN].

**faces** — persons; here the metaphor is merged in the reality.

**49.** Ezekiel complains that by this parabolic form of prophecy he only makes himself and it a jest to his countrymen. God therefore in <sup><320B</sup>Ezekiel 21:1-32 permits him to express the same prophecy more plainly.

# CHAPTER 21

## EZEKIEL 21:1-32.

### PROPHECY AGAINST ISRAEL AND JERUSALEM, AND AGAINST AMMON.

2. *the holy places* — the three parts of the temple: the courts, the holy place, and the holiest. If “synagogues” existed before the Babylonian captivity, as <sup>(1974B)</sup>Psalm 74:8 seems to imply, they and the *proseuchae*, or oratories, may be included in the “holy places” here.

3. *righteous ... wicked* — not contradictory of <sup>(2380H)</sup>Ezekiel 18:4,9 and <sup>(1182B)</sup>Genesis 18:23. Ezekiel here views the mere *outward* aspect of the indiscriminate universality of the national calamity. But *really* the same captivity to the “righteous” would prove a blessing as a wholesome discipline, which to the “wicked” would be an unmitigated punishment. The godly were sealed with a mark (<sup>(2400H)</sup>Ezekiel 9:4), not for outward exemption from the common calamity, but as marked for the secret interpositions of Providence, overruling even evil to their good. The godly were by comparison so few, that not their salvation but the universality of the judgment is brought into view here.

4. The “sword” did not, literally, *slay* all; but the *judgments* of God by the foe swept through the land “from the south to the north.”

6. *with the breaking of thy loins* — as one afflicted with pleurisy; or as a woman, in labor-throes, clasps her loins in pain, and heaves and sighs till *the girdle of the loins is broken* by the violent action of the body (<sup>(2300H)</sup>Jeremiah 30:6).

7. The abrupt sentences and mournful repetitions imply violent emotions.

9. *sword* — namely, of God (<sup>(1624H)</sup>Deuteronomy 32:41). The Chaldeans are His instrument.

10. *to make a sore slaughter* — literally, “that killing it may kill.”

*glitter* — literally, “glitter as the lightning flash”: flashing terror into the foe.

*should we ... make mirth* — It is no time for levity when such a calamity is impending (<sup>(2320D)</sup>Isaiah 22:12,13).

*it contemneth the rod of my son*, etc. — The sword has no more respect to the trivial “rod” or scepter of Judah (<sup><0490></sup>Genesis 49:10) than if it were any common “tree.” “Tree” is the image retained from <sup><2047></sup>Ezekiel 20:47; explained in <sup><2102></sup>Ezekiel 21:2,3. God calls Judah “My son” (compare <sup><0022></sup>Exodus 4:22 <sup><2101></sup>Hosea 11:1). FAIRBAIRN arbitrarily translates, “Perchance the scepter of My son rejoiceth; it (the sword) despiseth every tree.”

**11. *the slayer*** — the Babylonian king in this case; in general, *all* the instruments of God’s wrath (<sup><0615></sup>Revelation 19:15).

**12. *terrors by reason of the sword***, etc. — rather, “they (the princes of Israel) are *delivered up to* the sword together with My people” [GLASSIUS].

*smite ... upon ... thigh* — a mark of grief (<sup><2619></sup>Jeremiah 31:19).

**13. *it is a trial*** — rather, “There is a trial” being made: the sword of the Lord will subject all to the ordeal. “What, then, if it condemn even the rod” (scepter of Judah)? Compare as to a similar scourge of unsparing trial, <sup><0823></sup>Job 9:23.

*it shall be no more* — the scepter, that is, *the state*, must necessarily then come to an end. Fulfilled in part at the overthrow of Judah by Nebuchadnezzar, but fully at the time of “Shiloh’s” (Messiah’s) coming (<sup><0490></sup>Genesis 49:10), when Judea became a Roman province.

**14. *smite ... hands together*** — (<sup><0240></sup>Numbers 24:10), indicative of the indignant fury with which God will “smite” the people.

*sword ... doubled the third time* — referring to the threefold calamity: —

- (1) The taking of Zedekiah (to whom the “rod,” or scepter, may refer);
- (2) the taking of the city;
- (3) the removal of all those who remained with Gedaliah.

“Doubled” means “multiplied” or “repeated.” The stroke shall be doubled and even trebled.

*of the slain* — that is, by which many are slain. As the *Hebrew* is *singular*, FAIRBAIRN makes it refer to the king, “the sword of the great one that is slain,” or “pierced through.”

*entereth ... privy chambers* — (<sup><2421></sup>Jeremiah 9:21). The sword shall overtake them, not merely in the open battlefield, but in the chambers whither they flee to hide themselves (<sup><1120></sup>1 Kings 20:30 22:25). MAURER

translates, “which *besieged* them”; FAIRBAIRN, “which penetrates to them.” *English Version* is more literal.

**15. *point*** — “the *whirling glance* of the sword” [FAIRBAIRN]. “The *naked* (bared) sword” [HENDERSON].

***ruins*** — literally, “stumbling-blocks.” Their own houses and walls shall be stumbling-blocks in their way, whether they wish to fight or flee.

***made bright*** — made to glitter.

***wrapped***, etc. — namely, in the hand of him who holds the hilt, or in its scabbard, that the edge may not be blunt when it is presently drawn forth to strike. GESENIUS, translates, “sharpened,” etc.

**16. Apostrophe to the sword.**

***Go ... one way*** — or, “*Concentrate* thyself”; “*Unite* thy forces on the right hand” [GROTIUS]. The sword is commanded to take the nearest route for Jerusalem, “whither their face was set,” whether south or north (“right hand or left”), according to where the several parts of the Chaldean host may be.

***or other, ... on the left*** — rather “*set thyself* on the left.” The verbs are well-chosen. The main “*concentration*” of forces was to be on “the right hand,” or *south*, the part of Judea in which Jerusalem was, and which lay south in marching from Babylon, whereas the Chaldean forces advancing on Jerusalem from Egypt, of which Jerusalem was north, were fewer, and therefore “set thyself” is the verb used.

**17. Jehovah Himself smites His hands together, doing what He had commanded Ezekiel to do** (see on <sup>3214</sup>Ezekiel 21:14), in token of His smiting Jerusalem; compare the similar symbolical action (<sup>1238</sup>2 Kings 13:18,19).

***cause ... fury to rest*** — give it full vent, and so satisfy it (<sup>2453</sup>Ezekiel 5:13).

**19. *two ways*** — The king coming from Babylon is represented in the graphic style of Ezekiel as reaching the point where the road branched off in two ways, one leading by the south, by Tadmor or Palmyra, to Rabbath of Ammon, east of Jordan; the other by the north, by Riblah in Syria, to Jerusalem — and hesitating which way to take. Ezekiel is told to “appoint the two ways” (as in <sup>3003</sup>Ezekiel 4:1); for Nebuchadnezzar, though knowing no other control but his own will and superstition, had really this path “appointed” for him by the all-ruling God.

***out of one land*** — namely, Babylon.

**choose ... a place** — literally “a hand.” So it is translated by FAIRBAIRN, “make a *finger-post*,” namely, at the head of the two ways, the hand post pointing Nebuchadnezzar to the way to Jerusalem as the way he should select. But MAURER rightly supports *English Version*. Ezekiel is told to “choose the place” where Nebuchadnezzar should do as is described in <sup>(-0120)</sup>Ezekiel 21:20,21; so entirely does God order by the prophet every particular of place and time in the movements of the invader.

**20. Rabbath of the Ammonites** — distinct from Rabbah in Judah (<sup>(-0126)</sup>2 Samuel 12:26). Rabbath is put first, as it was from her that Jerusalem, that doomed city, had borrowed many of her idols.

**to Judah in Jerusalem** — instead of simply putting “Jerusalem,” to imply the sword was to come not merely to Judah, but to its people *within* Jerusalem, defended though it was; its defenses on which the Jews relied so much would not keep the foe out.

**21. parting** — literally, “mother of the way.” As “head of the two ways” follows, which seems tautology after “parting of the way,” HAVERNICK translates, according to *Arabic* idiom, “the highway,” or principal road. *English Version* is not tautology, “head of the two ways” defining more accurately “parting of the way.”

**made ... bright** — rather, “shook,” from an *Arabic* root.

**arrows** — Divination by arrows is here referred to: they were put into a quiver marked with the names of particular places to be attacked, and then *shaken* together; whichever came forth first intimated the one selected as the first to be attacked [JEROME]. The same usage existed among the Arabs, and is mentioned in the Koran. In the Nineveh sculptures the king is represented with a cup in his right hand, his left resting on a bow; also with two arrows in the right, and the bow in the left, probably practising divination.

**images** — *Hebrew*, “teraphim”; household gods, worshipped as family talismans, to obtain direction as to the future and other blessings. First mentioned in Mesopotamia, whence Rachel brought them (<sup>(-01319)</sup>Genesis 31:19,34); put away by Jacob (<sup>(-01330)</sup>Genesis 35:4); set up by Micah as his household gods (<sup>(-01708)</sup>Judges 17:5); stigmatized as idolatry (<sup>(-01852)</sup>1 Samuel 15:23, *Hebrew*; Zechariah 10:2, *Margin*).

**liver** — They judged of the success, or failure, of an undertaking by the healthy, or unhealthy, state of the liver and entrails of a sacrifice.

22. Rather, “*In his right hand was [is] the divination,*” that is, he holds up in his right hand the arrow marked with “*Jerusalem,*” to encourage his army to march for it.

*captains* — The *Margin*, “*battering-rams,*” adopted by FAIRBAIRN, is less appropriate, for “*battering-rams*” follow presently after [GROTIUS].

*open the mouth in ... slaughter* — that is, commanding slaughter: raising the war cry of death. Not as GESENIUS, “*to open the mouth with the war shout.*”

23. Unto *the Jews*, though credulous of divinations when in their favor, Nebuchadnezzar’s divination “*shall be (seen) as false.*” This gives the reason which makes the Jews fancy themselves safe from the Chaldeans, namely, that they “*have sworn*” to the latter “*oaths*” of allegiance, forgetting that they had violated them (<sup>26713</sup>Ezekiel 17:13,15,16,18).

*but he*, etc. — *Nebuchadnezzar* will remember in consulting his idols that he swore to Zedekiah by them, but that Zedekiah broke the league [GROTIUS]. Rather, *God* will remember against them (<sup>6669</sup>Revelation 16:19) their violating their oath sworn by the true God, whereas Nebuchadnezzar kept his oath sworn by a false god; <sup>2724</sup>Ezekiel 21:24 confirms this.

24. Their unfaithfulness to Nebuchadnezzar was a type of their general unfaithfulness to their covenant God.

*with the hand* — namely, of the king of Babylon.

25. *profane* — as having desecrated by idolatry and perjury his office as the Lord’s anointed. HAVERNICK translates, as in <sup>2714</sup>Ezekiel 21:14, “*slain,*” that is, not literally, but virtually; to Ezekiel’s idealizing view Zedekiah was the grand victim “*pierced through*” by God’s sword of judgment, as his sons were slain before his eyes, which were then put out, and he was led a captive in chains to Babylon. *English Version* is better: so GESENIUS (<sup>48132</sup>Chronicles 36:13 <sup>4810</sup>Jeremiah 52:2).

*when iniquity shall have an end* — (<sup>2729</sup>Ezekiel 21:29). When thine iniquity, having reached its last stage of guilt, shall be put an end to by judgment (<sup>2815</sup>Ezekiel 35:5).

26. *diadem* — rather, “*the miter*” of the holy priest (<sup>42304</sup>Exodus 28:4 Zechariah 3:5). His priestly emblem as representative of the priestly people. Both this and “*the crown,*” the emblem of the kingdom, were to be removed, until they should be restored and united in the Mediator, Messiah (<sup>48102</sup>Psalms 110:2,4 <sup>48103</sup>Zechariah 6:13), [FAIRBAIRN]. As, however, King

Zedekiah alone, not the high priest also, is referred to in the context, *English Version* is supported by GESENIUS.

**this shall not be the same** — The diadem shall not be as it was [ROSENMULLER]. Nothing shall remain what it was [FAIRBAIRN].

**exalt ... low, ... abase ... high** — not the general truth expressed (<sup>318B</sup>Proverbs 3:34 <sup>415E</sup>Luke 1:52 <sup>300E</sup>James 4:6 <sup>418E</sup>1 Peter 5:5); but specially referring to Messiah and Zedekiah contrasted together. The “tender plant ... out of the dry ground” (<sup>250E</sup>Isaiah 53:2) is to be “exalted” in the end (<sup>327E</sup>Ezekiel 21:27); the now “high” representative on David’s throne, Zedekiah, is to be “abased.” The *outward* relations of things shall be made to change places in just retaliation on the people for having so perverted the *moral* relations of things [HENGSTENBERG].

**27.** Literally, “An overturning, overturning, overturning, will I make it.” The threefold repetition denotes the awful *certainty* of the event; not as ROSENMULLER explains, the overthrow of the *three*, Jehoiakim, Jeconiah, and Zedekiah; for Zedekiah alone is referred to.

**it shall be no more, until he come whose fight it is** — strikingly parallel to <sup>440E</sup>Genesis 49:10. Nowhere shall there be rest or permanence; all things shall be in fluctuation until He comes who, as the rightful Heir, shall restore the throne of David that fell with Zedekiah. The *Hebrew* for “right” is “judgment”; it perhaps includes, besides the *right* to rule, the idea of His rule being one in *righteousness* (<sup>474E</sup>Psalms 72:2 <sup>200E</sup>Isaiah 9:6,7 11:4 <sup>691E</sup>Revelation 19:11). Others (Nebuchadnezzar, etc.), who held the rule of the earth delegated to them by God, abused it by unrighteousness, and so forfeited the “right.” He both has the truest “right” to the rule, and exercises it in “right.” It is true the *tribal* “scepter” continued with Judah “till Shiloh came” (<sup>440E</sup>Genesis 49:10); but there was no *kingly* scepter till Messiah came, as the *spiritual* King then (<sup>483E</sup>John 18:36,37); this spiritual kingdom being about to pass into the *literal, personal* kingdom over Israel at His second coming, when, and not before, this prophecy shall have its exhaustive fulfillment (<sup>413E</sup>Luke 1:32,33 <sup>248E</sup>Jeremiah 3:17 10:7; “To thee doth it appertain”).

**28.** Lest Ammon should think to escape because Nebuchadnezzar had taken the route to Jerusalem, Ezekiel denounces judgment against Ammon, without the prospect of a restoration such as awaited Israel. <sup>240E</sup>Jeremiah 49:6, it is true, speaks of a “bringing again of its captivity,” but this probably refers to its *spiritual* restoration under Messiah; or, if referring to it *politically*, must refer to but a partial restoration at the downfall of Babylon under Cyrus.

***their reproach*** — This constituted a leading feature in their guilt; they treated with proud contumely the covenant-people after the taking of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar (<sup><328></sup>Ezekiel 25:3,6 Zephaniah 2:9,10), and appropriated Israel's territory (<sup><340></sup>Jeremiah 49:1 <sup><3100></sup>Amos 1:13-15).

***furbished, to consume*** — MAURER punctuates thus, "Drawn for the slaughter, it is furbished to devour ('consume'), to glitter." *English Version*, "to consume because of the glittering," means, "to consume *by reason of the lightning, flash-like rapidity* with which it falls." Five years after the fall of Jerusalem, Ammon was destroyed for aiding Ishmael in usurping the government of Judea against the will of the king of Babylon (<sup><255></sup>2 Kings 25:25 <sup><3415></sup>Jeremiah 41:15) [GROTIUS].

**29. *see vanity ... divine a lie*** — Ammon, too, had false diviners who flattered them with assurances of safety; the only result of which will be to "bring Ammon upon the necks," etc., that is, to add the Ammonites to the *headless trunks* of the slain of Judah, whose bad example Ammon followed, and "whose day" of visitation for their guilt "is come."

***when their iniquity shall have an end*** — See on <sup><3025></sup>Ezekiel 21:25.

**30. *Shall I cause it to return into his sheath*** — namely, without first destroying Ammon. Certainly not (<sup><3405></sup>Jeremiah 47:6,7). Others, as the *Margin*, less suitably read it imperatively, "Cause it to return," that is, after it has done the work appointed to it.

***in the land of thy nativity*** — Ammon was not to be carried away captive as Judah, but to perish in his own land.

**31. *blow against thee in***, etc. — rather, "blow upon thee with the fire," etc. Image from smelting metals (<sup><3221></sup>Ezekiel 22:20,21).

***brutish*** — ferocious.

***skillful to destroy*** — literally, "artificers of destruction"; alluding to <sup><2546></sup>Isaiah 54:16.

**32. *thy blood shall be*** — that is, shall flow.

***be no more remembered*** — be consigned as a nation to oblivion.

# CHAPTER 22

## EZEKIEL 22:1-31.

### GOD'S JUDGMENT ON THE SINFULNESS OF JERUSALEM.

Repetition of the charges in the twentieth chapter only that there they were stated in an historical review of the *past* and present; here the *present* sins of the nation exclusively are brought forward.

2. See <sup><3104></sup>Ezekiel 20:4; that is, “Wilt thou *not* judge?” etc. (compare <sup><3236></sup>Ezekiel 23:36).

**the bloody city** — literally, “the city of bloods”; so called on account of murders perpetrated in her, and sacrifices of children to Molech (<sup><3218></sup>Ezekiel 22:3,4,6,9 24:6,9).

3. **sheddeth blood ... that her time may come** — Instead of deriving advantage from her bloody sacrifices to idols, she only thereby brought on herself “the time” of her punishment.

**against herself** — (<sup><3089></sup>Proverbs 8:36).

4. **thy days** — the shorter period, namely, that of the *siege*.

**thy years** — the longer period of the *captivity*. The “days” and “years” express that she is ripe for punishment.

5. **infamous** — They mockingly call thee, “Thou polluted one in name (*Margin*), and full of confusion” [FAIRBAIRN], (referring to the tumultuous violence prevalent in it). Thus the nations “far and near” mocked her as at once sullied in character and in actual fact lawless. What a sad contrast to the Jerusalem once designated “the holy city!”

6. Rather, “The princes ... each according to his power, were in thee, to shed blood” (as if this was the only object of their existence). “Power,” literally, “arm”; they, who ought to have been patterns of justice, made their own arm of might their only law.

7. **set light by** — Children have made light of, disrespected, father ... (<sup><3276></sup>Deuteronomy 27:16). At <sup><3217></sup>Ezekiel 22:7-12 are enumerated the sins committed in violation of Moses’ law.

9. **men that carry tales** — *informers*, who by misrepresentations cause innocent blood to be shed (<sup>4896</sup>Leviticus 19:16). Literally, “one who goes to and fro as a *merchant*.”
10. **set apart for pollution** — that is, set apart *as unclean* (<sup>4889</sup>Leviticus 18:19).
11. **forgotten me** — (<sup>4528</sup>Deuteronomy 32:18 <sup>4129</sup>Jeremiah 2:32 3:21).
12. **smitten mine hand** — in token of the indignant vengeance which I will execute on thee (see on <sup>4217</sup>Ezekiel 21:17).
13. (<sup>4210</sup>Ezekiel 21:7).
14. **consume thy filthiness out of thee** — the object of God in scattering the Jews.
15. **take thine inheritance in thyself** — Formerly thou wast Mine inheritance; but now, full of guilt, thou art no longer Mine, but *thine own inheritance to thyself*; “in the sight of the heathen,” that is, even they shall see that, now that thou hast become a captive, thou art no longer owned as Mine [VATABLUS]. FAIRBAIRN and others needlessly take the *Hebrew* from a different root, “thou shalt be *polluted by* (‘in,’ [HENDERSON]) *thyself*,” etc.; the heathen shall regard thee as a polluted thing, who hast brought thine own reproach on thyself.
16. **dross ... brass** — Israel has become a worthless compound of the dross of silver (implying not merely corruption, but *degeneracy* from good to bad, <sup>4212</sup>Isaiah 1:22, especially offensive) and of the baser metals. Hence the people must be thrown into the furnace of judgment, that the bad may be consumed, and the good separated (<sup>4169</sup>Jeremiah 6:29,30).
17. From this verse to the end he shows the general corruption of all ranks.
18. **land ... not cleansed** — not cleared or cultivated; all a scene of desolation; a fit emblem of the moral wilderness state of the people.
- nor rained upon** — a mark of divine “indignation”; as the early and latter rain, on which the productiveness of the land depended, was one of the great covenant blessings. Joel (<sup>4123</sup>Joel 2:23) promises the return of the former and latter rain, with the restoration of God’s favor.
19. **conspiracy** — The false prophets have conspired both to propagate error and to oppose the messages of God’s servants. *They* are mentioned first, as their bad influence extended the widest.

**prey** — Their aim was greed of gain, “treasure, and precious things” (<sup><3069></sup>Hosea 6:9 <sup><3069></sup>Zephaniah 3:3,4 <sup><3069></sup>Matthew 23:14).

**made ... many widows** — by occasioning, through false prophecies, the war with the Chaldeans in which the husbands fell.

**26. Her priests** — whose “lips should have kept knowledge” (Malachi 2:7).

**violated** — not simply *transgressed*; but, *have done violence to* the law, by wresting it to wrong ends, and putting wrong constructions on it.

**put no difference between the holy and profane**, etc. — made no distinction between the clean and unclean (<sup><3000></sup>Leviticus 10:10), the Sabbath and other days, sanctioning violations of that holy day. “Holy” means, *what is dedicated to God*; “profane,” *what is in common use*; “unclean,” *what is forbidden to be eaten*; “clean,” *what is lawful to be eaten*.

**I am profaned among them** — They abuse My name to false or unjust purposes.

**27. princes** — who should have employed the influence of their position for the people’s welfare, made “gain” their sole aim.

**wolves** — notorious for fierce and ravaging cruelty (<sup><3000></sup>Micah 3:2,3,9-11 <sup><3000></sup>John 10:12).

**28.** Referring to the false assurances of peace with which the prophets flattered the people, that they should not submit to the king of Babylon (see on <sup><3000></sup>Ezekiel 13:10; <sup><3000></sup>Ezekiel 21:29 <sup><3000></sup>Jeremiah 6:14 23:16,17 27:9,10).

**29. The people** — put last, after the mention of those in office. Corruption had spread downwards through the whole community.

**wrongfully** — that is, “without cause,” gratuitously, without the stranger proselyte giving any just provocation; nay, he of all others being one who ought to have been won to the worship of Jehovah by kindness, instead of being alienated by oppression; especially as the Israelites were commanded to remember that they themselves had been “strangers in Egypt” (<sup><0222></sup>Exodus 22:21 23:9).

**30. the hedge** — the wall (see on <sup><3000></sup>Ezekiel 13:5); image for *leading the people to repentance*.

**the gap** — the breach (<sup><0463></sup>Psalm 106:23); image for *interceding between the people and God* (<sup><0207></sup>Genesis 20:7 <sup><0207></sup>Exodus 32:11 <sup><0468></sup>Numbers 16:48).

***I found none*** — (<sup>2410E</sup>Jeremiah 5:1) — not that literally there was not a righteous man in the city. For Jeremiah, Baruch, etc., were still there; but Jeremiah had been forbidden to pray for the people (<sup>2411E</sup>Jeremiah 11:14), as being doomed to wrath. None now, of the godly, knowing the desperate state of the people, and God's purpose as to them, was *willing* longer to interpose between God's wrath and them. And none "among them," that is, among those just enumerated as guilty of such sins (<sup>2422E</sup>Ezekiel 22:25-29), was morally *able* for such an office.

**31. *their own way ... recompensed upon their heads*** — (<sup>2430E</sup>Ezekiel 9:10 11:21 16:43 <sup>2403E</sup>Proverbs 1:31 <sup>2418E</sup>Isaiah 3:11 <sup>2409E</sup>Jeremiah 6:19).

# CHAPTER 23

## EZEKIEL 23:1-49.

### ISRAEL'S AND JUDAH'S SIN AND PUNISHMENT ARE PARABOLICALLY PORTRAYED UNDER THE NAMES AHOLAH AND AHOLIBAH.

The imagery is similar to that in the sixteenth chapter; but here the reference is not as there so much to the breach of the spiritual marriage covenant with God by the people's *idolatries*, as by their *worldly spirit*, and their trusting to alliances with the heathen for safety, rather than to God.

**2. two ... of one mother** — Israel and Judah, one nation by birth from the same ancestress, Sarah.

**3.** Even so early in their history as their Egyptian sojourn, they committed idolatries (see on <sup><3310></sup>Ezekiel 20:6-8; <sup><6344></sup>Joshua 24:14).

**in their youth** — an aggravation of their sin. It was at the very time of their receiving extraordinary favors from God (<sup><2361></sup>Ezekiel 16:6,22).

**they bruised** — namely, the Egyptians.

**4. Aholah** — that is, “*Her tent*” (put for *worship*, as the first worship of God in Israel was in a *tent* or tabernacle), as contrasted with Aholibah, that is, “*My tent in her.*” The Beth-el worship of Samaria was of *her own* devising, not of God's appointment; the temple-worship of Jerusalem was expressly *appointed by Jehovah*, who “dwelt” there, “setting up His tabernacle among the people as His” (<sup><0238></sup>Exodus 25:8 <sup><0331></sup>Leviticus 26:11,12 <sup><6219></sup>Joshua 22:19 <sup><9702></sup>Psalms 76:2).

**the elder** — Samaria is called “the elder” because she preceded Judah in her apostasy and its punishment.

**they were mine** — Previous to apostasy under Jeroboam, Samaria (Israel, or the ten tribes), equally with Judah, worshipped the true God. God therefore never renounced the right over Israel, but sent prophets, as Elijah and Elisha, to declare His will to them.

**5. when ... mine** — literally, “under Me,” that is, subject to Me as her lawful husband.

**neighbors** — On the northeast the kingdom of Israel bordered on that of Assyria; for the latter had occupied much of Syria. Their neighborhood in locality was emblematical of their being near in corruption of morals and worship. The *alliances* of Israel with Assyria, which are the chief subject of reprobation here, tended to this (<sup><1259></sup>2 Kings 15:19 16:7,9 17:3 <sup><2089></sup>Hosea 8:9).

**6. blue** — rather, “purple” [FAIRBAIRN]. As a lustful woman’s passions are fired by showy dress and youthful appearance in men, so Israel was seduced by the pomp and power of Assyria (compare <sup><2089></sup>Isaiah 10:8).

**horsemen** — cavaliers.

**7. all their idols** — There was nothing that she refused to her lovers.

**8. whoredoms brought from Egypt** — the calves set up in Daniel and Beth-el by Jeroboam, answering to the Egyptian bull-formed idol Apis. Her *alliances* with Egypt *politically* are also meant (<sup><2302></sup>Isaiah 30:2,3 31:1). The ten tribes probably resumed the Egyptian rites, in order to enlist the Egyptians against Judah (<sup><4422></sup>2 Chronicles 12:2-4).

**9.** God, in righteous retribution, turned their objects of trust into the instruments of their punishment: Pul, Tiglath-pileser, Esar-haddon, and Shalmaneser (<sup><1259></sup>2 Kings 15:19,29 17:3,6,24 <sup><1504></sup>Ezra 4:2,10). “It was their sin to have sought after such lovers, and it was to be their punishment that these lovers should become their destroyers” [FAIRBAIRN].

**10. became famous** — literally, “she became a name,” that is, as notorious by her punishment as she had been by her sins, so as to be quoted as a *warning* to others.

**women** — that is, neighboring peoples.

**11.** Judah, the southern kingdom, though having the “warning” (see on <sup><2520></sup>Ezekiel 23:10) of the northern kingdom before her eyes, instead of profiting by it, went to even greater lengths in corruption than Israel. Her greater spiritual privileges made her guilt the greater (<sup><2564></sup>Ezekiel 16:47,51 <sup><2481></sup>Jeremiah 3:11).

**12.** (<sup><2236></sup>Ezekiel 23:6,23).

**most gorgeously** — literally, “to perfection.” GROTIUS translates, “wearing a crown,” or “chaplet,” such as lovers wore in visiting their mistresses.

**13. one way** — both alike forsaking God for heathen confidences.

**14. *vermilion*** — the peculiar color of the Chaldeans, as purple was of the Assyrians. In striking agreement with this verse is the fact that the Assyrian sculptures lately discovered have painted and colored bas-reliefs in red, blue, and black. The Jews (for instance Jehoiakim, <sup><2014></sup>Jeremiah 22:14) copied these (compare <sup><180></sup>Ezekiel 8:10).

**15. *exceeding in dyed attire*** — rather, “in ample dyed *turbans*”; literally, “redundant with dyed turbans.” The Assyrians delighted in ample, flowing, and richly colored tunics, scarfs, girdles, and head-dresses or turbans, varying in ornaments according to the rank.

***Chaldea, ... land of their nativity*** — between the Black and Caspian Seas (see on <sup><2313></sup>Isaiah 23:13).

***princes*** — literally, a first-rate military class that fought by threes in the chariots, one guiding the horses, the other two fighting.

**16. *sent messengers ... into Chaldea*** — (<sup><3169></sup>Ezekiel 16:29). It was she that solicited the Chaldeans, not they her. Probably the occasion was when Judah sought to strengthen herself by a Chaldean alliance against a menaced attack by Egypt (compare <sup><2392></sup>2 Kings 23:29-35 24:1-7). God made the object of their sinful desire the instrument of their punishment. Jehoiakim, probably by a stipulation of tribute, enlisted Nebuchadnezzar against Pharaoh, whose tributary he previously had been; failing to keep his stipulation, he brought on himself Nebuchadnezzar’s vengeance.

**17. *alienated from them*** — namely, from the Chaldeans: turning again to the Egyptians (<sup><3319></sup>Ezekiel 23:19), trying by their help to throw off her solemn engagements to Babylon (compare <sup><3175></sup>Jeremiah 37:5,7 <sup><2417></sup>2 Kings 24:7).

**18. *my mind was alienated from her*** — literally, “was broken off from her.” Just retribution for “her mind being alienated (broken off) from the Chaldeans” (<sup><3317></sup>Ezekiel 23:17), to whom she had sworn fealty (<sup><3372></sup>Ezekiel 17:12-19). “Discovered” implies the open shamelessness of her apostasy.

**19.** Israel first “called” her lusts, practiced when in Egypt, “to her (fond remembrance,” and then actually returned to them. Mark the danger of suffering the memory to dwell on the pleasure felt in past sins.

**20. *their paramours*** — that is, her paramours *among them* (the Egyptians); she doted upon their persons as her paramours (<sup><3316></sup>Ezekiel 23:5,12,16).

***flesh*** — the *membrum virile* (very large in the ass). Compare <sup><1831D></sup>Leviticus 15:2, *Margin*; <sup><3369></sup>Ezekiel 16:26.

*issue of horses* — the seminal issue. The horse was made by the Egyptians the hieroglyphic for a lustful person.

**21. *calledst to remembrance*** — “didst repeat” [MAURER].

*in bruising* — in suffering ... to be bruised.

**22. *lovers ... alienated*** — (<sup>2317</sup>Ezekiel 23:17). Illicit love, soon or late, ends in open hatred (<sup>10352</sup>Samuel 13:15). The Babylonians, the objects formerly of their God-forgetting love, but now, with characteristic fickleness, objects of their hatred, shall be made by God the instruments of their punishment.

**23. *Pekod***, etc. — (<sup>2821</sup>Jeremiah 50:21). Not a geographical name, but descriptive of Babylon. “Visitation,” peculiarly the *land of “judgment”*; in a double sense: *actively*, the inflicter of judgment on Judah; *passively*, as about to be afterwards herself the object of judgment.

*Shoa ... Koa* — “rich ... noble”; descriptive of Babylon in her prosperity, having all the world’s wealth and dignity at her disposal. MAURER suggests that, as descriptive appellatives are subjoined to the proper name, “all the Assyrians” in the second hemistich of the verse (as the verse ought to be divided at “Koa”), so Pekod, Shoa, and Koa must be appellatives descriptive of “The Babylonians and ... Chaldeans” in the first hemistich; “Pekod” meaning “prefects”; Shoa ... Koa, “rich ... princely.”

*desirable young men* — strong irony. Alluding to <sup>2312</sup>Ezekiel 23:12, these “desirable young men” whom thou didst so “dote upon” for their manly vigor of appearance, shall by that very vigor be the better able to chastise thee.

**24. *with chariots*** — or, “with armaments”; so the *Septuagint*; “axes” [MAURER]; or, joining it with “wagons,” translate, “with *scythe-armed* wagons,” or “chariots” [GROTIUS].

*weels* — The unusual height of these increased their formidable appearance (<sup>2116</sup>Ezekiel 1:16-20).

*their judgments* — which awarded barbarously severe punishments (<sup>2819</sup>Jeremiah 52:9 29:22).

**25. *take away thy nose ... ears*** — Adulteresses were punished so among the Egyptians and Chaldeans. Oriental beauties wore ornaments in the ear and nose. How just the retribution, that the features most bejewelled should be mutilated! So, allegorically as to Judah, the spiritual adulteress.

**26. *strip ... of ... clothes*** — whereby she attracted her paramours (<sup>2369</sup>Ezekiel 16:39).

**27. Thus ... make ... lewdness to cease** — The captivity has made the Jews ever since abhor idolatry, not only on their return from Babylon, but for the last nineteen centuries of their dispersion, as foretold (<sup><3804></sup>Hosea 3:4).

**28.** (<sup><3237></sup>Ezekiel 23:17,18 16:37).

**29. take away ... thy labor** — that is, the fruits of thy labor.

**leave thee naked** — as captive females are treated.

**31. her cup** — of punishment (<sup><5106></sup>Psalm 11:6 75:8 <sup><2515></sup>Jeremiah 25:15, etc.). Thy guilt and that of Israel being alike, your punishment shall be alike.

**34. break ... sherds** — So greedily shalt thou suck out every drop like one drinking to madness (the effect invariably ascribed to drinking God's cup of wrath, <sup><2507></sup>Jeremiah 51:7 <sup><3126></sup>Habakkuk 2:16) that thou shalt crunch the very shreds of it; that is, there shall be no evil left which thou shalt not taste.

**pluck off thine own breasts** — enraged against them as the ministers to thine adultery.

**35. forgotten me** — (<sup><2423></sup>Jeremiah 2:32 13:25).

**cast me behind thy back** — (<sup><1140></sup>1 Kings 14:9 <sup><3625></sup>Nehemiah 9:26).

**bear ... thy lewdness** — that is, its penal consequences (<sup><2033></sup>Proverbs 1:31).

**36-44.** A summing up of the sins of the two sisters, especially those of Judah.

**wilt thou judge** — Wilt thou (not) judge (see on <sup><2304></sup>Ezekiel 20:4)?

**38. the same day** — On the very day that they had burned their children to Molech in the valley of Gehenna, they shamelessly and hypocritically presented themselves as worshippers in Jehovah's temple (<sup><2008></sup>Jeremiah 7:9,10).

**40. messenger was sent** — namely, by Judah (<sup><2516></sup>Ezekiel 23:16 <sup><2509></sup>Isaiah 57:9).

**paintedst ... eyes** — (<sup><1202></sup>2 Kings 9:30, *Margin*; <sup><2403></sup>Jeremiah 4:30). Black paint was spread on the eyelids of beauties to make the white of the eye more attractive by the contrast, so Judah left no seductive art untried.

**41. bed** — divan. While men reclined at table, women sat, as it seemed indelicate for them to lie down (<sup><3104></sup>Amos 6:4) [GROTIUS].

**table** — that is, the idolatrous altar.

**mine incense** — which I had given thee, and which thou oughtest to have offered to Me (<sup><3168></sup>Ezekiel 16:18,19 <sup><3168></sup>Hosea 2:8; compare <sup><3177></sup>Proverbs 7:17).

**42. *Sabeans*** — Not content with the princely, handsome Assyrians, the sisters brought to themselves the rude robber hordes of *Sabeans* (<sup><3115></sup>Job 1:15). The *Keri*, or *Margin*, reads “drunkards.”

**upon their hands** — upon the hands of the sisters, that is, they allured Samaria and Judah to worship their gods.

**43. *Will they***, etc. — Is it possible that paramours will desire any longer to commit whoredoms with so worn-out an old adulteress?

**45. *the righteous men*** — the Chaldeans; the executioners of God’s righteous vengeance (<sup><3168></sup>Ezekiel 16:38), not that they were “righteous” in themselves (Habakkuk 1:3,12,13).

**46. *a company*** — properly, “a council of judges” passing sentence on a criminal [GROTIUS]. The “removal” and “spoiling” by the Chaldean army is the execution of the judicial sentence of God.

**47. *stones*** — the legal penalty of the adulteress (<sup><3164></sup>Ezekiel 16:40,41 <sup><3165></sup>John 8:5). Answering to the *stones* hurled by the Babylonians from engines in besieging Jerusalem.

**houses ... fire** — fulfilled (<sup><3172></sup>2 Chronicles 36:17,19).

**48.** (<sup><3227></sup>Ezekiel 23:27).

**that all ... may be taught not to do**, etc. — (<sup><3131></sup>Deuteronomy 13:11).

**49. *bear the sins of your idols*** — that is, the punishment of your idolatry.

**know that I am the Lord God** — that is, know it to your cost ... by bitter suffering.

# CHAPTER 24

## ⚔️ EZEKIEL 24:1-27.

### VISION OF THE BOILING CALDRON, AND OF THE DEATH OF EZEKIEL'S WIFE.

1, 2. Ezekiel proves his divine mission by announcing the very day, (“this same day”) of the beginning of the investment of the city by Nebuchadnezzar; “the ninth year,” namely, of Jehoiachin’s captivity, “the tenth day of the tenth month”; though he was three hundred miles away from Jerusalem among the captives at the Chebar (⚔️ 2 Kings 25:1 ⚔️ Jeremiah 39:1).

2. **set himself** — *laid siege*; “lay against.”

3. **pot** — caldron. Alluding to the self-confident proverb used among the people, ⚔️ Ezekiel 11:3 (see on ⚔️ Ezekiel 11:3), “This city is the caldron and we be the flesh”; your proverb shall prove awfully true, but in a different sense from what you intend. So far from the city proving an iron, caldron-like defense from the fire, it shall be as a caldron set on the fire, and the people as so many pieces of meat subjected to boiling heat. See ⚔️ Jeremiah 1:13.

4. **pieces thereof** — those which properly *belong to it, as its own*.

**every good piece ... choice bones** — that is the most distinguished of the people. The “choice bones” *in* the pot have flesh adhering to them. The bones *under* the pot (⚔️ Ezekiel 24:5) are those having no flesh and used as fuel, answering to the poorest who suffer first, and are put out of pain sooner than the rich who endure what answers to the slower process of boiling.

5. **burn ... bones** — rather, “*pile* the bones.” Literally, “Let there be a *round* pile of the bones.”

**therein** — literally, “in the midst of it.”

6. **scum** — not ordinary, but *poisonous scum*, that is, the people’s all-pervading wickedness.

**bring it out piece by piece** — “it,” the contents of the pot; its flesh, that is, “I will destroy the people of the city, not all at the same time, but by a series of successive attacks.” Not as FAIRBAIRN, “on its every piece let it (the poisonous scum) go forth.”

**let no lot fall upon it** — that is, no lot, such as is sometimes cast, to decide who are to be destroyed and who saved (<sup><OR2></sup>2 Samuel 8:2 <sup><OR3></sup>Joel 3:3 <sup><OR1></sup>Obadiah 1:11 Na 3:10). In former carryings away of captives, lots were cast to settle who were to go, and who to stay, but now all alike are to be cast out without distinction of rank, age, or sex.

**7. upon the top of a rock** — or, “the dry, bare, exposed rock,” so as to be conspicuous to all. Blood poured on a rock is not so soon absorbed as blood poured on the earth. The law ordered the blood even of a beast or fowl to be “covered with the dust” (<sup><OR73></sup>Leviticus 17:13); but Jerusalem was so shameless as to be at no pains to cover up the blood of innocent men slain in her. *Blood*, as the consummation of all sin, presupposes every other form of guilt.

**8. That it might cause** — God *purposefully* let her so shamelessly pour the blood on the bare rock, “*that it might*” the more loudly and openly cry for vengeance from on high; and that the connection between the guilt and the punishment might be the more palpable. The blood of Abel, though the ground received it, still cries to heaven for vengeance (<sup><OR10></sup>Genesis 4:10,11); much more blood shamelessly exposed on the bare rock.

**set her blood** — She *shall* be paid back in kind (<sup><OR2></sup>Matthew 7:2). She openly shed blood, and her blood shall openly be shed.

**9. the pile for fire** — the hostile materials for the city’s destruction.

**10. spice it well** — that the meat may be the more palatable, that is, I will make the foe delight in its destruction as much as one delights in well-seasoned, savory meat. GROTIUS, needlessly departing from the obvious sense, translates, “Let it be boiled down to a compound.”

**11. set it empty ... that ... brass ... may burn, ... that ... scum ... may be consumed** — Even the consumption of the contents is not enough; the caldron itself which is infected by the poisonous scum must be destroyed, that is, the city itself must be destroyed, not merely the inhabitants, just as the very house infected with leprosy was to be destroyed (<sup><OR41></sup>Leviticus 14:34-45).

**12. herself** — rather, “she hath wearied *Me* out with lies”; or rather, “with vain labors” on My part to purify her without being obliged to have recourse to judgments (compare <sup><OR31></sup>Isaiah 43:24 <sup><OR17></sup>Malachi 2:17)

[MAURER]. However, *English Version* gives a good sense (compare <sup>23713</sup>Isaiah 47:13 57:10).

**13. *lewdness*** — determined, deliberate wickedness; from a *Hebrew* root, “to purpose.”

***I have purged thee*** — that is, I have left nothing untried which would tend towards purging thee, by sending prophets to invite thee to repentance, by giving thee the law with all its promises, privileges, and threats.

***thou shalt not be purged ... any more*** — that is, by My gracious interpositions; thou shalt be left to thine own course to take its fatal consequences.

**14. *go back*** — desist; relax [FAIRBAIRN].

**15.** Second part of the vision; announcement of the death of Ezekiel’s wife, and prohibition of the usual signs of mourning.

**16. *desire of ... eyes*** — his wife: representing the sanctuary (<sup>23201</sup>Ezekiel 24:21) in which the Jews so much gloried. The energy and subordination of Ezekiel’s whole life to his prophetic office is strikingly displayed in this narrative of his wife’s death. It is the only memorable event of his personal history which he records, and this only in reference to his soul-absorbing work. His natural tenderness is shown by that graphic touch, “the desire of thine eyes.” What amazing subjection, then, of his individual feeling to his prophetic duty is manifested in the simple statement (<sup>23248</sup>Ezekiel 24:18), “So I spake ... in the morning; and at even my wife died; and I did in the morning as I was commanded.”

***stroke*** — a sudden visitation. The suddenness of it enhances the self-control of Ezekiel in so entirely merging individual feeling, which must have been especially acute under such trying circumstances, in the higher claims of duty to God.

**17. *Forbear to cry*** — or, “Lament in silence”; not forbidding sorrow, but the *loud expression* of it [GROTIUS].

***no mourning*** — typical of the universality of the ruin of Jerusalem, which would preclude mourning, such as is usual where calamity is but partial. “The dead” is purposely put in the *plural*, as referring ultimately to the *dead* who should perish at the taking of Jerusalem; though the *singular* might have been expected, as Ezekiel’s wife was the immediate subject referred to: “make no mourning,” *such as is usual*, “for *the dead*, and such as shall be hereafter in Jerusalem” (<sup>23405</sup>Jeremiah 16:5-7).

***tire of thine head*** — thy headdress [FAIRBAIRN]. JEROME explains, “Thou shalt retain the hair which is usually cut in mourning.” The fillet, binding the hair about the temples like a chaplet, was laid aside at such times. Uncovering the head was an ordinary sign of mourning in priests; whereas others covered their heads in mourning (<sup>4059</sup>2 Samuel 15:30). The reason was, the priests had their headdress of fine twined linen given them for ornament, and as a badge of office. The high priest, as having on his head the holy anointing oil, was forbidden in *any* case to lay aside his headdress. But the priests might do so in the case of the death of the nearest relatives (<sup>4810</sup>Leviticus 21:2,3,10). They then put on inferior attire, sprinkling also on their heads dust and ashes (compare <sup>4809</sup>Leviticus 10:6,7).

***shoes upon thy feet*** — whereas mourners went “barefoot” (<sup>4059</sup>2 Samuel 15:30).

***cover not ... lips*** — rather, the “upper lip,” with the moustache (<sup>4834</sup>Leviticus 13:45 <sup>4307</sup>Micah 3:7).

***bread of men*** — the bread usually brought to mourners by friends in token of sympathy. So the “cup of consolation” brought (<sup>2407</sup>Jeremiah 16:7). “Of men” means such as is usually furnished *by men*. So <sup>4381</sup>Isaiah 8:1, “a man’s pen”; <sup>4617</sup>Revelation 21:17, “the measure of a man.”

**19. *what these things are to us*** — The people perceive that Ezekiel’s strange conduct has a symbolical meaning as to themselves; they ask, “What is that meaning?”

**21. *excellency of your strength*** — (compare <sup>4088</sup>Amos 6:8). The object of your pride and confidence (<sup>2404</sup>Jeremiah 7:4,10,14).

***desire of ... eyes*** — (<sup>4974</sup>Psalms 27:4). The antitype to Ezekiel’s wife (<sup>4240</sup>Ezekiel 24:16).

***pitieth*** — loveth, as pity is akin to love: “yearned over.”

***Profane*** — an appropriate word. They had profaned the temple with idolatry; God, in just retribution, will profane it with the Chaldean sword, that is, lay it in the dust, as Ezekiel’s wife.

***sons ... daughters ... left*** — the children *left* behind in Judea, when the parents were carried away.

**22.** (<sup>2406</sup>Jeremiah 16:6,7). So general shall be the calamity, that all ordinary usages of mourning shall be suspended.

**23. *ye shall not mourn ... but ... pine away for your iniquities*** — The Jews’ not mourning was to be not the result of insensibility, any more than

Ezekiel's not mourning for his wife was not from want of feeling. They could not in their exile manifest publicly their lamentation, but they would privately "mourn *one to another*." Their "iniquities" would then be their chief sorrow ("pining away"), as feeling that these were the cause of their sufferings (compare <sup><4139></sup>Leviticus 26:39 <sup><2139></sup>Lamentations 3:39). The fullest fulfillment is still future (<sup><3207></sup>Zechariah 12:10-14).

**24. *sign*** — a typical representative in his own person of what was to befall them (<sup><2108></sup>Isaiah 20:3).

***when this cometh*** — alluding probably to their taunt, as if God's word spoken by His prophets would never come to pass. "Where is the word of the Lord? Let it *come* now" (<sup><2475></sup>Jeremiah 17:15). When the prophecy is fulfilled, "ye shall know (to your cost) that I am the Lord," who thereby show My power and fulfill My word spoken by My prophet (<sup><4139></sup>John 13:19 14:29).

**25, 26.** "The day" referred to in these verses is the day of the overthrow of the temple, when the fugitive "escapes." But "that day," in <sup><2207></sup>Ezekiel 24:27, is the day on which the fugitive brings the sad news to Ezekiel, at the Chebar. In the interval the prophet suspended his prophecies *as to the Jews*, as was foretold. Afterwards his mouth was "opened," and no more "dumb" (<sup><2139></sup>Ezekiel 3:26,27; compare <sup><2207></sup>Ezekiel 24:27 33:21,22).

# CHAPTER 25

## EZEKIEL 25:1-17.

### APPROPRIATELY IN THE INTERVAL OF SILENCE AS TO THE JEWS IN THE EIGHT CHAPTERS, (TWENTY-FIFTH THROUGH THIRTY-SECOND) EZEKIEL DENOUNCES JUDGMENTS ON THE HEATHEN WORLD KINGDOMS.

If Israel was not spared, much less the heathen utterly corrupt, and having no mixture of truth, such as Israel in its worst state possessed (<sup>61047</sup>1 Peter 4:17,18). Their ruin was to be utter: Israel's but temporary (<sup>3463</sup>Jeremiah 46:28). The nations denounced are seven, the perfect number; implying that God's judgments would visit, not merely these, but *the whole round* of the heathen foes of God. Babylon is excepted, because she is now for the present viewed as the rod of God's retributive justice, a view too much then lost sight of by those who fretted against her universal supremacy.

3. (<sup>2400</sup>Jeremiah 49:1).

*when ... profaned; ... when ... desolate; ... when ... captivity* — rather, “for ... for ... for”: the *cause* of the insolent exultation of Ammon over Jerusalem. They triumphed especially over the fall of the “sanctuary,” as the triumph of heathenism over the rival claims of Jehovah. In Jehoshaphat's time, when the eighty-third Psalm was written (<sup>3806</sup>Psalm 83:4,7,8,12, “Ammon ... *holpen the children of Lot,*” who were, therefore, the *leaders* of the unholy conspiracy, “Let us take to ourselves the *houses of God* in possession”), we see the same profane spirit. Now at last their wicked wish seems accomplished in the fall of Jerusalem. Ammon, descended from Lot, held the region east of Jordan, separated from the Amorites on the north by the river Jabbok, and from Moab on the south by the Arnon. They were auxiliaries to Babylon in the destruction of Jerusalem (<sup>1240</sup>2 Kings 24:2).

4. *men of ... east* — literally, “children of the East,” the nomad tribes of Arabia-Deserta, east of the Jordan and the Dead Sea.

*palaces* — their nomadic encampments or folds, surrounded with mud walls, are so called in irony. Where thy “palaces” once stood, there shall their very different “palaces” stand. Fulfilled after the ravaging of their

region by Nebuchadnezzar, shortly after the destruction of Jerusalem (compare <sup><3122></sup>Ezekiel 21:22 <sup><3401></sup>Jeremiah 49:1-28).

**5. *Rabbah*** — meaning “the Great,” Ammon’s metropolis. Under the Ptolemies it was rebuilt under the name Philadelphia; the ruins are called *Amman* now, but there is no dwelling inhabited.

***Ammonites*** — that is the Ammonite *region* is to be a “couching place for flocks,” namely of the Arabs. The “camels,” being the chief beast of burden of the Chaldeans, are put first, as their invasion was to prepare the Ammonite land for the Arab “flocks.” Instead of busy men, there shall be “still and couching flocks.”

**6, 7.** “Because *thou* hast clapped *thine* hands,” exulting over the downfall of Jerusalem, “*I* also will stretch out *Mine* hand upon thee” (to which <sup><3217></sup>Ezekiel 21:17 also may refer, “I will smite *Mine* hands together”).

***hands ... feet ... heart*** — with the whole inward feeling, and with every outward indication. *Stamping with the foot* means *dancing for joy*.

**7. *a spoil*** — so the *Hebrew Margin*, or *Keri*, for the text or *Chetib*, “meat” (so <sup><3315></sup>Ezekiel 26:5 34:28). Their *goods* were to be a “spoil to the foe”; their *state* was to be “cut off,” so as to be no more a “people”; and they were as *individuals*, for the most part, to be “destroyed.”

**8.** Moab, Seir, and Ammon were contiguous countries, stretching in one line from Gilead on the north to the Red Sea. They therefore naturally acted in concert, and in joint hostility to Judea.

***Judah is like ... all ... heathen*** — The Jews fare no better than others: it is of no use to them to serve Jehovah, who, they say, is the only true God.

**9, 10. *open ... from the cities*** — *I will open up the side*, or border of *Moab* (metaphor from a man whose side is open to blows), *from the* (direction of) *the cities* on his northwest border beyond the Arnon, once assigned to Reuben (<sup><3635></sup>Joshua 13:15-21), but now in the hands of their original owners; and the “men of the east,” the wandering Bedouin hordes, shall enter through these cities into Moab and waste it. Moab accordingly was so wasted by them, that long before the time of Christ it had melted away among the hordes of the desert. For “cities,” GROTIUS translates the *Hebrew* as proper names, the *Ar* and *Aroer*, on the Arnon. Hence the *Hebrew* for “cities,” “Ar” is repeated twice (<sup><4023></sup>Numbers 21:28 <sup><3123></sup>Deuteronomy 2:36 <sup><23501></sup>Isaiah 15:1).

***glory of the country*** — The region of Moab was richer than that of Ammon; it answers to the modern Belka, the richest district in South Syria,

and the scene in consequence of many a contest among the Bedouins. Hence it is called here a “glorious land” (literally, “a glory,” or “ornament of a land”) [FAIRBAIRN]. Rather, “the glory of the country” is in apposition with “cities” which immediately precedes, and the names of which presently follow.

***Beth-jeshimoth*** — meaning “the city of desolations”; perhaps so named from some siege it sustained; it was towards the west.

***Baal-meon*** — called also “Beth-meon” (<sup>24823</sup>Jeremiah 48:23), and “Beth-baal-meon” (<sup>4637</sup>Joshua 13:17, called so from the worship of Baal), and “Bajith,” simply (<sup>2349</sup>Isaiah 15:2).

***Kiriathaim*** — “the double city.” The strength of these cities engendered “the pride” of Moab (<sup>2366</sup>Isaiah 16:6).

**10. *with the Ammonites*** — FAIRBAIRN explains and translates, “upon the children of Ammon” (elliptically for, “I will open Moab to the men of the east, who, having overrun the children of Ammon, shall then fall on Moab”). MAURER, as *English Version*, “with the Ammonites,” that is, Moab, “together with the land of Ammon,” is to be thrown “open to the men of the east,” to enter and take possession (<sup>2441</sup>Jeremiah 49:1-39).

**12. *taking vengeance*** — literally, “revenging with revengement,” that is, the most unrelenting vengeance. It was not simple hatred, but deep-brooding, implacable revenge. The grudge of Edom or Esau was originally for Jacob’s robbing him of Isaac’s blessing (<sup>4023</sup>Genesis 25:23 27:27-41). This purpose of revenge yielded to the extraordinary kindness of Jacob, through the blessing of Him with whom Jacob wrestled in prayer; but it was revived as an hereditary grudge in the posterity of Esau when they saw the younger branch rising to the pre-eminence which they thought of right belonged to themselves. More recently, for David’s subjugation of Edom to Israel (<sup>3084</sup>2 Samuel 8:14). They therefore gave vent to their spite by joining the Chaldeans in destroying Jerusalem (<sup>4900</sup>Psalms 137:7 <sup>2942</sup>Lamentations 4:22 <sup>3010</sup>Obadiah 1:10-14), and then intercepting and killing the fugitive Jews (<sup>3001</sup>Amos 1:11) and occupying part of the Jewish land as far as Hebron.

**13. *Teman ... they of Dedan*** — rather, “I will make it desolate from Teman (in the south) even to Dedan (in the northwest)” [GROTIUS], (<sup>2408</sup>Jeremiah 49:8), that is, the whole country from north to south, stretching from the south of the Dead Sea to the Elanitic gulf of the Red Sea.

**14. by ... my people Israel** — namely, by Judas Maccabeus. The Idumeans were finally, by compulsory circumcision, incorporated with the Jewish state by John Hyrcanus (see <sup><23415></sup>Isaiah 34:5 63:1, etc.; I Maccabees 5:3). So complete was the amalgamation in Christ's time, that the Herods of Idumean origin, as Jews, ruled over the two races as one people. Thus the ancient prophecy was fulfilled (<sup><0252></sup>Genesis 25:23), "The elder shall serve the younger."

**15.** (<sup><0931></sup>1 Samuel 13:1-14:52 <sup><4088></sup>2 Chronicles 28:18). The "old hatred" refers to their continual enmity to the covenant-people. They lay along Judea on the seacoast at the opposite side from Ammon and Moab. They were overthrown by Uzziah (<sup><1016></sup>2 Chronicles 26:6), and by Hezekiah (<sup><1288></sup>2 Kings 18:8). Nebuchadnezzar overran the cities on the seacoast on his way to Egypt after besieging Tyre (<sup><2470></sup>Jeremiah 47:1-7). God will take vengeance on those who take the avenging of themselves out of His hands into their own (<sup><5129></sup>Romans 12:19-21 <sup><5013></sup>James 2:13).

**16. cut off the Cherethims** — There is a play on similar sounds in the Hebrew, *hichratti cherethim*, "I will slay the slayers." The name may have been given to a section of the Philistines from their warlike disposition (<sup><0844></sup>1 Samuel 30:14 31:3). They excelled in archery, whence David enrolled a bodyguard from them (<sup><1088></sup>2 Samuel 8:18 15:18 20:7). They sprang from Caphtor, identified by many with Crete, which was famed for archery, and to which the name *Cherethim* seems akin. Though in emigration, which mostly tended westwards, Crete seems more likely to be colonized from Philistia than Philistia from Crete, a *section* of Cretans may have settled at Chere thim in South Philistia, while the Philistines, *as a nation*, may have come originally from the east (compare <sup><0823></sup>Deuteronomy 2:23 <sup><2470></sup>Jeremiah 47:4 <sup><1016></sup>Amos 9:7 Zephaniah 2:5). In <sup><0104></sup>Genesis 10:14 the Philistines are made *distinct from the Caphtorim*, and are said to come from the Casluhim; so that the Cherethim were but a part of the Philistines, which <sup><0844></sup>1 Samuel 30:14 confirms.

**remnant of** — that is, "on the seacoast" of the Mediterranean: those left *remaining* after the former overthrows inflicted by Samuel, David, Hezekiah, and Psammetichus of Egypt, father of Pharaoh-necho (<sup><2520></sup>Jeremiah 25:20).

**17. know ... vengeance** — They shall know Me, not in mercy, but by My vengeance on them (<sup><4016></sup>Psalms 9:16).

# CHAPTER 26

## EZEKIEL 26:1-21.

### THE JUDGMENT ON TYRE THROUGH NEBUCHADNEZZAR (TWENTY-SIXTH THROUGH TWENTY-EIGHTH CHAPTERS).

In the twenty-sixth chapter, Ezekiel sets forth: —

- (1) Tyre's sin;
- (2) its doom;
- (3) the instruments executing it;
- (4) the effects produced on other nations by her downfall.

In the twenty-seventh chapter, a lamentation over the fall of such earthly splendor. In the twenty-eighth chapter, an elegy addressed to the king, on the humiliation of his sacrilegious pride. Ezekiel, in his prophecies as to the heathen, exhibits *the dark side only*; because he views them simply in their hostility to the people of God, who shall outlive them all. Isaiah (<sup>23:1</sup>Isaiah 23:1-18), on the other hand, at the close of judgments, holds out the prospect of blessing, when Tyre should turn to the Lord.

1. The specification of the date, which had been omitted in the case of the four preceding objects of judgment, marks the greater weight attached to the fall of Tyre.

*eleventh year* — namely, after the carrying away of Jehoiachin, the year of the fall of Jerusalem. The number of the month is, however, omitted, and the day only given. As the month of the *taking* of Jerusalem was regarded as one of particular note, namely, *the fourth month*, also *the fifth*, on which it was actually *destroyed* (<sup>25:1</sup>Jeremiah 52:6,12,13), RABBI DAVID reasonably supposes that Tyre uttered her taunt at the close of the fourth month, as her nearness to Jerusalem enabled her to hear of its fall very soon, and that Ezekiel met it with his threat against herself on “the first day” *of the fifth month*.

2. *Tyre* — (<sup>66:2</sup>Joshua 19:29 <sup>10:7</sup>2 Samuel 24:7), literally, meaning “the rock-city,” *Zor*; a name applying to the island Tyre, called New Tyre, rather

than *Old Tyre* on the *mainland*. They were half a mile apart. “New Tyre,” a century and a half before the fall of Jerusalem, had successfully resisted Shalmaneser of Assyria, for five years besieging it (MENANDER, from the Tyrian archives, quoted by JOSEPHUS, *Antiquities*, 9.14. 2). It was the stronger and more important of the two cities, and is the one chiefly, though not exclusively, here meant. Tyre was originally a colony of Zidon. Nebuchadnezzar’s siege of it lasted thirteen years (<sup><3298></sup>Ezekiel 29:18 <sup><3299></sup>Isaiah 23:1-18). Though no profane author mentions his having succeeded in the siege, JEROME states he read the fact in Assyrian histories.

**Aha!** — exultation over a fallen rival (<sup><4851></sup>Psalms 35:21,25).

**she ... that was the gates** — that is, the single gate composed of two folding doors. Hence the verb is *singular*. “Gates” were the place of resort for traffic and public business: so here it expresses *a mart of commerce* frequented by merchants. Tyre regards Jerusalem not as an open enemy, for her territory being the narrow, long strip of land north of Philistia, between Mount Lebanon and the sea, her interest was to cultivate friendly relations with the Jews, on whom she was dependent for corn (<sup><3277></sup>Ezekiel 27:17 <sup><1089></sup>1 Kings 5:9 <sup><4121></sup>Acts 12:20). But Jerusalem had intercepted some of the inland traffic which she wished to monopolize to herself; so, in her intensely selfish worldly-mindedness, she exulted heartlessly over the fall of Jerusalem as her own gain. Hence she incurred the wrath of God as pre-eminently the world’s representative in its ambition, selfishness, and pride, in defiance of the will of God (<sup><3299></sup>Isaiah 23:9).

**she is turned unto me** — that is, the mart of corn, wine, oil, balsam, etc. which she once was, is transferred to me. The caravans from Palmyra, Petra, and the East will no longer be intercepted by the market (“the gates”) of Jerusalem, but will come to me.

**3, 4. nations ... as the sea ... waves** — In striking contrast to the boasting of Tyre, God threatens to bring against her Babylon’s army levied from “many nations,” even as the Mediterranean waves that dashed against her rock-founded city on all sides.

**scrape her dust ... make her ... top of ... rock** — or, “a bare rock” [GROTIUS]. The soil which the Tyrians had brought together upon the rock on which they built their city, I will scrape so clean away as to leave no dust, but only the bare rock as it was. An awful contrast to her expectation of filling herself with *all* the wealth of the East now that Jerusalem has fallen.

**5. in the midst of the sea** — plainly referring to New Tyre (<sup><3273></sup>Ezekiel 27:32).

**6. *her daughters ... in the field*** — The surrounding villages, dependent on her in the open country, shall share the fate of the mother city.

**7. *from the north*** — the original locality of the Chaldeans; also, the direction by which they entered Palestine, taking the route of Riblah and Hamath on the Orontes, in preference to that across the desert between Babylon and Judea.

***king of kings*** — so called because of the many kings who owned allegiance to him (<sup><1283></sup>2 Kings 18:28). God had delegated to him the universal earth-empire which is His (<sup><2047></sup>Daniel 2:47). The Son of God alone has the right and title inherently, and shall assume it when the world kings shall have been fully proved as abusers of the trust (<sup><5065></sup>1 Timothy 6:15 <sup><6172></sup>Revelation 17:12-14 19:15,16). Ezekiel's prophecy was not based on conjecture from the past, for Shalmaneser, with all the might of the Assyrian empire, had failed in his siege of Tyre. Yet Nebuchadnezzar was to succeed. JOSEPHUS tells us that Nebuchadnezzar began the siege in the seventh year of Ithobal's reign, king of Tyre.

**9. *engines of war*** — literally, “an apparatus for *striking*.” “He shall apply *the stroke* of the battering-ram *against* thy walls.” HAVERNICK translates, “His enginery of *destruction*”; literally, the “*destruction* (not merely *the stroke*) of his enginery.”

***axes*** — literally, “swords.”

**10. *dust*** — So thick shall be the “dust” stirred up by the immense numbers of “horses,” that it shall “cover” the whole city as a cloud.

***horses ... chariots*** — As in <sup><3318></sup>Ezekiel 26:3-5, *New Tyre* on the insular rock in the sea (compare <sup><2211></sup>Isaiah 23:2,4,6) is referred to; so here, in <sup><3319></sup>Ezekiel 26:9-11, *Old Tyre* on the mainland. *Both* are included in the prophecies under one name.

***wheels*** — FAIRBAIRN thinks that here, and in <sup><3224></sup>Ezekiel 23:24, as “the wheels” are distinct from the “chariots,” some wheelwork for riding on, or for the operations of the siege, are meant.

**11. *thy strong garrisons*** — literally, “the statutes of thy strength”; so *the forts* which are “monuments of thy strength.” MAURER understands, in stricter agreement with the literal meaning, “the statues” or “obelisks erected in honor of the idols, the tutelary gods of Tyre,” as Melecarte, answering to the Grecian Hercules, whose temple stood in Old Tyre (compare <sup><2463></sup>Jeremiah 43:13, *Margin*).

**12. lay thy stones ... timber ... in ... midst of ... water** — referring to the insular New Tyre (<sup><3318></sup>Ezekiel 26:3,5 <sup><3274></sup>Ezekiel 27:4,25,26). When its lofty buildings and towers fall, surrounded as it was with the sea which entered its double harbor and washed its ramparts, the “stones ... timbers ... and dust” appropriately are described as thrown down “in the midst of the water.” Though Ezekiel attributes the capture of Tyre to Nebuchadnezzar (see on <sup><3298></sup>Ezekiel 29:18), yet it does not follow that the *final* destruction of it described is attributed by him to the same monarch. The overthrow of Tyre by Nebuchadnezzar was the first link in the long chain of evil — the first deadly blow which prepared for, and was the earnest of, the final doom. The change in this verse from the individual conqueror “he,” to the general “they,” marks that what he did was not the whole, but only paved the way for others to complete the work begun by him. It was to be a progressive work until she was utterly destroyed. Thus the words here answer exactly to what Alexander did. With the “stones, timber,” and rubbish of Old Tyre, he built a causeway in seven months to New Tyre on the island and so took it [CURTIUS, 4, 2], 322 B.C.

**13.** Instead of the joyousness of thy prosperity, a death-like silence shall reign (<sup><2318></sup>Isaiah 24:8 <sup><2474></sup>Jeremiah 7:34).

**14.** He concludes in nearly the same words as he began (<sup><3304></sup>Ezekiel 26:4,5).

**built no more** — fulfilled as to the mainland Tyre, under Nebuchadnezzar. The insular Tyre recovered partly, after seventy years (<sup><2317></sup>Isaiah 23:17,18), but again suffered under Alexander, then under Antigonos, then under the Saracens at the beginning of the fourteenth century. Now its harbors are choked with sand, precluding all hope of future restoration, “not one entire house is left, and only a few fishermen take shelter in the vaults” [MAUNDRELL]. So accurately has God’s word come to pass.

**15-21.** The impression which the overthrow of Tyre produced on other maritime nations and upon her own colonies, for example, Utica, Carthage, and Tartessus or Tarshish in Spain.

**isles** — maritime lands. Even mighty Carthage used to send a yearly offering to the temple of Hercules at Tyre: and the mother city gave high priests to her colonies. Hence the consternation at her fall felt in the widely scattered dependencies with which she was so closely connected by the ties of religion, as well as commercial intercourse.

**shake** — metaphorically: “be agitated” (<sup><2421></sup>Jeremiah 49:21).

**16. come down from their thrones ... upon the ground** — “the throne of the mourners” (<sup><3013></sup>Job 2:13 <sup><3013></sup>Jon 3:6).

**princes of the sea** — are the merchant rulers of Carthage and other colonies of Tyre, who had made themselves rich and powerful by trading on the sea (<sup>2328</sup>Isaiah 23:8).

**clothe ... with trembling** — Hebrew, “tremblings.” Compare <sup>3077</sup>Ezekiel 7:27, “clothed with desolation”; <sup>4128</sup>Psalms 132:18. In a public calamity the garment was changed for a mourning garb.

**17. inhabited of seafaring men** — that is, which was frequented by merchants of various sea-bordering lands [GROTIUS]. FAIRBAIRN translates with Peschito, “Thou inhabitant of the seas” (the Hebrew literal meaning). Tyre rose as it were *out of* the seas as if she got thence her inhabitants, being peopled so closely down to the waters. So Venice was called “the bride of the sea.”

**strong in the sea** — through her insular position.

**cause their terror to be on all that haunt it** — namely, the sea. The Hebrew is rather, “they put their terror upon all *her* (the city’s) inhabitants,” that is, they make the name of every Tyrian to be feared [FAIRBAIRN].

**18. thy departure** — <sup>2329</sup>Isaiah 23:6,12 predicts that the Tyrians, in consequence of the siege, should pass over the Mediterranean to the lands bordering on it (“Chittim,” “Tarshish,” etc.). So Ezekiel here. Accordingly JEROME says that he read in Assyrian histories that, “when the Tyrians saw no hope of escaping, they *fled* to Carthage or some islands of the Ionian and Aegean Seas” [BISHOP NEWTON]. (See on <sup>3198</sup>Ezekiel 29:18). GROTIUS explains “departure,” that is, “in the day when hostages shall be *carried away* from thee to Babylon.” The parallelism to “*thy fall*” makes me think “departure” must mean “thy end” in general, but with an *included* allusion to the “departure” of most of her people to her colonies at *the fall* of the city.

**19. great waters** — appropriate metaphor of the Babylonian hosts, which literally, by breaking down insular Tyre’s ramparts, caused the sea to “cover” part of her.

**20. the pit** — Tyre’s disappearance is compared to that of *the dead placed in their sepulchres* and no more seen among the living (compare <sup>3528</sup>Ezekiel 32:18,23 <sup>2341</sup>Isaiah 14:11,15,19).

**I shall set glory in the land** — In contrast to Tyre consigned to the “pit” of *death*, I shall set glory (that is, My presence symbolized by the Shekinah cloud, the antitype to which shall be Messiah, “the *glory* as of the only-begotten of the Father,” <sup>4014</sup>John 1:14 <sup>2012</sup>Isaiah 4:2,5 <sup>3063</sup>Zechariah 6:13) in Judah.

*of the living* — as opposed to Tyre consigned to the “pit” of death. Judea is to be the land of national and spiritual *life*, being restored after its captivity (Ezekiel 47:9). FAIRBAIRN loses the antithesis by applying the negative to both clauses, “and that thou be *not* set as a glory in the land of the living.”

**21. *terror*** — an example of judgment calculated to terrify all evildoers.

*thou shall be no more* — Not that there was to be no more a Tyre, but she was no more to be *the* Tyre that once was: her glory and name were to be no more. As, to Old Tyre, the prophecy was literally fulfilled, not a vestige of it being left.

# CHAPTER 27

## EZEKIEL 27:1-36.

### TYRE'S FORMER GREATNESS, SUGGESTING A LAMENTATION OVER HER SAD DOWNFALL.

2. *lamentation* — a funeral dirge, eulogizing her great attributes, to make the contrast the greater between her former and her latter state.

3. *situate at the entry of the sea* — literally, plural, “entrances,” that is, ports or havens; referring to the double port of Tyre, at which vessels entered round the north and south ends of the island, so that ships could find a ready entrance from whatever point the wind might blow (compare <sup><370></sup>Ezekiel 28:2).

*merchant of ... people for many isles* — that is, a mercantile emporium of the peoples of many seacoasts, both from the east and from the west (<sup><2338></sup>Isaiah 23:3), “a mart of nations.”

*of perfect beauty* — (<sup><382></sup>Ezekiel 28:12).

4. Tyre, in consonance with her seagirt position, separated by a strait of half a mile from the mainland, is described as a ship built of the best material, and manned with the best mariners and skillful pilots, but at last wrecked in tempestuous seas (<sup><3726></sup>Ezekiel 27:26).

5. *Senir* — the Amorite name of Hermon, or the southern height of Anti-libanus (<sup><4819></sup>Deuteronomy 3:9); the Sidonian name was *Sirion*. “All thy ... boards”; dual in *Hebrew*, “double-boards,” namely, placed in a double order on the two sides of which the ship consisted [VATABLUS]. Or, referring to the two sides or the two ends, the prow and the stern, which every ship has [MUNSTER].

*cedars* — most suited for “masts,” from their height and durability.

6. *Bashan* — celebrated for its oaks, as Lebanon was for its cedars.

*the company of ... Ashurites* — the most skillful workmen summoned from Assyria. Rather, as the *Hebrew* orthography requires, “They have made thy (rowing) benches of ivory inlaid in the daughter of cedars” [MAURER], or, *the best boxwood*. FAIRBAIRN, with BOCHART, reads the

*Hebrew* two words as *one*: “Thy plankwork (*deck*: instead of ‘benches,’ as the *Hebrew* is *singular*) they made ivory *with boxes*.” *English Version*, with MAURER’S correction, is simpler.

**Chittim** — Cyprus and Macedonia, from which, PLINY tells us, the best boxwood came [GROTIUS].

**7. broidered ... sail** — The ancients embroidered their sails often at great expense, especially the Egyptians, whose linen, still preserved in mummies, is of the finest texture.

**Elishah** — Greece; so called from Elis, a large and ancient division of Peloponnesus. Pausanias says that the best of linen was produced in it, and in no other part of Greece; called by HOMER, *Alisium*.

**that which covered thee** — thy awning.

**8. Arvad** — a small island and city near Phoenicia, now *Ruad*: its inhabitants are still noted for seafaring habits.

**thy wise men, O Tyrus ... thy pilots** — While the men of Arvad, once thy equals (<sup>4108</sup>Genesis 10:18), and the Sidonians, once thy superiors, were employed by thee in subordinate positions as “mariners,” thou madest thine own skilled men alone to be commanders and pilots. Implying the political and mercantile superiority of Tyre.

**9. Gebal** — a Phoenician city and region between Beirut and Tripoils, famed for skilled workmen (<sup>4168</sup>1 Kings 5:18, *Margin*; <sup>4837</sup>Psalms 83:7).

**calkers** — *stoppers of chinks* in a vessel: carrying on the metaphor as to Tyre.

**occupy thy merchandise** — that is, to exchange merchandise with thee.

**10. Persia ... Phut** — warriors from the extreme east and west.

**Lud** — the Lydians of Asia Minor, near the Meander, famed for archery (<sup>2697</sup>Isaiah 66:19); rather than those of Ethiopia, as the Lydians of Asia Minor form a kind of intermediate step between Persia and Phut (the Libyans about Cyrene, shielded warriors, <sup>2449</sup>Jeremiah 46:9, descended from Phut, son of Ham).

**hanged ... shield ... comeliness** — Warriors hanged their accoutrements on the walls for ornament. Divested of the metaphor, it means that it was an honor to thee to have so many nations supplying thee with hired soldiers.

**11. Gammadims** — rather, as the Tyrians were Syro-Phoenicians, from a *Syriac* root, meaning *daring*, “men of daring” [LUDOVICUS DE DIEU]. It is

not likely the keeping of watch “in the towers” would have been entrusted to foreigners. Others take it from a *Hebrew* root, “a dagger,” or short sword (<sup><0016></sup>Judges 3:16), short-swordsmen.”

**12. *Tarshish*** — Tartessus in Spain, a country famed for various metals, which were exported to Tyre. Much of the “tin” probably was conveyed by the Phoenicians from Cornwall to Tarshish.

***traded in thy fairs*** — “did barter with thee” [FAIRBAIRN]; from a root, “to leave,” something *left* in barter for something else.

**13. *Javan*** — the Ionians or *Greeks*: for the *Ionians* of Asia Minor were the first Greeks with whom the Asiatics came in contact.

***Tubal ... Meshech*** — the Tibareni and Moschi, in the mountain region between the Black and Caspian Seas.

***persons of men*** — that is, as slaves. So the Turkish harems are supplied with female slaves from Circassia and Georgia.

***vessels*** — all kinds of *articles*. Superior weapons are still manufactured in the Caucasus region.

**14. *Togarmah*** — Armenia: descended from Gomer (<sup><0018></sup>Genesis 10:3). Their mountainous region south of the Caucasus was celebrated for horses.

***horsemen*** — rather, “riding-horses,” as distinct from “horses” for chariots [FAIRBAIRN].

**15. *Dedan*** — near the Persian Sea: thus an avenue to the commerce of India. Not the Dedan in Arabia (<sup><0021></sup>Ezekiel 27:20), as the names in the context here prove, but the Dedan sprung from Gush [BOCHART], (<sup><0010></sup>Genesis 10:7).

***merchandise of thine hand*** — that is, were dependent on thee for trade [FAIRBAIRN]; came to buy *the produce of thy hands* [GROTIUS].

***a present*** — literally, “a reward in return”; a price paid for merchandise.

***horns of ivory*** — Ivory is so termed from its resemblance to *horns*. The *Hebrew* word for “ivory” means “tooth”; so that they cannot have mistaken ivory as if *coming from the horns* of certain animals, instead of from the tusks of the elephant.

**16.** “Syria was thy mart for the multitude,” etc. For “Syria” the *Septuagint* reads “Edom.” But the Syrians were famed as merchants.

***occupied*** — *old English* for “traded”; so in <sup><0013></sup>Luke 19:13.

**agate** — Others translate, “ruby,” “chalcedony,” or “pearls.”

**17. Minnith ... Pannag** — names of places in Israel famed for good wheat, wherewith Tyre was supplied (<sup><1169></sup>1 Kings 5:9,11 <sup><1570></sup>Ezra 3:7 <sup><4123></sup>Acts 12:20); Minnith was formerly an Ammonite city (<sup><0113></sup>Judges 11:33). “Pannag” is identified by GROTIUS with “Phenice,” the *Greek* name for “Canaan.” “They traded ... wheat,” that is, they supplied thy market with wheat.

**balm** — or, “balsam.”

**18. Helbon** — or Chalybon, in Syria, now Aleppo; famed for its wines; the Persian monarchs would drink no other.

**19. Daniel also** — None of the other places enumerated commence with the copula (“also”; *Hebrew*, *ve*). Moreover, the products specified, “cassia, calamus,” apply rather to places in Arabia. Therefore, FAIRBAIRN translates, “Vedan”; perhaps the modern Aden, near the straits of Bab-el-man-deb. GROTIUS refers it to Dana, mentioned by PTOLEMY.

**Javan** — not the Greeks of *Europe* or *Asia Minor*, but of a Greek settlement in *Arabia*.

**going to and fro** — rather, as *Hebrew* admits, “from *Uzal*.” This is added to “Javan,” to mark *which* Javan is meant (<sup><1017></sup>Genesis 10:27). The metropolis of Arabia Felix, or Yemen; called also Sanaa [BOCHART]. *English Version* gives a good sense, thus: All peoples, whether near as the Israelite “Dan,” or far as the Greeks or “Javan,” who were wont to “go to and fro” from their love of traffic, frequented thy marts, bringing bright iron, etc., these products not being necessarily represented as those of Daniel or Javan.

**bright iron** — Yemen is still famed for its sword blades.

**calamus** — aromatic cane.

**20. Dedan** — in Arabia; distinct from the Dedan in <sup><3275></sup>Ezekiel 27:15 (see on <sup><3275></sup>Ezekiel 27:15). Descended from Abraham and Keturah (<sup><0128></sup>Genesis 25:3) [BOCHART].

**precious clothes** — splendid coverlets.

**21. Arabia** — the nomadic tribes of Arabia, among which Kedar was pre-eminent.

**occupied with thee** — literally, “of thy hand,” that is, they *traded* with thee for wares, the product of *thy hand* (see on <sup><3275></sup>Ezekiel 27:15,16).

22. *Sheba ... Raamah* — in Arabia.

*chief of ... spices* — that is, *best* spices (<sup><HEB></sup>Deuteronomy 33:15). Obtained from India and conveyed in caravans to Tyre.

23. *Haran* — the dwelling-place of Abraham in Mesopotamia, after he moved from Ur (<sup><HEB></sup>Genesis 11:31).

*Canneh* — Calneh, an Assyrian city on the Tigris; the Ctesiphon of the Greeks (<sup><HEB></sup>Genesis 10:10).

*Eden* — probably a region in Babylonia (see <sup><HEB></sup>Genesis 2:8).

*Chilmad* — a compound; the place designated by PTOLEMY “Gaal of Media.” The *Chaldee version* interprets it of Media. HENDERSON refers it to Carmanda, which XENOPHON describes as a large city beyond the Euphrates.

24. *all sorts of things* — *Hebrew*, “perfections”; exquisite articles of finery [GROTIUS].

*clothes* — rather, “mantles” or “cloaks”; literally, “wrappings.” For “blue,” HENDERSON translates, “purple.”

*chests of rich apparel, bound with cords* — treasures or repositories of damask stuffs, consisting of variegated threads woven together in figures [HENDERSON].

*cedar* — The “chests” were made of *cedar*, in order to last the longer; and it also keeps off decay and has a sweet odor.

25. *sing of thee* — personification; flay great merchant ships were palpable proofs of thy greatness. Others translate from a different *Hebrew* root, “were thy (mercantile) travelers.” FAIRBAIRN translates, “Were thy walls.” But the parallelism to “thou wast glorious” favors *English Version*, “sing of thee.”

26. In contrast to her previous greatness, her downfall is here, by a sudden transition, depicted under the image of a vessel foundering at sea.

*east wind* — blowing from Lebanon, the most violent wind in the Mediterranean (<sup><HEB></sup>Psalms 48:7). A Levanter, as it is called. Nebuchadnezzar is meant. The “sea” is the war with him which the “rowers,” or rulers of the state vessel, had “brought” it into, to its ruin.

27. The detailed enumeration implies the *utter completeness* of the ruin.

*and in all thy company* — “even with all thy collected multitude” [HENDERSON].

28. *The suburbs* — the buildings of Tyre on the adjoining continent.

29. So on the downfall of spiritual Babylon (<sup><6887></sup>Revelation 18:17, etc.).

*shall stand upon ... land* — being cast out of their ships in which heretofore they prided themselves.

30. *against thee* — rather, “concerning thee.”

31. *utterly bald* — literally, “bald with baldness.” The Phoenician custom in mourning; which, as being connected with heathenish superstitions, was forbidden to Israel (<sup><6840></sup>Deuteronomy 14:1).

*take up* — lift up.

*the destroyed* — a destroyed one. Literally, (as opposed to its previous bustle of thronging merchants and mariners, <sup><6577></sup>Ezekiel 27:27), “one brought to death’s stillness.”

*in ... midst of ... sea* — insular Tyre.

33. *out of the seas* — brought on shore *out of* the ships.

*filledst* — didst supply plentifully with *wares*.

*enrich ... kings* — with the custom dues levied on the wares.

34. *In the time when ... shall ... shall* — *Now* that thou *art* broken (wrecked) ... thy merchandise ... are fallen [MAURER].

35. *isles* — seacoasts.

36. *hiss* — with astonishment; as in <sup><1008></sup>1 Kings 9:8.

# CHAPTER 28

## EZEKIEL 28:1-26.

### PROPHETICAL DIRGE ON THE KING OF TYRE, AS THE CULMINATION AND EMBODIMENT OF THE SPIRIT OF CARNAL PRIDE AND SELF-SUFFICIENCY OF THE WHOLE STATE. THE FALL OF ZIDON, THE MOTHER CITY. THE RESTORATION OF ISRAEL IN CONTRAST WITH TYRE AND ZIDON.

2. *Because*, etc. — repeated resumptively in <sup><3816></sup>Ezekiel 28:6. The apodosis begins at <sup><3817></sup>Ezekiel 28:7. “The prince of Tyrus” at the time was Ithobal, or Ithbaal II; the name implying his close connection with Baal, the Phoenician supreme god, whose representative he was.

*I am a god, I sit in ... seat of God ... the seas* — As God sits enthroned in His heavenly citadel exempt from all injury, so I sit secure in my impregnable stronghold amidst the stormiest elements, able to control them at will, and make them subserve my interests. The language, though primarily here applied to the king of Tyre, as similar language is to the king of Babylon (<sup><3143></sup>Isaiah 14:13,14), yet has an ulterior and fuller accomplishment in Satan and his embodiment in Antichrist (<sup><21725></sup>Daniel 7:25 11:36,37 <sup><31042></sup>2 Thessalonians 2:4 <sup><6116></sup>Revelation 13:6). This feeling of superhuman elevation in the king of Tyre was fostered by the fact that the island on which Tyre stood was called “the holy island” [SANCONIATHON], being sacred to Hercules, so much so that the colonies looked up to Tyre as the mother city of their religion, as well as of their political existence. The *Hebrew* for “God” is *El*, that is, “the Mighty One.”

*yet*, etc. — keen irony.

*set thine heart as ... heart of God* — Thou thinkest of thyself as if thou wert God.

3. Ezekiel ironically alludes to Ithbaal’s overweening opinion of the wisdom of himself and the Tyrians, as though superior to that of Daniel, whose fame had reached even Tyre as eclipsing the Chaldean sages. “Thou art wiser,” namely, in thine own opinion (Zechariah 9:2).

*no secret* — namely, forgetting riches (<sup><38206></sup>Ezekiel 28:4).

*that they can hide* — that is, that can be hidden.

5. (<sup>3520</sup>Psalm 62:10).

6. *Because*, etc. — resumptive of <sup>3530</sup>Ezekiel 28:2.

7. *therefore* — apodosis.

*strangers ... terrible of the nations* — the Chaldean foreigners noted for their ferocity (<sup>3501</sup>Ezekiel 30:11 31:12).

*against the beauty of thy wisdom* — that is, against thy beautiful possessions acquired by thy wisdom on which thou pridedst thyself (<sup>3530</sup>Ezekiel 28:3-5).

*defile thy brightness* — obscure the brightness of thy kingdom.

8. *the pit* — that is, the bottom of the sea; the image being that of one conquered in a sea-fight.

*the deaths* — plural, as various kinds of deaths are meant (<sup>3404</sup>Jeremiah 16:4).

*of them ... slain* — literally, “pierced through.” Such deaths as those pierced with many wounds die.

9. *yet say* — that is, still say; referring to <sup>3530</sup>Ezekiel 28:2.

*but*, etc. — But thy blasphemous boastings shall be falsified, and thou shalt be shown to be but man, and not God, in the hand (at the mercy) of Him.

10. *deaths of ... uncircumcised* — that is, such a death as the uncircumcised or godless heathen *deserve*; and perhaps, also, such as the uncircumcised *inflict*, a great ignominy in the eyes of a Jew (<sup>1810</sup>1 Samuel 31:4); a fit retribution on him who had scoffed at the circumcised Jews.

12. *sealest up the sum* — literally, “Thou art the one sealing the sum of perfection.” A thing is *sealed* when *completed* (<sup>2024</sup>Daniel 9:24). “The sum” implies *the full measure of beauty*, from a *Hebrew* root, “to measure.” The normal man — one formed after accurate rule.

13. *in Eden* — The king of Tyre is represented in his former high state (contrasted with his subsequent downfall), under images drawn from the primeval man in Eden, the type of humanity in its most Godlike form.

*garden of God* — the model of ideal loveliness (<sup>3508</sup>Ezekiel 31:8,9 36:35). In the person of the king of Tyre a new trial was made of humanity with the

greatest earthly advantages. But as in the case of Adam, the good gifts of God were only turned into ministers to pride and self.

**every precious stone** — so in Eden (<sup><0012></sup>Genesis 2:12), “gold, bdellium, and the onyx stone.” So the king of Tyre was arrayed in jewel-bespangled robes after the fashion of Oriental monarchs. The nine precious stones here mentioned answer to nine of the twelve (representing the twelve tribes) in the high priest’s breastplate (<sup><0290></sup>Exodus 39:10-13 <sup><6214></sup>Revelation 21:14,19-21). Of the four rows of three in each, the third is omitted in the *Hebrew*, but is supplied in the *Septuagint*. In this, too, there is an ulterior reference to Antichrist, who is blasphemously to arrogate the office of our divine High Priest (<sup><3063></sup>Zechariah 6:13).

**tabrets** — tambourines.

**pipes** — literally, “holes” in musical pipes or flutes.

**created** — that is, in *the day of thine accession to the throne*. Tambourines and all the marks of joy were ready prepared for thee (“in thee,” that is, “with and for thee”). Thou hadst not, like others, to work thy way to the throne through arduous struggles. No sooner created than, like Adam, thou wast surrounded with the gratifications of Eden. FAIRBAIRN, for “pipes,” translates, “females” (having reference to <sup><0027></sup>Genesis 1:27), that is, musician-women. MAURER explains the *Hebrew* not as to music, but as to the *setting* and *mounting* of the gems previously mentioned.

**14. anointed cherub** — GESENIUS translates from an *Aramaic* root, “extended cherub.” *English Version*, from a *Hebrew* root, is better. “The cherub consecrated to the Lord by the anointing oil” [FAIRBAIRN].

**covereth** — The imagery employed by Ezekiel as a priest is from the Jewish temple, wherein the cherubim overshadowed the mercy seat, as the king of Tyre, a demi-god in his own esteem, extended his protection over the interests of Tyre. The cherub — an ideal compound of the highest kinds of animal existence and the type of redeemed man in his ultimate state of perfection — is made the image of the king of Tyre, as if the beau ideal of humanity. The pretensions of Antichrist are the ulterior reference, of whom the king of Tyre is a type. Compare “As God ... in the *temple* of God” (<sup><3104></sup>2 Thessalonians 2:4).

**I have set thee** — not *thou* set thyself (<sup><3186></sup>Proverbs 8:16 <sup><6131></sup>Romans 13:1).

**upon the holy mountain of God** — Zion, following up the image.

**in ... midst of ... stones of fire** — In ambitious imagination he stood in the place of God, “under whose feet was, as it were, a pavement of sapphire,” while His glory was like “devouring fire” (<sup><0240></sup>Exodus 24:10,17).

**15. perfect** — prosperous [GROTIUS], and having no defect. So Hiram was a sample of the Tyrian monarch in his early days of wisdom and prosperity (<sup><1007></sup>1 Kings 5:7, etc.).

**till iniquity ... in thee** — Like the primeval man thou hast fallen by abusing God’s gifts, and so hast provoked God’s wrath.

**16. filled the midst of thee** — that is, they have filled *the midst of the city*; he as the head of the state being involved in the guilt of the state, which he did not check, but fostered.

**cast thee as profane** — no longer treated as sacred, but driven out of the place of sanctity (see <sup><0384></sup>Ezekiel 28:14) which thou hast occupied (compare <sup><0889></sup>Psalms 89:39).

**17. brightness** — thy splendor.

**lay thee before kings** — as an example of God’s wrath against presumptuous pride.

**18. thy sanctuaries** — that is, the holy places, attributed to the king of Tyre in <sup><0384></sup>Ezekiel 28:14, as his ideal position. As he “profaned” it, so God will “profane” him (<sup><0386></sup>Ezekiel 28:16).

**fire ... devour** — As he abused his supposed elevation amidst “the stones of fire” (<sup><0386></sup>Ezekiel 28:16), so God will make His “fire” to “devour” him.

**21. Zidon** — famous for its fishery (from a root, *Zud*, “to fish”); and afterwards for its wide extended commerce; its artistic elegance was proverbial. Founded by Canaan’s first-born (<sup><0105></sup>Genesis 10:15). Tyre was an offshoot from it, so that it was involved in the same overthrow by the Chaldeans as Tyre. It is mentioned separately, because its idolatry (Ashtaroth, Tammuz, or Adonis) infected Israel more than that of Tyre did (<sup><0384></sup>Ezekiel 8:14 <sup><0706></sup>Judges 10:6 <sup><1113></sup>1 Kings 11:33). The notorious Jezebel was a daughter of the Zidonian king.

**22. shall be sanctified in her** — when all nations shall see that I am the Holy Judge in the vengeance that I will inflict on her for sin.

**24. no more ... brier ... unto ... Israel** — as the idolatrous nations left in Canaan (among which Zidon is expressly specified in the limits of Asher, <sup><0013></sup>Judges 1:31) had been (<sup><0885></sup>Numbers 33:55 <sup><0233></sup>Joshua 23:13). “A brier,”

first ensnaring the Israelites in sin, and then being made the instrument of punishing them.

**pricking** — literally, “causing *bitterness*.” The same *Hebrew* is translated “fretting” (<sup><48159></sup>Leviticus 13:51,52). The wicked are often called “thorns” (<sup><42362></sup>2 Samuel 23:6).

**25, 26.** Fulfilled in part at the restoration from Babylon, when Judaism, so far from being merged in heathenism, made inroads by conversions on the idolatry of surrounding nations. The full accomplishment is yet future, when Israel, under Christ, shall be the center of Christendom; of which an earnest was given in the woman from the coasts of Tyre and Sidon who sought the Savior (<sup><41529></sup>Matthew 15:21,24,26-28; compare <sup><23112></sup>Isaiah 11:12).

**dwell safely** — (<sup><22365></sup>Jeremiah 23:6).

# CHAPTER 29

## EZEKIEL 29:1-21.

### THE JUDGMENT ON EGYPT BY NEBUCHADNEZZAR; THOUGH ABOUT TO BE RESTORED AFTER FORTY YEARS, IT WAS STILL TO BE IN A STATE OF DEGRADATION.

This is the last of the world kingdoms against which Ezekiel's prophecies are directed, and occupies the largest space in them, namely, the next four chapters. Though farther off than Tyre, it exercised a more powerful influence on Israel.

**2. Pharaoh** — a common name of all the kings of Egypt, meaning “the sun”; or, as others say, a “crocodile,” which was worshipped in parts of Egypt (compare <sup>29:3</sup>Ezekiel 29:3). Hophra or Apries was on the throne at this time. His reign began prosperously. He took Gaza (<sup>47:1</sup>Jeremiah 47:1) and Zidon and made himself master of Phoenicia and Palestine, recovering much that was lost to Egypt by the victory of Nebuchadnezzar at Carchemish (<sup>24:7</sup>2 Kings 24:7 <sup>46:2</sup>Jeremiah 46:2), in the fourth year of Jehoiakim [WILKINSON, *Ancient Egypt*, 1.169]. So proudly secure because of his successes for twenty-five years did he feel, that he said not even a god could deprive him of his kingdom [HERODOTUS, 2.169]. Hence the appropriateness of the description of him in <sup>29:3</sup>Ezekiel 29:3. No mere human sagacity could have enabled Ezekiel to foresee Egypt's downfall in the height of its prosperity. There are four divisions of these prophecies; the first in the tenth year of Ezekiel's captivity; the last in the twelfth. Between the first and second comes one of much later date, not having been given till the twenty-seventh year (<sup>29:17</sup>Ezekiel 29:17 30:19), but placed there as appropriate to the subject matter. Pharaoh-hophra, or Apries, was dethroned and strangled, and Amasis substituted as king, by Nebuchadnezzar (compare <sup>44:30</sup>Jeremiah 44:30). The Egyptian priests, from national vanity, made no mention to HERODOTUS of the Egyptian loss of territory in Syria through Nebuchadnezzar, of which JOSEPHUS tells us, but attributed the change in the succession from Apries to Amasis solely to the Egyptian soldiery. The civil war between the two rivals no doubt lasted several years, affording an opportunity to Nebuchadnezzar of interfering and of elevating the usurper Amasis, on condition of his becoming tributary to Babylon

[WILKINSON]. Compare <sup><2460></sup>Jeremiah 43:10-12, and see on <sup><2461></sup>Jeremiah 43:13, for another view of the grounds of interference of Nebuchadnezzar.

**3. dragon** — *Hebrew, tanim*, any large aquatic animal, here the crocodile, which on Roman coins is the emblem of Egypt.

**lieth** — retest proudly secure.

**his rivers** — the mouths, branches, and canals of the Nile, to which Egypt owed its fertility.

**4. hooks in thy jaws** — (<sup><2372></sup>Isaiah 37:29; compare <sup><2401></sup>Job 41:1,2). Amasis was the “hook.” In the Assyrian sculptures prisoners are represented with a hook in the underlip, and a cord from it held by the king.

**cause ... fish ... stick unto ... scales** — Pharaoh, presuming on his power as if he were God (<sup><2308></sup>Ezekiel 29:3, “I have made it”), wished to stand in the stead of God as defender of the covenant-people, his motive being, not love to them, but rivalry with Babylon. He raised the siege of Jerusalem, but it was only for a time (compare <sup><2306></sup>Ezekiel 29:6 <sup><2458></sup>Jeremiah 37:5,7-10); ruin overtook not only them, but himself. As the fish that clung to the horny scales of the crocodile, the lord of the Nile, when he was caught, shared his fate, so the adherents of Pharaoh, lord of Egypt, when he was overthrown by Amasis, should share his fate.

**5. wilderness** — captivity beyond thy kingdom. The expression is used perhaps to imply retribution in kind. As Egypt pursued after Israel, saying, “The wilderness hath shut them in” (<sup><1248></sup>Exodus 14:3), so she herself shall be brought into a *wilderness state*.

**open fields** — literally “face of the field.”

**not be brought together** — As the crocodile is not, when caught, restored to the river, so no remnant of thy routed army shall be brought together, and rallied, after its defeat in the wilderness. Pharaoh led an army against Cyrene in Africa, in support of Aricranes, who had been stripped of his kingdom by the Cyrenians. The army perished and Egypt rebelled against him [JUNIUS]. But the reference is mainly to the defeat by Nebuchadnezzar.

**beasts ... fowls** — hostile and savage men.

**6. staff of reed to ... Israel** — alluding to the reeds on the banks of the Nile, which broke if one leaned upon them (see on <sup><2306></sup>Ezekiel 29:4; <sup><2306></sup>Isaiah 36:6). All Israel’s dependence on Egypt proved hurtful instead of beneficial (<sup><2306></sup>Isaiah 30:1-5).

**7. hand** — or handle of the reed.

**rend ... shoulder** — by the splinters on which the shoulder or arm would fall, on the support failing the hand.

**madest ... loins ... at a stand** — that is, made them to be disabled. MAURER somewhat similarly (referring to a kindred *Arabic* form), “Thou hast stricken both their loins.” FAIRBAIRN, not so well, “Thou lettest all their loins stand,” that is, by themselves, bereft of the support which they looked for from thee.

**8. a sword** — Nebuchadnezzar’s army (<sup>2395</sup>Ezekiel 29:19). Also Amasis and the Egyptian revolters who after Pharaoh-hophra’s discomfiture in Cyrene dethroned and strangled him, having defeated him in a battle fought at Memphis [JUNIUS].

**9. I am the Lord** — in antithesis to the blasphemous boast repeated here from <sup>2398</sup>Ezekiel 29:3, “The river is mine, and I have made it.”

**10. from the tower of Syene** — GROTIUS translates, “from Migdol (a fortress near Pelusium on the north of Suez) to Syene (in the farthest south)”; that is, from one end of Egypt to the other. So “from Migdol to Syene,” <sup>2399</sup>Ezekiel 30:6, *Margin*. However, *English Version* rightly refers Syene to Seveneh, that is, Sebennytus, in the eastern delta of the Nile, the capital of the Lower Egyptian kings. The Sebennyte Pharaohs, with the help of the Canaanites, who, as shepherds or merchants, ranged the desert of Suez, extended their borders beyond the narrow province east of the delta, to which they had been confined by the Pharaohs of Upper Egypt. The defeated party, in derision, named the Sebennyte or Lower Egyptians *foreigners* and *shepherd-kings* (a shepherd being an abomination in Egypt, <sup>2404</sup>Genesis 46:34). They were really a *native* dynasty. Thus, in *English Version*, “Ethiopia” in the extreme south is rightly contrasted with Sebennytus or Syene in the north.

**11. forty years** — answering to the forty years in which the Israelites, their former bondsmen, wandered in “the wilderness” (compare *Note*, see on <sup>2396</sup>Ezekiel 29:5). JEROME remarks the number *forty* is one often connected with affliction and judgment. The rains of the flood in forty days brought destruction on the world. Moses, Elias, and the Savior fasted forty days. The interval between Egypt’s overthrow by Nebuchadnezzar and the deliverance by Cyrus, was about forty years. The *ideal* forty years’ wilderness state of social and political degradation, rather than a *literal* non-passing of man or beast for that term, is mainly intended (so <sup>2406</sup>Ezekiel 4:6 <sup>2397</sup>Isaiah 19:2,11).

**12.** As Israel passed through a term of wilderness discipline (compare <sup>2405</sup>Ezekiel 20:35, etc.), which was in its essential features to be repeated

again, so it was to be with Egypt [FAIRBAIRN]. Some Egyptians were to be carried to Babylon, also many “scattered” in Arabia and Ethiopia through fear; but mainly the “scattering” was to be the *dissipation of their power*, even though the people still remained in their own land.

13. (<sup>2433</sup>Jeremiah 46:26).

14. **Pathros** — the Thehaiti, or Upper Egypt, which had been especially harassed by Nebuchadnezzar (Na 3:8,10). The oldest part of Egypt as to civilization and art. The Thebaid was anciently called “Egypt” [ARISTOTLE]. Therefore it is called the “land of the Egyptians’ *birth*” (*Margin*, for “habitation”).

**base kingdom** — Under Amasis it was made dependent on Babylon; humbled still more under Cambyses; and though somewhat raised under the Ptolemies, never has it regained its ancient pre-eminence.

16. Egypt, when restored, shall be so circumscribed in power that it shall be no longer an object of confidence to Israel, as formerly; for example, as when, relying on it, Israel broke faith with Nebuchadnezzar (<sup>23713</sup>Ezekiel 17:13,15,16).

**which bringeth their iniquity to remembrance, when they shall look after them** — rather, “while they (the Israelites) look to (or, *turn after*) them” [HENDERSON]. Israel’s looking to Egypt, rather than to God, causes their iniquity (unfaithfulness to the covenant) to be remembered by God.

17. The departure from the chronological order occurs here only, among the prophecies as to foreign nations, in order to secure greater unity of subject.

18. **every head ... bald, ... shoulder ... peeled** — with carrying baskets of earth and stones for the siege works.

**no wages ... for the service** — that is, *in proportion to* it and the time and labor which he expended on the siege of Tyre. Not that he actually failed in the siege (JEROME expressly states, from Assyrian histories, that Nebuchadnezzar succeeded); but, so much of the Tyrian resources had been exhausted, or transported to her colonies in ships, that little was left to compensate Nebuchadnezzar for his thirteen year’s siege.

19. **multitude** — not as FAIRBAIRN, “store”; but, he shall take away a *multitude of captives* out of Egypt. The success of Nebuchadnezzar is implied in Tyre’s receiving a king from Babylon, probably one of her captives there, Merbal.

***take her spoil ... prey*** — literally, “spoil her spoil, prey her prey,” that is, as she spoiled other nations, so shall she herself be a spoil to Babylon.

**20. *because they wrought for me*** — the Chaldeans, fulfilling My will as to Tyre (compare <sup><3239></sup>Jeremiah 25:9).

**21.** In the evil only, not in the good, was Egypt to be parallel to Israel. The very downfall of Egypt will be the signal for the rise of Israel, because of God’s covenant with the latter.

***I cause the horn of ... Israel to bud*** — (<sup><3927></sup>Psalm 132:17). I will cause its ancient glory to revive: an earnest of Israel’s full glory under Messiah, the son of David (<sup><4169></sup>Luke 1:69). Even in Babylon an earnest was given of this in Daniel (<sup><2702></sup>Daniel 6:2) and Jeconiah (<sup><3423></sup>Jeremiah 52:31).

***I will give thee ... opening of ... mouth*** — When thy predictions shall have come to pass, thy words henceforth shall be more heeded (compare <sup><3927></sup>Ezekiel 24:27).

# CHAPTER 30

## EZEKIEL 30:1-26.

### CONTINUATION OF THE PROPHECIES AGAINST EGYPT.

Two distinct messages:

(1) At <sup><300></sup>Ezekiel 30:1-9, a repetition of <sup><290></sup>Ezekiel 29:1-16, with fuller details of lifelike distinctness. The date is probably not long after that mentioned in <sup><297></sup>Ezekiel 29:17, on the eve of Nebuchadnezzar's march against Egypt after subjugating Tyre.

(2) A vision relating directly to Pharaoh and the overthrow of his kingdom; communicated at an earlier date, the seventh of the first month of the eleventh year. Not a year after the date in <sup><290></sup>Ezekiel 29:1, and three months before the taking of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar.

2. *Woe worth the day!* — that is, Alas for the day!

3. *the time of the heathen* — namely, for taking vengeance on them. The judgment on Egypt is the beginning of a world-wide judgment on all the heathen enemies of God (<sup><305></sup>Joel 1:15 2:1,2 3 <sup><305></sup>Obadiah 1:15).

4. *pain* — literally, “pangs with trembling as of a woman in childbirth.”

5. *the mingled people* — the mercenary troops of Egypt from various lands, mostly from the interior of Africa (compare <sup><270></sup>Ezekiel 27:10 <sup><250></sup>Jeremiah 25:20,24 46:9,21).

*Chub* — the people named *Kufa* on the monuments [HAVERNICK], a people considerably north of Palestine [WILKINSON]; *Coba* or *Chobat*, a city of Mauritania [MAURER].

*men of the land that is in league* — too definite an expression to mean merely, “men in league” with Egypt; rather, “sons of the land of the covenant,” that is, the *Jews* who migrated to Egypt and carried Jeremiah with them (<sup><240></sup>Jeremiah 42:1-44:30). Even they shall not escape (<sup><240></sup>Jeremiah 42:22 44:14).

6. *from the tower of Syene* — (see on <sup><230></sup>Ezekiel 29:10).

**7. *in the midst of ... countries ... desolate*** — Egypt shall fare no better than they (<sup>2900</sup>Ezekiel 29:10).

**9. *messengers ... in ships to ... Ethiopians*** — (<sup>2800</sup>Isaiah 18:1,2). The cataracts interposing between them and Egypt should not save them. Egyptians “fleeing from before Me” in My execution of judgment, as “messengers” in “skiffs” (“vessels of bulrushes,” <sup>2800</sup>Isaiah 18:2) shall go up the Nile as far as navigable, to announce the advance of the Chaldeans.

***as in the day of Egypt*** — The day of Ethiopia’s “pain” shall come shortly, as Egypt’s day came.

**10. *the multitude*** — the large population.

**12. *rivers*** — the artificial canals made from the Nile for irrigation. The drying up of these would cause scarcity of grain, and so prepare the way for the invaders (<sup>2800</sup>Isaiah 19:5-10).

**13. *Noph*** — Memphis, the capital of Middle Egypt, and the stronghold of “idols.” Though no record exists of Nebuchadnezzar’s “destroying” these, we know from HERODOTUS and others, that Cambyses took Pelusium, the key of Egypt, by placing before his army dogs, cats, etc., all held sacred in Egypt, so that no Egyptian would use any weapon against them. He slew Apis, the sacred ox, and burnt other idols of Egypt.

***no more a prince*** — referring to the anarchy that prevailed in the civil wars between Apries and Amasis at the time of Nebuchadnezzar’s invasion. There shall no more be a prince of the land of Egypt, ruling the whole country; or, no *independent* prince.

**14. *Pathros*** — Upper Egypt, with “No” or Thebes its capital (famed for its stupendous buildings, of which grand ruins remain), in antithesis to Zoan or Tanis, a chief city in Lower Egypt, within the Delta.

**15. *Sin*** — that is, Pelusium, the frontier fortress on the northeast, therefore called “the strength (that is, the key) of Egypt.” It stands in antithesis to No or Thebes at the opposite end of Egypt; that is, I will afflict Egypt from one end to the other.

**16. *distresses daily*** — MAURER translates, “enemies during the day,” that is, open enemies who do not wait for the covert of night to make their attacks (compare <sup>2800</sup>Jeremiah 6:4 15:8). However, the *Hebrew*, though rarely, is sometimes rendered (see <sup>4900</sup>Psalms 13:2) as in *English Version*.

**17. *Aven*** — meaning “vanity” or “iniquity”: applied, by a slight change of the *Hebrew* name, to On or Heliopolis, in allusion to its idolatry. Here

stood the temple of the sun, whence it was called in *Hebrew*, *Beth-shemesh* (<sup><2483></sup>Jeremiah 43:13). The Egyptian hieroglyphics call it, *Revelation Athom*, the sun, the father of the gods, being impersonate in *Athom* or *Adam*, the father of mankind.

**Pi-beseth** — that is, Bubastis, in Lower Egypt, near the Pelusiac branch of the Nile: notorious for the worship of the goddess of the same name (*Coptic*, *Pasht*), the granite stones of whose temple still attest its former magnificence.

**these cities** — rather, as the *Septuagint*, “the women,” namely, of Aven and Pi-beseth, in antithesis to “the young men.” So in <sup><2308></sup>Ezekiel 30:18, “daughters shall go into captivity” [MAURER].

**18. Tehaphnehes** — called from the queen of Egypt mentioned in <sup><1119></sup>1 Kings 11:19. The same as Daphne, near Pelusium, a royal residence of the Pharaohs (<sup><2437></sup>Jeremiah 43:7,9). Called Hanes <sup><2304></sup>Isaiah 30:4).

**break ... the yokes of Egypt** — that is, the tyrannical supremacy which she exercised over other nations. Compare “bands of their yoke” (<sup><2540></sup>Ezekiel 34:7).

**a cloud** — namely, of calamity.

**20.** Here begins the earlier vision, not long after that in the twenty-ninth chapter, about three months before the taking of Jerusalem, as to Pharaoh and his kingdom.

**21. broken ... arm of Pharaoh** — (<sup><4577></sup>Psalm 37:17 <sup><2425></sup>Jeremiah 48:25). Referring to the defeat which Pharaoh-hophra sustained from the Chaldeans, when trying to raise the siege of Jerusalem (<sup><2673></sup>Jeremiah 37:5,7); and previous to the deprivation of Pharaoh-necho of all his conquests from the river of Egypt to the Euphrates (<sup><1241></sup>2 Kings 24:7 <sup><2442></sup>Jeremiah 46:2); also to the Egyptian disaster in Cyrene.

**22. arms** — Not only the “one arm” broken already (<sup><2521></sup>Ezekiel 30:21) was not to be healed, but the other two should be broken. Not a corporal wound, but a *breaking of the power* of Pharaoh is intended.

**cause ... sword to fall out of ... hand** — deprive him of the resources of making war.

# CHAPTER 31

## EZEKIEL 31:1-18.

### THE OVERTHROW OF EGYPT ILLUSTRATED BY THAT OF ASSYRIA.

Not that Egypt was, like Assyria, utterly to cease to be, but it was, like Assyria, to lose its prominence in the empire of the world.

1. *third month* — two months later than the prophecy delivered in <sup><3500></sup>Ezekiel 30:20.

2. *Whom art thou like* — The answer is, Thou art like the haughty king of Assyria; as he was overthrown by the Chaldeans, so shalt thou be by the same.

3. He illustrates the pride and the consequent overthrow of the Assyrian, that Egypt may the better know what she must expect.

*cedar in Lebanon* — often eighty feet high, and the diameter of the space covered by its boughs still greater: the symmetry perfect. Compare the similar image (<sup><3708></sup>Ezekiel 17:3 <sup><2700></sup>Daniel 4:20-22).

*with a shadowing shroud* — with an overshadowing thicket.

*top ... among ... thick boughs* — rather [HENGSTENBERG], “among the clouds.” But *English Version* agrees better with the *Hebrew*. The *top*, or *topmost shoot*, represents the king; the *thick boughs*, the large resources of the empire.

4. *waters ... little rivers* — the Tigris with its branches and “rivulets,” or “conduits” for irrigation, the source of Assyria’s fertility. “The deep” is the ever flowing water, never dry. Metaphorically, for Assyria’s resources, as the “conduits” are her colonies.

5. *when he shot forth* — because of the abundant moisture which nourished him in shooting forth. But see *Margin*.

6. *fowls ... made ... nests in ... boughs* — so <sup><3723></sup>Ezekiel 17:23 <sup><27012></sup>Daniel 4:12. The gospel kingdom shall gather all under its covert, for their good and for the glory of God, which the world kingdoms did for evil and for self-aggrandizement (<sup><4133></sup>Matthew 13:32).

8. *cedars ... could not hide him* — could not outtop him. No other king eclipsed him.

*were not like* — were not comparable to.

*garden of God* — As in the case of Tyre (<sup><3283></sup>Ezekiel 28:13), the imagery, that is applied to the Assyrian king, is taken from Eden; peculiarly appropriate, as Eden was watered by rivers that afterwards watered Assyria (<sup><4020></sup>Genesis 2:10-14). This cedar seemed to revive in itself all the glories of paradise, so that no tree there outtopped it.

9. *I ... made him* — It was all due to *My* free grace.

10. *thou ... he* — The change of persons is because the language refers partly to the cedar, partly to the person signified by the cedar.

11. Here the literal supersedes the figurative.

*shall surely deal with him* — according to his own pleasure, and according to the Assyrian's (Sardanapalus) desert. Nebuchadnezzar is called "the mighty one" (*El*, a name of God), because he was God's representative and instrument of judgment (<sup><2157></sup>Daniel 2:37,38).

12. *from his shadow* — *under* which they had formerly *dwelt* as their covert (<sup><2506></sup>Ezekiel 31:6).

13. Birds and beasts shall insult over his fallen trunk.

14. *trees by the waters* — that is, that are plentifully supplied by the waters: nations abounding in resources.

*stand up in their height* — that is, trust in their height: *stand upon* it as their ground of confidence. FAIRBAIRN points the *Hebrew* differently, so as for "their trees," to translate, "(And that none that drink water may stand *on themselves*, (because of their greatness).)" But the usual reading is better, as Assyria and the confederate states throughout are compared to strong trees. The clause, "All that drink water," marks the ground of the trees' confidence "in their height," namely, that they have ample sources of supply. MAURER, retaining the same *Hebrew*, translates, "that neither their *terebinth trees* may stand up in their height, nor all (the other trees) that drink water."

*to ... nether ... earth ... pit* — (<sup><2628></sup>Ezekiel 32:18 <sup><1831></sup>Psalms 82:7).

15. *covered the deep* — as mourners cover their heads in token of mourning, "I made the deep that watered the cedar" to wrap itself in

mourning for him. The waters of the deep are the tributary peoples of Assyria (<sup>4675</sup>Revelation 17:15).

*fainted* — literally, were “faintness” (itself); more forcible than the verb.

**16. *hell*** — Sheol or Hades, the unseen world: equivalent to, “I cast him into oblivion” (compare <sup>2349</sup>Isaiah 14:9-11).

*shall be comforted* — because so great a king as the Assyrian is brought down to a level with them. It is a kind of consolation to the wretched to have companions in misery.

**17. *his arm, that dwelt under his shadow*** — those who were the helpers or tool of his tyranny, and therefore enjoyed his protection (for example, Syria and her neighbors). These were sure to share her fate. Compare the same phrase as to the Jews living under the protection of their king (<sup>2909</sup>Lamentations 4:20); both alike “making flesh their arm, and in heart departing from the Lord” (<sup>2175</sup>Jeremiah 17:5).

**18.** Application of the parabolic description of Assyria to the parallel case of Egypt. “All that has been said of the Assyrian consider as said to thyself. To whom art thou so like, as thou art to the Assyrian? To none.” The lesson on a gigantic scale of Eden-like privileges abused to pride and sin by the Assyrian, as in the case of the first man in Eden, ending in ruin, was to be repeated in Egypt’s case. For the unchangeable God governs the world on the same unchangeable principles.

*thou shall lie in ... uncircumcised* — As circumcision was an object of mocking to thee, thou shall lie in the midst of the uncircumcised, slain by their sword [GROTIUS]. Retribution in kind (<sup>2330</sup>Ezekiel 28:10).

*This is Pharaoh* — Pharaoh’s end shall be the same humiliating one as I have depicted the Assyrian’s to have been. “This” is demonstrative, as if he were pointing with the finger to Pharaoh lying prostrate, a spectacle to all, as on the shore of the Red Sea (<sup>4243</sup>Exodus 14:30,31).

# CHAPTER 32

## ⲉⲙⲉⲗ EZEKIEL 32:1-32.

### TWO ELEGIES OVER PHARAOH, ONE DELIVERED ON THE FIRST DAY (ⲉⲙⲉⲗ EZEKIEL 32:1), THE OTHER ON THE FIFTEENTH DAY OF THE SAME MONTH, THE TWELFTH OF THE TWELFTH YEAR.

1. The twelfth year from the carrying away of Jehoiachin; Jerusalem was by this time overthrown, and Amasis was beginning his revolt against Pharaoh-hophra.
2. *Pharaoh* — “Phra” in Burmah, signifies the king, high priest, and idol.  
*whale* — rather, any monster of the waters; here, the crocodile of the Nile. Pharaoh is as a lion on dry land, a crocodile in the waters; that is, an object of terror everywhere.  
*camest forth with thy rivers* — “breakest forth” [FAIRBAIRN]. The antithesis of “seas” and “rivers” favors GROTIUS rendering, “Thou camest forth from the sea *into* the rivers”; that is, from thy own empire into other states. However, *English Version* is favored by the “thy”: thou camest forth with *thy* rivers (that is, with thy forces) and with thy feet didst fall irrecoverably; so Israel, once desolate, troubles the waters (that is, neighboring states).
3. *with a company of many people* — namely, the Chaldeans (ⲉⲙⲉⲗ Ezekiel 29:3,4 ⲉⲙⲉⲗ Hosea 7:12).
- my net* — for they are My instrument.
4. *leave thee upon the land* — as a fish drawn out of the water loses all its strength, so Pharaoh (in ⲉⲙⲉⲗ Ezekiel 32:3, compared to a water monster) shall be (ⲉⲙⲉⲗ Ezekiel 29:5).
5. *thy height* — thy hugeness [FAIRBAIRN]. The great heap of corpses of thy forces, on which thou pridest thyself. “Height” may refer to *mental elevation*, as well as bodily [VATABLUS].
6. *land wherein thou swimmest* — Egypt: the land watered by the Nile, the the source of its fertility, wherein thou swimmest (carrying on the

image of the crocodile, that is, wherein thou dost exercise thy wanton power at will). Irony. The land shall still afford seas to swim in, but they shall be seas of blood. Alluding to the plague (<sup><1079></sup>Exodus 7:19 <sup><1088></sup>Revelation 8:8). HAVERNICK translates, “I will water the land with *what flows from thee*, even thy blood, reaching to the mountains”: “with thy blood *overflowing* even to the mountains.” Perhaps this is better.

**7. *put thee out*** — extinguish thy light (<sup><1805></sup>Job 18:5). Pharaoh is represented as a bright star, at the extinguishing of whose light in the political sky the whole heavenly host is shrouded in sympathetic darkness. Here, too, as in <sup><3506></sup>Ezekiel 32:6, there is an allusion to the supernatural darkness sent formerly (<sup><1021></sup>Exodus 10:21-23). The heavenly bodies are often made images of earthly dynasties (<sup><2300></sup>Isaiah 13:10 <sup><1029></sup>Matthew 24:29).

**9. *thy destruction*** — that is tidings of thy destruction (literally, “thy breakage”) carried by captive and dispersed Egyptians “among the nations” [GROTIUS]; or, *thy broken people*, resembling one great *fracture*, the ruins of what they had been [FAIRBAIRN].

**10. *brandish my sword before them*** — literally, “in their faces,” or sight.

**13.** (See on <sup><3291></sup>Ezekiel 29:11). The picture is ideally true, not to be interpreted by the letter. The political ascendancy of Egypt was to cease with the Chaldean conquest [FAIRBAIRN]. Henceforth Pharaoh must figuratively no longer *trouble the waters by man or beast*, that is, no longer was he to flood other peoples with his overwhelming forces.

**14. *make their waters deep*** — rather, “make ... *to subside*”; literally, “sink” [FAIRBAIRN].

***like oil*** — emblem of *quietness*. No longer shall they descend violently on other countries as the overflowing Nile, but shall be still and sluggish in political action.

**16.** As in <sup><3394></sup>Ezekiel 19:14. This is a prophetic lamentation; yet so it shall come to pass [GROTIUS].

**17.** The second lamentation for Pharaoh. This funeral dirge in imagination accompanies him to the unseen world. Egypt personified in its political head is ideally represented as undergoing the change by death to which man is liable. Expressing that Egypt’s supremacy is no more, a thing of the past, never to be again.

***the month*** — the twelfth month (<sup><3001></sup>Ezekiel 32:1); fourteen days after the former vision.

**18. *cast them down*** — that is predict that they shall be *cast down* (so <sup>2010</sup>Jeremiah 1:10). The prophet's word was God's, and carried with it its own fulfillment.

***daughters of ... nations*** — that is the nations with their peoples. Egypt is to share the fate of other ancient nations once famous, now consigned to oblivion: Elam (Ezekiel 32: 24), Meshech, etc. (<sup>3529</sup>Ezekiel 32:26), Edom (<sup>3529</sup>Ezekiel 32:29), Zidon (<sup>3530</sup>Ezekiel 32:30).

**19. *Whom dost thou pass in beauty?*** — Beautiful as thou art, thou art not more so than other nations, which nevertheless have perished.

***go down***, etc. — to the nether world, where all “beauty” is speedily marred.

**20. *she is delivered to the sword*** — namely, by God.

***draw her*** — as if addressing her executioners: drag her forth to death.

**21.** (<sup>3516</sup>Ezekiel 31:16). Ezekiel has before his eyes <sup>2349</sup>Isaiah 14:9, etc.

***shall speak to him*** — with “him” join “with them that help him”; *shall speak to him and his helpers* with a taunting welcome, as now one of themselves.

**22. *her ... his*** — The abrupt change of gender is, because Ezekiel has in view at one time the *kingdom* (feminine), at another the *monarch*. “Asshur,” or Assyria, is placed first in punishment, as being first in guilt.

**23. *in the sides of the pit*** — Sepulchres in the East were caves hollowed out of the rock, and the bodies were laid in niches formed at the sides. MAURER needlessly departs from the ordinary meaning, and translates, “extremities” (compare <sup>2343</sup>Isaiah 14:13,15).

***which caused terror*** — They, who alive were a terror to others, are now, in the nether world, themselves a terrible object to behold.

**24. *Elam*** — placed next, as having been an auxiliary to Assyria. Its territory lay in Persia. In Abraham's time an independent kingdom (<sup>0140</sup>Genesis 14:1). Famous for its bowmen (<sup>2326</sup>Isaiah 22:6).

***borne their shame*** — the just retribution of their lawless *pride*. Destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar (<sup>2484</sup>Jeremiah 49:34-38).

**25. *a bed*** — a sepulchral niche.

***all ... slain by ... sword***, etc. — (<sup>3521</sup>Ezekiel 32:21,23,24). The very monotony of the phraseology gives to the dirge an awe-inspiring effect.

**26. *Meshech, Tubal*** — northern nations: the Moschi and Tibareni, between the Black and Caspian Seas. HERODOTUS [3.94], mentions them as a subjugated people, tributaries to Darius Hystaspes (see <sup><32718></sup>Ezekiel 27:13).

**27. *they shall not lie with the mighty*** — that is, they shall not have separate tombs such as mighty conquerors have: but shall all be heaped together in one pit, as is the case with the vanquished [GROTIUS]. HAVERNICK reads it interrogatively, “Shall they not lie with the mighty that are fallen?” But *English Version* is supported by the parallel (<sup><29448></sup>Isaiah 14:18,19), to which Ezekiel refers, and which represents them as *not* lying as mighty kings lie in a grave, but cast out of one, as a carcass trodden under foot.

***with ... weapons of war*** — alluding to the custom of burying warriors with their arms (1 Maccabees 13:29). Though honored by the laying of “their swords under their heads,” yet the punishment of “their iniquities shall be upon their bones.” Their swords shall thus attest their shame, not their glory (<sup><4062></sup>Matthew 26:52), being the instruments of their violence, the penalty of which they are paying.

**28. *Yea, thou*** — Thou, too, Egypt, like them, shalt lie as one vanquished.

**29. *princes*** — Edom was not only governed by kings, but by subordinate “princes” or “dukes” (<sup><0350></sup>Genesis 36:40).

***with their might*** — notwithstanding their might, they shall be brought down (<sup><23418></sup>Isaiah 34:5,10-17 <sup><3407></sup>Jeremiah 49:7,13-18).

***lie with the uncircumcised*** — Though Edom was circumcised, being descended from Isaac, he shall lie with the uncircumcised; much more shall Egypt, who had no hereditary right to circumcision.

**30. *princes of the north*** — Syria, which is still called by the Arabs the north; or the Tyrians, north of Palestine, conquered by Nebuchadnezzar (<sup><2301></sup>Ezekiel 26:1-28:26), [GROTIUS].

***Zidonians*** — who shared the fate of Tyre (<sup><32201></sup>Ezekiel 28:21).

***with their terror they are ashamed of their might*** — that is, notwithstanding the terror which they inspired in their contemporaries. “Might” is connected by MAURER thus, “Notwithstanding the terror which resulted from their might.”

**31. *comforted*** — with the melancholy satisfaction of not being alone, but of having other kingdoms companions in his downfall. This shall be his only comfort — a very poor one!

**32. *my terror*** — the *Margin* or *Keri*. The *Hebrew* text or *Chetib* is “*his* terror,” which gives good sense (<sup>43925</sup>Ezekiel 32:25,30). “*My* terror” implies that God puts *His* terror on Pharaoh’s multitude, as they put “their terror” on others, for example, under Pharaoh-necho on Judea. As “the land of the living” was the scene of “their terror,” so it shall be God’s; especially in Judea, He will display His glory to the terror of Israel’s foes (<sup>39317</sup>Ezekiel 26:20). In Israel’s case the judgment is temporary, ending in their future restoration under Messiah. In the case of the world kingdoms which flourished for a time, they fall to rise no more.

# CHAPTER 33

## EZEKIEL 33:1-33.

### RENEWAL OF EZEKIEL'S COMMISSION, NOW THAT HE IS AGAIN TO ADDRESS HIS COUNTRYMEN, AND IN A NEW TONE.

Heretofore his functions had been chiefly threatening; from this point, after the evil had got to its worst in the overthrow of Jerusalem, the consolatory element preponderates.

**2. to the children of thy people** — whom he had been forbidden to address from <sup><320></sup>Ezekiel 24:26,27, till Jerusalem was overthrown, and the “escaped” came with tidings of the judgment being completed. So now, in <sup><330></sup>Ezekiel 33:21, the tidings of the fact having arrived, he opens his heretofore closed lips to the Jews. In the interval he had prophesied as to foreign nations. The former part of the chapter, at <sup><330></sup>Ezekiel 33:2-20, seems to have been imparted to Ezekiel on the evening previous (<sup><330></sup>Ezekiel 33:22), being a preparation for the latter part (<sup><330></sup>Ezekiel 33:23-33) imparted after the tidings had come. This accounts for the first part standing without intimation of the date, which was properly reserved for the latter part, to which the former was the anticipatory introduction [FAIRBAIRN].

**watchman** — <sup><330></sup>Ezekiel 33:1-9 exhibit Ezekiel's office as a spiritual watchman; so in <sup><330></sup>Ezekiel 3:16-21; only here the duties of the earthly watchman (compare <sup><330></sup>2 Samuel 18:24,25 <sup><330></sup>2 Kings 9:17) are detailed first, and then the application is made to the spiritual watchman's duty (compare <sup><330></sup>Isaiah 21:6-10 <sup><330></sup>Hosea 9:8 Habakkuk 2:1). “A man of their coasts” is a man specially chosen for the office *out of their whole number*. So <sup><330></sup>Judges 18:2, “five men *from their coasts*”; also the *Hebrew* of <sup><330></sup>Genesis 47:2; implying the care needed in the choice of the watchman, the spiritual as well as the temporal (<sup><330></sup>Acts 1:21,22,24-26 <sup><330></sup>1 Timothy 5:22).

**3. the sword** — invaders. An appropriate illustration at the time of the invasion of Judea by Nebuchadnezzar.

**4. blood ... upon his own head** — metaphor from sacrificial victims, on the heads of which they used to lay their hands, praying that their guilt should be upon the victims.

**6. *his iniquity*** — his negligence in not maintaining constant watchfulness, as they who are in warfare ought to do. The thing signified here appears from under the image.

**7. *I have set thee a watchman*** — application of the image. Ezekiel's appointment to be a watchman spiritually is far more solemn, as it is derived from God, not from the people.

**8. *thou shalt surely die*** — by a violent death, the earnest of everlasting death; the qualification being supposed, "if thou dost not repent."

**9.** Blood had by this time been shed (<sup><3621></sup>Ezekiel 33:21), but Ezekiel was clear.

**10. *be upon us*** — that is, their guilt remain on us.

***pine away in them*** — if we suffer the penalty threatened for them in <sup><3623></sup>Ezekiel 24:23, according to the law (<sup><3679></sup>Leviticus 26:39).

***how should we ... live?*** — as Thou dost promise in <sup><3625></sup>Ezekiel 33:5 (compare <sup><3711></sup>Ezekiel 37:11 <sup><2344></sup>Isaiah 49:14).

**11.** To meet the Jews' cry of despair in <sup><3630></sup>Ezekiel 33:10, Ezekiel here cheers them by the assurance that God has no pleasure in their death, but that they should repent and live (<sup><602></sup>2 Peter 3:9). A yearning tenderness manifests itself here, notwithstanding all their past sins; yet with it a holiness that abates nothing of its demands for the honor of God's authority. God's righteousness is vindicated as in <sup><3625></sup>Ezekiel 3:18-21 and <sup><3621></sup>Ezekiel 18:1-32, by the statement that each should be treated with the closest adaptation of God's justice to his particular case.

**12. *not fall ... in the day that he turneth*** — (<sup><4074></sup>2 Chronicles 7:14; see <sup><3621></sup>Ezekiel 3:20 18:24).

**15. *give again that he had robbed*** — (<sup><2918></sup>Luke 19:8).

***statutes of life*** — in the obeying of which life is promised (<sup><3625></sup>Leviticus 18:5). If the law has failed to give life to man, it has not been the fault of the law, but of man's sinful inability to keep it (<sup><3710></sup>Romans 7:10,12 <sup><3621></sup>Galatians 3:21). It becomes life-giving through Christ's righteous obedience to it (<sup><4002></sup>2 Corinthians 3:6).

**17. *The way of the Lord*** — The Lord's way of dealing in His moral government.

**21. *twelfth year ... tenth month*** — a year and a half after the capture of the city (<sup><3621></sup>Jeremiah 39:2 52:5,6), in the eleventh year and fourth month. The

one who escaped (as foretold, <sup><309></sup>Ezekiel 24:26) may have been so long on the road through fear of entering the enemy's country [HENDERSON]; or, the *singular* is used for the *plural* in a collective sense, "the escaped remnant." Compare similar phrases, "the escaped of Moab," <sup><310></sup>Isaiah 15:9; "He that escapeth of them," <sup><311></sup>Amos 9:1. Naturally the reopening of the prophet's mouth for consolation would be deferred till the number of the escaped remnant was complete: the removal of such a large number would easily have occupied seventeen or eighteen months.

**22. *in the evening*** — (see on <sup><312></sup>Ezekiel 33:2). Thus the capture of Jerusalem was known to Ezekiel by revelation before the messenger came.

***my mouth ... no more dumb*** — that is, to my countrymen; as foretold (<sup><313></sup>Ezekiel 24:27), He spake (<sup><314></sup>Ezekiel 33:2-20) in the evening before the tidings came.

**24. *they that inhabit ... wastes of ... Israel*** — marking the blindness of the fraction of Jews under Gedaliah who, though dwelling amidst regions laid waste by the foe, still cherished hopes of deliverance, and this without repentance.

***Abraham was one ... but we are many*** — If God gave the land for an inheritance to Abraham, who was but one (<sup><315></sup>Isaiah 51:2), much more it is given to us, who, though reduced, are still many. If he, with 318 servants, was able to defend himself amid so many foes, much more shall we, so much more numerous, retain our own. The grant of the land was not for his sole use, but for his numerous posterity.

***inherited the land*** — not actually possessed it (<sup><316></sup>Acts 7:5), but had the right of dwelling and pasturing his flocks in it [GROTIUS]. The Jews boasted similarly of their Abrahamic descent in <sup><317></sup>Matthew 3:9 and <sup><318></sup>John 8:39.

**25. *eat with the blood*** — in opposition to the law (<sup><319></sup>Leviticus 19:26; compare <sup><320></sup>Genesis 9:4). They did so as an idolatrous rite.

**26. *Ye stand upon your sword*** — Your dependence is, not on right and equity, but on force and arms.

***every one*** — Scarcely anyone refrains from adultery.

**27. *shall fall by the sword*** — The very object of their confidence would be the instrument of their destruction. Thinking to "stand" by it, by it they shall "fall." Just retribution! Some fell by the sword of Ishmael; others by the Chaldeans in revenge for the murder of Gedaliah (<sup><321></sup>Jeremiah 40:1-44:30).

**caves** — (<sup>100B</sup>Judges 6:2 <sup>103B</sup>1 Samuel 13:6). In the hilly parts of Judea there were caves almost inaccessible, as having only crooked and extremely narrow paths of ascent, with rock in front stretching down into the valleys beneath perpendicularly [JOSEPHUS, *Wars of the Jews*, 1.16.4].

**28. most desolate** — (<sup>3027</sup>Jeremiah 4:27 12:11).

**none ... pass through** — from fear of wild beasts and pestilence [GROTIUS].

**30.** Not only the remnant in Judea, but those at the Chebar, though less flagrantly, betrayed the same unbelieving spirit.

**talking against thee** — Though going to the prophet to hear the word of the Lord, they criticised, *in an unfriendly spirit*, his peculiarities of manner and his enigmatical style (<sup>3109</sup>Ezekiel 20:49); making these the excuse for their impenitence. Their talking was not directly “*against*” Ezekiel, for they professed to like his ministrations; but God’s word speaks of things as they really are, not as they appear.

**by the walls** — in the public haunts. In the East groups assemble under the walls of their houses in winter for conversation.

**in the doors** — privately.

**what is the word** — Their motive was curiosity, seeking pastime and gratification of the ear (<sup>5012</sup>2 Timothy 4:3); not reformation of the heart. Compare Johanan’s consultation of Jeremiah, to hear the word of the Lord without desiring to *do* it (<sup>3401</sup>Jeremiah 42:1-43:13).

**31. as the people cometh** — that is, in crowds, as disciples flock to their teacher.

**sit before thee** — on lower seats at thy feet, according to the Jewish custom of pupils (<sup>653B</sup>Deuteronomy 33:3 <sup>1063</sup>2 Kings 4:38 <sup>1019</sup>Luke 10:39 <sup>402B</sup>Acts 22:3).

**as my people** — though they are not.

**hear ... not do** — (<sup>1030</sup>Matthew 13:20,21 <sup>3023</sup>James 1:23,24).

**they show much love** — literally, “make love,” that is, act the part of lovers. Profess love to the Lord (<sup>4021</sup>Matthew 7:21). GESENIUS translates, according to *Arabic* idiom, “They do the delights of God,” that is, all that is agreeable to God. *Vulgate* translates, “They turn thy words into a song of their mouths.”

***heart goeth after ... covetousness*** — the grand rival to the love of God; therefore called “idolatry,” and therefore associated with impure carnal love, as both alike transfer the heart’s affection from the Creator to the creature (<sup>4132</sup>Matthew 13:22 <sup>4185</sup>Ephesians 5:5 <sup>5180</sup>1 Timothy 6:10).

**32. *very lovely song*** — literally, a “song of loves”: a lover’s song. They praise thy eloquence, but care not for the subject of it as a real and personal thing; just as many do in the modern church [JEROME].

***play well on an instrument*** — Hebrew singers accompanied the “voice” with the harp.

**33. *when this cometh to pass*** — when My predictions are verified.

***lo, it will come*** — rather, “lo it is come” (see <sup>3322</sup>Ezekiel 33:22).

***know*** — experimentally, and to their cost.

# CHAPTER 34

## EZEKIEL 34:1-31.

### REPROOF OF THE FALSE SHEPHERDS; PROMISE OF THE TRUE AND GOOD SHEPHERD.

Having in the thirty-third chapter laid down repentance as the necessary preliminary to happier times for the people, He now promises the removal of the false shepherds as preparatory to the raising up of the Good Shepherd.

2. <sup>2216</sup>Jeremiah 23:1 and <sup>3117</sup>Zechariah 11:17 similarly make the removal of the false shepherds the preliminary to the interposition of Messiah the Good Shepherd in behalf of His people Israel. The “shepherds” are not prophets or priests, but *rulers* who sought in their government their own selfish ends, not the good of the people ruled. The term was appropriate, as David, the first king and the type of the true David (<sup>3323</sup>Ezekiel 34:23,24), was taken from being a shepherd (<sup>1082</sup>2 Samuel 5:2 <sup>4780</sup>Psalms 78:70,71); and the office, like that of a shepherd for his flock, is to guard and provide for his people. The choice of a *shepherd* for the first king was therefore designed to suggest this thought, just as Jesus’ selection of *fishermen* for apostles was designed to remind them of their spiritual office of catching men (compare <sup>3403</sup>Isaiah 44:28 <sup>2018</sup>Jeremiah 2:8 3:15 10:21 23:1,2).

3. *fat* — or, by differently pointing the *Hebrew*, “milk” [*Septuagint*]. Thus the repetition “fat” and “fed” is avoided: also the eating of “fat” would not probably be put before the “killing” of the sheep. The eating of sheep’s or goats’ milk as food (<sup>6214</sup>Deuteronomy 32:14 <sup>1727</sup>Proverbs 27:27) was unobjectionable, had not these shepherds milked them too often, and that without duly “feeding” them [BOCHART], (<sup>2891</sup>Isaiah 56:11). The rulers levied exorbitant tributes.

*kill ... fed* — kill the rich by false accusation so as to get possession of their property.

*feed not ... flock* — take no care of the people (<sup>6102</sup>John 10:12).

4. *The diseased* — rather, those *weak* from the effects of “disease,” as “strengthened” (that is, with due nourishment) requires [GROTIUS].

**broken** — that is, fractures from wounds inflicted by the wolf.

**brought again ... driven away** — (<sup><1234></sup>Exodus 23:4). Those “driven away” by the enemy into foreign lands through God’s judgments are meant (<sup><2345></sup>Jeremiah 23:3). A spiritual reformation of the state by the rulers would have turned away God’s wrath, and “brought again” the exiles. The rulers are censured as *chiefly* guilty (though the people, too, were guilty), because they, who ought to have been foremost in checking the evil, promoted it.

**neither ... sought ... lost** — Contrast the Good Shepherd’s love (<sup><2345></sup>Luke 15:4).

**with force ... ruled** — (<sup><1234></sup>Exodus 1:13,14). With an Egyptian bondage. The very thing forbidden by the law they did (<sup><2345></sup>Leviticus 25:43; compare <sup><3456></sup>1 Peter 5:3).

**5. scattered, because ... no shepherd** — that is, none worthy of the name, though there were some *called* shepherds (<sup><1234></sup>1 Kings 22:17 <sup><3456></sup>Matthew 9:36). Compare <sup><4567></sup>Matthew 26:31, where the sheep were scattered when the true Shepherd was smitten. God calls them “My sheep”; for they were not, as the shepherds treated them, *their* patrimony whereby to “feed themselves.”

**meat to all ... beasts** — They became a prey to the Syrians, Ammon, Moab, and Assyria.

**6. every high hill** — the scene of their idolatries sanctioned by the rulers.

**search ... seek** — rather, “seek ... search.” The former is the part of the superior rulers *to inquire after: to search out* is the duty of the subordinate rulers [JUNIUS].

**10. I will require my flock** — (<sup><3456></sup>Hebrews 13:17), rather, “I require,” etc., for God already had begun to do so, punishing Zedekiah and the other princes severely (<sup><2345></sup>Jeremiah 52:10).

**11. I ... will ... search** — doing that which the so-called shepherds had failed to do, I being the rightful owner of the flock.

**12. in the day that he is among** — *in the midst of (Hebrew)* His sheep that had been scattered. Referring to Messiah’s second advent, when He shall be “the glory *in the midst of* Israel” (Zechariah 2:5).

**in the cloudy ... day** — the day of the nation’s calamity (<sup><3456></sup>Joel 2:2).

**13. And I will bring them out from the people**, etc. — (<sup><2345></sup>Ezekiel 28:25 36:24 37:21,22 <sup><3456></sup>Isaiah 65:9,10 <sup><4567></sup>Jeremiah 23:3).

14. *good pasture* — (<sup>4820</sup>Psalm 23:2).

*high mountains of Israel* — In <sup>4572</sup>Ezekiel 17:23 20:40, the phrase is “the mountain of the height of Israel” in the *singular* number. The reason for the difference is: *there* Ezekiel spoke of the central seat of the kingdom, Mount Zion, where the people met for the worship of Jehovah; *here* he speaks of the kingdom of Israel at large, all the parts of which are regarded as possessing a moral elevation.

16. In contrast to the unfaithful shepherds (<sup>4504</sup>Ezekiel 34:4). The several duties neglected by *them* I will faithfully discharge.

*fat ... strong* — that is, those rendered wanton by prosperity (<sup>4625</sup>Deuteronomy 32:15 <sup>4453</sup>Jeremiah 5:28), who use their strength to oppress the weak. Compare <sup>4504</sup>Ezekiel 34:20, “the fat cattle” (<sup>4300</sup>Isaiah 10:16). The image is from fat cattle that wax refractory.

*with judgment* — that is, justice and equity, as contrasted with the “force” and “cruelty” with which the unfaithful shepherds ruled the flock (<sup>4504</sup>Ezekiel 34:4).

17. *you, ... my flock* — passing from the rulers to the people.

*cattle and cattle* — rather, “sheep and sheep”; *Margin*, “small cattle,” or “flocks of lambs and kids,” that is, I judge between one class of citizens and another, so as to award what is right to each. He then defines the class about to be punitively “judged,” namely, “the rams and he-goats,” or “great he-goats” (compare <sup>4349</sup>Isaiah 14:9, *Margin*; Zechariah 10:3 <sup>4152</sup>Matthew 25:32,33). They answer to “the fat and strong,” as opposed to the “sick” (<sup>4504</sup>Ezekiel 34:16). The rich and ungodly of the people are meant, who imitated the bad rulers in oppressing their poorer brethren, as if it enhanced their own joys to trample on others’ rights (<sup>4504</sup>Ezekiel 34:18).

18, 19. Not content with appropriating to their own use the goods of others, they from mere wantonness spoiled what they did not use, so as to be of no use to the owners.

*deep waters* — that is, “limpid,” as deep waters are generally *clear*. GROTIUS explains the image as referring to the usuries with which the rich ground the poor (<sup>4322</sup>Ezekiel 22:12 <sup>4349</sup>Isaiah 24:2).

19. *they eat* — scantily.

*they drink* — sorrowfully.

20. *fat ... lean* — the rich oppressors ... the humble poor.

**21. *scattered them abroad*** — down to the time of the carrying away to Babylon [GROTIUS].

**22.** After the restoration from Babylon, the Jews were delivered in some degree from the oppression, not only of foreigners, but also of their own great people (<sup><4181></sup>Nehemiah 5:1-19). The full and final fulfillment of this prophecy is future.

**23. *set up*** — that is, raise up by divine appointment; alluding to the declaration of God to David, “I will *set up* thy seed after thee” (<sup><4072></sup>2 Samuel 7:12); and, “Yet have I set My king on My holy hill of Zion” (<sup><3906></sup>Psalms 2:6; compare <sup><4023></sup>Acts 2:30 13:23).

***one shepherd*** — literally, “a Shepherd, one”: singularly and pre-eminently *one*: the only one of His kind, to whom none is comparable (So 5:10). The Lord Jesus refers to this prophecy (<sup><6043></sup>John 10:14), “I am THE Good Shepherd.” Also “one” as uniting in one the heretofore divided kingdoms of Israel and Judah, and also “gathering together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and on earth” (<sup><6010></sup>Ephesians 1:10); thus healing worse breaches than that between Israel and Judah (<sup><5011></sup>Colossians 1:20). “God by Him reconciling all things unto Himself, whether things in earth or in heaven.”

***David*** — the antitypical David, Messiah, of the seed of David, which no other king after the captivity was: who was *fully*, what David was only in a degree, “the man after God’s own heart.” Also, David means *beloved*: Messiah was truly God’s *beloved* Son (<sup><2301></sup>Isaiah 42:1 <sup><4017></sup>Matthew 3:17). Shepherd means King, rather than religious instructor; in this pre-eminently He was the true David, who was the *Shepherd King* (<sup><4012></sup>Luke 1:32,33). Messiah is called “David” in <sup><2513></sup>Isaiah 55:3,4 <sup><3819></sup>Jeremiah 30:9 <sup><3815></sup>Hosea 3:5.

**24. *my servant*** — implying fitness for ruling in the name of God, not pursuing a self-chosen course, as other kings, but acting as the faithful administrator of the will of God; Messiah realized fully this character (<sup><3407></sup>Psalms 40:7,8 <sup><2301></sup>Isaiah 42:1 49:3,6 53:11 <sup><5007></sup>Philippians 2:7), which David typically and partially represented (<sup><4136></sup>Acts 13:36); so He is the fittest person to wield the world scepter, abused by all the world kings (<sup><2034></sup>Daniel 2:34,35,44,45).

**25. *covenant of peace ... evil beasts ... to cease ... dwell safely*** — The original promise of the law (<sup><0306></sup>Leviticus 26:6) shall be realized for the first time fully under Messiah (<sup><2509></sup>Isaiah 11:6-9 35:9 <sup><3815></sup>Hosea 2:18).

**26. *them and the places round about my hill*** — The Jews, and Zion, God's hill (<sup>4916</sup>Psalm 2:6), are to be sources of blessing, not merely to themselves, but to the surrounding heathen (<sup>23924</sup>Isaiah 19:24 56:6,7 60:3 <sup>4310</sup>Micah 5:7 <sup>4883</sup>Zechariah 8:13). The literal fulfillment is, however, the primary one, though the spiritual also is designed. In correspondence with the settled reign of righteousness internally, all is to be prosperity externally, fertilizing showers (according to the promise of the ancient covenant, <sup>4304</sup>Leviticus 26:4 <sup>4989</sup>Psalm 68:9 <sup>4910</sup>Malachi 3:10), and productive trees and lands (<sup>4527</sup>Ezekiel 34:27). Thus shall they realize the image of <sup>4544</sup>Ezekiel 34:14; namely, a flock richly pastured by God Himself.

**27. *served themselves of them*** — availed themselves of their services, as if the Jews were their slaves (<sup>4273</sup>Jeremiah 22:13 25:14; compare <sup>4153</sup>Genesis 15:13 <sup>4114</sup>Exodus 1:14).

**28.  *dwell safely*** — (<sup>4236</sup>Jeremiah 23:6).

**29. *plant of renown*** — Messiah, the “Rod” and “Branch” (<sup>23104</sup>Isaiah 11:1), the “righteous Branch” (<sup>4235</sup>Jeremiah 23:5), who shall obtain for them “renown.” FAIRBAIRN less probably translates, “A plantation for a name,” that is, a flourishing condition, represented as a garden (alluding to Eden, <sup>4008</sup>Genesis 2:8-11, with its various trees, good for food and pleasant to the sight), the planting of the Lord (<sup>4303</sup>Isaiah 60:21 61:3), and an object of “renown” among the heathen.

**31. *ye my flock ... are men*** — not merely an explanation of the image, as JEROME represents. But as God had promised many things which mere “men” could not expect to realize, He shows that it is not from *man's* might their realization is to be looked for, but from GOD, who would perform them for His covenant-people, “*His flock*” [ROSENMULLER]. When we realize most our weakness and God's power and faithfulness to His covenant, we are in the fittest state for receiving His blessings.

# CHAPTER 35

## EZEKIEL 35:1-15.

### JUDGMENT ON EDMOM.

Another feature of Israel's prosperity; those who exulted over Israel's humiliation, shall themselves be a "prey." Already stated in <sup><3512></sup>Ezekiel 25:12-14; properly repeated here in full detail, as a commentary on <sup><3428></sup>Ezekiel 34:28. The Israelites "shall be no more a prey"; but Edom, the type of their most bitter foes, shall be destroyed irrecoverably.

**2. *Mount Seir*** — that is, Idumea (<sup><0139></sup>Genesis 36:9). Singled out as badly pre-eminent in its bitterness against God's people, to represent all their enemies everywhere and in all ages. So in <sup><2345></sup>Isaiah 34:5 63:1-4, Edom, the region of the greatest enmity towards God's people, is the ideal scene of the final judgments of all God's foes. "Seir" means "shaggy," alluding to its rugged hills and forests.

**3. *most desolate*** — literally, "desolation and desolateness" (<sup><2497></sup>Jeremiah 49:17, etc.). It is only in their national character of foes to God's people, that the Edomites are to be utterly destroyed. A *remnant* of Edom, as of the other heathen, is to be "called by the name of God" (<sup><3092></sup>Amos 9:12).

**5. *perpetual hatred*** — (<sup><3970></sup>Psalm 137:7 <sup><3001></sup>Amos 1:11 <sup><3001></sup>Obadiah 1:10-16). Edom perpetuated the hereditary hatred derived from Esau against Jacob.

***shed the blood of***, etc. — The literal translation is better. "Thou hast poured out the children of Israel"; namely, like water. So <sup><3224></sup>Psalm 22:14 63:10, *Margin*; <sup><3182></sup>Jeremiah 18:21. Compare <sup><0144></sup>2 Samuel 14:14.

***by the force of the sword*** — literally, "by" or "upon the hands of the sword"; the sword being personified as a devourer whose "hands" were the instruments of destruction.

***in the time that their iniquity had an end*** — that is, had its consummation (<sup><3225></sup>Ezekiel 21:25,29). Edom consummated his guilt when he exulted over Jerusalem's downfall, and helped the foe to destroy it (<sup><3970></sup>Psalm 137:7 <sup><3001></sup>Obadiah 1:11).

**6. *I will prepare thee unto blood*** — I will expose thee to slaughter.

*sith* — old English for “seeing that” or “since.”

*thou hast not hated blood* — The *Hebrew* order is, “thou hast hated not blood”; that is, thou couldst not bear to live without bloodshed [GROTIUS]. There is a play on similar sounds in the *Hebrew*; *Edom* resembling *dam*, the *Hebrew* for “blood”; as “Edom” means “red,” the transition to “blood” is easy. Edom, akin to blood in name, so also in nature and acts; “blood therefore shall pursue thee.” The measure which Edom meted to others should be meted to himself (<sup>194917</sup>Psalm 109:17 <sup>41012</sup>Matthew 7:2 26:52).

**7. *cut off ... him that passeth*** — that is, every passer to and fro; “the highways shall be unoccupied” (<sup>29111</sup>Ezekiel 29:11 <sup>10116</sup>Judges 5:6).

**9. *shall not return*** — to their former state (<sup>23655</sup>Ezekiel 16:55); shall not be restored. The *Hebrew* text (*Chetib*) reads, “shall not *be inhabited*” (compare <sup>23111</sup>Ezekiel 26:20 Malachi 1:3,4).

**10.** So far from being allowed to enter on Israel’s vacated inheritance, as Edom hoped (<sup>23655</sup>Ezekiel 36:5 <sup>18814</sup>Psalm 83:4,12 <sup>30113</sup>Obadiah 1:13), it shall be that he shall be deprived of his own; and whereas Israel’s humiliation was temporary, Edom’s shall be perpetual.

*Lord was there* — (<sup>23655</sup>Ezekiel 48:35 <sup>19411</sup>Psalm 48:1,3 132:13,14). Jehovah claimed Judea as His own, even when the Chaldeans had overthrown the state; they could not remove Him, as they did the idols of heathen lands. The broken sentences express the excited feelings of the prophet at Edom’s wicked presumption. The transition from the “two nations and two countries” to “it” marks that the two are regarded as one whole. The last clause, “and Jehovah was there,” bursts in, like a flash of lightning, reproving the wicked presumption of Edom’s thought.

**11. *according to thine anger*** — (<sup>31113</sup>James 2:13). As thou in anger and envy hast injured them, so I will injure thee.

*I will make myself known among them* — namely, the Israelites. I will manifest My favor to them, after I have punished thee.

**12, 13. *blasphemies ... against ... Israel ... against me*** — God regards what is done against His people as done against Himself (<sup>41565</sup>Matthew 25:45 <sup>44012</sup>Acts 9:2,4,5). Edom *implied*, if he did not express it, in his taunts against Israel, that God had not sufficient power to protect His people. A type of the spirit of all the foes of God and His people (<sup>40011</sup>1 Samuel 2:3 <sup>61116</sup>Revelation 13:6).

14. (<sup>2513</sup>Isaiah 65:13,14). “The whole earth” refers to *Judea and the nations that submit themselves to Judea’s God*; when these rejoice, the foes of God and His people, represented by Edom *as a nation*, shall be desolate. Things shall be completely reversed; Israel, that now for a time mourns, shall then rejoice and for ever. Edom, that now rejoices over fallen Israel, shall then, when elsewhere all is joy, mourn, and for ever (<sup>2517</sup>Isaiah 65:17-19 <sup>4169</sup>Matthew 5:4 <sup>4165</sup>Luke 6:25). HAVERNICK loses this striking antithesis by translating, “According to the joy of the whole land (of Edom), so I will make thee desolate”; which would make <sup>3585</sup>Ezekiel 35:15 a mere repetition of this.
15. (<sup>3012</sup>Obadiah 1:12,15).

# CHAPTER 36

## EZEKIEL 36:1-38.

### ISRAEL AVENGED OF HER FOES, AND RESTORED, FIRST TO INWARD HOLINESS, THEN TO OUTWARD PROSPERITY.

The distinction between Israel and the heathen (as Edom) is: Israel has a covenant relation to God ensuring restoration after chastisement, so that the heathen's hope of getting possession of the elect people's inheritance must fail, and they themselves be made desolate (<sup>2501</sup>Ezekiel 36:1-15). The reason for the chastisement of Israel was Israel's sin and profanation of God's name (<sup>2506</sup>Ezekiel 36:16-21). God has good in store for Israel, for His own name's sake, to revive His people; first, by a spiritual renewal of their hearts, and, next, by an external restoration to prosperity (<sup>2522</sup>Ezekiel 36:22-33). The result is that the heathen shall be impressed with the power and goodness of God manifested so palpably towards the restored people (<sup>2534</sup>Ezekiel 36:34-38).

**1, 2. *mountains of Israel*** — in contrast to “*Mount Seir*” of the previous prophecy. They are here personified; Israel's elevation is moral, not merely physical, as Edom's. Her hills are “the everlasting hills” of Jacob's prophecy (<sup>0422</sup>Genesis 49:26). “The enemy” (Edom, the singled-out representative of all God's foes), with a shout of exultation, “Aha!” had claimed, as the nearest kinsman of Israel (the brother of their father Esau), his vacated inheritance; as much as to say, the so-called “everlasting” inheritance of Israel and of the “hills,” which typified the unmoved perpetuity of it (<sup>1303</sup>Psalms 125:1,2), has come to an end, in spite of the promise of God, and has become “ours” (compare <sup>1523</sup>Deuteronomy 32:13 33:15).

**3.** Literally, “Because, even because.”

***swallowed you up*** — literally, “panted after” you, as a beast after its prey; implying the greedy cupidity of Edom as to Israel's inheritance (<sup>1501</sup>Psalms 56:1,2).

***lips of talkers*** — literally, “lips of *the tongue*,” that is, of the slanderer, the man of tongue. Edom slandered Israel because of the connection of the latter with Jehovah, as though He were unable to save them.

<sup><6387></sup>Deuteronomy 28:37, and <sup><2409></sup>Jeremiah 24:9 had foretold Israel's reproach among the heathen (<sup><2196></sup>Daniel 9:16).

4. Inanimate creatures are addressed, to imply that the creature also, as it were, groans for deliverance from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God (<sup><6189></sup>Romans 8:19-21) [POLANUS]. The completeness of the renewed blessedness of all parts of the land is implied.

*derision* — (<sup><5758></sup>Psalm 79:4).

5. *to cast it out for a prey* — that is, to take the land for a prey, its inhabitants being cast out. Or the land is compared to a prey cast forth to wild beasts. FAIRBAIRN needlessly alters the *Hebrew* pointing and translates, "that they may plunder its pasturage."

6. *the shame of the heathen* — namely, the shame with which the heathen cover you (<sup><4338></sup>Psalm 123:3,4).

7. *lifted ... mine hand* — in token of an oath (<sup><3105></sup>Ezekiel 20:5 <sup><0142></sup>Genesis 14:22).

*they shall bear their shame* — a *perpetual* shame; whereas the "shame" which Israel bore from these heathen was only for a time.

8. *they are at hand to come* — that is the Israelites are soon about to return to their land. This proves that the primary reference of the prophecy is to the return from Babylon, which was "at hand," or comparatively near. But this only in part fulfilled the prediction, the full and final blessing in future, and the restoration from Babylon was an earnest of it.

10. *wastes builded* — <sup><2582></sup>Isaiah 58:12 61:4 <sup><3191></sup>Amos 9:11,12,14, where, as here (<sup><3625></sup>Ezekiel 34:23,24), the names of David, Messiah's type, and Edom, Israel's foe, are introduced in connection with the coming restoration.

11. *do better ... than at your beginnings* — as in the case of Job (<sup><822></sup>Job 42:12). Whereas the heathen nations fall irrevocably, Israel shall be more than restored; its last estate shall exceed even its first.

12. *to walk upon you* — O mountains of Israel (<sup><3618></sup>Ezekiel 36:8)!

*thee ... thou* — change from *plural* to *singular*: O hill of Zion, singled out from the other mountains of Israel (<sup><3625></sup>Ezekiel 34:26); or land.

*thou shall no more ... bereave them of men* — Thou shalt no more provoke God to bereave them *of children* (so the ellipsis ought to be

supplied, as Ezekiel probably alludes to <sup><2457></sup>Jeremiah 15:7, “I will bereave them *of children*”).

**13. *Thou land devourest up men*** — alluding to the words of the spies (<sup><0433></sup>Numbers 13:32). The land personified is represented as doing that which was done in it. Like an unnatural mother it devoured, that is, it was the grave of its people; of the Canaanites, its former possessors, through mutual wars, and finally by the sword of Israel; and now, of the Jews, through internal and external ills; for example, wars, famine (to which <sup><3670></sup>Ezekiel 36:30, “reproach of *famine* among the heathen,” implies the allusion here is).

**14. *bereave*** — so the *Keri*, or *Hebrew Margin* reads, to correspond to “bereave” in <sup><2613></sup>Ezekiel 36:13; but “cause to fall” or “stumble,” in the *Hebrew* text or *Chetib*, being the more difficult reading, is the one least likely to come from a corrector; also, it forms a good transition to the next subject, namely, the moral *cause* of the people’s calamities, namely, their *falls*, or *stumbings* through sin. The latter ceasing, the former also cease. So the same expression follows in <sup><2615></sup>Ezekiel 36:15, “Neither shalt thou cause thy nations to *fall* any more.”

**17. *removed woman*** — (<sup><0819></sup>Leviticus 15:19, etc.).

**18, 19.** The reason for their removal was their sin, which God’s holiness could not let pass unpunished; just as a woman’s legal uncleanness was the reason for her being *separated* from the congregation.

**20. *profaned my holy name, when they*** — the heathen

*said to them* — the Israelites.

***These***, etc. — The Israelites gave a handle of reproach to the heathen against God, who would naturally say, These who take usury, oppress, commit adultery, etc., and who, in such an abject plight, are “gone forth” as exiles “out of His land,” are specimens of what Jehovah can or will effect, for His people, and show what kind of a God this so-called holy, omnipotent, covenant-keeping God must be! (<sup><2516></sup>Isaiah 52:5 <sup><0124></sup>Romans 2:24).

**21. *I had pity for mine holy name*** — that is, I felt pity for it; God’s own name, so dishonored, was the primary object of His pitying concern; then His people, secondarily, through His concern for it [FAIRBAIRN].

**22. *not ... for your sakes*** — that is, not for any merit in you; for, on the contrary, on your part, there is everything to call down continued severity (compare <sup><0808></sup>Deuteronomy 9:5,6). The sole and sure ground of hope was

God's regard to "His own name," as the God of covenant grace (<sup>39:66</sup>Psalm 106:45), which He must vindicate from the dishonor brought on it by the Jews, before the heathen.

**23. sanctify** — vindicate and manifest as holy, in opposition to the heathen reproaches of it brought on by the Jews' sins and their punishment (see on <sup>36:20</sup>Ezekiel 36:20).

**sanctified in you** — that is, in respect of you; I shall be regarded in their eyes as the Holy One, and righteous in My dealings towards you (<sup>20:41</sup>Ezekiel 20:41 28:22).

**24.** Fulfilled primarily in the restoration from Babylon; ultimately to be so in the restoration "from all countries."

**25.** The *external* restoration must be preceded by an *internal* one. The change in their condition must not be superficial, but must be based on a radical renewal of the heart. Then the heathen, understanding from the regenerated lives of God's people how holy God is, would perceive Israel's past troubles to have been only the necessary vindications of His righteousness. Thus God's name would be "sanctified" before the heathen, and God's people be prepared for outward blessings.

**sprinkle ... water** — phraseology taken from the law; namely, the water mixed with the ashes of a heifer sprinkled with a hyssop on the unclean (<sup>19:9-18</sup>Numbers 19:9-18); the thing signified being the cleansing blood of Christ sprinkled on the conscience and heart (<sup>9:13,14</sup>Hebrews 9:13,14 10:22; compare <sup>33:8</sup>Jeremiah 33:8 <sup>4:13</sup>Ephesians 5:26).

**from all your idols** — Literal idolatry has ceased among the Jews ever since the captivity; so far, the prophecy has been already fulfilled; but "cleansing from *all* their idols," for example, covetousness, prejudices against Jesus of Nazareth, is yet future.

**26. new heart** — mind and will.

**spirit** — motive and principle of action.

**stony heart** — unimpressible in serious things; like the "stony ground" (<sup>13:5,20</sup>Matthew 13:5,20), unfit for receiving the good seed so as to bring forth fruit.

**heart of flesh** — not "carnal" in opposition to "spiritual"; but impressible and docile, fit for receiving the good seed. In <sup>18:31</sup>Ezekiel 18:31 they are commanded, "Make you a new heart, and a new spirit." Here God says, "A new heart will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you." Thus the

responsibility of man, and the sovereign grace of God, are shown to be coexistent. Man cannot make himself a new heart unless God gives it (<sup><3852></sup>Philippians 2:12,13).

**27. *my spirit*** — (<sup><3818></sup>Ezekiel 11:19 <sup><3629></sup>Jeremiah 32:39). The partial reformation at the return from Babylon (<sup><4500></sup>Ezra 10:6, etc. <sup><4600></sup>Nehemiah 8:1-9:38) was an earnest of the full renewal hereafter under Messiah.

**28. *ye ... my people, ... I ... your God*** — (<sup><3812></sup>Ezekiel 11:20 <sup><3812></sup>Jeremiah 30:22).

**29. *save ... from all ... uncleannesses*** — the province of Jesus, according to the signification of His name (<sup><4021></sup>Matthew 1:21). To be specially exercised in behalf of the Jews in the latter days (<sup><5126></sup>Romans 11:26).

***call for ... corn*** — as a master “calls for” a servant; all the powers and productions of nature are the servants of Jehovah (<sup><49516></sup>Psalms 105:16 <sup><4088></sup>Matthew 8:8,9). Compare as to the subordination of all the intermediate agents to the Great First Cause, who will give “corn” and all good things to His people, <sup><3021></sup>Hosea 2:21,22 <sup><3882></sup>Zechariah 8:12.

**30. *no more reproach of famine among the heathen*** — to which their taunt (<sup><3863></sup>Ezekiel 36:13), “Thou land devourest up men,” in part referred.

**31. *remember your ... evil ways*** — with shame and loathing. The unexpected grace and love of God, manifested in Christ to Israel, shall melt the people into true repentance, which mere legal fear could not (<sup><3861></sup>Ezekiel 16:61,63 <sup><49104></sup>Psalms 130:4 <sup><38217></sup>Zechariah 12:10; compare <sup><38387></sup>Jeremiah 33:8,9).

**35. *they shall say*** — The heathen, who once made Israel’s desolation a ground of reproach against the name of Jehovah Himself (<sup><3861></sup>Ezekiel 36:20,21); but now He so vindicates its sanctity (<sup><3862></sup>Ezekiel 36:22,23) that these same heathen are constrained to acknowledge Israel’s more than renewed blessedness to be God’s own work, and a ground for glorifying His name (<sup><3866></sup>Ezekiel 36:36).

***Eden*** — as Tyre (the type of the world powers in general: so Assyria, a cedar “in the garden of God, Eden,” <sup><3818></sup>Ezekiel 31:8,9), in original advantages, had been compared to “Eden, the garden of God” (<sup><3863></sup>Ezekiel 28:13), from which she had fallen irrecoverably; so Israel, once desolate, is to be as “the garden of Eden” (<sup><2808></sup>Isaiah 51:3), and is to be so unchangeably.

**36. *Lord ... spoken ... do it*** — (<sup><4029></sup>Numbers 23:19).

**37. *I will yet for this be inquired of*** — so as to grant it. On former occasions He had refused to be inquired of by Israel because the inquirers were not in a fit condition of mind to receive a blessing (<sup>234B</sup>Ezekiel 14:3 20:3). But hereafter, as in the restoration from Babylon (<sup>468E</sup>Nehemiah 8:1-9:38 <sup>274B</sup>Daniel 9:3-20,21,23), God will prepare His people's hearts (<sup>236E</sup>Ezekiel 36:26) to pray aright for the blessings which He is about to give (<sup>49A2B</sup>Psalms 102:13-17,20 <sup>382D7</sup>Zechariah 12:10-14 13:1).

***like a flock*** — resuming the image (<sup>262E</sup>Ezekiel 34:23,31).

**38. *As the holy flock*** — the great flock of choice animals for sacrifice, brought up to Jerusalem at the three great yearly festivals, the passover, pentecost, and feast of the tabernacles.

# CHAPTER 37

## EZEKIEL 37:1-28.

### THE VISION OF DRY BONES REVIVIFIED, SYMBOLIZING ISRAEL'S DEATH AND RESURRECTION.

Three stages in Israel's revival present themselves to the prophet's eye.

(1) The new awakening of the people, the resurrection of the dead (<sup>350</sup>Ezekiel 37:1-14).

(2) The reunion of the formerly hostile members of the community, whose contentions had affected the whole (<sup>357</sup>Ezekiel 37:15-28).

(3) The community thus restored is strong enough to withstand the assault of Gog, etc. (<sup>381</sup>Ezekiel 38:1-39:29) [EWALD].

1. *carried ... in the spirit* — The matters transacted, therefore, were not literal, but in vision.

*the valley* — probably that by the Chebar (<sup>342</sup>Ezekiel 3:22). The valley represents Mesopotamia, the scene of Israel's sojourn in her state of national deadness.

2. *dry* — bleached by long exposure to the atmosphere.

3. *can these bones live? ... thou knowest* — implying that, humanly speaking, they could not; but faith leaves the question of possibility to rest with God, with whom nothing is impossible (<sup>623</sup>Deuteronomy 32:39). An image of Christian faith which believes in the coming general resurrection of the dead, in spite of all appearances against it, because God has said it (<sup>602</sup>John 5:21 <sup>607</sup>Romans 4:17 <sup>602</sup>2 Corinthians 1:9).

4. *Prophecy* — Proclaim God's quickening word to them. On account of this innate power of the divine word to effect its end, prophets are said to *do* that which they *prophecy as about to be done* (<sup>310</sup>Jeremiah 1:10).

5. *I ... cause breath to enter into you* — So <sup>239</sup>Isaiah 26:19, containing the same vision, refers *primarily* to Israel's restoration. Compare as to God's renovation of the earth and all its creatures hereafter by His breath, <sup>490</sup>Psalms 104:30.

*ye shall live* — come to life *again*.

**6. *ye shall know that I am the Lord*** — by the actual proof of My divinity which I will give in reviving Israel.

**7. *noise*** — of the bones when coming in mutual collision. Perhaps referring to the decree of Cyrus, or the noise of the Jews' exultation at their deliverance and return.

***bones came together*** — literally, “*ye bones came together*”; as in <sup><441></sup>Jeremiah 49:11 (*Hebrew*), “*ye widows of thine shall trust in Me.*” The second person puts the scene vividly before one's eyes, for the whole resurrection scene is a *prophecy in action* to render more palpably to the people the prophecy in word (<sup><472></sup>Ezekiel 37:21).

**8.** So far, they were only cohering in order as unsightly skeletons. The next step, that of covering them successively with sinews, skin, and flesh, gives them beauty; but still “no breath” of life in them. This may imply that Israel hereafter, as at the restoration from Babylon was the case in part, shall return to Judea unconverted at first (Zechariah 13:8,9). Spiritually: a man may assume all the semblances of spiritual life, yet have none, and so be dead before God.

**9. *wind*** — rather, *the spirit* of life or *life-breath* (*Margin*). For it is distinct from “the four *winds*” from which it is summoned.

***from the four winds*** — implying that Israel is to be gathered from the four quarters of the earth (<sup><2315></sup>Isaiah 43:5,6 <sup><2318></sup>Jeremiah 31:8), even as they were “scattered into all the winds” (<sup><2151></sup>Ezekiel 5:10 12:14 17:21; compare <sup><601></sup>Revelation 7:1,4).

**10.** Such honor God gives to the divine word, even in the mouth of a man. How much more when in the mouth of the Son of God! (<sup><4125></sup>John 5:25-29). Though this chapter does not *directly* prove the resurrection of the dead, it does so *indirectly*; for it takes for granted the future fact as one recognized by believing Jews, and so made the image of their national restoration (so <sup><2218></sup>Isaiah 25:8 26:19 <sup><2712></sup>Daniel 12:2 <sup><2102></sup>Hosea 6:2 13:14; compare *Note*, see on <sup><2712></sup>Ezekiel 37:12).

**11. *Our bones are dried*** — (<sup><4912></sup>Psalm 141:7), explained by “our hope is lost” (<sup><2314></sup>Isaiah 49:14); our national state is as hopeless of resuscitation, as marrowless bones are of reanimation.

***cut off for our parts*** — that is, so far as we are concerned. There is nothing in us to give hope, like a withered branch “cut off” from a tree, or a limb from the body.

**12. *my people*** — in antithesis to “for our parts” (<sup><3571></sup>Ezekiel 37:11). The hope that is utterly gone, if looking at *themselves*, is sure for them in *God*, because He regards them as *His* people. Their covenant relation to God ensures His not letting death permanently reign over them. Christ makes the same principle the ground on which the literal resurrection rests. God had said, “I am the God of Abraham,” etc.; God, by taking the patriarchs as *His*, undertook to do for them all that Omnipotence can perform: He, being the ever living God, is necessarily the God of, not dead, but living persons, that is, of those whose bodies His covenant love binds Him to raise again. He can — and because He can — He will — He must [FAIRBAIRN]. He calls them “*My people*” when receiving them into favor; but “*thy people*,” in addressing His servant, as if He would put them away from Him (<sup><3337></sup>Ezekiel 13:17 33:2 <sup><3319></sup>Exodus 32:7).

***out of your graves*** — out of your politically dead state, primarily in Babylon, finally hereafter in all lands (compare <sup><3068></sup>Ezekiel 6:8 <sup><2834></sup>Hosea 13:14). The Jews regarded the lands of their captivity and dispersion as their “graves”; their restoration was to be as “life from the dead” (<sup><3115></sup>Romans 11:15). Before, the bones were in the open plain (<sup><3571></sup>Ezekiel 37:1,2); now, in the graves, that is, some of the Jews were in the graves of actual captivity, others at large but dispersed. Both alike were nationally dead.

**16. *stick*** — alluding to <sup><3472></sup>Numbers 17:2, the tribal rod. The union of the two rods was a prophecy in action of the brotherly union which is to reunite the ten tribes and Judah. As their severance under Jeroboam was fraught with the greatest evil to the covenant-people, so the first result of both being joined by the spirit of life to God is that they become joined to one another under the one covenant King, Messiah-David.

***Judah, and ... children of Israel his companions*** — that is, Judah and, besides Benjamin and Levi, those who had joined themselves to him of Ephraim, Manasseh, Simeon, Asher, Zebulun, Issachar, as having the temple and lawful priesthood in his borders (<sup><3411></sup>2 Chronicles 11:12,13,16 15:9 30:11,18). The latter became identified with Judah after the carrying away of the ten tribes, and returned with Judah from Babylon, and so shall be associated with that tribe at the future restoration.

***For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim*** — Ephraim’s posterity took the lead, not only of the other descendants of Joseph (compare <sup><3571></sup>Ezekiel 37:19), but of the ten tribes of Israel. For four hundred years, during the period of the judges, with Manasseh and Benjamin, its dependent tribes, it had formerly taken the lead: Shiloh was its religious capital; Shechem, its civil capital. God had transferred the birthright from Reuben (for dishonoring his

father's bed) to Joseph, whose representative, Ephraim, though the younger, was made (<sup><0489></sup>Genesis 48:19 <sup><1301></sup>1 Chronicles 5:1). From its pre-eminence "Israel" is attached to it as "companions." The "all" in this case, not in that of Judah, which has only attached as "companions" the children of Israel" (that is, some of them, namely, those who followed the fortunes of Judah), implies that the *bulk* of the ten tribes did not return at the restoration from Babylon, but are distinct from Judah, until the coming union with it at the restoration.

**18.** God does not explain the symbolical prophecy until the Jews have been stimulated by the type to consult the prophet.

**19.** The union effected at the restoration from Babylon embraced but comparatively few of Israel; a future complete fulfillment must therefore be looked for.

*stick of Joseph ... in the hand of Ephraim* — Ephraim, of the descendants of Joseph, had exercised the rule among the ten tribes: that rule, symbolized by the "stick," was now to be withdrawn from him, and to be made one with the other, Judah's rule, in God's hand.

*them* — the "stick of Joseph," would strictly require "it"; but Ezekiel expresses the sense, namely, the ten tribes who were subject to it.

*with him* — that is, Judah; or "it," that is, the stick of Judah.

**22. one nation** — (<sup><2113></sup>Isaiah 11:13 <sup><2418></sup>Jeremiah 3:18 <sup><2011></sup>Hosea 1:11).

*one king* — not Zerubbabel, who was not a king either in fact or name, and who ruled over but a few Jews, and that only for a few years; whereas the King here reigns for ever. MESSIAH is meant (<sup><3523></sup>Ezekiel 34:23,24). The union of Judah and Israel under King Messiah symbolizes the union of Jews and Gentiles under Him, partly now, perfectly hereafter (<sup><3724></sup>Ezekiel 37:24 <sup><3106></sup>John 10:16).

**23.** (<sup><2325></sup>Ezekiel 36:25).

*out of ... their dwelling-places* — (<sup><2328></sup>Ezekiel 36:28,33). I will remove them from the scene of their idolatries to dwell in their own land, and to serve idols no more.

**24. David** — Messiah (See on <sup><3523></sup>Ezekiel 34:23,24).

**25. for ever** — (<sup><2421></sup>Isaiah 60:21 <sup><2420></sup>Joel 3:20 <sup><3195></sup>Amos 9:15).

**26. *covenant of peace*** — better than the old legal covenant, because an unchangeable covenant of grace (<sup><4645></sup>Ezekiel 34:25 <sup><2818></sup>Isaiah 55:3 <sup><4830></sup>Jeremiah 32:40).

***I will place them*** — set them in an established position; no longer unsettled as heretofore.

***my sanctuary*** — the temple of God; spiritual in the heart of all true followers of Messiah (<sup><4769></sup>2 Corinthians 6:16); and, in some “literal” sense, in the restored Israel (<sup><3401></sup>Ezekiel 40:1-44:31).

**27. *My tabernacle ... with them*** — as foretold (<sup><0027></sup>Genesis 9:27); <sup><4014></sup>John 1:14, “The Word ... *dwelt* among us” (literally, “tabernacled”); first, in humiliation; hereafter, in manifested glory (<sup><6213></sup>Revelation 21:3).

**28.** (<sup><3823></sup>Ezekiel 36:23).

***sanctify Israel*** — set it apart as holy unto Myself and inviolable (<sup><0918></sup>Exodus 19:5,6).

# CHAPTER 38

## ~~38:1~~ EZEKIEL 38:1-23.

### THE ASSAULT OF GOG, AND GOD'S JUDGMENT ON HIM.

The objections to a *literal* interpretation of the prophecy are —

- (1) The ideal nature of the name Gog, which is the root of Magog, the only kindred name found in Scripture or history.
- (2) The nations congregated are selected from places most distant from Israel, and from one another, and therefore most unlikely to act in concert (Persians and Libyans, etc.).
- (3) The whole spoil of Israel could not have given a handful to a tithe of their number, or maintained the myriads of invaders a single day (~~38:12~~ Ezekiel 38:12,13).
- (4) The wood of their invaders' weapons was to serve for fuel to Israel for seven years! And *all* Israel were to take seven months in burying the dead! Supposing a million of Israelites to bury each two corpses a day, the aggregate buried in the hundred eighty working days of the seven months would be three hundred sixty millions of corpses! Then the pestilential vapors from such masses of victims before they were all buried! What Israelite could live in such an atmosphere?
- (5) The scene of the Lord's controversy here is different from that in ~~34:6~~ Isaiah 34:6, Edom, which creates a discrepancy. (But probably a different judgment is alluded to).
- (6) The gross carnality of the representation of God's dealings with His adversaries is inconsistent with Messianic times. It therefore requires a non-literal interpretation. The prophetic delineations of the divine principles of government are thrown into the familiar forms of Old Testament relations. The final triumph of Messiah's truth over the most distant and barbarous nations is represented as a literal conflict on a gigantic scale, Israel being the battlefield, ending in the complete triumph of Israel's anointed King, the Savior of the world. It is a *prophetical* parable [FAIRBAIRN]. However, though the *details* are not literal, the distinctiveness in this picture, characterizing also parallel

descriptions in writers less ideally picturesque than Ezekiel, gives probability to a more definite and generally literal interpretation. The awful desolations caused in Judea by Antiochus Epiphanes, of Syria (I Maccabees; and PORPHYRY, quoted by JEROME on Ezekiel), his defilement of Jehovah's temple by sacrificing swine and sprinkling the altar with the broth, and setting up the altar of Jupiter Olympius, seem to be an earnest of the final desolations to be caused by Antichrist in Israel, previous to His overthrow by the Lord Himself, coming to reign (compare <sup>2780</sup>Daniel 8:10-26 11:21-45 12:1 Zechariah 13:9 14:2,3). GROTIUS explains Gog as a name taken from Gyges, king of Lydia; and Magog as Syria, in which was a city called Magag [PLINY, 5.28]. What Ezekiel stated more generally, <sup>610</sup>Revelation 20:7-9 states more definitely as to the anti-Christian confederacy which is to assail the beloved city.

2. **Gog** — the prince of the land of Magog. The title was probably a common one of the kings of the country, as “Pharaoh” in Egypt. Chakan was the name given by the Northern Asiatics to their king, and is still a title of the Turkish sultan: “Gog” may be a contraction of this. In Ezekiel's time a horde of northern Asiatics, termed by the Greeks “Scythians,” and probably including the Moschi and Tibareni, near the Caucasus, here (“Meshech ... Tubal”) undertook an expedition against Egypt [HERODOTUS, 1.103-106]. These names might be adopted by Ezekiel from the historical fact familiar to men at the time, as ideal titles for the great last anti-Christian confederacy.

**Magog** — (<sup>400</sup>Genesis 10:2 <sup>1305</sup>1 Chronicles 1:5). The name of a land belonging to Japheth's posterity. *Maha*, in Sanskrit, means “land.” Gog is the ideal political head of the region. In <sup>608</sup>Revelation 20:8, Gog and Magog are two peoples.

**the chief prince** — rather, “prince of *Rosh*,” or “*Rhos*” [*Septuagint*]. The Scythian Tauri in the Crimea were so called. The Araxes also was called “*Rhos*.” The modern Russians may have hence *assumed* their name, as Moscow and Tobolsk from Meshech and Tubal, though their *proper* ancient name was *Slavi*, or *Wends*. HENGSTENBERG supports *English Version*, as “*Rosh*” is not found in the Bible. “Magog was Gog's original kingdom, though he acquired also Meshech and Tubal, so as to be called their *chief prince*.”

3. His high-sounding titles are repeated to imply the haughty self-confidence of the invader as if invincible.

4. **turn thee back** — as a refractory wild beast, which thinks to take its own way, but is bent by a superior power to turn on a course which must end in

its destruction. Satan shall be, by overruling Providence, permitted to deceive them to their ruin (<sup><6117></sup>Revelation 20:7,8).

**hooks into thy jaws** — (<sup><2304></sup>Ezekiel 29:4 <sup><1248></sup>2 Kings 19:28).

**5. Persia ... Libya** — expressly specified by APPIAN as supplying the ranks of Antiochus' army.

**6. Gomer** — the Celtic Cimmerians of Crim-Tartary.

**Togarmah** — the Armenians of the Caucasus, south of Iberia.

**7. Irony.** Prepare thee and all thine with all needful accoutrements for war — that ye may perish together.

**be ... a guard unto them** — that is, *if thou canst*.

**8. thou shall be visited** — in wrath, by God (<sup><2306></sup>Isaiah 29:6). Probably there is allusion to <sup><2321></sup>Isaiah 24:21,22, “The host of the high ones ... shall be gathered ... as prisoners ... in me pit ... and *after many days shall they be visited.*” I therefore prefer *English Version* to GROTIUS rendering, “Thou shalt get *the command*” of the expedition. The “after many days” is defined by “in the latter years,” that is, in the times just before the coming of Messiah, namely, under Antiochus, before His first coming; under Antichrist, before His second coming.

**the mountains of Israel ... always waste** — that is, waste during the long period of the captivity, the earnest of the much longer period of Judea's present desolation (to which the language “always waste” more fully applies). This marks the impious atrocity of the act, to assail God's people, who had only begun to recover from their protracted calamities.

**but it is brought ... and they shall dwell** — rather, “And they (the Israelites) were brought ... dwelt safely” [FAIRBAIRN]. *English Version* means, “Against Israel, which has been waste, but which (that is, whose people) is now (at the time of the invasion) brought forth out of the nations where they were dispersed, and shall be found by the invader dwelling securely, so as to seem an easy prey to him.”

**9. cloud to cover the land** — with the multitude of thy forces.

**10. an evil thought** — as to attacking God's people in their defenseless state.

**11. dwell safely** — that is, securely, without fear of danger (compare <sup><1089></sup>Esther 9:19). Antiochus, the type of Antichrist, took Jerusalem without a blow.

**12. *midst of the land*** — literally, “the navel” of the land (<sup>4085</sup>Judges 9:37, *Margin*). So, in <sup>3488</sup>Ezekiel 5:5, Israel is said to be set “in the midst of the nations”; not physically, but morally, a central position for being a blessing to the world: so (as the favored or “beloved city,” <sup>6109</sup>Revelation 20:9) an object of envy. GROTIUS translates, “In the *height* of the land” (so <sup>3588</sup>Ezekiel 38:8), “the mountains of Israel,” Israel being morally elevated above the rest of the world.

**13. *Sheba***, etc. — These mercantile peoples, though not taking an active part against the cause of God, are well pleased to see others do it. Worldliness makes them ready to deal in the ill-gotten spoil of the invaders of God’s people. Gain is before godliness with them (I Maccabees 3:41).

***young lions*** — daring princes and leaders.

**14. *shalt thou not know it?*** — to thy cost, being visited with punishment, while Israel dwells safely.

**16. *I will bring thee against my land, that the heathen may know me*** — So in <sup>4896</sup>Exodus 9:16, God tells Pharaoh, “For this cause have I raised thee up, for to show in thee My power; and that My name may be declared throughout all the earth.”

**17. *thou he of whom I have spoken in old time*** — Gog, etc. are here identified with the enemies spoken of in other prophecies (<sup>4847</sup>Numbers 24:17-24 <sup>2207</sup>Isaiah 27:1; compare <sup>2307</sup>Isaiah 26:20,21 <sup>2423</sup>Jeremiah 30:23,24 <sup>2881</sup>Joel 3:1 <sup>3185</sup>Micah 5:5,6 <sup>2342</sup>Isaiah 14:12-14 59:19). God is represented as addressing Gog at the time of his assault; therefore, the “old time” is the time long prior, when Ezekiel uttered these prophecies; so, he also, as well as Daniel (<sup>2710</sup>Daniel 11:1-45) and Zechariah (Zechariah 14:1-21) are included among “the prophets of Israel” here.

***many years*** — ago.

**18. *fury shall come up in my face*** — literally, “nose”; in *Hebrew*, the idiomatic expression for *anger*, as men in anger breathe strongly through the nostrils. Anthropopathy: God stooping to human modes of thought (<sup>4988</sup>Psalms 18:8).

**19. *great shaking*** — an earthquake: physical agitations after accompanying social and moral revolutions. Foretold also in <sup>2486</sup>Joel 3:16; (compare Haggai 2:6,7 <sup>4147</sup>Matthew 24:7,29 <sup>6668</sup>Revelation 16:18).

**20. *fishes*** — disturbed by the fleets which I will bring.

***fowls***, etc. — frightened at the sight of so many men: an ideal picture.

**mountains** — that is, the fortresses on the mountains.

**steep places** — literally, “stairs” (So 2:14); steep terraces for vines on the sides of hills, to prevent the earth being washed down by the rains.

**every wall** — of towns.

**21. every man’s sword ... against his brother** — I will destroy them partly by My people’s sword, partly by their swords being turned against one another (compare <sup><4023></sup>2 Chronicles 20:23).

**22. plead** — a forensic term; because God in His inflictions acts on the principles of His own immutable *justice*, not by arbitrary impulse (<sup><2766></sup>Isaiah 66:16 <sup><2578></sup>Jeremiah 25:31).

**blood ... hailstones, fire** — (<sup><6087></sup>Revelation 8:7 16:21). The imagery is taken from the destruction of Sodom and the plagues of Egypt (compare <sup><9116></sup>Psalms 11:6). Antiochus died by “pestilence” (II Maccabees 9:5).

# CHAPTER 39

## EZEKIEL 39:1-29.

### CONTINUATION OF THE PROPHECY AGAINST GOG.

1. Repeated from <sup>38B</sup>Ezekiel 38:3, to impress the prophecy more on the mind.

2. *leave but the sixth part of thee* — *Margin*, “strike thee with six plagues” (namely, pestilence, blood, overflowing rain, hailstones, fire, brimstone, <sup>38D</sup>Ezekiel 38:22); or, “draw thee back with an hook of six teeth” (<sup>38H</sup>Ezekiel 38:4), the six teeth being those six plagues. Rather, “lead thee about” [LUDOVICUS DE DIEU and *Septuagint*]. As Antiochus was led (to his ruin) to leave Egypt for an expedition against Palestine, so shall the last great enemy of God be.

*north parts* — from the extreme north [FAIRBAIRN].

3. *bow* — in which the Scythians were most expert.

4, 5. (Compare <sup>39A</sup>Ezekiel 39:17-20).

*upon the mountains of Israel* — The scene of Israel’s preservation shall be that of the ungodly foe’s destruction.

6. *carelessly* — in self-confident security.

*the isles* — Those dwelling in maritime regions, who had helped Gog with fleets and troops, shall be visited with the fire of God’s wrath in their own lands.

7. *not let them pollute my holy name* — by their sins bringing down judgments which made the heathen think that I was unable or unwilling to save My people.

8. *it is come ... it is done* — The prediction of the salvation of My people, and the ruin of their enemy, is come to pass — is done: expressing that the event foretold is as certain as if it were already accomplished.

9, 10. The burning of the foe’s weapons implies that nothing belonging to them should be left to pollute the land. The *seven* years (*seven* being the sacred number) spent on this work, implies the completeness of the

cleansing, and the people's zeal for purity. How different from the ancient Israelites, who left not merely the arms, but the heathen themselves, to remain among them [FAIRBAIRN], (<sup><00123></sup>Judges 1:27,28 2:2,3 <sup><19468></sup>Psalms 106:34-36). The desolation by Antiochus began in the one hundred and forty-first year of the Seleucidae. From this date to 148, a period of six years and four months ("2300 days," <sup><27884></sup>Daniel 8:14), when the temple-worship was restored (I Maccabees 4:52), God vouchsafed many triumphs to His people; from this time to the death of Antiochus, early in 149, a period of seven months, the Jews had rest from Antiochus, and purified their land, and on the twenty-fifth day of the ninth month celebrated the Encaenia, or feast of dedication (<sup><6102></sup>John 10:22) and purification of the temple. The whole period, in round numbers, was seven years. Mattathias was the patriotic Jewish leader, and his third son, Judas, the military commander under whom the Syrian generals were defeated. He retook Jerusalem and purified the temple. Simon and Jonathan, his brothers, succeeded him: the independence of the Jews was secured, and the crown vested in the Asmonean family, in which it continued till Herod the Great.

**11. *place ... of graves*** — Gog found only a grave where he had expected the spoils of conquest.

***valley*** — So vast were to be the masses that nothing but a deep valley would suffice for their corpses.

***the passengers on the east of the sea*** — those travelling on the high road, east of the Dead Sea, from Syria to Petra and Egypt. The publicity of the road would cause many to observe God's judgments, as the stench (as *English Version* translates) or the multitude of graves (as HENDERSON translates, "it shall *stop the passengers*") would arrest the attention of passers-by. Their grave would be close to that of their ancient prototypes, Sodom and Gomorrah in the Dead Sea, both alike being signal instances of God's judgments.

**13. *I ... glorified*** — in destroying the foe (<sup><3332></sup>Ezekiel 28:22).

**14. *with the passengers*** — The men employed continually in the burying were to be helped by those happening to pass by; all were to combine.

***after the end of seven months shall they search*** — to see if the work was complete [MUNSTER].

**15.** First "*all the people of the land*" engaged in the burying for seven months; then special men were employed, at the end of the seven months, to search for any still left unburied. The passers-by helped them by setting up a mark near any such bones, in order to keep others from being defiled

by casually touching them, and that the buriers might come and remove them. Denoting the minute care to put away every relic of heathen pollution from the Holy Land.

**16.** A city in the neighborhood was to receive the name Hamonah, “multitude,” to commemorate the overthrow of the multitudes of the foe [HENDERSON]. The multitude of the slain shall give a name to the city of Jerusalem after the land shall have been cleansed [GROTIUS]. Jerusalem shall be famed as the conqueror of multitudes.

**17.** (<sup>4697</sup>Revelation 19:17).

*sacrifice* — Anciently worshippers feasted on the sacrifices. The birds and beasts of prey are invited to the sacrificial feast provided by God (compare <sup>2386</sup>Isaiah 18:6 34:6 Zephaniah 1:7 <sup>4099</sup>Mark 9:49). Here this sacrifice holds only a subordinate place in the picture, and so is put last. Not only shall their bones lie long unburied, but they shall be stripped of the flesh by beasts and birds of prey.

**18.** *rams ... lambs ... goats* — By these various animal victims used in sacrifices are meant various ranks of men, princes, generals, and soldiers (compare <sup>2346</sup>Isaiah 34:6).

*fatlings of Bashan* — ungodly men of might (<sup>4022</sup>Psalm 22:12). Bashan, beyond Jordan, was famed for its fat cattle. Fat implies prosperity which often makes men refractory towards God (<sup>4624</sup>Deuteronomy 32:14,15).

**20.** *my table* — the field of battle on the mountains of Israel (<sup>2308</sup>Ezekiel 38:8,20).

*chariots* — that is, charioteers.

**22.** *So the house of Israel shall know ... Lord* — by My interposition for them. So, too, the heathen shall be led to fear the name of the Lord (<sup>4925</sup>Psalm 102:15).

**23.** *hid I my face* — (<sup>4617</sup>Deuteronomy 31:17 <sup>2842</sup>Isaiah 59:2).

**25.** *bring again the captivity* — restore from calamity to prosperity.

*the whole house of Israel* — so “all Israel” (<sup>4612</sup>Romans 11:26). The restorations of Israel heretofore have been partial; there must be one yet future that is to be *universal* (<sup>2811</sup>Hosea 1:11).

**26.** *After that they have borne their shame* — the punishment of their sin: after they have become sensible of their guilt, and ashamed of it (<sup>2308</sup>Ezekiel 20:43 36:31).

27. *sanctified in them* — vindicated as holy in My dealings with them.

28. The Jews, having no dominion, settled country, or fixed property to detain them, may return at any time without difficulty (compare <sup><3804></sup>Hosea 3:4,5).

29. *poured out my Spirit upon ... Israel* — the sure forerunner of their conversion (<sup><3023></sup>Joel 2:28 <sup><3020></sup>Zechariah 12:10). The pouring out of His Spirit is a pledge that He will hide His face no more (<sup><4022></sup>2 Corinthians 1:22 <sup><4014></sup>Ephesians 1:14 <sup><3009></sup>Philippians 1:6).

# CHAPTER 40

## EZEKIEL 40:1-49.

### THE REMAINING CHAPTERS, THE FORTIETH THROUGH FORTY-EIGHTH, GIVE AN IDEAL PICTURE OF THE RESTORED JEWISH TEMPLE.

The arrangements as to the land and the temple are, in many particulars, different from those subsisting before the captivity. There are things in it so improbable physically as to preclude a *purely* literal interpretation. The general truth seems to hold good that, as Israel served the nations for his rejection of Messiah, so shall they serve him in the person of Messiah, when he shall acknowledge Messiah (<sup>3802</sup>Isaiah 60:12 <sup>3847</sup>Zechariah 14:17-19; compare <sup>3721</sup>Psalms 72:11). The ideal temple exhibits, under Old Testament forms (used as being those then familiar to the men whom Ezekiel, a priest himself, and one who delighted in sacrificial images, addresses), not the precise literal outline, but *the essential character* of the worship of Messiah as it shall be when He shall exercise sway in Jerusalem among His own people, the Jews, and thence to the ends of the earth. The very fact that the whole is a vision (<sup>3602</sup>Ezekiel 40:2), not an oral face-to-face communication such as that granted to Moses (<sup>4126</sup>Numbers 12:6-8), implies that the directions are not to be understood so precisely literally as those given to the Jewish lawgiver. The description involves things which, taken literally, almost involve natural impossibilities. The square of the temple, in <sup>3621</sup>Ezekiel 42:20, is six times as large as the circuit of the wall enclosing the old temple, and larger than all the earthly Jerusalem. Ezekiel gives three and a half miles and one hundred forty yards to his temple square. The boundaries of the ancient city were about two and a half miles. Again, the city in Ezekiel has an area between three or four thousand square miles, including the holy ground set apart for the prince, priests, and Levites. This is nearly as large as the whole of Judea west of the Jordan. As Zion lay in the center of the ideal city, the one-half of the sacred portion extended to nearly thirty miles south of Jerusalem, that is, covered nearly the whole southern territory, which reached only to the Dead Sea (<sup>3479</sup>Ezekiel 47:19), and yet five tribes were to have their inheritance on that side of Jerusalem, *beyond* the sacred portion (<sup>3683</sup>Ezekiel 48:23-28). Where was land to be found for them there? A breadth of but four or five miles apiece would be left. As the boundaries of the land are given the same as

under Moses, these incongruities cannot be explained away by supposing physical changes about to be effected in the land such as will meet the difficulties of the purely literal interpretation. The distribution of the land is in equal portions among the twelve tribes, without respect to their relative numbers, and the parallel sections running from east to west. There is a difficulty also in the supposed separate existence of the twelve tribes, such separate tribeships no longer existing, and it being hard to imagine how they could be restored as distinct tribes, mingled as they now are. So the stream that issued from the east threshold of the temple and flowed into the Dead Sea, in the rapidity of its increase and the quality of its waters, is unlike anything ever known in Judea or elsewhere in the world. Lastly, the catholicity of the Christian dispensation, and the spirituality of its worship, seem incompatible with a return to the local narrowness and “beggarly elements” of the Jewish ritual and carnal ordinances, disannulled “because of the unprofitableness thereof” [FAIRBAIRN], (<sup>2804</sup>Galatians 4:3,9 5:1 <sup>2806</sup>Hebrews 9:10 10:18). “A temple with sacrifices now would be a denial of the all-sufficiency of the sacrifice of Christ. He who sacrificed before confessed the Messiah. He who should sacrifice now would solemnly deny Him” [DOUGLAS]. These difficulties, however, may be all *seeming*, not real. Faith accepts God’s Word as it is, waits for the event, sure that it will clear up all such difficulties. Perhaps, as some think, the beau ideal of a sacred commonwealth is given according to the then existing pattern of temple services, which would be the imagery most familiar to the prophet and his hearers at the time. The minute particularizing of details is in accordance with Ezekiel’s style, even in describing purely ideal scenes. The old temple embodied in visible forms and rites spiritual truths affecting the people even when absent from it. So this ideal temple is made in the absence of the outward temple to serve by description the same purpose of symbolical instruction as the old literal temple did by forms and acts. As in the beginning God promised to be a “sanctuary” (<sup>2311</sup>Ezekiel 11:16) to the captives at the Chebar, so now at the close is promised a complete restoration and realization of the theocratic worship and polity under Messiah in its noblest ideal (compare <sup>2383</sup>Jeremiah 31:38-40). In <sup>2622</sup>Revelation 21:22 “no temple” is seen, as in the perfection of the new dispensation the accidents of place and form are no longer needed to realize to Christians what Ezekiel imparts to Jewish minds by the imagery familiar to them. In Ezekiel’s temple holiness stretches over the entire temple, so that in this there is no longer a distinction between the different parts, as in the old temple: parts left undeterminate in the latter obtain now a divine sanction, so that all arbitrariness is excluded. So that it is a perfect manifestation of the love of God to His covenant-people (<sup>2301</sup>Ezekiel 40:1-43:12); and from it, as from a new center of religious life, there gushes forth the fullness of blessings to them, and so to all people (<sup>2301</sup>Ezekiel 47:1-

23) [FAIRBAIRN and HAVERNICK]. The temple built at the return from Babylon can only very partially have realized the model here given. The law is seemingly opposed to the gospel (<sup><4172></sup>Matthew 5:21,22,27,28,33,34). It is not really so (compare <sup><4157></sup>Matthew 5:17,18 <sup><4158></sup>Romans 3:31 <sup><4162></sup>Galatians 3:21,22). It is true Christ's sacrifice superseded the law sacrifices (<sup><3902></sup>Hebrews 10:12-18). Israel's province may hereafter be to show the essential identity, even in the minute details of the temple sacrifices, between the law and gospel (<sup><5108></sup>Romans 10:8). The ideal of the theocratic temple will then first be realized.

1. *beginning of the year* — the ecclesiastical year, the first month of which was Nisan.

*the city ... thither* — Jerusalem, the center to which all the prophet's thoughts tended.

2. *visions of God* — divinely sent visions.

*very high mountain* — Moriah, very high, as compared with the plains of Babylon, still more so as to its *moral* elevation (<sup><3472></sup>Ezekiel 17:22 20:40).

*by which* — Ezekiel coming from the north is set down *at* (as the *Hebrew* for "upon" may be translated) Mount Moriah, and sees the city-like frame of the temple stretching *southward*. In <sup><3405></sup>Ezekiel 40:3, "God brings him thither," that is, close up to it, so as to inspect it minutely (compare <sup><6210></sup>Revelation 21:10). In this closing vision, as in the opening one of the book, the divine hand is laid on the prophet, and he is borne away in the visions of God. But the scene there was by the Chebar, Jehovah having forsaken Jerusalem; now it is the mountain of God, Jehovah having returned thither; there, the vision was calculated to inspire terror; here, hope and assurance.

3. *man* — The Old Testament manifestations of heavenly beings as *men* prepared men's minds for the coming incarnation.

*brass* — resplendent.

*line* — used for longer measurements (Zechariah 2:1).

*reed* — used in measuring houses (<sup><6215></sup>Revelation 21:15). It marked the straightness of the walls.

5. Measures were mostly taken from the human body. The *greater cubit*, the length from the elbow to the end of the middle finger, a little more than two feet: exceeding the ordinary *cubit* (from the elbow to the wrist) by an hand-breadth, that is, twenty-one inches in all. Compare <sup><2683></sup>Ezekiel 43:13,

with <sup><341B></sup>Ezekiel 40:5. The *palm* was the full breadth of the hand, three and a half inches.

***breadth of the building*** — that is, the boundary wall. The imperfections in the old temple's boundary wall were to have no place here. The buildings attached to it had been sometimes turned to common uses; for example, Jeremiah was imprisoned in one (<sup><341B></sup>Jeremiah 20:2 29:26). But now all these were to be holy to the Lord. The gates and doorways to the city of God were to be imprinted in their architecture with the idea of the exclusion of everything defiled (<sup><6127></sup>Revelation 21:27). The east gate was to be especially sacred, as it was through it the glory of God had departed (<sup><3123></sup>Ezekiel 11:23), and through it the glory was to return (<sup><3601></sup>Ezekiel 43:1,2 44:2,3).

**6. *the stairs*** — seven in number (<sup><341B></sup>Ezekiel 40:26).

***threshold*** — the sill [FAIRBAIRN].

***other threshold*** — FAIRBAIRN considers there is but one threshold, and translates, "even the one threshold, one rod broad." But there is another threshold mentioned in <sup><3407></sup>Ezekiel 40:7. The two thresholds here seem to be the upper and the lower.

**7. *chamber*** — These chambers were for the use of the Levites who watched at the temple gates; *guard-chambers* (<sup><1224></sup>2 Kings 22:4 <sup><1325></sup>1 Chronicles 9:26,27); also used for storing utensils and musical instruments.

**9. *posts*** — projecting column-faced fronts of the sides of the doorway, opposite to one another.

**12. *space*** — rather, "the boundary."

**16. *narrow*** — latticed [HENDERSON]. The ancients had no glass, so they had them latticed, narrow in the interior of the walls, and widening at the exterior. "Made fast," or "firmly fixed in the chambers" [MAURER].

***arches*** — rather, "porches."

**17. *pavement*** — tessellated mosaic (<sup><1006></sup>Esther 1:6).

***chambers*** — serving as lodgings for the priests on duty in the temple, and as receptacles of the tithes of salt, wine, and oil.

**18.** The higher pavement was level with the entrance of the gates, the lower was on either side of the raised pavement thus formed. Whereas Solomon's temple had an outer court open to alterations and even idolatrous innovations (<sup><1231></sup>2 Kings 23:11,12 <sup><1305></sup>1 Chronicles 20:5), in this

there was to be no room for human corruptions. Its compass was exactly defined, one hundred cubits; and the fine pavement implied it was to be trodden only by clean feet (compare <sup><2318></sup>Isaiah 35:8).

**20-27.** The different approaches corresponded in plan. In the case of these two other gates, however, no mention is made of a building with thirty chambers such as was found on the east side. Only one was needed, and it was assigned to the east as being the sacred quarter, and that most conveniently situated for the officiating priests.

**23. *and toward the east*** — an elliptical expression for “The gate of the inner court was over against the (outer) gate toward the north (just as the inner gate was over against the outer gate) toward the east.”

**28-37.** The inner court and its gates.

***according to these measures*** — namely, the measures of the outer gate. The figure and proportions of the inner answered to the outer.

**30.** This verse is omitted in the *Septuagint*, the Vatican manuscript, and others. The dimensions here of the inner gate do not correspond to the outer, though <sup><308></sup>Ezekiel 40:28 asserts that they do. HAVERNICK, retaining the verse, understands it of another porch looking inwards toward the temple.

***arches*** — the porch [FAIRBAIRN]; the columns on which the arches rest [HENDERSON].

**31. *eight steps*** — The outer porch had only *seven* (<sup><348></sup>Ezekiel 40:26).

**37. *posts*** — the *Septuagint* and *Vulgate* read, “the porch,” which answers better to <sup><348></sup>Ezekiel 40:31-34. “The arches” or “porch” [MAURER].

**38. *chambers ... entries*** — literally, “a chamber and its door.”

***by the posts*** — that is, *at* or *close by* the posts or *columns*.

***where they washed the burnt offering*** — This does not apply to all the gates but only to the north gate. For <sup><0111></sup>Leviticus 1:11 directs the sacrifices to be killed north of the altar; and <sup><348></sup>Ezekiel 8:5 calls the north gate, “the gate of the altar.” And <sup><340></sup>Ezekiel 40:40 particularly mentions the *north gate*.

**43. *hooks*** — cooking apparatus for cooking the flesh of the sacrifices that fell to the priests. The hooks were “fastened” in the walls within the apartment, to hang the meat from, so as to roast it. The *Hebrew* comes from a root “fixed” or “placed.”

**44. *the chambers of the singers*** — two in number, as proved by what follows: “and their prospect (that is, the prospect of *one*) was toward the south, (and) one toward the north.” So the *Septuagint*.

**46. *Zadok*** — lineally descended from Aaron. He had the high priesthood conferred on him by Solomon, who had set aside the family of Ithamar because of the part which Abiathar had taken in the rebellion of Adonijah (<sup><100B></sup>1 Kings 1:7 2:26,27).

**47. *court, an hundred cubits ... foursquare*** — not to be confounded with the inner court, or court of Israel, which was open to all who had sacrifices to bring, and went round the three sides of the sacred territory, one hundred cubits broad. This court was one hundred cubits square, and had the altar in it, in front of the temple. It was the court of the priests, and hence is connected with those who had charge of the altar and the music. The description here is brief, as the things connected with this portion were from the first divinely regulated.

**48, 49.** These two verses belong to the forty-first chapter, which treats of the temple itself.

**49. *twenty ... eleven cubits*** — in Solomon’s temple (<sup><100B></sup>1 Kings 6:3) “twenty ... *ten* cubits.” The breadth perhaps was *ten and a half*; <sup><100B></sup>1 Kings 6:3 designates the number by the *lesser* next round number, “ten”; Ezekiel here, by the *larger* number, “eleven” [MENOCHIUS]. The *Septuagint* reads “twelve.”

***he brought me by the steps*** — They were *ten* in number [*Septuagint*].

# CHAPTER 41

## EZEKIEL 41:1-26.

### THE CHAMBERS AND ORNAMENTS OF THE TEMPLE.

1. *tabernacle* — As in the measurement of the outer porch he had pointed to Solomon's *temple*, so here in the edifice itself, he points to the old *tabernacle*, which being eight boards in breadth (each one and a half cubits broad) would make in all twelve cubits, as here. On the interior it was only ten cubits.

2. *length thereof* — namely, of the holy place [FAIRBAIRN].

3. *inward* — towards the most holy place.

4. *thereof* — of the holy of holies.

*before the temple* — that is, before, or in front of the most holy place (so "temple" is used in <sup><1063></sup>1 Kings 6:3). The angel went in and measured it, while Ezekiel stood in front, in the only part of the temple accessible to him. The dimensions of the two apartments are the same as in Solomon's temple, since being fixed originally by God, they are regarded as finally determined.

5. *side chamber* — the singular used collectively for the plural. These chambers were appendages attached to the outside of the temple, on the west, north, and south; for on the east side, the principal entrance, there were no chambers. The narrowness of the chambers was in order that the beams could be supported without needing pillars.

6. *might ... hold, but ... not hold in ... wall of the house* — <sup><1065></sup>1 Kings 6:6 tells us there were rests made in the walls of the temple for supports to the side chambers; but the temple walls did not thereby become part of this side building; they stood separate from it. "They entered," namely, the beams of the chambers, which were three-storied and thirty in consecutive order, entered into the wall, that is, were made to lean on rests projecting from the wall.

7. *the breadth ... so increased from the lowest ... to the highest* — that is, the breadth of the interior space above was greater than that below.

**8. *foundations ... six ... cubits*** — the substructure, on which the foundations rested, was a full reed of six cubits.

***great*** — literally, “to the extremity” or root, namely, of the hand [HENDERSON]. “To the joining,” or point, where the foundation of one chamber ceased and another began [FAIRBAIRN].

**9. *that which was left*** — There was an unoccupied place within chambers that belonged to the house. The buildings in this unoccupied place, west of the temple, and so much resembling it in size, imply that no place was to be left which was to be held, as of old, not sacred. Manasseh (<sup><4231></sup>2 Kings 23:11) had abused these “suburbs of the temple” to keeping horses sacred to the sun. All excuse for such abominations was henceforth to be taken away, the Lord claiming every space, and filling up this also with sacred erections [FAIRBAIRN].

**10. *the chambers*** — that is, of the priests in the court: between these and the side chambers was the wideness, etc. While long details are given as to the chambers, etc., no mention is made of the ark of the covenant. FAIRBAIRN thus interprets this: In future there was to be a perfect conformity to the divine idea, such as there had not been before. The dwellings of His people should all become true sanctuaries of piety. Jehovah Himself, in the full display of the divine Shekinah, shall come in the room of the ark of the covenant (<sup><3418></sup>Jeremiah 3:16,17). The interior of the temple stands empty, waiting for His entrance to fill it with His glory (<sup><360></sup>Ezekiel 43:1-12). It is the same temple, but the courts of it have become different to accommodate a more numerous people. The entire compass of the temple mount has become a holy of holies (<sup><2682></sup>Ezekiel 43:12).

**12-15.** Sum of the measures of the temple, and of the buildings behind and on the side of it.

**15. *galleries*** — terrace buildings. On the west or back of the temple, there was a separate place occupied by buildings of the same external dimensions as the temple, that is, one hundred cubits square in the entire compass [FAIRBAIRN].

**16. *covered*** — being the highest windows they were “covered” from the view below. Or else “covered *with lattice-work*.”

**17. *by measure*** — Measurements were taken [FAIRBAIRN].

**21. *appearance of the one as the appearance of the other*** — The appearance of the sanctuary or holy of holies was similar to that of the temple. They differed only in magnitude.

**22. *table ... before the Lord*** — the altar of incense (<sup>33410</sup>Ezekiel 44:16). At it, not at the table of showbread, the priests daily ministered. It stood in front of the veil, and is therefore said to be “before the Lord.” It is called a table, as being that at which the Lord will take delight in His people, as at a feast. Hence its dimensions are larger than that of old — three cubits high, two broad, instead of two and one.

**25. *thick planks*** — a thick-plank work at the threshold.

# CHAPTER 42

## EZEKIEL 42:1-20.

### CHAMBERS OF THE PRIESTS: MEASUREMENTS OF THE TEMPLE.

**2. *Before the length of an hundred cubits*** — that is before “the separate place,” which was that length (<sup>3413</sup>Ezekiel 41:13). He had before spoken of chambers for the officiating priests on the north and south gates of the inner court (<sup>3404</sup>Ezekiel 40:44-46). He now returns to take a more exact view of them.

**5. *shorter*** — that is, the building became *narrower* as it rose in height. The chambers were many: so “in My Father’s house are many mansions” (<sup>3412</sup>John 14:2); and besides these there was much “room” still left (compare <sup>2142</sup>Luke 14:22). The chambers, though private, were near the temple. Prayer in our chambers is to prepare us for public devotions, and to help us in improving them.

**16. *five hundred reeds*** — the *Septuagint* substitutes “cubits” for “reeds,” to escape the immense compass assigned to the whole, namely, a square of five hundred rods or three thousand cubits (two feet each; <sup>3405</sup>Ezekiel 40:5), in all a square of one and one-seventh miles, that is, more than all ancient Jerusalem; also, there is much space thus left unappropriated. FAIRBAIRN rightly supports *English Version*, which agrees with the *Hebrew*. The vast extent is another feature marking the ideal character of the temple. It symbolizes the great enlargement of the kingdom of God, when Jehovah-Messiah shall reign at Jerusalem, and from thence to the ends of the earth (<sup>2112</sup>Isaiah 2:2-4 <sup>3437</sup>Jeremiah 3:17 <sup>6112</sup>Romans 11:12,15).

**20. *wall ... separation between ... sanctuary and ... profane*** — No longer shall the wall of partition be to separate the Jew and the Gentile (<sup>6114</sup>Ephesians 2:14), but to separate the sacred from the profane. The lowness of it renders it unfit for the purpose of defense (the object of the wall, <sup>6212</sup>Revelation 21:12). But its square form (as in the city, <sup>6216</sup>Revelation 21:16) is the emblem of the kingdom that cannot be shaken (<sup>3128</sup>Hebrews 12:28), resting on prophets and apostles, Jesus Christ being the chief corner-stone.

# CHAPTER 43

## EZEKIEL 43:1-27.

### JEHOVAH'S RETURN TO THE TEMPLE.

Everything was now ready for His reception. As the Shekinah glory was the peculiar distinction of the old temple, so it was to be in the new in a degree as much more transcendent as the proportions of the new exceeded those of the old. The fact that the Shekinah glory was not in the second temple proves that it cannot be that temple which is meant in the prophecy.

**2. *the way of the east*** — the way whereby the glory had departed (<sup><3112></sup>Ezekiel 11:22,23), and rested on Mount Olivet (compare Zechariah 14:4).

***his voice ... like ... many waters*** — So *English Version* rightly, as in <sup><3124></sup>Ezekiel 1:24, “voice of the Almighty”; <sup><6015></sup>Revelation 1:15 14:2, prove this. Not as FAIRBAIRN translates, “its noise.”

***earth his glory*** — (<sup><6801></sup>Revelation 18:1).

**3. *when I came to destroy the city*** — that is, to pronounce God’s word for its destruction. So completely did the prophets identify themselves with Him in whose name they spake.

**6. *the man*** — who had been measuring the buildings (<sup><3408></sup>Ezekiel 40:3).

**7. *the place*** — that is, “*behold the place of My throne*” — the place on which your thoughts have so much dwelt (<sup><2108></sup>Isaiah 2:1-3 <sup><2417></sup>Jeremiah 3:17 <sup><3416></sup>Zechariah 14:16-20 Malachi 3:1). God from the first claimed to be their King politically as well as religiously: and He had resisted their wish to have a human king, as implying a rejection of Him as the proper Head of the state. Even when He yielded to their wish, it was with a protest against their king ruling except as His vicegerent. When Messiah shall reign at Jerusalem, He shall then first realize the original idea of the theocracy, with its at once divine and human king reigning in righteousness over a people all righteous (<sup><3412></sup>Ezekiel 43:12 <sup><2511></sup>Isaiah 52:1 54:13 60:21).

**9. *carcasses of their kings*** — It is supposed that some of their idolatrous kings were buried within the bounds of Solomon’s temple [HENDERSON]. Rather, “the carcasses of their *idols*,” here called “kings,” as having had

lordship over them in past times (<sup><2363></sup>Isaiah 26:13); but henceforth Jehovah, alone their rightful lord, shall be their king, and the idols that had been their “king” would appear but as “carcasses.” Hence these defunct kings are associated with the “high places” in <sup><2607></sup>Ezekiel 43:7 [FAIRBAIRN] <sup><1830></sup>Leviticus 26:30 and <sup><2468></sup>Jeremiah 16:18, confirm this. Manasseh had built altars in the courts of the temple to the host of heaven (<sup><1215></sup>2 Kings 21:5 23:6).

***I will dwell in the midst ... for ever*** — (<sup><6218></sup>Revelation 21:3).

**10. *show the house ... that they may be ashamed of their iniquities*** — When the spirituality of the Christian scheme is *shown* to men by the Holy Ghost, it makes them “ashamed of their iniquities.”

**12. *whole ... most holy*** — This superlative, which had been used exclusively of the holy of holies (<sup><1234></sup>Exodus 26:34), was now to characterize the entire building. This all-pervading sanctity was to be “*the law of the (whole) house,*” as distinguished from the Levitical law, which confined the peculiar sanctity to a single apartment of it.

**13-27.** As to the altar of burnt offering, which was the appointed means of access to God.

**15. *altar*** — *Hebrew, Harel*, that is, “mount of God”; denoting the high security to be imparted by it to the restored Israel. It was a high place, but a high place *of God*, not of idols.

***from the altar*** — literally, “the lion of God,” *Ariel* (in <sup><2301></sup>Isaiah 29:1, “Ariel” is applied to Jerusalem). MENOCHIUS supposes that on it four animals were carved; the lion perhaps was the uppermost, whence the horns were made to issue. GESENIUS regards the two words as expressing the “hearth” or fireplace of the altar.

**16. *square in the four squares*** — square on the four sides of its squares [FAIRBAIRN].

**17. *settle*** — ledge [FAIRBAIRN].

***stairs*** — rather, “the ascent,” as “steps” up to God’s altar were forbidden in <sup><1215></sup>Exodus 20:26.

**18-27.** The sacrifices here are not mere commemorative, but propitiatory ones. The expressions, “blood” (<sup><2568></sup>Ezekiel 43:18), and “for a sin offering” (<sup><2609></sup>Ezekiel 43:19,21,22), prove this. In the *literal* sense they can only apply to the second temple. Under the Christian dispensation they would directly oppose the doctrine taught in <sup><3001></sup>Hebrews 10:1-18, namely, that Christ has

by one offering for ever atoned for sin. However, it is *possible* that they might exist with a *retrospective* reference to Christ's sufferings, as the Levitical sacrifices had a *prospective* reference to them; not propitiatory in themselves, but memorials to keep up the remembrance of His propitiatory sufferings, which form the foundation of His kingdom, lest they should be lost sight of in the glory of that kingdom [DE BURGH]. The particularity of the directions make it unlikely that they are to be understood in a merely vague spiritual sense.

**20. *cleanse*** — literally, “make expiation for.”

**21. *burn it ... without the sanctuary*** — (<sup><5831></sup>Hebrews 13:11).

**26. *Seven days*** — referring to the original directions of Moses for seven days' purification services of the altar (<sup><0297></sup>Exodus 29:37).

***consecrate themselves*** — literally, “fill their hands,” namely, with offerings; referring to the mode of consecrating a priest (<sup><0228></sup>Exodus 29:24,35).

**27. *I will accept you*** — (<sup><3204></sup>Ezekiel 20:40,41 <sup><5121></sup>Romans 12:1 <sup><0115></sup>1 Peter 2:5).

# CHAPTER 44

## EZEKIEL 44:1-31.

### ORDINANCES FOR THE PRINCE AND THE PRIESTS.

**2. shut ... not be opened** — (<sup><824></sup>Job 12:14 <sup><222></sup>Isaiah 22:22 <sup><687></sup>Revelation 3:7). “Shut” to the people (<sup><121></sup>Exodus 19:21,22), but open to “the prince” (<sup><344></sup>Ezekiel 44:3), he holding the place of God in political concerns, as the priests do in spiritual. As a mark of respect to an Eastern monarch, the gate by which he enters is thenceforth shut to all other persons (compare <sup><121></sup>Exodus 19:24).

**3. the prince** — not King Messiah, as He never would offer a burnt offering for Himself, as the prince is to do (<sup><344></sup>Ezekiel 46:4). The prince must mean the civil ruler under Messiah. His connection with the east gate (by which the Lord had returned to His temple) implies, that, as ruling under God, he is to stand in a place of peculiar nearness to God. He represents Messiah, who entered heaven, the true sanctuary, by a way that none other could, namely, by His own holiness; all others must enter as sinners by faith in His blood, through grace.

**eat bread before the Lord** — a custom connected with sacrifices (<sup><155></sup>Genesis 31:54 <sup><182></sup>Exodus 18:12 24:11 <sup><618></sup>1 Corinthians 10:18).

**4-6.** Directions as to the priests. Their acts of desecration are attributed to “the house of Israel” (<sup><344></sup>Ezekiel 44:6,7), as the sins of the priesthood and of the people acted and reacted on one another; “like people, like priest” (<sup><151></sup>Jeremiah 5:31 <sup><344></sup>Hosea 4:9).

**7. uncircumcised in heart** — Israelites circumcised outwardly, but wanting the true circumcision of the heart (<sup><106></sup>Deuteronomy 10:16 <sup><415></sup>Acts 7:51).

**uncircumcised in flesh** — not having even the outward badge of the covenant-people.

**8. keepers ... for yourselves** — such as you yourselves thought fit, not such as I approve of. Or else, “Ye have not *yourselves* kept the charge of My holy things, but have set *others as* keepers of My charge in My sanctuary for yourselves” [MAURER].

**10, 11. *Levites ... shall ... bear*** — namely, the punishment of

*their iniquity ... Yet they shall be ministers* — So Mark, a *Levite*, nephew of Barnabas (<sup><4066></sup>Acts 4:36), was punished by Paul for losing an opportunity of bearing the cross of Christ, and yet was afterwards admitted into his friendship again, and showed his zeal (<sup><4133></sup>Acts 13:13 15:37 <sup><5040></sup>Colossians 4:10 <sup><5011></sup>2 Timothy 4:11). One may be a believer, and that too in a distinguished place, and yet lose some special honor — be acknowledged as pious, yet be excluded from some dignity [BENGEL].

*charge at the gates* — Better to be “a doorkeeper in the house of God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness” (<sup><9840></sup>Psalm 84:10). Though standing as a mere doorkeeper, it is in the *house* of God, which hath foundations: whereas he who *dwells* with the wicked, dwells in but shifting *tents*.

**15. *Zadok*** — The priests of the line of Ithamar were to be discharged from ministrations in the temple, because of their corruptions, following in the steps of Eli’s sons, against whom the same denunciation was uttered (<sup><0123></sup>1 Samuel 2:32,35). Zadok, according to his name (which means “righteous”) and his line, were to succeed (<sup><1025></sup>1 Kings 2:35 <sup><1348></sup>1 Chronicles 24:3), as they did not take part in the general apostasy to the same degree, and perhaps [FAIRBAIRN] the prophet, referring to their original state, speaks of them as they appeared when first chosen to the office.

**17. *linen*** — symbolical of purity. Wool soon induces perspiration in the sultry East and so becomes uncleanly.

**18. *bonnets*** — turbans.

**19. *not sanctify the people with their garments*** — namely, those peculiarly priestly vestments in which they ministered in the sanctuary.

**20. *Neither ... shave ... heads*** — as mourners do (<sup><6201></sup>Leviticus 21:1-5). The worshippers of the Egyptian idols Serapis and Isis shaved their heads; another reason why Jehovah’s priests are not to do so.

*nor suffer ... locks to grow long* — as the luxurious, barbarians, and soldiers in warfare did [JEROME].

**21. *Neither ... wine*** — lest the holy enthusiasm of their devotion should be mistaken for inebriation, as in Peter’s case (<sup><4123></sup>Acts 2:13,15,18).

**28. *I am their inheritance*** — (<sup><0180></sup>Numbers 18:20 <sup><6109></sup>Deuteronomy 10:9 18:1 <sup><6134></sup>Joshua 13:14,32).

**30. *give ... priest the first ... that he may cause the blessing to rest*** — (<sup><1039></sup>Proverbs 3:9,10 <sup><3180></sup>Malachi 3:10).

# CHAPTER 45

## EZEKIEL 45:1-25.

### ALLOTMENT OF THE LAND FOR THE SANCTUARY, THE CITY, AND THE PRINCE.

**1. offer an oblation** — from a *Hebrew* root to “heave” or “raise”; when anything was offered to God, the offerer raised the hand. The special territorial division for the tribes is given in the forty-seventh and forty-eighth chapters. Only Jehovah’s portion is here subdivided into its three parts:

- (1) that for the sanctuary (<sup>3581E</sup>Ezekiel 45:2,3);
- (2) that for the priests (<sup>3581E</sup>Ezekiel 45:4);
- (3) that for the Levites (<sup>3581E</sup>Ezekiel 45:5). Compare <sup>3588E</sup>Ezekiel 48:8-13.

*five and twenty thousand reeds*, etc. — So *English Version* rightly fills the ellipsis (compare *Note*, see on <sup>3506E</sup>Ezekiel 42:16). Hence “cubits” are mentioned in <sup>3581E</sup>Ezekiel 45:2, not here, implying that *there alone* cubits are meant. Taking each reed at twelve feet, the area of the whole would be a square of sixty miles on each side. The whole forming a square betokens the settled stability of the community and the harmony of all classes. “An holy portion of the land” (<sup>3581E</sup>Ezekiel 45:1) comprised the whole length, and only two-fifths of the breadth. The outer territory in its distribution harmonizes with the inner and more sacred arrangements of the sanctuary. No room is to be given for *oppression* (see <sup>3588E</sup>Ezekiel 45:8), all having ample provision made for their wants and comforts. All will mutually cooperate without constraint or contention.

**7.** The prince’s possession is to consist of two halves, one on the west, the other on the east, of the sacred territory. The prince, as head of the holy community, stands in closest connection with the sanctuary; his possession, therefore, on both sides must adjoin that which was peculiarly the Lord’s [FAIRBAIRN].

**12.** The standard weights were lost when the Chaldeans destroyed the temple. The threefold enumeration of shekels (twenty, twenty-five, fifteen) probably refers to coins of different value, representing respectively so

many shekels, the three collectively making up a *maneh*. By weighing these together against the *maneh*, a test was afforded whether they severally had their proper weight: sixty shekels in all, containing one coin a fourth of the whole (fifteen shekels), another a third (twenty shekels), another a third and a twelfth (twenty-five shekels) [MENOCHIUS]. The *Septuagint* reads, “fifty shekels shall be your *maneh*.”

**13-15.** In these oblations there is a progression as to the relation between the kind and the quantity: of the corn, the sixth of a tenth, that is, a sixtieth part of the quantity specified; of the oil, the tenth of a tenth, that is, an hundredth part; and of the flock, one from every two hundred.

**18.** The year is to begin with a consecration service, not mentioned under the Levitical law; but an earnest of it is given in the feast of dedication of the second temple, which celebrated its purification by Judas Maccabeus, after its defilement by Antiochus.

**20. for him that is simple** — for sins of ignorance (<sup>CRB</sup>Leviticus 4:2,13,27).

**21.** As a new solemnity, the feast of consecration is to prepare for the passover; so the passover itself is to have different sacrifices from those of the Mosaic law. Instead of one ram and seven lambs for the daily burnt offering, there are to be seven bullocks and seven rams. So also whereas the feast of tabernacles had its own offerings, which diminished as the days of the feast advanced, here the same are appointed as on the passover. Thus it is implied that the letter of the law is to give place to its spirit, those outward rites of Judaism having no intrinsic efficacy, but symbolizing the spiritual truths of Messiah’s kingdom, as for instance the perfect holiness which is to characterize it. Compare <sup>CRB</sup>1 Corinthians 5:7,8, as to our spiritual “passover,” wherein, at the Lord’s supper, we feed on Christ by faith, accompanied with “the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.” Literal ordinances, though not slavishly bound to the letter of the law, will set forth the catholic and eternal verities of Messiah’s kingdom.

# CHAPTER 46

## EZEKIEL 46:1-24.

### CONTINUATION OF THE ORDINANCES FOR THE PRINCE AND FOR THE PEOPLE IN THEIR WORSHIP.

**2.** The prince is to go through the east gate without (open on the Sabbath only, to mark its peculiar sanctity) to the entrance of the gate of the inner court; he is to go no further, but “stand by the post” (compare <sup><1084></sup>1 Kings 8:14,22, Solomon standing before the altar of the Lord in the presence of the congregation; also <sup><1114></sup>2 Kings 11:14 23:3, “by a pillar”: the customary place), the court within belonging exclusively to the priests. There, as representative of the people, in a peculiarly near relation to God, he is to present his offerings to Jehovah, while at a greater distance, the people are to stand worshipping at the outer gate of the same entrance. The offerings on Sabbaths are larger than those of the Mosaic law, to imply that the worship of God is to be conducted by the prince and people in a more munificent spirit of self-sacrificing liberality than formerly.

**9.** The worshippers were on the great feasts to pass from one side to the other, through the temple courts, in order that, in such a throng as should attend the festivals, the ingress and egress should be the more unimpeded, those going out not being in the way of those coming in.

**10. *prince in the midst*** — not isolated as at other times, but joining the great throng of worshippers, at their head, after the example of David (<sup><924></sup>Psalm 42:4, “I had gone with the multitude ... to the house of God, with the voice of joy and praise, with a multitude that kept holy day”); the highest in rank animating the devotions of the rest by his presence and example.

**12-15.** Not only is he to perform *official* acts of worship on holy days and feasts, but in “voluntary” offerings daily he is to show his individual zeal, surpassing all his people in liberality, and so setting them a princely example.

**16-18.** The prince’s possession is to be inalienable, and any portion given to a servant is to revert to his sons at the year of jubilee, that he may have no temptation to spoil his people of their inheritance, as formerly (compare Ahab and Naboth, <sup><1208></sup>1 Kings 21:1-29). The mention of the year of jubilee

implies that there is something literal meant, besides the spiritual sense. The jubilee year was restored after the captivity [JOSEPHUS, *Antiquities*, 14.10,6; I Maccabees 6:49]. Perhaps it will be restored under Messiah's coming reign. Compare <sup>23012</sup>Isaiah 61:2,3, where "the acceptable year of the Lord" is closely connected with the comforting of the mourners in Zion, and "the day of vengeance" on Zion's foes. The mention of the prince's *sons* is another argument against Messiah being meant by "the prince."

**19-24.** Due regard is to be had for the sanctity of the officiating priests' food, by cooking courts being provided close to their chambers. One set of apartments for cooking was to be at the corners of the *inner* court, reserved for the flesh of the sin offerings, to be eaten only by the priests whose perquisite it was (<sup>23013</sup>Leviticus 6:25 7:7), before coming forth to mingle again with the people; another set at the corners of the *outer* court, for cooking the flesh of the peace offerings, of which the people partook along with the priests. All this implies that no longer are the common and unclean to be confounded with the sacred and divine, but that in even the least things, as eating and drinking, the glory of God is to be the aim (<sup>23014</sup>1 Corinthians 10:31).

**22. *courts joined*** — FAIRBAIRN translates, "roofed" or "vaulted." But these cooking apartments seem to have been uncovered, to let the smoke and smell of the meat the more easily pass away. They were "joined" or "attached" to the walls of the courts at the corners of the latter [MENOCHIUS].

**23. *boiling places*** — boilers.

***under the rows*** — At the foot of the rows, that is, in the lowest part of the *walls*, were the places for boiling made.

# CHAPTER 47

## EZEKIEL 47:1-29.

### VISION OF THE TEMPLE WATERS. BORDERS AND DIVISION OF THE LAND.

The happy fruit to the earth at large of God's dwelling with Israel in holy fellowship is that the blessing is no longer restricted to the one people and locality, but is to be diffused with comprehensive catholicity through the whole world. So the plant from the cedar of Lebanon is represented as gathering under its shelter "all fowl of every wing" (<sup>26723</sup>Ezekiel 17:23). Even the desert places of the earth shall be made fruitful by the healing waters of the Gospel (compare <sup>23304</sup>Isaiah 35:1).

**1. waters** — So <sup>6218</sup>Revelation 22:1, represents "the water of life as proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb." His throne was set up in the temple at Jerusalem (<sup>36416</sup>Ezekiel 43:7). Thence it is to flow over the earth (<sup>24188</sup>Joel 3:18 <sup>1314</sup>Zechariah 13:1 14:8). Messiah is the temple and the door; from His pierced side flow the living waters, ever increasing, both in the individual believer and in the heart. The fountains in the vicinity of Moriah suggested the image here. The waters flow eastward, that is, towards the Kedron, and thence towards the Jordan, and so along the Ghor into the Dead Sea. The main point in the picture is the rapid augmentation from a petty stream into a mighty river, not by the influx of side streams, but by its own self-supply from the sacred miraculous source in the temple [HENDERSON]. (Compare <sup>49818</sup>Psalms 36:8,9 46:4 <sup>29109</sup>Isaiah 11:9 <sup>31214</sup>Habakkuk 2:14). Searching into the things of God, we find some easy to understand, as the water up to the ankles; others more difficult, which require a deeper search, as the waters up to the knees or loins; others beyond our reach, of which we can only adore the depth (<sup>61133</sup>Romans 11:33). The *healing* of the waters of the Dead Sea here answers to "there shall be no more curse" (<sup>62118</sup>Revelation 22:3; compare <sup>33411</sup>Zechariah 14:11).

**7. trees** — not merely *one* tree of life as in Paradise (<sup>10032</sup>Genesis 3:22), but many: to supply immortal food and medicine to the people of God, who themselves also become "trees of righteousness" (<sup>25019</sup>Isaiah 61:3) planted by the waters and (<sup>49108</sup>Psalms 1:3) bearing fruit unto holiness.

**8. *the desert*** — or “plain,” *Hebrew, Arabah* (<sup><6187></sup>Deuteronomy 3:17 4:49 <sup><6186></sup>Joshua 3:16), which is the name still given to the valley of the Jordan and the plain south of the Dead Sea, and extending to the Elanitic gulf of the Red Sea.

***the sea*** — the Dead Sea. “*The sea*” noted as covering with its waters the guilty cities of the plain, Sodom and Gomorrah. In its bituminous waters no vegetable or animal life is said to be found. But now death is to give place to life in Judea, and throughout the world, as symbolized by the healing of these death-pervaded waters covering the doomed cities. Compare as to “the sea” in general, regarded as a symbol of the troubled powers of nature, disordered by the fall, henceforth to rage no more, <sup><6201></sup>Revelation 21:1.

**9. *rivers*** — in *Hebrew*, “two rivers.” Hence Hebrew expositors think that the waters from the temple were divided into two branches, the one emptying itself into the eastern or Dead Sea, the other into the western or Mediterranean. So Zechariah 14:8. However, though this probably is covertly implied in the *Hebrew dual*, the flowing of the waters into the *Dead Sea only* is expressed. Compare <sup><3678></sup>Ezekiel 47:8, “waters ... healed,” which can apply only to it, not to the Mediterranean: also <sup><3679></sup>Ezekiel 47:10, “fish as the fish of the great sea”; the Dead Sea, when healed, containing fish, as the Mediterranean does.

**10. *En-gedi ... En-eglaim*** — En-gedi (meaning “fountain of the kid”), anciently, Hazazon-Tamar, now Ain-Jidy; west of the Dead Sea; David’s place of refuge from Saul. En-eglaim means “fountain of two calves,” on the confines of Moab, over against En-gedi, and near where Jordan enters the Dead Sea (<sup><2138></sup>Isaiah 15:8). These two limits are fixed on, to comprise between them the whole Dead Sea.

***fish ... according to their kinds*** — JEROME quotes an ancient theory that “there are a hundred fifty-three kinds of fishes,” all of which were taken by the apostles (<sup><4911></sup>John 21:11), and not one remained uncaptured; signifying that both the noble and baseborn, the rich and the poor, and every class, are being drawn out of the sea of the world to salvation. Compare <sup><1137></sup>Matthew 13:47, the gospel net; the apostles being fishermen, at first literally, afterwards spiritually (<sup><4049></sup>Matthew 4:19).

**11. *marshes*** — marshy places. The region is known to have such pits and marshes. The Arabs take the salt collected by evaporation in these pits for their own use, and that of their flocks.

***not be healed*** — Those not reached by the healing waters of the Gospel, through their sloth and earthly-mindedness, are given over (<sup><6211></sup>Revelation

22:11) to their own bitterness and barrenness (as “saltness” is often employed to express, <sup><0523></sup>Deuteronomy 29:23 <sup><19734></sup>Psalms 107:34 Zephaniah 2:9); and awful example to others in the punishment they suffer (<sup><0116></sup>2 Peter 2:6).

**12.** Instead of the “vine of Sodom and grapes of Gomorrah” (<sup><0333></sup>Deuteronomy 32:32), nauseous and unwholesome, trees of life-giving and life-restoring virtue shall bloom similar in properties to, and exceeding in number, the tree of life in Eden (<sup><0117></sup>Revelation 2:7 22:2,14).

**leaf ... not fade** — expressing not only the unfailling character of the heavenly medicine of the tree of life, but also that the graces of the believer (as a tree of righteousness), which are the *leaves*, and his deeds, which are the fruits that flow from those graces, are immortal (<sup><0003></sup>Psalms 1:3 <sup><0478></sup>Jeremiah 17:8 <sup><0102></sup>Matthew 10:42 <sup><0658></sup>1 Corinthians 15:58).

**new fruit** — literally, “firstlings,” or first fruit. They are still, each month afresh, as it were, yielding their first-fruit [FAIRBAIRN]. The *first-born* of a thing, in *Hebrew* idiom, means *the chiefest*. As <sup><0883></sup>Job 18:13, “the first-born of death,” that is, *the most fatal* death.

**13.** *The redivision of the land: the boundaries.* The latter are substantially the same as those given by Moses in <sup><0603></sup>Numbers 34:1-29; they here begin with the north, but in Numbers they begin with the south (<sup><0603></sup>Numbers 34:3). It is only Canaan proper, exclusive of the possession of the two and a half tribes beyond Jordan, that is here divided.

**Joseph ... two portions** — according to the original promise of Jacob (<sup><0883></sup>Genesis 48:5,22). Joseph’s sons were given the birthright forfeited by Reuben, the first-born (<sup><0301></sup>1 Chronicles 5:1). Therefore the former is here put first. His *two* sons having distinct portions make up the whole number *twelve* portions, as he had just before specified “*twelve* tribes of Israel”; for Levi had no separate inheritance, so that he is not reckoned in the twelve.

**15. Zedad** — on the north boundary of Canaan.

**16. Hamath** — As Israel was a separate people, so their land was a separate land. On no scene could the sacred history have been so well transacted as on it. On the east was the sandy desert. On the north and south, mountains. On the west, an inhospitable sea-shore. But it was not always to be a separate land. Between the parallel ranges of Lebanon is the long valley of El-Bekaa, leading to “the entering in of Hamath” on the Orontes, in the Syrian frontier. Roman roads, and the harbor made at Caesarea, opened out doors through which the Gospel should go from it to

all lands. So in the last days, when all shall flock to Jerusalem as the religious center of the world.

**Berothah** — a city in Syria conquered by David (<sup><1088></sup>2 Samuel 8:8); meaning “wells.”

**Hazar-hatticon** — meaning “the middle village.”

**Hauran** — a tract in Syria, south of Damascus; Auranitis.

**17. Hazar-enan** — a town in the north of Canaan, meaning “village of fountains.”

**18. east sea** — the Dead Sea. The border is to go down straight to it by the valley of the Jordan. So (<sup><0611></sup>Numbers 34:11,12.

**19. Tamar** — not Tadmor in the desert, but Tamar, the last town of Judea, by the Dead Sea. Meaning “palm tree”; so called from palm trees abounding near it.

**22. to the strangers** — It is altogether unprecedented under the old covenant, that “strangers” should have “inheritance” among the tribes. There would not be room locally within Canaan for more than the tribes. The literal sense must therefore be modified, as expressing that Gentiles are not to be excluded from settling among the covenant-people, and that spiritually their privileges are not to be less than those of Israel (<sup><5012></sup>Romans 10:12 <sup><4028></sup>Galatians 3:28 <sup><4016></sup>Ephesians 3:6 <sup><5031></sup>Colossians 3:11 <sup><4109></sup>Revelation 7:9,10). Still, “sojourneth,” in (<sup><5473></sup>Ezekiel 47:23, implies that in Canaan, the covenant people are regarded as *at home*, the strangers as *settlers*.

# CHAPTER 48

## EZEKIEL 48:1-35.

### ALLOTMENT OF THE LAND TO SEVERAL TRIBES.

1. **Daniel** — The lands are divided into portions of ideal exactness, running alongside of each other, the whole breadth from west to east, standing in a common relation to the temple in the center: seven tribes' portions on the north, five in the smaller division in the south. The portions of the city, the temple, the prince, and the priesthood, are in the middle, not within the boundaries of any tribe, all alike having a common interest in them. Judah has the place of honor next the center on the north, Benjamin the corresponding place of honor next the center on the south; because of the adherence of these two to the temple ordinances and to the house of David for so long, when the others deserted them. Dan, on the contrary, so long locally and morally semi-heathen (<sup><0710E></sup>Judges 18:1-31), is to have the least honorable place, at the extreme north. For the same reason, St. John (<sup><061E></sup>Revelation 7:5-8) omits Daniel altogether.

3. **Asher** — a tribe of which no one of note is mentioned in the Old Testament. In the New Testament one is singled out of it, the prophetess Anna.

4. **Manasseh** — The intercourse and unity between the two and a half tribes east of the Jordan, and the nine and a half west of it, had been much kept up by the splitting of Manasseh, causing the visits of kinsmen one to the other from both sides of the Jordan. There shall be no need for this in the new order of things.

5. **Ephraim** — This tribe, within its two dependent tribes, Manasseh and Benjamin, for upwards of four hundred years under the judges held the pre-eminence.

6. **Reuben** — doomed formerly for incest and instability “not to excel” (<sup><0400></sup>Genesis 49:4). So no distinguished prophet, priest, or king had come from it. Of it were the notorious Dathan and Abiram, the mutineers. A pastoral and Bedouin character marked it and Gad (<sup><01E16></sup>Judges 5:16).

**15-17.** The five thousand rods, apportioned to the city out of the twenty-five thousand square, are to be laid off in a square of four thousand five hundred, with the two hundred fifty all around for suburbs.

*profane* — that is, not strictly sacred as the sacerdotal portions, but applied to secular uses.

**24. Benjamin** — Compare Jacob’s prophecy (<sup><0497></sup>Genesis 49:27 <sup><0592></sup>Deuteronomy 33:12). It alone with Judah had been throughout loyal to the house of David, so its prowess at the “night” of the national history was celebrated as well as in the “morning.”

**25. Simeon** — omitted in the blessing of Moses in <sup><0531></sup>Deuteronomy 33:1-29 perhaps because of the Simeonite “prince,” who at Baal-peor led the Israelites in their idolatrous whoredoms with Midian (<sup><0254></sup>Numbers 25:14).

**26. Issachar** — Its ancient portion had been on the plain of Esdraelon. Compared (<sup><0494></sup>Genesis 49:14) to “a strong ass crouching between two burdens,” that is, tribute and tillage; never meddling with wars except in self-defense.

**31. gates** — (<sup><0212></sup>Revelation 21:12, etc.). The twelve gates bear the names of the twelve tribes to imply that all are regarded as having an interest in it.

**35. Lord is there** — *Jehovah-Shammah*. Not that the city will be called so in mere name, but that the reality will be best expressed by this descriptive title (<sup><2487></sup>Jeremiah 3:17 33:16 <sup><3205></sup>Zechariah 2:10 <sup><0213></sup>Revelation 21:3 22:3).

## THE BOOK OF

# DANIEL

Commentary by **A. R. FAUSSETT**

## INTRODUCTION

DANIEL, that is, “God is my judge”; probably of the blood royal (compare <sup><2008></sup>Daniel 1:3, with <sup><1308></sup>1 Chronicles 3:1, where *a son of David* is named so). Jerusalem may have been his birthplace (though <sup><2028></sup>Daniel 9:24, “thy holy city,” does not *necessarily* imply this). He was carried to Babylon among the Hebrew captives brought thither by Nebuchadnezzar at the first deportation in the fourth year of Jehoiakim. As he and his three companions are called (<sup><2008></sup>Daniel 1:4) “children,” he cannot have been more than about twelve years old when put in training, according to Eastern etiquette, to be a courtier (<sup><2008></sup>Daniel 1:3,6). He then received a new name, by which it was usual to mark a change in one’s condition (<sup><1238></sup>2 Kings 23:34 24:17 <sup><1564></sup>Ezra 5:14 <sup><1017></sup>Esther 2:7), Belteshazzar, that is, “a prince favored by Bel” (<sup><2008></sup>Daniel 1:7). His piety and wisdom were proverbial among his countrymen at an early period; probably owing to that noble proof he gave of faithfulness, combined with wisdom, in abstaining from the food sent to him from the king’s table, as being polluted by the idolatries usual at heathen banquets (<sup><2008></sup>Daniel 1:8-16). Hence Ezekiel’s reference to him (<sup><2344></sup>Ezekiel 14:14,20 28:3) is precisely of that kind we should expect; a coincidence which must be undesigned. Ezekiel refers to him not as a *writer*, but as exhibiting a character righteous and wise in discerning secrets, in those circumstances now found in his book, which are *earlier* than the time when Ezekiel wrote. As Joseph rose in Egypt by interpreting Pharaoh’s dreams, so Daniel, by interpreting Nebuchadnezzar’s, was promoted to be governor of Babylonia, and president of the Magian priest-caste. Under Evil-merodach, Nebuchadnezzar’s successor, as a change of officers often attends the accession of a new king, Daniel seems to have had a lower post, which led him occasionally to be away from Babylon (<sup><2700></sup>Daniel 8:2,27). Again he came into note when he read the mystic writing of Belshazzar’s doom on the wall on the night of that monarch’s impious feast. BEROSUS calls the last Babylonian king Nabonidus and says he was not killed, but had an

honorable abode in Carmania assigned to him, after having surrendered voluntarily in Borsippa. RAWLINSON has cleared up the discrepancy from the Nineveh inscription. Belshazzar was joint king with his father, Evilmerodach or Nabonidus (called Minus in the inscriptions), to whom he was subordinate. He shut himself up in Babylon, while the other king took refuge elsewhere, namely, in Borsippa. BEROSUS gives the Chaldean account, which suppresses all about Belshazzar, as being to the national dishonor. Had Daniel been a *late* book, he would no doubt have taken up the later account of BEROSUS. If he gave a history differing from that current in Babylonia, the Jews of that region would not have received it as true. Darius the Mede, or Cyaxares II, succeeded and reigned two years. The mention of this monarch's reign, almost unknown to profane history (being eclipsed by the splendor of Cyrus) is an incidental proof that Daniel wrote as a contemporary historian of events which he knew, and did not borrow from others. In the third year of Cyrus he saw the visions (the tenth through twelfth chapters) relating to his people down to the latest days and the coming resurrection. He must have been about eighty-four years old at this time. Tradition represents Daniel as having died and been buried at Shushan. Though his advanced age did not allow him to be among those who returned to Palestine, yet he never ceased to have his people's interests nearest to his heart (<sup>200B</sup>Daniel 9:3-19 10:12).

AUTHENTICITY OF THE BOOK OF DANIEL. <sup>200B</sup>Daniel 7:1,28 8:2 9:2 10:1,2 12:4,5, testify that it was composed by Daniel himself. He does not mention himself in the first six chapters, which are *historical*; for in these it is not the author, but the *events* which are the prominent point. In the last six, which are *prophetical*, the author makes himself known, for here it was needed, prophecy being a revelation of *words* to particular men. It holds a third rank in the *Hebrew* canon: not among *the prophets*, but in the Hagiographa (Chetubim), between Esther and Ezra, books like it relating to the captivity; because he did not strictly belong to those who held exclusively the *profession* of "prophets" in the theocracy, but was rather a "seer," having the *gift*, but not the *office* of prophet. Were the book an interpolated one, it doubtless would have been placed among the prophets. Its present position is a proof of its genuineness, as it was *deliberately* put in a position different from that where most would expect to find it. Placed between Esther, and Ezra and Nehemiah, it separated the historical books of the time after the captivity. Thus, Daniel was, as BENGEL calls him, the politician, chronologer, and historian among the prophets. The Psalms also, though many are prophetical, are ranked with the Hagiographa, not with the prophets; and the Revelation of John is separated from his Epistles, as Daniel is from the Old Testament prophets. Instead of writing in the midst of the covenant people, and making them the foreground of his picture, he

writes in a heathen court, the world kingdoms occupying the foreground, and the kingdom of God, though ultimately made the most significant, the background. His peculiar position in the heathen court is reflected in his peculiar position in the canon. As the “prophets” in the Old Testament, so the epistles of the apostles in the New Testament were written by divinely commissioned persons for their contemporaries. But Daniel and John were not in immediate contact with the congregation, but isolated and alone with God, the one in a heathen court, the other on a lonely isle (<sup>4009</sup>Revelation 1:9). PORPHYRY, the assailant of Christianity in the third century, asserted that the Book of Daniel was a forgery of the time of the Maccabees (170-164 B.C.), a time when *confessedly* there were no prophets, written after the events as to Antiochus Epiphanes, which it professes to *foretell*; so accurate are the details. A conclusive proof of Daniel’s inspiration, if his prophecies can be shown to have been *before* the events. Now we know, from JOSEPHUS [*Antiquities*, 10.11.7], that the Jews in Christ’s days recognized Daniel as in the canon. Zechariah, Ezra, and Nehemiah, centuries before Antiochus, refer to it. Jesus refers to it in His characteristic designation, “Son of man,” (<sup>4180</sup>Matthew 24:30 (<sup>2703</sup>Daniel 7:13); also expressly by name, and as a “prophet,” in (<sup>4145</sup>Matthew 24:15 (compare (<sup>4182</sup>Matthew 24:21, with (<sup>2718</sup>Daniel 12:1, etc.); and in the moment that decided His life (<sup>4164</sup>Matthew 26:64) or death, when the high priest adjured him by the living God. Also, in (<sup>4119</sup>Luke 1:19-26, “Gabriel” is mentioned, whose name occurs nowhere else in Scripture, save in (<sup>2706</sup>Daniel 8:16 9:21. Besides the references to it in Revelation, Paul confirms the prophetic part of it, as to the blasphemous king (<sup>2708</sup>Daniel 7:8,25 11:36), in (<sup>4162</sup>1 Corinthians 6:2 (<sup>4718</sup>2 Thessalonians 2:3,4; the narrative part, as to the miraculous deliverances from “the lions” and “the fire,” in (<sup>4813</sup>Hebrews 11:3 3,34. Thus the book is expressly attested by the New Testament on the three points made the stumbling-block of neologists — the predictions, the narratives of miracles, and the manifestations of angels. An objection has been stated to the unity of the book, namely, that Jesus quotes no part of the first half of Daniel. But (<sup>4144</sup>Matthew 21:44 would be an enigma if it were not a reference to the “stone that smote the image” (<sup>2734</sup>Daniel 2:34,35,44,45). Thus the New Testament sanctions the second, third, sixth, seventh, and eleventh chapters. The design of the miracles in the heathen courts where Daniel was, as of those of Moses in Egypt, was to lead the world power, which seemed to be victorious over the theocracy, to see the essential inner superiority of the seemingly fallen kingdom of God to itself, and to show prostrate Israel that the power of God was the same as of old in Egypt. The first book of Maccabees (compare I Maccabees 1:24 9:27,40, with (<sup>2711</sup>Daniel 12:1 11:26, of the *Septuagint*) refers to Daniel as an accredited book, and even refers to the *Septuagint* Alexandrian version of it. The fact of Daniel having a place in the *Septuagint* shows it was received by the Jews at large prior to the

Maccabean times. The *Septuagint* version so arbitrarily deviated from the *Hebrew* Daniel, that Theodotius' version was substituted for it in the early Christian Church. JOSEPHUS [*Antiquities*, 11.8.5] mentions that Alexander the Great had designed to punish the Jews for their fidelity to Darius, but that Jaddua (332 B.C.), the high priest, met him at the head of a procession and averted his wrath by showing him Daniel's prophecy that a Grecian monarch should overthrow Persia. Certain it is, Alexander favored the Jews, and JOSEPHUS' statement gives an explanation of the fact; at least it shows that The Jews in JOSEPHUS' days *believed* that Daniel was extant in Alexander's days, long before the Maccabees. With Jaddua (high priest from 341-322 B.C.) the Old Testament history ends (~~in~~ Nehemiah 12:11). (The register of the priests and Levites was not written by Nehemiah, who died about 400 B.C., but was inserted with divine sanction by the collectors of the canon subsequently.) An objection to Daniel's authenticity has been rested on a few *Greek* words found in it. But these are mostly names of Greek musical instruments, which were imported by Greece from the East, rather than vice versa. Some of the words are derived from the common Indo-Germanic stock of both *Greek* and *Chaldee*: hence their appearance in both tongues. And one or two may have come through the Greeks of Asia Minor to the *Chaldee*. The fact that from the fourth verse of the second chapter to the end of the seventh, the language is *Chaldee*, but the rest *Hebrew*, is not an argument against, but for, its authenticity. So in Ezra the two languages are found. The work, if that of one author, must have been composed by someone in the circumstances of Daniel, that is, by one familiar with both languages. No native-born Hebrew who had not lived in Chaldea would know *Chaldee* so well as to use it with the same idiomatic ease as his native tongue; the very impurities in Daniel's use of both are just such as were *natural* to one in his circumstances, but *unnatural* to one in a later age, or to one not half Hebrew, half Chaldean in residence as Daniel was. Those parts of Daniel which concern the whole world are mostly *Chaldee*, then the language of the world empire. So *Greek* was made the language of the New Testament, which was designed for the whole world. Those affecting the Jews, mostly *Hebrew*; and this not so impure as that of Ezekiel. His *Chaldee* is a mixture of *Hebrew* and *Aramaic*. Two predictions alone are enough to prove to us that Daniel was a true prophet.

(1) That his prophecies reach beyond Antiochus; namely, he foretells the rise of *the four great monarchies*, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome (the last not being in Daniel's time known beyond the precincts of Italy, or rather of Latium), and that no other earthly kingdom would subvert the fourth, but that it would divide into parts. All this has come to pass. No *fifth* great earthly monarchy has arisen, though often attempted, as by Charlemagne, Charles V, and Napoleon.

(2) The time of Messiah's advent, as dated from a certain decree, His being cut off, and the destruction of the city. "He who denies Daniel's prophecies," says SIR ISAAC NEWTON, "undermines Christianity, which is founded on Daniel's prophecies concerning Christ."

CHARACTERISTICS OF DANIEL. The *vision mode of revelation* is the exception in other prophets, the rule in Daniel. In Zechariah (Zechariah 1:1-6:15), who lived after Daniel, the same mode appears, but the other form from the seventh chapter to the end. The Revelation of St. John alone is perfectly parallel to Daniel, which may be called the Old Testament Apocalypse. In the *contents* too there is the difference above noticed, that he views the kingdom of God from the standpoint of the world kingdoms, the development of which is his great subject. This mode of viewing it was appropriate to his own position in a heathen court, and to the relation of subjection in which the covenant-people then stood to the world powers. No longer are single powers of the world incidentally introduced, but the *universal monarchies* are the chief theme, in which the worldly principle, opposed to the kingdom of God, manifests itself fully. The near and distant are not seen in the same perspective, as by the other prophets, who viewed the whole future from the eschatological point; but in Daniel the historical *details* are given of that development of the world powers which must precede the advent of the kingdom [AUBERLEN].

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE BABYLONIAN CAPTIVITY. The exile is the historical basis of Daniel's prophecies, as Daniel implies in the first chapter, which commences with the beginning, and ends with the termination, of the captivity (<sup>2006</sup>Daniel 1:1,21; compare <sup>2006</sup>Daniel 9:1,2). A new stage in the theocracy begins with the captivity. Nebuchadnezzar made three incursions into Judah. The first under Jehoiakim (606 B.C.), in which Daniel was carried away, subjected the theocracy to the Babylonian world power. The second (598 B.C.) was that in which Jehoiachin and Ezekiel were carried away. In the third (588 B.C.), Nebuchadnezzar destroyed Jerusalem and carried away Zedekiah. Originally, Abraham was raised out of the "sea" (<sup>2006</sup>Daniel 7:2) of the nations, as an island holy to God, and his seed chosen as God's mediator of His revelations of love to mankind. Under David and Solomon, the theocracy, as opposed to the heathen power, attained its climax in the Old Testament, not only being independent, but lord of the surrounding nations; so that the period of these two kings was henceforth made the type of the Messianic. But when God's people, instead of resting on Him, seek alliance with the world power, that very power is made the instrument of their chastisement. So Ephraim (722 B.C.) fell by Assyria; and Judah also, drawn into the sphere of the world's movements from the time of Ahaz, who sought Assyrian help (740 B.C., <sup>2006</sup>Isaiah 7:1-25) at last

fell by Babylon, and thenceforth has been more or less dependent on the world monarchies, and so, till Messiah, was favored with no revelations from the time of Malachi (four hundred years). Thus, from the beginning of the exile, the theocracy, in the strict sense, ceased on earth; the rule of the world powers superseding it. But God's covenant with Israel remains firm (<sup><6112></sup>Romans 11:29); therefore, a period of blessing under Messiah's kingdom is *now* foretold as about to follow their long chastisement. The exile thus is the turning point in the history of the theocracy, which ROOS thus divides:

- (1) From Adam to the exodus out of Egypt.
- (2) From the exodus to the beginning of the Babylonian captivity.
- (3) From the captivity to the millennium.
- (4) From the millennium to the end of the world.

*The position of Daniel* in the Babylonian court was in unison with the altered relations of the theocracy and the world power, which new relation was to be the theme of his prophecy. Earlier prophets, from the standpoint of Israel, treated of Israel in its relation to the world powers; Daniel, from Babylon, the center of the then world power, treats of the world powers in their relation to Israel. His seventy years' residence in Babylon, and his high official position there, gave him an insight into the world's politics, fitting him to be the recipient of political revelations; while his spiritual experiences, gained through Nebuchadnezzar's humiliation, Belshazzar's downfall, and the rapid decay of the Babylonian empire itself, as well as the miraculous deliverances of himself and his friends (the third through sixth chapters), all fitted him for regarding things from the spiritual standpoint, from which the world's power appears transient, but the glory of God's kingdom eternal. As his political position was the *body*, the school of magicians in which he had studied for three years (<sup><2006></sup>Daniel 1:4,5) was the *soul*; and his mind strong in faith and nourished by the earlier prophecies (<sup><2012></sup>Daniel 9:2), the *spirit* of his prophecy, which only waited for the spirit of revelation from above to kindle it. So God fits His organs for their work. AUBERLEN compares Daniel to Joseph: the one at the beginning, the other at the end of the Jewish history of revelation; both representatives of God and His people at heathen courts; both interpreters of the dim presentiments of truth, expressed in God-sent dreams, and therefore raised to honor by the powers of the world: so representing Israel's calling to be a royal priesthood among the nations; and types of Christ, the true Israel, and of Israel's destination to be a light to lighten the whole Gentile world, as <sup><6112></sup>Romans 11:12,15 foretells. As Achilles at the beginning, and Alexander

at the end, of Grecian history are the mirrors of the whole life of the Hellenic people, so Joseph and Daniel of Israel.

CONTENTS OF THE BOOK. Historical and biographical *introduction in the first chapter*. Daniel, a captive exile, is representative of his nation in its servitude and exile: while his heavenly insight into dreams, far exceeding that of the magi, represents the divine superiority of the covenant-people over their heathen lords. The high dignities, even in the world, which he thereby attained, typify the giving of the earth-kingdom at last “to the people of the saints of the Most High” (<sup>2022</sup>Daniel 7:27). Thus Daniel’s personal history is the typical foundation of his prophecy. The prophets had to experience in themselves, and in their age, something of what they foretold about future times; just as David felt much of Christ’s sufferings in his own person (compare <sup>2002</sup>Hosea 1:2-9,10,11 2:3). So Jon 1:1-17, etc. [Roos]. Hence biographical notices of Daniel and his friends are inserted among his prophecies. The second through twelfth chapters contain the substance of the book, and consist of *two parts*. The first (the second through seventh chapters) represents the development of the world powers, viewed from a historical point. The second (the eighth through twelfth chapters), their development in relation to Israel, especially in the future preceding Christ’s first advent, foretold in the ninth chapter. But prophecy looks beyond the immediate future to the complete fulfillment in the last days, since the individual parts in the organic history of salvation cannot be understood except in connection with the whole. Also Israel looked forward to the Messianic time, not only for spiritual salvation, but also for the visible restoration of the kingdom which even now we too expect. The prophecy which they needed ought therefore to comprise both, and so much of the history of the world as would elapse before the final consummation. The period of Daniel’s prophecies, therefore, is that from the downfall of the theocracy at the captivity till its final restoration, yet future — the period of the dominion of the world powers, not set aside by Christ’s first coming (<sup>2033</sup>John 18:36; for, to have taken the earth-kingdom *then*, would have been to take it from Satan’s hands, <sup>2008</sup>Matthew 4:8-10), but to be superseded by His universal and everlasting kingdom at His second coming (<sup>2015</sup>Revelation 11:15). Thus the general survey of the development and final destiny of the world powers (the second through seventh chapters) fittingly precedes the disclosures as to the immediate future (the eighth through twelfth chapters). Daniel marks the division by writing the first part in *Chaldee*, and the second, and the introduction, in *Hebrew*; the former, referring to the powers of the world, in the language of the then dominant world power under which he lived; the latter, relating to the people of God, in their own language. An interpolator in a later age would have used *Hebrew*, the language of the ancient prophets throughout,

or if anywhere *Aramaic*, so as to be understood by his contemporaries, he would have used it in the second rather than in the first part as having a more immediate reference to his own times [AUBERLEN].

# CHAPTER 1

## <2000> DANIEL 1:1-21.

### THE BABYLONIAN CAPTIVITY BEGINS; DANIEL'S EDUCATION AT BABYLON, &C.

1. *third year* — compare <3251> Jeremiah 25:1, “the *fourth* year; Jehoiakim came to the throne at the *end* of the year, which Jeremiah reckons as the *first* year, but which Daniel leaves out of count, being an incomplete year: thus, in Jeremiah, it is “the *fourth* year”; in Daniel, “the *third*” [JAHN]. However, Jeremiah (<3251> Jeremiah 25:1 46:2) merely says, the fourth year of Jehoiakim coincided with the first of Nebuchadnezzar, when the latter *conquered the Egyptians at Carchemish*; not that the *deportation of captives from Jerusalem* was in the fourth year of Jehoiakim: this probably took place in the end of the third year of Jehoiakim, shortly *before* the battle of Carchemish [FAIRBAIRN]. Nebuchadnezzar took away the captives as hostages for the submission of the Hebrews. *Historical Scripture* gives no positive account of this first deportation, with which the Babylonian captivity, that is, Judah's subjection to Babylon for seventy years (<3250> Jeremiah 29:10), begins. But <4805> 2 Chronicles 36:6,7, states that Nebuchadnezzar had intended “to carry Jehoiakim to Babylon,” and that he “carried off the vessels of the house of the Lord” thither. But Jehoiakim died at Jerusalem, before the conqueror's intention as to him was carried into effect (<3228> Jeremiah 22:18,19 36:30), and his dead body, as was foretold, was dragged out of the gates by the Chaldean besiegers, and left unburied. The second deportation under Jehoiachin was eight years later.

2. *Shinar* — the old name of Babylonia (<0102> Genesis 11:2 14:1 <23114> Isaiah 11:11 <3815> Zechariah 5:11). Nebuchadnezzar took only “part of the vessels,” as he did not intend wholly to overthrow the state, but to make it tributary, and to leave such vessels as were absolutely needed for the public worship of Jehovah. Subsequently all were taken away and were restored under Cyrus (<5300> Ezra 1:7).

*his god* — Bel. His temple, as was often the case among the heathen, was made “treasure house” of the king.

3. *master of ... eunuchs* — called in Turkey the *kislar aga*.

*of the king's seed* — compare the prophecy, <1207> 2 Kings 20:17,18.

**4. *no blemish*** — A handsome form was connected, in Oriental ideas, with mental power. “Children” means youths of twelve or fourteen years old.

***teach ... tongue of ... Chaldeans*** — their language and literature, the Aramaic-Babylonian. That the heathen lore was not altogether valueless appears from the Egyptian magicians who opposed Moses; the Eastern Magi who sought Jesus, and who may have drawn the tradition as to the “King of the Jews” from <sup>(2702)</sup>Daniel 9:24, etc., written in the East. As Moses was trained in the learning of the Egyptian sages, so Daniel in that of the Chaldeans, to familiarize his mind with mysterious lore, and so develop his heaven-bestowed gift of understanding in visions (<sup>(2704)</sup>Daniel 1:4,5,17).

**5. *king’s meat*** — It is usual for an Eastern king to entertain, from the food of his table, many retainers and royal captives (<sup>(2823)</sup>Jeremiah 52:33,34). The *Hebrew* for “meat” implies *delicacies*.

***stand before the king*** — as attendant courtiers; not as eunuchs.

**6. *children of Judah*** — the most noble tribe, being that to which the “king’s seed” belonged (compare <sup>(2703)</sup>Daniel 1:3).

**7. *gave names*** — designed to mark their new relation, that so they might forget their former religion and country (<sup>(0445)</sup>Genesis 41:45). But as in Joseph’s case (whom Pharaoh called Zaphnath-paaneah), so in Daniel’s, the name indicative of his relation to a heathen court (“Belteshazzar,” that is, “Bel’s prince”), however flattering to him, is not the one retained by Scripture, but the name marking his relation to God (“Daniel,” *God my Judge*, the theme of his prophecies being *God’s judgment* on the heathen world powers).

***Hananiah*** — that is, “whom Jehovah hath favored.”

***Shadrach*** — from *Rak*, in Babylonian, “the King,” that is, “the Sun”; the same root as in *Abrech* (<sup>(0443)</sup>Genesis 41:43, *Margin*), inspired or illumined by the Sun-god.”

***Mishael*** — that is, “who is what God is?” *Who is comparable to God?*

***Meshach*** — The Babylonians retained the first syllable of Mishael, the *Hebrew* name; but for *El*, that is, GOD, substituted *Shak*, the Babylonian goddess, called Sheshach (<sup>(2823)</sup>Jeremiah 25:26 51:41), answering to the Earth, or else Venus, the goddess of love and mirth; it was during her feast that Cyrus took Babylon.

***Azariah*** — that is, “whom Jehovah helps.”

**Abed-nego** — that is, “servant of the shining fire.” Thus, instead of to Jehovah, these His servants were dedicated by the heathen to their four leading gods [HERODOTUS, *Clio*]; Bel, the Chief-god, the Sun-god, Earth-god, and Fire-god. To the last the three youths were consigned when refusing to worship the golden image (<sup>2702</sup>Daniel 3:12). The *Chaldee version* translates “Lucifer,” in <sup>2342</sup>Isaiah 14:12, *Nogea*, the same as *Nego*. The names thus at the outset are significant of the seeming triumph, but sure downfall, of the heathen powers before Jehovah and His people.

**8. Daniel ... would not defile himself with ... king's meat** — Daniel is specified as being the leader in the “purpose” (the word implies a *decided* resolution) to abstain from defilement, thus manifesting a character already formed for prophetic functions. The other three youths, no doubt, shared in his purpose. It was the custom to throw a small part of the viands and wine upon the earth, as an initiatory offering to the gods, so as to consecrate to them the whole entertainment (compare <sup>4628</sup>Deuteronomy 32:38). To have partaken of such a feast would have been to sanction idolatry, and was forbidden even after the legal distinction of clean and unclean meats was done away (<sup>4007</sup>1 Corinthians 8:7,10 10:27,28). Thus the faith of these youths was made instrumental in overruling the evil foretold against the Jews (<sup>2043</sup>Ezekiel 4:13 <sup>2008</sup>Hosea 9:3), to the glory of God. Daniel and his three friends, says AUBERLEN, stand out like an oasis in the desert. Like Moses, Daniel “chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season” (<sup>5812</sup>Hebrews 11:25; see <sup>2008</sup>Daniel 9:3-19). He who is to interpret divine revelations must not feed on the dainties, nor drink from the intoxicating cup, of this world. This made him as dear a name to his countrymen as Noah and Job, who also stood alone in their piety among a perverse generation (<sup>2644</sup>Ezekiel 14:14 28:3).

**requested** — While decided in principle, we ought to seek our object by gentleness, rather than by an ostentatious testimony, which, under the plea of faithfulness, courts opposition.

**9. God ... brought Daniel into favor** — The favor of others towards the godly is the doing of God. So in Joseph's case (<sup>4321</sup>Genesis 39:21). Especially towards Israel (<sup>5966</sup>Psalms 106:46; compare <sup>2067</sup>Proverbs 16:7).

**10. worse liking** — looking less healthy.

**your sort** — of *your age*, or *class*; literally, “circle.”

**endanger my head** — An arbitrary Oriental despot could, in a fit of wrath at his orders having been disobeyed, command the offender to be instantly decapitated.

**11. *Melzar*** — rather, the steward, or chief butler, entrusted by Ashpenaz with furnishing the daily portion to the youths [GESENIUS]. The word is still in use in Persia.

**12. *pulse*** — The *Hebrew* expresses any vegetable grown from *seeds*, that is, vegetable food in general [GESENIUS].

**13-15.** Illustrating <sup><BIB></sup>Deuteronomy 8:3, “Man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord.”

**17. *God gave them knowledge*** — (<sup><BIB></sup>Exodus 31:2,3 <sup><BIB></sup>1 Kings 3:12 <sup><BIB></sup>Job 32:8 <sup><BIB></sup>James 1:5,17).

***Daniel had understanding in ... dreams*** — God thus made one of the despised covenant-people eclipse the Chaldean sages in the very science on which they most prided themselves. So Joseph in the court of Pharaoh (<sup><BIB></sup>Genesis 40:5 41:1-8). Daniel, in these praises of his own “understanding,” speaks not through vanity, but by the direction of God, as one transported out of himself. See my *Introduction*, “CONTENTS OF THE BOOK.”

**18. *brought them in*** — that is, not only Daniel and his three friends, but other youths (<sup><BIB></sup>Daniel 1:3,19, “among *them all*”).

**19. *stood ... before the king*** — that is, were advanced to a position of favor near the throne.

**20. *ten times*** — literally, “ten hands.”

***magicians*** — properly, “sacred scribes, skilled in the sacred writings, a class of Egyptian priests” [GESENIUS]; from a *Hebrew* root, “a pen.” The word in our *English Version*, “magicians,” comes from *mag*, that is, “a priest.” The Magi formed one of the six divisions of the Medes.

***astrologers*** — *Hebrew*, “enchanters,” from a root, “to conceal,” practisers of the occult arts.

**21. *Daniel continued ... unto ... first year of Cyrus*** — (<sup><BIB></sup>2 Chronicles 36:22 <sup><BIB></sup>Ezra 1:1). Not that he did not continue *beyond* that year, but the expression is designed to mark the fact that he who was one of the first captives taken to Babylon, lived to see the end of the captivity. See my *Introduction*, “SIGNIFICANCE OF THE BABYLONIAN CAPTIVITY.” In <sup><BIB></sup>Daniel 10:1 he is mentioned as living “in the third year of Cyrus.” See *Margin Note*, on the use of “till” (<sup><BIB></sup>Psalms 110:1,112:8).

# CHAPTER 2

## ◀2006 DANIEL 2:1-49.

### NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S DREAM: DANIEL'S INTERPRETATION OF IT, AND ADVANCEMENT.

1. *second year of ... Nebuchadnezzar* — ◀2006 Daniel 1:5 shows that “three years” had elapsed since Nebuchadnezzar had taken Jerusalem. The solution of this difficulty is: Nebuchadnezzar first ruled as subordinate to his father Nabopolassar, to which time the first chapter refers (◀2006 Daniel 1:1); whereas “the second year” in the second chapter is dated from his sole sovereignty. The very difficulty is a proof of genuineness; all was clear to the writer and the original readers from *their* knowledge of the circumstances, and so he adds no explanation. A forger would not *introduce* difficulties; the author did not *then* see any difficulty in the case. Nebuchadnezzar is called “king” (◀2006 Daniel 1:1), *by anticipation*. Before he left Judea, he became actual king by the death of his father, and the Jews always called him “king,” as commander of the invading army.

*dreams* — It is significant that not to Daniel, but to the then world ruler, Nebuchadnezzar, the dream is vouchsafed. It was from the first of its representatives who had conquered the theocracy, that the world power was to learn its doom, as about to be in its turn subdued, and for ever by the kingdom of God. As this vision opens, so that in the seventh chapter developing the same truth more fully, closes the first part. Nebuchadnezzar, as vicegerent of God (◀2006 Daniel 2:37; compare ◀2006 Jeremiah 25:9 ◀3382 Ezekiel 28:12-15 ◀3408 Isaiah 44:28 45:1 ◀5100 Romans 13:1), is honored with the revelation in the form of a dream, the appropriate form to one outside the kingdom of God. So in the cases of Abimelech, Pharaoh, etc. (◀0008 Genesis 20:3 41:1-7), especially as the heathen attached such importance to dreams. Still it is not he, but an Israelite, who interprets it. Heathendom is passive, Israel active, in divine things, so that the glory redounds to “the God of heaven.”

2. *Chaldeans* — here, a certain order of priest-magicians, who wore a peculiar dress, like that seen on the gods and deified men in the Assyrian sculptures. Probably they belonged exclusively to the Chaldeans, the original tribe of the Babylonian nation, just as the Magians were properly Medes.

**3. *troubled to know the dream*** — He awoke in alarm, remembering that something solemn had been presented to him in a dream, without being able to recall the form in which it had clothed itself. His thoughts on the unprecedented greatness to which his power had attained (<sup>27029</sup>Daniel 2:29) made him anxious to know what the issue of all this should be. God meets this wish in the way most calculated to impress him.

**4.** Here begins the *Chaldee* portion of Daniel, which continues to the end of the seventh chapter. In it the course, character, and crisis of the Gentile power are treated; whereas, in the other parts, which are in *Hebrew*, the things treated apply more particularly to the Jews and Jerusalem.

*Syriac* — the *Aramean Chaldee*, the vernacular tongue of the king and his court; the prophet, by mentioning it here, hints at the reason of his own adoption of it from this point.

*live for ever* — a formula in addressing kings, like our “Long live the king!” Compare <sup>41034</sup>1 Kings 1:31.

**5. *The thing*** — that is, The dream, “is gone from me.” GESENIUS translates, “The *decree* is gone forth from me,” irrevocable (compare <sup>23629</sup>Isaiah 45:23); namely, that you shall be executed, if you do not tell both the dream and the interpretation. *English Version* is simpler, which supposes the king himself to have forgotten the dream. Pretenders to supernatural knowledge often bring on themselves their own punishment.

*cut in pieces* — (<sup>40534</sup>1 Samuel 15:33).

*houses ... dunghill* — rather, “a morass heap.” The Babylonian houses were built of sun-dried bricks; when demolished, the rain dissolves the whole into a mass of mire, in the wet land, near the river [STUART]. As to the consistency of this cruel threat with Nebuchadnezzar’s character, see <sup>27047</sup>Daniel 4:17, “basest of men”; <sup>28915</sup>Jeremiah 39:5,6 52:9-11.

**6. *rewards*** — literally, “presents *poured out in* lavish profusion.”

**8. *gain ... time*** — literally, “buy.” Compare <sup>40156</sup>Ephesians 5:16 <sup>51045</sup>Colossians 4:5, where the sense is somewhat different.

*the thing is gone from me* — (See on <sup>27018</sup>Daniel 2:5).

**9. *one decree*** — There can be no second one reversing the first (<sup>47041</sup>Esther 4:11).

*corrupt* — deceitful.

**till the time be changed** — till a new state of things arrive, either by my ceasing to trouble myself about the dream, or by a change of government (which perhaps the agitation caused by the dream made Nebuchadnezzar to forebode, and so to suspect the Chaldeans of plotting).

**tell ... dream, and I shall know ... ye can show ... interpretation** — If ye cannot tell the past, a dream actually presented to me, how can ye know, and show, the future events prefigured in it?

**10. There is not a man ... that can show** — God makes the heathen out of their own mouth, condemn their impotent pretensions to supernatural knowledge, in order to bring out in brighter contrast His power to reveal secrets to His servants, though but “men upon the earth” (compare <sup><1022></sup>Daniel 2:22,23).

**therefore**, etc. — that is, If such things could be done by men, other absolute princes would have required them from their magicians; as they have not, it is proof such things cannot be done and cannot be reasonably asked from us.

**11. gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh** — answering to “no man upon the earth”; for there were, in their belief, “men in heaven,” namely, men deified; for example, Nimrod. The *supreme* gods are referred to here, who alone, in the Chaldean view, could solve the difficulty, but who do not communicate with men. The *inferior* gods, intermediate between men and the supreme gods, are unable to solve it. Contrast with this heathen idea of the utter severance of God from man, <sup><1014></sup>John 1:14, “The Word was made *flesh*, and *dwelt* among us”; Daniel was in this case made His representative.

**12, 13.** Daniel and his companions do not seem to have been actually numbered among the Magi or Chaldeans, and so were not summoned before the king. Providence ordered it so that all mere human wisdom should be shown vain before His divine power, through His servant, was put forth. <sup><1024></sup>Daniel 2:24 shows that the decree for slaying the wise men had not been actually executed when Daniel interposed.

**14. captain of the king's guard** — commanding the executioners (*Margin*; and <sup><1024></sup>Genesis 37:36, *Margin*).

**15. Why is the decree so hasty** — Why were not all of us consulted before the decree for the execution of all was issued?

**the thing** — the agitation of the king as to his dream, and his abortive consultation of the Chaldeans. It is plain from this that Daniel was till now ignorant of the whole matter.

**16. *Daniel went in*** — perhaps not in person, but by the mediation of some courtier who had access to the king. His first direct interview seems to have been <sup><2025></sup>Daniel 2:25 [BARNES].

***time*** — The king granted “time” to Daniel, though he would not do so to the Chaldeans because they betrayed their lying purpose by requiring him to tell the dream, which Daniel did not. Providence doubtless influenced his mind, already favorable (<sup><2019></sup>Daniel 1:19,20), to show special favor to Daniel.

**17.** Here appears the reason why Daniel sought “time” (<sup><2026></sup>Daniel 2:16), namely he wished to engage his friends to join him in prayer to God to reveal the dream to him.

**18.** An illustration of the power of united prayer (<sup><4889></sup>Matthew 18:19). The same instrumentality rescued Peter from his peril (<sup><4125></sup>Acts 12:5-12).

**19. *revealed ... in ... night vision*** — (<sup><3835></sup>Job 33:15,16).

**20. *answered*** — responded to God’s goodness by praises.

***name of God*** — *God in His revelation of Himself* by acts of love, “wisdom, and might” (<sup><2429></sup>Jeremiah 32:19).

**21. *changeth ... times ... seasons*** — “He herein gives a general preparatory intimation, that the dream of Nebuchadnezzar is concerning the changes and successions of kingdoms” [JEROME]. The “times” are the *phases* and periods of *duration* of empires (compare <sup><2025></sup>Daniel 7:25 <sup><3221></sup>1 Chronicles 12:32 29:30); the “seasons” the *fitting* times for their culmination, decline, and fall (<sup><2008></sup>Ecclesiastes 3:1 <sup><4007></sup>Acts 1:7 <sup><5101></sup>1 Thessalonians 5:1). The vicissitudes of states, with their times and seasons. are not regulated by chance or fate, as the heathen thought, but by God.

***removed kings*** — (<sup><3228></sup>Job 12:18 <sup><4956></sup>Psalms 75:6,7 <sup><2025></sup>Jeremiah 27:5; compare <sup><4007></sup>1 Samuel 2:7,8).

***giveth wisdom*** — (<sup><1009></sup>1 Kings 3:9-12 <sup><5005></sup>James 1:5).

**22. *revealeth*** — (<sup><3822></sup>Job 12:22). So spiritually (<sup><4017></sup>Ephesians 1:17,18).

***knoweth what is in ... darkness*** — (<sup><4011></sup>Psalms 139:11,12 <sup><5043></sup>Hebrews 4:13).

***light ... him*** — (<sup><5017></sup>James 1:17 <sup><6104></sup>1 John 1:4). *Apocalypse* (or “revelation”) signifies a divine, *prophecy* a human, activity. Compare <sup><4346></sup>1 Corinthians 14:6, where the two are distinguished. The prophet is connected with the outer world, addressing to the congregation the words with which the Spirit

of God supplies him; he *speaks* in the Spirit, but the apocalyptic seer is in the Spirit in his whole person (<sup><6110></sup>Revelation 1:10 4:2). The form of the apocalyptic revelation (the very term meaning that the *veil* that hides the invisible world is *taken off*) is subjectively either the *dream*, or, higher, the *vision*. The interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream was a preparatory education to Daniel himself. By gradual steps, each revelation preparing him for the succeeding one, God fitted him for disclosures becoming more and more special. In the second and fourth chapters he is but an interpreter of Nebuchadnezzar's dreams; then he has a dream himself, but it is only a vision in a dream of the night (<sup><2008></sup>Daniel 7:1,2); then follows a vision in a waking state (<sup><2008></sup>Daniel 8:1-3); lastly, in the two final revelations (<sup><2008></sup>Daniel 9:20 10:4,5) the ecstatic state is no longer needed. The progression in the *form* answers to the progression in the *contents* of his prophecy; at first general *outlines*, and these afterwards filled up with minute chronological and historical *details*, such as are not found in the Revelation of John, though, as became the New Testament, the form of revelation is the highest, namely, clear waking visions [AUBERLEN].

**23. *thee ... thee*** — He ascribes all the glory to God.

***God of my fathers*** — Thou hast shown Thyself the same God of grace to me, a captive exile, as Thou didst to Israel of old and this on account of the *covenant* made with our “fathers” (<sup><4058></sup>Luke 1:54,55; compare <sup><1966></sup>Psalms 106:45).

***given me wisdom and might*** — Thou being the fountain of both; referring to <sup><2021></sup>Daniel 2:20. Whatever *wise ability* I have to stay the execution of the king's cruel decree, is Thy gift.

***me ... we ... us*** — The revelation was given to Daniel, as “me” implies; yet with just modesty he joins his friends with him; because it was to their joint prayers, and not to his individually. that he owed the revelation from God.

***known ... the king's matter*** — the very words in which the Chaldeans had denied the *possibility of any man on earth* telling the dream (“not a man upon the earth can show *the king's matter*,” <sup><2008></sup>Daniel 2:10). Impostors are compelled by the God of truth to eat up their own words.

**24. *Therefore*** — because of having received the divine communication.

***bring me in before the king*** — implying that. he had not previously been in person before the king (see on <sup><2026></sup>Daniel 2:16).

**25. *I have found a man*** — Like all courtiers, in announcing agreeable tidings, he ascribes the merit of the discovery to himself [JEROME]. So far from it being a discrepancy, that he says nothing of the previous

understanding between him and Daniel, or of Daniel's application to the king (<sup><2125></sup>Daniel 2:15,16), it is just what we should expect. Arioch would not dare to tell an absolute despot that he had stayed the execution of his sanguinary decree, on his own responsibility; but would, in the first instance, secretly stay it until Daniel had got, by application from the king, the time required, without Arioch seeming to know of Daniel's application as the cause of the respite; then, when Daniel had received the revelation, Arioch would in trembling haste bring him in, as if then for the first time he had "found" him. The very difficulty when cleared up is a proof of genuineness, as it never would be *introduced* by a forger.

**27. cannot** — Daniel, being learned in all the lore of the Chaldeans (<sup><2008></sup>Daniel 1:4), could authoritatively declare the *impossibility* of mere man solving the king's difficulty.

**soothsayers** — from a root, "to cut off"; referring to their *cutting* the heavens into divisions, and so guessing at men's destinies from the place of the stars at one's birth.

**28. God** — in contrast to "the wise men," etc. (<sup><2027></sup>Daniel 2:27).

**revealeth secrets** — (<sup><3087></sup>Amos 3:7 4:13). Compare <sup><0445></sup>Genesis 41:45, *Zaphnath-paaneah*, "revealer of secrets," the title given to Joseph.

**the latter days** — literally, "in the after days" (<sup><2029></sup>Daniel 2:29); "hereafter" (<sup><0401></sup>Genesis 49:1): It refers to the whole future, including the Messianic days, which is the final dispensation (<sup><2102></sup>Isaiah 2:2).

**visions of thy head** — conceptions formed in the brain.

**29.** God met with a revelation Nebuchadnezzar, who had been meditating on the future destiny of his vast empire.

**30. not ... for any wisdom that I have** — not *on account* of any previous wisdom which I may have manifested (<sup><2017></sup>Daniel 1:17,20). The specially-favored servants of God in all ages disclaim merit in themselves and ascribe all to the grace and power of God (<sup><0416></sup>Genesis 41:16 <sup><4012></sup>Acts 3:12). The "as for me," disclaiming extraordinary merit, contrasts elegantly with "as for thee," whereby Daniel courteously, but without flattery, implies, that God honored Nebuchadnezzar, as His vicegerent over the world kingdoms, with a revelation on the subject uppermost in his thoughts, the ultimate destinies of those kingdoms.

**for their sakes that shall make known**, etc. — a *Chaldee* idiom for, "to the intent that the interpretation may be made known to the king."

*the thoughts of thy heart* — thy subject of thought before falling asleep. Or, perhaps the *probation of Nebuchadnezzar's character* through this revelation may be the meaning intended (compare <sup><423></sup>2 Chronicles 32:31 <sup><4125></sup>Luke 2:35).

**31.** The world power in its totality appears as a colossal human form: Babylon the head of gold, Medo-Persia the breast and *two* arms of silver, Graeco-Macedonia the belly and *two* thighs of brass, and Rome, with its Germano-Slavonic offshoots, the legs of iron and feet of iron and clay, the fourth still existing. Those kingdoms only are mentioned which stand in some relation to the kingdom of God; of these none is left out; the final establishment of that kingdom is the aim of His moral government of the world. The colossus of metal stands on weak feet, of clay. All man's glory is as ephemeral and worthless as chaff (compare <sup><4124></sup>1 Peter 1:24). But the kingdom of God, small and unheeded as a "stone" on the ground is compact in its homogeneous unity; whereas the world power, in its heterogeneous constituents successively supplanting one another, contains the elements of decay. The relation of the stone to the mountain is that of the kingdom of the cross (<sup><4163></sup>Matthew 16:23 <sup><4226></sup>Luke 24:26) to the kingdom of glory, the latter beginning, and the former ending when the kingdom of God breaks in pieces the kingdoms of the world (<sup><4115></sup>Revelation 11:15). Christ's contrast between the two kingdoms refers to this passage.

*a great image* — literally, "one image that was great." Though the kingdoms were different, it was essentially *one* and the same world power under different phases, just as the image was *one*, though the parts were of different metals.

**32.** On ancient coins states are often represented by human figures. The head and higher parts signify the earlier times; the lower, the later times. The metals become successively baser and baser, implying the growing degeneracy from worse to worse. Hesiod, two hundred years before Daniel, had compared the four ages to the four metals in the same order; the idea is sanctioned here by Holy Writ. It was perhaps one of those fragments of revelation among the heathen derived from the tradition as to the fall of man. The metals lessen in *specific gravity*, as they downwards; silver is not so heavy as gold, brass not so heavy as silver, and iron not so heavy as brass, the *weight* thus being arranged in the reverse of stability [TREGELLES]. Nebuchadnezzar derived his authority from God, not from man, nor as responsible to man. But the Persian king was so far dependent on others that he could not deliver Daniel from the princes (<sup><2764></sup>Daniel 6:14,15); contrast <sup><2768></sup>Daniel 5:18,19, as to Nebuchadnezzar's power from God, whom he would he slew, and whom he would he kept alive" (compare <sup><3774></sup>Ezra 7:14 <sup><3703></sup>Esther 1:13-16). Graeco-Macedonia betrays its

deterioration in its divisions, not united as Babylon and Persia. Iron is stronger than brass, but inferior in other respects; so Rome hardy and strong to tread down the nations, but less kingly and showing its chief deterioration in its last state. Each successive kingdom incorporates its predecessor (compare <sup><2168></sup>Daniel 5:28). Power that in Nebuchadnezzar's hands was a God-derived (<sup><2169></sup>Daniel 2:37,38) autocracy, in the Persian king's was a rule resting on his nobility of person and birth, the nobles being his equals in rank, but not in office; in Greece, an aristocracy not of birth, but individual influence, in Rome, lowest of all, dependent entirely on popular choice, the emperor being appointed by popular military election.

**33.** As the two arms of silver denote the kings of the Medes and Persians [JOSEPHUS]; and the two thighs of brass the Seleucidae of Syria and Lagidae of Egypt, the two leading sections into which Graeco-Macedonia parted, so the two legs of iron signify the two Roman consuls [NEWTON]. The clay, in <sup><2184></sup>Daniel 2:41, "potter's clay," <sup><2188></sup>Daniel 2:43, "miry clay," means "earthenware," hard but brittle (compare <sup><4189></sup>Psalms 2:9 <sup><4127></sup>Revelation 2:27, where the same image is used of the same event); the feet are stable while bearing only direct pressure, but easily "broken" to pieces by a blow (<sup><2184></sup>Daniel 2:34), the iron intermixed not retarding, but hastening, such a result.

**34. stone** — Messiah and His kingdom (<sup><4141></sup>Genesis 49:24 <sup><4182></sup>Psalms 118:22 <sup><2336></sup>Isaiah 28:16). In its relations to Israel, it is a "stone of stumbling" (<sup><2184></sup>Isaiah 8:14 <sup><4041></sup>Acts 4:11 <sup><6107></sup>1 Peter 2:7,8) on which both houses of Israel are broken, not destroyed (<sup><4132></sup>Matthew 21:32). In its relation to the Church, the same stone which destroys the image is the foundation of the Church (<sup><4121></sup>Ephesians 2:20). In its relation to the Gentile world power, the stone is its destroyer (<sup><2185></sup>Daniel 2:35,44; compare Zechariah 12:3). Christ saith (<sup><4144></sup>Matthew 21:44, referring to <sup><2184></sup>Isaiah 8:14,15), "Whosoever shall fall on this stone (that is, stumble, and be offended, at Him, as the Jews were, from whom, therefore, He says, 'The kingdom shall be taken') shall be *broken*; but (referring to <sup><2184></sup>Daniel 2:34,35) on whomsoever it shall fall (referring to *the world power* which had been the instrument of *breaking* the Jews), it will (not merely *break*, but) *grind him to powder*" (<sup><4153></sup>1 Corinthians 15:24). The falling of the stone of the feet of the image cannot refer to Christ at His first advent, for the fourth kingdom was not then as yet divided — no toes were in existence (see on <sup><2184></sup>Daniel 2:44).

**cut out** — namely, from "the mountain" (<sup><2185></sup>Daniel 2:45); namely, Mount Zion (<sup><2189></sup>Isaiah 2:2), and antitypically, the heavenly mount of the Father's glory, from whom Christ came.

**without hands** — explained in <sup>204</sup>Daniel 2:44, “The *God of heaven* shall set up a kingdom,” as contrasted with the image which was made *with hands* of man. Messiah not created by human agency, but conceived by the Holy Ghost (<sup>102</sup>Matthew 1:20 <sup>135</sup>Luke 1:35; compare Zechariah 4:6 <sup>148</sup>Mark 14:58 <sup>891</sup>Hebrews 9:11,24). So “not made with hands,” that is, *heavenly*, <sup>2</sup>2 Corinthians 5:1; *spiritual*, <sup>501</sup>Colossians 2:11. The world kingdoms were reared by *human* ambition: but this is the “kingdom of *heaven*”; “not of this world” (<sup>836</sup>John 18:36). As the fourth kingdom, or Rome, was represented in a twofold state, first strong, with legs of iron, then weak, with toes part of iron, part of clay; so this fifth kingdom, that of Christ, is seen conversely, first insignificant as a “stone,” then as a “mountain” filling the whole earth. The ten toes are the ten lesser kingdoms into which the Roman kingdom was finally to be divided; this tenfold division here hinted at is not specified in detail till the seventh chapter. The fourth empire originally was bounded in Europe pretty nearly by the line of the Rhine and Danube; in Asia by the Euphrates. In Africa it possessed Egypt and the north coasts; South Britain and Dacia were afterwards added but were ultimately resigned. The ten kingdoms do not arise until a deterioration (by mixing clay with the iron) has taken place; they are in existence when Christ comes in glory, and then are broken in pieces. The ten have been sought for in the invading hosts of the fifth and sixth century. But though many provinces were then severed from Rome as independent kingdoms, the dignity of emperor still continued, and the imperial power was exercised over Rome itself for two centuries. So the tenfold divisions cannot be looked for before A.D. 731. But the East is not to be excluded, five toes being on each foot. Thus no point of time before the overthrow of the empire at the taking of Constantinople by the Turks (A.D. 1453) can be assigned for the division. It seems, therefore, that the definite ten will be the ultimate development of the Roman empire just before the rise of Antichrist, who shall overthrow three of the kings, and, after three and a half years, he himself be overthrown by Christ in person. Some of the ten kingdoms will, doubtless, be the same as some past and present divisions of the old Roman empire, which accounts for the *continuity* of the connection between the toes and legs, a gap of centuries not being interposed, as is objected by opponents of the futurist theory. The lists of the ten made by the latter differ from one another; and they are set aside by the fact that they include countries which were never Roman, and exclude one whole section of the empire, namely, the East [TREGELLES].

**upon his feet** — the last state of the Roman empire. Not “upon his *legs*.” Compare “in the days of these kings” (see on <sup>204</sup>Daniel 2:44).

**35. broken ... together** — excluding a contemporaneous existence of the kingdom of the world and the kingdom of God (in its *manifested*, as distinguished from its *spiritual*, phase). The latter is not gradually to wear away the former, but to destroy it at once, and utterly (<sup><500P></sup>2 Thessalonians 1:7-10 2:8). However, the *Hebrew* may be translated, “in one discriminate mass.”

**chaff** — image of the ungodly, as they shall be dealt with in the judgment (<sup><400P></sup>Psalm 1:4,5 <sup><408P></sup>Matthew 3:12).

**summer threshing-floors** — Grain was winnowed in the East on an elevated space in the open air, by throwing the grain into the air with a shovel, so that the wind might clear away the chaff.

**no place ... found for them** — (<sup><620P></sup>Revelation 20:11; compare <sup><4570P></sup>Psalm 37:10,36 103:16).

**became ... mountain** — cut out of the mountain (<sup><208P></sup>Daniel 2:45) originally, it ends in *becoming a mountain*. So the kingdom of God, coming from heaven originally, ends in heaven being established on earth (<sup><620P></sup>Revelation 21:1-3).

**filled ... earth** — (<sup><210P></sup>Isaiah 11:9 <sup><312P></sup>Habakkuk 2:14). It is to do so in connection with Jerusalem as the mother Church (<sup><400P></sup>Psalm 80:9 <sup><210P></sup>Isaiah 2:2,3).

**36. we** — Daniel and his three friends.

**37. Thou ... art a king of kings** — The committal of power in fullest plenitude belongs to Nebuchadnezzar personally, as having made Babylon the mighty empire it was. In twenty-three years after him the empire was ended: with him its greatness is identified (<sup><208P></sup>Daniel 4:30), his successors having done nothing notable. Not that he actually ruled every part of the globe, but that God granted him illimitable dominion *in whatever direction his ambition led him*, Egypt, Nineveh, Arabia, Syria, Tyre, and its Phoenician colonies (<sup><275P></sup>Jeremiah 27:5-8). Compare as to Cyrus, <sup><450P></sup>Ezra 1:2.

**38. men ... beasts ... fowls** — the dominion originally designed for man (<sup><400P></sup>Genesis 1:28 2:19,20), forfeited by sin; temporarily delegated to Nebuchadnezzar and the world powers; but, as they abuse the trust for self, instead of for God, to be taken from them by the Son of man, who will exercise it for God, restoring in His person to man the lost inheritance (<sup><400P></sup>Psalm 8:4-6).

**Thou art ... head of gold** — alluding to the riches of Babylon, hence called “the golden city” (<sup>2344</sup>Isaiah 14:4 <sup>2507</sup>Jeremiah 51:7 <sup>6816</sup>Revelation 18:16).

39. That Medo-Persia is the second kingdom appears from <sup>2163</sup>Daniel 5:28 and <sup>2703</sup>Daniel 8:20. Compare <sup>4852</sup>2 Chronicles 36:20 <sup>2302</sup>Isaiah 21:2.

**inferior** — “The kings of Persia were the worst race of men that ever governed an empire” [PRIDEAUX]. Politically (which is the main point of view here) the power of the central government in which the nobles shared with the king, being weakened by the growing independence of the provinces, was inferior to that of Nebuchadnezzar, whose sole word was law throughout his empire.

**brass** — The Greeks (the third empire, <sup>2782</sup>Daniel 8:21 10:20 11:2-4) were celebrated for the *brazen* armor of their warriors. JEROME fancifully thinks that the brass, as being a *clear-sounding* metal, refers to the *eloquence* for which Greece was famed. The “belly,” in <sup>2703</sup>Daniel 2:32, may refer to the drunkenness of Alexander and the luxury of the Ptolemies [TIRINUS].

**over all the earth** — Alexander commanded that he should be called “king of all the world” [JUSTIN, 12. sec. 16.9; ARRIAN, *Campaigns of Alexander*, 7. sec. 15]. The four successors (*diadochi*) who divided Alexander’s dominions at his death, of whom the Seleucidae in Syria and the Lagidae in Egypt were chief, held the same empire.

40. **iron** — This vision sets forth the *character* of the Roman power, rather than its territorial extent [TREGELLES].

**breaketh in pieces** — So, in righteous retribution, itself will at last be *broken in pieces* (<sup>2784</sup>Daniel 2:44) by the kingdom of God (<sup>6830</sup>Revelation 13:10).

41-43. **feet ... toes ... part ... clay ... iron** — explained presently, “the kingdom shall be partly strong, partly broken” (rather, “brittle,” as earthenware); and <sup>2785</sup>Daniel 2:43, “they shall mingle ... with the seed of men,” that is, there will be power (in its deteriorated form, *iron*) mixed up with that which is wholly of man, and therefore brittle; power in the hands of the people having no internal stability, though something is left of the strength of the iron [TREGELLES]. NEWTON, who understands the Roman empire to be parted into the ten kingdoms already (whereas TREGELLES makes them *future*), explains the “clay” mixture as the blending of Barbarous nations with Rome by intermarriages and alliances, in which there was no stable amalgamation, though the ten kingdoms retained much of Rome’s strength. The “mingling with the seed of men” (<sup>2784</sup>Daniel 2:44) seems to refer to <sup>0062</sup>Genesis 6:2, where the marriages of the seed of godly

Seth with the daughters of ungodly Cain are described in similar words. The reference, therefore, seems to be to the blending of the Christianized Roman empire with the pagan nations, a deterioration being the result. Efforts have been often made to reunite the parts into one great empire, as by Charlemagne and Napoleon, but in vain. Christ alone shall effect that.

**44. *in the days of these kings*** — in the days of these kingdoms, that is, of the last of the four. So Christianity was set up when Rome had become mistress of Judea and the world (<sup><401></sup>Luke 2:1, etc.) [NEWTON]. Rather, “in the days of these kings,” answers to “upon his feet” (<sup><203></sup>Daniel 2:34); that is, the ten *toes* (<sup><202></sup>Daniel 2:42), or ten kings, the final state of the Roman empire. For “these kings” cannot mean the four successional monarchies, as they do not *coexist* as the holders of power; if the fourth had been meant, the *singular*, not the *plural*, would be used. The falling of the stone on the image must mean, *destroying judgment* on the fourth Gentile power, not gradual evangelization of it by grace; and the destroying judgment cannot be dealt by Christians, for they are taught to submit to the powers that be, so that it must be dealt by Christ Himself at His coming again. We live under the divisions of the Roman empire which began fourteen hundred years ago, and which at the time of His coming shall be definitely *ten*. All that had failed in the hand of man shall then pass away, and that which is kept in His own hand shall be introduced. Thus the second chapter is the alphabet of the subsequent prophetic statements in Daniel [TREGELLES].

***God of heaven ... kingdom*** — hence the phrase, “the kingdom of heaven” (<sup><402></sup>Matthew 3:2).

***not ... left to other people*** — as the Chaldees had been forced to leave their kingdom to the Medo-Persians, and these to the Greeks, and these to the Romans (<sup><304></sup>Micah 4:7 <sup><403></sup>Luke 1:32,33).

***break ... all*** — (<sup><202></sup>Isaiah 60:12 <sup><604></sup>1 Corinthians 15:24).

**45. *without hands*** — (See on <sup><203></sup>Daniel 2:35).

**46. *fell upon ... face, and worshipped Daniel*** — worshipping God in the person of Daniel. Symbolical of the future prostration of the world power before Messiah and His kingdom (<sup><190></sup>Philippians 2:10). As other servants of God refused such honors (<sup><402></sup>Acts 10:25,26 14:13-15 <sup><208></sup>Revelation 22:8,9) would not taste defiled food, nor give up prayer to God at the cost of his life (<sup><202></sup>Daniel 6:7,10), it seems likely that Daniel rejected the proffered divine honors. The word “answered” (<sup><204></sup>Daniel 2:47) implies that Daniel had objected to these honors; and in compliance with his objection, “the king *answered*, Of a truth, your God is a God of gods.”

Daniel had disclaimed all personal merit in <sup><2129></sup>Daniel 2:30, giving God all the glory (compare <sup><2125></sup>Daniel 2:45).

**commanded ... sweet odours** — divine honors (<sup><3160></sup>Ezra 6:10). It is not said his command was executed.

**47. Lord of kings** — The world power shall at last have to acknowledge this (<sup><6174></sup>Revelation 17:14 19:16); even as Nebuchadnezzar, who had been the God-appointed “king of kings” (<sup><2129></sup>Daniel 2:37), but who had abused the trust, is constrained by God’s servant to acknowledge that God is the true “Lord of kings.”

**48.** One reason for Nebuchadnezzar having been vouchsafed such a dream is here seen; namely, that Daniel might be promoted, and the captive people of God be comforted: the independent state of the captives during the exile and the alleviation of its hardships, were much due to Daniel.

**49. Daniel requested** — Contrast this honorable remembrance of his humble friends in his elevation with the spirit of the children of the world in the chief butler’s case (<sup><0412></sup>Genesis 40:23 <sup><2195></sup>Ecclesiastes 9:15,16 <sup><3165></sup>Amos 6:6).

**in the gate** — the place of holding courts of justice and levees in the East (<sup><1129></sup>Esther 2:19 <sup><3217></sup>Job 29:7). So “the Sublime *Porte*,” or “Gate,” denotes the sultan’s government, his counsels being formerly held in the entrance of his palace. Daniel was a chief counsellor of the king, and president over the governors of the different orders into which the Magi were divided.

# CHAPTER 3

## ☞ DANIEL 3:1-30.

### NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S IDOLATROUS IMAGE; SHADRACH, MESHACH, AND ABED-NEGO ARE DELIVERED FROM THE FURNACE.

Between the vision of Nebuchadnezzar in the second chapter and that of Daniel in the seventh, four narratives of Daniels and his friends' personal history are introduced. As the second and seventh chapters go together, so chapters the third and sixth chapters (the deliverance from the lions' den), and the fourth and fifth chapters. Of these last two pairs, the former shows God's nearness to save His saints when faithful to Him, at the very time they seem to be crushed by the world power. The second pair shows, in the case of the two kings of the first monarchy, how God can suddenly humble the world power in the height of its insolence. The latter advances from mere self-glorification, in the fourth chapter, to open opposition to God in the fifth. Nebuchadnezzar demands homage to be paid to his image (☞ Daniel 3:1-6), and boasts of his power (☞ Daniel 4:1-18). But Belshazzar goes further, blaspheming God by polluting His holy vessels. There is a similar progression in the conduct of God's people. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego refuse *positive* homage to the image of the world power (☞ Daniel 3:12); Daniel will not yield it even a *negative* homage, by omitting for a time the worship of God (☞ Daniel 6:10). Jehovah's power manifested for the saints against the world in individual histories (the third through sixth chapters) is exhibited in the second and seventh chapters, in world-wide prophetic pictures; the former heightening the effect of the latter. The miracles wrought in behalf of Daniel and his friends were a manifestation of God's glory in Daniel's person, as the representative of the theocracy before the Babylonian king, who deemed himself almighty, at a time when God could not manifest it in His people as a body. They tended also to secure, by their impressive character, that respect for the covenant-people on the part of the heathen powers which issued in Cyrus' decree, not only restoring the Jews, but ascribing honor to the God of heaven, and commanding the building of the temple (☞ Ezra 1:1-4) [AUBERLEN].

**1. image** — Nebuchadnezzar's confession of God did not prevent him being a worshipper of idols, besides. Ancient idolaters thought that each

nation had its own gods, and that, in addition to these, foreign gods might be worshipped. The Jewish religion was the only exclusive one that claimed *all* homage for Jehovah as the *only* true God. Men will in times of trouble confess God, if they are allowed to retain their favorite heart-idols. The image was that of Bel, the Babylonian tutelary god; or rather, Nebuchadnezzar *himself* the personification and representative of the Babylonian empire, as suggested to him by the dream (<sup>2023</sup>Daniel 2:38), “*Thou art this head of gold.*” The interval between the dream and the event here was about nineteen years. Nebuchadnezzar had just returned from finishing the Jewish and Syrian wars, the spoils of which would furnish the means of rearing such a colossal statue [PRIDEAUX]. The colossal size makes it likely that the frame was wood, overlaid with gold. The “height,” sixty cubits, is so out of proportion with the “breadth,” exceeding it ten times, that it seems best to suppose the *thickness* from breast to back to be intended, which is exactly the right proportion of a well-formed man [AUGUSTINE, *The City of God*, 15.20]. PRIDEAUX thinks the sixty cubits refer to *the image and pedestal together*, the image being twenty-seven cubits HIGH, or forty feet, the pedestal thirty-three cubits, or fifty feet. HERODOTUS [1.183] confirms this by mentioning a *similar* image, forty feet high, in the temple of Belus at Babylon. It was not the *same* image, for the one here was on the plain of Dura, not in the city.

**2. *princes*** — “satraps” of provinces [GESENIUS].

***captains*** — *rulers*, not exclusively military.

***sheriffs*** — men learned in the law, like the Arab *mufti* [GESENIUS].

**3. *stood before the image*** — in an attitude of devotion. Whatever the king approved of, they all approve of. There is no stability of principle in the ungodly.

**4.** The arguments of the persecutor are in brief, Turn or burn.

**5. *cornet*** — A wind instrument, like the French horn, is meant.

***flute*** — a pipe or pipes, not blown transversely as our “flute,” but by mouthpieces at the end.

***sackbut*** — a triangular stringed instrument, having short strings, the sound being on a high sharp key.

***psaltery*** — a kind of harp.

**dulcimer** — a bagpipe consisting of two pipes, thrust through a leathern bag, emitting a sweet plaintive sound. *Chaldee sumponya*, the modern Italian *zampogna*, Asiatic *zambonja*.

**fall down** — that the recusants might be the more readily detected.

6. No other nation but the Jews would feel this edict oppressive; for it did not prevent them worshipping their own gods *besides*. It was evidently aimed at the Jews by those jealous of their high position in the king's court, who therefore induced the king to pass an edict as to all recusants, representing such refusal of homage as an act of treason to Nebuchadnezzar as civil and religious "head" of the empire. So the edict under Darius (<sup>2016</sup>Daniel 6:7-9) was aimed against the Jews by those jealous of Daniel's influence. The literal image of Nebuchadnezzar is a typical prophecy of "the image of the beast," connected with mystical Babylon, in <sup>6634</sup>Revelation 13:14. The second mystical beast there causeth the earth, and them that dwell therein, to worship the first beast, and that as many as would not, should be killed (<sup>6632</sup>Revelation 13:12,15).

**furnace** — a common mode of punishment in Babylon (<sup>2022</sup>Jeremiah 29:22). It is not necessary to suppose that the furnace was made for the occasion. Compare "brick-kiln," <sup>4023</sup>2 Samuel 12:31. Any furnace for common purposes in the vicinity of Dura would serve. CHARDIN, in his travels (A.D. 1671-1677), mentions that in Persia, to terrify those who took advantage of scarcity to sell provisions at exorbitant prices, the cooks were roasted over a slow fire, and the bakers cast into a burning oven.

7. None of the Jews seem to have been present, except the *officers*, summoned specially.

8. **accused the Jews** — literally, "ate the rent limbs," or flesh of the Jews (compare <sup>8833</sup>Job 31:31 <sup>3940</sup>Psalms 14:4 27:2 <sup>3405</sup>Jeremiah 10:25). Not probably in general, but as <sup>2012</sup>Daniel 3:12 states, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego. Why Daniel was not summoned does not appear. Probably he was in some distant part of the empire on state business, and the general summons (<sup>2012</sup>Daniel 3:2) had not time to reach him before the dedication. Also, the Jews' enemies found it more politic to begin by attacking Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, who were nearer at hand, and had less influence, before they proceeded to attack Daniel.

9. **live for ever** — A preface of flattery is closely akin to the cruelty that follows. So <sup>4042</sup>Acts 24:2,3, etc., Tertullus in accusing Paul before Felix.

12. **serve not thy gods** — not only not the golden image, but also *not any of Nebuchadnezzar's gods*.

**13. *bring*** — Instead of commanding their immediate execution, as in the case of the Magi (<sup><2012></sup>Daniel 2:12), Providence inclined him to command the recusants to be *brought* before him, so that their noble “testimony” for God might be given before the world powers “against them” (<sup><1008></sup>Matthew 10:18), to the edification of the Church in all ages.

**14. *Is it true*** — rather, as the *Margin* [THEODOTON], “Is it *purposely* that?” etc. Compare the *Hebrew*, <sup><0850></sup>Numbers 35:20,22. Notwithstanding his “fury,” his past favor for them disposes him to give them the opportunity of excusing themselves on the ground that their disobedience had not been *intentional*; so he gives them another trial to see whether they would still worship the image.

**15. *who is that God*** — so Sennacherib’s taunt (<sup><1288></sup>2 Kings 18:35), and Pharaoh’s (<sup><0182></sup>Exodus 5:2).

**16. *not careful to answer thee*** — rather, “We have *no need* to answer thee”; thou art determined on thy side, and our mind is made up not to worship the image: there is therefore no use in our arguing as if we could be shaken from our principles. Hesitation, or parleying with sin, is fatal; unhesitating decision is the only safety, where the path of duty is clear (<sup><1009></sup>Matthew 10:19,28).

**17. *If it be so*** — VATABLUS translates, “Assuredly.” *English Version* agrees better with the original. The sense is, *If it be* our lot to be cast into the furnace, *our God* (quoted from <sup><0808></sup>Deuteronomy 6:4) is able to deliver us (a reply to Nebuchadnezzar’s challenge, “Who is that God that shall deliver you?”); and He will deliver us (either *from* death, or *in* death, <sup><5047></sup>2 Timothy 4:17,18). He will, *we trust*, literally deliver us, but certainly He will do so spiritually.

**18. *But if not***, etc. — connected with <sup><2088></sup>Daniel 3:18. “Whether our God deliver us, as He is able, or do not, we will not serve thy gods.” Their service of God is not mercenary in its motive. Though He slay them, they will still trust in Him (<sup><0835></sup>Job 13:15). Their deliverance from sinful compliance was as great a miracle in the kingdom of grace, as that from the furnace was in the kingdom of nature. Their youth, and position as captives and friendless exiles, before the absolute world potentate and the horrid death awaiting them if they should persevere in their faith, all enhance the grace of God, which carried them through such an ordeal.

**19. *visage ... changed*** — He had shown forbearance (<sup><2084></sup>Daniel 3:14,15) as a favor to them, but now that they despise even his forbearance, anger “fills” him, and is betrayed in his whole countenance.

**seven times more than it was wont** — literally, “than it was (ever) *seen* to be heated.” *Seven* is the perfect number; that is, it was made *as hot as possible*. Passion overdoes and defeats its own end, for the hotter the fire, the sooner were they likely to be put out of pain.

**21. coats ... hosen ... hats** — HERODOTUS [1.195] says that the Babylonian costume consisted of three parts:

- (1) wide, long pantaloons;
- (2) a woollen *shirt*;
- (3) an outer *mantle* with a girdle round it.

So these are specified [GESENIUS], “their pantaloons, inner tunics (*hosen*, or stockings, are not commonly worn in the East), and outer mantles.” Their being cast in so hurriedly, with all their garments on, enhanced the miracle in that not even the smell of fire passed on their clothes, though of delicate, inflammable material.

**22. flame ... slew those men** — (<sup>2024</sup>Daniel 6:24 <sup>406</sup>Psalms 7:16).

**23. fell down** — not *cast down*; for those who brought the three youths to the furnace, perished by the flames themselves, and so could not *cast* them in. Here follows an addition in the *Septuagint*, *Syrian*, *Arabic*, and *Vulgate versions*. “The Prayer of Azarias,” and “The Song of the Three Holy Children.” It is not in the *Chaldee*. The hymn was sung throughout the whole Church in their liturgies, from the earliest times [RUFINUS in *Commentary on the Apostles Creed*, and ATHANASIUS]. The “astonishment” of Nebuchadnezzar in <sup>2024</sup>Daniel 3:24 is made an argument for its genuineness, as if it explained the cause of his astonishment, namely, “they walked in the midst of the fire praising God, but the angel of the Lord came down into the oven” (<sup>2026</sup>Daniel 3:1 and <sup>2027</sup>Daniel 3:27 of the Apocryphal addition). But <sup>2025</sup>Daniel 3:25 of *English Version* explains his astonishment, without need of any addition.

**24. True, O king** — God extorted this confession from His enemies’ own mouths.

**25. four** — whereas but three had been cast in.

**loose** — whereas they had been cast in “bound.” Nebuchadnezzar’s question, in <sup>2024</sup>Daniel 3:24, is as if he can scarcely trust his own memory as to a fact so recent, now that he sees through an aperture in the furnace what seems to contradict it.

**walking in ... midst of ... fire** — image of the godly unhurt, and at large (<sup><4088></sup>John 8:36), “in the midst of trouble” (<sup><4507></sup>Psalms 138:7; compare <sup><4278></sup>Psalms 23:3,4). They walked up and down in the fire, not leaving it, but waiting for God’s time to bring them out, just as Jesus waited in the tomb as God’s prisoner, till God should let Him out (<sup><4426></sup>Acts 2:26,27). So Paul (<sup><4718></sup>2 Corinthians 12:8,9). So Noah waited in the ark, after the flood, till God brought him forth (<sup><4082></sup>Genesis 8:12-18).

**like the Son of God** — Unconsciously, like Saul, Caiaphas (<sup><6149></sup>John 11:49-52), and Pilate, he is made to utter divine truths. “Son of God” in *his* mouth means only an “angel” from heaven, as <sup><2733></sup>Daniel 3:28 proves. Compare <sup><4003></sup>Job 1:6 38:7 <sup><3807></sup>Psalms 34:7,8; and the probably heathen centurion’s exclamation (<sup><4075></sup>Matthew 27:54). The Chaldeans believed in *families* of gods: Bel, the supreme god, accompanied by the goddess Mylitta, being the father of the gods; thus the expression *he* meant: *one sprung from and sent by the gods*. Really it was the “messenger of the covenant,” who herein gave a prelude to His incarnation.

**26. the most high God** — He acknowledges Jehovah to be supreme above other gods (not that he ceased to believe in these); so he returns to his original confession, “your God is a God of gods” (<sup><2747></sup>Daniel 2:47), from which he had swerved in the interim, perhaps intoxicated by his success in taking Jerusalem, whose God he therefore thought unable to defend it.

**27. nor ... an hair** — (<sup><4217></sup>Luke 12:7 21:18).

**fire had no power** — fulfilling <sup><2347></sup>Isaiah 43:2; compare <sup><3813></sup>Hebrews 11:34. God alone is a “consuming fire” (<sup><3829></sup>Hebrews 12:29).

**nor ... smell of fire** — compare spiritually, <sup><3152></sup>1 Thessalonians 5:22.

**28.** In giving some better traits in Nebuchadnezzar’s character, Daniel agrees with <sup><2491></sup>Jeremiah 39:11 42:12.

**changed the king’s word** — have made the king’s attempt to coerce into obedience vain. Have set aside his word (so “alter ... word,” <sup><4561></sup>Ezra 6:11) from regard to God. Nebuchadnezzar now admits that God’s law should be obeyed, rather than his (<sup><4459></sup>Acts 5:29).

**yielded ... bodies** — namely, to the fire.

**not serve** — by sacrificing.

**nor worship** — by prostration of the body. Decision for God at last gains the respect even of the worldly (<sup><2167></sup>Proverbs 16:7).

**29.** This decree promulgated throughout the vast empire of Nebuchadnezzar must have tended much to keep the Jews from idolatry in the captivity and thenceforth (~~Psalm~~ Psalm 76:10).

# CHAPTER 4

## DANIEL 4:1-37.

### EDICT OF NEBUCHADNEZZAR CONTAINING HIS SECOND DREAM, RELATING TO HIMSELF.

Punished with insanity for his haughtiness, he sinks to the level of the beasts (illustrating <sup><2089></sup>Psalm 49:6,12). The opposition between bestial and human life, set forth here, is a key to interpret the symbolism in the seventh chapter concerning the beasts and the Son of man. After his conquests, and his building in fifteen days a new palace, according to the heathen historian, ABYDENUS (268 B.C), whose account confirms Daniel, he ascended upon his palace roof (<sup><2089></sup>Daniel 4:29, *Margin*), whence he could see the surrounding city which he had built, and seized by some deity, he predicted the Persian conquest of Babylon, adding a prayer that the Persian leader might on his return be borne where there is no path of men, and where the wild beasts graze (*language* evidently derived by tradition from <sup><2089></sup>Daniel 4:32,33, though the *application* is different). In his insanity, his excited mind would naturally think of the coming conquest of Babylon by the Medo-Persians, already foretold to him in the second chapter.

1. **Peace** — the usual salutation in the East, *shalom*, whence “salaam.” The primitive revelation of the fall, and man’s alienation from God, made “peace” to be felt as the first and deepest want of man. The Orientals (as the East was the cradle of revelation) retained the word by tradition.

2. ***I thought it good*** — “It was seemly before me” (<sup><194702></sup>Psalm 107:2-8).

***signs*** — tokens significant of God’s omnipotent agency. The *plural* is used, as it comprises the marvellous dream, the marvellous interpretation of it, and its marvellous issue.

4. ***I was ... at rest*** — my wars over, my kingdom at peace.

***flourishing*** — “green.” Image from a tree (<sup><241708></sup>Jeremiah 17:8). Prosperous (<sup><18152></sup>Job 15:32).

6. It may seem strange that Daniel was not first summoned. But it was ordered by God’s providence that he should be reserved to the last, in order that all mere human means should be proved vain, before God manifested

His power through His servant; thus the haughty king was stripped of all fleshly confidences. The Chaldees were the king's recognized interpreters of dreams; whereas Daniel's interpretation of the one in <sup><2728></sup>Daniel 2:24-45 had been a peculiar case, and very many years before; nor had he been consulted on such matters since.

**8. *Beltshazzar*** — called so from the god Bel or Belus (see on <sup><2009></sup>Daniel 1:7).

**9. *spirit of the holy gods*** — Nebuchadnezzar speaks as a heathen, who yet has imbibed some notions of the true God. Hence he speaks of "gods" in the *plural* but gives the epithet "holy," which applies to Jehovah alone, the heathen gods making no pretension to purity, even in the opinion of their votaries (<sup><1824></sup>Deuteronomy 32:31; compare <sup><2581></sup>Isaiah 63:11). "I know" refers to his knowledge of Daniel's skill many years before (<sup><2718></sup>Daniel 2:8); hence he calls him "master of the magicians."

***troubleth*** — gives thee difficulty in explaining it.

**10. *tree*** — So the Assyrian is compared to a "cedar" (<sup><2518></sup>Ezekiel 31:3; compare <sup><2572></sup>Ezekiel 17:24).

***in the midst of the earth*** — denoting its conspicuous position as the center whence the imperial authority radiated in all directions.

**12. *beasts ... shadow under it*** — implying that God's purpose in establishing empires in the world is that they may be as trees affording men "fruits" for "meat," and a "shadow" for "rest" (compare <sup><2019></sup>Lamentations 4:20). But the world powers abuse their trust for self; therefore Messiah comes to plant the tree of His gospel kingdom, which alone shall realize God's purpose (<sup><2573></sup>Ezekiel 17:23 <sup><4032></sup>Matthew 13:32). HERODOTUS [7.19] mentions a dream (probably suggested by the tradition of this dream of Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel) which Xerxes had; namely, that he was crowned with olive, and that the branches of the olive filled the whole earth, but that afterwards the crown vanished from his head: signifying his universal dominion soon to come to an end.

**13. *watcher and an holy one*** — rather, "even an holy one." Only *one* angel is intended, and he not one of the bad, but of the *holy* angels. Called a "watcher," because ever on the watch to execute God's will [JEROME], (<sup><1933></sup>Psalm 103:20,21). Compare as to their watchfulness, <sup><6048></sup>Revelation 4:8, "*full of eyes within ... they rest not day and night.*" Also they watch good men committed to their charge (<sup><2517></sup>Psalm 34:7 <sup><2011></sup>Hebrews 1:14); and watch over the evil to record their sins, and at God's bidding at last punish them (<sup><2016></sup>Jeremiah 4:16,17), "watchers" applied to *human* instruments of

God's vengeance. As to GOD (<sup>2704</sup>Daniel 9:14 <sup>8072</sup>Job 7:12 14:16 <sup>2447</sup>Jeremiah 44:27). In a good sense (<sup>0349</sup>Genesis 31:49 <sup>2628</sup>Jeremiah 31:28). The idea of heavenly "watchers" under the supreme God (called in the *Zendavesta* of the Persian Zoroaster, *Ormuzd*) was founded on the primeval revelation as to evil angels having *watched* for an opportunity until they succeeded in tempting man to his ruin, and good angels ministering to God's servants (as Jacob, <sup>0285</sup>Genesis 28:15 32:1,2). Compare the watching over Abraham for good, and over Sodom for wrath after long watching in vain for good men it it, for whose sake He would spare it, <sup>0182</sup>Genesis 18:23-33; and over Lot for good, <sup>0101</sup>Genesis 19:1-38 Daniel fitly puts in Nebuchadnezzar's mouth the expression, though not found elsewhere in Scripture, yet substantially sanctioned by it (<sup>4469</sup>2 Chronicles 16:9 <sup>0158</sup>Proverbs 15:3 <sup>2629</sup>Jeremiah 32:19), and natural to him according to Oriental modes of thought.

**14. *Hew down*** — (<sup>0181</sup>Matthew 3:10 <sup>0237</sup>Luke 13:7). The holy (<sup>6014</sup>Jude 1:14) one incites his fellow angels to God's appointed work (compare <sup>6445</sup>Revelation 14:15,18).

***beasts get away from under it*** — It shall no longer afford them shelter (<sup>2312</sup>Ezekiel 31:12).

**15. *stump*** — The kingdom is still reserved secure for him at last, as a tree stump secured by a hoop of brass and iron from being split by the sun's heat, in the hope of its growing again (<sup>2311</sup>Isaiah 11:1; compare <sup>8347</sup>Job 14:7-9). BARNES refers it to the chaining of the royal maniac.

**16. *heart*** — understanding (<sup>2760</sup>Isaiah 6:10).

***times*** — that is, "years" (<sup>2717</sup>Daniel 12:7). "Seven" is the perfect number: a week of years: a complete revolution of time accompanying a complete revolution in his state of mind.

**17. *demand*** — that is, determination; namely, as to the change to which Nebuchadnezzar is to be doomed. A solemn council of the heavenly ones is supposed (compare <sup>8306</sup>Job 1:6 2:1), over which God presides supreme. His "decree" and "word" are therefore said to be theirs (compare <sup>2703</sup>Daniel 4:24, "decree of the Most High"); "the decree of the watchers," "the word of the holy ones." For He has placed particular kingdoms under the administration of angelic beings, subject to Him (<sup>2703</sup>Daniel 10:13,20 12:1). The word "demand," in the second clause, expresses a distinct idea from the first clause. Not only as members of God's council (<sup>2701</sup>Daniel 7:10 <sup>1229</sup>1 Kings 22:19 <sup>4932</sup>Psalms 103:21 <sup>8301</sup>Zechariah 1:10) do they subscribe to His "decree," but that decree is in answer to their prayers, wherein they *demand* that every mortal who tries to obscure the glory of God shall be humbled

[CALVIN]. Angels are grieved when God's prerogative is in the least infringed. How awful to Nebuchadnezzar to know that angels plead against him for his pride, and that the decree has been passed in the high court of heaven for his humiliation in answer to angels' *demands!* The conceptions are moulded in a form peculiarly adapted to Nebuchadnezzar's modes of thought.

***the living*** — not as distinguished from the dead, but from the inhabitants of heaven, who “know” that which the men of the world need to be taught (<sup><39B></sup>Psalm 9:16); the ungodly confess there is a God, but would gladly confine Him to heaven. But, saith Daniel, God ruleth not merely there, but “in the kingdom of men.”

***basest*** — the lowest in condition (<sup><40B></sup>1 Samuel 2:8 <sup><40C></sup>Luke 1:52). It is not one's talents, excellency, or noble birth, but God's will, which elevates to the throne. Nebuchadnezzar abased to the dunghill, and then restored, was to have in himself an experimental proof of this (<sup><20B></sup>Daniel 4:37).

**19. Daniel ... Belteshazzar** — The use of the *Hebrew* as well as the *Chaldee* name, so far from being an objection, as some have made it, is an undesigned mark of genuineness. In a proclamation to “*all people,*” and one designed to honor the God of the Hebrews, Nebuchadnezzar would naturally use the *Hebrew* name (derived from *El*, “God,” the name by which the prophet was best known among his countrymen), as well as the Gentile name by which he was known in the Chaldean empire.

***astonied*** — overwhelmed with awe at the terrible import of the dream.

***one hour*** — the original means often “a moment,” or “short time,” as in <sup><20B></sup>Daniel 3:6,15.

***let not the dream ... trouble thee*** — Many despots would have punished a prophet who dared to foretell his overthrow. Nebuchadnezzar assures Daniel he may freely speak out.

***the dream be to them that hate thee*** — We are to desire the prosperity of those under whose authority God's providence has placed us (<sup><20B></sup>Jeremiah 29:7). The wish here is not so much against others, as for the king: a common formula (<sup><40B></sup>2 Samuel 18:32). It is not the language of uncharitable hatred.

**20.** The *tree* is the king. The *branches*, the princes. The *leaves*, the soldiers. The *fruits*, the revenues. The *shadow*, the protection afforded to dependent states.

**22. *It is thou*** — He speaks pointedly, and without circumlocution (<sup><000></sup>2 Samuel 12:7). While pitying the king, he uncompromisingly pronounces his sentence of punishment. Let ministers steer the mean between, on the one hand, fulminations against sinners under the pretext of zeal, without any symptom of compassion; and, on the other, flattery of sinners under the pretext of moderation.

***to the end of the earth*** — (<sup><276></sup>Jeremiah 27:6:8). To the Caspian, Euxine, and Atlantic seas.

**24. *decree of the Most High*** — What was termed in <sup><2017></sup>Daniel 4:17 by Nebuchadnezzar, “the decree *of the watchers*,” is here more accurately termed by Daniel, “the decree *of the Most High*.” They are but His ministers.

**25. *they shall drive thee*** — a *Chaldee* idiom for “thou shalt be driven.” Hypochondriacal madness was his malady, which “drove” him under the fancy that he was a beast, to “dwell with the beasts”; <sup><2068></sup>Daniel 4:34 proves this, “mine understanding returned.” The regency would leave him to roam in the large beast-abounding parks attached to the palace.

***eat grass*** — that is, vegetables, or herbs in general (<sup><0088></sup>Genesis 3:18).

***they shall wet thee*** — that is, thou shalt be wet.

***till thou know***, etc. — (<sup><8817></sup>Psalms 83:17,18 <sup><276></sup>Jeremiah 27:5).

**26. *thou shalt have known***, etc. — a promise of spiritual grace to him, causing the judgment to humble, not harden, his heart.

***heavens do rule*** — The plural is used, as addressed to Nebuchadnezzar, the head of an organized earthly kingdom, with various principalities under the supreme ruler. So “the kingdom of heaven” (<sup><0117></sup>Matthew 4:17; *Greek*, “kingdom of the *heavens*”) is a *manifold* organization, composed of various orders of angels, under the Most High (<sup><0121></sup>Ephesians 1:20,21 <sup><310></sup>3:10 <sup><0116></sup>Colossians 1:16).

**27. *break off*** — as a galling yoke (<sup><0240></sup>Genesis 27:40); sin is a heavy load (<sup><0128></sup>Matthew 11:28). The *Septuagint* and *Vulgate* translate not so well, “redeem,” which is made an argument for Rome’s doctrine of the expiation of sins by meritorious works. Even translate it so, it can only mean; Repent and show the reality of thy repentance by works of justice and charity (compare <sup><2141></sup>Luke 11:41); so God will remit thy punishment. The trouble will be longer before it comes, or shorter when it does come. Compare the cases of Hezekiah, <sup><2301></sup>Isaiah 38:1-5; Nineveh, Jon 3:5-10 <sup><2187></sup>Jeremiah 18:7,8. The change is not in God, but in the sinner who repents. As the king

who had provoked God's judgments by sin, so he might avert it by a return to righteousness (compare <sup><490E></sup>Psalm 41:1,2 <sup><44E2></sup>Acts 8:22). Probably, like most Oriental despots, Nebuchadnezzar had oppressed the poor by forcing them to labor in his great public works without adequate remuneration.

*if ... lengthening of ... tranquillity* — if haply thy present prosperity shall be prolonged.

**29. twelve months** — This respite was granted to him to leave him without excuse. So the hundred twenty years granted before the flood (<sup><00E></sup>Genesis 6:3). At the first announcement of the coming judgment he was alarmed, as Ahab (<sup><127></sup>1 Kings 21:27), but did not thoroughly repent; so when judgment was not executed at once, he thought it would never come, and so returned to his former pride (<sup><08E></sup>Ecclesiastes 8:11).

*in the palace* — rather, upon the (flat) palace roof, whence he could contemplate the splendor of Babylon. So the heathen historian, ABYDENUS, records. The palace roof was the scene of the fall of another king (<sup><11E2></sup>Samuel 11:2). The outer wall of Nebuchadnezzar's new palace embraced six miles; there were two other embattled walls within, and a great tower, and three brazen gates.

**30. Babylon, that I have built** — HERODOTUS ascribes the building of Babylon to Semiramis and Nitocris, his informant under the *Persian* dynasty giving him the Assyrian and Persian account. Berosus and ABYDENUS give the *Babylonian* account, namely, that Nebuchadnezzar added much to the old city, built a splendid palace and city walls. HERODOTUS, the so-called "father of history," does not even mention Nebuchadnezzar. (Nitocris, to whom he attributes the beautifying of Babylon, seems to have been Nebuchadnezzar's wife). Hence infidels have doubted the Scripture account. But the latter is proved by thousands of bricks on the plain, the inscriptions of which have been deciphered, each marked "Nebuchadnezzar, the son of Nabopolassar." "Built," that is, restored and enlarged (<sup><40E2></sup>2 Chronicles 11:5,6). It is curious, all the bricks have been found with the stamped face downwards. Scarcely a figure in stone, or tablet, has been dug out of the rubbish heaps of Babylon, whereas Nineveh abounds in them; fulfilling <sup><51E7></sup>Jeremiah 51:37, "Babylon shall become *heaps*." The "*I*" is emphatic, by which he puts himself in the place of God; so the "my ... my." He impiously opposes *his* might to God's, as though God's threat, uttered a year before, could never come to pass. He would be more than man; God, therefore, justly, makes him less than man. An acting over again of the fall; Adam, once lord of the world and the very beasts (<sup><00E3></sup>Genesis 1:28; so Nebuchadnezzar <sup><02E3></sup>Daniel 2:38), would be a god (<sup><00E5></sup>Genesis 3:5); therefore he must die like the beasts (<sup><40E6></sup>Psalm 82:6

49:12). The second Adam restores the forfeited inheritance (<sup><3904></sup>Psalm 8:4-8).

**31. *While***, etc. — in the very act of speaking, so that there could be no doubt as to the connection between the crime and the punishment. So <sup><2129></sup>Luke 12:19,20.

***O king ... to thee it is spoken*** — Notwithstanding thy *kingly* power, to thee thy doom *is* now *spoken*, there is to be no further respite.

**33. *driven from men*** — as a maniac fancying himself a wild beast. It is possible, a conspiracy of his nobles may have co-operated towards his having been “driven” forth as an outcast.

***hairs ... eagles’ feathers*** — matted together, as the hair-like, thick plumage of the ossifraga eagle. The “nails,” by being left uncut for years, would become like “claws.”

**34. *lifted up mine eyes unto heaven*** — whence the “voice” had issued (<sup><2061></sup>Daniel 4:31) at the beginning of his visitation. Sudden mental derangement often has the effect of annihilating the whole interval, so that, when reason returns, the patient remembers only the event that immediately preceded his insanity. Nebuchadnezzar’s looking up towards heaven was the first symptom of his “understanding” having “returned.” Before, like the beasts, his eyes had been downward to the earth. Now, like Jonah’s (Jon 2:1,2,4) out of the fish’s belly, they are lifted up to heaven in prayer. He turns to Him that smiteth him (<sup><2193></sup>Isaiah 9:13), with the faint glimmer of reason left to him, and owns God’s justice in punishing him.

***praised ... him*** — Praise is a sure sign of a soul spiritually healed (<sup><3362></sup>Psalm 116:12,14 <sup><4165></sup>Mark 5:15,18,19).

***I ... honored him*** — implying that the cause of his chastisement was that he had before robbed God of His honor.

***everlasting dominion*** — not temporary or mutable, as a human king’s dominion.

**35. *all ... as nothing*** — (<sup><2405></sup>Isaiah 40:15,17).

***according to his will in ... heaven*** — (<sup><3931></sup>Psalm 115:3 135:6 <sup><4160></sup>Matthew 6:10 <sup><4011></sup>Ephesians 1:11).

***army*** — the heavenly hosts, angels and starry orbs (compare <sup><2321></sup>Isaiah 24:21).

**none ... stay his hand** — literally, “strike His hand.” Image from striking the hand of another, to check him in doing anything (<sup><3813></sup>Isaiah 43:13 45:9).

**What doest thou** — (<sup><3812></sup>Job 9:12 <sup><3120></sup>Romans 9:20).

**36.** An inscription in the East India Company’s Museum is read as describing the period of Nebuchadnezzar’s insanity [G. V. SMITH]. In the so-called standard inscription read by SIR H. RAWLINSON, Nebuchadnezzar relates that during four (?) years he ceased to lay out buildings, or to furnish with victims Merodach’s altar, or to clear out the canals for irrigation. No other instance in the cuneiform inscriptions occurs of a king recording his own inaction.

**my counsellors ... sought unto me** — desired to have me, as formerly, to be their head, wearied with the anarchy which prevailed in my absence (compare *Note*, see on <sup><2033></sup>Daniel 4:33); the likelihood of a conspiracy of the nobles is confirmed by this verse.

**majesty was added** — My authority was greater than ever before (<sup><3812></sup>Job 42:12 <sup><1214></sup>Proverbs 22:4; “added,” <sup><4163></sup>Matthew 6:33).

**37. praise ... extol ... honor** — He heaps word on word, as if he cannot say enough in praise of God.

**all whose works ... truth ... judgment** — that is, are true and just (<sup><6153></sup>Revelation 15:3 16:7). God has not dealt unjustly or too severely with me; whatever I have suffered, I deserved it all. It is a mark of true contrition to condemn one’s self, and justify God (<sup><3514></sup>Psalms 51:4).

**those that walk in pride ... abase** — exemplified in me. He condemns himself before the whole world, in order to glorify God.

# CHAPTER 5

## ◀<sup>200E</sup>DANIEL 5:1-31.

### BELSHAZZAR'S IMPIOUS FEAST; THE HANDWRITING ON THE WALL INTERPRETED BY DANIEL OF THE DOOM OF BABYLON AND ITS KING.

1. *Belshazzar* — RAWLINSON, from the Assyrian inscriptions, has explained the seeming discrepancy between Daniel and the heathen historians of Babylon, BEROSUS and ABYDENUS, who say the last king (Nabonidus) surrendered in Borsippa, after Babylon was taken, and had an honorable abode in Caramania assigned to him. *Belshazzar was joint king with his father* (called *Minus* in the inscriptions), *but subordinate to him*; hence the *Babylonian* account suppresses the facts which cast discredit on Babylon, namely, that Belshazzar shut himself up in that city and fell at its capture; while it records the surrender of the principal king in Borsippa (see my *Introduction to Daniel*). The heathen XENOPHON'S description of Belshazzar accords with Daniel's; he calls him "impious," and illustrates his cruelty by mentioning that he killed one of his nobles, merely because, in hunting, the noble struck down the game before him; and unmanned a courtier, Gadates, at a banquet, because one of the king's concubines praised him as handsome. Daniel shows none of the sympathy for him which he had for Nebuchadnezzar. XENOPHON confirms Daniel as to Belshazzar's end. WINER explains the "shazzar" in the name as meaning "fire."

*made ... feast* — heaven-sent infatuation when his city was at the time being besieged by Cyrus. The fortifications and abundant provisions in the city made the king despise the besiegers. It was a festival day among the Babylonians [XENOPHON].

*drank ... before the thousand* — The king, on this extraordinary occasion, departed from his usual way of feasting apart from his nobles (compare <sup>◀<sup>200B</sup></sup>Esther 1:3).

2. *whiles he tasted the wine* — While under the effects of wine, men will do what they dare not do when sober.

*his father Nebuchadnezzar* — that is, his forefather. So "Jesus ... the son of David, the son of Abraham" (<sup>◀<sup>200C</sup></sup>Matthew 1:1). Daniel does not say that

the other kings mentioned in other writers did not reign between Belshazzar and Nebuchadnezzar, namely, Evil-merodach (<sup><2623></sup>Jeremiah 52:31), Neriglissar, his brother-in-law, and Laborasoarchod (nine months). Berosus makes Nabonidus, the last king, to have been *one of the people*, raised to the throne by an insurrection. As the inscriptions show that Belshazzar was distinct from, and joint king with, him, this is not at variance with Daniel, whose statement that Belshazzar was *son* (grandson) of *Nebuchadnezzar* is corroborated by Jeremiah (<sup><2707></sup>Jeremiah 27:7). Their joint, yet independent, testimony, as contemporaries, and having the best means of information, is more trustworthy than any of the heathen historians, if there were a discrepancy. Evil-merodach, son of Nebuchadnezzar (according to Berosus), reigned but a short time (one or two years), having, in consequence of his bad government, been dethroned by a plot of Neriglissar, his sister's husband; hence Daniel does not mention him. At the elevation of Nabonidus as supreme king, Belshazzar, the grandson of Nebuchadnezzar, was doubtless suffered to be subordinate king and successor, in order to conciliate the legitimate party. Thus the seeming discrepancy becomes a confirmation of genuineness when cleared up, for the real harmony must have been undesigned.

**wives ... concubines** — not usually present at feasts in the East, where women of the harem are kept in strict seclusion. Hence Vashti's refusal to appear at Ahasuerus' feast (<sup><2709></sup>Esther 1:9-12). But the Babylonian court, in its Reckless excesses, seems not to have been so strict as the Persian. Xenophon [*Cyropaedia*, 5.2,28] confirms Daniel, representing a feast of Belshazzar where the concubines are present. At the beginning "the lords" (<sup><2708></sup>Daniel 5:1), for whom the feast was made, alone seem to have been present; but as the revelry advanced, the women were introduced. Two classes of them are mentioned, those to whom belonged the privileges of "wives," and those strictly concubines (<sup><3063></sup>2 Samuel 5:13 <sup><3118></sup>1 Kings 11:3 <sup><2708></sup>Song of Solomon 6:8).

3. This act was not one of necessity, or for honor's sake, but in reckless profanity.

4. **praised** — sang and shouted praises to "gods," which being of gold, "are their own witnesses" (<sup><2349></sup>Isaiah 44:9), confuting the folly of those who fancy such to be gods.

5. **In the same hour** — that the cause of God's visitation might be palpable, namely, the profanation of His vessels and His holy name.

**fingers of ... hand** — God admonishes him, not by a dream (as Nebuchadnezzar had been warned), or by a voice, but by "fingers coming forth," the invisibility of Him who moved them heightening the awful

impressiveness of the scene, the hand of the Unseen One attesting his doom before the eyes of himself and his guilty fellow revellers.

**against the candlestick** — the candelabra; where the mystic characters would be best seen. BARNES makes it the candlestick taken from the temple of Jerusalem, the nearness of the writing to it intimating that the rebuke was directed against the sacrilege.

**upon the plaster of the wall of the king's palace** — Written in cuneiform letters on slabs on the walls, and on the very bricks, are found the perpetually recurring recital of titles, victories, and exploits, to remind the spectator at every point of the regal greatness. It is significant, that on the same wall on which the king was accustomed to read the flattering legends of his own magnificence, he beholds the mysterious inscription which foretells his fall (compare <sup><31638></sup>Proverbs 16:18 <sup><44221></sup>Acts 12:21-23).

**part of the hand** — the anterior part, namely, the fingers.

**6. countenance** — literally, “brightness,” that is, his bright look.

**joints of his loins** — “the vertebrae of his back” [GESENIUS].

**7.** He calls for the magicians, who more than once had been detected in imposture. He neglects God, and Daniel, whose fame as an interpreter was then well-established. The world wishes to be deceived and shuts its eyes against the light [CALVIN]. The Hebrews think the words were *Chaldee*, but in the old *Hebrew* character (like that now in the Samaritan Pentateuch).

**third ruler** — The first place was given to the king; the second, to the son of the king, or of the queen; the third, to the chief of the satraps.

**8.** The words were in such a character as to be illegible to the Chaldees, God reserving this honor to Daniel.

**10. queen** — the queen mother, or *grandmother*, Nitocris, had not been present till now. She was wife either of Nebuchadnezzar or of Evil merodach; hence her acquaintance with the services of Daniel. She completed the great works which the former had begun. Hence HERODOTUS attributes them to her alone. This accounts for the deference paid to her by Belshazzar. (See on <sup><2048></sup>Daniel 4:36). Compare similar rank given to the queen mother among the Hebrews (<sup><41533></sup>1 Kings 15:13).

**11. spirit of the holy gods** — She remembers and repeats Nebuchadnezzar's language (<sup><2048></sup>Daniel 4:8,9,18). As Daniel was probably, according to Oriental custom, deprived of the office to which Nebuchadnezzar had promoted him, as “master of the magicians”

(<sup>2049</sup>Daniel 4:9), at the king's death, Belshazzar might easily be ignorant of his services.

*the king ... thy father the king ... thy father* — The repetition marks with emphatic gravity both the excellencies of Daniel, and the fact that Nebuchadnezzar, whom Belshazzar is bound to reverence as his father, had sought counsel from him in similar circumstances.

**13. *the captivity of Judah*** — the captive Jews residing in Babylon.

**17.** Not inconsistent with (<sup>2153</sup>Daniel 5:29). For here he declares his interpretation of the words is not from the *desire* of reward. The honors in (<sup>2153</sup>Daniel 5:29) were doubtless *urged* on him, without his wish, in such a way that he could not with propriety refuse them. Had he refused them after announcing the doom of the kingdom, he might have been suspected of cowardice or treason.

**18. *God gave*** — It was not his own birth or talents which gave him the vast empire, as he thought. To make him unlearn his proud thought was the object of God's visitation on him.

*majesty* — in the eyes of his subjects.

*glory* — from his victories.

*honor* — from the enlargement and decoration of the city.

**19.** A purely absolute monarchy (<sup>2207</sup>Jeremiah 27:7).

**21. *heart was made like ... beasts*** — literally, "he made his heart like the beasts," that is, he desired to dwell with them.

**22.** Thou hast erred not through ignorance, but through deliberate contempt of God, notwithstanding that thou hadst before thine eyes the striking warning given in thy grandfather's case.

**23. *whose are all thy ways*** — (<sup>2413</sup>Jeremiah 10:23).

**24. *Then*** — When thou liftedst up thyself against the Lord.

*the part of the hand* — the fore part, the fingers.

*was ... sent from him* — that is, from God.

**25. *Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin*** — literally, "numbered, weighed, and dividers."

**26.** God hath fixed the number of years of thine empire, and that number is now complete.

**27. weighed in the balances** — The Egyptians thought that Osiris weighed the actions of the dead in a literal balance. The Babylonians may have had the same notion, which would give a peculiar appropriateness to the image here used.

**found wanting** — too light before God, the weigher of actions (<sup>(408B1)</sup> Samuel 2:3 <sup>(408B)</sup> Psalm 62:9). Like spurious gold or silver (<sup>(408B)</sup> Jeremiah 6:30).

**28. Peres** — the explanation of “dividers” (<sup>(2165)</sup> Daniel 5:25), the *active participle plural* there being used for the *passive participle singular*, “dividers” for “divided.” The word “Peres” alludes to the similar word “Persia.”

**divided** — namely, among the Medes and Persians [MAURER]; or, “severed” from thee [GROTIUS].

**29. Belshazzar ... clothed Daniel with scarlet** — To come from the presence of a prince in a dress presented to the wearer as a distinction is still held a great honor in the East. Daniel was thus restored to a similar rank to what he had held under Nebuchadnezzar (<sup>(216B)</sup> Daniel 2:48). Godly fidelity which might be expected to bring down vengeance, as in this case, is often rewarded even in this life. The king, having promised, was ashamed before his courtiers to break his word. He perhaps also affected to despise the prophecy of his doom, as an idle threat. As to Daniel’s reasons for now accepting what at first he had declined, compare *Note*, see on <sup>(2167)</sup> Daniel 5:17. The insignia of honor would be witnesses for God’s glory to the world of his having by God’s aid interpreted the mystic characters. The *cause* of his elevation too would secure the favor of the new dynasty (<sup>(216E)</sup> Daniel 6:2) for both himself and his captive countrymen. As the capture of the city by Cyrus was not till near daylight, there was no want of *time* in that eventful night for accomplishing all that is here recorded. The capture of the city so immediately after the prophecy of it (following Belshazzar’s sacrilege), marked most emphatically to the whole world the connection between Babylon’s sin and its punishment.

**30. HERODOTUS and XENOPHON** confirm Daniel as to the *suddenness* of the event. Cyrus diverted the Euphrates into a new channel and, guided by two deserters, marched by the dry bed into the city, while the Babylonians were carousing at an annual feast to the gods. See also <sup>(216F)</sup> Isaiah 21:5 44:27 <sup>(408B)</sup> Jeremiah 50:38,39 51:36. As to Belshazzar’s being slain, compare <sup>(214E)</sup> Isaiah 14:18-20 21:2-9 <sup>(408B)</sup> Jeremiah 50:29-35 51:57.

**31. Darius the Median** — that is Cyaxares II, the son and successor of Astyages, 569-536 B.C. Though Koresh, or Cyrus, was leader of the assault, yet all was done in the name of Darius; therefore, he alone is

mentioned here; but <sup><21038</sup>Daniel 6:28 shows Daniel was not ignorant of Cyrus' share in the capture of Babylon. <sup><23137</sup>Isaiah 13:17 21:2, confirm Daniel in making the *Medes* the leading nation in destroying Babylon. So also <sup><25111</sup>Jeremiah 51:11,28. HERODOTUS, on the other hand, omits mentioning Darius, as that king, being weak and sensual, gave up all the authority to his energetic nephew, Cyrus [XENOPHON, *Cyropaedia*, 1.5; 8.7].

***threescore and two years old*** — This agrees with XENOPHON [*Cyropaedia*, 8.5,19], as to Cyaxares II.

# CHAPTER 6

## ~~2761E~~ DANIEL 6:1-28.

### DARIUS' DECREE: DANIEL'S DISOBEDIENCE, AND CONSEQUENT EXPOSURE TO THE LION'S: HIS DELIVERANCE BY GOD, AND DARIUS' DECREE.

1. **Darius** — GROTEFEND has read it in the cuneiform inscriptions at Persepolis, as *Darheush*, that is, “Lord-King,” a name applied to many of the Medo-Persian kings in common. Three of that name occur: Darius Hystaspes, 521 B.C., in whose reign the decree was carried into effect for rebuilding the temple (<sup>4304E</sup>Ezra 4:5 Haggai 1:1); Darius Codomanus, 336 B.C., whom Alexander overcame, called “the Persian” (<sup>4622E</sup>Nehemiah 12:22), an expression used after the rule of Macedon was set up; and Darius Cyaxares II, between Astyages and Cyrus [AESCHYLUS, *The Persians*, 762, 763].

**hundred and twenty** — satraps; set over the conquered provinces (including Babylon) by Cyrus [XENOPHON, *Cyropaedia*, 8.6.1]. No doubt Cyrus acted *under Darius*, as in the capture of Babylon; so that Daniel rightly attributes the appointment to *Darius*.

3. **Daniel was preferred** — probably because of his having so wonderfully foretold the fall of Babylon. Hence the very expression used by the queen mother on that occasion (<sup>2762E</sup>Daniel 5:12) is here used, “because *an excellent spirit was in him*.”

**king thought to set him over the whole realm** — Agreeing with Darius character, weak and averse to business, which he preferred to delegate to favorites. God overruled this to the good both of Daniel, and, through him, of His people.

4. **occasion ... concerning the kingdom** — pretext for accusation in his administration (<sup>2100E</sup>Ecclesiastes 4:4).

5. It is the highest testimony to a godly man's walk, when his most watchful enemies can find no ground of censure save in that he walks according to the law of God even where it opposes the ways of the world.

**6. *assembled together*** — literally, “assembled hastily and tumultuously.” Had they come more deliberately, the king might have refused their grant; but they gave him no time for reflection, representing that their *test-decree* was necessary for the safety of the king.

***live for ever*** — ARRIAN [*Alexander*, 4] records that Cyrus was the first before whom prostration was practiced. It is an undesigned mark of genuineness that Daniel should mention no prostration before Nebuchadnezzar or Darius (see on <sup><7R9></sup>Daniel 3:9).

**7.** The Persian king was regarded as representative of the chief god, Ormuzd; the seven princes near him represented the seven Amshaspands before the throne of Ormuzd; hence Mordecai (<sup><7R9></sup>Esther 3:4) refused such homage to Haman, the king’s prime minister, as inconsistent with what is due to God alone. A weak despot, like Darius, much under the control of his princes, might easily be persuaded that such a decree would test the obedience of the Chaldeans just conquered, and tame their proud spirits. So absolute is the king in the East, that he is regarded not merely as the ruler, but the owner, of the people.

***All ... governors ... counsellors***, etc. — Several functionaries are here specified, not mentioned in <sup><7R9></sup>Daniel 6:4,6. They evidently exaggerated the case of the weak king, as if *their* request was that of *all* the officers in the empire.

***den of lions*** — an underground cave or pit, covered with a stone. It is an undesigned proof of genuineness, that the “fiery furnace” is not made the means of punishment here, as in <sup><7R9></sup>Daniel 3:20; for the Persians were *fire-worshippers*, which the Babylonians were not.

**8. *decree*** — or, “interdict.”

***that it be not changed*** — (<sup><7R9></sup>Esther 1:19 8:8). This immutability of the king’s commands was peculiar to the Medes and Persians: it was due to their regarding him infallible as the representative of Ormuzd; it was not so among the Babylonians.

***Medes and Persians*** — The order of the names is an undesigned mark of genuineness. Cyrus the Persian reigned subordinate to Darius the Mede as to dignity, though exercising more real power. After Darius’ death, the order is “the Persians and Medes” (<sup><7R14></sup>Esther 1:14,19, etc.).

**9.** Such a despotic decree is quite explicable by remembering that the king, as the incarnation of Ormuzd, might demand such an act of religious obedience as a *test of loyalty*. Persecuting laws are always made on false pretenses. Instead of bitter complaints against men, Daniel prays to God.

Though having vast business as a ruler of the empire, he finds time to pray thrice a day. Daniel's three companions (<sup><2082></sup>Daniel 3:12), are not alluded to here, nor any other Jew who conscientiously may have disregarded the edict, as the conspirators aimed at Daniel alone (<sup><2065></sup>Daniel 6:5).

**10. when Daniel knew ... writing ... signed** — and that, therefore, the power of advising the king against it was taken from him.

**went into his house** — withdrawing from the God-dishonoring court.

**windows ... open** — not in vainglory, but that there might be no obstruction to his view of the direction in which Jerusalem, the earthly seat of Jehovah under the Old Testament, lay; and that the sight of heaven might draw his mind off from earthly thoughts. To Christ in the heavenly temple let us turn our eyes in prayer, from this land of our captivity (<sup><1084></sup>1 Kings 8:44,48 <sup><4022></sup>2 Chronicles 6:29,34,38 <sup><4070></sup>Psalms 5:7).

**chamber** — the upper room, where prayer was generally offered by the Jews (<sup><4013></sup>Acts 1:13). Not on the housetop (<sup><4009></sup>Acts 10:9), where he would be conspicuous.

**upon his knees** — Humble attitudes in prayer become humble suppliants.

**three times a day** — (<sup><3517></sup>Psalms 55:17). The third, sixth, and ninth hour; our nine, twelve, and three o'clock (<sup><4025></sup>Acts 2:15 10:9 3:1 10:30; compare <sup><2021></sup>Daniel 9:21).

**as ... aforesaid** — not from contempt of the king's command.

**11. assembled** — as in <sup><2065></sup>Daniel 6:6, "assembled" or "ran hastily," so as to come upon Daniel suddenly and detect him in the act.

**12.** They preface their attack by alleging the king's edict, so as to get him again to confirm it unalterably, before they mention *Daniel's* name. Not to break a wicked promise, is not firmness, but guilty obstinacy (<sup><4049></sup>Matthew 14:9 <sup><4026></sup>Mark 6:26).

**13. That Daniel** — contemptuously.

**of ... captivity of Judah** — recently a captive among thy servants, the Babylonians — one whom humble obedience most becomes. Thus they aggravate his guilt, omitting mention of his being prime minister, which might only remind Darius of Daniel's state services.

**regardeth not thee** — because he regarded God (<sup><4049></sup>Acts 4:19 5:29).

**14. displeased with himself** — for having suffered himself to be entrapped into such a hasty decree (<sup><3120></sup>Proverbs 29:20). On the one hand he was

pressed by the immutability of the law, fear that the princes might conspire against him, and desire to consult for his own reputation, not to seem fickle; on the other, by regard for Daniel, and a desire to save him from the effects of his own rash decree.

**till ... going down of ... sun** — The king took this time to deliberate, thinking that after sunset Daniel would be spared till morning, and that meanwhile some way of escape would turn up. But (<sup>2065</sup>Daniel 6:15) the conspirators “assembled tumultuously” (literally) to prevent this delay in the execution, lest the king should meantime change his decree.

**16. Thy God ... will deliver thee** — The heathen believed in the interposition of the gods at times in favor of their worshippers. Darius recognized Daniel’s God as a god, but not *the only true* God. He had heard of the deliverance of the three youths in (<sup>2066</sup>Daniel 3:26,27) and hence augurs Daniel’s deliverance. I am not my own master, and cannot deliver thee, however much I wish it. “Thy God will.” Kings are the slaves of their flatterers. Men admire piety to God in others, however disregarding Him themselves.

**17. stone ... sealed** — typical of Christ’s entombment under a seal (<sup>2067</sup>Matthew 27:66). Divinely ordered, that the deliverance might be the more striking.

**his own signet, and ... of his lords** — The *concurrence* of the lords was required for making laws. In this kingly power had fallen since it was in Nebuchadnezzar’s hands. The Median king is a puppet in his lords’ hands; they take the security of their own seal as well as his, that he should not release Daniel. The king’s seal guaranteed Daniel from being killed by them, should he escape the lions.

**18. neither were instruments of music**, etc. — GESENIUS translates, “concubines.” Daniel’s mentioning to us as an extraordinary thing of Darius, that he neither approached his table nor his harem, agrees with XENOPHON’S picture of him as devoted to wine and women, vain, and without self-control. He is sorry for the evil which he himself had caused, yet takes no steps to remedy it. There are many such halters between good and bad, who are ill at ease in their sins, yet go forward in them, and are drawn on by others.

**19.** His grief overcame his fear of the nobles.

**20. living God** — having life Himself, and able to preserve thy life; contrasted with the lifeless idols. Darius borrowed the phrase from Daniel; God extorting from an idolater a confession of the truth.

*thou servest continually* — in times of persecution, as well as in times of peace.

*is thy God ... able* — the language of doubt, yet hope.

21. Daniel might have indulged in anger at the king, but does not; his sole thought is, God's glory has been set forth in his deliverance.

22. *his angel* — the instrument, not the author, of his deliverance (<sup><39111></sup>Psalm 91:11 34:7).

*shut ... lions' mouths* — (<sup><58133></sup>Hebrews 11:33). So spiritually, God will shut the roaring lion's mouth (<sup><6188></sup>1 Peter 5:8) for His servants.

*forasmuch as before him innocency* — not absolutely (in <sup><2017></sup>Daniel 9:7,18 he disclaims such a plea), but relatively to this case. God has attested the justice of my cause in standing up for His worship, by delivering me. Therefore, the "forasmuch" does not justify Rome's doctrine of works meriting salvation.

*before thee* — Obedience to God is in strictest compatibility with loyalty to the king (<sup><422></sup>Matthew 22:21 <sup><6127></sup>1 Peter 2:17). Daniel's disobedience to the king was seeming, not real, because it was not from contempt of the king, but from regard to the King of kings (compare <sup><4816></sup>Acts 24:16).

23. *because he believed* — "Faith" is stated in <sup><58133></sup>Hebrews 11:33 to have been his actuating principle: a prelude to the Gospel. His belief was not with a view to a miraculous deliverance. He shut his eyes to the event, committing the keeping of his soul to God, in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator (<sup><6149></sup>1 Peter 4:19), sure of deliverance in a better life, if not in this.

24. (<sup><5999></sup>Deuteronomy 19:19 <sup><1095></sup>Proverbs 19:5).

*accused* — literally, "devoured the bones and flesh." It was just that they who had torn Daniel's character, and sought the tearing of his person, should be themselves given to be torn in pieces (<sup><2018></sup>Proverbs 11:8).

*their children* — Among the Persians, all the kindred were involved in the guilt of one culprit. The Mosaic law expressly forbade this (<sup><6246></sup>Deuteronomy 24:16 <sup><1246></sup>2 Kings 14:6).

*or ever* — that is, "before ever." The lions sparing Daniel could not have been because they were full, as they showed the keenness of their hunger on the accusers.

**26.** Stronger than the decree (<sup>2700B</sup>Daniel 3:29). That was negative; this, positive; not merely men must say “nothing amiss of,” but must “fear before God.”

**28.** It was in the third year of Cyrus that Daniel’s visions (<sup>2700B</sup>Daniel 10:1-12:13) were given. Daniel “prospered” because of his prophecies (<sup>4500B</sup>Ezra 1:1,2).

# CHAPTER 7

## DANIEL 7:1-28.

### VISION OF THE FOUR BEASTS.

This chapter treats of the same subject as the second chapter. But there the four kingdoms, and Messiah's final kingdom, were regarded according to their *external* political aspect, but here according to the mind of God concerning them, and their *moral* features. The outward political history had been shown in its general features to the world ruler, whose position fitted him for receiving such a revelation. But God's prophet here receives disclosures as to the characters of the powers of the world, in a religious point of view, suited to *his* position and receptivity. Hence in the second chapter the images are taken from the inanimate sphere; in the seventh chapter they are taken from the animate. Nebuchadnezzar saw superficially the world power as a splendid human figure, and the kingdom of God as a mere stone at the first. Daniel sees the world kingdoms in their inner essence as of an *animal* nature lower than human, being estranged from God; and that only in the kingdom of God ("the Son of *man*," the representative man) is the true dignity of man realized. So, as contrasted with Nebuchadnezzar's vision, the kingdom of God appears to Daniel, *from the very first*, superior to the world kingdom. For though in *physical* force the beasts excel man, man has essentially *spiritual* powers. Nebuchadnezzar's colossal image represents mankind in its own strength, but only the outward man. Daniel sees man spiritually degraded to the beast level, led by blind impulses, through his alienation from God. It is only from above that the perfect Son of man comes, and in His kingdom man attains his true destiny. Compare <sup><990E></sup>Psalm 8:1-9 with <sup><002E></sup>Genesis 1:26-28. Humanity is impossible without divinity: it sinks to bestiality (<sup><990E></sup>Psalm 32:9 49:20 73:22). Obstinate heathen nations are compared to "bulls" (<sup><990E></sup>Psalm 68:30); Egypt to the dragon in the Nile (<sup><200E></sup>Isaiah 27:1 51:9 <sup><590E></sup>Ezekiel 29:3). The animal with all its sagacity looks always to the ground, without consciousness of relation to God. What elevates man is communion with God, in willing subjection to Him. The moment he tries to exalt himself to independence of God, as did Nebuchadnezzar (<sup><00E></sup>Daniel 4:30), he sinks to the beast's level. Daniel's acquaintance with the animal colossal figures in Babylon and Nineveh was a psychological preparation

for his animal visions. <sup><2831F></sup>Hosea 13:7,8 would occur to him while viewing those ensigns of the world power. Compare <sup><2412S></sup>Jeremiah 2:15 4:7:5:6.

**1. *Belshazzar*** — Good *Hebrew* manuscripts have “Belshazzar”; meaning “Bel is to be burnt with hostile fire” (<sup><2812E></sup>Jeremiah 50:2 51:44). In the *history* he is called by his ordinary name; in the *prophecy*, which gives his true destiny, he is called a corresponding name, by the change of a letter.

***visions of his head*** — not *confused* “dreams,” but distinct images seen *while his mind was collected*.

***sum*** — a “summary.” In predictions, generally, details are not given so fully as to leave no scope for free agency, faith, and patient waiting for God manifesting His will in the event. He “wrote” it for the Church in all ages; he “told” it for the comfort of his captive fellow countrymen.

**2. *the four winds*** — answering to the “four beasts”; their several *conflicts in the four quarters or directions of the world*.

***stroke*** — burst forth (from the abyss) [MAURER].

***sea*** — The world powers rise out of the agitations of the political *sea* (<sup><2410E></sup>Jeremiah 46:7,8 <sup><2212S></sup>Luke 21:25; compare <sup><6601E></sup>Revelation 13:1 17:15 21:1); the kingdom of God and the Son of man from the *clouds of heaven* (<sup><2701S></sup>Daniel 7:13; compare <sup><8823S></sup>John 8:23). TREGELLES takes “the great sea” to mean, as always elsewhere in Scripture (<sup><6001E></sup>Joshua 1:4 9:1), *the Mediterranean*, the center territorially of the four kingdoms of the vision, which all border on it and have Jerusalem subject to them. *Babylon* did not border on the Mediterranean, nor rule Jerusalem, till Nebuchadnezzar’s time, when both things took place simultaneously. *Persia* encircled more of this sea, namely, from the Hellespont to Cyrene. *Greece* did not become a monarchy before Alexander’s time, but then, succeeding to Persia, it became mistress of Jerusalem. It surrounded still more of the Mediterranean, adding the coasts of Greece to the part held by Persia. *Rome*, under Augustus, realized three things at once — it became a monarchy; it became mistress of the last of the four parts of Alexander’s empire (symbolized by the four heads of the third beast), and of Jerusalem; it surrounded *all* the Mediterranean.

**3. *beasts*** — not *living animals*, as the cherubic four in <sup><6601E></sup>Revelation 4:7 (for the original is a different word from “beasts,” and ought to be there translated, *living animals*). The cherubic living animals represent redeemed man, combining in himself the highest forms of animal life. But the “beasts” here represent the world powers, in their beast-like, grovelling character. It is on the fundamental harmony between nature and spirit,

between the three kingdoms of nature, history, and revelation, that Scripture symbolism rests. The selection of symbols is not arbitrary, but based on the essence of things.

**4. lion** — the symbol of *strength and courage*; chief among the kingdoms, as the lion among the beasts. Nebuchadnezzar is called “the lion” (<sup>2407</sup>Jeremiah 4:7).

**eagle’s wings** — denoting a widespread and rapidly acquired (<sup>2361</sup>Isaiah 46:11 <sup>2403</sup>Jeremiah 4:13 <sup>2409</sup>Lamentations 4:19 Habakkuk 1:6) empire (<sup>2480</sup>Jeremiah 48:40).

**plucked** — Its ability for widespread conquests passed away under Evil-merodach, etc. [GROTIUS]; rather, during Nebuchadnezzar’s privation of his throne, while deranged.

**it was lifted up from the earth** — that is, from its grovelling bestiality.

**made stand ... as a man** — So long as Nebuchadnezzar, in haughty pride, relied on his own strength, he forfeited the true dignity of man, and was therefore degraded to be with the beasts. (<sup>2406</sup>Daniel 4:16: “Let his *heart* be changed from *man’s*, and let a *beast’s heart* be given unto him.” But after he learned by this sore discipline that “the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men” (<sup>2405</sup>Daniel 4:35,36), the change took place in him, “a *man’s heart* is given to him; instead of his former *beast’s heart*, he attains *man’s true position*, namely, to be consciously dependent on God.” Compare <sup>2402</sup>Psalms 9:20.

**5. bear** — symbolizing the austere life of the Persians in their mountains, also their cruelty (<sup>2337</sup>Isaiah 13:17,18; Cambyses, Ochus, and other of the Persian princes were notoriously cruel; the Persian laws involved, for one man’s offense, the whole kindred and neighborhood in destruction, <sup>2404</sup>Daniel 6:24) and rapacity. “A bear is an *all-devouring animal*” [ARISTOTLE, 8.5], (<sup>2543</sup>Jeremiah 51:48,56).

**raised ... itself on one side** — but the *Hebrew*, “It raised up one *dominion*.” The Medes, an ancient people, and the Persians, a modern tribe, formed *one united sovereignty* in contrast to the third and fourth kingdoms, each originally one, afterwards divided. *English Version* is the result of a slight change of a *Hebrew* letter. The idea then would be, “It lay on one of its fore feet, and stood on the other”; a figure still to be seen on one of the stones of Babylon [MUNTER, *The Religion of Babylonia*, 112]; denoting a kingdom that had been at rest, but is now rousing itself for conquest. *Media* is the lower side, passiveness; *Persia*, the upper, active element [AUBERLEN]. The three ribs in its mouth are *Media*, *Lydia*, and *Babylon*,

brought under the Persian sway. Rather, *Babylon, Lydia, and Egypt*, not properly parts of its body, but seized by Medo-Persia [SIR ISAAC NEWTON]. Called “ribs” because they strengthened the Medo-Persian empire. “Between its teeth,” as being much grinded by it.

*devour much flesh* — that is, subjugate many nations.

**6. leopard** — smaller than the lion; swift (Habakkuk 1:8); cruel (<sup>23105</sup>Isaiah 11:6), the opposite of tame; springing suddenly from its hiding place on its prey (<sup>23107</sup>Hosea 13:7); spotted. So Alexander, a small king, of a small kingdom, Macedon, attacked Darius at the head of the vast empire reaching from the Aegean Sea to the Indies. In twelve years he subjugated part of Europe, and all Asia from Illyricum and the Adriatic to the Ganges, not so much fighting as conquering [JEROME]. Hence, whereas Babylon is represented with *two* wings, Macedon has *four*, so rapid were its conquests. The various spots denote the various nations incorporated into his empire [BOCHART]; Or Alexander’s own variation in character, at one time mild, at another cruel, now temperate, and now drunken and licentious.

*four heads* — explained in <sup>23088</sup>Daniel 8:8,22; the four kingdoms of the *Diadochi* or “successors” into which the Macedonian empire was divided at the death of Alexander, namely, Macedon and Greece under Cassander, Thrace and Bithynia under Lysimachus, Egypt under PTOLEMY, and Syria under Seleucus.

*dominion ... given to it* — by God; not by Alexander’s own might. For how unlikely it was that thirty thousand men should overthrow several hundreds of thousands! JOSEPHUS [*Antiquities*, 11.6] says that Alexander adored the high priest of Jerusalem, saying that he at Diium in Macedonia had seen a vision of God so habited, inviting him to go to Asia, and promising him success.

**7.** As Daniel lived under the kingdom of the first beast, and therefore needed not to describe it, and as the second and third are described fully in the second part of the book, the chief emphasis falls on the fourth. Also prophecy most dwells on the *end*, which is the consummation of the preceding series of events. It is in the fourth that the world power manifests fully its God-opposing nature. Whereas the three former kingdoms were designated respectively, as a lion, bear, and leopard, no particular beast is specified as the image of the fourth; for Rome is so terrible as to be not describable by any one, but combines in itself all that we can imagine inexpressibly fierce in all beasts. Hence *thrice* (<sup>23096</sup>Daniel 7:7,19,23) it is repeated, that the fourth was “diverse from all” the others. The formula of introduction, “I saw in the night visions,” occurs here, as at <sup>23098</sup>Daniel 7:2, and again at <sup>23099</sup>Daniel 7:13, thus dividing the whole vision into three parts

— the first embracing the three kingdoms, the second the fourth and its overthrow, the third Messiah's kingdom. The first three together take up a few centuries; the fourth, thousands of years. The whole lower half of the image in the second chapter is given to it. And whereas the other kingdoms consist of only one material, this consists of two, iron and clay (on which much stress is laid, <sup>(2024)</sup>Daniel 2:41-43); the "*iron teeth*" here allude to one material in the fourth kingdom of the image.

***ten horns*** — It is with the crisis, rather than the *course*, of the fourth kingdom that this seventh chapter is mainly concerned. The ten *kings* (<sup>(2024)</sup>Daniel 7:24, the "horns" representing *power*), that is, *kingdoms*, into which Rome was divided on its incorporation with the Germanic and Slavonic tribes, and again at the Reformation, are thought by many to be here intended. But the variation of the list of the ten, and their ignoring the eastern half of the empire altogether, and the existence of the Papacy *before* the breaking up of even the *Western* empire, instead of being the "little horn" springing up *after* the other ten, are against this view. The Western Roman empire continued till A.D. 731, and the Eastern, till A.D. 1453. The ten kingdoms, therefore, prefigured by the ten "toes" (<sup>(2024)</sup>Daniel 2:41; compare <sup>(631)</sup>Revelation 13:1 17:12), are the ten kingdoms into which Rome shall be found finally divided when Antichrist shall appear [TREGELLES]. These, probably, are prefigured by the number *ten* being the prevalent one at the chief turning points of Roman history.

**8. *little horn*** — *little* at first, but afterwards waxing greater than all others. He must be sought "among them," namely, the ten horns. The Roman empire did not represent itself as a continuation of Alexander's; but the Germanic empire calls itself "the holy Roman empire." Napoleon's attempted universal monarchy was avowedly Roman: his son was called king of Rome. The czar (*Caesar*) also professes to represent the eastern half of the Roman empire. The Roman civilization, church, language, and law are the chief elements in Germanic civilization. But the Romanic element seeks universal empire, while the Germanic seeks individualization. Hence the universal monarchies attempted by the Papacy, Charlemagne, Charles V, and Napoleon have failed, the iron not amalgamating with the clay. In the king symbolized by "the little horn," the God-opposing, haughty spirit of the world, represented by the fourth monarchy, finds its intensest development. "The man of sin," "the son of perdition" (<sup>(511)</sup>2 Thessalonians 2:3). Antichrist (<sup>(618)</sup>1 John 2:18,22 4:3). It is the complete evolution of the evil principle introduced by the fall.

***three of the first horns plucked up*** — the exarchate of Ravenna, the kingdom of the Lombards and the state of Rome, which constituted the Pope's dominions at the first; obtained by Pope Zachary and Stephen II in

return for acknowledging the usurper Pepin lawful king of France [NEWTON]. See TREGELLES' objections, <sup><2007></sup>Daniel 7:7, "ten horns," Note. The "little horn," in his view, is to be Antichrist rising three and a half years before Christ's second advent, having first overthrown three of the ten contemporaneous kingdoms, into which the fourth monarchy, under which we live, shall be finally divided. Popery seems to be a fulfillment of the prophecy in many particulars, the Pope claiming to be God on earth and above all earthly dominions; but the spirit of Antichrist prefigured by Popery will probably culminate in ONE *individual*, to be destroyed by Christ's coming; He will be the product of the political *world* powers, whereas Popery which prepares His way, is a *Church* become worldly.

**eyes of man** — Eyes express intelligence (<sup><2018></sup>Ezekiel 1:18); so (<sup><0018></sup>Genesis 3:5) the serpent's promise was, man's "eyes should be opened," if he would but rebel against God. Antichrist shall consummate the self-apotheosis, begun at the fall, high intellectual culture, independent of God. The metals representing Babylon and Medo-Persia, gold and silver, are more precious than brass and iron, representing Greece and Rome; but the latter metals are more useful to civilization (<sup><0022></sup>Genesis 4:22). The clay, representing the Germanic element, is the most plastic material. Thus there is a progress in *culture*; but this is not a progress *necessarily* in man's truest dignity, namely, union and likeness to God. Nay, it has led him farther from God, to self-reliance and world-love. The beginnings of civilization were among the children of Cain (<sup><0017></sup>Genesis 4:17-24 <sup><2018></sup>Luke 16:8). Antiochus Epiphanes, the first Antichrist, came from civilized Greece, and loved art. As Hellenic civilization produced the *first*, so modern civilization under the fourth monarchy will produce the *last* Antichrist. The "mouth" and "eyes" are those of a man, while the symbol is otherwise brutish that is it will assume man's true dignity, namely, wear the guise of the kingdom of God (which comes as the "Son of *man*" from above), while it is really bestial, namely, severed from God. Antichrist promises the same things as Christ, but in an opposite way: a caricature of Christ, offering a regenerated world without the cross. Babylon and Persia in their religion had more reverence for things divine than Greece and Rome in the imperial stages of their history. Nebuchadnezzar's human *heart*, given him (<sup><2016></sup>Daniel 4:16) on his repentance, contrasts with the human *eyes* of Antichrist, the pseudo son of man, namely, intellectual culture, while heart and mouth blaspheme God. The deterioration politically corresponds: the first kingdom, an organic unity; the second, divided into Median and Persian; the third branches off into four; the fourth, into ten. The two eastern kingdoms are marked by nobler metals; the two western, by baser; individualization and division appear in the latter, and it is they which produce the two Antichrists.

**9. *I beheld till*** — I continued looking till.

***thrones ... cast down*** — rather, “thrones were *placed*” [Vulgate and LUTHER], namely, for the saints and elect angels to whom “judgment is given” (<sup>2072</sup>Daniel 7:22), as assessors with the Judge. Compare <sup>2070</sup>Daniel 7:10, “thousand thousands ministered unto Him” (<sup>4038</sup>Matthew 19:28 <sup>4239</sup>Luke 22:30 <sup>4062</sup>1 Corinthians 6:2,3 <sup>5452</sup>1 Timothy 5:21 <sup>6126</sup>Revelation 2:26 4:4). In *English Version* the thrones *cast down* are those of the previously mentioned kings who give place to Messiah.

***Ancient of days*** — “The everlasting Father” (<sup>2006</sup>Isaiah 9:6). HE is the Judge here, as THE SON does not judge in His own cause, and it is His cause which is the one at issue with Antichrist.

***sit*** — the attitude of a judge about to pass sentence.

***white*** — The judicial purity of the Judge, and of all things round Him, is hereby expressed (<sup>6014</sup>Revelation 1:14).

***wheels*** — as Oriental thrones move on wheels. Like the rapid flame, God’s judgments are most swift in falling where He wills them (<sup>3015</sup>Ezekiel 1:15,16). The judgment here is not the last judgment, for *then* there will be no beast, and heaven and earth shall have passed away; but it is that on Antichrist (the last development of the fourth kingdom), typical of the last judgment: Christ coming to substitute the millennial kingdom of *glory* for that of *the cross* (<sup>6772</sup>Revelation 17:12-14 19:15-21 11:15).

**10. *thousand ... ministered unto him*** — so at the giving of the law (<sup>6302</sup>Deuteronomy 33:2 <sup>4987</sup>Psalms 68:17 <sup>5222</sup>Hebrews 12:22 <sup>6114</sup>Jude 1:14).

***ten ... thousand before him*** — image from the Sanhedrim, in which the father of the consistory sat with his assessors on each side, in the form of a semicircle, and the people standing before him.

***judgment was set*** — The judges sat (<sup>6004</sup>Revelation 20:4).

***books ... opened*** — (<sup>6012</sup>Revelation 20:12). Forensic image; all the documents of the cause at issue, connected with the condemnation of Antichrist and his kingdom, and the setting up of Messiah’s kingdom. *Judgment* must pass on the world as being under the curse, before the glory comes; but Antichrist offers glory without the cross, a renewed world without the world being *judged*.

**11.** Here is set forth the execution on earth of the judgment pronounced in the unseen heavenly court of judicature (<sup>2009</sup>Daniel 7:9,10).

***body ... given to ... flame*** — (<sup>6620</sup>Revelation 19:20).

**12. *the rest of the beasts*** — that is, the three first, had passed away not by *direct* destroying judgments, such as consumed the little horn, as being the finally matured evil of the fourth beast. They had continued to exist but their “*dominion* was taken away”; whereas the fourth beast shall cease utterly, superseded by Messiah’s kingdom.

***for a season ... time*** — Not only the triumph of the beasts over the godly, but their very existence is limited to a *definite time*, and that time the *exactly suitable* one (compare <sup><4B2></sup>Matthew 24:22). Probably a definite period is meant by a “season and time” (compare <sup><2D5></sup>Daniel 7:25 <sup><6A8></sup>Revelation 20:3). It is striking, the fourth monarchy, though Christianized for fifteen hundred years past, is not distinguished from the previous heathen monarchies, or from its own heathen portion. Nay, it is represented as the most God-opposed of all, and culminating at last in blasphemous Antichrist. The reason is: Christ’s kingdom *now* is not of this world (<sup><8B36></sup>John 18:36); and only at the second advent of Christ does it become an external power of the world. Hence Daniel, whose province it was to prophesy of the world powers, does not treat of Christianity until it becomes a world power, namely, at the second advent. The kingdom of God is a hidden one till Jesus comes again (<sup><8A7></sup>Romans 8:17 <sup><5D2></sup>Colossians 3:2,3 <sup><5D12></sup>2 Timothy 2:11,12). Rome was worldly while heathen, and remains worldly, though Christianized. So the New Testament views the present aeon or age of the world as essentially heathenish, which we cannot love without forsaking Christ (<sup><6D2></sup>Romans 12:2 <sup><4D1></sup>1 Corinthians 1:20 2:6,8 3:18 7:31 <sup><6D4></sup>2 Corinthians 4:4 <sup><8D4></sup>Galatians 1:4 <sup><4D2></sup>Ephesians 2:2 <sup><5D12></sup>2 Timothy 4:10; compare <sup><6D51></sup>1 John 2:15,17). The object of Christianity is not so much to Christianize the present world as to save souls out of it, so as not to be condemned with the world (<sup><4D12></sup>1 Corinthians 11:32), but to rule with Him in His millennium (<sup><4B55></sup>Matthew 5:5 <sup><2D23></sup>Luke 12:32 22:28-30 <sup><4B57></sup>Romans 5:17 <sup><4D2></sup>1 Corinthians 6:2 <sup><6D6></sup>Revelation 1:6 2:26-28 3:21 20:4). This is to be our *hope*, not to reign in the present world course (<sup><4D8></sup>1 Corinthians 4:8 <sup><4D82></sup>2 Corinthians 4:18 <sup><5D33></sup>Philippians 3:20 <sup><8D34></sup>Hebrews 13:14). There must be a “regeneration” of the world, as of the individual, a death previous to a resurrection, a *destruction* of the world kingdoms, before they rise anew as the kingdoms of Christ (<sup><4D28></sup>Matthew 19:28). Even the millennium will not perfectly eradicate the world’s corruption; another apostasy and judgment will follow (<sup><6D7></sup>Revelation 20:7-15), in which the world of *nature* is to be destroyed and renewed, as the world of *history* was before the millennium (<sup><6D82></sup>2 Peter 3:8-13); then comes the perfect earth and heaven (<sup><6D18></sup>Revelation 21:1). Thus there is an onward progress, and the Christian is *waiting* for the consummation (<sup><4B33></sup>Mark 13:33-37 <sup><2D25></sup>Luke 12:35,36,40-46 <sup><5D11></sup>1 Thessalonians 1:9,10), as His Lord also is “expecting” (<sup><8D3></sup>Hebrews 10:13).

**13. Son of man** — (See on <sup><200E></sup>Ezekiel 2:1). Not merely Son of David, and King of Israel, but Head of restored *humanity* (corresponding to the world-wide horizon of Daniel's prophecy); the seed of the woman, crushing Antichrist, the seed of the serpent, according to the Prot-evangel in Paradise (<sup><008S></sup>Genesis 3:15). The Representative Man shall then realize the original destiny of man as Head of the creation (<sup><000S></sup>Genesis 1:26,28); the center of unity to Israel and the Gentiles. The beast, which taken conjointly represents the four beasts, ascends from the sea (<sup><200E></sup>Daniel 7:2 <sup><600E></sup>Revelation 13:1); the Son of man descends *from* "heaven." Satan, as the serpent, is the representative head of all that bestial; man, by following the serpent, has become bestial. God must, therefore, become man, so that man may cease to be beast-like. Whoever rejects the incarnate God will be judged by the Son of man just because He is the Son of man (<sup><800E></sup>John 5:27). This title is always associated with His coming again, because the kingdom that then awaits Him in that ch belongs to Him as the Savior of man, the Restorer of the lost inheritance. "Son of man" expresses His *VISIBLE* state formerly in his humiliation hereafter in His exaltation. He "comes to the Ancient of days" to be invested with the kingdom. Compare <sup><800E></sup>Psalm 110:2: "The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength (Messiah) out of Zion." This investiture was at His ascension "with the clouds of heaven" (<sup><400E></sup>Acts 1:9 2:33,34 <sup><800E></sup>Psalm 2:6-9 <sup><008S></sup>Matthew 28:18), which is a pledge of His return "in like manner" in the clouds" (<sup><400E></sup>Acts 1:11 <sup><006E></sup>Matthew 26:64), and "with clouds" (<sup><600E></sup>Revelation 1:7). The kingdom then was given to Him in *title* and *invisible* exercise; at His second coming it shall be in *visible* administration. He will vindicate it from the misrule of those who received it to hold for and under God, but who ignored His supremacy. The Father will assert His right by the Son, the heir, who will hold it for Him (<sup><800E></sup>Ezekiel 1:27 <sup><300E></sup>Hebrews 1:2 <sup><600E></sup>Revelation 19:13-16). TREGELLES thinks the investiture here *immediately precedes* Christ's coming forth; because He sits at God's right hand *until* His enemies are made His footstool, *then* the kingdom is given to the Son in actual investiture, and He comes to crush His so prepared footstool under His feet. But the words, "with the clouds," and the universal power actually, though invisibly, given Him then (<sup><400E></sup>Ephesians 1:20-22), agree best with His investiture at the ascension, which, in the prophetic view that overleaps the interval of ages, is the precursor of His coming visibly to reign; no event of equal moment taking place in the interval.

**15. body** — literally, "sheath": the body being the "sheath" of the soul.

**17. kings** — that is, kingdoms. Compare <sup><200E></sup>Daniel 7:23, "fourth kingdom"; <sup><200E></sup>Daniel 2:38 8:20-22. Each of the four kings represents a

dynasty. Nebuchadnezzar, Alexander, Antiochus, and Antichrist, though *individually* referred to, are representatives of characteristic tendencies.

**18. *the Most High*** — the emphatic title of God in this prophecy, who delegates His power first to Israel; then to the Gentiles (<sup>2037</sup>Daniel 2:37,38) when Israel fails to realize the idea of the theocracy; lastly, to Messiah, who shall rule truly for God, taking it from the Gentile world powers, whose history is one of continual degeneracy culminating in the last of the kings, Antichrist. Here, in the interpretation, “the saints,” but in the vision (<sup>2073</sup>Daniel 7:13,14), “the Son of man,” takes the kingdom; for Christ and His people are one in suffering, and one in glory. TREGELLES translates, “most high places” (<sup>4003</sup>Ephesians 1:3 2:6). Though oppressed by the beast and little horn, they belong not to the earth from which the four beasts arise, but to the most high places.

**19. Balaam**, an Aramean, dwelling on the Euphrates, at the beginning of Israel’s independent history, and Daniel at the close of it, prophetically exhibit to the hostile world powers Israel as triumphant over them at last, though the world powers of the East (Asshur) and the West (Chittim) carry all before them and afflict Eber (Israel) for a time (<sup>4038</sup>Numbers 23:8-10,28 24:2,7-9,22-24). To Balaam’s “Asshur” correspond Daniel’s two eastern kingdoms, Babylon and Medo-Persia; to “Chittim,” the two western kingdoms, Greece and Rome (compare <sup>4004</sup>Genesis 10:4,11,22). In Babel, Nimrod the hunter (revolter) founds the first kingdom of the world (<sup>4008</sup>Genesis 10:8-13). The Babylonian world power takes up the thread interrupted at the building of Babel, and the kingdom of Nimrod. As at Babel, so in Babylon the world is united against God; Babylon, the first world power, thus becomes the type of the God-opposed world. The fourth monarchy consummates the evil; it is “diverse” from the others only in its more unlimited universality. The three first were not in the full sense universal monarchies. The fourth is; so in it the God-opposed principle finds its full development. All history moves within the Romanic, Germanic, and Slavonic nations; it shall continue so to Christ’s second advent. The fourth monarchy represents universalism externally; Christianity, internally. Rome is Babylon fully developed. It is the world power corresponding in contrast to Christianity, and therefore contemporary with it (<sup>4039</sup>Matthew 13:38 <sup>4015</sup>Mark 1:15 <sup>4011</sup>Luke 2:1 <sup>4004</sup>Galatians 4:4).

**20. *look ... more stout than ... fellows*** — namely, than that of the other horns.

**21. *made war with the saints*** — persecuted the Church (<sup>4010</sup>Revelation 11:7 13:7).

**prevailed** — but not ultimately. The limit is marked by “until” (<sup>(2072)</sup>Daniel 7:22). The little horn continues, *without intermission*, to persecute up to Christ’s second advent (<sup>(6172)</sup>Revelation 17:12,14 19:19,20).

**22. Ancient of days came** — The title applied to the Father in <sup>(2073)</sup>Daniel 7:13 is here applied to the Son; who is called “the everlasting Father” (<sup>(2309)</sup>Isaiah 9:6). The Father is never said to “come”; it is the Son who *comes*.

**judgment was given to ... saints** — *Judgment* includes *rule*; “kingdom” in the end of this verse (<sup>(4182)</sup>1 Corinthians 6:2 <sup>(6105)</sup>Revelation 1:6,5:10 20:4). Christ first receives “judgment” and the “kingdom,” then the saints with Him (<sup>(2073)</sup>Daniel 7:13,14).

**24. ten horns** — answering to the ten “toes” (<sup>(2084)</sup>Daniel 2:41).

**out of this kingdom** — It is *out of* the fourth kingdom that ten others arise, whatever exterior territory any of them possess (<sup>(6131)</sup>Revelation 13:1 17:12).

**rise after them** — yet contemporaneous with them; the ten are contemporaries. Antichrist rises after their rise, at first “little” (<sup>(2008)</sup>Daniel 7:8); but after destroying three of the ten, he becomes greater than them all (<sup>(2072)</sup>Daniel 7:20,21). The three being gone, he is the eighth (compare <sup>(6171)</sup>Revelation 17:11); a distinct head, and yet “of the seven.” As the previous world kingdoms had their representative heads (Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar; Persia, Cyrus; Greece, Alexander), so the fourth kingdom and its Antichrists shall have their evil concentrated in the one final Antichrist. As Antiochus Epiphanes, the Antichrist of the third kingdom in <sup>(2183)</sup>Daniel 8:23-25, was the personal enemy of God, so the final Antichrist of the fourth kingdom, his antitype. The Church has endured a pagan and a papal persecution; there remains for her an infidel persecution, general, purifying, and cementing [CECIL]. He will not merely, as Popery, *substitute* himself for Christ *in Christ’s name*, but “*deny* the Father and the Son” (<sup>(6122)</sup>1 John 2:22). The persecution is to continue *up to Christ’s second coming* (<sup>(2072)</sup>Daniel 7:21,22); the horn of blasphemy cannot therefore be past; for now there is almost a general cessation of persecution.

**25.** Three attributes of Antichrist are specified:

- (1) The highest worldly wisdom and civilization.
- (2) The uniting of the whole civilized world under his dominion.
- (3) Atheism, antitheism, and autotheism in its fullest development (<sup>(6122)</sup>1 John 2:22).

Therefore, not only is power taken from the fourth beast, as in the case of the other three, but God destroys it and the world power in general by a final judgment. The present external Christianity is to give place to an almost universal apostasy.

**think** — literally, “carry within him as it were the burden of the thought.”

**change times** — the prerogative of God alone (<sup>2702</sup>Daniel 2:21); blasphemously assumed by Antichrist. The “times and laws” here meant are those of religious ordinance; *stated times of feasts* [MAURER]. Perhaps there are included the *times assigned by God to the duration of kingdoms*. He shall set Himself above all that is called God (<sup>5000</sup>2 Thessalonians 2:4), putting his own “will” above God’s times and laws (<sup>2713</sup>Daniel 11:36,37). But the “times” of His wilfulness are limited for the elect’s sake (<sup>4102</sup>Matthew 24:22).

**they** — the saints.

**given into his hand** — to be persecuted.

**time ... times and ... dividing of time** — one year, two years, and half a year: 1260 days (<sup>6116</sup>Revelation 12:6,14); forty-two months (<sup>6112</sup>Revelation 11:2,3). That literally three and a half years are to be the term of Antichrist’s persecution is favored by <sup>2706</sup>Daniel 4:16,23, where the year-day theory would be impossible. If the Church, moreover, had been informed that 1260 years must elapse before the second advent, the attitude of expectancy which is inculcated (<sup>2728</sup>Luke 12:38 <sup>4107</sup>1 Corinthians 1:7 <sup>5000</sup>1 Thessalonians 1:9,10 <sup>6102</sup>2 Peter 3:12) on the ground of the uncertainty of the time, would be out of place. The original word for “time” denotes *a stated period or set feast*; or the interval from one set feast to its recurrence, that is, a year [TREGELLES]; <sup>6230</sup>Leviticus 23:4, “seasons”; <sup>6234</sup>Leviticus 23:44, “feasts.” The passages in favor of the year-day theory are <sup>3016</sup>Ezekiel 4:6, where each day of the forty during which Ezekiel lay on his right side is defined by God as meaning a year. Compare <sup>0449</sup>Numbers 14:34, where a year of wandering in the wilderness was appointed for each day of the forty during which the spies searched Canaan; but the days were, in these two cases, merely the type or reason for the years, which were *announced as they were to be fulfilled*. In the prophetic part of <sup>0449</sup>Numbers 14:34 “years” are literal. If the year-day system was applied to them, they would be 14,400 years! In <sup>3004</sup>Ezekiel 4:4-6, if *day* meant *year*, Ezekiel would have lain on his right side forty years! The context here in <sup>2724</sup>Daniel 7:24,25, is not symbolical. Antichrist is no longer called a horn, but a *king* subduing three out of ten *kings* (no longer horns, <sup>2707</sup>Daniel 7:7,8). So in <sup>2713</sup>Daniel 12:7, where “time, times, and half a time,” again occurs, nothing symbolic occurs in the context. So that there is no reason why the three and a half

years should be so. For the first four centuries the “days” were interpreted literally; a mystical meaning of the 1260 days then began. WALTER BRUTE first suggested the year-day theory in the end of the fourteenth century. The *seventy years* of the Babylonian captivity foretold by Jeremiah (<sup><352></sup>Jeremiah 25:12 29:10) were understood by Daniel (<sup><270></sup>Daniel 9:2) as literal years, not symbolical, which would have been 25,200 years! [TREGELLES]. It is possible that the year-day and day-day theories are *both* true. The seven (symbolical) times of the Gentile monarchies (<sup><634></sup>Leviticus 26:24) during Israel’s casting off will end in the seven years of Antichrist. The 1260 years of papal misrule in the name of Christ may be represented by three and a half years of open Antichristianity and persecution before the millennium. Witnessing churches may be succeeded by witnessing individuals, the former occupying the longer, the latter the shorter PERIOD (<sup><613></sup>Revelation 11:3). The beginning of the 1260 years is by ELLIOTT set at A.D. 529 or 533, when Justinian’s edict acknowledged Pope John II to be head of the Church; by LUTHER, at 606, when Phocas confirmed Justinian’s grant. But 752 is the most likely date, when the *temporal* dominion of the popes began by Pepin’s grant to Stephen II (for Zachary, his predecessor’s recognition of his title to France), confirmed by Charlemagne. For it was then first that the little horn plucked up three horns, and so became the prolongation of the fourth *secular* kingdom [NEWTON]. This would bring us down to about A.D. 2000, or the seventh thousand millenary from creation. But CLINTON makes about 1862 the seventh millenary, which may favor the dating from A.D. 529.

**26. consume ... destroy** — a twofold operation. Antichrist is to be *gradually* “consumed,” as the Papacy has been consuming for four hundred years past, and especially of late years. He is also to be “destroyed” *suddenly* by Christ at His coming; the fully developed man of sin (<sup><518></sup>2 Thessalonians 2:3) or false prophet making a last desperate effort in confederacy with the “beast” (<sup><663></sup>Revelation 16:13,14,16) or secular power of the Roman empire (some conjecture Louis Napoleon): destroyed at Armageddon in Palestine.

**27. greatness of the kingdom under ... whole heaven** — The power, which those several kingdoms had possessed, shall all be conferred on Messiah’s kingdom. “Under ... heaven” shows it is a kingdom *on earth*, not in heaven.

**people of ... saints of ... Most High** — “the people of the saints,” or “holy ones” (<sup><270></sup>Daniel 8:24, *Margin*): the Jews, the people to whom the saints stand in a peculiar relation. The saints are gathered out of Jews and Gentiles, but the stock of the Church is Jewish (<sup><512></sup>Romans 9:24 11:24); God’s faithfulness to this election Church is thus virtually faithfulness to

Israel, and a pledge of their future national blessing. Christ confirms this fact, while withholding the date (<sup><400></sup>Acts 1:6,7).

***everlasting kingdom*** — If *everlasting*, how can the kingdom here refer to the millennial one? Answer: Daniel saw the whole time of future blessedness as *one period*. The clearer light of the New Testament distinguishes, in the whole period, the millennium and the time of the new heaven and new earth (compare <sup><600></sup>Revelation 20:4 with <sup><620></sup>Revelation 21:1 and <sup><625></sup>Revelation 22:5). Christ's kingdom is "everlasting." Not even the last judgment shall end it, but only give it a more glorious appearance, the new Jerusalem coming down from God out of heaven, with the throne of God and the Lamb in it (compare <sup><600></sup>Revelation 5:9,10 11:15).

**28. *cogitations ... troubled me*** — showing that the Holy Spirit intended much more to be understood by Daniel's words than Daniel himself understood. We are not to limit the significance of prophecies to what the prophets themselves understood (<sup><611></sup>1 Peter 1:11,12).

# CHAPTER 8

## ~~<200E>~~DANIEL 8:1-27.

### VISION OF THE RAM AND HE-GOAT: THE TWENTY-THREE HUNDRED DAYS OF THE SANCTUARY BEING TRODDEN DOWN.

With this chapter the *Hebrew* part of the book begins and continues to be the language of the remainder; the visions relating wholly to the Jews and Jerusalem. The scene here narrows from world-wide prophecies to those affecting the one covenant-people in the five centuries between the exile and the advent. Antichrist, like Christ, has a more immediate future, as well as one more remote. The vision, the eighth chapter, begins, and that, the tenth through twelfth chapters, concludes, the account of the Antichrist of the third kingdom. Between the two visions the ninth chapter is inserted, as to Messiah and the covenant-people at the end of the half millennium (seventy weeks of years).

1. *vision* — a higher kind of revelation than a dream.

*after that ... at the first* — that in ~~<200E>~~Daniel 7:1.

2. *Shushan* — Susa. Though then comparatively insignificant, it was destined to be the capital of Persia after Cyrus' time. Therefore Daniel is transported into it, as being the capital of the kingdom signified by the two-horned ram (~~<400E>~~Nehemiah 1:1 ~~<700E>~~Esther 1:2-5).

*Elam* — west of Persia proper, east of Babylonia, south of Media. Daniel was not present there personally, but *in vision*.

*Ulai* — called in PLINY Euloeus; by the Greeks, Choaspes. Now Kerah, or Karasu. So in ~~<200E>~~Daniel 10:4 he receives a vision near another river, the Hiddekel. So Ezekiel (~~<300E>~~Ezekiel 1:1) at the Chebar. Perhaps because synagogues used to be built near rivers, as before praying they washed their hands in the water [ROSENMULLER], (~~<800E>~~Psalm 137:1).

3. *two horns* — The “two” ought not to be in italics, as if it were not in the original; for it is expressed by the *Hebrew dual*. “Horn” in the East is the symbol of power and royalty.

**one ... higher than ... other ... the higher came up last** — Persia, which was of little note till Cyrus' time, became then ascendant over Media, the more ancient kingdom. Darius was sixty-two years old (<sup>2765</sup>Daniel 5:31) when he began to reign; during his short reign of two years, being a weak king (<sup>2700</sup>Daniel 6:1-3), the government was almost entirely in Cyrus' hands. Hence HERODOTUS does not mention Darius; but XENOPHON does under the name of Cyaxares II. The "ram" here corresponds to the "bear" (<sup>2705</sup>Daniel 7:5), symbolizing *clumsy firmness*. The king of Persia wore a jewelled ram's head of gold instead of a diadem, such as are seen on the pillars at Persepolis. Also the *Hebrew* for "ram" springs from the same root as "Elam," or Persia [NEWTON]. The "one horn higher than the other" answers to the bear "raising itself *on one side*" (compare *Note*, see on <sup>2705</sup>Daniel 7:5).

**4. ram pushing westward** — Persia conquered westward Babylon, Mesopotamia, Syria, Asia Minor.

**northward** — Colchis, Armenia, Iberia, and the dwellers on the Caspian Sea.

**southward** — Judea, Egypt, Ethiopia, Libya; also India, under Darius. He does not say *eastward*, for the Persians themselves came from the east (<sup>2341</sup>Isaiah 46:11).

**did according to his will** — (<sup>2713</sup>Daniel 11:3,16; compare <sup>2759</sup>Daniel 5:19).

**5. he-goat** — Graeco-Macedonia.

**notable horn** — Alexander. "Touched not ... ground," implies the incredible swiftness of his conquests; he overran the world in less than twelve years. The he-goat answers to the leopard (<sup>2706</sup>Daniel 7:6). Caranus, the first king of Macedonia, was said to have been led by *goats* to Edessa, which he made the seat of his kingdom, and called aegae, that is, "goat-city."

**6. standing before the river** — Ulai. It was at the "river" Granicus that Alexander fought his first victorious battle against Darius, 334 B.C.

**7. moved with choler** — Alexander represented the concentrated wrath of Greece against Persia for the Persian invasions of Greece; also for the Persian cruelties to Greeks, and Darius' attempts to seduce Alexander's soldiers to treachery [NEWTON].

**stamped upon him** — In 331 B.C. he defeated Darius Codomanus, and in 330 burned Persepolis and completed the conquest of Persia.

**none ... could deliver** — Not the immense hosts of Persia could save it from the small army of Alexander (<sup><49316></sup>Psalm 33:16).

**8. when he was strong ... great horn was broken** — The empire was in full strength at Alexander's death by fever at Babylon, and seemed then least likely to fall. Yet it was then "broken." His natural brother, Philip Aridoeus, and his two sons, Alexander aegus and Hercules, in fifteen months were murdered.

**four ... toward ... four winds** — Seleucus, in the east, obtained Syria, Babylonia, Media, etc.; Cassander, in the west, Macedon Thessaly, Greece; PTOLEMY, in the south, Egypt, Cyprus, etc.; Lysimachus, in the north, Thrace, Cappadocia, and the north parts of Asia Minor.

**9. little horn** — not to be confounded with the little horn of the fourth kingdom in <sup><2008></sup>Daniel 7:8. The little horn in <sup><2008></sup>Daniel 7:8 comes as an eleventh horn after ten preceding horns. In <sup><2089></sup>Daniel 8:9 it is not an independent fifth horn, after the four previous ones, but it arises out of one of the four existing horns. This horn is explained (<sup><2085></sup>Daniel 8:23) to be "a king of fierce countenance," etc. Antiochus Epiphanes is meant. Greece with all its refinement produces the first, that is, the Old Testament Antichrist. Antiochus had an extraordinary love of art, which expressed itself in grand temples. He wished to substitute Zeus Olympius for Jehovah at Jerusalem. Thus first heathen civilization from below, and revealed religion from above, came into collision. Identifying himself with Jupiter, his aim was to make *his own* worship universal (compare <sup><2085></sup>Daniel 8:25 with <sup><2139></sup>Daniel 11:36); so mad was he in this that he was called Epimanes (maniac) instead of Epiphanes. None of the previous world rulers, Nebuchadnezzar (<sup><2083></sup>Daniel 4:31-34), Darius (<sup><2027></sup>Daniel 6:27,28), Cyrus (<sup><4500></sup>Ezra 1:2-4), Artaxerxes Longimanus (<sup><4572></sup>Ezra 7:12), had systematically opposed the Jews' religious worship. Hence the need of prophecy to prepare them for Antiochus. The struggle of the Maccabees was a fruit of Daniel's prophecy (I Maccabees 2:59). He is the forerunner of the final Antichrist, standing in the same relation to the first advent of Christ that Antichrist does to His second coming. The sins in Israel which gave rise to the Greek Antichrist were that some Jews adopted Hellenic customs (compare <sup><2139></sup>Daniel 11:30,32), erecting theaters, and regarding all religions alike, sacrificing to Jehovah, but at the same time sending money for sacrifices to Hercules. Such shall be the state of the world when ripe for Antichrist. At <sup><2089></sup>Daniel 8:9 and <sup><2085></sup>Daniel 8:23 the description passes from the literal Antiochus to features which, though partially attributed to him, hold good in their fullest sense only of his antitype, the New Testament Antichrist. The Mohammedan Antichrist may also be included; answering to the Euphratean (Turk) horsemen (<sup><6094></sup>Revelation 9:14-21), loosed "an

hour, a day, a month, a year” (391 years, in the year-day theory), to scourge corrupted, idolatrous Christianity. In A.D. 637 the Saracen Moslem mosque of Omar was founded on the site of the temple, “treading under foot the sanctuary” (<sup>2781</sup>Daniel 8:11-13); and there it still remains. The first conquest of the Turks over Christians was in A.D. 1281; and 391 years after they reached their zenith of power and began to decline, Sobieski defeating them at Vienna. Mohammed II, called “the conqueror,” reigned A.D. 1451-1481, in which period Constantinople fell 391 years after brings us to our own day, in which Turkey’s fall is imminent.

**waxed ... great, toward ... south** — (<sup>27125</sup>Daniel 11:25). Antiochus fought against PTOLEMY Philometer and Egypt, that is, the south.

**toward the east** — He fought against those who attempted a change of government in Persia.

**toward the pleasant land** — Judea, “the glorious land” (<sup>27116</sup>Daniel 11:16,41,45; compare <sup>4981</sup>Psalms 48:2 <sup>2516</sup>Ezekiel 20:6,15). Its chief *pleasantness* consists in its being God’s chosen land (<sup>49213</sup>Psalms 132:13 <sup>4189</sup>Jeremiah 3:19). Into it Antiochus made his inroad after his return from Egypt.

**10. great, even to ... host of heaven** — explained in <sup>27824</sup>Daniel 8:24, “the mighty and holy people,” that is, the Jews (<sup>27021</sup>Daniel 7:21) and their priests (compare <sup>2321</sup>Isaiah 24:21). The Levites’ service is called “a warfare” (<sup>40824</sup>Numbers 8:24,25, *Margin*). Great civil and religious powers are symbolized by “stars” (<sup>40829</sup>Matthew 24:29). See I Maccabees 1:25, etc. I Maccabees 2:35, etc. I Maccabees 5:2,12,13. TREGELLES refers “stars” to those Jews whose portion from God is heavenly glory (<sup>27113</sup>Daniel 12:3), being believers in Him who is above at God’s right hand: not the blinded Jews.

**cast ... stars to the ground** — So Babel, as type of Antichrist, is described (<sup>23413</sup>Isaiah 14:13,14), “I will exalt my throne above the stars of God.” Compare <sup>46124</sup>Revelation 12:4; II Maccabees 9:10, as to Antiochus.

**11. to the prince of the host** — that is, God Himself, the Lord of Sabaoth, the hosts in heaven and earth, stars, angels, and earthly ministers. So <sup>27825</sup>Daniel 8:25, “he shall stand up against the *Prince of princes*”; “against the God of gods” (<sup>27136</sup>Daniel 11:36; compare <sup>27018</sup>Daniel 7:8). He not only opposes God’s ancient people, but also God Himself.

**daily sacrifice** — offered morning and evening (<sup>40238</sup>Exodus 29:38,39).

**taken away** — by Antiochus (I Maccabees 1:20-50).

**sanctuary ... cast down** — Though robbed of its treasures, it was not strictly cast down” by Antiochus. So that a fuller accomplishment is future. Antiochus took away the daily sacrifice for a few years; the Romans, for many ages, and “cast down” the temple; and Antichrist, in connection with Rome, the fourth kingdom, shall do so again after the Jews in their own land, still unbelieving, shall have rebuilt the temple, and restored the Mosaic ritual: God giving them up to him “by reason of transgression” (<sup>2782</sup>Daniel 8:12), that is, not owning the worship so rendered [TREGELLES]; and then the opposition of the horn to the “truth” is especially mentioned.

**12. an host** — rather, “the host was given up to him,” that is, *the holy people* were given into his hands. So in <sup>2780</sup>Daniel 8:10 “the host” is used; and again in <sup>2783</sup>Daniel 8:13, where also “give” is used as here for “giving up” for destruction (compare <sup>2706</sup>Daniel 11:6) [MAURER].

**against ... daily sacrifice** — rather (the host was given up for him to tread upon), “together with the daily sacrifice” (compare <sup>2783</sup>Daniel 8:13).

**by reason of transgression** — I Maccabees 1:11-16 traces all the calamities suffered under Antiochus to the *transgression* of certain Jews who introduced heathen customs into Jerusalem just before. But *transgression* was not *at the full* (<sup>2783</sup>Daniel 8:23) under Antiochus; for Onias the high priest administered the laws in godliness at the time (II Maccabees 3:1). Therefore the “transgression” must refer to that of the Jews hereafter restored to Palestine in unbelief.

**the truth** — the worship of the true God. <sup>2594</sup>Isaiah 59:14, “Truth is fallen in the street.”

**practiced, and prospered** — Whatever he undertook succeeded (<sup>2706</sup>Daniel 8:4 11:28,36).

**13. that certain saint** — Daniel did not know the names of these two holy angels, but saw only that one was speaking to the other.

**How long shall be the vision concerning ... daily sacrifice** — How long shall the daily sacrifice be suspended?

**transgression of desolation** — literally, “making desolate,” that is, Antiochus *desolating profanation* of the temple (<sup>2713</sup>Daniel 11:31 12:11). Compare as to Rome and the last Antichrist, <sup>4185</sup>Matthew 24:15.

**14. unto me** — The answer is to *Daniel*, not to the inquirer, for the latter had asked in Daniel’s name; as vice versa the saint or angel (<sup>18515</sup>Job 15:15 <sup>1806</sup>Psalms 89:6,7) speaks of the vision granted to Daniel, as if it had been granted to himself. For holy men are in Scripture represented as having

attendant angels, with whom they are in a way identified in interests. If the conversation had been limited to the angels, it could have been of no use to us. But God conveys it to prophetic men, for our good, through the ministry of angels.

*two thousand ... three hundred days* — literally, “mornings and evenings,” specified in connection with the *morning and evening* sacrifice. Compare <sup>GEN 1:5</sup>Genesis 1:5. Six years and a hundred ten days. This includes not only the three and a half years during which the daily sacrifice was *forbidden* by Antiochus [JOSEPHUS, *Wars of the Jews*, 1:1.1], but the whole series of events whereby it was practically interrupted: beginning with the “little horn waxing great toward the pleasant land,” and “casting down some of the host” (<sup>DAN 8:9,10</sup>Daniel 8:9,10); namely, when in 171 B.C., or the month Sivan in the year 142 of the era of the Seleucidae, the sacrifices began to be neglected, owing to the high priest Jason introducing at Jerusalem Grecian customs and amusements, the palaestra and gymnasium; ending with the death of Antiochus, 165 B.C., or the month Shebath, in the year 148 of the Seleucid era. Compare I Maccabees 1:11-15; II Maccabees 4:9, etc. The reason for the greater minuteness of historical facts and dates, given in Daniel’s prophecies, than in those of the New Testament, is that Israel, not having yet the clear views which Christians have of immortality and the heavenly inheritance, could only be directed to the earthly future: for it was on earth the looked-for Messiah was to appear, and the sum and subject of Old Testament prophecy was *the kingdom of God upon earth*. The minuteness of the revelation of Israel’s earthly destiny was to compensate for the absence, in the Old Testament, of views of heavenly glory. Thus, in <sup>DAN 9:24-27</sup>Daniel 9:24-27, the times of Messiah are foretold to the very year; in <sup>DAN 8:14</sup>Daniel 8:14 the times of Antiochus, even to the day; and in <sup>DAN 11:5-20</sup>Daniel 11:5-20 the Syro-Egyptian struggles in most minute detail. TREGELLES thinks the twenty-three hundred “days” answer to the week of years (<sup>DAN 9:27</sup>Daniel 9:27), during which the destroying prince (<sup>DAN 9:26</sup>Daniel 9:26) makes a covenant, which he breaks in the midst of the week (namely, at the end of three and a half years). The seven years exceed the twenty-three hundred days by considerably more than a half year. This period of the seven years’ excess above the twenty-three hundred days may be allotted to the preparations needed for setting up the temple-worship, with Antichrist’s permission to the restored Jews, according to his “covenant” with them; and the twenty-three hundred days may date from the actual setting up of the worship. But, says AUBERLEN, the more accurate to a day the dates as to Antiochus are given, the less should we say the 1290, or 1335 days (<sup>DAN 12:11,12</sup>Daniel 12:11,12) correspond to the half week (roughly), and the twenty-three hundred to the whole. The event, however, may, in the case of Antichrist, show a correspondence between the days

here given and <sup>2102</sup>Daniel 9:27, such as is not yet discernible. The term of twenty-three hundred days cannot refer twenty-three hundred years of the treading down of Christianity by Mohammedanism, as this would leave the greater portion of the time yet future; whereas, Mohammedanism is fast waning. If the twenty-three hundred *days* mean *years*, dating from Alexander's conquests, 334 B.C. to 323, we should arrive at about the close of the sixth thousand years of the world, just as the 1260 years (<sup>2105</sup>Daniel 7:25) from Justinian's decree arrive at the same terminus. The Jews' tradition represents the seventh thousand as the millennium. CUMMING remarks, 480 B.C. is the date of the waning of the Persian empire before Greece; deducting 480 from 2300, we have 1820; and in 1821, Turkey, the successor of the Greek empire, began to wane, and Greece became a separate kingdom. See on <sup>2121</sup>Daniel 12:11.

**cleansed** — literally, "justified," vindicated from profanation. Judas Maccabeus celebrated the feast of dedication after the cleansing, on the twenty-fifth of the ninth month, Kisleu (I Maccabees 4:51-58; II Maccabees 10:1-7; <sup>6102</sup>John 10:22). As to the antitypical dedication of the new temple, see <sup>6401</sup>Ezekiel 43:1-27, etc.; also <sup>6101</sup>Amos 9:11,12.

**16. Gabriel** — meaning, "the strength of God."

**17. the time of the end** — so <sup>2109</sup>Daniel 8:19 <sup>2113</sup>Daniel 11:35,36,40. The event being to take place at "the time of the end" makes it likely that the Antichrist ultimately referred to (besides the immediate reference to Antiochus) in this chapter, and the one in <sup>2108</sup>Daniel 7:8, are one and the same. The objection that the one in the seventh chapter springs out of the ten divisions of the Roman earth, the fourth kingdom, the one in the eighth chapter and the eleventh chapter from one of the four divisions of the third kingdom, Greece, is answered thus: The four divisions of the Grecian empire, having become parts of the Roman empire, shall at the end form four of its ten final divisions [TREGELLES]. However, the origin from one of the four parts of the third kingdom may be *limited to Antiochus*, the immediate subject of the eighth and eleventh chapter, while the ulterior typical reference of these chapters (namely, Antichrist) may belong to one of the ten Roman divisions, not *necessarily* one formerly of the four of the third kingdom. The event will tell. "Time of the end" may apply to the time of Antiochus. For it is the prophetic phrase for the time of fulfillment, seen always at the end of the prophetic horizon (<sup>6401</sup>Genesis 49:1 <sup>6204</sup>Numbers 24:14).

**19. the last end of the indignation** — God's displeasure against the Jews for their sins. For their comfort they are told, the calamities about to come

are not to be for ever. The “time” is limited (<sup>2027</sup>Daniel 9:27 11:27,35,36 12:7 Habakkuk 2:3).

**21. *the first king*** — Philip was king of Macedon before Alexander, but the latter was the first who, as a generalissimo of Greece, subdued the Persian empire.

**22. *not in his power*** — not with the power which Alexander possessed [MAURER]. An empire united, as under Alexander, is more powerful than one divided, as under the four Diadochi.

**23. *transgressors are come to the full*** — This does not hold good of the times of Antiochus, but of the closing times of the Christian era. Compare <sup>2188</sup>Luke 18:8, and <sup>5102</sup>2 Timothy 3:1-9, as to the wickedness of the world in general just before Christ’s second coming. *Israel’s* guilt, too, shall then be at the full, when they who rejected Christ shall receive Antichrist; fulfilling Jesus words, “I am come in My Father’s name, and ye receive Me not; if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive” (compare <sup>4156</sup>Genesis 15:16 <sup>4132</sup>Matthew 23:32 <sup>5126</sup>1 Thessalonians 2:16).

***of fierce countenance*** — (<sup>4580</sup>Deuteronomy 28:50); one who will spare neither old nor young.

***understanding dark sentences*** — rather, “artifices” [GESENIUS]. Antiochus made himself master of Egypt and Jerusalem successively by *craft* (I Maccabees 1:30, etc.; II Maccabees 5:24, etc.).

**24. *not by his own power*** — which in the beginning was “little” (<sup>2789</sup>Daniel 8:9 7:8); but by gaining over others through craft, the once *little* horn became “mighty” (compare <sup>2785</sup>Daniel 8:25 11:23). To be fully realized by Antichrist. He shall act by the power of Satan, who shall then be permitted to work through him in unrestricted license, such as he has not now (<sup>6612</sup>Revelation 13:2); hence the ten kingdoms shall give the beast their power (<sup>5112</sup>2 Thessalonians 2:9-12 <sup>6673</sup>Revelation 17:13).

***prosper and practice*** — prosper in all that he attempts (<sup>2782</sup>Daniel 8:12).

***holy people*** — His persecutions are especially directed against the *Jews*.

**25. *by peace*** — by pretending “peace” and friendship; *in the midst of security* [GESENIUS], suddenly striking his blow (compare *Note*, see on <sup>2458</sup>Jeremiah 15:8). “A spoiler *at noon-day*.”

***also ... against the Prince of princes*** — not merely against the Jews (<sup>2781</sup>Daniel 8:11 11:36).

***broken without hand*** — by God’s special visitation. The stone “cut out of the mountain without hands,” that is, Christ is to smite the world power image *on his feet* (<sup>27034</sup>Daniel 2:34), that is, in its last development (compare <sup>27011</sup>Daniel 7:11). Antiochus horrible death by worms and ulcers, when on his way to Judea, intending to take vengeance for the defeat of his armies by the Maccabees, was a primary fulfillment, foreshadowing God’s judgment on the last enemy of the Jewish Church.

**26. *shut ... up ... vision*** — implying the vision was *not to be understood* for the present. In <sup>66210</sup>Revelation 22:10 it is said, “*Seal not the vision, for the time is at hand.*” What in Daniel’s time was hidden was more fully explained in Revelation, and as the time draws nearer, it will be clearer still.

***it shall be for many days*** — It refers to remote times (<sup>34127</sup>Ezekiel 12:27).

**27. *I ... was sick*** — through grief at the calamities coming on my people and the Church of God (compare <sup>39A24</sup>Psalms 102:14).

***afterward I ... did the king’s business*** — He who holds nearest communion with heaven can best discharge the duties of common life.

***none understood it*** — He had heard of kings, but knew not their names; He foresaw the events, but not the time when they were to take place; thereupon he could only feel “astonished,” and leave all with the omniscient God [JEROME].

# CHAPTER 9

## ~~2006~~ DANIEL 9:1-27.

### DANIEL'S CONFESSION AND PRAYER FOR JERUSALEM: GABRIEL COMFORTS HIM BY THE PROPHECY OF THE SEVENTY WEEKS.

The world powers here recede from view; Israel, and the salvation by Messiah promised to it, are the subject of revelation. Israel had naturally expected salvation at the end of the captivity. Daniel is therefore told, that, after the seventy years of the captivity, seventy times seven must elapse, and that even then Messiah would not come in glory as the Jews might through misunderstanding expect from the earlier prophets, but by dying would put away sin. This ninth chapter (Messianic prophecy) stands between the two visions of the Old Testament Antichrist, to comfort “the wise.” In the interval between Antiochus and Christ, no further revelation was needed; therefore, as in the first part of the book, so in the second, Christ and Antichrist in connection are the theme.

**1. *first year of Darius*** — Cyaxares II, in whose name Cyrus, his nephew, son-in-law, and successor, took Babylon, 538 B.C. The date of this chapter is therefore 537 B.C., a year before Cyrus permitted the Jews to return from exile, and sixty-nine years after Daniel had been carried captive at the beginning of the captivity, 606 B.C.

***son of Ahasuerus*** — called Astyages by XENOPHON. Ahasuerus was a name common to many of the kings of Medo-Persia.

***made king*** — The phrase implies that Darius owed the kingdom not to his own prowess, but to that of another, namely, Cyrus.

**2. *understood by books*** — rather, “letters,” that is, Jeremiah’s letter (~~2300~~ Jeremiah 29:10) to the captives in Babylon; also ~~2511~~ Jeremiah 25:11,12; compare ~~4821~~ 2 Chronicles 36:21 ~~2818~~ Jeremiah 30:18 31:38. God’s promises are the ground on which we should, like Daniel, rest sure hope; not so as to make our prayers needless, but rather to encourage them.

**3. *prayer ... supplications*** — literally, “intercessions ... entreaties for mercy.” Praying for *blessings*, and deprecating evils.

**4. *my confession*** — according to God’s promises in <sup><B339></sup>Leviticus 26:39-42, that if Israel in exile for sin should repent and *confess*, God would remember for them His covenant with Abraham (compare <sup><B501></sup>Deuteronomy 30:1-5 <sup><B392></sup>Jeremiah 29:12-14 <sup><S040></sup>James 4:10). God’s promise was absolute, but prayer also was ordained as about to precede its fulfillment, this too being the work of God *in* His people, as much as the *external* restoration which was to follow. So it shall be at Israel’s final restoration (<sup><A9213></sup>Psalms 102:13-17). Daniel takes his countrymen’s place of confession of sin, identifying himself with them, and, as their representative and intercessory priest, “accepts the punishment of their iniquity.” Thus he typifies Messiah, the Sin-bearer and great Intercessor. The prophet’s own life and experience form the fit starting point of the prophecy concerning the sin atonement. He prays for Israel’s restoration as associated in the prophets (compare <sup><B104></sup>Jeremiah 31:4,11,12,31, etc.) with the hope of Messiah. The revelation, now granted, analyzes into its successive parts that which the prophets, in prophetic perspective, heretofore saw together in one; namely, the redemption from captivity, and the full Messianic redemption. God’s servants, who, like Noah’s father (<sup><B63></sup>Genesis 5:29), hoped many a time that now the Comforter of their afflictions was at hand, had to wait from age to age, and to view preceding fulfillments only as pledges of the coming of Him whom they so earnestly desired to see (<sup><A137></sup>Matthew 13:17); as now also Christians, who believe that the Lord’s second coming is nigh, are expected to continue waiting. So Daniel is informed of a long period of seventy prophetic weeks before Messiah’s coming, instead of seventy years, as *he* might have expected (compare <sup><A829></sup>Matthew 18:21,22) [AUBERLEN].

***great and dreadful God*** — as we know to our cost by the calamities we suffer. The *greatness* of God and His *dreadful* abhorrence of sin should prepare sinners for reverent, humble acknowledgment of the justice of their punishment.

***keeping ... covenant and mercy*** — that is, the covenant of Thy mercy, whereby Thou hast promised to deliver us, not for our merits, but of Thy mercy (<sup><B52></sup>Ezekiel 36:22,23). So weak and sinful is man that any covenant for good on God’s part with him, to take effect, must depend solely on His grace. If He be a God to be *feared* for His justice, He is one to be *trusted* for His “mercy.”

***love ... keep his commandments*** — Keeping His commandments is the only sure test of love to God (<sup><B415></sup>John 14:15).

**5. Compare Nehemiah’s confession** (<sup><A001></sup>Nehemiah 9:1-38).

*sinned ... committed iniquity ... done wickedly ... rebelled* — a climax. Erred in *ignorance* ... sinned by *infirmity* ... *habitually and wilfully* done wickedness ... as *open and obstinate rebels* set ourselves against God.

**6. *prophets ... spake ... to our kings ... to all the people*** — They fearlessly warned all without respect of persons.

**7. *confusion of faces, as at this day*** — Shame at our guilt, betrayed in our countenance, is what belongs to us; as our punishment “at this day” attests.

*near, and ... far off* — the chastisement, however varied, some Jews not being cast off so far from Jerusalem as others, all alike were sharers in the guilt.

**9. *mercies*** — The *plural* intensifies the force; mercy manifold and exhibited in countless ways. As it is humbling to recollect “*righteousness* belongeth unto God,” so it is comforting, that “*mercies* belong to the Lord OUR God.”

*though we have rebelled* — rather, “since,” etc. [*Vulgate*], (<sup><4251></sup>Psalm 25:11). Our punishment is not inconsistent with His “*mercies*,” *since* we have rebelled against Him.

**10. *set before us*** — not ambiguously, but plainly, so that we were without excuse.

**11. *all*** — (<sup><944></sup>Psalm 14:3 <sup><682></sup>Romans 3:12).

*the curse ... and ... oath ... in ... law* — the *curse* against Israel, if disobedient, which God ratified by *oath* (<sup><634></sup>Leviticus 26:14-39; Deut 27:15-26 28:15-68 29).

**12. *confirmed his words*** — showed by the punishments we suffer, that His words were no idle threats.

*under ... heaven hath not been done as ... upon Jerusalem* — (<sup><112></sup>Lamentations 1:12).

**13. *yet made we not our prayer before*** — literally, “soothed not the face of.” Not even our chastisement has taught us penitence (<sup><213></sup>Isaiah 9:13 <sup><413></sup>Jeremiah 5:3 <sup><370></sup>Hosea 7:10). Diseased, we spurn the healing medicine.

*that we might turn*, etc. — Prayer can only be accepted when joined with the desire to *turn* from sin to God (<sup><668></sup>Psalm 66:18 <sup><139></sup>Proverbs 28:9).

*understand thy truth* — “attentively regard Thy faithfulness” in fulfilling Thy promises, and also Thy threats [CALVIN]. *Thy law* (<sup><12></sup>Daniel 8:12), [MAURER].

**14. *watched upon the evil*** — expressing ceaseless vigilance that His people’s sins might not escape His judgment, as a watchman on guard night and day (<sup><18416></sup>Job 14:16 <sup><3628></sup>Jeremiah 31:28 44:27). God *watching* upon the Jews punishment forms a striking contrast to the Jews slumbering in their sins.

***God is righteous*** — True penitents “justify” God, “ascribing righteousness to Him,” instead of complaining of their punishment as too severe (<sup><4088></sup>Nehemiah 9:33 <sup><3818></sup>Job 36:3 <sup><4506></sup>Psalm 51:4 <sup><2588></sup>Lamentations 3:39-42).

**15. *brought thy people ... out of ... Egypt*** — a proof to all ages that the seed of Abraham is Thy covenant-people. That ancient benefit gives us hope that Thou wilt confer a like one on us now under similar circumstances (<sup><4808></sup>Psalm 80:8-14 <sup><4421></sup>Jeremiah 32:21 23:7,8).

***as at this day*** — is known.

**16. *thy righteousness*** — not stern *justice* in punishing, but Thy *faithfulness* to Thy promises of mercy to them who trust in Thee (<sup><4800></sup>Psalm 31:1 143:1).

***thy city*** — chosen as *Thine* in the election of grace, which changes not.

***for ... iniquities of ... fathers*** — (<sup><0205></sup>Exodus 20:5). He does not impugn God’s justice in this, as did the murmurers (<sup><3808></sup>Ezekiel 18:2,3; compare <sup><3829></sup>Jeremiah 31:29).

***thy people ... a reproach*** — which brings reproach on Thy name. “All the nations that are about us” will say that Thou, Jehovah, wast not able to save Thy peculiar people. So <sup><2097></sup>Daniel 9:17, “for the Lord’s sake”; <sup><2099></sup>Daniel 9:19, “for Thine own sake” (<sup><2889></sup>Isaiah 48:9,11).

**17. *cause thy face to shine*** — metaphor from the sun, which gladdens all that it beams upon (<sup><0025></sup>Numbers 6:25 Malachi 4:2).

**18. *present ... supplications*** — literally, “cause to fall,” etc. (compare *Note*, see on <sup><3817></sup>Jeremiah 36:7).

**19.** The short broken ejaculations and repetitions show the intense fervor of his supplications.

***defer not*** — He implies that the seventy years are now all but complete.

***thine own sake*** — often repeated, as being the strongest plea (<sup><2421></sup>Jeremiah 14:21).

**20. *whiles I was speaking*** — repeated in <sup><2021></sup>Daniel 9:21; emphatically marking that the answer was given before the prayer was completed, as God promised (<sup><2309></sup>Isaiah 30:19 65:24; compare <sup><4315></sup>Psalms 32:5).

**21. *I had seen in the vision at the beginning*** — namely, in the former vision by the river Ulai (<sup><2001></sup>Daniel 8:1,16).

***fly swiftly*** — literally, “with weariness,” that is, move swiftly as one breathless and wearied out with quick running [GESENIUS]. *English Version* is better (<sup><2302></sup>Isaiah 6:2 <sup><2006></sup>Ezekiel 1:6 <sup><6406></sup>Revelation 14:6).

***time of ... evening oblation*** — the ninth hour, three o’clock (compare <sup><1836></sup>1 Kings 18:36). As formerly, when the temple stood, this hour was devoted to sacrifices, so now to prayer. Daniel, during the whole captivity to the very last, with pious patriotism never forgot God’s temple-worship, but speaks of its rites long abolished, as if still in use.

**22. *to give thee ... understanding*** — <sup><2006></sup>Daniel 8:16; <sup><2026></sup>Daniel 8:26 shows that the symbolical vision had not been understood. God therefore now gives “information” directly, instead of by symbol, which required interpretation.

**23. *At the beginning of thy supplications***, etc. — The promulgation of the divine decree was made in heaven to the angels as soon as Daniel began to pray.

***came forth*** — from the divine throne; so <sup><2022></sup>Daniel 9:22.

***thou art greatly beloved*** — literally, “a man of desires” (compare <sup><2306></sup>Ezekiel 23:6,12); the object of God’s delight. As the apocalyptic prophet of the New Testament was “the disciple whom Jesus loved,” so the apocalyptic prophet of the Old Testament was “greatly beloved” of God.

***the vision*** — the further revelation as to Messiah in connection with Jeremiah’s prophecy of seventy years of the captivity. The charge to “understand” is the same as in <sup><4215></sup>Matthew 24:15, where Rome primarily, and Antichrist ultimately, is referred to (compare *Note*, see on <sup><2027></sup>Daniel 9:27).

**24. *Seventy weeks*** — namely, of years; literally, “Seventy sevens”; seventy heptads or hebdomads; four hundred ninety years; expressed in a form of “concealed definiteness” [HENGSTENBERG], a usual way with the prophets. The Babylonian captivity is a turning point in the history of the kingdom of God. It terminated the free Old Testament theocracy. Up to that time Israel, though oppressed at times, was; as a rule, free. From the Babylonian captivity the theocracy never recovered its full freedom down to its entire

suspension by Rome; and this period of Israel's subjection to the Gentiles is to continue till the millennium (<sup>(1000)</sup>Revelation 20:1-15), when Israel shall be restored as head of the New Testament theocracy, which will embrace the whole earth. The free theocracy ceased in the first year of Nebuchadnezzar, and the fourth of Jehoiakim; the year of the world 3338, the point at which the seventy years of the captivity. begin. Heretofore Israel had a right, if subjugated by a foreign king, to shake off the yoke (<sup>(1000)</sup>Judges 4:1-5:31 <sup>(2000)</sup>2 Kings 18:7) as an unlawful one, at the first opportunity. But the prophets (<sup>(2000)</sup>Jeremiah 27:9-11) declared it to be *God's will* that they should submit to Babylon. Hence every effort of Jehoiakim, Jeconiah, and Zedekiah to rebel was vain. The period of the world times, and of Israel's depression, from the Babylonian captivity to the millennium, though abounding more in afflictions (for example, the two destructions of Jerusalem, Antiochus' persecution, and those which Christians suffered), contains all that was good in the preceding ones, summed up in Christ, but in a way visible only to the eye of faith. Since He came as a servant, He chose for His appearing the period darkest of all as to His people's temporal state. Always fresh persecutors have been rising, whose end is destruction, and so it shall be with the last enemy, Antichrist. As the Davidic epoch is the point of the covenant-people's highest glory, so the captivity is that of their lowest humiliation. Accordingly, the people's sufferings are reflected in the picture of the suffering Messiah. He is no longer represented as the theocratic King, the Antitype of David, but as the Servant of God and Son of man; at the same time the cross being the way to glory (compare <sup>(2000)</sup>Daniel 9:1-27 with <sup>(2000)</sup>Daniel 2:34,35,44 12:7). In the second and seventh chapters, Christ's first coming is not noticed, for Daniel's object was to prophesy to his nation as to the whole period from the destruction to the re-establishment of *Israel*; but this ninth chapter minutely predicts Christ's first coming, and its effects on the covenant people. *The seventy weeks date thirteen years before the rebuilding of Jerusalem*; for then the re-establishment of the theocracy began, namely, at *the return of Ezra to Jerusalem*, 457 B.C. So Jeremiah's seventy years of the captivity begin 606 B.C., eighteen years before the destruction of Jerusalem, for then Judah ceased to exist as an independent theocracy, having fallen under the sway of Babylon. Two periods are marked in Ezra:

- (1) The return from the captivity under Jeshua and Zerubbabel, and rebuilding of the *temple*, which was the first anxiety of the theocratic nation.
- (2) The return of Ezra (regarded by the Jews as a second Moses) from Persia to Jerusalem, the restoration of *the city, the nationality, and the law*.

Artaxerxes, in the *seventh* year of his reign, gave him the commission which virtually includes permission to rebuild the city, afterwards confirmed to, and carried out by, Nehemiah in the *twentieth* year (<sup>150B</sup>Ezra 9:9 7,11, etc.). <sup>2025</sup>Daniel 9:25, “from the going forth of the commandment *to build Jerusalem*,” proves that the second of the two periods is referred to. The words in <sup>202B</sup>Daniel 9:24 are not, “are determined upon the holy city,” but “*upon thy people and thy holy city*”; thus the restoration of the religious *national polity* and the law (the inner work fulfilled by Ezra the priest), and the rebuilding of the *houses and walls* (the outer work of Nehemiah, the governor), are both included in <sup>2025</sup>Daniel 9:25, “restore and build Jerusalem.” “Jerusalem” represents both the city, the body, and the congregation, the soul of the state. Compare <sup>194B</sup>Psalms 46:1-11 48:1-14 87:1-7. The starting-point of the seventy weeks dated from eighty-one years after Daniel received the prophecy: the object being not to fix *for him* definitely the time, but for the Church: the prophecy taught *him* that the Messianic redemption, which he thought near, was separated from him by at least a half millennium. Expectation was sufficiently kept alive by the *general* conception of the time; not only the Jews, but many Gentiles looked for some great Lord of the earth to spring from Judea *at that very time* [TACITUS, *Histories*, 5.13; SUETONIUS, *Vespasian*, 4]. Ezra’s placing of Daniel in the canon immediately before his own book and Nehemiah’s was perhaps owing to his feeling that he himself brought about the beginning of the fulfillment of the prophecy (<sup>270B</sup>Daniel 9:20-27) [AUBERLEN].

**determined** — literally, “cut out,” namely, from the whole course of time, for God to deal in a particular manner with Jerusalem.

**thy ... thy** — Daniel had in his prayer often spoken of Israel as “*Thy people, Thy holy city*”; but Gabriel, in reply, speaks of them as *Daniel’s* (“*thy ... thy*”) people and city, God thus intimating that until the “everlasting righteousness” should be brought in by Messiah, He could not fully own them as *His* [TREGELLES] (compare <sup>1237</sup>Exodus 32:7). Rather, as God is wishing to console Daniel and the godly Jews, “the people whom *thou* art so anxiously praying for”; such weight does God give to the intercessions of the righteous (<sup>3166</sup>James 5:16-18).

**finish** — literally “shut up”; remove from God’s sight, that is, abolish (<sup>1510</sup>Psalms 51:9) [LENGKERKE]. The seventy years exile was a punishment, but not a full atonement, for the sin of the people; this would come only after seventy prophetic weeks, through Messiah.

**make an end of** — The *Hebrew* reading, “to steal,” that is, to hide out of sight (from the custom of *sealing* up things to be concealed, compare <sup>1800</sup>Job 9:7), is better supported.

**make reconciliation for** — literally, “to cover,” to overlay (as with pitch, <sup><4034></sup>Genesis 6:14). Compare <sup><4315></sup>Psalms 32:1.

**bring in everlasting righteousness** — namely, the restoration of the normal state between God and man (<sup><2025></sup>Jeremiah 23:5,6); to continue eternally (<sup><3092></sup>Hebrews 9:12 <sup><4416></sup>Revelation 14:6).

**seal up ... vision ... prophecy** — literally, “prophet.” To give the seal of confirmation to the prophet and his vision by the fulfillment.

**anoint the Most Holy** — primarily, to “anoint,” or to *consecrate* after its pollution “the Most Holy” *place* but mainly *Messiah*, the antitype to the Most Holy place (<sup><4109></sup>John 2:19-22). The propitiatory in the temple (the same *Greek* word expresses *the mercy seat* and *propitiation*, <sup><4125></sup>Romans 3:25), which the Jews looked for at the restoration from Babylon, shall have its true realization only in Messiah. For it is only when sin is “made an end of” that God’s presence can be perfectly manifested. As to “anoint,” compare <sup><4109></sup>Exodus 40:9,34. Messiah was *anointed* with the Holy Ghost (<sup><4107></sup>Acts 4:27 10:38). So hereafter, God-Messiah will “anoint” or consecrate with His presence the holy place at Jerusalem (<sup><2416></sup>Jeremiah 3:16,17 <sup><3572></sup>Ezekiel 37:27,28), after its pollution by Antichrist, of which the feast of dedication after the pollution by Antiochus was a type.

**25. from the going forth of the commandment** — namely the command from God, whence originated the command of the Persian king (<sup><4164></sup>Ezra 6:14). AUBERLEN remarks, there is but one Apocalypse in each Testament. Its purpose in each is to sum up all the preceding prophecies, previous to the “troublesome times” of the Gentiles, in which there was to be no revelation. Daniel sums up all the previous Messianic prophecy, separating into its individual phases what the prophets had seen in one and the same perspective, the temporary deliverance from captivity and the antitypical final Messianic deliverance. The seventy weeks are separated (<sup><2705></sup>Daniel 9:25-27) into three unequal parts, seven, sixty-two, one. The seventieth is the consummation of the preceding ones, as the Sabbath of God succeeds the working days; an idea suggested by the division into *weeks*. In the sixty-nine weeks Jerusalem is restored, and so a place is prepared for Messiah wherein to accomplish His sabbatic work (<sup><2705></sup>Daniel 9:25,26) of “confirming the covenant” (<sup><2707></sup>Daniel 9:27). The Messianic time is the Sabbath of Israel’s history, in which it had the offer of all God’s mercies, but in which it was cut off for a time by its rejection of them. As the seventy weeks end with seven years, or a week, so they begin with seven times seven, that is, seven weeks. As the seventieth week is separated from the rest *as a period of revelation*, so it may be with the seven weeks. The number *seven* is associated with revelation; for the *seven* spirits of God are

the mediators of all His revelations (<sup><100H></sup>Revelation 1:4 3:1 4:5). Ten is the number of what is human; for example, the world power issues in *ten heads* and *ten horns* (<sup><27B></sup>Daniel 2:42 7:7). *Seventy* is *ten* multiplied by *seven*, the human moulded by the divine. The *seventy* years of exile symbolize the triumph of the world power over Israel. In the seven times seventy years the world number ten is likewise contained, that is, God's people is still under the power of the world ("troublesome times"); but the number of the divine is multiplied by itself; seven times seven years, at the beginning a period of Old Testament revelation to God's people by Ezra, Nehemiah, and Malachi, whose labors extend over about half a century, or *seven weeks*, and whose writings are last in the canon; and in the end, seven years, the period of New Testament revelation in Messiah. The commencing seven weeks of years of Old Testament revelation are hurried over, in order that the chief stress might rest on the Messianic week. Yet the seven weeks of Old Testament revelation are marked by their separation from the sixty-two, to be above those sixty-two wherein there was to be none.

***Messiah the Prince*** — *Hebrew, Nagid*. *Messiah* is Jesus' title in respect to Israel (<sup><81E></sup>Psalm 2:2 <sup><175></sup>Matthew 27:37,42). *Nagid*, as Prince of the *Gentiles* (<sup><280H></sup>Isaiah 55:4). *Nagid* is applied to Titus, only as representative of Christ, who designates the Roman destruction of Jerusalem as, in a sense, His coming (<sup><1B3></sup>Matthew 24:29-31 <sup><622></sup>John 21:22). *Messiah* denotes His calling; *Nagid*, His power. He is to "be cut off, and there shall be nothing for Him." (So the *Hebrew* for "not for Himself," <sup><7B></sup>Daniel 9:26, ought to be translated). Yet He is "the Prince" who is to "come," by His representative at first, to inflict judgment, and at last in person.

***wall*** — the "trench" or "scarp rampart" [TREGELLES]. The *street and trench* include the complete restoration of the city externally and internally, which was during the sixty-nine weeks.

**26. *after threescore and two weeks*** — rather, *the* threescore and two weeks. In this verse, and in <sup><702></sup>Daniel 9:27, Messiah is made the prominent subject, while the fate of the city and sanctuary are secondary, being mentioned only in the second halves of the verses. Messiah appears in a twofold aspect, salvation to believers, judgment on unbelievers (<sup><124></sup>Luke 2:34; compare Malachi 3:1-6 4:1-3). He repeatedly, in Passion week, connects His being "cut off" with *the destruction of the city*, as cause and effect (<sup><137></sup>Matthew 21:37-41 23:37,38 <sup><213></sup>Luke 21:20-24 23:28-31). Israel might naturally expect Messiah's kingdom of glory, if not after the seventy years' captivity, at least at the end of the sixty-two weeks; but, instead of that, shall be His death, and the consequent destruction of Jerusalem.

**not for himself** — rather, “there shall be nothing to Him” [HENGSTENBERG]; not that the real object of His first coming (His *spiritual* kingdom) should be frustrated; but the *earthly* kingdom anticipated by the Jews should, for the present, *come to naught*, and not *then* be realized. TREGELLES refers the title, “the Prince” (<sup>2025</sup>Daniel 9:25), to the time of His entering Jerusalem on an ass’s colt, His only appearance as a king, and six days afterwards put to death as “King of the Jews.”

**the people of the prince** — the Romans, led by Titus, the representative of the world power, ultimately to be transferred to Messiah, and so called by Messiah’s title, “the Prince”; as also because sent by Him, as His instrument of judgment (<sup>4074</sup>Matthew 22:7).

**end thereof** — of the sanctuary. TREGELLES takes it, “the end of the Prince,” the last head of the Roman power, Antichrist.

**with a flood** — namely, of war (<sup>3915</sup>Psalms 90:5 <sup>2387</sup>Isaiah 8:7,8 28:18). Implying the completeness of the catastrophe, “not one stone left on another.”

**unto the end of the war** — rather, “unto the end *there* is war.”

**determined** — by God’s decree (<sup>2303</sup>Isaiah 10:23 28:22).

**27. he shall confirm the covenant** — Christ. The confirmation of the covenant is assigned to Him also elsewhere. <sup>2306</sup>Isaiah 42:6, “I will give thee for a *covenant* of the people” (that is, He in whom the covenant between Israel and God is personally expressed); compare <sup>4221</sup>Luke 22:20, “The new testament in My blood”; Malachi 3:1, “the angel of the covenant”; <sup>3651</sup>Jeremiah 31:31-34, describes the Messianic covenant in full. Contrast <sup>2719</sup>Daniel 11:30,32, “forsake the covenant,” “do wickedly against the covenant.” The prophecy as to Messiah’s *confirming the covenant with many* would comfort the faithful in Antiochus’ times, who suffered partly from persecuting enemies, partly from false friends (<sup>2713</sup>Daniel 11:33-35). Hence arises the similarity of the language here and in <sup>2719</sup>Daniel 11:30,32, referring to Antiochus, the type of Antichrist.

**with many** — (<sup>2531</sup>Isaiah 53:11 <sup>4103</sup>Matthew 20:28 26:28 <sup>4655</sup>Romans 5:15,19 <sup>3025</sup>Hebrews 9:28).

**in ... midst of ... week** — The seventy weeks extend to A.D. 33. Israel was not actually destroyed till A.D. 79, but it was so virtually, A.D. 33, about three or four years after Christ’s death, during which the Gospel was preached exclusively to the Jews. When the Jews persecuted the Church and stoned Stephen (<sup>4075</sup>Acts 7:54-60), the respite of grace granted to them was at an end (<sup>4237</sup>Luke 13:7-9). Israel, having rejected Christ, was rejected

by Christ, and henceforth is counted dead (compare <sup><0007</sup>Genesis 2:17 with <sup><0005</sup>Genesis 5:5 <sup><3101</sup>Hosea 13:1,2), its actual destruction by Titus being the consummation of the removal of the kingdom of God from Israel to the Gentiles (<sup><0146</sup>Matthew 21:43), which is not to be restored until Christ's second coming, when Israel shall be at the head of humanity (<sup><0234</sup>Matthew 23:39 <sup><4006</sup>Acts 1:6,7 <sup><6125</sup>Romans 11:25-31 15). The interval forms for the covenant-people a great parenthesis.

***he shall cause the sacrifice ... oblation to cease*** — distinct from the temporary “*taking away*” of “the daily” (sacrifice) by Antiochus (<sup><0781</sup>Daniel 8:11 11:31). Messiah was to cause all sacrifices and oblations in general to “*cease*” utterly. There is here an *allusion* only to Antiochus' act; to comfort God's people when sacrificial worship was to be trodden down, by pointing them to the Messianic time when salvation would fully come and yet temple sacrifices cease. This is the same consolation as Jeremiah and Ezekiel gave under like circumstances, when the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar was impending (<sup><2486</sup>Jeremiah 3:16 31:31 <sup><3119</sup>Ezekiel 11:19). Jesus died in the middle of the last week, A.D. 30. His prophetic life lasted three and a half years; the very time in which “the saints are given into the hand” of Antichrist (<sup><2025</sup>Daniel 7:25). Three and a half does not, like ten, designate the power of the world in its fullness, but (while opposed to the divine, expressed by *seven*) broken and defeated in its seeming triumph; for immediately after the three and a half times, judgment falls on the victorious world powers (<sup><2025</sup>Daniel 7:25,26). So Jesus' death seemed the triumph of the world, but was really its defeat (<sup><6121</sup>John 12:31). The rending of the veil marked the cessation of sacrifices through Christ's death (<sup><0005</sup>Leviticus 4:6,17 16:2,15 <sup><3014</sup>Hebrews 10:14-18). There cannot be a covenant without sacrifice (<sup><0003</sup>Genesis 8:20 9:17 15:9, etc. <sup><3015</sup>Hebrews 9:15). Here the old covenant is to be confirmed, but in a way peculiar to the New Testament, namely, by the one sacrifice, which would terminate all sacrifices (<sup><3406</sup>Psalms 40:6,11). Thus as the Levitical rites approached their end, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel, with ever increasing clearness, oppose the spiritual new covenant to the transient earthly elements of the old.

***for the overspreading of abominations*** — *On account of the abominations* committed by the unholy people against the Holy One, He shall not only destroy the city and sanctuary (<sup><2025</sup>Daniel 9:25), but shall continue its desolation until the time of the consummation “determined” by God (the phrase is quoted from <sup><2302</sup>Isaiah 10:22,23), when at last the world power shall be judged and dominion be given to the saints of the Most High (<sup><2026</sup>Daniel 7:26,27). AUBERLEN translates, “On account of the desolating *summit* of abominations (compare <sup><0713</sup>Daniel 11:31 12:11; thus the repetition of the same thing as in <sup><2026</sup>Daniel 9:26 is avoided), and till the

consummation which is determined, it (the curse, <sup><2011></sup>Daniel 9:11, foretold by Moses) will pour on the desolated.” Israel reached the summit of abominations, which drew down desolation (<sup><1025></sup>Matthew 24:28), nay, which is the desolation itself, when, after murdering Messiah, they offered sacrifices, Mosaic indeed in form, but heathenish in spirit (compare <sup><2013></sup>Isaiah 1:13 <sup><2011></sup>Ezekiel 5:11). Christ refers to this passage (<sup><1015></sup>Matthew 24:15), “When ye see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand *in the holy place*” (the latter words being *tacitly implied* in “abominations” as being such as are committed *against the sanctuary*). TREGELLES translates, “upon the *wing* of abominations shall be that which causeth desolation”; namely, an idol set up on a wing or pinnacle of the temple (compare <sup><1015></sup>Matthew 4:5) by Antichrist, who makes a covenant with the restored Jews for the last of the seventy weeks of years (fulfilling Jesus’ words, “If another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive”), and for the first three and a half years keeps it, then in the midst of the week breaks it, causing the daily sacrifices to cease. TREGELLES thus identifies the last half week with the time, times, and a half of the persecuting little horn (<sup><2025></sup>Daniel 7:25). But thus there is a gap of at least 1830 years put between the sixty-nine weeks and the seventieth week. SIR ISAAC NEWTON explains the wing (“overspreading”) of abominations to be the Roman ensigns (eagles) brought to the east gate of the temple, and there sacrificed to by the soldiers; the war, ending in the destruction of Jerusalem, lasted from spring A.D. 67 to autumn A.D. 70, that is, just three and a half years, or the last half week of years [JOSEPHUS, *Wars of the Jews*, 6.6].

***poured upon the desolate*** — TREGELLES translates, “the *causer* of desolation,” namely, Antichrist. Compare “abomination *that maketh desolate*” (<sup><2011></sup>Daniel 12:11). Perhaps *both* interpretations of the whole passage may be in part true; the Roman desolator, Titus, being a type of Antichrist, the final desolator of Jerusalem. BACON [*The Advancement of Learning*, 2.3] says, “Prophecies are of the nature of the Author, with whom a thousand years are as one day; and therefore are not fulfilled punctually at once, but have a springing and germinant accomplishment through many years, though the height and fullness of them may refer to one age.”

# CHAPTER 10

## DANIEL 10:1-21.

### DANIEL COMFORTED BY AN ANGELIC VISION.

The tenth through twelfth chapters more fully describe the vision in the eighth chapter by a second vision on the same subject, just as the vision in the seventh chapter explains more fully that in the second. The tenth chapter is the prologue; the eleventh, the prophecy itself; and the twelfth, the epilogue. The tenth chapter unfolds the spiritual worlds as the background of the historical world (<sup>3800E</sup>Job 1:7 2:1, etc. Zechariah 3:1,2 <sup>6621E</sup>Revelation 12:7), and angels as the ministers of God's government of men. As in the world of nature (<sup>4884E</sup>John 5:4 <sup>6600E</sup>Revelation 7:1-3), so in that of history here; Michael, the champion of Israel, and with him another angel, whose aim is to realize God's will in the heathen world, resist the God-opposed spirit of the world. These struggles are not merely symbolical, but real (<sup>0963E</sup>1 Samuel 16:13-15 <sup>1222E</sup>1 Kings 22:22 <sup>4862E</sup>Ephesians 6:12).

**1. *third year of Cyrus*** — two years after Cyrus' decree for the restoration of the Jews had gone forth, in accordance with Daniel's prayer in <sup>2908E</sup>Daniel 9:3-19. This vision gives not merely general outlines, or symbols, but minute details of the future, in short, anticipative history. It is the expansion of the vision in <sup>2900E</sup>Daniel 8:1-14. That which then "none understood," he says here, "he understood"; the messenger being sent to him for this (<sup>2701E</sup>Daniel 10:11,14), to make him understand it. Probably Daniel was no longer in office at court; for in <sup>2902E</sup>Daniel 1:21, it is said, "Daniel continued even unto the first year of King Cyrus"; not that he *died* then. See on <sup>2902E</sup>Daniel 1:21.

***but the time appointed was long*** — rather, "it (that is, the prophecy) referred to *great calamity*" [MAURER]; or, "long and calamitous warfare" [GESENIUS]. Literally, "host going to war"; hence, warfare, calamity.

**2. *mourning*** — that is afflicting myself by fasting from "pleasant bread, flesh and wine" (<sup>2708E</sup>Daniel 10:3), as a sign of sorrow, not for its own sake. Compare <sup>4094E</sup>Matthew 9:14, "fast," answering to "mourn" (<sup>2705E</sup>Daniel 10:15). Compare <sup>4888E</sup>1 Corinthians 8:8 <sup>5003E</sup>1 Timothy 4:3, which prove that "fasting" is not an indispensable Christian obligation; but merely an outward expression of sorrow, and separation from ordinary worldly

enjoyments, in order to give one's self to prayer (<sup>4413</sup>Acts 13:2). Daniel's mourning was probably for his countrymen, who met with many obstructions to their building of the temple, from their adversaries in the Persian court.

**3. *no pleasant bread*** — “unleavened bread, even the bread of affliction” (<sup>4563</sup>Deuteronomy 16:3).

***anoint*** — The Persians largely used unguents.

**4. *first month*** — Nisan, the month most suited for considering Israel's calamity, being that in which the feast of unleavened bread reminded them of their Egyptian bondage. Daniel mourned not merely for the seven days appointed (<sup>4128</sup>Exodus 12:18), from the evening of the fourteenth to the twenty-first of Nisan, but *thrice seven* days, to mark extraordinary sorrow. His mourning ended on the twenty-first day, the closing day of the passover feast; but the vision is not till the twenty-fourth, because of the opposition of “the prince of Persia” (<sup>2703</sup>Daniel 10:13).

***I was by ... the ... river*** — in waking reality, not a trance (<sup>2700</sup>Daniel 10:7); when younger, he saw the future in images, but now when old, he receives revelations from angels in common language, that is, in the *apocalyptic mode*. In the patriarchal period God often appeared *visibly*, that is, theophany. In the *prophets*, next in the succession, the *inward* character of revelation is prominent. The consummation is when the seer looks up from earth into the unseen world, and has the future shown to him by angels, that is, apocalypse. So in the New Testament there is a parallel progression: God in the flesh, the spiritual activity of the apostles and the apocalypse [AUBERLEN].

***Hiddekel*** — the Tigris.

**5. *lifted up mine eyes*** — from the ground on which they had been fixed in his mourning.

***certain man*** — literally, “one man.” An angel of the highest order; for in <sup>2786</sup>Daniel 8:16 he commands Gabriel to make Daniel to understand the vision, and in <sup>2716</sup>Daniel 12:6 one of the two angels inquires of him how long it would be till the end predicted.

***linen*** — the raiment of priests, being the symbol of sanctity, as more pure than wool (<sup>4282</sup>Exodus 28:42); also of *prophets* (<sup>2413</sup>Jeremiah 13:1); and of *angels* (<sup>4636</sup>Revelation 15:6).

***girded with ... gold*** — that is, with a girdle interwoven with gold (<sup>4613</sup>Revelation 1:13).

6. *beryl* — literally, “Tarshish,” in Spain. The beryl, identical with the chrysolite or topaz, was imported into the East from Tarshish, and therefore is called “the Tarshish stone.”

7. *they fled* — terrified by the presence of the presence of the angel.

8. *comeliness* — literally, “vigor,” that is, lively expression and color.

*into corruption* — “deadliness,” that is, death-like paleness (<sup>2786</sup>Daniel 5:6 7:28).

9. *voice of his words* — the *sound* of his words.

*was I in a deep sleep* — “I *sank* into a deep sleep” [LENGKERKE].

10. *an hand* — namely, of Gabriel, who interpreted other revelations to Daniel (<sup>2786</sup>Daniel 8:16) [THEODORET].

*set me upon my knees* — GESENIUS translates, “cause me to reel on my knees,” etc.

11. *man ... beloved* — (See on <sup>27029</sup>Daniel 9:23).

*understand* — “attend to.” See <sup>27087</sup>Daniel 8:17,18.

12. *Fear not* — Be not affrighted at my presence.

*didst set thine heart to understand* — what shall come to pass to thy people at the last times (compare <sup>27014</sup>Daniel 10:14).

*chasten thyself* — (<sup>27012</sup>Daniel 10:2,3).

*thy words were heard* — (<sup>4004</sup>Acts 10:4). Prayer is heard at once in heaven, though the sensible answer may *seem* to be delayed. God’s messenger was detained on the way (<sup>27013</sup>Daniel 10:13) by the opposition of the powers of darkness. If in our prayers amidst long protracted sorrows we believed God’s angel is on his way to us, what consolation it would give us!

*for thy words* — because of thy prayers.

13. *prince of ... Persia* — the angel of darkness that represented the Persian world power, to which Israel was then subject. This verse gives the reason why, though Daniel’s “words were heard from the first day” (<sup>27012</sup>Daniel 10:12), the good angel did not come to him until more than three weeks had elapsed (<sup>27014</sup>Daniel 10:4).

*one and twenty days* — answering to the three weeks of Daniel’s mourning (<sup>27012</sup>Daniel 10:2).

**Michael** — that is, “Who is like God?” Though an archangel, “one of the chief princes,” Michael was not to be compared to God.

**help me** — Michael, as patron of Israel before God (<sup>2710B</sup>Daniel 10:21 12:1), “helped” to influence the Persian king to permit the Jews’ return to Jerusalem.

**I remained** — *I was detained* there with the kings of Persia, that is, with the angel of the Persian rulers, with whom I had to contend, and from whom I should not have got free, but for the help of Michael. GESENIUS translates, “I obtained the ascendancy,” that is, I gained my point against the adverse angel of Persia, so as to influence the Persian authorities to favor Israel’s restoration.

**14. what shall befall thy people in the latter days** — an intimation that the prophecy, besides describing the doings of Antiochus, reaches to the concluding calamities of Israel’s history, prior to the nation’s full restoration at Christ’s coming — calamities of which Antiochus’ persecutions were the type.

**vision is for many days** — that is, extends far into the future.

**15. face toward the ground** — in humble reverence (<sup>4191</sup>Genesis 19:1).

**dumb** — with overwhelming awe.

**16. touched my lips** — the same significant action wherewith the Son of man accompanied His healing of the dumb (<sup>4103B</sup>Mark 7:33). He alone can give spiritual utterance (<sup>2708F</sup>Isaiah 6:6,7 <sup>4069F</sup>Ephesians 6:19), enabling one to “open the mouth boldly.” The same one who makes dumb (<sup>2701F</sup>Daniel 10:15) opens the mouth.

**sorrows** — literally, “writings” as of a woman in travail.

**17. this ... this my lord** — to avoid the tautology in *English Version*, join rather “this,” with “servant,” “How can *this servant* of my lord (that is, how can I who am *so feeble*) talk with this my lord (who is *so majestic*)?” Thus Daniel gives the reason why he is so overwhelmed with awe [MAURER].

**18. again ... touched me** — It was gradually that Daniel recovered his strength. Hence there was need of the second touch, that he might hear the angel with composure.

**19. peace be unto thee** — God is favorable to thee and to thy people Israel. See <sup>4072B</sup>Judges 13:21,22, as to the fear of some evil resulting from a vision of angels.

**20. *Knowest thou wherefore*** — The angel asks, after Daniel had recovered from his fright, whether he has understood what was revealed (<sup><2700B></sup>Daniel 10:13). On Daniel, by his silence, intimating that he did understand, the angel declares he will return to renew the fight with the evil angel, the prince of Persia. This points to new difficulties to the Jews' restoration which would arise in the Persian court, but which would be counteracted by God, through the ministry of angels.

***prince of Grecia shall come*** — Alexander the Great, who conquered Persia, and favored the Jews [CALVIN]. Rather, as the prince of Persia is an angel, representing the hostile world power, so the prince of Grecia is a fresh angelic adversary, representing Greece. When I am gone forth from conquering the Persian foe, a fresh one starts up, namely, the world power that succeeds Persia, Greece; Antiochus Epiphanes, and his antitype Antichrist, but him, too, with the help of Michael, Israel's champion, I shall overcome [GEJER].

**21. *noted in the scripture of truth*** — in the secret book of God's decrees (<sup><49D></sup>Psalm 139:16 <sup><65E></sup>Revelation 5:1), which are truth, that is, the things which shall most surely come to pass, being determined by God (compare <sup><817E></sup>John 17:17).

***none ... but Michael*** — To him alone of the angels the office of protecting Israel, in concert with the angelic speaker, was delegated; all the world powers were against Israel.

# CHAPTER 11

## 27103 DANIEL 11:1-45.

**THIS CHAPTER IS AN ENLARGEMENT OF THE EIGHTH: THE OVERTHROW OF PERSIA BY GRECIA: THE FOUR DIVISIONS OF ALEXANDER'S KINGDOM: CONFLICTS BETWEEN THE KINGS OF THE SOUTH AND OF THE NORTH, THE PTOLEMIES AND SELEUCIDAE: ANTIOCHUS EPIPHANES.**

1. **I** — the angel (2708 Daniel 10:18).

**first year of Darius** — Cyaxares II; the year of the conquest of Babylon (2705 Daniel 5:31). Cyrus, who wielded the real power, though in name subordinate to Darius, in that year promulgated the edict for the restoration of the Jews, which Daniel was at the time praying for (2701 Daniel 9:1,2,21,23).

**stood** — implying promptness in helping (4346 Psalm 94:16).

**strengthen him** — namely, Michael; even as Michael (2702 Daniel 10:21, “strengtheneth himself with me”) helped the angel, both joining their powers in behalf of Israel [ROSENMULLER]. Or, *Darius*, the angel “confirming him” in his purpose of kindness to Israel.

2. **three kings in Persia** — Cambyses, Pseudo-Smerdis, and Darius Hystaspes. (Ahasuerus, Artaxerxes, and Darius, in 4346 Ezra 4:6,7,24). The Ahasuerus of *Esther* (see on 2701 Daniel 9:1) is identified with Xerxes, both in Greek history and in Scripture, appearing proud, self-willed, careless of contravening Persian customs, amorous, facile, and changeable (2702 Daniel 11:2).

**fourth ... riches ... against ... Grecia** — Xerxes, whose riches were proverbial. Persia reached its climax and showed its greatest power in his invasion of Greece, 480 B.C. After his overthrow at Salamis, Persia is viewed as politically dead, though it had an *existence*. Therefore, 27103 Daniel 11:3, without noticing Xerxes' successors, proceeds at once to Alexander, under whom, first, the third world kingdom, Grecia, reached its culmination, and assumed an importance as to the people of God.

**stir up all** — Four years were spent in gathering his army out of all parts of his vast empire, amounting to two millions six hundred and forty-one thousand men. [PRIDEAUX, *Connexion*, 1.4, 1.410].

**3. mighty king ... do according to his will** — answering to the he-goat's "notable horn" (<sup>2708B</sup>Daniel 8:6,7,21). Alexander invaded Persia 334 B.C., to avenge the wrongs of Greece on Persia for Xerxes' past invasion (as Alexander said in a letter to Darius Codomanus, ARRIAN, *Alexander*. 2.14.7).

**4. kingdom ... divided toward ... four winds** — the fourfold division of Alexander's kingdom at his death (<sup>2708B</sup>Daniel 8:8,22), after the battle of Ipsus, 301 B.C.

**not to his posterity** — (See on <sup>2708B</sup>Daniel 8:8; <sup>2708C</sup>Daniel 8:22).

**nor according to his dominion** — None of his successors had so wide a dominion as Alexander himself.

**others besides those** — besides *Alexander's sons*, Hercules by Barsine, Darius daughter, and Alexander by Roxana, who were both slain [MAURER]. Rather, besides *the four successors* to the four chief divisions of the empire, there will be other lesser chiefs who shall appropriate smaller fragments of the Macedonian empire [JEROME].

**5.** Here the prophet leaves Asia and Greece and takes up Egypt and Syria, these being in continual conflict under Alexander's successors, entailing misery on Judea, which lay between the two. Holy Scripture handles external history only so far as it is connected with God's people, Israel [JEROME]. TREGELLES puts a chasm between the fourth and fifth verses, making the transition to the final Antichrist here, answering to the chasm (in his view) at <sup>2708D</sup>Daniel 8:22,23.

**king of ... south** — literally, "of midday": Egypt (<sup>2710B</sup>Daniel 11:8,42), PTOLEMY Soter, son of Lagus. He took the title "king," whereas Lagus was but "governor."

**one of his princes** — Seleucus, at first a satrap of PTOLEMY Lagus, but from 312 B.C. king of the largest empire after that of Alexander (Syria, Babylon, Media, etc.), and called therefore *Nicator*, that is, "conqueror." Connect the words thus, "And one of his (PTOLEMY'S) princes, *even* he (Seleucus) shall be strong above him" (above PTOLEMY, his former master).

**6. in ... end of years** — when the predicted time shall be consummated (<sup>2711B</sup>Daniel 11:13, *Margin*; <sup>2708B</sup>Daniel 8:17 12:13).

**king's daughter of the south** — Berenice, daughter of Ptolemy Philadelphus of Egypt. The latter, in order to end his war with Antiochus Theus, “king of the north” (literally, “midnight”: the prophetic phrase for the region whence came affliction to Israel, <sup>24013</sup>Jeremiah 1:13-15 <sup>24123</sup>Joel 2:20), that is, Syria, gave Berenice to Antiochus, who thereupon divorced his former wife, Laodice, and disinherited her son, Seleucus Callinicus. The designation, “king of the north” and “of the south,” is given in relation to Judea, as the standpoint. Egypt is mentioned by name (<sup>27108</sup>Daniel 11:8,42), though Syria is not; because the former was in Daniel’s time a flourishing kingdom, whereas Syria was *then* a mere dependency of Assyria and Babylon: an undesigned proof of the genuineness of the Book of Daniel.

**agreement** — literally, “rights,” that is, to put things to rights between the belligerents.

**she shall not retain the power of the arm** — She shall not be able to effect the purpose of the alliance, namely, that she should be the *mainstay* of peace. Ptolemy having died, Antiochus took back Laodice, who then poisoned him, and caused Berenice and her son to be put to death, and raised her own son, Seleucus Nicator, to the throne.

**neither shall he stand** — The king of Egypt shall not gain his point of setting his line on the throne of Syria.

**his arm** — that on which he relied. Berenice and her offspring.

**they that brought her** — her attendants from Egypt.

**he that begat her** — rather as *Margin*, “the child *whom she brought forth*” [EWALD]. If *English Version* (which MAURER approves) be retained, as Ptolemy died a natural death, “given up” is not in his case, as in Berenice’s, to be understood of giving up *to death*, but in a general sense, of his plan proving abortive.

**he that strengthened her in these times** — Antiochus Theus, who is to *attach himself to her* (having divorced Laodice) at the times predicted [GEJER].

**7. a branch of her roots ... in his estate** — Ptolemy Euergetes, brother of Berenice, succeeding *in the place* (*Margin*) of Philadelphus, avenged her death by overrunning Syria, even to the Euphrates.

**deal against them** — He shall deal with the Syrians at his own pleasure. He slew Laodice.

**8. carry ... into Egypt their gods**, etc. — Ptolemy, on hearing of a sedition in Egypt, returned with forty thousand talents of silver, precious vessels, and twenty-four hundred images, including Egyptian idols, which Cambyses had carried from Egypt into Persia. The idolatrous Egyptians were so gratified, that they named him Euergetes, or “benefactor.”

**continue more years** — Ptolemy survived Seleucus four years, reigning in all forty-six years. MAURER translates, “Then he for several years shall desist from (contending with) the king of the north” (compare <sup>27109</sup>Daniel 11:9).

**9. come into his kingdom** — Egypt: not only with impunity, but with great spoil.

**10. his sons** — the two sons of the king of the north, Seleucus Callinicus, upon his death by a fall from his horse, namely, Seleucus Ceraunus and Antiochus the Great.

**one shall ... come** — Ceraunus having died, Antiochus alone prosecuted the war with Ptolemy Philopater, Euergetes’ son, until he had recovered all the parts of Syria subjugated by Euergetes.

**pass through** — like an “overflowing” torrent (<sup>27122</sup>Daniel 11:22,26,40 <sup>27108</sup>Isaiah 8:8). Antiochus penetrated to Dura (near Caesarea), where he gave Ptolemy a four months’ truce.

**return** — renew the war at the expiration of the truce (so <sup>27113</sup>Daniel 11:13).

**even to his fortress** — Ptolemy’s; Raphia, a border-fortress of Egypt against incursions by way of Edom and Arabia-Petraea, near Gaza; here Antiochus was vanquished.

**11. the king of the south ... moved with choler** — at so great losses, Syria having been wrested from him, and his own kingdom imperilled, though otherwise an indolent man, to which his disasters were owing, as also to the odium of his subjects against him for having murdered his father, mother, and brother, whence in irony they called him *Philopater*, “father-lover.”

**he shall set forth a great multitude** — Antiochus, king of Syria, whose force was seventy thousand infantry and five thousand cavalry.

**but ... multitude ... given into his hand** — into Ptolemy’s hands; ten thousand of Antiochus’ army were slain, and four thousand made captives.

**12. when he hath taken away** — that is, *subdued* “the multitude” of Antiochus.

**heart ... lifted up** — instead of following up his victory by making himself master of the whole of Syria, as he might, he made peace with Antiochus, and gave himself up to licentiousness [POLYBIUS, 87; JUSTIN, 30.4], and profaned the temple of God by entering the holy place [GROTIUS].

**not be strengthened by it** — He shall lose the power gained by his victory through his luxurious indolence.

**13. return** — renew the war.

**after certain years** — *fourteen years* after his defeat at Raphia. Antiochus, after successful campaigns against Persia and India, made war with Ptolemy Epiphanes, son of Philopater, a mere child.

**14. many stand up against the king of the south** — Philip, king of Macedon, and rebels in Egypt itself, combined with Antiochus against Ptolemy.

**robbers of thy people** — that is, factious men of the Jews shall exalt themselves, so as to revolt from Ptolemy, and join themselves to Antiochus; the Jews helped Antiochus army with provisions, when on his return from Egypt he besieged the Egyptian garrison left in Jerusalem [JOSEPHUS, *Antiquities*, 12:3.3].

**to establish the vision** — Those turbulent Jews unconsciously shall help to fulfill the purpose of God, as to the trials which await Judea, according to this vision.

**but they shall fall** — Though helping to fulfill the vision, they shall fail in their aim, of making Judea independent.

**15. king of ... north** — Antiochus the Great.

**take ... fenced cities** — Scopas, the Egyptian general, met Antiochus at Paneas, near the sources of the Jordan, and was defeated, and fled to Sidon, a strongly “fenced city,” where he was forced to surrender.

**chosen people** — Egypt’s choicest army was sent under Eropus, Menocles, and Damoxenus, to deliver Scopas, but in vain [JEROME].

**16. he that cometh against him** — Antiochus coming against Ptolemy Epiphanes.

**glorious land** — Judea (<sup>2714</sup>Daniel 11:41,45 <sup>2789</sup>Daniel 8:9 <sup>2816</sup>Ezekiel 20:6,15).

**by his hand shall be consumed** — literally, “perfected,” that is, completely brought under his sway. JOSEPHUS [*Antiquities*, 12:3.3] shows that the

meaning is not, that the Jews should be utterly consumed: for Antiochus favored them for taking his part against Ptolemy, but that their land should be *subjected* to him [LENGKERKE]. GROTIUS translates, “shall be perfected by him,” that is, shall flourish under him. *English Version* gives a good sense; namely, that Judea was much “*consumed*” or “*desolated*” by being the arena of conflict between the combatants, Syria and Egypt. TREGELLES refers (<sup>27114</sup>Daniel 11:14), “robbers of thy people,” to the Gentiles, once oppressors, attempting to restore the Jews to their land by mere human effort, whereas this is to be effected only by divine interposition: their attempt is frustrated (<sup>27116</sup>Daniel 11:16) by the wilful king, who makes Judea the scene of his military operations.

**17. *set his face*** — *purpose* steadfastly. Antiochus purpose was, however, turned from open assault to wile, by his war with the Romans in his endeavor to extend his kingdom to the limits it had under Seleucus Nicator.

***upright one*** — *Jasher*, or *Jeshurun* (<sup>46215</sup>Deuteronomy 32:15 <sup>23412</sup>Isaiah 44:2); the epithet applied by the Hebrews to their nation. It is here used not in praise; for in <sup>27114</sup>Daniel 11:14 (see on <sup>27114</sup>Daniel 11:14) they are called “robbers,” or “men of violence, factious”: it is the general designation of Israel, as *having God for their God*. Probably it is used to rebuke those who ought to have been God’s “upright ones” for confederating with godless heathen in acts of *violence* (the contrast to the term in <sup>27114</sup>Daniel 11:14 favors this).

***thus shall he do*** — Instead of at once invading Ptolemy’s country with his “whole strength,” he prepares his way for doing so by the following plan: he gives to Ptolemy Epiphanes his daughter Cleopatra in marriage, promising Coelo-Syria and Judea as a dowry, thus securing his neutrality in the war with Rome: he hoped through his daughter to obtain Syria, Cilicia, and Lycia, and even Egypt itself at last; but Cleopatra favored her husband rather than her father, and so defeated his scheme [JEROME]. “She shall not stand on his side.”

**18. *isles*** — He “took many” of the isles in the aegean in his war with the Romans, and crossed the Hellespont.

***prince for his own behalf shall cause the reproach ... to cease*** — Lucius Scipio Asiaticus, the Roman general, by routing Antiochus at Magnesia (190 B.C.), caused the reproach which he offered Rome by inflicting injuries on Rome’s allies, to cease. He did it *for his own glory*.

***without his own reproach*** — with untarnished reputation.

**19. *Then he shall turn ... toward ... his own land*** — Compelled by Rome to relinquish all his territory west of the Taurus, and defray the expenses of the war, he garrisoned the cities left to him.

***stumble ... not be found*** — Attempting to plunder the temple of Jupiter at Elymais by night, whether through avarice, or the want of money to pay the tribute imposed by Rome (a thousand talents), he was slain with his soldiers in an insurrection of the inhabitants [JUSTIN, 32.2].

**20. *in his estate*** — in Antiochus' stead: his successor, Seleucus Philopater, his son.

***in the glory of the kingdom*** — that is, inheriting it by hereditary right. MAURER translates, "one who shall cause the tax gatherer (Heliodorus) to pass through the glory of the kingdom," that is, *Judea*, "the glorious land" (<sup>27116</sup>Daniel 11:16,41 <sup>27809</sup>Daniel 8:9). Simon, a Benjamite, in spite against Onias III, the high priest, gave information of the treasures in the Jewish temple; and Seleucus having reunited to Syria Coelo-Syria and Palestine, the dowry formerly given by Antiochus the Great to Cleopatra, Ptolemy's wife, sent Heliodorus to Jerusalem to plunder the temple. This is narrated in II Maccabees 3:4, etc. Contrast Zechariah 9:8, "No oppressor shall pass through ... any more."

***within few days ... destroyed*** — after a reign of twelve years, which were "few" compared with the thirty-seven years of Antiochus' reign. Heliodorus, the instrument of Seleucus' sacrilege, was made by God the instrument of his punishment. Seeking the crown, in the absence at Rome of Seleucus' only son and heir, Demetrius, he poisoned Seleucus. But Antiochus Epiphanes, Seleucus' brother, by the help of Eumenes, king of Pergamos, succeeded to the throne, 175 B.C.

***neither in anger, nor in battle*** — not in a popular outbreak, nor in open battle.

**21. *vile*** — Antiochus called Epiphanes, that is, "the illustrious," for vindicating the claims of the royal line against Heliodorus, was nicknamed, by a play of sounds, Epimanes, that is, "the madman," for his mad freaks beneath the dignity of a king. He would carouse with the lowest of the people, bathe with them in the public baths, and foolishly jest and throw stones at passers-by [POLYBIUS, 26.10]. Hence, as also for his crafty supplanting of Demetrius, the rightful heir, from the throne, he is termed "vile."

***they shall not give ... kingdom: but ... by flatteries*** — The nation shall not, by a public act, confer the kingdom on him, but he shall obtain it by artifice,

“flattering” Eumenes and Attalus of Pergamos to help him, and, as he had seen candidates at Rome doing, canvassing the Syrian people high and low, one by one, with embraces [LIVY, 41.20].

**22. *shall they be overflown ... before him*** — Antiochus Epiphanes shall invade Egypt with overwhelming forces.

***prince of the covenant*** — Ptolemy Philometer, the son of Cleopatra, Antiochus’ sister, who was joined in covenant with him. Ptolemy’s guardians, while he was a boy, sought to recover from Epiphanes Coelo-Syria and Palestine, which had been promised by Antiochus the Great as Cleopatra’s dowry in marrying Ptolemy Epiphanes. Hence arose the war. Philometer’s generals were vanquished, and Pelusium, the key of Egypt, taken by Antiochus, 171 B.C.

**23.** TREGELLES notes three divisions in the history of the “vile person,” which is continued to the end of the chapter:

(1) His rise (<sup>27121</sup>Daniel 11:21,22).

(2) The time from his making the covenant to the taking away of the daily sacrifice and setting up of the abomination of desolation (<sup>27123</sup>Daniel 11:23-31).

(3) His career of blasphemy, to his destruction (<sup>27133</sup>Daniel 11:32-45); the latter two periods answering to the “week” of years of his “covenant with many” (namely, in Israel) (<sup>27027</sup>Daniel 9:27), and the last being the closing half week of the ninth chapter.

But the context so accurately agrees with the relations of Antiochus to Ptolemy that the primary reference seems to be to the “league” between them. *Antotypically*, Antichrist’s relations towards *Israel* are probably delineated. Compare <sup>27081</sup>Daniel 8:11,25, with <sup>27122</sup>Daniel 11:22 here, “prince of the covenant.”

***work deceitfully*** — Feigning friendship to young Ptolemy, as if he wished to order his kingdom for him, he took possession of Memphis and all Egypt (“the fattest places,” <sup>27134</sup>Daniel 11:34) as far as Alexandria.

***with a small people*** — At first, to throw off suspicion, his forces were small.

**24. *peaceably*** — literally, “unexpectedly”; under the guise of friendship he seized Ptolemy Philometer.

*he shall do that which his fathers have not done* — His predecessors, kings of Syria, had always coveted Egypt, but in vain: he alone made himself master of it.

*scatter among them ... prey* — among his followers (I Maccabees 1:19).

*forecast his devices against ... strongholds* — He shall form a studied scheme for making himself master of the Egyptian fortresses. He gained them all except Alexandria, which successfully resisted him. Retaining to himself Pelusium, he retired to Judea, where, in revenge for the joy shown by the Jews at the report of his death, which led them to a revolt, he subdued Jerusalem by storm or stratagem.

*for a time* — His rage shall not be for ever; it is but for a time limited by God. CALVIN makes “for a time” in antithesis to “unexpectedly,” in the beginning of the verse. He *suddenly* mastered the weaker cities: he had to “forecast his plans” more *gradually* (“for a time”) as to how to gain the stronger fortresses.

**25.** A fuller detail of what was summarily stated (<sup><2112></sup>Daniel 11:22-24). This is the first of Antiochus’ three (<sup><2113></sup>Daniel 11:29) open invasions of Egypt.

*against the king of the south* — against Ptolemy Philometer.

Subsequently, Ptolemy Physcon (the Gross), or Euergetes II, was made king by the Egyptians, as Ptolemy Philometer was in Antiochus hands.

*great army* — as distinguished from the “small people” (<sup><2113></sup>Daniel 11:23) with which he first came. This was his first *open* expedition; he was emboldened by success to it. Antiochus “entered Egypt with an overwhelming multitude, with chariots, elephants, and cavalry” (I Maccabees 1:17).

*stirred up* — by the necessity, though naturally indolent.

*not stand* — Philometer was defeated.

*they shall forecast*, etc. — *His own nobles* shall frame treacherous “devices” against him (see <sup><2113></sup>Daniel 11:26). Euloeus and Lenoeus maladministered his affairs. Antiochus, when checked at last at Alexandria, left Ptolemy Philometer at Memphis as king, pretending that his whole object was to support Philometer’s claims against the usurper Physcon.

**26.** *they that feed of ... his meat* — those from whom he might naturally have looked for help, his intimates and dependents (<sup><2114></sup>Psalm 41:9 <sup><2115></sup>John 13:18); his ministers and guardians.

***his army shall overflow*** — Philometer's army shall be dissipated as water. The phrase is used of overflowing *numbers*, usually in a victorious sense, but here in the sense of *defeat*, the very numbers which ordinarily ensure victory, hastening the defeat through mismanagement.

***many shall fall down slain*** — (I Maccabees 1:18, "many fell wounded to death"). Antiochus, when he might have slain all in the battle near Pelusium, rode around and ordered the enemy to be taken alive, the fruit of which policy was, he soon gained Pelusium and all Egypt [DIODORUS SICULUS, 26.77].

**27. *both ... to do mischief*** — each to the other.

***speak lies at one table*** — They shall, under the semblance of intimacy, at Memphis try to deceive one another (see on <sup>27118</sup>Daniel 11:3; <sup>27125</sup>Daniel 11:25).

***it shall not prosper*** — Neither of them shall carry his point at this time.

***yet the end shall be*** — "the end" of the contest between them is reserved for "the time appointed" (<sup>27129</sup>Daniel 11:29,30).

**28.** (I Maccabees 1:19,20, etc.).

***against the holy covenant*** — On his way back to Syria, he attacked Jerusalem, the metropolis of Jehovah's covenant-people, slew eighty thousand, took forty thousand prisoners, and sold forty thousand as slaves (II Maccabees 5:5-14).

***he shall do exploits*** — He shall effect his purpose. Guided by Menelaus, the high priest, he entered the sanctuary with blasphemies, took away the gold and silver vessels, sacrificed swine on the altar, and sprinkled broth of the flesh through the temple (II Maccabees 5:15-21).

**29. *At the time appointed*** — "the time" spoken of in <sup>27127</sup>Daniel 11:27.

***return*** — his second open invasion of Egypt. Ptolemy Philometer, suspecting Antiochus' designs with Physcon, hired mercenaries from Greece. Whereupon Antiochus advanced with a fleet and an army, demanding the cession to him of Cyprus, Pelusium, and the country adjoining the Pelusiac mouth of the Nile.

***it shall not be as the former*** — not successful as the former expedition. Popilius Loenas, the Roman ambassador, met him at Eleusis, four miles from Alexandria, and presented him the decree of the senate; on Antiochus replying that he would consider what he was to do, Popilius drew a line round him with a rod and said, "I must have a reply to give to the senate

before you leave this circle.” Antiochus submitted, and retired from Egypt; and his fleets withdrew from Cyprus.

*or as the latter* — that mentioned in <sup><7142></sup>Daniel 11:42,43 [TREGELLES]. Or, making this the *third* expedition, the sense is “not as the first or as the second” expeditions [PISCATOR]. Rather “not as the former, so shall be this latter” expedition [GROTIUS].

**30. ships of Chittim** — the Roman ambassadors arriving in *Macedonian Grecian* vessels (see on <sup><3429></sup>Jeremiah 2:10). *Chittim*, properly *Cyprian*, so called from a Phoenician colony in Cyprus; then the islands and coasts of the Mediterranean in general.

*grieved* — humbled and dispirited through fear of Rome.

*indignation against the holy covenant* — Indignant that meantime God’s worship had been restored at Jerusalem, he gives vent to his wrath at the check given him by Rome, on the Jews.

*intelligence with them that forsake the ... covenant* — namely, with the apostates in the nation (I Maccabees 1:11-15). Menelaus and other Jews instigated the king against their religion and country, learning from Greek philosophy that all religions are good enough to keep the masses in check. These had cast off circumcision and the religion of Jehovah for Greek customs. Antiochus, on his way home, sent Apollonius (167 B.C.) with twenty-two thousand to destroy Jerusalem, two years after its capture by himself. Apollonius slew multitudes, dismantled and pillaged the city. They then, from a fortress which they built commanding the temple, fell on and slew the worshippers; so that the temple service was discontinued. Also, Antiochus decreed that all, on pain of death, should conform to the Greek religion, and the temple was consecrated to Jupiter Olympius. Identifying himself with that god, with fanatical haughtiness he wished to make his own worship universal (I Maccabees 1:41; II Maccabees 6:7). This was the gravest peril which ever heretofore threatened revealed religion, the holy people, and the theocracy on earth, for none of the previous world rulers had interfered with the religious worship of the covenant-people, when subject to them (<sup><2708></sup>Daniel 4:31-34 6:27,28 <sup><1506></sup>Ezra 1:2,4 7:12 <sup><1428></sup>Nehemiah 2:18). Hence arose the need of such a forewarning of the covenant-people as to him — so accurate, that PORPHYRY, the adversary of revelation, saw it was hopeless to deny its correspondence with history, but argued from its accuracy that it must have been written *subsequent* to the event. But as Messianic events are foretold in Daniel, the Jews, the adversaries of Jesus, would never have forged the prophecies which confirm His claims. The ninth chapter was to comfort the faithful Jews, in the midst of the “abominations” against “the covenant,” with the prospect of Messiah who

would “confirm the covenant.” He would show by bringing salvation, and yet abolishing sacrifices, that the temple service which they so grieved after, was not absolutely necessary; thus the correspondence of phraseology would suggest comfort (compare <sup><2192></sup>Daniel 9:27 with <sup><2113></sup>Daniel 11:30,31).

**31. arms** — namely, of the human body; not *weapons*; human forces.

*they* — Antiochus’ hosts confederate with the apostate Israelites; these latter attain the climax of guilt, when they not only, as before, “forsake the covenant” (<sup><2113></sup>Daniel 11:30), but “do wickedly against” it (<sup><2113></sup>Daniel 11:32), turning complete heathens. Here Antiochus’ actions are described in language which reach beyond him the type to Antichrist the antitype [JEROME] (just as in <sup><2121></sup>Psalms 72:1-20 many things are said of Solomon the type, which are only applicable to Christ the Antitype); including perhaps Rome, Mohammed, and the final personal Antichrist. SIR ISAAC NEWTON refers the rest of the chapter from this verse to the Romans, translating, “after him arms (that is, the Romans) shall stand up”; at the very time that Antiochus left Egypt, the Romans conquered Macedon, thus finishing the reign of Daniel’s third beast; so here the prophet naturally proceeds to the fourth beast. JEROME’S view is simpler; for the narrative seems to continue the history of Antiochus, though with features only in type applicable to him, fully to Antichrist.

*sanctuary of strength* — not only naturally a place of strength, whence it held out to the last against the besiegers, but chiefly the *spiritual* stronghold of the covenant-people (<sup><2101></sup>Psalms 48:1-3,12-14). Apollonius “polluted” it with altars to idols and sacrifices of swine’s flesh, after having “taken away the daily sacrifice” (see on <sup><2101></sup>Daniel 8:11).

*place ... abomination that maketh desolate* — that is, that pollutes the temple (<sup><2102></sup>Daniel 8:12,13). Or rather, “the abomination of the desolater,” Antiochus Epiphanes (I Maccabees 1:29,37-49). Compare <sup><2192></sup>Daniel 9:27, wherein the antitypical *desolating abomination* of Rome (the eagle standard, the bird of Jupiter, sacrificed to by Titus’ soldiers within the sacred precincts, at the destruction of Jerusalem), of Mohammed and of the final Antichrist, is foretold. I Maccabees 1:54, uses the very phrase, “the fifteenth day of the month Casleu, in the hundred forty-fifth year, they set up the *abomination of desolation* on the altar”; namely, an idol-altar and image of Jupiter Olympius, erected upon Jehovah’s altar of burnt offerings. “Abomination” is the common name for an *idol* in the Old Testament. The Roman emperor Adrian’s erection of a temple to Jupiter Capitolinus where the temple of God had stood, A.D. 132; also the erection of the Mohammedan mosque of Omar in the same place (it is striking, Mohammedanism began to prevail in A.D. 610, only about three years of

the time when Popery assumed the temporal power); and the idolatry of the Church of Rome in the spiritual temple, and the final blasphemy of the personal Antichrist in the literal temple (<sup>5104</sup>2 Thessalonians 2:4) may all be antitypically referred to here under Antiochus the type, and the Old Testament Antichrist.

32. (I Maccabees 1:52).

*corrupt* — seduce to apostasy.

*by flatteries* — promises of favor.

*people that ... know their God* — the Maccabees and their followers (I Maccabees 1:62,63).

33. *they that understand* — who know and keep the truth of God (<sup>2110</sup>Isaiah 11:2).

*instruct many* — in their duty to God and the law, not to apostatize.

*yet they shall fall* — as Eleazar (II Maccabees 6:18, etc.). They shall be sorely persecuted, even to death (<sup>5115</sup>Hebrews 11:35,36,37; II Maccabees 6,7). Their enemies took advantage of the Sabbath to slay them on the day when they would not fight. TREGELLES thinks, from comparison with <sup>2713</sup>Daniel 11:35, it is *the people* who “fall,” not *those of understanding*. But <sup>2715</sup>Daniel 11:35 makes *the latter* “fall,” not an unmeaning repetition; in <sup>2713</sup>Daniel 11:33 they fall (die) by persecution; in <sup>2715</sup>Daniel 11:35 they fall (spiritually) for a time by their own weakness.

*flame* — in caves, whither they had retired to keep the Sabbath. Antiochus caused some to be roasted alive (II Maccabees 7:3-5).

*many days* — rather, “*certain days*,” as in <sup>2712</sup>Daniel 8:27. JOSEPHUS [*Antiquities*, 12:7.6,7] tells us the persecution lasted for three years (I Maccabees 1:59 4:54; II Maccabees 10:1-7).

34. *a little help* — The liberty obtained by the Maccabean heroes for the Jews was of but short duration. They soon fell under the Romans and Herodians, and ever since every attempt to free them from Gentile rule has only aggravated their sad lot. The period of the world times (Gentile rule) is the period of depression of the theocracy, extending from the exile to the millennium [ROOS]. The more immediate reference seems to be, the forces of Mattathias and his five sons were originally *few* (I Maccabees 2:1-5).

*many shall cleave to them* — as was the case under Judas Maccabeus, who was thus able successfully to resist Antiochus.

**with flatteries** — Those who had deserted the Jewish cause in persecution, now, when success attended the Jewish arms, joined the Maccabean standard, for example, Joseph, the son of Zecharias, Azarias, etc. (I Maccabees 5:55-57; II Maccabees 12:40 13:21). MAURER explains it, of those who through fear of the Maccabees' severity against apostates joined them, though ready, if it suited their purpose, to desert them (I Maccabees 2:44 3:58).

**35. to try them** — the design of affliction. Image from *metals* tried with fire.

**to purge** — Even in the elect there are dregs which need to be purged out (<sup>4007</sup>1 Peter 1:7). Hence they are allowed to fall for a time; not finally (<sup>4429</sup>2 Chronicles 32:31 <sup>4229</sup>Luke 22:31). Image from wheat cleared of its chaff by the wind.

**make ... white** — image from cloth (<sup>6109</sup>Revelation 7:9).

**to ... time of ... end** — God will not suffer His people to be persecuted without limitation (<sup>4603</sup>1 Corinthians 10:13). The godly are to wait patiently for “the end” of “the time” of trial; “for it is (to last) yet for a time appointed” by God.

**36.** The wilful king here, though primarily Antiochus, is antitypically and mainly Antichrist, the seventh head of the seven-headed and ten-horned beast of <sup>4631</sup>Revelation 13:1-18, and the “beast” of Armageddon (<sup>4663</sup>Revelation 16:13,16 19:19). Some identify him with the revived French emperors, the eighth head of the beast (<sup>4671</sup>Revelation 17:11), who is to usurp the kingly, as the Pope has the priestly, dignity of Christ — the false Messiah of the Jews, who will “plant his tabernacle between the seas in the holy mountain,” “exalting himself above every god” (<sup>5104</sup>2 Thessalonians 2:4 <sup>4635</sup>Revelation 13:5,6). This last clause only in part holds good of Antiochus; for though he assumed divine honors, identifying himself with Jupiter Olympius, yet it was for that god he claimed them; still it applies to him as *the type*.

**speak marvellous things against ... God of gods** — so <sup>2025</sup>Daniel 7:25, as to the “little horn,” which seemingly identifies the two (compare <sup>2025</sup>Daniel 8:25). Antiochus forbade the worship of Jehovah by a decree “marvellous” for its wickedness: thus he was a type of Antichrist. Compare <sup>2008</sup>Daniel 7:8, “a mouth speaking great things.”

**indignation ... accomplished** — God's visitation of wrath on the Jews for their sins (<sup>2089</sup>Daniel 8:19).

**that ... determined** — (<sup>2026</sup>Daniel 9:26,27 10:21).

**37. *Neither ... regard ... the desire of women*** — (Compare <sup>3546</sup>Ezekiel 24:16,18). The wife, as the *desire* of man's eyes, is the symbol of the tenderest relations (<sup>4002</sup>2 Samuel 1:26). Antiochus would set at naught even their entreaties that he should cease from his attack on Jehovah's worship [POLANUS]. MAURER refers it to Antiochus' attack on the temple of *the Syrian Venus, worshipped by women* (I Maccabees 6:1, etc.; II Maccabees 1:13). NEWTON refers it to Rome's "forbidding to marry." ELLIOTT rightly makes the antitypical reference be to *Messiah*. Jewish women desired to be mothers with a view to Him, the promised seed of the woman (<sup>4123</sup>Genesis 30:23 <sup>4025</sup>Luke 1:25,28).

***nor regard any god*** — (<sup>5104</sup>2 Thessalonians 2:4).

**38. *God of forces*** — probably Jupiter Capitolinus, to whom Antiochus began to erect a temple at Antioch [LIVY, 41.20]. Translate, "He shall honor the god of *fortresses on his basis*," that is, the base of the statue. NEWTON translates, "And the god 'Mahuzzim' (*guardians*, that is, saints adored as '*protectors*' in the Greek and Roman churches) shall he honor."

***honor with gold***, etc. — Compare <sup>6704</sup>Revelation 17:4 as to Antiochus' antitype, Antichrist.

**39.** NEWTON translates, "*to be defenders of Mahuzzim* (the monks and priests who uphold saint worship), together with the strange god whom he shall acknowledge, he shall multiply honor." *English Version* is better: He shall do (exploits) in the most strongholds (that is, shall succeed against them) with a strange god (under the auspices of a god which he worshipped not before, namely, Jupiter Capitolinus, whose Worship he imported into his empire from Rome). Antiochus succeeded against Jerusalem, Sidon, Pelusium, Memphis.

***cause them*** — Antiochus "caused" his *followers and the apostates* "to rule over many" Jews, having "divided their land" (Judea), "for gain" (that is, as a *reward* for their compliance).

**40.** The difficulty of reconciling this with Antiochus' history is that no historian but PORPHYRY mentions an expedition of his into *Egypt* towards the close of his reign. This <sup>27140</sup>Daniel 11:40, therefore, may be a recapitulation summing up the facts of the first expedition to Egypt (171-170 B.C.), in <sup>27123</sup>Daniel 11:22,25; and <sup>27143</sup>Daniel 11:41, the former invasion of Judea, in <sup>27128</sup>Daniel 11:28; <sup>27142</sup>Daniel 11:42,43, the second and third invasions of Egypt (169 and 168 B.C.) in <sup>27123</sup>Daniel 11:23,24,29,30. AUBERLEN takes rather PORPHYRY'S statement, that Antiochus, in the eleventh year of his reign (166-165 B.C.), invaded Egypt again, and took Palestine on his way. The "tidings" (<sup>27144</sup>Daniel 11:44) as to the revolt of

tributary nations then led him to the East. PORPHYRY'S statement that Antiochus starting from Egypt took Arad in Judah, and devastated all Phoenicia, agrees with <sup><27145></sup>Daniel 11:45; then he turned to check Artaxias, king of Armenia. He died in the Persian town Tabes, 164 B.C., as both POLYBIUS and PORPHYRY agree. Doubtless, antitypically, the final Antichrist, and its predecessor Mohammed, are intended, to whom the language may be more fully applicable than to Antiochus the type. The Saracen Arabs "of the south" "pushed at" the Greek emperor Heraclius, and deprived him of Egypt and Syria. But the Turks of "the north" not merely *pushed at*, but destroyed the Greek empire; therefore more is said of them than of the Saracens. Their "horsemen" are specified, being their chief strength. Their standards still are *horse tails*. Their "ships," too, often gained the victory over Venice, the great naval power of Europe in that day. They "overflowed" Western Asia, and then "passed over" into Europe, fixing their seat of empire at Constantinople under Mohammed II [NEWTON].

**41.** Antiochus, according to PORPHYRY, marching against Ptolemy, though he turned from his course to wreak his wrath on the Jews, did not meddle with Edom, Moab, and Ammon on the side of Judea. In I Maccabees 4:61 5:3; etc., it is stated that he used their help in crushing the Jews, of whom they were the ancient enemies. Compare <sup><23114></sup>Isaiah 11:14, as to Israel's future retribution, just as the Maccabees made war on them as the friends of Antiochus (I Maccabees 5:1-68). Antitypically, the Turks under Selim entered Jerusalem on their way to Egypt, and retain "the glorious land" of Palestine to this day. But they never could conquer the Arabs, who are akin to Edom, Moab, and Ammon (<sup><0162></sup>Genesis 16:12). So in the case of the final Antichrist.

**42, 43. *Egypt ... Libyans ... Ethiopians*** — The latter two, being the allies of the first, served under Antiochus when he conquered Egypt. Antitypically, Egypt, though it held out long under the Mamelukes, in A.D. 1517 fell under the Turks. Algiers, Tunis, and other parts of Africa, are still under them.

***at his steps*** — following him (<sup><02108></sup>Exodus 11:8, *Margin*; <sup><00403></sup>Judges 4:10).

**44. *tidings out of the east and out of the north*** — Artaxias, king of Armenia, his vassal, had revolted in the north, and Arsaces, leader of the Parthians, in the east (I Maccabees 3:10, etc., I Maccabees 3:37; TACITUS, *Histories*, 5.8). In 147 B.C. Antiochus went on the expedition against them, on the return from which he died.

***great fury*** — at the Jews, on account of their successes under Judas Maccabeus, whence he desired to replenish his treasury with means to

prosecute the war with them; also at Artaxias and Arsaces, and their respective followers. DE BURGH makes the “tidings” which rouse his fury, to be concerning the Jews’ restoration; such may be the antitypical reference.

**45. *plant ... between the seas*** — the Dead Sea and the Mediterranean.

***tabernacles of ... palace*** — his palace-like military tents, such as Oriental princes travel with. See on <sup><2714></sup>Daniel 11:40, as to the time of Antiochus’ attack on Judea, and his subsequent “end” at Tabes, which was caused by chagrin both at hearing that his forces under Lysias were overcome by the Jews, and at the failure of his expedition against the temple of Elymais (II Maccabees 9:5).

***holy mountain*** — Jerusalem and Mount Zion. The desolation of the sanctuary by Antiochus, and also the desecration of the consecrated ground round Jerusalem by the idolatrous Roman ensigns, as also by the Mohammedan mosque, and, finally, by the last Antichrist, are referred to. So the last Antichrist is to sit upon “the *mount* of the congregation” (<sup><2343></sup>Isaiah 14:13), but “shall be brought down to hell” (compare *Note*, see on <sup><2023></sup>Daniel 7:26; <sup><5118></sup>2 Thessalonians 2:8).

# CHAPTER 12

## DANIEL 12:1-13.

### CONCLUSION OF THE VISION (TENTH THROUGH TWELFTH CHAPTERS) AND EPILOGUE TO THE BOOK.

Compare <sup>2718</sup>Daniel 12:4,13; as <sup>2718</sup>Daniel 12:6,7 refer to <sup>2703</sup>Daniel 7:25, that is, to the time of Antichrist, so the subsequent <sup>2718</sup>Daniel 12:8-12 treat of the time of Antiochus (compare <sup>2718</sup>Daniel 12:11 with <sup>2713</sup>Daniel 11:31), thus putting together in one summary view the two great periods of distress. The political resurrection of the Jews under the Maccabees is the starting-point of transition to the literal resurrection about to follow the destruction of Antichrist by Christ's coming in glory. The language passes here from the nearer to the more remote event, to which alone it is fully applicable.

**1. at that time** — *typically*, towards the close of Antiochus' reign; *antitypically*, the time when Antichrist is to be destroyed at Christ's coming.

**Michael** — the guardian angel of Israel ("thy people"), (<sup>2703</sup>Daniel 10:13). The transactions on earth affecting God's people have their correspondences in heaven, in the conflict between good and bad angels; so at the last great contest on earth which shall decide the ascendancy of Christianity (<sup>6127</sup>Revelation 12:7-10). An archangel, not the Lord Jesus; for he is distinguished from "the Lord" in <sup>6109</sup>Jude 1:9.

**there shall be** — rather, "it shall be."

**time of trouble, such as never was** — partially applicable to the time of Antiochus, who was the first subverter of the Jews' religion, and persecutor of its professors, which no other world power had done. Fully applicable to the last times of Antichrist, and his persecutions of Israel restored to Palestine. Satan will be allowed to exercise an unhindered, unparalleled energy (<sup>2351</sup>Isaiah 26:20,21 <sup>2810</sup>Jeremiah 30:7 <sup>4121</sup>Matthew 24:21; compare <sup>2718</sup>Daniel 8:24,25 11:36).

**thy people shall be delivered** — (<sup>6126</sup>Romans 11:26). The same deliverance of Israel as in Zechariah 13:8,9, "the third part ... brought through the fire ... refined as silver." The remnant in Israel spared, as not having joined in the Antichristian blasphemy (<sup>6149</sup>Revelation 14:9,10); not to be confounded with

those who have confessed Christ before His coming, “the remnant according to the election of grace” (<sup><6116></sup>Romans 11:5), part of the Church of the first-born who will share His millennial reign in glorified bodies; the spared remnant (<sup><23021></sup>Isaiah 10:21) will only know the Lord Jesus when they see Him, and when the spirit of grace and supplication is poured out on them [TREGELLES].

**written in the book** — namely, of God’s secret purpose, as destined for deliverance (<sup><4508></sup>Psalms 56:8 69:28 <sup><4011></sup>Luke 10:20 <sup><6115></sup>Revelation 20:15 21:27). Metaphor from a muster-roll of citizens (<sup><4016></sup>Nehemiah 7:5).

**2. many ... that sleep** — “many *from among* the sleepers ... *these* shall be unto everlasting life; but *those* (the rest of the sleepers who do not awake at this time) shall be unto shame” [TREGELLES]. Not the *general* resurrection, but that of those who share in the first resurrection; the rest of the dead being not to rise till the end of the thousand years (<sup><6118></sup>Revelation 20:3,5,6; compare <sup><4523></sup>1 Corinthians 15:23 <sup><30061></sup>1 Thessalonians 4:16). Israel’s national resurrection, and the first resurrection of the elect Church, are similarly connected with the Lord’s coming forth out of His place to punish the earth in <sup><3309></sup>Isaiah 26:19,21 27:6. Compare <sup><23016></sup>Isaiah 25:6-9. The Jewish commentators support TREGELLES. AUBERLEN thinks the sole purpose for which the resurrection is introduced in this verse is an incitement to faithful perseverance in the persecutions of Antiochus; and that there is no *chronological* connection between the time of trouble in <sup><2711></sup>Daniel 12:1 and the resurrection in <sup><2712></sup>Daniel 12:2; whence the phrase, “at that time,” twice occurs in <sup><2711></sup>Daniel 12:1, but no fixing of time in <sup><2712></sup>Daniel 12:2,3; II Maccabees 7:9,14,23, shows the fruit of this prophecy in animating the Maccabean mother and her sons to brave death, while confessing the resurrection in words like those here. Compare <sup><51135></sup>Hebrews 11:35. NEWTON’S view that “many” means *all*, is not so probable; for <sup><615></sup>Romans 5:15,19, which he quotes, is not in point, since the *Greek* is “*the many*,” that is, all, but there is no article in the *Hebrew* here. Here only *in the Old Testament* is “everlasting life” mentioned.

**3. wise** — (<sup><2113></sup>Proverbs 11:30). Answering to “they that understand” (<sup><27133></sup>Daniel 11:33,35), the same *Hebrew*, *Maskilim*; Israelites who, though in Jerusalem when wickedness is coming to a head, are found intelligent witnesses against it. As *then* they appeared worn out with persecutions (typically, of Antiochus; antotypically, of Antichrist); so *now* in the resurrection they “shine as the brightness of the firmament.” The design of past afflictions here appears “to make them white” (<sup><4138></sup>Matthew 13:43 <sup><6119></sup>Revelation 7:9,14).

**turn ... to righteousness** — literally, “justify,” that is, convert many to justification through Christ (<sup><39E3></sup>James 5:20).

**stars** — (<sup><4354></sup>1 Corinthians 15:41,42).

**4. shut up ... seal the book** — John, on the contrary, is told (<sup><620></sup>Revelation 22:10) not to seal his visions. Daniel’s prophecy refers to a *distant* time, and is therefore obscure for the immediate future, whereas John’s was to be *speedily* fulfilled (<sup><600></sup>Revelation 1:1,3 22:6). *Israel*, to whom Daniel prophesied after the captivity, with premature zeal sought after signs of the predicted period: Daniel’s prophecy was designed to restrain this. The *Gentile* Church, on the contrary, for whom John wrote, needs to be impressed with the shortness of the period, as it is, owing to its Gentile origin, apt to conform to the world, and to forget the coming of the Lord (compare <sup><1253></sup>Matthew 25:13,19 <sup><4132></sup>Mark 13:32-37 <sup><688></sup>2 Peter 3:8,12 <sup><620></sup>Revelation 22:20).

**run to and fro** — not referring to the modern rapidity of locomotion, as some think, nor to Christian missionaries going about to preach the Gospel to the world at large [BARNES], which the context scarcely admits; but, whereas now but few care for this prophecy of God, “at the time of the end,” that is, near its fulfillment, “many shall run to and fro,” that is, scrutinize it, running through every page. Compare Habakkuk 2:2 [CALVIN]: it is thereby that “*the* knowledge (namely, of God’s purposes as revealed in prophecy) shall be increased.” This is probably being now fulfilled.

**5.** A vision of two other angels, one on one side of the Hiddekel or Tigris, the other on the other side, implying that on all sides angels attend to execute God’s commands. The angel addressing Daniel had been *over* the river “from above” (<sup><2716></sup>Daniel 12:6, *Margin*).

**6. one** — namely, of the two (<sup><2715></sup>Daniel 12:5).

**man ... in linen** — who had spoken up to this point. God impelled the angel to ask in order to waken us out of our torpor, seeing that the very “angels desire to look into” the things affecting man’s redemption (<sup><612></sup>1 Peter 1:12), as setting forth the glory of their Lord and ours (<sup><480></sup>Ephesians 3:10).

**How long ... to the end of these wonders** — This question of the angel refers to the final dealings of God in general, Antichrist’s overthrow, and the resurrection. Daniel’s question (<sup><2718></sup>Daniel 12:8) refers to the more immediate future of his nation [AUBERLEN].

**7. held up ... right ... and ... left hand** — Usually the right hand was held up in affirmation as an appeal to heaven to attest the truth (<sup>(2025)</sup>Deuteronomy 32:40 <sup>(6115)</sup>Revelation 10:5,6). Here *both* hands are lifted up for the fuller confirmation.

**time, times, and a half** — (See on <sup>(2025)</sup>Daniel 7:25). NEWTON, referring this prophecy to the Eastern apostasy, Mohammedanism, remarks that the same period of three and a half years, or 1260 prophetic days, is assigned to it as the Western apostasy of the little horn (<sup>(2025)</sup>Daniel 7:25); and so, says PRIDEAUX, Mohammed began to forge his imposture, retiring to his cave, A.D. 606, the very year that Phocas made the grant to the bishop of Rome, whence he assumed the title, The Universal Pastor; Antichrist thus setting both his feet on Christendom together, the one in the East, and the other in the West. Three and a half is the time of the world power, in which the earthly kingdoms rule over the heavenly [AUBERLEN]. “Three and a half” represents *the idea of spiritual trial*; (besides this certain *symbolical* meaning, there is doubtless an accurate *chronological* meaning, which is as yet to us uncertain): it is half of “seven,” the complete number, so a semi-perfect state, one of probation. The holy city is trodden by the Gentiles forty-two months (<sup>(6115)</sup>Revelation 11:2), so the exercise of the power of the beast (<sup>(6115)</sup>Revelation 13:5). The two witnesses preach in sackcloth 1260 days, and remained unburied *three days and a half*: so the woman in the wilderness: also the same for a “time, times, and a half” (<sup>(6115)</sup>Revelation 11:3,9,11 12:6,14). *Forty-two* connects the Church with Israel, whose haltings in the wilderness were *forty-two* (<sup>(6115)</sup>Numbers 33:1-50). The famine and drought on Israel in Elijah’s days were for “three years and six months” (<sup>(4025)</sup>Luke 4:25 <sup>(5117)</sup>James 5:17); there same period as Antiochus’ persecution: so the ministry of the Man of Sorrows, which ceased in the midst of a week (<sup>(2025)</sup>Daniel 9:27) [WORDSWORTH, *Apocalypse*].

**scatter ... holy people** — “accomplished” here answers to “the consummation” (<sup>(2025)</sup>Daniel 9:27), namely, the “pouring out” of the last dregs of the curse on the “desolated holy people.” Israel’s lowest humiliation (the utter “scattering of her power”) is the precursor of her exaltation, as it leads her to seek her God and Messiah (<sup>(4239)</sup>Matthew 23:39).

**8. understood not** — Daniel “understood” the main features of the vision as to Antiochus (<sup>(2011)</sup>Daniel 10:1,14), but not as to the *times*. <sup>(6111)</sup>1 Peter 1:10-12 refers mainly to Daniel: for it is he who foretells “the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow”; it is he who prophesies “not unto himself, but unto us”; it is he who “searched what, or what manner of *time* the Spirit of Christ in him did signify.”

9. Daniel's desire of knowing more is thus deferred "till the time of the end." John's Revelation in part reveals what here is veiled (see on <sup>(27104)</sup>Daniel 12:4; <sup>(27085)</sup>Daniel 8:26).

10. There is no need of a fuller explanation as to the *time*; for when the predictions so far given shall have come to pass, the godly shall be "purified" by the foretold trials and shall understand that the end is at hand; but the wicked shall not understand, and so shall rush on to their own ruin (<sup>(27113)</sup>Daniel 11:33-35) [MAURER]. The "end" is primarily, of Antiochus' persuasion; antitypically, the end of Antichrist's. It is the very clearness in the main which renders necessary the obscurity. The fulfillment of God's decree is not a mere arithmetical problem which the profane may understand by arithmetical calculations, but a holy enigma to stimulate to a faithful observance of God's ways, and to a diligent study of the history of God's people [AUBERLEN]. To this Christ refers (<sup>(41415)</sup>Matthew 24:15), "Whose readeth, let him *understand*."

11. **from ... sacrifice ... taken way ... abomination** — (<sup>(27131)</sup>Daniel 11:31). As to this epoch, which probably is prophetically germinant and manifold; the profanation of the temple *by Antiochus* (in the month Ijar of the year 145 B.C., till the restoration of the worship by Judas Maccabeus on the twenty-fifth day of the ninth month [Chisleu] of 148 B.C., according to the Seleucid era, 1290 days; forty-five days more elapsed before Antiochus' death in the month Shebat of 148 B.C., so ending the Jews' calamities [MAURER]); *by pagan Rome*, after Christ's death; *by Mohammed*; *by Antichrist*, the culmination of apostate Rome. The "abomination" must reach its climax (see AUBERLEN's translation, "summit," <sup>(27027)</sup>Daniel 9:27), and the measure of iniquity be full, before Messiah comes.

**thousand two hundred and ninety days** — a month beyond the "time, times, and a half" (<sup>(27117)</sup>Daniel 12:7). In <sup>(27122)</sup>Daniel 12:12, forty-five days more are added, in all 1335 days. TREGELLES thinks Jesus at His coming will deliver the Jews. An interval elapses, during which their consciences are awakened to repentance and faith in Him. A second interval elapses in which Israel's outcasts are gathered, and then the united blessing takes place. These stages are marked by the 1260, 1290, and 1335 days. CUMMING thinks the 1260 years begin when Justinian in 533 subjected the Eastern churches to John II, bishop of Rome; ending in 1792, when the Code Napoleon was established and the Pope was dishonored. 1290 reach to 1822, about the time of the waning of the Turkish power, the successor to Greece in the empire of the East. Forty-five years more end in 1867, the end of "the times of the Gentiles." See <sup>(41354)</sup>Leviticus 26:24, "seven times," that is, 7 X 360, or 2520 years: 652 B.C. is the date of Judah's captivity, beginning under Manasseh 2520 from this date end in 1868, thus nearly

harmonizing with the previous date, 1867. See on <sup><2784></sup>Daniel 8:14. The seventh millenary of the world [CLINTON] begins in 1862. Seven years to 1869 (the date of the second advent) constitute the reign of the personal Antichrist; in the last three and a half, the period of final tribulation, Enoch (or else Moses) and Elijah, the two witnesses, prophesy in sackcloth. This theory is very dubious (compare <sup><1266></sup>Matthew 24:36 <sup><4007></sup>Acts 1:7 <sup><5162></sup>1 Thessalonians 5:2 <sup><6102></sup>2 Peter 3:10); still the event alone can tell whether the chronological coincidences of such theories are fortuitous, or solid data on which to fix the future times. HALES makes the periods 1260, 1290, 1335, begin with the Roman destruction of Jerusalem and end with the precursory dawn of the Reformation, the preaching of Wycliffe and Huss.

**13. rest** — in the grave (<sup><3817></sup>Job 3:17 <sup><2501></sup>Isaiah 57:2). He, like his people Israel, was to wait patiently and confidently for the blessing till God's time. He "received not the promise," but had to wait until the Christian elect saints should be brought in, at the first resurrection, that he and the older Old Testament saints "without us should not be made perfect" (<sup><5814></sup>Hebrews 11:40).

**stand** — implying *justification* unto life, as opposed to condemnation (<sup><3006></sup>Psalm 1:5).

**thy lot** — image from the *allotment* of the earthly Canaan.

## THE BOOK OF

# HOSEA

Commentary by **A. R. FAUSSETT**

## INTRODUCTION

THE first of the twelve minor prophets in the order of the canon (called "minor," not as less in point of inspired authority, but simply in point of size). The twelve are first mentioned by Jesus, the son of Sirach (Ecclesiasticus 49:10). St. Stephen, in <sup>4072</sup>Acts 7:42 (in referring to <sup>3157</sup>Amos 5:27), quotes them as forming one collective body of writings, "the book of the prophets." So JEROME and MELITO, the first Greek father who has left us a catalogue of these books. The collection of the sacred books is by Jewish tradition attributed to the great synagogue of learned scribes formed by Ezra. Many think Nehemiah completed this collection by adding to the books already in the canon those of his own times. Malachi, the last in the series, probably aided him in determining with infallible authority what books were entitled to be ranked in the inspired canon. The chronological order differs from the canonical. Joel, about 810 B.C.; Jonah, about 810 B.C., or, as others, *first*, 862 B.C.; Amos, about 790 B.C.; Hosea, about 784 B.C. Hosea, the contemporary of Isaiah, Micah, and Amos, seems to have entered on his prophetic office in the last years of Jeroboam (contemporary in part with Uzziah), and to have ended it in the beginning of Hezekiah's reign, 722 B.C., that is, about *sixty* years in all, from 784 B.C. to 722 B.C. The prophets, however, were not uninterruptedly engaged in prophesying. Considerable intervals elapsed, though their office as divinely commissioned public teachers was never wholly laid aside. The Book of Hosea which we have constitutes only that portion of his public teachings which the Holy Spirit saw fit to preserve for the benefit of the Church. The cause of his being placed first of the twelve was, probably, the length, the vivid earnestness, and patriotism of his prophecies, as well as their closer resemblance to those of the greater prophets. His style is abrupt, sententious, and unrounded; the connecting particles are few; there are changes of person, and anomalies of gender, number, and construction. His name means *Salvation*. He was son of Beerī, of the tribe of Issachar, born in Beth-shemesh [JEROME]. His mention, in the inscription, of Uzziah,

Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, is no proof that he belonged to Judah: for the prophets in Israel regarded its separation from Judah, *civil* as well as religious, as an apostasy from God, who promised the dominion of the theocracy to the line of David. Hence Elijah in Israel took *twelve* stones to represent Judah, as well as Israel (<sup><1183></sup>1 Kings 18:31). Hence Hosea dates from Judah's kings, as well as from Jeroboam of Israel, though he belonged to Israel, with whose sins and fate his book is chiefly occupied. He, however, makes incidental references to Judah. His first prophecy foretells the overthrow of Jehu's house, fulfilled on the death of Jeroboam, Jehu's great-grandson (<sup><12512></sup>2 Kings 15:12), in Zachariah, Jeroboam's son, the fourth and last from Jehu, conspired against by Shallum. This first prediction was doubtless in Jeroboam's life, as Zachariah, his son, was only suffered to reign six months; thus the inscription is verified that "the word of the Lord came unto him in the days of Jeroboam" (<sup><3001></sup>Hosea 1:1). Again, in <sup><3004></sup>Hosea 10:14, Shalmaneser's expedition against Israel is alluded to *as past*, that is, the first inroad against King Hoshea, who began to reign in the twelfth year of Ahaz; so that as Ahaz' whole reign was sixteen years, the prophecy seems to have been given about the beginning of Hezekiah's reign. Thus the inscription is confirmed that the exercise of his prophetic functions was of such a protracted duration.

Hosea (<sup><3011></sup>Hosea 11:1) is quoted in <sup><1025></sup>Matthew 2:15; also <sup><3016></sup>Hosea 6:6 in <sup><1023></sup>Matthew 9:13 12:7; compare <sup><1025></sup>Romans 9:25,26, quoting <sup><3010></sup>Hosea 1:10 2:1,23; <sup><1555></sup>1 Corinthians 15:55, quoting <sup><3034></sup>Hosea 13:14; <sup><1020></sup>1 Peter 2:10, quoting <sup><3009></sup>Hosea 1:9,10 2:23. Messianic references are not frequent; but the predictions of the future conversion of Israel to the Lord their God, and David their king, and of the fulfillment of the promise to Abraham that his spiritual seed should be as the sand of the sea (<sup><3010></sup>Hosea 1:10 3:5), clearly refer to the New Testament dispensation.

The first and third chapters are in prose, the rest of the book is rhythmical.

# CHAPTER 1

## HOSEA 1:1-11.

### INSCRIPTION.

Spiritual whoredom of Israel set forth by symbolical acts; Gomer taken to wife at God's command: Jezreel, Lo-ruhamah, and Lo-Ammi, the children. Yet a promise of Judah and Israel's restoration.

1. *The word of the Lord that came unto Hosea* — See *Introduction*.

*Jeroboam* — the second; who died in the fifteenth year of Uzziah's forty-one years' reign. From his time forth *all* Israel's kings worshipped false gods: Zachariah (<sup><121519></sup>2 Kings 15:9), Menahem (<sup><121518></sup>2 Kings 15:18), Pekahiah (<sup><121514></sup>2 Kings 15:24), Pekah (<sup><121518></sup>2 Kings 15:28), Hoshea (<sup><121712></sup>2 Kings 17:2). As Israel was most flourishing externally under Jeroboam II, who recovered the possessions seized on by Syria, Hosea's prophecy of its downfall at that time was the more striking as it could not have been foreseen by mere human sagacity. Jonah the prophet had promised success to Jeroboam II from God, not for the king's merit, but from God's mercy to Israel; so the coast of Israel was restored by Jeroboam II from the entering of Hamath to the sea of the plain (<sup><121423></sup>2 Kings 14:23-27).

2. *beginning* — not of the prophet's predictions generally, but of those spoken by *Hosea*.

*take ... wife of whoredoms* — not externally acted, but internally and in vision, as a pictorial illustration of Israel's unfaithfulness [HENGSTENBERG]. Compare <sup><123118></sup>Ezekiel 16:8,15, etc. Besides the loathsomeness of such a marriage, if an external act, it would require years for the birth of three children, which would weaken the symbol (compare <sup><123018></sup>Ezekiel 4:4). HENDERSON objects that there is no hint of the transaction being fictitious: Gomer fell into lewdness *after* her union with Hosea, not before; for thus only she was a fit symbol of Israel, who lapsed into spiritual whoredom *after* the marriage contract with God on Sinai, and made even before at the call of the patriarchs of Israel. Gomer is called "a wife of whoredoms," anticipatively.

*children of whoredoms* — The kingdom collectively is viewed as a *mother*; the individual subjects of it are spoken of as her *children*. "Take"

being applied to both implies that they refer to the same thing viewed under different aspects. The “children” were not the prophet’s own, but born of adultery, and presented to him as his [KITTO, *Biblical Cyclopaedia*]. Rather, “children of whoredoms” means that the children, like their mother, fell into spiritual fornication. Compare “bare *him* a son” (see <sup><3014></sup>Hosea 2:4,5). Being children of a spiritual whore, they naturally fell into her whorish ways.

**3. *Gomer ... daughter of Diblaim*** — symbolical names; literally, “completion, daughter of grape cakes”; the dual expressing the double layers in which these dainties were baked. So, *one completely given up to sensuality*. MAURER explains “Gomer” as literally, “a burning coal.” Compare <sup><1017></sup>Proverbs 6:27,29, as to an adulteress; <sup><8301></sup>Job 31:9,12.

**4. *Jezebel*** — that is, “God will scatter” (compare Zechariah 10:9). It was the royal city of Ahab and his successors, in the tribe of Issachar. Here Jehu exercised his greatest cruelties (<sup><11916></sup>2 Kings 9:16,25,33 10:11,14,17). There is in the name an allusion to “Israel” by a play of letters and sounds.

**5. *bow*** — the prowess (<sup><1485></sup>Jeremiah 49:35; compare <sup><1424></sup>Genesis 49:24).

***valley of Jezreel*** — afterwards called Esdraelon, extending ten miles in breadth, and in length from Jordan to the Mediterranean near Mount Carmel, the great battlefield of Palestine (<sup><1013></sup>Judges 6:33 <sup><1021></sup>1 Samuel 29:1).

**6. *Lo-ruhamah*** — that is, “not an object of mercy or gracious favor.”

***take ... away*** — Israel, as a kingdom, was never restored from Assyria, as Judah was from Babylon after seventy years. MAURER translates according to the primary meaning, “No more will I have mercy on the house of Israel, so as to *pardon* them.”

**7. *Judah*** is only incidentally mentioned to form a contrast to *Israel*.

***by the Lord their God*** — more emphatic than “by Myself”; by that Jehovah (Me) whom they worship as *their God*, whereas ye despise Him.

***not ... by bow*** — on which ye Israelites rely (<sup><3015></sup>Hosea 1:5, “the bow of Israel”); Jeroboam II was famous as a warrior (<sup><1245></sup>2 Kings 14:25). Yet it was not by their warlike power Jehovah would save Judah (<sup><1074></sup>1 Samuel 17:47 <sup><1311></sup>Psalms 20:7). The deliverance of Jerusalem from Sennacherib (<sup><1235></sup>2 Kings 19:35), and the restoration from Babylon, are herein predicted.

**8. *weaned*** — said to complete the symbolical picture, not having any special signification as to Israel [HENDERSON]. Israel was bereft of all the privileges which were as needful to them as milk is to infants (compare

<sup><4900></sup>Psalm 131:2 <sup><6000></sup>1 Peter 2:2) [VATABLUS]. Israel was *not suddenly*, but *gradually* cast off; God bore with them with long-suffering, until they were incurable [CALVIN]. But as it is not God, but *Gomer* who weans Lo-ruhamah, the weaning may imply the lust of Gomer, who was hardly weaned when she is again pregnant [MANGER].

**9. *Lo-Ammi*** — once “My people,” but henceforth *not* so (<sup><3608></sup>Ezekiel 16:8). The intervals between the marriage and the successive births of the three children, imply that three successive generations are intended. Jezreel, the first child, represents the dynasty of Jeroboam I and his successors, ending with Jehu’s shedding the blood of Jeroboam’s line in Jezreel; it was there that Jezebel was slain, in vengeance for Naboth’s blood shed in the same Jezreel (<sup><1101></sup>1 Kings 16:1 <sup><1102></sup>2 Kings 9:21,30). The scenes of Jezreel were to be enacted over again on Jehu’s degenerate race. At Jezreel Assyria routed Israel [JEROME]. The child’s name associates past sins, intermediate punishments, and final overthrow. Lo-ruhamah (“not pitied”), the second child, is a *daughter*, representing the effeminate period which followed the overthrow of the first dynasty, when Israel was at once abject and impious. Lo-Ammi (“not my people”), the third child, a *son*, represents the vigorous dynasty (<sup><1205></sup>2 Kings 14:25) of Jeroboam II; but, as prosperity did not bring with it revived piety, they were still *not God’s people*.

**10.** Literally fulfilled *in part* at the return from Babylon, in which many Israelites joined with Judah. Spiritually, the believing seed of Jacob or Israel, Gentiles as well as Jews, numerous “as the sand” (<sup><1012></sup>Genesis 32:12); the Gentiles, once not God’s people, becoming His “sons” (<sup><8112></sup>John 1:12 <sup><1205></sup>Romans 9:25,26 <sup><1010></sup>1 Peter 2:10 <sup><3101></sup>1 John 3:1). To be fulfilled in its literal *fullness* hereafter in Israel’s restoration (<sup><5113></sup>Romans 11:26).

***the living God*** — opposed to their *dead* idols.

**11. *Judah ... Israel ... together*** — (<sup><23112></sup>Isaiah 11:12,13 <sup><2408></sup>Jeremiah 3:18 <sup><3523></sup>Ezekiel 34:23 37:16-24).

***one head*** — Zerubbabel typically; Christ antotypically, under whom alone Israel and Judah are joined, the “Head” of the Church (<sup><4002></sup>Ephesians 1:22 5:23), and of the hereafter united kingdom of Judah and Israel (<sup><2405></sup>Jeremiah 34:5,6 <sup><3523></sup>Ezekiel 34:23). Though “appointed” by the Father (<sup><4006></sup>Psalm 2:6), Christ is in another sense “appointed” as their Head by His people, when they accept and embrace Him as such.

***out of the land*** — of the Gentiles among whom they sojourn.

***the day of Jezreel*** — “The day of one” is the time of God’s special visitation of him, either in wrath or in mercy. Here “Jezreel” is in a

different sense from that in <sup><300></sup>Hosea 1:4, “God will sow,” not “God will scatter”; they shall be *the seed of God*, planted by God again in their own land (<sup><2016></sup>Jeremiah 24:6 31:28 32:41 <sup><3015></sup>Amos 9:15).

## CHAPTER 2

### ~~XXX~~ HOSEA 2:1-23.

#### APPLICATION OF THE SYMBOLS IN THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Israel's spiritual fornication, and her threatened punishment: yet a promise of God's restored favor, when chastisements have produced their designed effect.

1. *Say ... unto ... brethren, Ammi*, etc. — that is, When the prediction (~~XXXIII~~Hosea 1:11) shall be accomplished, then ye will call one another, as *brothers* and *sisters* in the family of God, Ammi and Ruhamah.

2. *Plead* — expostulate.

*mother* — that is the nation *collectively*. The address is to “her children,” that is, to the *individual* citizens of the state (compare ~~XXXII~~Isaiah 50:1).

*for she is not my wife* — She has deprived herself of her high privilege by spiritual adultery.

*out of her sight* — rather, “from her face.” Her very countenance unblushingly betrayed her lust, as did also her exposed “breasts.”

3. *set her as in the day ... born* — (~~XXXIV~~Ezekiel 16:4 23:25,26,28,29). The day of her political “birth” was when God delivered her from the bondage of Egypt, and set up the theocracy.

*make her as a wilderness* — (~~XXXV~~Jeremiah 6:8 ~~XXXVI~~Zephaniah 2:13).

Translate, “make her as the wilderness,” namely, that in which she passed forty years on her way to her goodly possession of Canaan. With this agrees the mention of “thirst” (compare ~~XXXVII~~Jeremiah 2:6).

4. *her children* — Not even her *individual* members shall escape the doom of the nation collectively, for they are individually guilty.

5. *I will go after* — The *Hebrew* expresses a *settled determination*.

*lovers* — the idols which Israel fancied to be the givers of all their goods, whereas God gave all these goods (~~XXXVIII~~Hosea 2:8-13; compare ~~XXXIX~~Jeremiah 44:17-19).

**bread and ... water** — the *necessaries* of life in food.

**wool ... flax** — clothing.

**oil ... drink** — perfumed unguents and palatable drinks: the *luxuries* of Hebrew life.

**6, 7. thorns ... wall** — (<sup><389B></sup>Job 19:8 <sup><270P></sup>Lamentations 3:7,9). The hindrances which the captivity interposed between Israel and her idols. As she attributes all her temporal blessings to idols, I will reduce her to straits in which, when she in vain has sought help from false gods, she will at last seek Me as her only God and Husband, as at the first (<sup><254E></sup>Isaiah 54:5 <sup><318A></sup>Jeremiah 3:14 <sup><340E></sup>Ezekiel 16:8).

**then** — before Israel's apostasy, under Jeroboam. The way of duty is hedged *about* with thorns; it is the way of sin that is hedged *up* with thorns. Crosses in an evil course are God's hedges to turn us from it. Restraining grace and restraining providences (even sicknesses and trials) are great blessings when they stop us in a course of sin. Compare <sup><254E></sup>Luke 15:14-18, "I will arise, and go to my father." So here, "I will go, and return," etc; crosses in the both cases being sanctified to produce this effect.

**8. she did not know that I** — not the idols, as she thought: the "lovers" alluded to in <sup><300E></sup>Hosea 2:5.

**which they prepared for Baal** — that is, of which they made images of Baal, or at least the plate covering of them (<sup><389E></sup>Hosea 8:4). Baal was the Phoenician sun-god: answering to the female Astarte, the moon-goddess. The name of the idol is found in the Phoenician Hannibal, Hasdrubal. Israel borrowed it from the Tyrians.

**9. my corn ... my wool ... my flax** — in contrast to "my bread ... my wool ... my flax," (<sup><300E></sup>Hosea 2:5). Compare also <sup><312D></sup>Hosea 2:21-23, on God as the great First Cause giving these through secondary instruments in nature. "Return, and take away," is equivalent to, "I will take back again," namely, by sending storms, locusts, Assyrian enemies, etc. "Therefore," that is, because she did not acknowledge Me as the Giver.

**in the time thereof** — in the harvest-time.

**10. lewdness** — rather, "the shame of her nakedness"; laying aside the figure, "I will expose her in *her state, bereft of every necessary*, before her lovers," that is, the idols (personified, as if they could see), who, nevertheless, can give her no help. "Discover" is appropriate to stripping off the self-flatteries of her hypocrisy.

**11. *her feast days*** — of Jeroboam’s appointment, distinct from the Mosaic (<sup><1123></sup>1 Kings 12:32). However, most of the Mosaic feasts, “new-moons” and “sabbaths” to Jehovah, remained, but to degenerate Israel worship was a weariness; they cared only for the carnal indulgence on them (<sup><1085></sup>Amos 8:5).

**12. *my rewards*** — my hire as a harlot (<sup><237></sup>Isaiah 23:17,18).

*lovers* — idols.

***destroy ... vines ... make ... forest*** — (<sup><216></sup>Isaiah 5:6 7:23,24). Fulfilled in the overthrow of Israel by Assyria (<sup><304></sup>Hosea 9:4,5).

**13. *days of Baalim*** — the days consecrated to the Baals, or various images of Baal in different cities, whence the names *Baal-gad*, *Baal-hermon*, etc.

***decked herself with ... earrings*** — rather, “nose-rings” (<sup><216></sup>Isaiah 3:21 <sup><362></sup>Ezekiel 16:12, *Margin*), with which harlots decked themselves to attract admirers: answering to the ornaments in which the Israelites decked themselves on the idols’ feasts.

***forgot me*** — worse than the nations which had never known God. Israel *wilfully apostatized* from Jehovah, whom she had known.

**14. *Therefore*** — rather, “Nevertheless” [HENDERSON]. *English Version* gives a more lovely idea of God. That which would provoke all others to unappeasable wrath, Israel’s perversity and consequent punishment, is made a reason why God should at last have mercy on her. As the “therefore” (<sup><304></sup>Hosea 2:9) expresses Israel’s punishment as the *consequence* of Israel’s guilt, so “therefore” here, as in <sup><304></sup>Hosea 2:6, expresses, that when that punishment has effected its designed end, the hedging up her way with thorns so that she returns to God, her first love, the *consequence* in God’s wondrous grace is, He “speaks comfortably” (literally, “speaks to her heart”; compare <sup><078></sup>Judges 19:8 <sup><003></sup>Ruth 2:13). So obstinate is she that God has to “allure her,” that is, so to temper judgment with unlooked-for grace as to *win* her to His ways. For this purpose it was necessary to “bring her into the wilderness” (that is, into temporal want and trials) first, to make her sin hateful to her by its bitter fruits, and God’s subsequent grace the more precious to her by the contrast of the “wilderness.” JEROME makes the “bringing into the wilderness” to be rather a *Deliverance from her enemies*, just as ancient Israel was brought into the wilderness from the bondage of Egypt; to this the phrase here alludes (compare <sup><304></sup>Hosea 2:15). The wilderness sojourn, however, is not literal, but moral: while still in the land of their enemies *locally*, by the discipline of the trial rendering the word of God sweet to them, they are to

be brought *morally* into the wilderness state, that is, into a state of preparedness for returning to their temporal and spiritual privileges in their own land; just as the literal wilderness prepared their fathers for Canaan: thus the bringing of them into the *wilderness state is virtually* a deliverance from their enemies.

**15. *from thence*** — returning from the wilderness. God gives Israel a fresh grant of Canaan, which she had forfeited; so of her vineyards, etc. (<sup>-3119</sup>Hosea 2:9,12).

***Achor*** — that is “trouble.” As formerly Israel, after their tedious journey through the wilderness, met with the *trouble* resulting from Achan’s crime in this valley, on the very threshold of Canaan, and yet that *trouble* was presently turned into *joy* at the great victory at Ai, which threw all Canaan into their hands (Joshua 7,8); so the very trouble of Israel’s wilderness state will be the “door of hope” opening to better days. The valley of Achor, near Jericho, was specially fruitful (<sup>-2610</sup>Isaiah 65:10); so “trouble” and “hope” are rightly blended in connection with it.

***sing ... as ... when she came ... out of ... Egypt*** — It shall be a second exodus song, such as Israel sang after the deliverance at the Red Sea (<sup>-0210</sup>Exodus 15:1-21; compare <sup>-23115</sup>Isaiah 11:15,16); and “the song of Moses” (<sup>-66312</sup>Revelation 15:2,3) sung by those who through the Lamb overcome the beast, and so stand on the sea of glass mingled with fire, emblems of fiery trial, such as that of Israel at the Red Sea.

**16. *Ishi ... no more Baali*** — “my *Husband* ... no more my *Lord*.” *Affection* is the prominent idea in “Husband”; *rule*, in “Lord.” The chief reason for the substitution of *Husband* for *Lord* appears in <sup>-31017</sup>Hosea 2:17; namely, *Baali*, the *Hebrew* for *my Lord*, had been perverted to express the images of Baal, whose name ought not to be taken on their lips (<sup>-02313</sup>Exodus 23:13 Zechariah 13:2).

**17. *Baalim*** — *plural*, expressing the various images of Baal, which, according to the places of their erection, received various names, Baal-gad, Baal-ammon, etc.

**18. *for them*** — for their benefit.

***covenant ... with the beasts*** — not to hurt them (<sup>-30523</sup>Job 5:23). They shall fulfill the original law of their creation by becoming subject to man, when man fulfils the law of his being by being subject to God. To be realized fully in millennial times (<sup>-23109</sup>Isaiah 11:6-9).

**break the bow ... out of the earth** — rather, “out of the *land*”; that is, I will break *and remove* war out of the earth (<sup><949></sup>Psalm 46:9); and “out of the *land*” of Israel first (<sup><210></sup>Isaiah 2:4 <sup><309></sup>Ezekiel 39:9,10 Zechariah 9:9,10).

**lie down** — A reclining posture is the usual one with Orientals when not in action.

**safely** — (<sup><206></sup>Jeremiah 23:6).

**19, 20.** “Betroth” is *thrice* repeated, implying the intense love of God to His people; and perhaps, also, *the three Persons* of the *Triune God*, severally engaging to make good the betrothal. The marriage covenant will be as it were renewed from the beginning, on a different footing; not for a time only, as before, through the apostasy of the people, but “forever” through the grace of God writing the law on their hearts by the Spirit of Messiah (<sup><613></sup>Jeremiah 31:31-37).

**righteousness ... judgment** — in rectitude and truth.

**loving-kindness**, etc. — Hereby God assures Israel, who might doubt the possibility of their restoration to His favor; low, sunk, and unworthy as thou art. I will restore thee from a regard to My own “loving-kindness,” not thy merits.

**20. faithfulness** — to My new covenant of grace with thee (<sup><513></sup>1 Thessalonians 5:24 <sup><802></sup>Hebrews 10:23).

**21. in that day** — of grace to Israel.

**heavens ... hear the earth** — personification. However many be the intermediate instruments, God is the Great First Cause of all nature’s phenomena. God had threatened (<sup><819></sup>Hosea 2:9) He would *take back His corn, His wine*, etc. Here, on the contrary, God promises to *hearken to the skies*, as it were, supplicating Him to fill them with rain to pour on the earth; and that the skies again would hearken to the earth begging for a supply of the rain it requires; and again, that the earth would hearken to the corn, wine, and oil, begging it to bring them forth; and these again would hear Jezreel, that is, would fulfill Israel’s prayers for a supply of them. Israel is now no longer “Jezreel” in the sense, “*God will SCATTER*” (<sup><309></sup>Hosea 1:4), but in the sense, “*God will PLANT*” (<sup><311></sup>Hosea 1:11).

**23. I will sow her** — referring to the meaning of *Jezreel* (<sup><322></sup>Hosea 2:22).

# CHAPTER 3

## HOSEA 3:1-5.

### ISRAEL'S CONDITION IN THEIR PRESENT DISPERSION, SUBSEQUENT TO THEIR RETURN FROM BABYLON, SYMBOLIZED.

The prophet is to take back his wife, though unfaithful, as foretold in <sup><3002></sup>Hosea 1:2. He purchases her from her paramour, stipulating she should wait for a long period before she should be restored to her conjugal rights. So Israel is to live for a long period without her ancient rites of religion, and yet be free from idolatry; then at last she shall acknowledge Messiah, and know Jehovah's goodness restored to her.

**1. *Go yet*** — “Go *again*,” referring to <sup><3002></sup>Hosea 1:2 [HENDERSON].

***a woman*** — purposely indefinite, for *thy wife*, to express the *separation* in which Hosea had lived from Gomer for her unfaithfulness.

***beloved of her friend*** — used for “her *husband*,” on account of the estrangement between them. She was still beloved of her husband, though an adulteress; just as God still loved Israel, though idolatrous (<sup><3483></sup>Jeremiah 3:20). Hosea is told, not as in <sup><3002></sup>Hosea 1:2, “take a wife,” but “love” her, that is, renew thy conjugal kindness to her.

***who look to other gods*** — that is, have done so heretofore, but henceforth (from the return from Babylon) shall do so no more (<sup><3004></sup>Hosea 3:4).

***flagons of wine*** — rather, pressed cakes of dried grapes, such as were offered to idols (<sup><3478></sup>Jeremiah 7:18) [MAURER].

**2. *I bought her*** — The price paid is too small to be a probable dowry wherewith to buy *a wife* from her parents; but it is just half the price of a female *slave*, in money, the rest of the price being made up in grain (<sup><0213></sup>Exodus 21:32). Hosea pays this for the redemption of his wife, who has become the *slave of her paramour*. The price being *half grain* was because the latter was the allowance of food for the slave, and of the coarsest kind, not *wheat*, but *barley*. Israel, as *committing sin*, was the *slave of sin* (<sup><0384></sup>John 8:34 <sup><0160></sup>Romans 6:16-20 <sup><0292></sup>2 Peter 2:19). The low price expresses Israel's *worthlessness*.

**3. *abide for me*** — separate from intercourse with any other man, and remaining for me who have redeemed thee (compare <sup><6213></sup>Deuteronomy 21:13).

***so will I also be for thee*** — remain for thee, not taking any other consort. As Israel should long remain without serving other gods, yet separate from Jehovah; so Jehovah on His part, in this long period of estrangement, would form no marriage covenant with any other people (compare <sup><3806></sup>Hosea 3:4). He would not immediately receive her to marriage privileges, but would test her repentance and discipline her by the long probation; still the marriage covenant would hold good, she was to be kept separated for but a time, not divorced (<sup><2810></sup>Isaiah 50:1); in God's good time she shall be restored.

**4.** The long period here foretold was to be one in which Israel should have no civil polity, king, or prince, no sacrifice to Jehovah, and yet no idol, or false god, no ephod, or teraphim. Exactly describing their state for the last nineteen centuries, separate from idols, yet without any legal sacrifice to Jehovah, whom they profess to worship, and without being acknowledged by Him as His Church. So KIMCHI, a Jew, explains it. The ephod was worn by the high priest above the tunic and robe. It consisted of two finely wrought pieces which hung down, the one in front over the breast, the other on the back, to the middle of the thigh; joined on the shoulders by golden clasps set in onyx stones with the names of the twelve tribes, and fastened round the waist by a girdle (<sup><1236></sup>Exodus 28:6-12). The common ephod worn by the lower priests, Levites, and any person performing sacred rites, was of linen (<sup><1064></sup>2 Samuel 6:14 <sup><3157></sup>1 Chronicles 15:27). In the breast were the Urim and Thummim by which God gave responses to the Hebrews. The latter was one of the five things which the second temple lacked, and which the first had. It, as representing the divinely constituted priesthood, is opposed to the idolatrous "teraphim," as "sacrifice" (to Jehovah) is to "an (idolatrous) image." "Abide" answers to "thou shalt abide for me" (<sup><3806></sup>Hosea 3:3). Abide in solitary isolation, as a separated wife. The teraphim were tutelary household gods, in the shape of human busts, cut off at the waist (as the root of the Hebrew word implies) [MAURER], (<sup><1319></sup>Genesis 31:19,30-35). They were supposed to give responses to consulters (<sup><1224></sup>2 Kings 23:24 <sup><3202></sup>Ezekiel 21:21, *Margin*; Zechariah 10:2). Saul's daughter, Michal, putting one in a bed, as if it were David, proves the shape to have been that of a man.

**5. *Afterward*** — after the long period ("many days," <sup><3806></sup>Hosea 3:4) has elapsed.

***return*** — from their idols to "their God," from whom they had wandered.

**David their king** — Israel had forsaken the worship of Jehovah at the same time that they forsook their allegiance to David's line. Their repentance towards God is therefore to be accompanied by their return to the latter. So Judah and Israel shall be one, and under "one head," as is also foretold (<sup>2811</sup>Hosea 1:11). That representative and antitype of David is Messiah. "David" means "the beloved." Compare as to Messiah, <sup>4087</sup>Matthew 3:17 <sup>4006</sup>Ephesians 1:6. Messiah is called David (<sup>268</sup>Isaiah 55:3,4 <sup>2809</sup>Jeremiah 30:9 <sup>4543</sup>Ezekiel 34:23,24 37:24,25).

**fear the Lord and his goodness** — that is, tremblingly flee to the Lord, to escape from the wrath to come; and to His goodness," as manifested in Messiah, which attracts them to Him (<sup>2612</sup>Jeremiah 31:12). The "fear" is not that which "hath torment" (<sup>6083</sup>1 John 4:18), but *reverence* inspired by His goodness realized in the soul (<sup>4504</sup>Psalms 130:4).

**the latter days** — those of Messiah [KIMCHI].

# CHAPTER 4

## ~~2000~~ HOSEA 4:1-19.

### HENCEFORTH THE PROPHET SPEAKS PLAINLY AND WITHOUT SYMBOL, IN TERSE, SENTENTIOUS PROPOSITIONS.

In this chapter he reproves the people and priests for their sins in the interregnum which followed Jeroboam's death; hence there is no mention of the king or his family; and in ~~2002~~ Hosea 4:2 bloodshed and other evils usual in a civil war are specified.

1. *Israel* — the ten tribes.

*controversy* — judicial ground of complaint (~~2008~~ Isaiah 1:18 ~~2051~~ Jeremiah 25:31 Micah 6:2).

*no ... knowledge of God* — exhibited in practice (~~2026~~ Jeremiah 22:16).

2. *they break out* — bursting through every restraint.

*blood toucheth blood* — literally, "bloods." One act of bloodshed follows another without any interval between (see ~~2158~~ 2 Kings 15:8-16,25 Micah 7:2).

3. *land ... languish* — (~~2808~~ Isaiah 19:8 24:4 ~~2010~~ Joel 1:10,12).

*sea* — including all bodies of water, as pools and even rivers (see on ~~2005~~ Isaiah 19:5). A general drought, the greatest calamity in the East, is threatened.

4. *let no man ... reprove* — Great as is the sin of Israel, it is hopeless to reprove them; for their presumptuous guilt is as great as that of one who refuses to obey the priest when giving judgment in the name of Jehovah, and who therefore is to be put to death (~~0572~~ Deuteronomy 17:12). They rush on to their own destruction as wilfully as such a one.

*thy people* — the ten tribes of Israel; distinct from Judah (~~2000~~ Hosea 4:1).

5. *fall in the day* — in broad *daylight*, a time when an attack would not be expected (see on ~~2004~~ Jeremiah 6:4,5; ~~2158~~ Jeremiah 15:8).

**in ... night** — No time, night or day, shall be free from the slaughter of individuals of the people, as well as of the false prophets.

**thy mother** — the Israelitish state, of which the citizens are the children (<sup><3010></sup>Hosea 2:2).

**6. lack of knowledge** — “of God” (<sup><3008></sup>Hosea 4:1), that is, lack of piety. Their ignorance was wilful, as the epithet, “My people,” implies; they *ought* to have known, having the opportunity, as the people of God.

**thou** — O priest, so-called. Not regularly constituted, but still bearing the name, while confounding the worship of Jehovah and of the calves in Beth-el (<sup><1122></sup>1 Kings 12:29,31).

**I will ... forget thy children** — Not only those who then were alive should be deprived of the priesthood, but their children who, in the ordinary course would have succeeded them, should be set aside.

**7. As they were increased** — in numbers and power. Compare <sup><3006></sup>Hosea 4:6, “thy children,” to which their “increase” in *numbers* refers.

**so they sinned** — (Compare <sup><3005></sup>Hosea 10:1 and <sup><3006></sup>Hosea 13:6).

**will I change their glory into shame** — that is, I will strip them of all they now *glory* in (their numbers and power), and give them *shame* instead. A just retribution: as they changed their glory into shame, by idolatry (<sup><1946></sup>Psalm 106:20 <sup><2421></sup>Jeremiah 2:11 <sup><8123></sup>Romans 1:23 <sup><3089></sup>Philippians 3:19).

**8. eat ... sin of my people** — that is, the sin offerings (<sup><8037></sup>Leviticus 6:26 10:17). The priests greedily devoured them.

**set their heart on their iniquity** — literally “lift up the animal soul to lust after,” or strongly desire. Compare <sup><5345></sup>Deuteronomy 24:15, *Margin*; <sup><1246></sup>Psalm 24:4 <sup><2227></sup>Jeremiah 22:27. The priests set *their own* hearts on the iniquity of the people, instead of trying to suppress it. For the more the people sinned, the more sacrificial victims in atonement for sin the priests gained.

**9. like people, like priest** — They are one in guilt; therefore they shall be one in punishment (<sup><2941></sup>Isaiah 24:2).

**reward them their doings** — in homely phrase, “pay them back in their own coin” (<sup><3033></sup>Proverbs 1:31).

**10. eat, and not have enough** — just retribution on those who “eat up (greedily) the sin of My people” (<sup><2008></sup>Hosea 4:8 <sup><3064></sup>Micah 6:14 Haggai 1:6).

**whoredom, and ... not increase** — literally “break forth”; used of *giving birth to children* (<sup>4084</sup>Genesis 28:14, *Margin*; compare <sup>4389</sup>Genesis 38:29). Not only their wives, but their concubines, shall be barren. To be childless was considered a great calamity among the Jews.

**11.** A moral truth applicable to all times. The special reference here is to the licentious orgies connected with the Syrian worship, which lured Israel away from the pure worship of God (<sup>2301</sup>Isaiah 28:1,7 <sup>3001</sup>Amos 4:1).

**take away the heart** — that is, the understanding; make men blind to their own true good (<sup>2007</sup>Ecclesiastes 7:7).

**12.** Instances of their understanding (“heart”) being “taken away.”

**stocks** — wooden idols (<sup>3127</sup>Jeremiah 2:27 <sup>3099</sup>Habakkuk 2:19).

**staff** — alluding to divination by rods (see on <sup>3021</sup>Ezekiel 21:21,22). The diviner, says ROSENMULLER, threw a rod from him, which was stripped of its bark on one side, not on the other: if the bare side turned uppermost, it was a good omen; if the side with the bark, it was a bad omen. The Arabs used two rods, the one marked *God bids*, the other, *God forbids*; whichever came out first, in drawing them out of a case, gave the omen for, or against, an undertaking.

**declareth** — that is, is consulted to inform them of future events.

**spirit of whoredoms** — a general *disposition* on the part of all *towards idolatry* (<sup>3304</sup>Hosea 5:4).

**err** — go astray from the true God.

**from under their God** — They have gone away from God *under* whom they were, as a wife is under the dominion of her husband.

**13. upon ... mountains** — High places were selected by idolaters on which to sacrifice, because of their greater nearness to the heavenly hosts which they worshipped (<sup>4521</sup>Deuteronomy 12:2).

**elms** — rather, “terebinths” [MAURER].

**shadow ... good** — screening the lascivious worshippers from the heat of the sun.

**daughters ... commit whoredom ... spouses ... adultery** — in the polluted worship of Astarte, the Phoenician goddess of love.

**14. I will not punish ... daughters** — I will visit with the heaviest punishments “not” the unchaste “daughters and spouses,” but the fathers

and husbands; for it is these who “themselves” have set the bad example, so that as compared with the punishment of the latter, that of the former shall seem as nothing [MUNSTER].

**separated with whores** — withdrawn from the assembly of worshippers to some receptacle of impurity for carnal connection with *whores*.

**sacrifice with harlots** — They commit lewdness with *women* who *devote their persons* to be violated in honor of Astarte. (So the *Hebrew* for “harlots” means, as distinguished from “whores”). Compare <sup><0270></sup>Numbers 25:1-3; and the prohibition, <sup><0238></sup>Deuteronomy 23:18.

**not understand** — (<sup><2348></sup>Isaiah 44:18 45:20).

**shall fall** — shall be cast down.

**15.** Though *Israel's* ten tribes indulge in spiritual harlotry, at least thou, *Judah*, who hast the legal priesthood, and the temple rites, and Jerusalem, do not follow her bad example.

**Gilgal** — situated between Jordan and Jericho on the confines of Samaria; once a holy place to Jehovah (<sup><0650></sup>Joshua 5:10-15 <sup><0908></sup>1 Samuel 10:8 15:21); afterwards desecrated by idol-worship (<sup><2085></sup>Hosea 9:15 12-11 <sup><3004></sup>Amos 4:4 5:5; compare <sup><0789></sup>Judges 3:19, *Margin*).

**Beth-aven** — that is, “house of vanity” or idols: a name substituted in contempt for *Beth-el*, “the house of God”; once sacred to Jehovah (<sup><0287></sup>Genesis 28:17,19 35:7), but made by Jeroboam the seat of the worship of the calves (<sup><1128></sup>1 Kings 12:28-33 13:1 <sup><2483></sup>Jeremiah 48:13 <sup><3084></sup>Amos 3:14 7:13). “Go up” refers to the fact that Beth-el was on a hill (<sup><0601></sup>Joshua 16:1).

**nor swear, The Lord liveth** — This formula of oath was appointed by God Himself (<sup><0663></sup>Deuteronomy 6:13 10:20 <sup><2002></sup>Jeremiah 4:2). It is therefore here forbidden not absolutely, but in conjunction with idolatry and falsehood (<sup><2808></sup>Isaiah 48:1 <sup><3519></sup>Ezekiel 20:39 Zephaniah 1:5).

**16. backsliding** — Translate, “Israel is refractory, as a refractory heifer,” namely, one that throws the yoke off her neck. Israel had represented God under the form of “calves” (<sup><1128></sup>1 Kings 12:28); but it is she herself who is one.

**lamb in a large place** — not in a good sense, as in <sup><2303></sup>Isaiah 30:23. Here there is irony: lambs like a large pasture; but it is not so safe for them as a small one, duly fenced from wild beasts. God will “feed” them, but it shall be with the “rod” (<sup><3074></sup>Micah 7:14). It shall be no longer in the narrow territory of Israel, but “in a large place,” namely, they shall be scattered in

exile over the wide realm of Assyria, a prey to their foes; as lambs, which are timid, gregarious, and not solitary, are a prey when scattered asunder to wild beasts.

**17. Ephraim** — the ten tribes. Judah was at this time not so given to idolatry as afterwards.

**joined to** — closely and voluntarily; identifying themselves with them as a whoremonger becomes one flesh with the harlot (<sup><4023></sup>Numbers 25:3 <sup><4026></sup>1 Corinthians 6:16,17).

**idols** — The *Hebrew* means also “sorrows,” “pains,” implying the pain which idolatry brings on its votaries.

**let him alone** — Leave him to himself. Let him reap the fruits of his own perverse choice; his case is desperate; say nothing to him (compare <sup><2076></sup>Jeremiah 7:16). Here <sup><2045></sup>Hosea 4:15 shows the address is to *Judah*, to avoid the contagion of Israel’s bad example. He is bent on his own ruin; leave him to his fate, lest, instead of saving him, thou fall thyself (<sup><2380></sup>Isaiah 48:20 <sup><2518></sup>Jeremiah 50:8 51:6,45 <sup><4027></sup>2 Corinthians 6:17).

**18. Their drink is sour** — metaphor for *utter degeneracy* of principle (<sup><2012></sup>Isaiah 1:22). Or, *unbridled licentiousness*; not mere ordinary sin, but as abandoned as drunkards who vomit and smell sour with wine potations [CALVIN]. MAURER not so well translates, “When their drinking *is over*, they commit whoredoms,” namely, in honor of Astarte (<sup><2045></sup>Hosea 4:13,14).

**her rulers** — Israel’s; literally, “shields” (compare <sup><2079></sup>Psalms 47:9).

**with shame ... love, Give ye** — (<sup><2015></sup>Proverbs 30:15). No remedy could be effectual against their corruptions since the very rulers sold justice for gifts [CALVIN]. MAURER translates, “The rulers are marvelously enamored of shame.” *English Version* is better.

**19.** Israel shall be swept away from her land (<sup><2046></sup>Hosea 4:16) suddenly and violently as if by “the wings of the wind” (<sup><2080></sup>Psalms 18:10 104:3 <sup><2041></sup>Jeremiah 4:11,12).

**ashamed ... of their sacrifices** — disappointed to their shame in their hope of help through their sacrifices to idols.

# CHAPTER 5

## HOSEA 5:1-5.

### GOD'S JUDGMENTS ON THE PRIESTS, PEOPLE, AND PRINCES OF ISRAEL FOR THEIR SINS.

Judah, too, being guilty shall be punished; nor shall Assyria, whose aid they both sought, save them; judgments shall at last lead them to repentance.

**1. *the king*** — probably Pekah; the contemporary of Ahaz, king of Judah, under whom idolatry was first carried so far in Judah as to call for the judgment of the joint Syrian and Israelite invasion, as also that of Assyria.

***judgment is towards you*** — that is, threatens you from God.

***ye have been a snare on Mizpah ... net ... upon Tabor*** — As hunters spread their net and snares on the hills, *Mizpah* and *Tabor*, so ye have snared the people into idolatry and made them your prey by injustice. As *Mizpah* and *Tabor* mean a “watch tower,” and a “lofty place,” a fit scene for hunters, playing on the words, the prophet implies, in the lofty place in which I have set you, whereas ye ought to have been the *watchers* of the people, guarding them from evil, ye have been as *hunters entrapping* them into it [JEROME]. These two places are specified, *Mizpah* in the east and *Tabor* in the west, to include the *high places* throughout the *whole* kingdom, in which Israel's rulers set up idolatrous altars.

**2. *revolters*** — apostates.

***profound*** — *deeply* rooted [CALVIN] and sunk to the lowest depths, *excessive* in their idolatry (<sup>2301</sup>Hosea 9:9 <sup>2306</sup>Isaiah 31:6) [HENDERSON]. From the antithesis (<sup>2308</sup>Hosea 5:3), “not hid from me,” I prefer explaining, *profoundly cunning* in their idolatry. Jeroboam thought it a *profound* piece of policy to set up golden calves to represent God in *Daniel* and *Beth-el*, in order to prevent Israel's heart from turning again to David's line by going up to Jerusalem to worship. So Israel's subsequent idolatry was grounded by their leaders on various pleas of state expediency (compare <sup>2305</sup>Isaiah 29:15).

**to ... slaughter** — He does not say “to *sacrifice*,” for their so-called sacrifices were *butcheries* rather than sacrifices; there was nothing sacred about them, being to idols instead of to the holy God.

**though** — MAURER translates, “*and* (in spite of their hope of safety through their slaughter of victims to idols) *I will be* a chastisement to them all.” *English Version* is good sense: They have deeply revolted, *notwithstanding* all my prophetic warnings.

**3. Ephraim** — the tribe so called, as distinguished from “Israel” here, the other nine tribes. It was always foremost of the tribes of the northern kingdom. For four hundred years in early history, it, with Manasseh and Benjamin, its two dependent tribes, held the pre-eminence in the whole nation. Ephraim is here addressed as foremost in idolatry.

**I how ... not hid from me** — notwithstanding their supposed *profound* cunning (<sup>389E</sup>Hosea 5:2 <sup>660E</sup>Revelation 2:2,9,13,19).

**now** — “though I have been a rebuker of all them” (<sup>389E</sup>Hosea 5:2) who *commit* such spiritual *whoredoms*, thou art *now* continuing in them.

**4. They** — Turning from a direct address to Ephraim, he uses the third person *plural* to characterize the people in general. The *Hebrew* is against the *Margin*, their doings will not suffer *them*” the omission of “them” in the *Hebrew* after the verb being unusual. The sense is, they are incurable, for they will not *permit* (as the *Hebrew* literally means) their doings to be framed so as to turn unto God. Implying that they *resist* the Spirit of God, not *suffering* Him to renew them; and give themselves up to “the spirit of whoredoms” (in antithesis to “the Spirit of God” implied in “suffer” or “permit”) (<sup>304E</sup>Hosea 4:12 <sup>230E</sup>Isaiah 63:10 <sup>236E</sup>Ezekiel 16:43 <sup>405E</sup>Acts 7:51).

**5. the pride of Israel** — wherewith they reject the warnings of God’s prophets (<sup>389E</sup>Hosea 5:2), and prefer their idols to God (<sup>307E</sup>Hosea 7:10 <sup>418E</sup>Jeremiah 13:17).

**testify to his face** — openly *to his face* he shall be convicted of the pride which is so palpable in him. Or, “*in his face*,” as in <sup>239E</sup>Isaiah 3:9.

**Judah ... shall fall with them** — This prophecy is later than <sup>304E</sup>Hosea 4:15, when Judah had not gone so far in idolatry; now her imitation of Israel’s bad example provokes the threat of her being doomed to share in Israel’s punishment.

**6. with ... flocks** — to propitiate Jehovah (<sup>201E</sup>Isaiah 1:11-15).

**seek ... not find** — because it is slavish fear that leads them to seek Him; and because it then shall be too late (<sup><3003></sup>Proverbs 1:28 <sup><4034></sup>John 7:34).

**7. treacherously** — as to the marriage covenant (<sup><2489></sup>Jeremiah 3:20).

**strange children** — alluding to “children of whoredoms” (<sup><2004></sup>Hosea 1:2 2:4). “Strange” or *foreign* implies that their idolatry was imported from abroad [HENDERSON]. Or rather, “regarded by God as strangers, not His,” as being reared in idolatry. The case is desperate, when not only the existing, but also the rising, generation is reared in apostasy.

**a month** — *a very brief space of time* shall elapse, and then punishment shall overtake them (Zechariah 11:8). The allusion seems to be to money loans, which were *by the month*, not as with us by the year. You cannot put it off; the time of your destruction is immediately and suddenly coming on you; just as the debtor must meet the creditor’s demand at the expiration of the month. The prediction is of the invasion of Tiglath-pileser, who carried away Reuben, Gad, Naphtali, and the half tribe of Manasseh.

**portions** — that is, possessions. Their resources and garrisons will not avail to save them. HENDERSON explains from <sup><2576></sup>Isaiah 57:6, “portions” as *their idols*; the context favors this, “the Lord” the true “*portion* of His people” (<sup><4539></sup>Deuteronomy 32:9), being in antithesis to “their portions,” the idols.

**8.** The arrival of the enemy is announced in the form of an injunction to *blow an alarm*.

**cornet ... trumpet** — The “cornet” was made of the curved horn of animals and was used by shepherds. The “trumpet” was of brass or silver, straight, and used in wars and on solemn occasions. The *Hebrew* is *hatzotzerah*, the sound imitating the trumpet note (<sup><2001></sup>Hosea 8:1 <sup><4002></sup>Numbers 10:2 <sup><2005></sup>Jeremiah 4:5 <sup><2003></sup>Joel 2:1).

**Gibeah ... Ramah** — both in Benjamin (<sup><2309></sup>Isaiah 10:29).

**Beth-aven** — in Benjamin; not as in <sup><2005></sup>Hosea 4:15; *Beth-el*, but a town east of it (<sup><4002></sup>Joshua 7:2). “Cry aloud,” namely, to raise the alarm. “Benjamin” is put for the whole southern kingdom of Judah (compare <sup><2005></sup>Hosea 5:5), being the first part of it which would meet the foe advancing from the north. “After thee, O Benjamin,” implies the position of Beth-aven, *behind* Benjamin, at the borders of Ephraim. When the foe is at Beth-aven, he is at Benjamin’s rear, close upon thee, O Benjamin (<sup><4054></sup>Judges 5:14).

**9, 10.** Israel is referred to in <sup><2009></sup>Hosea 5:9, Judah in <sup><2009></sup>Hosea 5:10.

*the day of rebuke* — the day when I shall chastise him.

*among the tribes of Israel have I made known* — proving that the scene of Hosea's labor was among the ten tribes.

*that which shall surely be* — namely, the coming judgment here foretold. It is no longer a conditional decree, leaving a hope of pardon on repentance; it is absolute, for Ephraim is hopelessly impenitent.

**10. *remove the bound*** — (<sup><6594></sup>Deuteronomy 19:14 27:17 <sup><8912></sup>Job 24:2 <sup><1228></sup>Proverbs 22:28 23:10). Proverbial for the rash setting aside of the ancestral laws by which men are kept to their duty. Ahaz and his courtiers (“the princes of Judah”), setting aside the ancient ordinances of God, removed the borders of the bases and the layer and the sea and introduced an idolatrous altar from Damascus (<sup><1260></sup>2 Kings 16:10-18); also he burnt his children in the valley of Hinnom, after the abominations of the heathen (<sup><1282></sup>2 Chronicles 28:3).

**11. *broken in judgment*** — namely, the “judgment” of God on him (<sup><2301></sup>Hosea 5:1).

*walked after the commandment* — Jeroboam's, to worship the calves (<sup><1218></sup>2 Kings 10:28-33). Compare <sup><3316></sup>Micah 6:16, “the *statutes* of Omri,” namely, idolatrous statutes. We ought to obey God rather than men (<sup><4152></sup>Acts 5:29). JEROME reads “filthiness.” The *Septuagint* gives the sense, not the literal translation: “after *vanities*.”

**12. *as a moth*** — consuming a garment (<sup><8138></sup>Job 13:28 <sup><8911></sup>Psalms 39:11 <sup><2319></sup>Isaiah 50:9).

*Judah ... rottenness* — Ephraim, or the ten tribes, are as a *garment* eaten by the moth; Judah as the *body* itself consumed by rottenness (<sup><3104></sup>Proverbs 12:4). Perhaps alluding to the superiority of the latter in having the house of David, and the temple, the religious center of the nation [GROTIUS]. As in <sup><2463></sup>Hosea 5:13,14, the violence of the calamity is prefigured by the “wound” which “a lion” inflicts, so here its long protracted duration, and the certainty and completeness of the destruction from small unforeseen beginnings, by the images of a slowly but surely consuming *moth* and *rottenness*.

**13. *wound*** — literally, “bandage”; hence a *bandaged wound* (<sup><2309></sup>Isaiah 1:6 <sup><2812></sup>Jeremiah 30:12). “Saw,” that is, felt its weakened state politically, and the dangers that threatened it. It aggravates their perversity, that, though aware of their unsound and calamitous state, they did not inquire into the cause or seek a right remedy.

**went ... to the Assyrian** — First, Menahem (<sup><1259></sup>2 Kings 15:19) applied to Pul; again, Hoshea to Shalmaneser (<sup><1278></sup>2 Kings 17:3).

**sent to King Jareb** — Understand *Judah* as the nominative to “sent.” Thus, as “Ephraim saw his sickness” (the first clause) answers in the parallelism to “Ephraim went to the Assyrian” (the third clause), so “Judah saw his wound” (the second clause) answers to (*Judah*) “sent to King Jareb” (the fourth clause). *Jareb* ought rather to be translated, “their defender,” literally, “avenger” [JEROME]. The Assyrian “king,” ever ready, for his own aggrandizement, to mix himself up with the affairs of neighboring states, professed to *undertake* Israel’s and Judah’s *cause*; in <sup><1062></sup>Judges 6:32, *Jerub*, in Jerub-baal is so used, namely, “*plead* one’s cause.” Judah, under Ahaz, applied to Tiglath-pileser for aid against Syria and Israel (<sup><1216></sup>2 Kings 16:7,8 <sup><1486></sup>2 Chronicles 28:16-21); the Assyrian “distressed him, but strengthened him not,” fulfilling the prophecy here, “he could not heal your, nor cure. you of your wound.

**14. lion** — The *black lion* and the *young lion* are emblems of strength and ferocity (<sup><913></sup>Psalms 91:13).

**I, even I** — emphatic; when I, even I, the irresistible God, tear in pieces (<sup><1312></sup>Psalms 50:22), no Assyrian power can rescue.

**go away** — as a lion stalks leisurely back with his prey to his lair.

**15. return to my place** — that is, withdraw My favor.

**till they acknowledge their offense** — The *Hebrew* is, “till they suffer the penalty of their guilt.” Probably “*accepting* the punishment of their guilt” (compare Zechariah 11:5) is included in the idea, as *English Version* translates. Compare <sup><8340></sup>Leviticus 26:40,41 <sup><292></sup>Jeremiah 29:12,13 <sup><1069></sup>Ezekiel 6:9 20:43 36:31.

**seek my face** — that is, seek My favor (<sup><1296></sup>Proverbs 29:26, *Margin*).

**in ... affliction ... seek me early** — that is, diligently; rising up before dawn to seek Me (<sup><13947></sup>Psalms 119:147; compare <sup><1989></sup>Psalms 78:34).

# CHAPTER 6

## HOSEA 6:1-11.

### THE ISRAELITES' EXHORTATION TO ONE ANOTHER TO SEEK THE LORD.

At <sup>2804</sup>Hosea 6:4 a new discourse, *complaining of them*, begins; for <sup>2801</sup>Hosea 6:1-3 evidently belong to <sup>2855</sup>Hosea 5:15, and form the *happy* termination of Israel's *punishment*: primarily, the return from Babylon; ultimately, the return from their present long dispersion. <sup>2808</sup>Hosea 6:8 perhaps refers to the murder of Pekahiah; the discourse cannot be later than Pekah's reign, for it was under it that *Gilead* was carried into captivity (<sup>1252</sup>2 Kings 15:29).

**1. *let us return*** — in order that God who has “returned to His place” may return to us (<sup>2855</sup>Hosea 5:15).

***torn, and ... heal*** — (<sup>4529</sup>Deuteronomy 32:39 <sup>2807</sup>Jeremiah 30:17). They ascribe their punishment not to fortune, or man, but to God, and acknowledge that none (not the Assyrian, as they once vainly thought, <sup>2853</sup>Hosea 5:13) but God can heal their wound. They are at the same time persuaded of the mercy of God, which persuasion is the starting-point of true repentance, and without which men would not seek, but hate and flee from God. Though our wound be severe, it is not past hope of recovery; there is room for grace, and a hope of pardon. He hath smitten us, but not so badly that He cannot heal us (<sup>3304</sup>Psalms 130:4).

**2.** Primarily, in type, Israel's national revival, *in a short period* (“two or three” being used to denote a *few* days, <sup>2876</sup>Isaiah 17:6 <sup>4133</sup>Luke 13:32,33); antitypically the language is so framed as to refer in its *full accuracy* only to Messiah, the ideal Israel (<sup>2803</sup>Isaiah 49:3; compare <sup>4025</sup>Matthew 2:15, with <sup>2801</sup>Hosea 11:1), raised on the third day (<sup>4129</sup>John 2:19 <sup>4154</sup>1 Corinthians 15:4; compare <sup>2530</sup>Isaiah 53:10). “He shall *prolong* His *days*.” Compare the similar use of Israel's political resurrection as the type of the general resurrection of which “Christ is the first-fruits” (<sup>2369</sup>Isaiah 26:19 <sup>3501</sup>Ezekiel 37:1-14 <sup>2712</sup>Daniel 12:2).

***live in his sight*** — enjoy His countenance shining on us, as of old; in contrast to <sup>2806</sup>Hosea 5:6,15, “Withdrawn Himself from them.”

**3. *know, if we follow on to know the Lord*** — The result of His recovered favor (<sup><306E></sup>Hosea 6:2) will be onward growth in saving knowledge of God, as the result of perseverance in following after Him (<sup><163E></sup>Psalm 63:8 <sup><254E></sup>Isaiah 54:13). “Then” implies the consequence of the revival in <sup><306E></sup>Hosea 6:2. The “if” is not so much *conditional*, as expressive of the *means* which God’s grace will sanctify to the full enlightenment of Israel in the knowledge of Him. As want of “knowledge of God” has been the source of all evils (<sup><306E></sup>Hosea 4:1 5:4), so the knowledge of Him will bring with it all blessings; yea, it is “life” (<sup><477E></sup>John 17:3). This knowledge is practice, not mere theory (<sup><225E></sup>Jeremiah 22:15,16). Theology is life, not science; realities, not words. This onward progress is illustrated by the light of “morning” increasing more and more “unto the perfect day” (<sup><148E></sup>Proverbs 4:18).

***prepared*** — “is sure,” literally, “fixed,” ordered in His everlasting purposes of love to His covenant-people. Compare “prepared of God” (<sup><043E></sup>Genesis 41:32, *Margin*; <sup><661E></sup>Revelation 12:6). Jehovah shall surely come to the relief of His people after their dark night of calamity.

***as the morning*** — (<sup><124E></sup>2 Samuel 23:4).

***as the rain ... latter ... former*** — (<sup><822E></sup>Job 29:23 <sup><223E></sup>Joel 2:23). First, “the rain” generally is mentioned; then the two rains (<sup><511E></sup>Deuteronomy 11:14) which caused the fertility of Palestine, and the absence of which was accounted the greatest calamity: “the latter rain” which falls in the latter half of February, and during March and April, just before the harvest whence it takes its name, from a root meaning “*to gather*”; and “the former rain,” literally, “the darting rain,” from the middle of October to the middle of December. As the rain fertilizes the otherwise barren land, so God’s favor will restore Israel long nationally lifeless.

**4. *what shall I do unto thee*** — to bring thee back to piety. What more could be done that I have not done, both in mercies and chastenings (<sup><219E></sup>Isaiah 5:4)? At this verse a new discourse begins, resuming the threats (<sup><214E></sup>Hosea 5:14). See opening remarks on this chapter.

***goodness*** — godliness.

***morning cloud*** — soon dispersed by the sun (<sup><213E></sup>Hosea 13:3). There is a tacit contrast here to the promise of God’s grace to Israel hereafter, in <sup><306E></sup>Hosea 6:3. *His* going forth is “as the morning,” shining more and more unto the perfect day; *your* goodness is “as a morning cloud,” soon vanishing. His coming to His people is “as the (fertilizing) latter and former rains”; your coming to Him “as the early dew goeth away.”

**5. *I hewed them by the prophets*** — that is, I *announced* by the prophets that they should be hewn asunder, like trees of the forest. God identifies His act with that of His prophets; the word being His instrument for executing His will (<sup>2010</sup>Jeremiah 1:10 <sup>268B</sup>Ezekiel 43:3).

**by ... words of my mouth** — (<sup>2310F</sup>Isaiah 11:4 <sup>2239</sup>Jeremiah 23:29 <sup>3012</sup>Hebrews 4:12).

**thy judgments** — the judgments which I will inflict on thee, Ephraim and Judah (<sup>206F</sup>Hosea 6:4). So “*thy judgments*,” that is, those inflicted *on thee* (<sup>3185</sup>Zephaniah 3:15).

**are as the light**, etc. — like the light, palpable to the eyes of all, as coming from God, the punisher of sin. HENDERSON translates, “lightning” (compare <sup>837B</sup>Job 37:3, *Margin*; <sup>855B</sup>Job 35:15).

**6. *mercy*** — put for *piety* in general, of which *mercy* or *charity* is a branch.

**not sacrifice** — that is, “*rather than sacrifice*.” So “not” is merely comparative (<sup>206F</sup>Exodus 16:8 <sup>2013</sup>Joel 2:13 <sup>4127</sup>John 6:27 <sup>5124</sup>1 Timothy 2:14). As God Himself instituted sacrifices, it cannot mean that He desired them not absolutely, but that even in the Old Testament, He valued *moral obedience* as the only end for which *positive* ordinances, such as sacrifices, were instituted — as of more importance than a mere external ritual obedience (<sup>0952</sup>1 Samuel 15:22 <sup>408B</sup>Psalms 50:8,9 51:16 <sup>2011</sup>Isaiah 1:11,12 Micah 6:6-8 <sup>4093</sup>Matthew 9:13 12:7).

**knowledge of God** — experimental and practical, not merely theoretical (<sup>206F</sup>Hosea 6:3 <sup>2026</sup>Jeremiah 22:16 <sup>4013</sup>1 John 2:3,4). “*Mercy*” refers to the *second* table of the law, our duty to our fellow man; “the knowledge of God” to the *first* table, our duty to God, including inward spiritual worship. The second table is put first, not as superior in dignity, for it is secondary, but in the order of our understanding.

**7. *like men*** — the common sort of men (<sup>4307</sup>Psalms 82:7). Not as *Margin*, “like Adam,” <sup>4853</sup>Job 31:33. For the *expression* “covenant” is not found elsewhere applied to Adam’s relation to God; though the *thing* seems implied (<sup>4512</sup>Romans 5:12-19). Israel “transgressed the covenant” of God as lightly as men break everyday compacts with their fellow men.

**there** — in the northern kingdom, Israel.

**8. *Gilead ... city*** — probably Ramoth-gilead, metropolis of the hilly region beyond Jordan, south of the Jabbok, known as “Gilead” (<sup>1013</sup>1 Kings 4:13; compare <sup>0132</sup>Genesis 31:21-25).

*work iniquity* — (<sup>2821</sup>Hosea 12:11).

*polluted with blood* — “marked with blood-traces” [MAURER]. Referring to Gilead’s complicity in the regicidal conspiracy of Pekah against Pekahiah (<sup>4255</sup>2 Kings 15:25). See on <sup>3060</sup>Hosea 6:1. Many homicides were there, for there were beyond Jordan more cities of refuge, in proportion to the extent of territory, than on this side of Jordan (<sup>0654</sup>Numbers 35:14 <sup>0844</sup>Deuteronomy 4:41-43 <sup>0318</sup>Joshua 20:8). Ramoth-gilead was one.

**9. *company*** — “association” or guild of priests.

*murder by consent* — literally, “with one shoulder” (compare Zephaniah 3:9, *Margin*). The image is from oxen putting their *shoulders together* to pull the same yoke [RIVETUS]. MAURER translates, “in the way *towards Shechem*.” It was a city of refuge between Ebal and Gerizim; on Mount Ephraim (<sup>0610</sup>Joshua 20:7 21:21), long the civil capital of Ephraim, as Shiloh was the religious capital; now called Naploos; for a time the residence of Jeroboam (<sup>1125</sup>1 Kings 12:25). The priests there became so corrupted that they waylaid and murdered persons fleeing to the asylum for refuge [HENDERSON]; the sanctity of the place enhanced the guilt of the priests who abused their priestly privileges, and the right of asylum to perpetrate murders themselves, or to screen those committed by others [MAURER].

*commit lewdness* — *deliberate* crime, presumptuous wickedness, from an Arabic root, “to form a deliberate purpose.”

**10. *horrible thing*** — (<sup>2453</sup>Jeremiah 5:30 18:13 23:14).

*whoredom* — idolatry.

**11. *an harvest*** — namely, of judgments (as in <sup>2613</sup>Jeremiah 51:33 <sup>2983</sup>Joel 3:13 <sup>0645</sup>Revelation 14:15). Called a “harvest” because it is the fruit of the seed which Judah herself had sown (<sup>3006</sup>Hosea 8:7 10:12 <sup>3008</sup>Job 4:8 <sup>4128</sup>Proverbs 22:8). Judah, under Ahaz, lost a hundred twenty thousand “slain in one day (by Israel under Pekah), because they had forsaken the Lord God of their fathers.”

*when I returned the captivity of my people* — when I, by Oded My prophet, caused two hundred thousand women, sons, and daughters, of Judah to be restored from captivity by Israel (<sup>4839</sup>2 Chronicles 28:6-15). This prophecy was delivered under Pekah [LUDOVICUS DE DIEU]. MAURER explains, When Israel shall have been exiled for its sins, and has been subsequently restored by Me, thou, Judah, also shalt be exiled for thine. But as Judah’s punishment was not at the time *when* God restored Israel, LUDOVICUS DE DIEU’S explanation must be taken. GROTIUS translates,

“When I *shall have returned to make captive* (that is, when I shall have again made captive) My people.” The first captivity of Israel under Tiglath-pileser was followed by a *second* under Shalmaneser. Then came the siege of Jerusalem, and the capture of the fenced cities of Judah, by Sennacherib, the forerunner of other attacks, ending in Judah’s captivity. But the *Hebrew* is elsewhere used of *restoration*, not *renewed punishment* (<sup><BIB></sup>Deuteronomy 30:3 <sup><BIB></sup>Psalm 14:7).

# CHAPTER 7

## HOSEA 7:1-16.

### REPROOF OF ISRAEL.

Probably delivered in the interreign and civil war at Pekah's death; for <sup><300></sup>Hosea 7:7, "all their kings ... fallen," refers to the murder of Zechariah, Shallum, Menahem, Pekahiah, and Pekah. In <sup><300></sup>Hosea 7:8 the reference seems to be to Menahem's payment of tribute to Pul, in order to secure himself in the usurped throne, also to Pekah's league with Rezin of Syria, and to Hoshea's connection with Assyria during the interregnum at Pekah's death [MAURER].

**1. *I would have healed Israel*** — Israel's restoration of the two hundred thousand Jewish captives at God's command (<sup><428></sup>2 Chronicles 28:8-15) gave hope of Israel's reformation [HENDERSON]. Political, as well as moral, healing is meant. When I would have healed Israel in its calamitous state, then their iniquity was discovered to be so great as to preclude hope of recovery. Then he enumerates their wickedness: "The thief cometh in (indoors stealthily), and the troop of robbers spoileth without" (out-of-doors with open violence).

**2. *consider not in their hearts*** — literally "say not to," etc. (<sup><940></sup>Psalms 14:1).

***that I remember*** — and will punish.

***their own doings have beset them about*** — as so many witnesses against them (<sup><906></sup>Psalms 9:16 <sup><102></sup>Proverbs 5:22).

***before my face*** — (<sup><908></sup>Psalms 90:8).

**3.** Their princes, instead of checking, "have pleasure in them that do" such crimes (<sup><612></sup>Romans 1:32).

**4. *who ceaseth from raising*** — rather, "heating" it, from an *Arabic* root, "to be hot." So the *Septuagint*. Their adulterous and idolatrous lust is inflamed as the oven of a baker who has it at such a heat that he ceaseth from heating it only from the time that he hath kneaded the dough, until it be leavened; he only needs to omit feeding it during the short period of the

fermentation of the bread. Compare <sup><6124></sup>2 Peter 2:14, “that cannot cease from sin” [HENDERSON].

**5. *the day of our king*** — his birthday or day of inauguration.

***have made him sick*** — namely, the king. MAURER translates, “make themselves sick.”

***with bottles of wine*** — drinking not merely glasses, but *bottles*. MAURER translates, “Owing to the heat of wine.”

***he stretched out his hand with scorers*** — the gesture of revellers in holding out the cup and in drinking to one another’s health. Scoffers were the king’s boon companions.

**6. *they have made ready*** — rather, “they make their heart approach,” namely their king, in going to drink with him.

***like an oven*** — following out the image in <sup><3006></sup>Hosea 7:4. As it conceals the lighted fire all night while the baker sleeps but in the morning burns as a flaming fire, so they brood mischief in their hearts while conscience is lulled asleep, and their wicked designs wait only for a fair occasion to break forth [HORSLEY]. Their heart is the oven, their baker the ringleader of the plot. In <sup><3006></sup>Hosea 7:7 their plots appear, namely, the intestine disturbances and murders of one king after another, after Jeroboam II.

**7. *all hot*** — All burn with eagerness to cause universal disturbance (<sup><2152></sup>2 Kings 15:1-38).

***devoured their judges*** — magistrates; as the fire of the oven devours the fuel.

***all their kings ... fallen*** — See on <sup><3006></sup>Hosea 7:1.

***none ... calleth unto me*** — Such is their perversity that amid all these national calamities, none seeks help from Me (<sup><2163></sup>Isaiah 9:13 64:7).

**8. *mixed ... among the people*** — by leagues with idolaters, and the adoption of their idolatrous practices (<sup><3009></sup>Hosea 7:9,11 <sup><1965></sup>Psalms 106:35).

***Ephraim ... cake not turned*** — a cake burnt on one side and unbaked on the other, and so uneatable; an image of the *worthlessness* of Ephraim. The Easterners bake their bread on the ground, covering it with embers (<sup><1186></sup>1 Kings 19:6), and *turning* it every ten minutes, to bake it thoroughly without burning it.

**9. *Strangers*** — foreigners: the Syrians and Assyrians (<sup><1217></sup>2 Kings 13:7 15:19,20 17:3-6).

**gray hairs** — that is, symptoms of approaching national dissolution.

**are here and there upon** — literally, “are sprinkled on” him.

**yet he knoweth not** — Though old age ought to bring with it wisdom, he neither knows of his senile decay, nor has the true knowledge which leads to reformation.

**10. Repetition of** <sup><3085></sup>Hosea 5:5.

**not return to ... Lord ... for all this** — notwithstanding all their calamities (<sup><2093></sup>Isaiah 9:13).

**11. like a silly dove** — a bird proverbial for simplicity: easily deceived.

**without heart** — that is, understanding.

**call to Egypt** — Israel lying between the two great rival empires Egypt and Assyria, sought each by turns to help her against the other. As this prophecy was written in the reign of Hoshea, the allusion is probably to the alliance with So or Sabacho II (of which a record has been found on the clay cylindrical seals in Koyunjik), which ended in the overthrow of Hoshea and the deportation of Israel (<sup><1278></sup>2 Kings 17:3-6). As the dove betrays its foolishness by fleeing in alarm from its nest only to fall into the net of the fowler, so Israel, though warned that foreign alliances would be their ruin, rushed into them.

**12. When they shall go** — to seek aid from this or that foreign state.

**spread my net upon them** — as on birds taken on the ground (<sup><3229></sup>Ezekiel 12:13), as contrasted with “*bringing them down*” as the “*fowls of the heavens,*” namely, by the use of missiles.

**as their congregation hath heard** — namely, by My prophets through whom I threatened “chastisement” (<sup><3059></sup>Hosea 5:9 <sup><1273></sup>2 Kings 17:13-18).

**13. fled** — as birds from their nest (<sup><1278></sup>Proverbs 27:8 <sup><2042></sup>Isaiah 16:2).

**me** — who both could and would have healed them (<sup><3001></sup>Hosea 7:1), had they applied to Me.

**redeemed them** — from Egypt and their other enemies (Micah 6:4).

**lies** — (<sup><1786></sup>Psalms 78:36 <sup><1810></sup>Jeremiah 3:10). Pretending to be My worshippers, when they all the while worshipped idols (<sup><3074></sup>Hosea 7:14 <sup><3011></sup>Hosea 12:1); also defrauding Me of the glory of their deliverance, and ascribing it and their other blessings to idols [CALVIN].

**14. *not cried unto me*** — but unto other gods [MAURER], (<sup><3889></sup>Job 35:9,10). Or, they did indeed cry unto Me, but not “with their heart”: answering to “lies,” <sup><3073></sup>Hosea 7:13 (see on <sup><3073></sup>Hosea 7:13).

***when they howled upon their beds*** — sleepless with anxiety; image of *deep affliction*. Their cry is termed “howling,” as it is the cry of anguish, not the cry of repentance and faith.

***assemble ... for corn***, etc. — namely in the temples of their idols, to obtain from them a good harvest and vintage, instead of coming to Me, the true Giver of these (<sup><3016></sup>Hosea 2:5,8,12), proving that their cry to God was “not with their heart.”

***rebel against me*** — literally, “withdraw themselves *against* Me,” that is, not only withdraw *from* Me, but also rebel *against* Me.

**15. *I ... bound*** — when I saw their arms as it were relaxed with various disasters, I bound them so as to strengthen their sinews; image from surgery [CALVIN]. MAURER translates, “I *instructed* them” to war (<sup><3934></sup>Psalms 18:34 144:1), namely, under Jeroboam II (<sup><1245></sup>2 Kings 14:25). GROTIUS explains, “Whether I chastised them (*Margin*) or strengthened their arms, they imagined mischief against Me.” *English Version is best*.

**16. *return, but not to the Most High*** — or, “to one who is *not the Most High*,” one very different from Him, a stock or a stone. So the *Septuagint*.

***deceitful bow*** — (<sup><3957></sup>Psalms 78:57). A bow which, from its faulty construction, shoots wide of the mark. So Israel pretends to seek God, but turns aside to idols.

***for the rage of their tongue*** — their boast of safety from Egyptian aid, and their “lies” (<sup><3073></sup>Hosea 7:13), whereby they pretended to serve God, while worshipping idols; also their perverse defense for their idolatries and blasphemies against God and His prophets (<sup><3731></sup>Psalms 73:9 120:2,3).

***their derision in ... Egypt*** — Their “fall” shall be the subject of “derision” to Egypt, to whom they had applied for help (<sup><3016></sup>Hosea 9:3,6 <sup><1274></sup>2 Kings 17:4).

# CHAPTER 8

## HOSEA 8:1-14.

### PROPHECY OF THE IRRUPTION OF THE ASSYRIANS, IN PUNISHMENT FOR ISRAEL'S APOSTASY, IDOLATRY, AND SETTING UP OF KINGS WITHOUT GOD'S SANCTION.

In <sup><3084></sup>Hosea 8:14, *Judah* is said to multiply fenced cities; and in <sup><3007></sup>Hosea 8:7-9, Israel, to its great hurt, is said to have gone up to Assyria for help. This answers best to the reign of Menahem. For it was then that Uzziah of Judah, his contemporary, built fenced cities (<sup><4016></sup>2 Chronicles 26:6,9,10). Then also Israel turned to Assyria and had to pay for their sinful folly a thousand talents of silver (<sup><12589></sup>2 Kings 15:19) [MAURER].

1. ***Set the trumpet***, etc. — to give warning of the approach of the enemy: “To thy *palate* (that is, ‘mouth,’ <sup><4830></sup>Job 31:30, *Margin*) the trumpet”; the abruptness of expression indicates the suddenness of the attack. So <sup><3088></sup>Hosea 5:8.

***as ... eagle*** — the Assyrian (<sup><15389></sup>Deuteronomy 28:49 <sup><3480></sup>Jeremiah 48:40 Habakkuk 1:8).

***against ... house of ... Lord*** — not the temple, but Israel viewed as *the family of God* (<sup><3095></sup>Hosea 9:15 <sup><4017></sup>Numbers 12:7 Zechariah 9:8 <sup><3000></sup>Hebrews 3:2 <sup><4885></sup>1 Timothy 3:15 <sup><4047></sup>1 Peter 4:17).

2. ***My God, we know thee*** — the singular, “My,” is used distributively, each one so addressing God. They, in their hour of need, plead their knowledge of God as the covenant-people, while in their *acts* they acknowledge Him not (compare <sup><4021></sup>Matthew 7:21,22 <sup><5016></sup>Titus 1:16; also <sup><3093></sup>Isaiah 29:13 <sup><4004></sup>Jeremiah 7:4). The *Hebrew* joins “Israel,” not as *English Version*, with “shall cry,” but “*We, Israel, know thee*”; God denies the claim thus urged on the ground of their descent from Israel.

3. ***Israel*** — God repeats the name in opposition to *their* use of it (<sup><3081></sup>Hosea 8:2).

***the thing that is good*** — JEROME translates, “God” who is good and doing good (<sup><4886></sup>Psalms 119:68). He is the chief object rejected, but with Him also all that is good.

*the enemy shall pursue him* — in just retribution from God.

**4. kings ... not by me** — not with My sanction (<sup>4113</sup>1 Kings 11:31 12:20). Israel set up Jeroboam and his successors, whereas God had appointed the house of David as the rightful kings of the whole nation.

*I knew it not* — I approved it not (<sup>4906</sup>Psalms 1:6).

*of ... gold ... idols* — (<sup>3088</sup>Hosea 2:8 13:2).

*that they may be cut off* — that is, though warned of the consequences of idolatry, as it were with open eyes they rushed on their own destruction. So <sup>4270</sup>Jeremiah 27:10,15 44:8.

**5. hath cast thee off** — As the ellipsis of *thee* is unusual, MAURER translates, “thy calf *is* abominable.” But the antithesis to <sup>3088</sup>Hosea 8:3 establishes *English Version*, “Israel *hath cast off* the thing that is good”; therefore, in just retribution, “thy calf hath cast thee off,” that is, is made by God the cause of thy being cast off (<sup>3015</sup>Hosea 10:15). Jeroboam, during his sojourn in Egypt, saw Apis worshipped at Memphis, and Mnevis at Heliopolis, in the form of an ox; this, and the temple cherubim, suggested the idea of the calves set up at Daniel and Beth-el.

*how long ... ere they attain to innocency?* — How long will they be incapable of bearing innocency? [MAURER].

**6. from Israel was it** — that is, the calf originated with them, not from Me. “It also,” as well as their “kings set up” by them, “but not by Me” (<sup>3084</sup>Hosea 8:4).

**7. sown ... reap** — (<sup>4128</sup>Proverbs 22:8 <sup>4067</sup>Galatians 6:7). “Sow ... wind,” that is, to make the vain show of worship, while faith and obedience are wanting [CALVIN]. Rather, to offer senseless supplications to the calves for good harvests (compare <sup>3018</sup>Hosea 2:8); the result being that God will make them “reap no stalk,” that is, “standing corn.” Also, the phraseology proverbially means that all their undertakings shall be profitless (<sup>4113</sup>Proverbs 11:29 <sup>4166</sup>Ecclesiastes 5:16).

*the bud* — or, “growth.”

*strangers* — foreigners (<sup>3009</sup>Hosea 7:9).

**8. vessel wherein is no pleasure** — (<sup>49412</sup>Psalms 41:12 <sup>4028</sup>Jeremiah 22:28 48:38).

**9. gone ... to Assyria** — referring to Menahem’s application for Pul’s aid in establishing him on the throne (compare <sup>3083</sup>Hosea 5:13 7:11). Menahem’s

name is read in the inscriptions in the southwest palace of Nimrod, as a tributary to the Assyrian king in his eighth year. The dynasty of Pul, or Phalluka, was supplanted at Nineveh by that of Tiglath-pileser, about 768 (or 760) B.C. Semiramis seems to have been Pul's wife, and to have withdrawn to Babylon in 768; and her son, Nabonassar, succeeding after a period of confusion, originated "the era of Nabonassar," 747 B.C. [G. V. SMITH]. Usually foreigners coming to Israel's land were said to "go up"; here it is the reverse, to intimate Israel's *sunken* state, and Assyria's superiority.

**wild ass** — a figure of Israel's headstrong perversity in following her own bent (<sup><2122></sup>Jeremiah 2:24).

**alone by himself** — characteristic of Israel in all ages: "lo, the people shall dwell alone" (<sup><0123></sup>Numbers 23:9; compare <sup><4391></sup>Job 39:5-8).

**hired lovers** — reversing the ordinary way, namely, that lovers should hire her (<sup><2363></sup>Ezekiel 16:33,34).

**10. will I gather them** — namely, the *nations* (Assyria, etc.) against Israel, instead of their assisting her as she had wished (<sup><2367></sup>Ezekiel 16:37).

**a little** — rather, "in a little" [HENDERSON]. *English Version* gives good sense: They shall sorrow "a little" at the imposition of the tribute; God suspended yet the *great* judgment, namely, their deportation by Assyria.

**the burden of the king of princes** — the tribute imposed on Israel (under Menahem) by the Assyrian king Pul, (<sup><1259></sup>2 Kings 15:19-22), who had many "princes" under his sway (<sup><2308></sup>Isaiah 10:8).

**11. God in righteous retribution gives them up to their own way; the sin becomes its own punishment** (<sup><2103></sup>Proverbs 1:31).

**many altars** — in opposition to God's law (<sup><5115></sup>Deuteronomy 12:5,6,13,14).

**to sin ... to sin** — Their altars which were "sin" (whatever religious intentions they might plead) should be treated as such, and be the source of their punishment (<sup><1123></sup>1 Kings 12:30 13:34).

**12. great things of ... law** — (<sup><1104></sup>Deuteronomy 4:6,8 <sup><5108></sup>Psalms 19:8 119:18,72 147:19,20). MAURER not so well translates, "*the many things of My law.*"

**my law** — as opposed to their inventions. This reference of Hosea to the Pentateuch alone is against the theory that some earlier written prophecies have not come down to us.

*strange thing* — as if a thing with which they had nothing to do.

**13. sacrifices of mine offerings** — that is, which they offer to Me.

*eat it* — Their own carnal gratification is the object which they seek, not My honor.

*now* — that is, “speedily.”

*shall return to Egypt* — (<sup><2008</sup>Hosea 9:3,6 11:11). The same threat as in <sup><628</sup>Deuteronomy 28:68. They fled thither to escape from the Assyrians (compare as to *Judah*, <sup><408</sup>Jeremiah 42:1-44:30), when these latter had overthrown their nation. But see on <sup><308</sup>Hosea 9:3.

**14. forgotten ... Maker** — (<sup><628</sup>Deuteronomy 32:18).

*temples* — to idols.

*Judah ... fenced cities* — Judah, though less idolatrous than Israel, betrayed lack of faith in Jehovah by trusting more to its fenced cities than to Him; instead of making peace with God, Judah multiplied human defenses (<sup><2218</sup>Isaiah 22:8 <sup><457</sup>Jeremiah 5:17 <sup><350</sup>Micah 5:10,11).

*I will send ... fire upon ... cities* — Sennacherib burned all Judah's fenced cities except Jerusalem (<sup><1283</sup>2 Kings 18:13).

*palaces thereof* — namely, of the land. Compare as to Jerusalem, <sup><4727</sup>Jeremiah 17:27.

# CHAPTER 9

## HOSEA 9:1-17.

**WARNING AGAINST ISRAEL'S JOY AT PARTIAL RELIEF FROM THEIR TROUBLES: THEIR CROPS SHALL FAIL, AND THE PEOPLE LEAVE THE LORD'S LAND FOR EGYPT AND ASSYRIA, WHERE THEY CANNOT, IF SO INCLINED, SERVE GOD ACCORDING TO THE ANCIENT RITUAL: FOLLY OF THEIR FALSE PROPHETS.**

1. *Rejoice not ... for joy* — literally, “to exultation.” Thy exultation at the league with Pul, by which peace seems secured, is out of place: since thy idolatry will bring ruin on thee.

*as other people* — the Assyrians for instance, who, unlike thee, are in the height of prosperity.

*loved a reward upon every corn floor* — Thou hast desired, in *reward* for thy homage to idols, abundance of corn on every threshing-floor (<sup><XPT></sup>Hosea 2:12).

2. (<sup><XIB></sup>Hosea 2:9,12).

*fail* — disappoint her expectation.

3. *return to Egypt* — (See on <sup><XIB></sup>Hosea 8:13). As in <sup><XIB></sup>Hosea 11:5 it is said, “He shall *not return* into ... Egypt.” FAIRBAIRN thinks it is not the exact country that is meant, but the *bondage state* with which, from past experience, Egypt was identified in their minds. Assyria was to be a second Egypt to them. <sup><XIB></sup>Deuteronomy 28:68, though threatening a return to Egypt, speaks (<sup><XIB></sup>Deuteronomy 28:36) of their being brought to a nation which *neither they nor their fathers had known*, showing that it is not the literal Egypt, but a second Egypt-like bondage that is threatened.

*eat unclean things in Assyria* — reduced by necessity to eat meats pronounced unclean by the Mosaic law (<sup><XIB></sup>Ezekiel 4:13). See <sup><XIB></sup>2 Kings 17:6.

4. *offer wine offerings* — literally, “pour as a libation (<sup><XIB></sup>Exodus 30:9 <sup><XIB></sup>Leviticus 23:13).

*neither shall they be pleasing unto him* — as being offered on a profane soil.

*sacrifices ... as the bread of mourners* — which was unclean (<sup><634></sup>Deuteronomy 26:14 <sup><2403></sup>Jeremiah 16:7 <sup><3277></sup>Ezekiel 24:17).

*their bread for their soul* — their offering for the expiation of their soul [CALVIN], (<sup><6711></sup>Leviticus 17:11). Rather, “their bread for their sustenance (‘soul’ being often used for *the animal life*, <sup><1142></sup>Genesis 14:21, *Margin*) shall not come into the Lord’s house”; it shall only subserve their own uses, not My worship.

5. (<sup><3211></sup>Hosea 2:11).

6. *because of destruction* — to escape from the devastation of their country.

*Egypt shall gather them up* — that is, into its sepulchres (<sup><2482></sup>Jeremiah 8:2 <sup><3245></sup>Ezekiel 29:5). Instead of returning to Palestine, they should die in Egypt.

*Memphis* — famed as a necropolis.

*the pleasant places for their silver* — that is, their desired treasuries for their money. Or, “whatever precious thing they have of silver” [MAURER].

*nettles* — the sign of desolation (<sup><2343></sup>Isaiah 34:13).

7. *visitation* — vengeance: punishment (<sup><2303></sup>Isaiah 10:3).

*Israel shall know it* — to her cost experimentally (<sup><2349></sup>Isaiah 9:9).

*the prophet is a fool* — The false prophet who foretold prosperity to the nation shall be convicted of folly by the event.

*the spiritual man* — the man pretending to inspiration (<sup><2514></sup>Lamentations 2:14 <sup><3238></sup>Ezekiel 13:3 <sup><3181></sup>Micah 3:11 Zephaniah 3:4).

*for the multitude of thine iniquity*, etc. — Connect these words with, “the days of visitation ... are come”; “the prophet ... is mad,” being parenthetical.

*the great hatred* — or, “the great provocation” [HENDERSON]; or, “(thy) great apostasy” [MAURER]. *English Version* means Israel’s “*hatred*” of God’s prophets and the law.

8. *The watchman ... was with my God* — The spiritual watchmen, the true prophets, formerly consulted my God (<sup><2406></sup>Jeremiah 31:6 Habakkuk 2:1); but their so-called *prophet* is a snare, entrapping Israel into idolatry.

**hatred** — rather, “(a cause of) apostasy” (see <sup><3007></sup>Hosea 9:7) [MAURER].

**house of his God** — that is, the state of Ephraim, as in <sup><3001></sup>Hosea 8:1 [MAURER]. Or, “the house of his (false) god,” the calves [CALVIN]. Jehovah, “my God,” seems contrasted with “his God.” CALVIN’S view is therefore preferable.

**9. as in the days of Gibeah** — as in the day of the perpetration of the atrocity of Gibeah, narrated in <sup><0796></sup>Judges 19:16-22, etc.

**10.** As the traveler in a wilderness is delighted at finding grapes to quench his thirst, or the early fig (esteemed a great delicacy in the East, <sup><3301></sup>Isaiah 28:4 <sup><3010></sup>Jeremiah 24:2 Micah 7:1); so it was My delight to choose your fathers as My peculiar people in Egypt (<sup><3015></sup>Hosea 2:15).

**at her first time** — when the first-fruits of the tree become ripe.

**went to Baal-peor** — (<sup><0258></sup>Numbers 25:3): the Moabite idol, in whose worship young women prostituted themselves; the very sin Israel latterly was guilty of.

**separated themselves** — consecrated themselves.

**unto that shame** — to that shameful or foul idol (<sup><2113></sup>Jeremiah 11:13).

**their abominations were according as they loved** — rather, as *Vulgate*, “they became abominable like the object of their love” (<sup><0128></sup>Deuteronomy 7:26 <sup><0358></sup>Psalms 115:8). *English Version* gives good sense, “their abominable idols they followed after, according as their lusts prompted them” (<sup><3015></sup>Amos 4:5, *Margin*).

**11. their glory shall fly away** — fit retribution to those who “separated themselves unto that shame” (<sup><3000></sup>Hosea 9:10). Children were accounted the *glory* of parents; sterility, a reproach. “Ephraim” means “fruitfulness” (<sup><0452></sup>Genesis 41:52); this its name shall cease to be its characteristic.

**from the birth ... womb ... conception** — Ephraim’s children shall perish in a threefold gradation;

- (1) From the time of birth.
- (2) From the time of pregnancy.
- (3) From the time of their first conception.

**12.** Even though they should rear their children, yet will I bereave them (the Ephraimites) of them (<sup><3074></sup>Job 27:14).

**woe ... to them when I depart** — Yet the ungodly in their madness desire God to depart from them (<sup><8214></sup>Job 21:14 22:17 <sup><4034></sup>Matthew 8:34). At last they know to their cost how awful it is when God has departed (<sup><6117></sup>Deuteronomy 31:17 <sup><1285></sup>1 Samuel 28:15,16; compare <sup><3911></sup>Hosea 9:11 <sup><1021></sup>1 Samuel 4:21).

**13. Ephraim, as I saw Tyrus ... in a pleasant place** — that is, in looking towards Tyrus (on whose borders Ephraim lay) I saw Ephraim beautiful in situation like her (<sup><3901></sup>Ezekiel 26:1-28:26).

**is planted** — as a *fruitful* tree; image suggested by the meaning of “Ephraim” (<sup><3911></sup>Hosea 9:11).

**bring forth his children to the murderer** — (<sup><3916></sup>Hosea 9:16 <sup><3836></sup>Hosea 13:16). With all his fruitfulness, his children shall only be brought up to be slain.

**14. what wilt thou give?** — As if overwhelmed by feeling, he deliberates with God what is most desirable.

**give ... a miscarrying womb** — Of two evils he chooses the least. So great will be the calamity, that barrenness will be a blessing, though usually counted a great misfortune (<sup><8083></sup>Job 3:3 <sup><3914></sup>Jeremiah 20:14 <sup><4239></sup>Luke 23:29).

**15. All their wickedness** — that is, their chief guilt.

**Gilgal** — (see on <sup><3915></sup>Hosea 4:15). This was the scene of their first contumacy in rejecting God and choosing a king (<sup><1914></sup>1 Samuel 11:14,15; compare <sup><1981></sup>1 Samuel 8:7), and of their subsequent idolatry.

**there I hated them** — not with the human passion, but holy hatred of their sin, which required punishment to be inflicted on themselves (compare Malachi 1:3).

**out of mine house** — as in <sup><3901></sup>Hosea 8:1: out of the land holy unto ME. Or, as “love” is mentioned immediately after, the reference may be to the Hebrew mode of divorce, the husband (God) putting the wife (Israel) out of the house.

**princes ... revolvers** — “*Sarim ... Sorerim*” (*Hebrew*), a play on similar sounds.

**16.** The figures “root,” “fruit,” are suggested by the word “Ephraim,” that is, *fruitful* (see on <sup><3911></sup>Hosea 9:11,12). “Smitten,” namely, with a blight (<sup><19301></sup>Psalms 102:4).

**17. *My God*** — “My,” in contrast to “them,” that is, the people, whose God Jehovah no longer is. Also Hosea appeals to God as supporting his authority against the whole people.

***wanderers among ... nations*** — (~~1253~~2 Kings 15:29 ~~1356~~1 Chronicles 5:26).

# CHAPTER 10

## HOSEA 10:1-15.

### ISRAEL'S IDOLATRY, THE SOURCE OF PERJURIES AND UNLAWFUL LEAGUES, SOON DESTINED TO BE THE RUIN OF THE STATE, THEIR KING AND THEIR IMAGES BEING ABOUT TO BE CARRIED OFF; A JUST CHASTISEMENT, THE REAPING CORRESPONDING TO THE SOWING.

The prophecy was uttered between Shalmaneser's first and second invasions of Israel. Compare <sup><3014></sup>Hosea 10:14; also <sup><3016></sup>Hosea 10:6, referring to Hoshea's calling So of Egypt to his aid; also <sup><3018></sup>Hosea 10:4,13.

1. *empty* — stripped of its fruits [CALVIN], (Na 2:2); compelled to pay tribute to Pul (<sup><1251></sup>2 Kings 15:20). MAURER translates, "A *widespreading* vine"; so the *Septuagint*. Compare <sup><0422></sup>Genesis 49:22 <sup><3019></sup>Psalms 80:9-11 <sup><3176></sup>Ezekiel 17:6.

*bringeth forth fruit unto himself* — not unto ME.

*according to ... multitude of ... fruit ... increased ... altars* — In proportion to the abundance of their prosperity, which called for fruit unto God (compare <sup><6122></sup>Romans 6:22), was the abundance of their idolatry (<sup><3020></sup>Hosea 8:4,11).

2. *heart ... divided* — (<sup><11821></sup>1 Kings 18:21 <sup><10261></sup>Matthew 6:24 <sup><5008></sup>James 4:8).

*now* — that is soon.

*he* — Jehovah.

*break down* — "cut off," namely the heads of the victims. Those altars, which were the scene of *cutting off* the victims' heads, shall be themselves cut off.

3. *now*, etc. — Soon they, deprived of their king, shall be reduced to say, We have no king (<sup><3017></sup>Hosea 10:7,15), for Jehovah deprived us of him, because of our not fearing God. What then (seeing God is against us) should a king be able to do for us, if we had one? As they rejected the heavenly King, they were deprived of their earthly king.

4. *words* — mere empty words.

**swearing falsely in making a covenant** — breaking their engagement to Shalmaneser (<sup><12704></sup>2 Kings 17:4), and making a covenant with So, though covenants with foreigners were forbidden.

**judgment ... as hemlock** — that is, divine judgment shall spring up as rank, and as deadly, as hemlock in the furrows (<sup><12393></sup>Deuteronomy 29:18 <sup><3101></sup>Amos 5:7 6:12). GESENIUS translates, “poppy.” GROTIUS, “darnel.”

**5. fear because of the calves** — that is, shall fear *for* them.

**Beth-aven** — substituted for Beth-el in contempt (<sup><3045></sup>Hosea 4:15).

**it** — *singular*, the *one* in Beth-el; after the pattern of which the other “calves” (*plural*) were made. “Calves” in the *Hebrew* is *feminine*, to express contempt.

**priests** — The *Hebrew* is only used of *idolatrous priests* (<sup><12316></sup>2 Kings 23:5 Zephaniah 1:4), from a root meaning either “the black garment” in which they were attired; or, “to resound,” referring to their howling cries in their sacred rites [CALVIN].

**that rejoiced on it** — because it was a source of gain to them. MAURER translates, “Shall leap in trepidation on account of it”; as Baal’s priests did (<sup><11835></sup>1 Kings 18:26).

**the glory thereof** — the magnificence of its ornaments and its worship.

**6. It ... also** — The calf, so far from saving its worshippers from deportation, itself shall be carried off; hence “Israel shall be ashamed” of it.

**Jareb** — (See on <sup><3163></sup>Hosea 5:13). “A present to the king (whom they looked to as) their *defender*,” or else *avenger*, whose wrath they wished to appease, namely, Shalmaneser. The minor states applied this title to the Great King, as the avenging Protector.

**his own counsel** — the calves, which Jeroboam set up as a stroke of policy to detach Israel from Judah. Their severance from Judah and Jehovah proved now to be not politic, but fatal to them.

**7.** (<sup><3003></sup>Hosea 10:3,15).

**foam** — denoting short-lived existence and speedy dissolution. As the foam, though seeming to be eminent raised on the top of the water, yet has no solidity, such is the throne of Samaria. MAURER translates, “a chip” or *broken branch* that cannot resist the current.

**8. Aven** — that is, Beth-aven.

**the sin** — that is, the occasion of sin (<sup><1821></sup>Deuteronomy 9:21 <sup><1123></sup>1 Kings 12:30).

**they shall say to ... mountains, Cover us** — So terrible shall be the calamity, that men shall prefer death to life (<sup><2231></sup>Luke 23:30 <sup><6696></sup>Revelation 6:16 9:6). Those very hills on which were their idolatrous altars (one source of their confidence, as their “king,” <sup><2807></sup>Hosea 10:7, was the other), so far from helping them, shall be called on by them to overwhelm them.

**9. Gibeah** — (<sup><2009></sup>Hosea 9:9 <sup><0791></sup>Judges 19:1-20:48). They are singled out as a specimen of the whole nation.

**there they stood** — The Israelites have, as there and then, so ever since, *persisted* in their sin [CALVIN]. Or, better, “they stood their ground,” that is, did not perish then [MAURER].

**the battle ... did not overtake them** — Though God spared you then, He will not do so now; nay, the battle whereby God punished the Gibeonite “children of iniquity,” shall the more heavily visit you for your continued impenitence. Though “they stood” then, it shall not be so now. The change from “thou” to “they” marks God’s alienation from them; they are, by the use of the third person, put to a greater distance from God.

**10. my desire ... chastise** — expressing God’s *strong inclination* to vindicate His justice against sin, as being the infinitely holy God (<sup><6263></sup>Deuteronomy 28:63).

**the people** — *Foreign invaders* “shall be gathered against them.”

**when they shall bind themselves in their two furrows** — image from two oxen ploughing together side by side, in two contiguous furrows: so the Israelites shall join themselves, to unite their powers against all dangers, but it will not save them from My destroying them [CALVIN]. Their “two furrows” may refer to their *two places of setting up the calves*, their ground of confidence, Daniel and Beth-el; or, the two divisions of the nation, *Israel and Judah*, “in their two furrows,” that is, in their respective two places of habitation; <sup><2801></sup>Hosea 10:11, which specifies the two, favors this view. HENDERSON prefers the *Keri (Hebrew Margin)* “for their two iniquities”; and translates, “when they are bound” in captivity. *English Version* is best, as the image is carried out in <sup><2801></sup>Hosea 10:11; only it is perhaps better to translate, “the people (the invaders) *binding them*,” that is, making them captives; and so <sup><2801></sup>Hosea 10:11 alludes to the yoke being put on the neck of Ephraim and Judah.

**11. taught** — that is, accustomed.

**loveth to tread out ... corn** — a far easier and more self-indulgent work than ploughing. In treading corn, cattle were not bound together under a yoke, but either trod it singly with their feet, or drew a threshing sledge over it (<sup><2307></sup>Isaiah 28:27,28): they were free to eat some of the corn from time to time, as the law required they should be unmuzzled (<sup><1634></sup>Deuteronomy 25:4), so that they grew fat in this work. An image of Israel's freedom, prosperity, and self-indulgence heretofore. But now God will put the Assyrian yoke upon her, instead of freedom, putting her to servile work.

**I passed over upon** — I put the yoke upon.

**make ... to ride** — as in <sup><812></sup>Job 30:22; that is, *hurry* Ephraim *away* to a distant region [CALVIN]. LYRA translates, "I will make (the Assyrian) to ride upon Ephraim." MAURER, "I will make Ephraim to carry," namely, a charioteer.

**his clods** — "the clods before him."

12. Continuation of the image in <sup><3011></sup>Hosea 10:11 (<sup><2118></sup>Proverbs 11:18). Act righteously and ye shall reap the reward; a reward not of debt, but of grace.

**in mercy** — according to the measure of the divine "mercy," which over and above repays the *goodness* or "mercy" which we show to our fellow man (<sup><4168></sup>Luke 6:38).

**break ... fallow ground** — Remove your superstitions and vices, and be renewed.

**seek ... Lord, fill he come** — Though not answered immediately, persevere unceasingly "till He come."

**rain** — send down as a copious shower.

**righteousness** — the reward of righteousness, that is, *salvation*, temporal and spiritual (<sup><1023></sup>1 Samuel 26:23; compare <sup><2123></sup>Joel 2:23).

13. **reaped iniquity** — that is, the *fruit* of iniquity; as "righteousness" (<sup><3012></sup>Hosea 10:12) is "the *fruit* of righteousness" (<sup><3018></sup>Job 4:8 <sup><1218></sup>Proverbs 22:8 <sup><4010></sup>Galatians 6:7,8).

**lies** — false and spurious worship.

**trust in thy way** — thy perverse way (<sup><2570></sup>Isaiah 57:10 <sup><2123></sup>Jeremiah 2:23), thy worship of false gods. This was their internal safeguard, as their external was "the multitude of their mighty men."

14. **tumult** — a tumultuous war.

**among thy people** — literally, “peoples”: the war shall extend to the whole people of Israel, through all the tribes, and the peoples allied to her.

**Shalman spoiled Beth-arbel** — that is, Shalmaneser, a compound name, in which the part common to it and the names of three other Assyrian kings, is omitted; Tiglath-pileser, Esar-haddon, Shar-ezer. So Jeconiah is abbreviated to Coniah. Arbel was situated in Naphtali in Galilee, on the border nearest Assyria. Against it Shalmaneser, at his first invasion of Israel (<sup>277B</sup>2 Kings 17:3), vented his chief rage. God threatens Israel’s fortresses with the same fate as Arbel suffered “in the day (on the occasion) of the battle” then well-known, though not mentioned elsewhere (compare <sup>284</sup>2 Kings 18:34). This event, close on the reign of Hezekiah, shows the inscription of Hosea (<sup>300</sup>Hosea 1:1) to be correct.

**15. So shall Beth-el do unto you** — Your idolatrous calf at Beth-el shall be the cause of a like calamity befalling you.

**your great wickedness** — literally, “the wickedness of your wickedness.”

**in a morning** — speedily as quickly as the dawn is put to flight by the rising sun (<sup>300</sup>Hosea 6:4 13:3 <sup>305</sup>Psalms 30:5).

**king** — Hoshea.

# CHAPTER 11

## HOSEA 11:1-12.

### GOD'S FORMER BENEFITS, AND ISRAEL'S INGRATITUDE RESULTING IN PUNISHMENT, YET JEHOVAH PROMISES RESTORATION AT LAST.

Hosea 11:5 shows this prophecy was uttered after the league made with Egypt (<sup>2704</sup>2 Kings 17:4).

**1. *Israel ... called my son out of Egypt*** — BENDEL translates, “From the time that he (Israel) was *in* Egypt, I called him My son,” which the parallelism proves. So <sup>3019</sup>Hosea 12:9 and <sup>3036</sup>Hosea 13:4 use “from ... Egypt,” for “from the time that thou didst sojourn *in* Egypt.” <sup>1002</sup>Exodus 4:22 also shows that Israel was called by God, “My son,” from the time of his Egyptian sojourn (<sup>2801</sup>Isaiah 43:1). God is always said to have *led* or *brought forth*, not to have “called,” Israel from Egypt. <sup>4015</sup>Matthew 2:15, therefore, in quoting this prophecy (typically and primarily referring to Israel, antitypically and fully to Messiah), applies it to Jesus’ sojourn *in* Egypt, not His return *from* it. Even from His infancy, partly spent in Egypt, God called Him His son. God included Messiah, and Israel for Messiah’s sake, in one common love, and therefore in one common prophecy. Messiah’s people and Himself are one, as the Head and the body. <sup>2408</sup>Isaiah 49:3 calls Him “Israel.” The same general reason, danger of extinction, caused the infant Jesus, and Israel in its national infancy (compare <sup>1401</sup>Genesis 42:1-43:34 45:18 46:3,4 <sup>2304</sup>Ezekiel 16:4-6 <sup>2820</sup>Jeremiah 31:20) to sojourn in Egypt. So He, and His spiritual Israel, are already called “God’s sons” while yet in the Egypt of the world.

**2. *As they called them*** — “they,” namely, monitors sent by Me. “Called,” in <sup>3019</sup>Hosea 11:1, suggests the idea of the many subsequent calls by the prophets.

***went from them*** — turned away in contempt (<sup>2427</sup>Jeremiah 2:27).

***Baalim*** — images of Baal, set up in various places.

**3. *taught ... to go*** — literally “to use his feet.” Compare a similar image, <sup>8138</sup>Deuteronomy 1:31 8:2,5,15 32:10,11 <sup>4321</sup>Nehemiah 9:21 <sup>2439</sup>Isaiah 63:9 <sup>3100</sup>Amos 2:10. God bore them as a parent does an infant, unable to supply

itself, so that it has no anxiety about food, raiment, and its going forth.

<sup><4138></sup>Acts 13:18, which probably refers to this passage of Hosea; He took them by the arms, to guide them that they might not stray, and to hold them up that they might not stumble.

***knew not that I healed them*** — that is, that My design was to restore them spiritually and temporally (<sup><4153></sup>Exodus 15:26).

**4. *CORDS OF A MAN*** — parallel to “bands of love”; not such cords as oxen are led by, but *humane methods*, such as men employ when inducing others, as for instance, a father drawing his child, by leading-strings, teaching him to go (<sup><3100></sup>Hosea 11:1).

***I was ... as they that take off the yoke on their jaws ... I laid meat*** — as the humane husbandman occasionally loosens the straps under the jaws by which the yoke is bound on the neck of oxen and lays food before them to eat. An appropriate image of God’s deliverance of Israel from the Egyptian yoke, and of His feeding them in the wilderness.

**5. *HE SHALL NOT RETURN INTO ... EGYPT*** — namely, to seek help against Assyria (compare <sup><3071></sup>Hosea 7:11), as Israel lately had done (<sup><4270></sup>2 Kings 17:4), after having revolted from Assyria, to whom they had been tributary from the times of Menahem (<sup><4259></sup>2 Kings 15:19). In a *figurative* sense, “he shall return to Egypt” (<sup><3008></sup>Hosea 9:3), that is, to Egypt-like bondage; also many Jewish fugitives were literally to *return* to Egypt, when the Holy Land was to be in Assyrian and Chaldean hands.

***Assyrian shall be his king*** — instead of having kings of their own, and Egypt as their auxiliary.

***because they refused to return*** — just retribution. They would not return (spiritually) to God, therefore they shall not return (corporally) to Egypt, the object of their desire.

**6. *ABIDE*** — or, “fall upon” [CALVIN].

***branches*** — villages, which are the branches or dependencies of the cities [CALVIN]. GROTIUS translates, “his bars” (so <sup><2510></sup>Lamentations 2:9), that is, the warriors who were the bulwarks of the state. Compare <sup><3008></sup>Hosea 4:18, “rulers” (*Margin*), “shields” (<sup><4970></sup>Psalms 47:9).

***because of their own counsels*** — in worshipping idols, and relying on Egypt (compare <sup><2806></sup>Hosea 10:6).

**7. *BENT TO BACKSLIDING*** — Not only do they *backslide*, and that too *from ME*, their “chief good,” but they are *bent upon it*. Though they (the

prophets) called them (the Israelites) to the Most High (from their idols), “none would exalt (that is, extol or honor) Him.” To exalt God, they must cease to be “*bent on* backsliding,” and *must* lift themselves upwards.

**8. *as Admah ... Zeboim*** — among the cities, including Sodom and Gomorrah, irretrievably overthrown (<sup><1623></sup>Deuteronomy 29:23).

***heart is turned within me*** — with the deepest compassion, so as not to execute My threat (<sup><2012></sup>Lamentations 1:20; compare <sup><1451></sup>Genesis 43:30 <sup><1126></sup>1 Kings 3:26). So the phrase is used of a new turn given to the feeling (<sup><1955></sup>Psalms 105:25).

***repentings*** — God speaks according to *human* modes of thought (<sup><1029></sup>Numbers 23:19). God’s *seeming* change is in accordance with His secret everlasting purpose of love to His people, to magnify His grace after their desperate rebellion.

**9. *I will not return to destroy Ephraim*** — that is I will no more, as in past times, destroy Ephraim. The destruction primarily meant is probably that by Tiglath-pileser, who, as the Jewish king Ahaz’ ally against Pekah of Israel and Rezin of Syria, deprived Israel of Gilead, Galilee, and Naphtali (<sup><1259></sup>2 Kings 15:29). The ulterior reference is to the long dispersion hereafter, to be ended by God’s covenant mercy restoring His people, not for their merits, but of His grace.

***God, ... not man*** — not dealing as man would, with implacable wrath under awful provocation (<sup><2317></sup>Isaiah 55:7-9 Malachi 3:6). I do not, like man, change when once I have made a covenant of everlasting love, as with Israel (<sup><1029></sup>Numbers 23:19). We measure God by the human standard, and hence are slow to credit fully His promises; these, however, belong to the faithful remnant, not to the obstinately impenitent.

***in the midst of thee*** — as peculiarly thy God (<sup><1295></sup>Exodus 19:5,6).

***not enter into the city*** — as an enemy: as I entered Admah, Zeboim, and Sodom, utterly destroying them, whereas I will not utterly destroy thee. Somewhat similarly JEROME: “I am *not one such as human dwellers in a city*, who take cruel vengeance; I save those whom I correct.” Thus “not man,” and “in the midst of thee,” are parallel to “into the city.” Though I am in the midst of thee, it is not as man entering a rebellious city to destroy utterly. MAURER needlessly translates, “I will not come *in wrath*.”

**10. *he shall roar like a lion*** — by awful judgments on their foes (<sup><2310></sup>Isaiah 31:4 <sup><1253></sup>Jeremiah 25:26-30 <sup><2161></sup>Joel 3:16), calling His dispersed “children” from the various lands of their dispersion.

*shall tremble* — shall flock in eager agitation of haste.

*from the west* — (Zechariah 8:7). Literally, “the sea.” Probably the Mediterranean, including its “isles of the sea,” and maritime coast. Thus as <sup><3111></sup>Hosea 11:11 specifies regions of Africa and Asia, so here Europe.

<sup><3111></sup>Isaiah 11:11-16, is parallel, referring to the very same regions. On “children,” see <sup><3110></sup>Hosea 1:10.

**11. tremble** — flutter in haste.

*dove* — no longer “a silly dove” (<sup><3111></sup>Hosea 7:11), but as “doves flying to their windows” (<sup><3108></sup>Isaiah 60:8).

*in their houses* — (<sup><3339></sup>Ezekiel 28:26). Literally, “upon,” for the Orientals live almost as much *upon* their flat-roofed houses as *in* them.

**12.** MAURER joins this verse with the twelfth chapter. But as this verse praises Judah, whereas <sup><3112></sup>Hosea 12:2 censures him, it must belong rather to the eleventh chapter and a new prophecy begins at the twelfth chapter. To avoid this, MAURER translates this verse as a censure, “Judah wanders with God,” that is, though having the true God, he wanders after false gods.

*ruleth with God* — to serve God is to reign. Ephraim wished to rule *without God* (compare <sup><4018></sup>1 Corinthians 4:8); nay, even, in order to rule, cast off God’s worship [RIVETUS]. In Judah was the legitimate succession of kings and priests.

*with the saints* — the holy priests and Levites [RIVETUS]. With the fathers and prophets who handed down the pure worship of God. Israel’s apostasy is the more culpable, as he had before him the good example of Judah, which he set at naught. The parallelism (“with GOD”) favors *Margin*, “With THE MOST HOLY ONE.”

# CHAPTER 12

## HOSEA 12:1-14.

### REPROOF OF EPHRAIM AND JUDAH: THEIR FATHER JACOB OUGHT TO BE A PATTERN TO THEM.

This prophecy was delivered about the time of Israel's seeking the aid of the Egyptian king So, in violation of their covenant with Assyria (see <sup><3810></sup>Hosea 12:1). He exhorts them to follow their father Jacob's persevering prayerfulness, which brought God's favor upon him. As God is unchangeable, He will show the same favor to Jacob's posterity as He did to Jacob, if, like him, they seek God.

**1. *feedeth on wind*** — (<sup><1654></sup>Proverbs 15:14 <sup><2440></sup>Isaiah 44:20). Followeth after vain objects, such as alliances with idolaters and their idols (compare <sup><3806></sup>Hosea 8:7).

***east wind*** — the simoon, blowing from the desert east of Palestine, which not only does not benefit, but does injury. Israel follows not only things vain, but things pernicious (compare <sup><3812></sup>Job 15:2).

***increaseth lies*** — accumulates lie upon lie, that is, impostures wherewith they deceive themselves, forsaking the truth of God.

***desolation*** — *violent oppressions* practiced by Israel [MAURER]. Acts which would prove the *cause* of Israel's own *desolation* [CALVIN].

***covenant with ... Assyrians*** — (<sup><2613></sup>Hosea 5:13 7:11).

***oil ... into Egypt*** — as a present from Israel to secure Egypt's alliance (<sup><2306></sup>Isaiah 30:6 57:9; compare <sup><1270></sup>2 Kings 17:4). Palestine was famed for oil (<sup><3277></sup>Ezekiel 27:17).

**2. *controversy with Judah*** — (<sup><2006></sup>Hosea 4:1 Micah 6:2). Judah, under Ahaz, had fallen into idolatry (<sup><1263></sup>2 Kings 16:3, etc.).

***Jacob*** — that is, the ten tribes. If Judah, the favored portion of the nation, shall not be spared, much less degenerate Israel.

**3. *He*** — Jacob, contrasted with his degenerate descendants, called by his name, Jacob (<sup><3810></sup>Hosea 12:2; compare <sup><3107></sup>Micah 2:7). *He* took Esau by the heel in the womb in order to obtain, if possible, the privileges of the first-

born (<sup><0252></sup>Genesis 25:22-26), whence he took his name, Jacob, meaning “supplanter”; and again, by his strength, prevailed in wrestling with God for a blessing (<sup><0324></sup>Genesis 32:24-29); whereas ye disregard My promises, putting your confidence in idols and foreign alliances. *He* conquered God, ye are the slaves of idols. Only have Jehovah on your side, and ye are stronger than Edom, or even Assyria. So the spiritual Israel lays hold of the heel of Jesus, “the First-born of many brethren,” being born again of the Holy Spirit. Having no right in themselves to the inheritance, they lay hold of the bruised heel, the humanity of Christ crucified, and let not go their hold of Him who is not, as Esau, a curse (<sup><0216></sup>Hebrews 12:16,17), but, by becoming a curse for us, is a blessing to us.

***power with God*** — referring to his name, “Israel,” *prince of God*, acquired on that occasion (compare <sup><0112></sup>Matthew 11:12). As the promised Canaan had to be gained forcibly by Israel, so heaven by the faithful (<sup><0129></sup>Revelation 3:21; compare <sup><0134></sup>Luke 13:24). “Strive,” literally, “as in the agony of a contest.” So the Canaanitess (<sup><0152></sup>Matthew 15:22).

***his strength*** — which lay in his conscious weakness, whence, when his thigh was put out of joint by God, he *hung upon Him*. To seek strength was his object; to grant it, God’s. Yet God’s mode of procedure was strange. In human form He tries as it were to throw Jacob down. When simple wrestling was not enough, He does what seems to ensure Jacob’s fall, dislocating his thigh joint, so that he could no longer stand. Yet it was then that Jacob prevailed. Thus God teaches us the irresistible might of conscious weakness. For when weak in ourselves, we are strong by His strength put in us (<sup><0216></sup>Job 23:6 <sup><0271></sup>Isaiah 27:5 <sup><0711></sup>2 Corinthians 12:9,10).

**4. *the angel*** — the uncreated Angel of the Covenant, as God the Son appears in the Old Testament (Malachi 3:1).

***made supplication*** — <sup><0326></sup>Genesis 32:26; I will not let thee go, except thou bless me.”

***he found him*** — The angel found Jacob, when he was fleeing from Esau into Syria: the Lord appearing to him “in Beth-el” (<sup><0281></sup>Genesis 28:11-19 35:1). What a sad contrast, that in this same Beth-el now Israel worships the golden calves!

***there he spake with us*** — “with us,” as being in the loins of our progenitor Jacob (compare <sup><0266></sup>Psalms 66:6, “They ... we;,” <sup><0309></sup>Hebrews 7:9,10). What God there spoke to Jacob appertains to us. God’s promises to him belong to all his posterity who follow in the steps of his prayerful faith.

**5. Lord God** — JEHOVAH, a name implying His *immutable constancy to His promises*. From the *Hebrew* root, meaning “existence.” “He that is, was, and is to be,” always the same (<sup><3838></sup>Hebrews 13:8 <sup><6106></sup>Revelation 1:4,8; compare <sup><0134></sup>Exodus 3:14,15 6:3). As He was unchangeable in His favor to Jacob, so will He be to His believing posterity.

**of hosts** — which Israel foolishly worshipped. Jehovah has all the hosts (*saba*) or powers of heaven and earth at His command, so that He is as all-powerful, as He is faithful, to fulfill His promises (<sup><4916></sup>Psalm 135:6 <sup><1027></sup>Amos 5:27).

**memorial** — the name expressive of the character in which God was ever to be remembered (<sup><4916></sup>Psalm 135:13).

**6. thou** — who dost wish to be a true descendant of Jacob.

**to THY God** — who is therefore bound by covenant to hear thy prayers.

**keep mercy and judgment** — (Micah 6:8). These two include the second-table commandments, duty towards one’s neighbor, the most visible test of the sincerity on one’s repentance.

**wait on thy God** — alone, not on thy idols. Including all the duties of the first table (<sup><4916></sup>Psalm 37:3,5,7 40:1).

**7. merchant** — a play on the double sense of the *Hebrew*, “Canaan,” that is, a Canaanite and a “merchant” <sup><2348></sup>Ezekiel 16:3: “Thy birth is ... of Canaan.” They who naturally were descendants of pious *Jacob* had become virtually *Canaanites*, who were proverbial as cheating *merchants* (compare <sup><2331></sup>Isaiah 23:11, *Margin*), the greatest reproach to Israel, who despised Canaan. The Phoenicians called themselves *Canaanites* or *merchants* (<sup><2338></sup>Isaiah 23:8).

**oppress** — *open* violence: as the “balances of deceit” imply *fraud*.

**8. And** — that is, Notwithstanding.

**Yet I am ... rich** — I regard not what the prophets say: I am content with my state, as I am rich (<sup><4687></sup>Revelation 3:17). Therefore, in just retribution, this is the very language of the enemy in being the instrument of Israel’s punishment. Zechariah 11:5: “They that sell them say ... *I am rich*.” Far better is poverty with honesty, than riches gained by sin.

**my labors** — my gains by labor.

**they shall find none** — that is, none shall find any.

**iniquity ... that were sin** — iniquity that would bring down the penalty of sin. Ephraim argues, My success in my labors proves that I am not a guilty sinner as the prophets assert. Thus sinners pervert God’s long-suffering goodness (<sup>4156</sup>Matthew 5:45) into a justification of their impenitence (compare <sup>2081</sup>Ecclesiastes 8:11-13).

**9. And** — rather, “And yet.” Though Israel deserves to be cast off for ever, yet I am still what I have been from the time of My delivering them out of Egypt, their covenant God; therefore, “I will yet make thee to dwell in tabernacles,” that is, to keep the feast of tabernacles again in remembrance of a new deliverance out of bondage. Fulfilled primarily at the return from Babylon (<sup>4087</sup>Nehemiah 8:17). Fully and antotypically to be fulfilled at the final restoration from the present dispersion (<sup>3846</sup>Zechariah 14:16; compare <sup>6302</sup>Leviticus 23:42,43).

**10. by ... the prophets** — literally, “upon,” that is, My spirit resting on them. I deposited *with them* My instructions which ought to have brought you to the right way. An aggravation of your guilt, that it was not through ignorance you erred, but in defiance of God and His prophets [CALVIN]. Ahijah the Shilonite, Shemaiah, Iddo, Azariah, Hanani, Jehu, Elijah, Elisha, Micaiah, Joel, and Amos were “the prophets” before Hosea.

**visions ... similitudes** — I adopted such modes of communication, adapted to man’s capacities, as were calculated to arouse attention: I left no means untried to reform you. The first, second, and third chapters contain examples of “similitudes.”

**11. Is there iniquity in Gilead?** — He asks the question, not as if the answer was doubtful, but to strengthen the affirmation: “Surely they are vanity”; or as MAURER translates, “They are *nothing but* iniquity.” *Iniquity*, especially idolatry, in Scripture is often termed “vanity.” <sup>2131</sup>Proverbs 13:11: “Wealth gotten by *vanity*,” that is, *iniquity*. <sup>2429</sup>Isaiah 41:29: “They are all *vanity ... images*.” “Gilead” refers to Mizpah-gilead, a city representing the region beyond Jordan (<sup>2008</sup>Hosea 6:8 <sup>07129</sup>Judges 11:29); as “Gilgal,” the region on this side of Jordan (<sup>2045</sup>Hosea 4:15). In all quarters alike they are utterly vile.

**their altars are as heaps in the furrows** — that is, as numerous as such heaps: namely, the heaps of stones cleared out of a stony field. An appropriate image, as at a distance they look like altars (compare <sup>2800</sup>Hosea 10:1,4 8:11). As the third member in the parallelism answers to the first, “Gilgal” to “Gilead,” so the fourth to the second, “altars” to “vanity.” The word “heaps” alludes to the name “Gilgal,” meaning “a heap of stones.” The very scene of the general circumcision of the people, and of the solemn

passover kept after crossing Jordan, is now the stronghold of Israel's idolatry.

**12. *Jacob fled ... served*** — Though ye pride yourselves on the great name of “Israel,” forget not that your progenitor was the same Jacob who was a fugitive, and who served for Rachel fourteen years. *He* forgot not ME who delivered him when fleeing from Esau, and when oppressed by Laban (<sup><0285</sup>Genesis 28:5 29:20,28 <sup><0305</sup>Deuteronomy 26:5). *Ye*, though delivered from Egypt (<sup><0213</sup>Hosea 12:13), and loaded with My favors, are yet unwilling to return to Me.

***country of Syria*** — the champaign region of Syria, the portion lying between the Tigris and Euphrates, hence called Mesopotamia. Padan-aram means the same, that is, “Low Syria,” as opposed to Aramea (meaning the “high country”) or Syria (<sup><0407</sup>Genesis 48:7).

**13. *by a prophet*** — Moses (<sup><0116</sup>Numbers 12:6-8 <sup><0585</sup>Deuteronomy 18:15,18).

***preserved*** — Translate, “kept”; there is an allusion to the same *Hebrew* word in <sup><0212</sup>Hosea 12:12, “*kept* sheep”; Israel was *kept* by God as *His flock*, even as *Jacob kept sheep* (<sup><0801</sup>Psalms 80:1 <sup><0311</sup>Isaiah 63:11).

**14. *provoked him*** — that is, God.

***leave his blood upon him*** — not take away the guilt and penalty of the innocent blood shed by Ephraim in general, and to Moloch in particular.

***his reproach shall his Lord return unto him*** — Ephraim's dishonor to God in worshipping idols, God will repay to him. That God is “*his Lord*” by right redemption and special revelation to Ephraim only aggravates his guilt, instead of giving him hope of escape. God does not give up His claim to them as *His*, however they set aside His dominion.

# CHAPTER 13

## HOSEA 13:1-16.

### EPHRAIM'S SINFUL INGRATITUDE TO GOD, AND ITS FATAL CONSEQUENCE; GOD'S PROMISE AT LAST.

This chapter and the fourteenth chapter probably belong to the troubled times that followed Pekah's murder by Hoshea (compare <sup><2831H></sup>Hosea 13:11 <sup><2150></sup>2 Kings 15:30). The subject is the idolatry of Ephraim, notwithstanding God's past benefits, destined to be his ruin.

**1. *When Ephraim spake trembling*** — rather, “When Ephraim (the tribe most powerful among the twelve in Israel's early history) spake (authoritatively) there was trembling”; all reverentially feared him [JEROME], (compare <sup><8918></sup>Job 29:8,9,21).

***offended in Baal*** — that is, *in respect to* Baal, by worshipping him (<sup><11631></sup>1 Kings 16:31), under Ahab; a more heinous offense than even the calves. Therefore it is at this climax of guilt that Ephraim “died.” Sin has, in the sight of God, within itself the germ of death, though that death may not visibly take effect till long after. Compare <sup><61019></sup>Romans 7:9, “Sin revived, and I *died*.” So Adam in the day of his sin was to die, though the sentence was not visibly executed till long after (<sup><40217></sup>Genesis 2:17 5:5). Israel is similarly represented as politically dead in <sup><25701></sup>Ezekiel 37:1-28.

**2. *according to their own understanding*** — that is, their arbitrary devising. Compare “will-worship,” <sup><51023></sup>Colossians 2:23. Men are not to be “wise above that which is written,” or to follow their own understanding, but God's command in worship.

***kiss the calves*** — an act of adoration to the golden calves (compare <sup><11918></sup>1 Kings 19:18 <sup><89127></sup>Job 31:27 <sup><19112></sup>Psalms 2:12).

**3. *they shall be as the morning cloud ... dew*** — (<sup><21014></sup>Hosea 6:4). As their “goodness” soon vanished like the morning cloud and dew, so they shall perish like them.

***the floor*** — the threshing-floor, generally an open area, on a height, exposed to the winds.

**chimney** — generally in the East an orifice in the wall, at once admitting the light, and giving egress to the smoke.

4. (<sup><3813></sup>Hosea 12:9 <sup><2461></sup>Isaiah 43:11).

**no saviour** — temporal as well as spiritual.

**besides me** — (<sup><2362></sup>Isaiah 45:21).

5. **I did know thee** — did acknowledge thee as Mine, and so took care of thee (<sup><3813></sup>Psalms 144:3 <sup><3102></sup>Amos 3:2). As *I knew* thee as Mine, so *thou* shouldst *know* no God but Me (<sup><2809></sup>Hosea 13:4).

**in ... land of ... drought** — (<sup><3815></sup>Deuteronomy 8:15).

6. Image from cattle, waxing wanton in abundant pasture (compare <sup><2815></sup>Hosea 2:5,8 <sup><3503></sup>Deuteronomy 32:13-15). In proportion as I fed them to the full, they were so satiated that “their heart was exalted”; a sad contrast to the time when, by God’s blessing, Ephraim truly “exalted himself in Israel” (<sup><2815></sup>Hosea 13:1).

**therefore have they forgotten me** — the very reason why men should remember God (namely, prosperity, which comes from Him) is the cause often of their forgetting Him. God had warned them of this danger (<sup><3811></sup>Deuteronomy 6:11,12).

7. (<sup><2814></sup>Hosea 5:14 <sup><2810></sup>Lamentations 3:10).

**leopard** — The *Hebrew* comes from a root meaning “spotted” (compare <sup><2433></sup>Jeremiah 13:23). Leopards lurk in thickets and thence spring on their victims.

**observe** — that is, *lie in wait* for them. Several manuscripts, the *Septuagint*, *Vulgate*, *Syriac*, and *Arabic* read, by a slight change of the *Hebrew* vowel pointing, “by the way of *Assyria*,” a region abounding in leopards and lions. *English Version* is better.

8. “Writers on the natures of beasts say that none is more savage than a *she bear*, when *bereaved of her whelps*” [JEROME].

**caul of ... heart** — the membrane enclosing it: the pericardium.

**there** — “by the way” (<sup><2807></sup>Hosea 13:7).

9. **thou ... in me** — in contrast.

**hast destroyed thyself** — that is, thy destruction is of thyself (<sup><2102></sup>Proverbs 6:32 8:36).

*in me is thine help* — literally, “in thine help” (compare <sup><6339></sup>Deuteronomy 33:26). Hadst thou rested thy hope *in Me*, I would have been always ready at hand *for thy help* [GROTIUS].

**10. *I will be thy king; where*** — rather, as the *Margin* and the *Septuagint*, *Syriac*, *Vulgate*, “Where now is thy king?” [MAURER]. *English Version* is, however, favored both by the *Hebrew*, by the antithesis between Israel’s self-chosen and *perishing kings*, and God, Israel’s *abiding King* (compare <sup><806></sup>Hosea 3:4,5).

*where ... Give me a king* — Where now is the king whom ye substituted in My stead? Neither Saul, whom the whole nation begged for, not contented with Me their true king (<sup><985></sup>1 Samuel 8:5,7,19,20 10:19), nor Jeroboam, whom subsequently the ten tribes chose instead of the line of David My anointed, can save thee now. They had expected from their kings what is the prerogative of God alone, namely, the power of saving them.

*judges* — including all civil authorities under the king (compare <sup><318></sup>Amos 2:3).

**11. *I gave ... king in ... anger ... took ... away in ... wrath*** — true both of Saul (<sup><952></sup>1 Samuel 15:22,23 16:1) and of Jeroboam’s line (<sup><253></sup>2 Kings 15:30). Pekah was taken away through Hoshea, as he himself took away Pekahiah; and as Hoshea was soon to be taken away by the Assyrian king.

**12. *bound up ... hid*** — Treasures, meant to be kept, are bound up and hidden; that is, do not flatter yourselves, because of the delay, that I have forgotten your sin. Nay (<sup><309></sup>Hosea 9:9), Ephraim’s iniquity is kept as it were safely sealed up, until the due time comes for bringing it forth for punishment (<sup><823></sup>Deuteronomy 32:34 <sup><847></sup>Job 14:17 21:19; compare <sup><818></sup>Romans 2:5). Opposed to “blotting out the handwriting against” the sinner (<sup><514></sup>Colossians 2:14).

**13. *sorrows of a travailing woman*** — calamities sudden and agonizing (<sup><218></sup>Jeremiah 30:6).

*unwise* — in not foreseeing the impending judgment, and averting it by penitence (<sup><123></sup>Proverbs 22:3).

*he should not stay long in the place of the breaking forth of children* — When Israel might deliver himself from calamity by the pangs of penitence, he brings ruin on himself by so long deferring a new birth unto repentance, like a child whose mother has not strength to bring it forth, and which therefore remains so long in the passage from the womb as to run the risk of death (<sup><219></sup>2 Kings 19:3 <sup><338></sup>Isaiah 37:3 66:9).

**14.** Applying primarily to God’s restoration of Israel from Assyria partially, and, in times yet future, fully from all the lands of their present long-continued dispersion, and political *death* (compare <sup><306P></sup>Hosea 6:2 <sup><351S></sup>Isaiah 25:8 26:19 <sup><357I2></sup>Ezekiel 37:12). God’s power and grace are magnified in quickening what to the eye of flesh seems dead and hopeless ( <sup><307R></sup>Romans 4:17,19). As Israel’s history, past and future, has a representative character in relation to the Church, this verse is expressed in language alluding to Messiah’s (who is the ideal Israel) grand victory over the grave and death, the first-fruits of His own resurrection, the full harvest to come at the general resurrection; hence the similarity between this verse and Paul’s language as to the latter ( <sup><415S></sup>1 Corinthians 15:55). That similarity becomes more obvious by *translating* as the *Septuagint*, from which Paul plainly quotes; and as the same *Hebrew* word is translated in <sup><310P></sup>Hosea 13:10, “O death, *where* are thy plagues (paraphrased by the *Septuagint*, ‘thy victory’)? O grave, where is thy destruction (rendered by the *Septuagint*, ‘thy sting’)?” The question is that of one triumphing over a foe, once a cruel tyrant, but now robbed of all power to hurt.

*repentance shall be hid from mine eyes* — that is, I will not change My purpose of fulfilling My promise by delivering Israel, on the condition of their return to Me (compare <sup><340P></sup>Hosea 14:2-8 <sup><023P></sup>Numbers 23:19 <sup><312R></sup>Romans 11:29).

**15.** *fruitful* — referring to the meaning of “Ephraim,” from a *Hebrew* root, “to be fruitful” ( <sup><041S></sup>Genesis 41:52). It was long the most numerous and flourishing of the tribes ( <sup><048P></sup>Genesis 48:19).

*wind of the Lord* — that is, sent by the Lord (compare <sup><307P></sup>Isaiah 40:7), who has His instruments of punishment always ready. The Assyrian, Shalmaneser, etc., is meant ( <sup><340I1></sup>Jeremiah 4:11 18:17 <sup><357I2></sup>Ezekiel 19:12).

*from the wilderness* — that is, the desert part of Syria ( <sup><119S1></sup>1 Kings 19:15), the route from Assyria into Israel.

*he* — the Assyrian invader. Shalmaneser began the siege of Samaria in 723 B.C. Its close was in 721 B.C., the first year of Sargon, who seems to have usurped the throne of Assyria while Shalmaneser was at the siege of Samaria. Hence, while <sup><270P2></sup>2 Kings 17:6 states, “the *king of Assyria* took Samaria,” <sup><280P2></sup>2 Kings 18:10 says, “at the end of three years *they* took it.” In Sargon’s magnificent palace at Khorsabad, inscriptions mention the number — 27,280 — of Israelites carried captive from Samaria and other places of Israel by the founder of the palace [G. V. SMITH].

**16.** This verse and <sup><281S1></sup>Hosea 13:15 foretell the calamities about to befall Israel before her restoration ( <sup><281P4></sup>Hosea 13:14), owing to her impenitence.

*her God* — the greatest aggravation of her rebellion, that it was against *her* God (<sup><3308></sup>Hosea 13:4).

*infants ... dashed in pieces*, etc. — (<sup><1282></sup>2 Kings 8:12 15:16 <sup><3008></sup>Amos 1:13).

# CHAPTER 14

## HOSEA 14:1-9.

**GOD'S PROMISE OF BLESSING, ON THEIR REPENTANCE:  
THEIR ABANDONMENT OF IDOLATRY FORETOLD: THE  
CONCLUSION OF THE WHOLE, THE JUST SHALL WALK IN  
GOD'S WAYS, BUT THE TRANSGRESSOR SHALL FALL  
THEREIN.**

1. *fallen by thine iniquity* — (<sup><2885></sup>Hosea 5:5 13:9).

2. *Take with you words* — instead of sacrifices, namely, the words of penitence here put in your mouths by God. “Words,” in *Hebrew*, mean “realities,” there being the same term for “words” and “things”; so God implies, He will not accept empty professions (<sup><9786></sup>Psalms 78:36 <sup><2993></sup>Isaiah 29:13). He does not ask costly sacrifices, but *words* of heartfelt penitence.

*receive us graciously* — literally “(for) good.”

*calves of our lips* — .that is, instead of sacrifices of *calves*, which we cannot offer to Thee in exile, we present the praises of our *lips*. Thus the exile, wherein the temple service ceased, prepared the way for the gospel time when the types of the animal sacrifices of the Old Testament being realized in Christ's perfect sacrifice once for all, “the sacrifice of praise to God continually that is *the fruit of our lips*” (<sup><8134></sup>Hebrews 13:14) takes their place in the New Testament.

3. Three besetting sins of Israel are here renounced, trust in Assyria, application to Egypt for its cavalry (forbidden, <sup><6709></sup>Deuteronomy 17:16; compare <sup><2071></sup>Hosea 7:11 11:5 12:1 <sup><2704></sup>2 Kings 17:4 <sup><6317></sup>Psalms 33:17 <sup><2310></sup>Isaiah 30:2,16 31:1), and idolatry.

*fatherless* — descriptive of the *destitute* state of Israel, when severed from God, their true Father. We shall henceforth trust in none but Thee, the only Father of the fatherless, and Helper of the destitute (<sup><9014></sup>Psalms 10:14 68:5); our nation has experienced Thee such in our helpless state in Egypt, and now in a like state again our only hope is Thy goodness.

4. God's gracious reply to their self-condemning prayer.

**backsliding** — *apostasy*: not merely occasional backslidings. God can heal the most desperate sinfulness [CALVIN].

**freely** — with a gratuitous, unmerited, and abundant love (<sup><2360></sup>Ezekiel 16:60-63). So as to the spiritual Israel (<sup><616></sup>John 15:16 <sup><612></sup>Romans 3:24 5:8 <sup><610></sup>John 4:10).

**5. as the dew** — which falls copiously in the East, taking the place of the more frequent rains in other regions. God will not be “as the early dew that goeth away,” but constant (<sup><216></sup>Hosea 6:3,4 <sup><299></sup>Job 29:19 <sup><192></sup>Proverbs 19:12).

**the lily** — No plant is more productive than the lily, one root often producing fifty bulbs [PLINY, *Natural History*, 21.5]. The common lily is white, consisting of six leaves opening like bells. The royal lily grows to the height of three or four feet; <sup><162></sup>Matthew 6:29 alludes to the beauty of its flowers.

**roots as Lebanon** — that is, as the trees of Lebanon (especially the cedars), which cast down their roots as deeply as is their height upwards; so that they are immovable [JEROME], (<sup><218></sup>Isaiah 10:34). Spiritual growth consists most in the growth of the root which is out of sight.

**6. branches** — shoots, or suckers.

**beauty ... as the olive** — which never loses its verdure. One plant is not enough to express the graces of God’s elect people. The *lily* depicts its lovely growth; but as it wants duration and firmness, the deeply rooted cedars of Lebanon are added; these, however, are fruitless, therefore the fruitful, peace-bearing, fragrant, ever green olive is added.

**smell as Lebanon** — which exhaled from it the fragrance of odoriferous trees and flowers. So Israel’s name shall be in good savor with all (<sup><127></sup>Genesis 27:27 <sup><211></sup>Song of Solomon 4:11).

**7. They that used to dwell under Israel’s shadow** (but who shall have been forced to leave it), shall *return*, that is, be restored (<sup><359></sup>Ezekiel 35:9). Others take “*His shadow*” to mean *Jehovah’s* (compare <sup><978></sup>Psalms 17:8 91:1 <sup><316></sup>Isaiah 4:6), which <sup><341></sup>Hosea 14:1,2 (“*return unto the Lord*,” etc.) favor. But the “*his*” in <sup><346></sup>Hosea 14:6 refers to Israel, and therefore must refer to the same here.

**revive as ... corn** — As the corn long buried in the earth springs up, with an abundant produce, so shall they revive from their calamities, with a great increase of offspring (compare <sup><122></sup>John 12:24).

**scent thereof** — that is, Israel's *fame*. Compare <sup><3416></sup>Hosea 14:6, "His smell as Lebanon"; <sup><2108></sup>Song of Solomon 1:3: "Thy *name* is as ointment poured forth." The *Septuagint* favors the *Margin*, "memorial."

**as the wine of Lebanon** — which was most celebrated for its aroma, flavor, and medicinal restorative properties.

**8. Ephraim shall say** — being brought to penitence by God's goodness, and confessing and abhorring his past madness.

**I have heard ... and observed him** — I Jehovah have *answered* and *regarded* him *with favor*; the opposite of God's "hiding His face from" one (<sup><6511></sup>Deuteronomy 31:17). It is the experience of God's favor, in contrast to God's wrath heretofore, that leads Ephraim to abhor his past idolatry. Jehovah *heard* and *answered*: whereas the idols, as Ephraim now sees, could not *hear*, much less answer.

**I am ... a green fir** — or cypress; ever green, winter and summer alike; the leaves not falling off in winter.

**From me is thy fruit found** — "From Me," as the root. Thou needest go no farther than Me for the supply of all thy wants; not merely the *protection* implied by the *shadow* of the cypress, but that which the cypress has not, namely, *fruit*, all spiritual and temporal blessings. It may be also implied, that whatever spiritual graces Ephraim seeks for or may have, are not of themselves, but of God (<sup><3008></sup>Psalm 1:3 <sup><6134></sup>John 15:4,5,8 <sup><3017></sup>James 1:17). God's promises to us are more our security for mortifying sin than our promises to God (<sup><2709></sup>Isaiah 27:9).

**9. EPILOGUE**, summing up the whole previous teaching. Here alone Hosea uses the term "righteous," so rare were such characters in his day. There is enough of saving truth clear in God's Word to guide those humbly seeking salvation, and enough of difficulties to confound those who curiously seek them out, rather than practically seek salvation.

**fall** — stumble and are offended at difficulties opposed to their prejudices and lusts, or above their self-wise understanding (compare <sup><3029></sup>Proverbs 10:29 <sup><3107></sup>Micah 2:7 <sup><4119></sup>Matthew 11:19 <sup><4134></sup>Luke 2:34 <sup><4077></sup>John 7:17 <sup><6017></sup>1 Peter 2:7,8). To him who sincerely seeks the *agenda*, God will make plain the *credenda*. Christ is the foundation-stone to some: a stone of stumbling and rock of offense to others. The same sun softens wax and hardens clay. But their fall is the most fatal who fall in the ways of God, split on the Rock of ages, and suck poison out of the Balm of Gilead.

## THE BOOK OF

# JOEL

Commentary by **A. R. FAUSSETT**

## INTRODUCTION

JOEL (meaning “one to whom Jehovah is God,” that is, worshipper of Jehovah) seems to have belonged to Judah, as no reference occurs to Israel; whereas he speaks of Jerusalem, the temple, the priests, and the ceremonies, as if he were intimately familiar with them (compare <sup>2014</sup> Joel 1:14 2:1,15,32 3:1,2,6,16,17,20,21). His predictions were probably delivered in the early days of Joash 870-865 B.C.; for no reference is made in them to the Babylonian, Assyrian, or even the Syrian invasion; and the only enemies mentioned are the Philistines, Phoenicians, Edomites, and Egyptians (<sup>2014</sup> Joel 3:4,19). Had he lived after Joash, he would doubtless have mentioned the Syrians among the enemies whom he enumerates since they took Jerusalem and carried off immense spoil to Damascus (<sup>1802</sup> 2 Chronicles 24:23,24). No idolatry is mentioned; and the temple services, the priesthood, and other institutions of the theocracy, are represented as flourishing. This all answers to the state of things under the high priesthood of Jehoiada, through whom Joash had been placed on the throne and who lived in the early years of Joash (<sup>2117</sup> 2 Kings 11:17,18 12:2-16 2 Chronicles 24.4-14). He was the son of Pethuel.

The first chapter describes the desolation caused by an inroad of locusts — one of the instruments of divine judgment mentioned by Moses (<sup>1838</sup> Deuteronomy 28:38,39) and by Solomon (<sup>1087</sup> 1 Kings 8:37). The second chapter (<sup>2011</sup> Joel 2:1-11): the appearance of them, under images of a hostile army suggesting that the locusts were symbols and forerunners of a more terrible scourge, namely, foreign enemies who would consume all before them. (The absence of mention of *personal* injury to the inhabitants is not a just objection to the figurative interpretation; for the figure is consistent throughout in attributing to the locusts only injury to *vegetation*, thereby injuring indirectly man and beast). <sup>2012</sup> Joel 2:12-17: exhortation to repentance, the result of which will be: God will deliver His people, the former and latter rains shall return to fertilize their desolated lands, and

these shall be the pledge of the spiritual outpouring of grace beginning with Judah, and thence extending to “all flesh.” <sup>Joel 2:18-3:21</sup> Joel 2:18-3:21: God’s judgments on Judah’s enemies, whereas Judah shall be established for ever.

Joel’s style is pre-eminently pure. It is characterized by smoothness and fluency in the rhythms, roundness in the sentences, and regularity in the parallelisms. With the strength of Micah it combines the tenderness of Jeremiah, the vividness of Nahum, and the sublimity of Isaiah. As a specimen of his style take the second chapter wherein the terrible aspect of the locusts, their rapidity, irresistible progress, noisy din, and instinct-taught power of marshalling their forces for their career of devastation, are painted with graphic reality.

# CHAPTER 1

## JOEL 1:1-20.

**THE DESOLATE ASPECT OF THE COUNTRY THROUGH THE PLAGUE OF LOCUSTS; THE PEOPLE ADMONISHED TO OFFER SOLEMN PRAYERS IN THE TEMPLE; FOR THIS CALAMITY IS THE EARNEST OF A STILL HEAVIER ONE.**

1. *Joel* — meaning, “Jehovah is God.”

*son of Pethuel* — to distinguish Joel the prophet from others of the name. Persons of eminence also were noted by adding the father’s name.

2, 3. A spirited introduction calling attention.

*old men* — the best judges in question concerning the past (<sup>6517</sup>Deuteronomy 32:7 <sup>8317</sup>Job 32:7).

*Hath this been*, etc. — that is, Hath any *so grievous* a calamity *as this* ever been before? No such plague of locusts had been since the ones *in Egypt*. <sup>2114</sup>Exodus 10:14 is not at variance with this verse, which refers to *Judea*, in which Joel says there had been no such devastation before.

3. *Tell ye your children* — in order that they may be admonished by the severity of the punishment to fear God (<sup>3706</sup>Psalm 78:6-8; compare <sup>2138</sup>Exodus 13:8 <sup>6107</sup>Joshua 4:7).

4. This verse states the subject on which he afterwards expands. Four species or stages of locusts, rather than four different insects, are meant (compare <sup>8112</sup>Leviticus 11:22). Literally,

(1) the *gnawing* locust;

(2) the *swarming* locust;

(3) the *licking* locust;

(4) the *consuming* locust; forming a climax to the most destructive kind.

The last is often three inches long, and the two antennae, each an inch long. The two hinder of its six feet are larger than the rest, adapting it for leaping.

The first “kind” is that of the locust, having just emerged from the egg in spring, and without wings. The second is when at the end of spring, still in their first skin, the locusts put forth little ones without legs or wings. The third, when after their third casting of the old skin, they get small wings, which enable them to leap the better, but not to fly. Being unable to go away till their wings are matured, they devour all before them, grass, shrubs, and bark of trees: translated “rough caterpillars” (<sup>3627</sup>Jeremiah 51:27). The fourth kind, the matured winged locusts (see on Na 3:16). In <sup>2925</sup>Joel 2:25 they are enumerated in the reverse order, where the restoration of the devastations caused by them is promised. The Hebrews make the first species refer to Assyria and Babylon; the second species, to Medo-Persia; the third, to Greco-Macedonia and Antiochus Epiphanes; the fourth, to the Romans. Though the primary reference be to literal locusts, the Holy Spirit doubtless had in view the successive empires which assailed Judea, each worse than its predecessor, Rome being the climax.

**5. *Awake*** — out of your ordinary state of drunken stupor, to realize the cutting off from you of your favorite drink. Even the drunkards (from a *Hebrew* root, “any strong drink”) shall be forced to “howl,” though usually laughing in the midst of the greatest national calamities, so palpably and universally shall the calamity affect all.

***wine ... new wine*** — “New” or “fresh wine,” in *Hebrew*, is the unfermented, and therefore unintoxicating, *sweet juice* extracted by pressure from grapes or other fruit, as *pomegranates* (So 8:2). “Wine” is the produce of the grape alone, and is intoxicating (see on <sup>2910</sup>Joel 1:10).

**6. *nation*** — applied to the locusts, rather than “people” (<sup>2915</sup>Proverbs 30:25,26), to mark not only their *numbers*, but also their *savage hostility*; and also to prepare the mind of the hearer for the transition to the figurative locusts in the second chapter, namely, the “nation” or *Gentile* foe coming against Judea (compare <sup>2912</sup>Joel 2:2).

***my land*** — that is, Jehovah’s; which never would have been so devastated were *I* not pleased to inflict punishment (<sup>2918</sup>Joel 2:18 <sup>2945</sup>Isaiah 14:25 <sup>2918</sup>Jeremiah 16:18 <sup>2915</sup>Ezekiel 36:5 38:16).

***strong*** — as irresistibly sweeping away before its compact body the fruits of man’s industry.

***without number*** — so <sup>2905</sup>Judges 6:5 7:12, “like grasshoppers (or “locusts”) for multitude” (<sup>2923</sup>Jeremiah 46:23 Na 3:15).

**teeth ... lion** — that is, the locusts are as destructive as a lion; there is no vegetation that can resist their bite (compare <sup>(-6198)</sup>Revelation 9:8). PLINY says “they gnaw even the doors of houses.”

**7. barked** — BOCHART, with the *Septuagint* and *Syriac*, translates, from an *Arabic* root, “hath broken,” namely, the topmost shoots, which locusts most feed on. CALVIN supports *English Version*.

**my vine ... my fig tree** — being, in “My land,” that is, Jehovah’s (<sup>(-2006)</sup>Joel 1:6). As to the vine-abounding nature of ancient Palestine, see <sup>(-04328)</sup>Numbers 13:23,24.

**cast it away** — down to the ground.

**branches ... white** — both from the bark being stripped off (<sup>(-0387)</sup>Genesis 30:37), and from the branches drying up through the trunk, both bark and wood being eaten up below by the locusts.

**8. Lament** — O “my land” (<sup>(-2006)</sup>Joel 1:6 <sup>(-2304)</sup>Isaiah 24:4).

**virgin ... for the husband** — A virgin betrothed was regarded as married (<sup>(-1622)</sup>Deuteronomy 22:23 <sup>(-4018)</sup>Matthew 1:19). The *Hebrew* for “husband” is “lord” or “possessor,” the husband being considered the master of the wife in the East.

**of her youth** — when the affections are strongest and when sorrow at bereavement is consequently keenest. Suggesting the thought of what Zion’s grief ought to be for her separation from Jehovah, the betrothed husband of her early days (<sup>(-2412)</sup>Jeremiah 2:2 <sup>(-2408)</sup>Ezekiel 16:8 <sup>(-2407)</sup>Hosea 2:7; compare <sup>(-2127)</sup>Proverbs 2:17 <sup>(-2408)</sup>Jeremiah 3:4).

**9.** The greatest sorrow to the mind of a religious Jew, and what ought to impress the whole nation with a sense of God’s displeasure, is the cessation of the usual temple-worship.

**meat offering** — *Hebrew*, *mincha*; “meat” not in the English sense “flesh,” but the unbloody offering made of flour, oil, and frankincense. As it and the drink offering or libation *poured out* accompanied every sacrificial *flesh* offering, the latter is included, though not specified, as being also “cut off,” owing to there being no food left for man or beast.

**priests ... mourn** — not for their own loss of sacrificial perquisites (<sup>(-0488)</sup>Numbers 18:8-15), but because they can no longer offer the appointed offerings to Jehovah, to whom they minister.

**10. field ... land** — differing in that “field” means the open, unenclosed country; “land,” the rich *red* soil (from a root “to be red”) fit for

cultivation. Thus, “a man of the field,” in *Hebrew*, is a “hunter”; a “man of the ground” or “land,” an “agriculturist” (<sup>4027</sup>Genesis 25:27). “Field” and “land” are here personified.

**new wine** — from a *Hebrew* root implying that it *takes possession* of the brain, so that a man is not master of himself. So the *Arabic* term is from a root “to hold captive.” It is already fermented, and so intoxicating, unlike the *sweet fresh wine*, in <sup>2905</sup>Joel 1:5, called also “new wine,” though a different *Hebrew* word. It and “the oil” stand for the vine and the olive tree, from which the “wine” and “oil” are obtained (<sup>2912</sup>Joel 1:12).

**dried up** — not “ashamed,” as *Margin*, as is proved by the parallelism to “languisheth,” that is, droopeth.

**11. Be ... ashamed** — that is, Ye shall have the *shame* of disappointment on account of the failure of “the wheat” and “barley ... harvest.”

**howl ... vine dressers** — The semicolon should follow, as it is the “husbandmen” who are to be “ashamed ... for the wheat.” The reason for the “vine dressers” being called to “howl” does not come till <sup>2912</sup>Joel 1:12, “The vine is dried up.”

**12. pomegranate** — a tree straight in the stem growing twenty feet high; the fruit is of the size of an orange, with blood-red colored pulp.

**palm tree** — The dates of Palestine were famous. The palm is the symbol of Judea on coins under the Roman emperor Vespasian. It often grows a hundred feet high.

**apple tree** — The *Hebrew* is generic, including the orange, lemon, and pear tree.

**joy is withered away** — such as is felt in the harvest and the vintage seasons (<sup>3907</sup>Psalms 4:7 <sup>2908</sup>Isaiah 9:3).

**13. Gird yourselves** — namely, with sackcloth; as in <sup>2301</sup>Isaiah 32:11, the ellipsis is supplied (compare <sup>2408</sup>Jeremiah 4:8).

**lament, ye priests** — as it is your duty to set the example to others; also as the guilt was greater, and a greater scandal was occasioned, by your sin to the cause of God.

**come** — the *Septuagint*, “enter” *the house of God* (compare <sup>2914</sup>Joel 1:14).

**lie all night in sackcloth** — so Ahab (<sup>4127</sup>1 Kings 21:27).

**ministers of my God** — (<sup>4913</sup>1 Corinthians 9:13). Joel claims authority for his doctrine; it is *in God’s name and by His mission* I speak to you.

**14. Sanctify ... a fast** — Appoint a solemn fast.

**solemn assembly** — literally, a “day of restraint” or cessation from work, so that all might give themselves to supplication (<sup>2025</sup>Joel 2:15,16 <sup>9075</sup>1 Samuel 7:5,6 <sup>4085</sup>2 Chronicles 20:3-13).

**elders** — The contrast to “children” (<sup>2016</sup>Joel 2:16) requires age to be intended, though probably elders in *office* are included. Being the people’s leaders in guilt, they ought to be their leaders also in repentance.

**15. day of the Lord** — (<sup>2011</sup>Joel 2:1,11); that is, the day of His anger (<sup>2319</sup>Isaiah 13:9 <sup>3015</sup>Obadiah 1:15 <sup>2015</sup>Zephaniah 1:7,15). It will be a foretaste of the coming day of the Lord as Judge of all men, whence it receives the same name. Here the transition begins from the plague of locusts to the worse calamities (<sup>2011</sup>Joel 2:1-11) from invading armies about to come on Judea, of which the locusts were the prelude.

**16. Compare** <sup>2009</sup>Joel 1:9, and latter part of <sup>2012</sup>Joel 1:12.

**joy** — which prevailed at the annual feasts, as also in the ordinary sacrificial offerings, of which the offerers ate before the Lord with gladness and thanksgivings (<sup>6126</sup>Deuteronomy 12:6,7,12 16:11,14,15).

**17. is rotten** — “is dried up,” “vanishes away,” from an *Arabic* root [MAURER]. “Seed,” literally, “grains.” The drought causes the seeds to lose all their vitality and moisture.

**garners** — granaries; generally underground, and divided into separate receptacles for the different kinds of grain.

**18. cattle ... perplexed** — implying the restless gestures of the dumb beasts in their inability to find food. There is a tacit contrast between the sense of the brute creation and the insensibility of the people.

**yea, the ... sheep** — *Even the sheep*, which are content with less rich pasturage, cannot find food.

**are made desolate** — literally, “suffer *punishment*.” The innocent brute shares the “punishment” of guilty man (<sup>4029</sup>Exodus 12:29 <sup>2011</sup>Jon 3:7 4:11).

**19. to thee will I cry** — Joel here interposes, As this people is insensible to shame or fear and will not hear, I will leave them and address myself directly to Thee (compare <sup>2315</sup>Isaiah 15:5 <sup>2029</sup>Jeremiah 23:9).

**fire** — that is, the parching heat.

*pastures* — “grassy places”; from a *Hebrew* root “to be pleasant.” Such places would be selected for “habitations” (*Margin*). But the *English Version* rendering is better than *Margin*.

20. *beasts ... cry ... unto thee* — that is, look up to heaven with heads lifted up, as if their only expectation was from God (<sup><388B></sup>Job 38:41 <sup><39A21></sup>Psalms 104:21 145:15 147:9; compare <sup><39D11></sup>Psalms 42:1). They tacitly reprove the deadness of the Jews for not even now invoking God.

## CHAPTER 2

### JOEL 2:1-32.

#### THE COMING JUDGMENT A MOTIVE TO REPENTANCE. PROMISE OF BLESSINGS IN THE LAST DAYS.

A more terrific judgment than that of the locusts is foretold, under imagery drawn from that of the calamity then engrossing the afflicted nation. He therefore exhorts to repentance, assuring the Jews of Jehovah's pity if they would repent. Promise of the Holy Spirit in the last days under Messiah, and the deliverance of all believers in Him.

1. **Blow ... trumpet** — to sound an alarm of coming war (<sup>4000</sup>Numbers 10:1-10 <sup>4008</sup>Hosea 5:8 <sup>4006</sup>Amos 3:6); the office of the priests. <sup>4015</sup>Joel 1:15 is an anticipation of the fuller prophecy in this chapter.

2. **darkness ... gloominess ... clouds ... thick darkness** — accumulation of synonyms, to intensify the picture of *calamity* (<sup>4022</sup>Isaiah 8:22). Appropriate here, as the swarms of locusts intercepting the sunlight suggested *darkness* as a fit image of the coming visitation.

**as the morning spread upon the mountains: a great people** — Substitute a comma for a colon after mountains: As the morning light spreads itself over the mountains, so a people *numerous* [MAURER] and strong shall spread themselves. The *suddenness* of the rising of the morning light, which gilds the mountain tops first, is less probably thought by others to be the point of comparison to the sudden inroad of the foe. MAURER refers it to the *yellow splendor* which arises from the reflection of the sunlight on the wings of the immense hosts of locusts as they approach. This is likely; understanding, however, that the locusts are only the symbols of human foes. The immense Assyrian host of invaders under Sennacherib (compare <sup>4376</sup>Isaiah 37:36) destroyed by God (<sup>4028</sup>Joel 2:18,20,21), may be the primary objects of the prophecy; but ultimately the last antichristian confederacy, destroyed by special divine interposition, is meant (see on <sup>4002</sup>Joel 3:2).

**there hath not been ever the like** — (Compare <sup>4002</sup>Joel 1:2 <sup>4204</sup>Exodus 10:14).

3. **before ... behind** — that is, *on every side* (<sup>4390</sup>1 Chronicles 19:10).

**fire ... flame** — destruction ... desolation (<sup><2307</sup>Isaiah 10:17).

**as ... Eden ... wilderness** — conversely (<sup><2518</sup>Isaiah 51:3 <sup><366</sup>Ezekiel 36:35).

**4. appearance ... of horses** — (<sup><607</sup>Revelation 9:7). Not literal, but figurative locusts. The fifth trumpet, or first woe, in the parallel passage (<sup><607</sup>Revelation 9:1-11), cannot be literal: for in <sup><601</sup>Revelation 9:11 it is said, “they had a king over them, the angel of the bottomless pit” — in the *Hebrew*, *Abaddon* (“destroyer”), but in the *Greek*, *Apollyon* — and (<sup><607</sup>Revelation 9:7) “on their heads were as it were crowns like gold, and their faces were as the faces of men.” Compare <sup><2911</sup>Joel 2:11, “the day of the Lord ... great and very terrible”; implying their ultimate reference to be connected with Messiah’s second coming in judgment. The locust’s head is so like that of a horse that the Italians call it *cavalette*. Compare <sup><1830</sup>Job 39:20, “the horse ... as the grasshopper,” or *locust*.

**run** — The locust *bounds*, not unlike the horse’s gallop, raising and letting down together the two front feet.

**5. Like the noise of chariots** — referring to the loud sound caused by their wings in motion, or else the movement of their hind legs.

**on the tops of mountains** — MAURER connects this with “they,” that is, the locusts, which first occupy the higher places, and thence descend to the lower places. It may refer (as in *English Version*) to “chariots,” which make most noise in crossing over rugged heights.

**6. much pained** — namely, with terror. The Arab proverb is, “More terrible than the locusts.”

**faces shall gather blackness** — (<sup><2338</sup>Isaiah 13:8 <sup><2616</sup>Jeremiah 30:6 Na 2:10). MAURER translates, “withdraw their brightness,” that is, wax pale, lose color (compare <sup><2910</sup>Joel 2:10 <sup><2915</sup>Joel 3:15).

**7-9.** Depicting the regular military order of their advance, “One locust not turning a nail’s breadth out of his own place in the march” [JEROME]. Compare <sup><1812</sup>Proverbs 30:27, “The locusts have no king, yet go they forth all of them *by bands*.”

**8. Neither shall one thrust another** — that is, press upon so as to thrust his next neighbor out of his place, as usually occurs in a large multitude.

**when they fall upon the sword** — that is, among *missiles*.

**not be wounded** — because they are protected by defensive armor [GROTIUS]. MAURER translates, “Their (the locusts’) ranks are *not broken* when they rush among missiles” (compare <sup><2112</sup>Daniel 11:22).

9. *run to and fro in the city* — greedily seeking what they can devour.

*the wall* — surrounding each house in Eastern buildings.

*enter in at the windows* — though barred.

*like a thief* — (<sup><300></sup>John 10:1; compare <sup><312></sup>Jeremiah 9:21).

10. *earth ... quake before them* — that is, the inhabitants of the earth quake with fear of them.

*heavens ... tremble* — that is, the powers of heaven (<sup><429></sup>Matthew 24:29); its illumining powers are disturbed by the locusts which intercept the sunlight with their dense flying swarms. These, however, are but the images of revolutions of states caused by such foes as were to invade Judea.

11. *Lord ... his army* — So among Mohammedans, “Lord of the locusts” is a title of God.

*his voice* — His word of command to the locusts, and to the antitypical human foes of Judea, as “His army.”

*strong that executeth his word* — (<sup><638></sup>Revelation 18:8).

12. With such judgments impending over the Jews, Jehovah Himself urges them to repentance.

*also now* — *Even now*, what none could have hoped or believed possible, God still invites you to the hope of salvation.

*fasting ... weeping ... mourning* — Their sin being most heinous needs extraordinary humiliation. The outward marks of repentance are to signify the depth of their sorrow for sin.

13. Let there be the inward sorrow of heart, and not the mere outward manifestation of it by “rending the garment” (<sup><606></sup>Joshua 7:6).

*the evil* — the calamity which He had threatened against the impenitent.

14. *leave ... a meat offering and a drink offering* — that is, give plentiful harvests, out of the first-fruits of which we may offer the meat and drink offering, now “cut off” through the famine (<sup><309></sup>Joel 1:9,13,16). “Leave behind Him”: as God in visiting His people now has left behind Him a curse, so He will, on returning to visit them, leave behind Him a blessing.

15. *Blow the trumpet* — to convene the people (<sup><403></sup>Numbers 10:3). Compare <sup><314></sup>Joel 1:14. The nation was guilty, and therefore there must be a

national humiliation. Compare Hezekiah's proceedings before Sennacherib's invasion (<sup><480></sup>2 Chronicles 30:1-27).

**16. sanctify the congregation** — namely, by expiatory rites and purification with water [CALVIN], (<sup><290></sup>Exodus 19:10,22). MAURER translates, "appoint a solemn assembly," which would be a tautological repetition of <sup><305></sup>Joel 2:15.

**elders ... children** — No age was to be excepted (<sup><403></sup>2 Chronicles 20:13).

**bridegroom** — ordinarily exempted from public duties (<sup><634></sup>Deuteronomy 24:5; compare <sup><405></sup>1 Corinthians 7:5,29).

**closet** — or, nuptial bed, from a *Hebrew* root "to cover," referring to the canopy over it.

**17. between the porch and ... altar** — the porch of Solomon's temple on the east (<sup><1063></sup>1 Kings 6:3); the altar of burnt offerings in the court of the priests, before the porch (<sup><482></sup>2 Chronicles 8:12; compare <sup><386></sup>Ezekiel 8:16 <sup><423></sup>Matthew 23:35). The suppliants thus were to stand with their backs to the altar on which they had nothing to offer, their faces towards the place of the Shekinah presence.

**heathen should rule over them** — This shows that not locusts, but human foes, are intended. The *Margin* translation, "use a byword against them," is not supported by the *Hebrew*.

**wherefore should they say ... Where is their God?** — that is, do not for thine own honor's sake, let the heathen sneer at the God of Israel, as unable to save His people (<sup><3790></sup>Psalms 79:10 115:2).

**18. Then** — when God sees His people penitent.

**be jealous for his land** — as a husband *jealous* of any dishonor done to the wife whom he loves, as if done to himself. The *Hebrew* comes from an *Arabic* root, "to be flushed in face" through indignation.

**19. corn ... wine ... oil** — rather, as *Hebrew*, "the corn ... the wine ... the oil," namely, which the locusts have destroyed [HENDERSON]. MAURER not so well explains, "the corn, etc., necessary for your sustenance." "The Lord will answer," namely, the prayers of His people, priests, and prophets. Compare in the case of Sennacherib, <sup><290></sup>2 Kings 19:20,21.

**20. the northern army** — The *Hebrew* expresses that the *north* in relation to Palestine is not merely the quarter whence the invader comes, but is his native land, "the Northlander"; namely, the Assyrian or Babylonian (compare <sup><404></sup>Jeremiah 1:14,15 <sup><302></sup>Zephaniah 2:13). The locust's native

country is not the *north*, but the *south*, the deserts of Arabia, Egypt, and Libya. Assyria and Babylon are the type and forerunner of all Israel's foes (Rome, and the final Antichrist), from whom God will at last deliver His people, as He did from Sennacherib (<sup>4285</sup>2 Kings 19:35).

**face ... hinder part** — more applicable to a human army's *van* and *rear*, than to locusts. The northern invaders are to be dispersed in every other direction but that from which they had come: "a land barren and desolate," that is, Arabia-Deserta: "the eastern (or *front*) sea," that is, the Dead Sea: "the utmost (or *hinder*) sea," that is, the Mediterranean. *In front* and *behind* mean east and west; as, in marking the quarters of the world, they *faced* the east, which was therefore "in front"; the west was *behind* them; the south was on their *right*, and the north on their *left*.

**stink** — metaphor from *locusts*, which perish when blown by a storm into the sea or the desert, and emit from their putrefying bodies such a stench as often breeds a pestilence.

**because he hath done great things** — that is, because the invader hath *haughtily magnified himself in his doings*. Compare as to Sennacherib, <sup>4291</sup>2 Kings 19:11-13,22,28. This is quite inapplicable to the locusts, who merely seek food, not self-glorification, in invading a country.

**21-23.** In an ascending gradation, the *land* destroyed by the enemy, the *beasts of the field*, and the *children of Zion*, the land's inhabitants, are addressed, the former two by personification.

**Lord will do great things** — In contrast to the "great things" done by the haughty foe (<sup>2921</sup>Joel 2:20) to the hurt of Judah stand the "great things" to be done by Jehovah for her benefit (compare <sup>4301</sup>Psalms 126:2,3).

**22.** (<sup>3882</sup>Zechariah 8:12). As before (<sup>2918</sup>Joel 1:18,20) he represented the beasts as *groaning* and *crying* for want of food in the "pastures," so now he reassures them by the promise of *springing pastures*.

**23. rejoice in the Lord** — not merely *in the springing pastures*, as the brute "beasts" which cannot raise their thoughts higher (<sup>2310</sup>Isaiah 61:10 <sup>3888</sup>Habakkuk 3:18).

**former rain ... the rain ... the former ... the latter rain** — The autumnal, or "former rain," from the middle of October to the middle of December, is put first, as Joel prophesies in summer when the locusts' invasion took place, and therefore looks to the time of early sowing in autumn, when the autumnal rain was indispensably required. Next, "the rain," *generically*, literally, "the showering" or "heavy rain." Next, the two species of the latter, "the former and the latter rain" (in March and April). The repetition

of the “former rain” implies that He will give it not merely for the exigence of that particular season when Joel spake, but also for the future in the regular course of nature, the autumn and the spring rain; the former being put first, in the order of nature, as being required for the sowing in autumn, as the latter is required in spring for maturing the young crop. The *Margin*, “a teacher of righteousness,” is wrong. For the same *Hebrew* word is translated “former rain” in the next sentence, and cannot therefore be differently translated here. Besides, Joel begins with the inferior and temporal blessings, and not till <sup><2028></sup>Joel 2:28 proceeds to the higher and spiritual ones, of which the former are the pledge.

***moderately*** — rather, “in due measure,” as much as the land requires; literally, “according to right”; neither too much nor too little, either of which extremes would hurt the crop (compare <sup><6114></sup>Deuteronomy 11:14 <sup><2165></sup>Proverbs 16:15 <sup><2168></sup>Jeremiah 5:24; see on <sup><2028></sup>Hosea 6:3). The phrase, “in due measure,” in this clause is parallel to “in the first month,” in the last clause (that is, “*in the month* when *first* it is needed,” each rain in its proper season). Heretofore the *just* or *right* order of nature has been interrupted through your sin; now God will restore it. See my *Introduction* to Joel.

24. The effect of the seasonable rains shall be abundance of all articles of food.

25. ***locust ... cankerworm ... caterpillar ... palmer worm*** — the reverse order from <sup><2006></sup>Joel 1:4, where (see on <sup><2004></sup>Joel 1:4) God will restore not only what has been lost by the full-grown *consuming locust*, but also what has been lost by the less destructive *licking locust*, and *swarming locust*, and *gnawing locust*.

26. ***never be ashamed*** — shall no longer endure the “reproach of the heathen (<sup><2017></sup>Joel 2:17), [MAURER]; or rather, “shall not bear the shame of disappointed hopes,” as the husbandmen had heretofore (<sup><2011></sup>Joel 1:11). So spiritually, waiting on God, His people shall not have the shame of disappointment in their expectations from Him (<sup><6033></sup>Romans 9:33).

27. ***know that I am in the midst of Israel*** — As in the Old Testament dispensation God was present by the Shekinah, so in the New Testament first, for a brief time by the Word made flesh dwelling among us (<sup><6014></sup>John 1:14), and to the close of this dispensation by the Holy Spirit in the Church (<sup><1831></sup>Matthew 28:20), and probably in a more perceptible manner with Israel when restored (<sup><2576></sup>Ezekiel 37:26-28).

***never be ashamed*** — not an unmeaning repetition from <sup><2025></sup>Joel 2:26. The twice-asserted truth enforces its unfailing certainty. As the “shame” in <sup><2025></sup>Joel 2:26 refers to temporal blessings, so in this verse it refers to the

spiritual blessings flowing from the presence of God with His people (compare <sup><2486></sup>Jeremiah 3:16,17 <sup><6203></sup>Revelation 21:3).

**28. *afterward*** — “in the last days” (<sup><2101></sup>Isaiah 2:2) under Messiah *after* the invasion and deliverance of Israel from the *northern army*. Having heretofore stated the outward blessings, he now raises their minds to the expectation of extraordinary spiritual blessings, which constitute the true restoration of God’s people (<sup><2448></sup>Isaiah 44:3). Fulfilled in earnest (<sup><4127></sup>Acts 2:17) on Pentecost; among the Jews and the subsequent election of a people among the Gentiles; hereafter more fully at the restoration of Israel (<sup><2543></sup>Isaiah 54:13 <sup><2609></sup>Jeremiah 31:9,34 <sup><3539></sup>Ezekiel 39:29 <sup><3820></sup>Zechariah 12:10) and the consequent conversion of the whole world (<sup><2101></sup>Isaiah 2:2 11:9 66:18-23 <sup><3107></sup>Micah 5:7 <sup><3112></sup>Romans 11:12,15). As the Jews have been the seedmen of the elect Church gathered out of Jews and Gentiles, the first Gospel preachers being Jews from Jerusalem, so they shall be the harvest men of the coming world-wide Church, to be set up at Messiah’s appearing. That the promise is not *restricted* to the first Pentecost appears from Peter’s own words: “The promise is (not only) unto you and to your children, (but also) to *all that are afar off* (both in space and in time), even as many as the Lord our God shall call” (<sup><4129></sup>Acts 2:39). So here “upon *all* flesh.”

***I will pour out*** — under the new covenant: not merely, *let fall drops*, as under the Old Testament (<sup><379></sup>John 7:39).

***my spirit*** — the Spirit “proceeding from the Father and the Son,” and at the same time one with the Father and the Son (compare <sup><3102></sup>Isaiah 11:2).

***sons ... daughters ... old ... young*** — not merely on a privileged few (<sup><4129></sup>Numbers 11:29) as the prophets of the Old Testament, but men of all ages and ranks. See <sup><4129></sup>Acts 21:9 <sup><4315></sup>1 Corinthians 11:5, as to “daughters,” that is, women, prophesying.

***dreams ... visions*** — (<sup><4090></sup>Acts 9:10 16:9). The “dreams” are attributed to the “old men,” as more in accordance with their years; “visions” to the “young men,” as adapted to their more lively minds. The three modes whereby God revealed His will under the Old Testament (<sup><4126></sup>Numbers 12:6), “prophecy, dreams, and visions,” are here made the symbol of the full manifestation of Himself to all His people, not only in miraculous gifts to some, but by His indwelling Spirit to all in the New Testament (<sup><3121></sup>John 14:21,23 15:15). In <sup><4129></sup>Acts 16:9 18:9, the term used is “vision,” though in the night, not a *dream*. No other dream is mentioned in the New Testament save those given to Joseph in the very beginning of the New Testament, before the full Gospel had come; and to the wife of Pilate, a *Gentile* (<sup><4121></sup>Matthew 1:20 2:13 27:19). “Prophesying” in the New Testament is

applied to all speaking under the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit, and not merely to foretelling events. All true Christians are “priests” and “ministers” of our God (<sup><2616></sup>Isaiah 61:6), and have the Spirit (<sup><3626></sup>Ezekiel 36:26,27). Besides this, probably, a special gift of prophecy and miracle-working is to be given at or before Messiah’s coming again.

**29. *And also*** — “And even.” The very slaves by becoming the Lord’s servants are His freemen (<sup><4172></sup>1 Corinthians 7:22 <sup><4188></sup>Galatians 3:28 <sup><5181></sup>Colossians 3:11 <sup><5116></sup>Philemon 1:16). Therefore, in <sup><4418></sup>Acts 2:18 it is quoted, “My servants” and “My handmaidens”; as it is only by becoming *the Lord’s* servants they are spiritually free, and partake of the same spirit as the other members of the Church.

**30, 31.** As Messiah’s manifestation is full of joy to believers, so it has an aspect of wrath to unbelievers, which is represented here. Thus when the Jews received Him not in His coming of grace, He came in judgment on Jerusalem. Physical prodigies, massacres, and conflagrations preceded its destruction [JOSEPHUS, *Wars of the Jews*]. To these the language here may allude; but the figures chiefly symbolize political revolutions and changes in the ruling powers of the world, prognosticated by previous disasters (<sup><3189></sup>Amos 8:9 <sup><4182></sup>Matthew 24:29 <sup><4215></sup>Luke 21:25-27), and convulsions such as preceded the overthrow of the Jewish polity. Such shall probably occur in a more appalling degree before the final destruction of the ungodly world (“the great and terrible day of Jehovah,” compare Malachi 4:5), of which Jerusalem’s overthrow is the type and earnest.

**32. *call on ... name of ... Lord*** — *Hebrew*, JEHOVAH. Applied to Jesus in <sup><5183></sup>Romans 10:13 (compare <sup><4014></sup>Acts 9:14 <sup><4101></sup>1 Corinthians 1:2). Therefore, Jesus is JEHOVAH; and the phrase means, “Call on Messiah in His divine attributes.”

***shall be delivered*** — as the Christians were, just before Jerusalem’s destruction, by retiring to Pella, warned by the Savior (<sup><4116></sup>Matthew 24:16); a type of the spiritual deliverance of all believers, and of the last deliverance of the elect “remnant” of Israel from the final assault of Antichrist. “In Zion and Jerusalem” the Savior first appeared; and there again shall He appear as the *Deliverer* (Zechariah 14:1-5).

***as the Lord hath said*** — Joel herein refers, not to the other prophets, but to his own words preceding.

***call*** — metaphor from an invitation to a feast, which is an act of gratuitous kindness (<sup><2416></sup>Luke 14:16). So the remnant called and saved is according to the election of grace, not for man’s merits, power, or efforts (<sup><5115></sup>Romans 11:5).

## CHAPTER 3

### JOEL 3:1-21.

#### GOD'S VENGEANCE ON ISRAEL'S FOES IN THE VALLEY OF JEHOSEPHAT. HIS BLESSING ON THE CHURCH.

1. *bring again the captivity* — that is, reverse it. The Jews restrict this to the return from Babylon. Christians refer it to the coming of Christ. But the prophet comprises the whole redemption, beginning from the return out of Babylon, then continued from the first advent of Christ down to the last day (His second advent), when God will restore His Church to perfect felicity [CALVIN].

2. Parallel to Zechariah 14:2,3,4, where the “Mount of Olives” answers to the “Valley of Jehoshaphat” here. The latter is called “the valley of blessing” (*Berachah*) (<sup>4002</sup>2 Chronicles 20:26). It lies between Jerusalem and the Mount of Olives and has the Kedron flowing through it. As Jehoshaphat overthrew the confederate foes of Judah, namely, Ammon, Moab, etc. (<sup>4306</sup>Psalm 83:6-8), in this valley, so God was to overthrow the Tyrians, Zidonians, Philistines, Edom, and Egypt, with a similar utter overthrow (<sup>2004</sup>Joel 3:4,19). This has been long ago fulfilled; but the ultimate event shadowed forth herein is still future, when God shall specially interpose to destroy Jerusalem’s last foes, of whom Tyre, Zidon, Edom, Egypt, and Philistia are the types. As “Jehoshaphat” means “the judgment of Jehovah,” *the valley of Jehoshaphat* may be used as a *general* term for the theater of God’s final judgments on Israel’s foes, with an allusion to the judgment inflicted on them by Jehoshaphat. The definite mention of the Mount of Olives in Zechariah 14:4, and the fact that this was the scene of the ascension, makes it likely the same shall be the scene of Christ’s coming again: compare “this same Jesus ... shall so come *in like manner* as ye have seen Him go into heaven” (<sup>4411</sup>Acts 1:11).

*all nations* — namely, which have maltreated Judah.

*plead with them* — (<sup>2769</sup>Isaiah 66:16 <sup>4382</sup>Ezekiel 38:22).

*my heritage Israel* — (<sup>4539</sup>Deuteronomy 32:9 <sup>2406</sup>Jeremiah 10:16). Implying that the source of Judah’s redemption is God’s free love, wherewith He chose Israel as *His peculiar heritage*, and at the same time assuring them,

when desponding because of trials, that He would plead their cause as His own, and as if He were injured in their person.

**3. *cast lots for my people*** — that is, divided among themselves My people as their captives by lot. Compare as to the distribution of captives by lot (<sup><3011></sup>Obadiah 1:11 Na 3:10).

***given a boy for ... harlot*** — Instead of paying a harlot for her prostitution in money, they gave her a Jewish captive boy as a slave.

***girl for wine*** — So valueless did they regard a Jewish girl that they would sell her for a draught of wine.

**4. *what have ye to do with me*** — Ye have no connection with Me (that is, with My people: God identifying Himself with Israel); I (that is, My people) have given you no cause of quarrel, why then do ye trouble Me (that is, My people)? (Compare the same phrase, <sup><1224></sup>Joshua 22:24 <sup><1112></sup>Judges 11:12 <sup><1610></sup>2 Samuel 16:10 <sup><1029></sup>Matthew 8:29).

***Tyre ... Zidon ... Palestine*** — (Amos 1:6,9).

***if ye recompense me*** — If ye injure Me (My people), in revenge for fancied wrongs (<sup><3515></sup>Ezekiel 25:15-17), I will requite you in your own coin swiftly and speedily.

**5. *my silver ... my gold*** — that is, the gold and silver of My people. The Philistines and Arabians had carried off all the treasures of King Jehoram's house (<sup><4216></sup>2 Chronicles 21:16,17). Compare also <sup><11518></sup>1 Kings 15:18 <sup><1218></sup>2 Kings 12:18 14:14, for the spoiling of the treasures of the temple and the king's palace in Judah by Syria. It was customary among the heathen to hang up in the idol temples some of the spoils of war as presents to their gods.

**6. *Grecians*** — literally, "Javanites," that is, the Ionians, a Greek colony on the coast of Asia Minor who were the first Greeks known to the Jews. The Greeks themselves, however, in their *original descent* came from Javan (<sup><1010></sup>Genesis 10:2,4). Probably the germ of Greek civilization in part came through the Jewish slaves imported into Greece from Phoenicia by traffickers. <sup><5713></sup>Ezekiel 27:13 mentions *Javan* and Tyre as trading in the persons of men.

***far from their border*** — far from Judea; so that the captive Jews were cut off from all hope of return.

**7. *raise them*** — that is, I will *rouse* them. Neither sea nor distance will prevent My bringing them back. Alexander, and his successors, restored to

liberty many Jews in bondage in Greece [JOSEPHUS, *Antiquities*, 13.5; *Wars of the Jews*, 9,2].

**8. *sell them to ... Sabeans*** — The Persian Artaxerxes Mnemon and Darius Ochus, and chiefly the Greek Alexander, reduced the Phoenician and Philistine powers. Thirty thousand Tyrians after the capture of Tyre by the last conqueror, and multitudes of Philistines on the taking of Gaza, were sold as slaves. The Jews are here said to do that which the God of Judah does in vindication of their wrong, namely, sell the Phoenicians who sold them, to a people “far off,” as was Greece, whither the Jews had been sold. The Sabeans at the most remote extremity of Arabia Felix are referred to (compare <sup><316D></sup>Jeremiah 6:20 <sup><312C></sup>Matthew 12:42).

**9.** The nations hostile to Israel are summoned by Jehovah to “come up” (this phrase is used because Jerusalem was on a *hill*) against Jerusalem, not that they may destroy it, but to be destroyed by the Lord (<sup><380F></sup>Ezekiel 38:7-23 Zechariah 12:2-9 14:2,3).

***Prepare war*** — literally, *sanctify* war: because the heathen always began war with religious ceremonies. The very phrase used of Babylon’s *preparations* against Jerusalem (<sup><316A></sup>Jeremiah 6:4) is now used of the final foes of Jerusalem. As Babylon was then desired by God to advance against her for her destruction, so now all her foes, of whom Babylon was the type, are desired to advance against her for *their own* destruction.

**10. *Beat your ploughshares into swords*** — As the foes are desired to “beat their *ploughshares into swords*, and *their pruning hooks into spears*,” that so they may perish in their unhallowed attack on Judah and Jerusalem, so these latter, and the nations converted to God by them, after the overthrow of the antichristian confederacy, shall, on the contrary, “beat their *swords into ploughshares*, and their *spears into pruning hooks*,” when under Messiah’s coming reign there shall be war no more (<sup><312A></sup>Isaiah 2:4 <sup><312B></sup>Hosea 2:18 <sup><310E></sup>Micah 4:3).

***let the weak say, I am strong*** — So universal shall be the rage of Israel’s foes for invading her, that even the *weak* among them will fancy themselves *strong* enough to join the invading forces. Age and infirmity were ordinarily made valid excuses for exemption from service, but so mad shall be the fury of the world against God’s people, that even the feeble will not desire to be exempted (compare <sup><310E></sup>Psalms 2:1-3).

**11. *Assemble*** — “Hasten” [MAURER].

***thither*** — to the valley of Jehoshaphat.

**thy mighty ones** — the warriors who fancy themselves “mighty ones,” but who are on that very spot to be overthrown by Jehovah [MAURER]. Compare “the mighty men” (<sup>298B</sup>Joel 3:9). Rather, Joel speaks of God’s really “mighty ones” in contrast to the self-styled “mighty men” (<sup>298B</sup>Joel 3:9 <sup>493D</sup>Psalms 103:20 <sup>293B</sup>Isaiah 13:3; compare <sup>270B</sup>Daniel 10:13). AUBERLEN remarks: One prophet supplements the other, for they all prophesied only “in part.” What was obscure to one was revealed to the other; what is briefly described by one is more fully so by another. Daniel calls Antichrist a king, and dwells on his worldly conquests; John looks more to his spiritual tyranny, for which reason he adds a second beast, wearing the semblance of spirituality. Antichrist *himself* is described by Daniel. Isaiah (<sup>290B</sup>Isaiah 29:1-24), Joel (<sup>298B</sup>Joel 3:1-21) describe *his army* of heathen followers coming up against Jerusalem, but not Antichrist himself.

12. See <sup>298B</sup>Joel 3:2.

**judge all the heathen round about** — that is, all the nations from all parts of the earth which have maltreated Israel; not merely, as HENDERSON supposes, the nations *round about* Jerusalem (compare <sup>480B</sup>Psalms 110:6 <sup>290B</sup>Isaiah 2:4 <sup>300B</sup>Micah 4:3,11-13 <sup>308B</sup>Zephaniah 3:15-19 Zechariah 12:9 14:3-11 Malachi 4:1-3).

13. Direction to the ministers of vengeance to execute God’s wrath, as the enemy’s wickedness is come to its full maturity. God does not cut off the wicked at once, but waits till their guilt is at its *full* (so as to the Amorites iniquity, <sup>415B</sup>Genesis 15:16), to show forth His own long-suffering, and the justice of their doom who have so long abused it (<sup>412D</sup>Matthew 13:27-30,38,40 <sup>644B</sup>Revelation 14:15-19). For the image of a harvest to be threshed, compare <sup>261B</sup>Jeremiah 51:33; and a wine-press, <sup>293B</sup>Isaiah 63:3 and <sup>201B</sup>Lamentations 1:15.

14. The prophet in vision seeing the immense array of nations congregating, exclaims, “Multitudes, multitudes!” a Hebraism for *immense multitudes*.

**valley of decision** — that is, the valley in which they are to meet their “determined doom.” The same as “the valley of Jehoshaphat,” that is, “the valley of judgment” (see on <sup>298B</sup>Joel 3:2). Compare <sup>298B</sup>Joel 3:12, “there will I sit to judge,.” which confirms *English Version* rather than *Margin*, “threshing.” The repetition of “valley of decision” heightens the effect and pronounces the awful *certainty* of their doom.

15. (See on <sup>290D</sup>Joel 2:10; <sup>298D</sup>Joel 2:30).

**16.** (Compare <sup><3788></sup>Ezekiel 38:18-22). The victories of the Jews over their cruel foe Antiochus, under the Maccabees, may be a reference of this prophecy; but the ultimate reference is to the last Antichrist, of whom Antiochus was the type. Jerusalem being the central seat of the theocracy (<sup><4213></sup>Psalms 132:13), it is from thence that Jehovah discomfits the foe.

**roar** — as a lion (<sup><2253></sup>Jeremiah 25:30 <sup><3002></sup>Amos 1:2 3:8). Compare as to Jehovah's voice thundering, <sup><9813></sup>Psalms 18:13 <sup><3810></sup>Habakkuk 3:10,11.

**Lord ... the hope of his people** — or, “their refuge” (<sup><9401></sup>Psalms 46:1).

**17. shall ye know** — experimentally by the proofs of favors which I shall vouchsafe to you. So “know” (<sup><2406></sup>Isaiah 60:16 <sup><3402></sup>Hosea 2:20).

**dwelling in Zion** — as peculiarly *your God*.

**holy ... no strangers pass through** — to attack, or to defile, the holy city (<sup><2308></sup>Isaiah 35:8 52:1 <sup><3424></sup>Zechariah 14:21). *Strangers*, or Gentiles, shall come to Jerusalem, but it shall be in order to worship Jehovah there (<sup><3846></sup>Zechariah 14:16).

**18. mountains ... drop ... wine** — figurative for *abundance of vines*, which were cultivated in terraces of earth between the rocks on the sides of the hills of Palestine (<sup><3013></sup>Amos 9:13).

**hills ... flow with milk** — that is, they shall abound in flocks and herds yielding milk plentifully, through the richness of the pastures.

**waters** — the great desideratum for fertility in the parched East (<sup><2325></sup>Isaiah 30:25).

**fountain ... of ... house of ... Lord ... water ... valley of Shittim** — The blessings, temporal and spiritual, issuing from Jehovah's house at Jerusalem, shall extend even to Shittim, on the border between Moab and Israel, beyond Jordan (<sup><0208></sup>Numbers 25:1 33:49 <sup><0611></sup>Joshua 2:1 Micah 6:5). “Shittim” means “acacias,” which grow only in arid regions: implying that even *the arid desert* shall be fertilized by the blessing from Jerusalem. So <sup><3570></sup>Ezekiel 47:1-12 describes the waters issuing from the threshold of the house as flowing into the Dead Sea, and purifying it. Also in Zechariah 14:8 the waters flow on one side into the Mediterranean, on the other side into the Dead Sea, near which latter Shittim was situated (compare <sup><9405></sup>Psalms 46:4 <sup><6201></sup>Revelation 22:1).

**19. Edom** — It was subjugated by David, but revolted under Jehoram (<sup><4208></sup>2 Chronicles 21:8-10); and at every subsequent opportunity tried to injure Judah. Egypt under Shishak spoiled Jerusalem under Rehoboam of the

treasures of the temple and the king's house; subsequently to the captivity, it inflicted under the Ptolemies various injuries on Judea. Antiochus spoiled Egypt (<sup>27149</sup>Daniel 11:40-43). Edom was made "desolate" under the Maccabees [JOSEPHUS, *Antiquities*, 12.11,12]. The low condition of the two countries for centuries proves the truth of the prediction (compare <sup>23901</sup>Isaiah 19:1, etc. <sup>24977</sup>Jeremiah 49:17 <sup>30100</sup>Obadiah 1:10). So shall fare all the foes of Israel, typified by these two (<sup>23601</sup>Isaiah 63:1, etc.).

**20.  *dwell for ever*** — (<sup>3095</sup>Amos 9:15), that is, be established as a flourishing state.

**21.  *cleanse ... blood ... not cleansed*** — I will purge away from Judah the extreme guilt (represented by "blood," the shedding of which was the climax of her sin, <sup>23015</sup>Isaiah 1:15) which was for long not purged away, but visited with judgments (<sup>23001</sup>Isaiah 4:4). Messiah saves from guilt, in order to save from punishment (<sup>40121</sup>Matthew 1:21).

## THE BOOK OF

# AMOS

Commentary by **A. R. FAUSSETT**

## INTRODUCTION

AMOS (meaning in *Hebrew* “a burden”) was (<sup>300E</sup>Amos 1:1) a shepherd of Tekoa, a small town of Judah, six miles southeast from Beth-lehem, and twelve from Jerusalem, on the borders of the great desert (<sup>400E</sup>2 Chronicles 20:20; compare <sup>400E</sup>2 Chronicles 11:6). The region being sandy was more fit for pastoral than for agricultural purposes. Amos therefore owned and tended flocks, and collected sycamore figs; not that the former was a menial office, kings themselves, as Mesha of Moab (<sup>000E</sup>2 Kings 3:4), exercising it. Amos, however (from <sup>3074</sup>Amos 7:14,15), seems to have been of humble rank.

Though belonging to Judah, he was commissioned by God to exercise his prophetic function in Israel; as the latter kingdom abounded in impostors, and the prophets of God generally fled to Judah through fear of the kings of Israel, a true prophet from Judah was the more needed in it. His name is not to be confounded with that of Isaiah’s father, Amoz.

The time of his prophesying was in the reigns of Uzziah king of Judea, and Jeroboam II, son of Joash, king of Israel (<sup>300E</sup>Amos 1:1), that is, in part of the time in which the two kings were contemporary; probably in Jeroboam’s latter years, after that monarch had recovered from Syria “the coast of Israel from the entering of Hamath to the sea of the plain” (<sup>324E</sup>2 Kings 14:25-27); for Amos foretells that these same coasts, “from the entering in of Hamath unto the river of the wilderness,” should be the scene of Israel’s being afflicted (<sup>3064</sup>Amos 6:14); also his references to the state of luxurious security then existing (<sup>300E</sup>Amos 6:1,4,13), and to the speedy termination of it by the Assyrian foe (Amos 1:5 3:12,15 5:27 8:2), point to the latter part of Jeroboam’s reign, which terminated in 784 B.C., the twenty-seventh year of Uzziah’s reign, which continued down to 759 B.C. He was contemporary with Hosea, only that the latter continued to prophesy in reigns subsequent to Uzziah (<sup>300E</sup>Hosea 1:1); whereas Amos ceased to prophesy in the reign of that monarch. The scene of his ministry

was Beth-el, where the idol calves were set up (<sup><3070></sup>Amos 7:10-13). There his prophecies roused Amaziah, the idol priest, to accuse him of conspiracy and to try to drive him back to Judah.

The first six chapters are without figure; the last three symbolical, but with the explanation subjoined. He first denounces the neighboring peoples, then the Jews, then Israel (from the third chapter to the end), closing with the promise or restoration under Messiah (<sup><3091></sup>Amos 9:11-15). His style is thought by JEROME to betray his humble origin; but though not sublime, it is regular, perspicuous, and energetic; his images are taken from the scenes in nature with which he was familiar; his rhythms are flowing, his parallelisms exact, and his descriptions minute and graphic. Some peculiar expressions occur: “cleanness of teeth,” that is, *want of bread* (<sup><3006></sup>Amos 4:6); “the excellency of Jacob” (<sup><3068></sup>Amos 6:8 8:7); “the high places of Isaac” (<sup><3009></sup>Amos 7:9); “the house of Isaac” (<sup><3076></sup>Amos 7:16); “he that createth the wind” (<sup><3043></sup>Amos 4:13).

HENGSTENBERG draws an able argument for the genuineness of the Mosaic records from the evidence in Amos, that the existing institutions in Israel as well as Judah (excepting the calves of Jeroboam), were framed according to the Pentateuch rules.

Two quotations from Amos occur in the New Testament (compare <sup><4072></sup>Acts 7:42,43, with <sup><3025></sup>Amos 5:25,26; and <sup><4156></sup>Acts 15:16,17, with <sup><3091></sup>Amos 9:11).

PHILO, JOSEPHUS, MELITO’S catalogue, JEROME, JUSTIN MARTYR (*Dialogue with Trypho*, 22, quoting the fifth and six chapters of Amos as “one of the twelve minor prophets”), and the sixtieth canon of the Laodicean council support the canonicity of the book of Amos.

# CHAPTER 1

## <3000>AMOS 1:1-15.

### GOD'S JUDGMENTS ON SYRIA, PHILISTIA, TYRE, EDOM, AND AMMON.

1. *The words of Amos* — that is, Amos' *oracular communications*. A heading found only in <3000>Jeremiah 1:1.

*among the herdmen* — rather, “shepherds”; both owning and tending sheep; from an *Arabic* root, “to mark with pricks,” namely, to select the best among a species of sheep and goats *ill-shapen and short-footed* (as others explain the name from an *Arabic* root), but distinguished by their wool [MAURER]. God chooses “the weak things of the world to confound the mighty,” and makes a humble shepherd reprove the arrogance of Israel and her king arising from prosperity (compare <0174>1 Samuel 17:40).

*which he saw* — in supernatural *vision* (<2000>Isaiah 1:1).

*two years before the earthquake* — mentioned in Zechariah 14:5. The earthquake occurred in Uzziah's reign, at the time of his being stricken with leprosy for usurping the priest's functions [JOSEPHUS, *Antiquities*, 9:10.4]. This clause must have been inserted by Ezra and the compilers of the Jewish canon.

2. *will roar* — as a lion (<2016>Joel 3:16). Whereas Jehovah is there represented roaring in Israel's behalf, here He roars against her (compare <0183>Psalm 18:13 <2053>Jeremiah 25:30).

*from Zion ... Jerusalem* — the seat of the theocracy, from which ye have revolted; not from Daniel and Beth-el, the seat of your idolatrous worship of the calves.

*habitations ... mourn* — poetical personification. Their *inhabitants* shall mourn, imparting a sadness to the very *habitations*.

*Carmel* — the mountain promontory north of Israel, in Asher, abounding in rich pastures, olives, and vines. The name is the symbol of *fertility*. When Carmel itself “withers,” how utter the desolation! (So 7:5 <2000>Isaiah 33:9 35:2 <2009>Jeremiah 50:19 Na 1:4).

**3.** Here begins a series of threatenings of vengeance against six other states, followed by one against Judah, and ending with one against Israel, with whom the rest of the prophecy is occupied. The eight predictions are in symmetrical stanzas, each prefaced by “Thus saith the Lord.” Beginning with the sin of others, which Israel would be ready enough to recognize, he proceeds to bring home to Israel her own guilt. Israel must not think hereafter, because she sees others visited similarly to herself, that such judgments are matters of chance; nay, they are divinely foreseen and foreordered, and are confirmations of the truth that God will not clear the guilty. If God spares not the nations that know not the truth, how much less Israel that sins wilfully (<sup><0137></sup>Luke 12:47,48 <sup><5047></sup>James 4:17)!

*for three transgressions ... and for four* — If Damascus had only sinned once or twice, I would have spared them, but since, after having been so often pardoned, they still persevere *so continually*, I will no longer “turn away” *their punishment*. The *Hebrew* is simply, “I will not reverse it,” namely, the sentence of punishment which follows; the negative expression implies more than it expresses; that is, “I will *most surely execute* it”; God’s fulfillment of His threats being more awful than human language can express. “Three and four” imply sin *multiplied on sin* (compare <sup><0216></sup>Exodus 20:5 <sup><0165></sup>Proverbs 30:15,18,21; “six and seven,” <sup><0659></sup>Job 5:19; “once and twice,” <sup><0314></sup>Job 33:14; “twice and thrice,” *Margin*; “oftentimes,” *English Version*, <sup><0329></sup>Job 33:29; “seven and also eight,” <sup><2110></sup>Ecclesiastes 11:2). There may be also a reference to *seven*, the product of *three* and *four* added; *seven* expressing the *full completion* of the measure of their guilt (<sup><0658></sup>Leviticus 26:18,21,24; compare <sup><0132></sup>Matthew 23:32).

*threshed* — the very term used of the Syrian king Hazael’s oppression of Israel under Jehu and Jehoahaz (<sup><0102></sup>2 Kings 10:32,33 13:7). The victims were thrown before the threshing sledges, the teeth of which tore their bodies. So David to Ammon (<sup><0121></sup>2 Samuel 12:31; compare <sup><0337></sup>Isaiah 28:27).

**4. Hazael ... Ben-hadad** — A black marble obelisk found in the central palace of Nimroud, and now in the British Museum, is inscribed with the names of Hazael and Ben-hadad of Syria, as well as Jehu of Israel, mentioned as tributaries of “Shalmanubar,” king of Assyria. The kind of tribute from Jehu is mentioned: gold, pearls, precious oil, etc. [G. V. SMITH]. The Ben-hadad here is the son of Hazael (<sup><0133></sup>2 Kings 13:3), not the Ben-hadad supplanted and slain by Hazael (<sup><0100></sup>2 Kings 8:7,15). The phrase, “I will send a fire,” that is, the flame of war (<sup><0386></sup>Psalms 78:63), occurs also in Amos 1:7,10,12,14, and <sup><0102></sup>Amos 2:2,5 <sup><0447></sup>Jeremiah 49:27 <sup><0314></sup>Hosea 8:14.

**5. *bar of Damascus*** — that is, the bar of its gates (compare <sup><2613></sup>Jeremiah 51:30).

***the inhabitant*** — *singular for plural*, “inhabitants.” HENDERSON, because of the parallel, “him that holdeth the scepter,” translates, “the ruler.” But the parallelism is that of one clause complementing the other, “the inhabitant” or *subject* here answering to “him that holdeth the scepter” or *ruler* there, both ruler and subject alike being cut off.

***Aven*** — the same as *Oon* or *Un*, a delightful valley, four hours’ journey from Damascus, towards the desert. Proverbial in the East as a place of delight [JOSEPHUS ABASSUS]. It is here parallel to “Eden,” which also means “pleasantness”; situated at Lebanon. As JOSEPHUS ABASSUS is a doubtful authority, perhaps the reference may be rather to the valley between Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon, called *El-Bekaa*, where are the ruins of the Baal-bek temple of the sun; so the *Septuagint* renders it *On*, the same name as the city in Egypt bears, dedicated to the sun-worship (<sup><0445></sup>Genesis 41:45; *Heliopolis*, “the city of the sun,” <sup><2507></sup>Ezekiel 30:17, *Margin*). It is termed by Amos “the valley of Aven,” or “vanity,” from the worship of idols in it.

***Kir*** — a region subject to Assyria (<sup><2207></sup>Isaiah 22:6) in Iberia, the same as that called now in *Armenian Kur*, lying by the river Cyrus which empties itself into the Caspian Sea. Tiglath-pileser fulfilled this prophecy when Ahaz applied for help to him against Rezin king of Syria, and the Assyrian king took Damascus, slew Rezin, and carried away its people captive to Kir.

**6. *Gaza*** — the southernmost of the five capitals of the five divisions of Philistia, and the key to Palestine on the south: hence put for the whole Philistine nation. Uzziah commenced the fulfillment of this prophecy (see <sup><4006></sup>2 Chronicles 26:6).

***because they carried away ... the whole captivity*** — that is, they left none. Compare with the phrase here, <sup><2439></sup>Jeremiah 13:19, “Judah ... carried captive *all* of it ... *wholly* carried away.” Under Jehoram already the Philistines had carried away all the substance of the king of Judah, and his wives and his sons, “so that there was never a son left to him, save Jehoahaz”; and after Amos’ time (if the reference includes the *future*, which to the prophet’s eye is as if already done), under Ahaz (<sup><4088></sup>2 Chronicles 28:18), they seized on all the cities and villages of the low country and south of Judah.

***to deliver them up to Edom*** — Judah’s bitterest foe; as slaves (Amos 1:9; compare <sup><2401></sup>Joel 3:1,3,6). GROTIUS refers it to the fact (<sup><2504></sup>Isaiah 16:4) that on Sennacherib’s invasion of Judah, many fled for refuge to neighboring

countries; the Philistines, instead of hospitably sheltering the refugees, sold them, as if captives in war, to their enemies, the Idumeans.

**7. *fire*** — that is, the flame of war (<sup>-02128</sup>Numbers 21:28 <sup>-2301H</sup>Isaiah 26:11). Hezekiah fulfilled the prophecy, smiting the Philistines unto Gaza (<sup>-128082</sup>Kings 18:8). Foretold also by <sup>-23409</sup>Isaiah 14:29,31.

**8. *Ashdod***, etc. — Gath alone is not mentioned of the five chief Philistine cities. It had already been subdued by David; and it, as well as Ashdod, was taken by Uzziah (<sup>-430192</sup>2 Chronicles 26:6). Gath perhaps had lost its position as one of the five primary cities before Amos uttered this prophecy, whence arose his omission of it. So Zephaniah 2:4,5. Compare <sup>-34708</sup>Jeremiah 47:4 <sup>-35216</sup>Ezekiel 25:16. Subsequently to the subjugation of the Philistines by Uzziah, and then by Hezekiah, they were reduced by Psammetichus of Egypt, Nebuchadnezzar, the Persians, Alexander, and lastly the Asmoneans.

**9. *Tyrus ... delivered up the ... captivity to Edom*** — the same charge as against the Philistines (Amos 1:6).

***remembered not the brotherly covenant*** — the league of Hiram of Tyre with David and Solomon, the former supplying cedars for the building of the temple and king's house in return for oil and corn (<sup>-105112</sup>2 Samuel 5:11 <sup>-105101</sup>1 Kings 5:2-6 9:11-14,27 10-22 <sup>-314011</sup>1 Chronicles 14:1 <sup>-403882</sup>2 Chronicles 8:18 9:10).

**10. *fire*** — (Compare Amos 1:4,7 <sup>-23201</sup>Isaiah 23:1-18 <sup>-3301</sup>Ezekiel 26:1-28:26). Many parts of Tyre were burnt by fiery missiles of the Chaldeans under Nebuchadnezzar. Alexander of Macedon subsequently overthrew it.

**11. *Edom ... did pursue his brother*** — (<sup>-23405</sup>Isaiah 34:5). The chief aggravation to Edom's violence against Israel was that they both came from the same parents, Isaac and Rebekah (compare <sup>-02504</sup>Genesis 25:24-26 <sup>-62207</sup>Deuteronomy 23:7,8 <sup>-30010</sup>Obadiah 1:10,12 Malachi 1:2).

***cast off all pity*** — literally, “destroy compassions,” that is, did suppress all the natural feeling of pity for a brother in distress.

***his wrath for ever*** — As Esau kept up his grudge against Jacob, for having twice supplanted him, namely, as to the birthright and the blessing (<sup>-0274</sup>Genesis 27:41), so Esau's posterity against Israel (<sup>-00304</sup>Numbers 20:14,21). Edom first showed his spite in not letting Israel pass through his borders when coming from the wilderness, but threatening to “come out against him with the sword”; next, when the Syrians attacked Jerusalem under Ahaz (compare <sup>-43072</sup>2 Chronicles 28:17, with <sup>-21652</sup>2 Kings 16:5); next, when Nebuchadnezzar assailed Jerusalem (<sup>-110107</sup>Psalms 137:7,8). In each case

Edom chose the day of Israel's calamity for venting his grudge. This is the point of Edom's guilt dwelt on in <sup><310D></sup>Obadiah 1:10-13. God punishes the children, not for the sin of their fathers, but for their own filling up the measure of their fathers' guilt, as children generally follow in the steps of, and even exceed, their fathers' guilt (compare <sup><121B></sup>Exodus 20:5).

**12. Teman** — a city of Edom, called from a grandson of Esau (<sup><106A></sup>Genesis 36:11,15 <sup><310B></sup>Obadiah 1:8,9); situated five miles from Petra; south of the present Wady Musa. Its people were famed for wisdom (<sup><247E></sup>Jeremiah 49:7).

**Bozrah** — a city of Edom (<sup><250E></sup>Isaiah 63:1). Selah or Petra is not mentioned, as it had been overthrown by Amaziah (<sup><1247E></sup>2 Kings 14:7).

**13. Ammon** — The Ammonites under Nahash attacked Jabesh-gilead and refused to accept the offer of the latter to save them, unless the Jabesh-gileadites would put out all their right eyes (<sup><1910E></sup>1 Samuel 11:1, etc.). Saul rescued Jabesh-gilead. The Ammonites joined the Chaldeans in their invasion of Judea for the sake of plunder.

**ripped up ... women with-child** — as Hazael of Syria also did (<sup><128E2></sup>2 Kings 8:12; compare <sup><2830E></sup>Hosea 13:16). Ammon's object in this cruel act was to leave Israel without "heir," so as to seize on Israel's inheritance (<sup><240E></sup>Jeremiah 49:1).

**14. Rabbah** — the capital of Ammon: meaning "the Great." Distinct from Rabbah of Moab. Called *Philadelphia*, afterwards, from Ptolemy Philadelphus.

**tempest** — that is, with an onset swift, sudden, and resistless as a hurricane.

**day of the whirlwind** — parallel to "the day of battle"; therefore meaning "the day of the foe's tumultuous assault."

**15. their king ... princes** — or else, "their Molech (the idol of Ammon) and his priests" [GROTIUS and *Septuagint*]. <sup><363E></sup>Isaiah 43:28 so uses "princes" for "priests." So "your Molech," <sup><315E></sup>Amos 5:26; and <sup><247E></sup>Jeremiah 49:3, *Margin. English Version*, however, is perhaps preferable both here and in <sup><247E></sup>Jeremiah 49:3; see on <sup><247E></sup>Jeremiah 49:3.

# CHAPTER 2

## AMOS 2:1-16.

### CHARGES AGAINST MOAB, JUDAH, AND LASTLY ISRAEL, THE CHIEF SUBJECT OF AMOS' PROPHECIES.

1. *burned ... bones of ... king of Edom into lime* — When Jehoram of Israel, Jehoshaphat of Judah, and the king of Edom, combined against Mesha king of Moab, the latter failing in battle to break through to the king of Edom, took the oldest son of the latter and offered him as a burnt offering on the wall (<sup>2488E</sup>2 Kings 3:27) [MICHAELIS]. Thus, “king of Edom” is taken as *the heir to the throne of Edom*. But “his son” is rather the *king of Moab’s own son*, whom the father offered to Molech [JOSEPHUS, *Antiquities*, 9.3]. Thus the reference here in Amos is not to that fact, but to the revenge which probably the king of Moab took on the king of Edom, when the forces of Israel and Judah had retired after their successful campaign against Moab, leaving Edom without allies. The Hebrew tradition is that Moab in revenge tore from their grave and burned the bones of the king of Edom, the ally of Jehoram and Jehoshaphat, who was already buried. Probably the “burning of the bones” means, “he burned the king of Edom alive, reducing his very bones to lime” [MAURER].

2. *Kirioth* — the chief city of Moab, called also Kir-Moab (<sup>2815E</sup>Isaiah 15:1). The form is *plural* here, as including both the acropolis and town itself (see <sup>2483E</sup>Jeremiah 48:24,41, *Margin*).

*die with tumult* — that is, amid the tumult of battle (<sup>2804E</sup>Hosea 10:14).

3. *the judge* — the chief magistrate, the supreme source of justice. “King” not being used, it seems likely a change of government had before this time substituted for *kings*, supreme *judges*.

4. From foreign kingdoms he passes to Judah and Israel, lest it should be said, he was strenuous in denouncing sins abroad, but connived at those of his own nation. Judah’s guilt differs from that of all the others, in that it was directly against God, not merely against man. Also because Judah’s sin was wilful and wittingly against light and knowledge.

*law* — the Mosaic code in general.

**commandments** — or *statutes*, the ceremonies and civil laws.

**their lies** — their lying idols (<sup><3906></sup>Psalm 40:4 <sup><3469></sup>Jeremiah 16:19), from which they drew false hopes. The order is to be observed. The Jews first cast off the divine *law*, then fall into *lying errors*; God thus visiting them with a righteous retribution ( <sup><4129></sup>Romans 1:25,26,28 <sup><3011></sup>2 Thessalonians 2:11,12). The pretext of a *good intention* is hereby refuted: the “lies” that mislead them are “*their* (own) lies” [CALVIN].

**after ... which their fathers ... walked** — We are not to follow the fathers in error, but must follow the word of God alone. It was an aggravation of the Jews’ sin that it was not confined to preceding generations; the sins of the sons rivalled those of their fathers ( <sup><1232></sup>Matthew 23:32 <sup><4075></sup>Acts 7:51) [CALVIN].

**5. a fire** — Nebuchadnezzar.

**6. Israel** — the ten tribes, the main subject of Amos’ prophecies.

**sold the righteous** — Israel’s judges for a bribe are induced to condemn in judgment him who has a righteous cause; in violation of <sup><5669></sup>Deuteronomy 16:19.

**the poor for a pair of shoes** — literally, “sandals” of wood, secured on the foot by leather straps; less valuable than shoes. Compare the same phrase, for “the most paltry bribe,” <sup><3086></sup>Amos 8:6 <sup><3339></sup>Ezekiel 13:19 <sup><3983></sup>Joel 3:3. They were not driven by poverty to such a sin; beginning with suffering themselves to be tempted by a large bribe, they at last are so reckless of all shame as to prostitute justice for the merest trifle. Amos convicts them of injustice, incestuous unchastity, and oppression first, as these were so notorious that they could not deny them, before he proceeds to reprove their contempt of God, which they would have denied on the ground that they worshipped God in the form of the calves.

**7. pant after ... dust of ... earth on ... head of ... poor** — that is, eagerly thirst for this object, by their oppression to prostrate the poor so as to cast the dust on their heads in mourning on the earth (compare <sup><1002></sup>2 Samuel 1:2 <sup><4022></sup>Job 2:12 <sup><3273></sup>Ezekiel 27:30).

**turn aside ... way of ... meek** — pervert their cause ( <sup><3152></sup>Amos 5:12 <sup><3344></sup>Job 24:4 [GROTIUS]; <sup><3012></sup>Isaiah 10:2).

**a man and his father** — a crime “not so much as named among the Gentiles” ( <sup><4001></sup>1 Corinthians 5:1). When God’s people sin in the face of light, they often fall lower than even those who know not God.

*go in unto the same maid* — from <sup><3018></sup>Amos 2:8 it seems likely “the damsel” meant is one of the prostitutes attached to the idol Astarte’s temple: prostitution being part of her filthy worship.

*to profane my ... name* — Israel in such abominations, as it were, *designedly* seeks to insult God.

**8. lay themselves ... upon clothes laid to pledge** — the *outer garment*, which <sup><0225></sup>Exodus 22:25-27 ordered to be restored to the poor man before sunset, as being his only covering. It aggravated the crime that they lay on these clothes in an idol temple.

*by every altar* — They partook in a recumbent posture of their idolatrous feasts; the ancients being in the habit of reclining at full length in eating, the upper part of the body resting on the left elbow, not sitting as we do.

*drink ... wine of the condemned* — that is, wine bought with the money of those whom they unjustly fined.

**9. Yet** — My former benefits to you heighten your ingratitude.

*the Amorite* — the most powerful of all the Canaanite nations, and therefore put for them all (<sup><01516></sup>Genesis 15:16 48:22 <sup><01011></sup>Deuteronomy 1:20 <sup><01002></sup>Joshua 7:7).

*height ... like ... cedars* — (<sup><01332></sup>Numbers 13:32,33).

*destroyed his fruit ... above ... roots ... beneath* — that is, destroyed him utterly (<sup><03816></sup>Job 18:16 <sup><03709></sup>Ezekiel 17:9 Malachi 4:1).

**10. brought you up from ... Egypt** — “brought up” is the phrase, as Egypt was low and flat, and Canaan hilly.

*to possess the land of the Amorite* — The Amorites strictly occupied both sides of the Jordan and the mountains afterward possessed by Judah; but they here, as in <sup><3019></sup>Amos 2:9, stand for *all* the Canaanites. God kept Israel forty years in the wilderness, which tended to discipline them in His statutes, so as to be the better fitted for entering on the possession of Canaan.

**11. Additional obligations under which Israel lay to God; the prophets and Nazarites**, appointed by Him, to furnish religious instruction and examples of holy self-restraint.

*of your young men* — It was a specimen of Israel’s highly favored state, that, of the class most addicted to pleasures, God chose those who by a solemn vow bound themselves to abstinence from all produce of the vine,

and from all ceremonial and moral defilement. The Nazarite was not to shave (<sup><000E></sup>Numbers 6:2, etc.). God left nothing undone to secure the purity of their worship and their faithfulness to it (<sup><200E></sup>Lamentations 4:7). The same comes from a *Hebrew* root, *nazar*, “to set apart.” Samson, Samuel, and John the Baptist were Nazarites.

***Is it not even thus*** — Will any of you dare to deny it is so?

**12.** Ye so despised these My favors, as to tempt the Nazarite to break his vow; and forbade the prophets prophesying (<sup><200E></sup>Isaiah 30:10). So Amaziah forbade Amos (<sup><300E></sup>Amos 7:12,13,14).

**13. *I am pressed under you*** — so CALVIN (Compare <sup><2014></sup>Isaiah 1:14). The *Margin* translates actively, “I will depress your place,” that is, “I will make it narrow,” a metaphor for *afflicting* a people; the opposite of *enlarging*, that is, relieving (<sup><300E></sup>Psalm 4:1 <sup><300E></sup>Proverbs 4:12). MAURER translates, “I will press you *down*” (not as *Margin*, “your place”; so the *Hebrew*, <sup><300E></sup>Job 40:12; or <sup><300E></sup>Amos 2:7 in *Hebrew* text). Amos, as a shepherd, appropriately draws his similes from rustic scenes.

**14. *flight shall perish from ... swift*** — Even the swift shall not be able to escape.

***strong shall not strengthen his force*** — that is, shall not be able to use his strength.

***himself*** — literally, “his life.”

**16. *flee ... naked*** — If any escape, it must be with the loss of accoutrements, and all that would impede rapid flight. They must be content with saving their life alone.

# CHAPTER 3

## <300E>AMOS 3:1-15.

**GOD’S EXTRAORDINARY LOVE, BEING REPAID BY ISRAEL WITH INGRATITUDE, OF NECESSITY CALLS FOR JUDGMENTS, WHICH THE PROPHETS ANNOUNCE, NOT AT RANDOM, BUT BY GOD’S COMMISSION, WHICH THEY CANNOT BUT FULFIL. THE OPPRESSION PREVALENT IN ISRAEL WILL BRING DOWN RUIN ON ALL SAVE A SMALL REMNANT.**

**1. *children of Israel*** — not merely the ten tribes, but “the *whole family* brought up from Egypt”; all the descendants of Jacob, including Judah and Benjamin. Compare <300B>Jeremiah 8:3, and <300B>Micah 2:3, on “family” for the nation. However, as the prophecy following refers to the ten tribes, *they* must be chiefly, if not solely, meant: they were the majority of the nation; and so Amos concedes what they so often boasted, that they were the elect people of God [CALVIN], *but* implies that this only heightens their sins.

**2. *You only have I known*** — that is, acknowledged as My people, and treated with peculiar favor (<300B>Exodus 19:5 <300B>Deuteronomy 4:20). Compare the use of “know,” <300B>Psalm 1:6 144:3 <300B>John 10:14 <300B>2 Timothy 2:19.

***therefore I will punish*** — the greater the privileges, the heavier the punishment for the abuse of them; for to the other offenses there is added, in this case, ingratitude. When God’s people do not glorify Him, He glorifies Himself by punishing them.

**3-6.** Here follow several questions of a parable-like kind, to awaken conviction in the people.

***Can two walk together, except they be agreed?*** — Can God’s prophets be so unanimous in prophesying against you, if God’s Spirit were not joined with them, or if their prophecies were false? The Israelites were “at ease,” not believing that God was with the prophets in their denunciations of coming ruin to the nation (<300B>Amos 6:1,3; compare <300B>1 Kings 22:18,24,27 <300B>Jeremiah 43:2). This accords with <300B>Amos 3:7,8. So “I will be with thy mouth” (<300B>Exodus 4:12 <300B>Jeremiah 1:8 <300B>Matthew 10:20). If the prophets and God were not agreed, the former could not predict the future

as they do. In <sup><312></sup>Amos 2:12 He had said, the Israelites forbade the prophets prophesying; therefore, in <sup><313></sup>Amos 3:3,8, He asserts the agreement between the prophets and God who spake by them against Israel [ROSENMULLER]. Rather, “I once walked with you” (<sup><312></sup>Leviticus 26:12) as a Father and Husband (<sup><2516></sup>Isaiah 54:5 <sup><3134></sup>Jeremiah 3:14); but now your way and Mine are utterly diverse; there can therefore be no fellowship between us such as there was (<sup><312></sup>Amos 3:2); I will walk with you only to “punish you”; as a “lion” walks with his “prey” (<sup><3134></sup>Amos 3:4), as a bird-catcher with a bird [TARNOVIUS]. The prophets, and all servants of God, can have no fellowship with the ungodly (<sup><3136></sup>Psalms 119:63 <sup><3136></sup>2 Corinthians 6:16,17 <sup><3131></sup>Ephesians 5:11 <sup><3134></sup>James 4:4).

4. The same idea as in <sup><3138></sup>Matthew 24:28. Where a corrupt nation is, there God’s instruments of punishment are sure also to be. The lion roars loudly only when he has prey in sight.

***Will a young lion cry out ... if he*** — the “lion,” not the “young lion.”

***have taken nothing?*** — The young lion just weaned lies silent, until the old lion brings the prey near; then the scent rouses him. So, the prophet would not speak against Israel, if God did not reveal to him Israel’s sins as requiring punishment.

5. When a bird trying to fly upwards is made to fall upon the earth snare, it is a plain proof that the snare is there; so, Israel, now that thou art falling, infer thence, that it is in the snare of the divine judgment that thou art entangled [LUDOVICUS DE DIEU].

***shall one take up a snare from the earth, and have taken nothing*** — The bird-catcher does not remove his snare off the ground till he has caught some prey; so God will not withdraw the Assyrians, etc., the instruments of punishment, until they have had the success against you which God gives them. The foe corresponds to the “snare,” suddenly *springing* from the ground and enclosing the bird on the latter touching it; the *Hebrew* is literally, “Shall the snare *spring* from the earth?” Israel entangled in judgments answers to the bird “taken.”

6. When the sound of alarm is trumpeted by the watchman in the city, the people are sure to *run to and fro in alarm* (*Hebrew*, literally). Yet Israel is not alarmed, though God threatens judgments.

***shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it?*** — This is the explanation of the preceding similes: God is the Author of all the calamities which come upon you, and which are foretold by His prophets. The evil of

sin is from ourselves; the evil of trouble is from God, whoever be the instruments.

**7. *his secret*** — namely, His purpose hidden from all, until it is revealed to His prophets (compare <sup><1887></sup>Genesis 18:17). In a wider sense, God’s will is revealed to all who love God, which it is not to the world (<sup><1254></sup>Psalm 25:14 <sup><815></sup>John 15:15 17:25,26).

***unto his servants*** — who being *servants* cannot but obey their Lord in setting forth His purpose (namely, that of judgment against Israel) (<sup><209></sup>Jeremiah 20:9 <sup><391></sup>Ezekiel 9:11). Therefore the fault which the ungodly find with them is groundless (<sup><1187></sup>1 Kings 18:17). It aggravates Israel’s sin, that God is not about to inflict judgment, without having fully warned the people, if haply they might repent.

**8.** As when “the lion roars” (compare <sup><302></sup>Amos 1:2 <sup><304></sup>Amos 3:4), none can help but “fear,” so when Jehovah communicates His awful message, the prophet cannot but prophesy. Find not fault with me for prophesying; I must obey God. In a wider sense true of all believers (<sup><403></sup>Acts 4:20 5:29).

**9. *Publish in ... palaces*** — as being places of greatest resort (compare <sup><1027></sup>Matthew 10:27); and also as it is the sin of *princes* that he arraigns, he calls on princes (the occupants of the “palaces”) to be the witnesses.

***Ashdod*** — put for all Philistia. Convene the Philistine and the Egyptian magnates, from whom I have on various occasions rescued Israel. (The opposite formula to “Tell it not in Gath,” namely, lest the heathen should glory over Israel). Even these idolaters, in looking on your enormities, will condemn you; how much more will the holy God?

***upon the mountains of Samaria*** — on the hills surrounding and commanding the view of Samaria, the metropolis of the ten tribes, which was on a lower hill (<sup><301></sup>Amos 4:1 <sup><1163></sup>1 Kings 16:24). The mountains are to be the tribunal on which the Philistines and Egyptians are to sit aloft to have a view of your crimes, so as to testify to the justice of your punishment (<sup><303></sup>Amos 3:13).

***tumults*** — caused by the violence of the princes of Israel in “oppressions” of the poor (<sup><819></sup>Job 35:9 <sup><201></sup>Ecclesiastes 4:1).

**10. *know not to do*** — Their moral corruption blinds their power of discernment so that they cannot do right (<sup><302></sup>Jeremiah 4:22). Not simple intellectual ignorance; the defect lay in the heart and will.

***store up violence and robbery*** — that is, treasures obtained by “violence and robbery” (<sup><102></sup>Proverbs 10:2).

**11.** Translate, “An adversary (the abruptness produces a startling effect)! *and that too*, from every side of the land.” So in the fulfillment, <sup><1276></sup>2 Kings 17:5: “The king of Assyria (Shalmaneser) came up *throughout all the land*, and went up to Samaria, and besieged it three years.”

***bring down thy strength from thee*** — that is, bring thee down from thy strength (the strength on which thou didst boast thyself): all thy resources (<sup><3005></sup>Proverbs 10:15).

***palaces shall be spoiled*** — a just retribution in kind (<sup><3180></sup>Amos 3:10). *The palaces* in which spoils of robbery were *stored up*, “shall be spoiled.”

**12. shepherd** — a pastoral image, appropriately used by Amos, a shepherd himself.

***piece of ... ear*** — brought by the shepherd to the owner of the sheep, so as not to have to pay for the loss (<sup><10134></sup>Genesis 31:39 <sup><10213></sup>Exodus 22:13). So if aught of Israel escapes, it shall be a miracle of God’s goodness. It shall be but a scanty remnant. There is a kind of goat in the East the ears of which are a foot long, and proportionally broad. Perhaps the reference is to this. Compare on the image <sup><10734></sup>1 Samuel 17:34,35 <sup><30472></sup>2 Timothy 4:17.

***that dwell in Samaria in the corner of a bed*** — that is, that live luxuriously in Samaria (compare <sup><3180></sup>Amos 6:1,4). “A bed” means here the Oriental divan, a raised part of the room covered with cushions.

***in Damascus in a couch*** — Jeroboam II had lately restored Damascus to Israel (<sup><12425></sup>2 Kings 14:25,28). So the Israelites are represented as not merely in “the corner of a bed,” as in Samaria, but “in a (whole) couch,” at Damascus, living in luxurious ease. Of these, now so luxurious, soon but a remnant shall be left by the foe. The destruction of Damascus and that of Samaria shall be conjoined; as here their luxurious lives, and subsequently under Pekah and Rezin their inroads on Judah, were combined (<sup><2301></sup>Isaiah 7:1-8 8:4,9 17:3). The parallelism of “Samaria” to “Damascus,” and the *Septuagint* favor *English Version* rather than GESENIUS: “on a *damask* couch.” The *Hebrew* pointing, though generally expressing *damask*, may express the city “Damascus”; and many manuscripts point it so. Compare for Israel’s overthrow, <sup><1276></sup>2 Kings 17:5,6 18:9-12.

**13. testify in the house**, etc. — that is, *against* the house of Jacob. God calls on the same persons as in <sup><3180></sup>Amos 3:9, namely, the heathen Philistines and the Egyptians to witness with their own eyes Samaria’s corruptions above described, so that none may be able to deny the justice of Samaria’s punishment [MAURER].

**God of hosts** — having all the powers of heaven and earth at His command, and therefore One calculated to strike terror into the hearts of the guilty whom He threatens.

**14. That** — rather, “since,” or “for.” This verse is not, as *English Version* translates, the thing which the witnesses cited are to “testify” (<sup><3183></sup>Amos 3:13), but the reason why God calls on the heathen to witness Samaria’s guilt; namely, in order to justify the punishment which He declares He will inflict.

**I will also visit ... Beth-el** — the golden calves which were the source of all “the transgressions of Israel” (<sup><1123></sup>1 Kings 12:32 13:2 <sup><1236></sup>2 Kings 23:15,16), though Israel thought that by them their transgressions were atoned for and God’s favor secured.

**horns of the altar** — which used to be sprinkled with the blood of victims. They were horn-like projecting points at the corners of ancient altars. The *singular*, “altar,” refers to the great altar erected by Jeroboam to the calves. The “altars,” *plural*, refer to the lesser ones made in imitation of the great one (<sup><1615></sup>2 Chronicles 34:5, compare with <sup><1132></sup>1 Kings 13:2 <sup><3811></sup>Hosea 8:11 10:1).

**15. winter ... summer house** — (<sup><1032></sup>Judges 3:20 <sup><2622></sup>Jeremiah 36:22). Winter houses of the great were in sheltered positions facing the south to get all possible sunshine, summer houses in forests and on hills, facing the east and north.

**houses of ivory** — having their walls, doors, and ceilings inlaid with ivory. So Ahab’s house (<sup><1229></sup>1 Kings 22:39 <sup><1618></sup>Psalms 45:8).

# CHAPTER 4

## <300E>AMOS 4:1-13.

### DENUNCIATION OF ISRAEL'S NOBLES FOR OPPRESSION; AND OF THE WHOLE NATION FOR IDOLATRY; AND FOR THEIR BEING UNREFORMED EVEN BY GOD'S JUDGMENTS: THEREFORE THEY MUST PREPARE FOR THE LAST AND WORST JUDGMENT OF ALL.

1. *king of Bashan* — fat and wanton cattle such as the rich pasture of Bashan (east of Jordan, between Hermon and Gilead) was famed for (<4634>Deuteronomy 32:14 <4921>Psalm 22:12 <4348>Ezekiel 39:18). Figurative for those luxurious nobles mentioned, <3089>Amos 3:9,10,12,15. The feminine, *kine*, or *cows*, not *bulls*, expresses their effeminacy. This accounts for masculine forms in the *Hebrew* being intermixed with feminine; the latter being figurative, the former the real persons meant.

*say to their masters* — that is to *their king*, with whom the princes indulged in potations (<2005>Hosea 7:5), and whom here they importune for more wine. “Bring” is *singular*, in the *Hebrew* implying that *one* “master” alone is meant.

2. *The Lord* — the same *Hebrew* as “masters” (<3041>Amos 4:1). Israel’s nobles say to their master or lord, Bring us drink: but “the Lord” of him and them “hath sworn,” etc.

*by his holiness* — which binds Him to punish the guilty (<3905>Psalm 89:35).

*he will take you away* — that is God by the instrumentality of the enemy.

*with hooks* — literally, “thorns” (compare <4312>2 Chronicles 33:11). As fish are taken out of the water by hooks, so the Israelites are to be taken out of their cities by the enemy (<3504>Ezekiel 29:4; compare <3801>Job 41:1,2 <2406>Jeremiah 16:16 <3015>Habakkuk 1:15). The image is the more appropriate, as anciently captives were led by their conquerors by a hook made to pass through the nose (<4202>2 Kings 19:28), as is to be seen in the Assyrian remains.

3. *go out at the breaches* — namely, of the city walls broken by the enemy.

**every cow at that which is before her** — figurative for *the once luxurious nobles* (compare “kine of Bashan,” <sup><300></sup>Amos 4:1) shall go out *each one right before her*; not through the gates, but *each at the breach before him*, not turning to the right or left, apart from one another.

**ye shall cast them into the palace** — “them,” that is, “your posterity,” from <sup><300></sup>Amos 4:2. You yourselves shall escape through the breaches, after having cast your little children into the palace, so as not to see their destruction, and to escape the more quickly. Rather, “ye shall cast *yourselves* into the palace,” so as to escape from it out of the city [CALVIN]. The palace, the scene of the princes riots (<sup><3180></sup>Amos 3:10,15 4:1), is to be the scene of their ignominious flight. Compare in the similar case of *Jerusalem’s* capture, the king’s escape by way of the palace, through a breach in the wall (<sup><3116></sup>Ezekiel 12:5,12). GESENIUS translates, “Ye shall be cast (as captives) into the (enemy’s) stronghold”; in this view, the enemy’s stronghold is called “palace,” in retributive contrast to the “palaces” of Israel’s nobles, the *store houses* of their *robberies* (<sup><3180></sup>Amos 3:10).

4. God gives them up to their self-willed idolatry, that they may see how unable their idols are to save them from their coming calamities. So <sup><3319></sup>Ezekiel 20:39.

**Beth-el** — (<sup><3084></sup>Amos 3:14).

**Gilgal** — (<sup><3045></sup>Hosea 4:15 9:15 12:11).

**sacrifices every morning** — as commanded in the law (<sup><0208></sup>Numbers 28:3,4). They imitated the letter, while violating by calf-worship the spirit, of the Jerusalem temple-worship.

**after three years** — every third year; literally, “after three (years of) days” (that is, the fullest complement of days, or *a year*); “after three full years.” Compare <sup><0251></sup>Leviticus 25:20 <sup><0770></sup>Judges 17:10, and “the days” for the *years*, <sup><2002></sup>Joel 1:2. So *a month of days* is used for *a full month*, wanting no day to complete it (<sup><0134></sup>Genesis 29:14, *Margin*; <sup><0412></sup>Numbers 11:20,21). The Israelites here also kept to the letter of the law in bringing in the tithes of their increase every third year (<sup><0543></sup>Deuteronomy 14:28 26:12).

5. **offer** — literally, “burn incense”; that is, “offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving with *burnt incense* and with leavened bread.” The frankincense was laid on the meat offering, and taken by the priest from it to burn on the altar (<sup><0818></sup>Leviticus 2:1,2,8-11). Though *unleavened cakes* were to accompany the peace offering sacrifice of animals, *leavened bread* was also commanded (<sup><0812></sup>Leviticus 7:12,13), but not as a “meat offering” (<sup><0811></sup>Leviticus 2:11).

*this liketh you* — that is, this is what ye like.

**6-11.** Jehovah details His several chastisements inflicted with a view to reclaiming them: but adds to each the same sad result, “yet have ye not returned unto Me” (<sup><219></sup>Isaiah 9:13 <sup><248></sup>Jeremiah 5:3 <sup><207></sup>Hosea 7:10); the monotonous repetition of the same burden marking their pitiable obstinacy.

*cleanness of teeth* — explained by the parallel, “want of bread.” The famine alluded to is that mentioned in <sup><131></sup>2 Kings 8:1 [GROTIUS]. Where there is no food to masticate, the teeth are free from uncleanness, but it is the cleanness of want. Compare <sup><140></sup>Proverbs 14:4, “Where no oxen are, the crib is clean.” So spiritually, where all is outwardly smooth and clean, it is often because there is no solid religion. Better fighting and fears with real piety, than peace and respectable decorum without spiritual life.

**7.** *withholden ... rain ... three months to ... harvest* — the time when rain was most needed, and when usually “the latter rain” fell, namely, in spring, the latter half of February, and the whole of March and April (<sup><218></sup>Hosea 6:3 <sup><102></sup>Joel 2:23). The drought meant is that mentioned in <sup><117></sup>1 Kings 17:1 [GROTIUS].

*rain upon one city ... not ... upon another* — My rain that fell was only partial.

**8.** *three cities wandered* — that is, *the inhabitants* of three cities (compare <sup><244></sup>Jeremiah 14:1-6). GROTIUS explains this verse and <sup><301></sup>Amos 4:7, “The rain fell on neighboring countries, but not on Israel, which marked the drought to be, not accidental, but the special judgment of God.” The Israelites were obliged to leave their cities and homes to seek water at a distance [CALVIN].

**9.** *blasting* — the blighting influence of the east wind on the corn (<sup><400></sup>Genesis 41:6).

*when ... gardens ... increased* — In vain ye multiplied your gardens, etc., for I destroyed their produce. BOCHART supports *Margin*, “the *multitude* of your gardens.”

*palmer worm* — A species of *locust* is here meant, hurtful to fruits of trees, not to herbage or corn. The same east wind which brought the drought, blasting, and mildew, brought also the locusts into Judea [BOCHART], (<sup><200></sup>Exodus 10:13).

**10.** *pestilence after the manner of Egypt* — such as I formerly sent on the Egyptians (<sup><018></sup>Exodus 9:3,8, etc. <sup><022></sup>Exodus 12:29 <sup><632></sup>Deuteronomy 28:27,60). Compare the same phrase, <sup><214></sup>Isaiah 10:24.

**have taken away your horses** — literally, “accompanied with the captivity of your horses”; I have given up your young men to be slain, and their horses to be taken by the foe (compare <sup><2137></sup>2 Kings 13:7).

**stink of your camps** — that is, of your slain men (compare <sup><2348></sup>Isaiah 34:3 <sup><2123></sup>Joel 2:20).

**to come up unto your nostrils** — The *Hebrew* is more emphatic, “to come up, and that unto your nostrils.”

**11. some of you** — some parts of your territory.

**as God overthrew Sodom** — (<sup><622></sup>Deuteronomy 29:23 <sup><2339></sup>Isaiah 13:19 <sup><2498></sup>Jeremiah 49:18 50:40 <sup><6119></sup>2 Peter 2:6 <sup><6007></sup>Jude 1:7). “God” is often repeated in *Hebrew* instead of “I.” The earthquake here apparently alluded to is not that in the reign of Uzziah, which occurred “two years” later (<sup><3006></sup>Amos 1:1). Traces of earthquakes and volcanic agency abound in Palestine. The allusion here is to some of the effects of these in previous times. Compare the prophecy, <sup><6285></sup>Deuteronomy 28:15-68, with <sup><3046></sup>Amos 4:6-11 here.

**as a firebrand plucked out of ... burning** — (Compare <sup><2304></sup>Isaiah 7:4 Zechariah 3:2). The phrase is proverbial for a narrow escape from utter extinction. Though Israel revived as a nation under Jeroboam II, it was but for a time, and that after an almost utter destruction previously (<sup><2445></sup>2 Kings 14:26).

**12. Therefore** — as all chastisements have failed to make thee “return unto Me.”

**thus will I do unto thee** — as I have threatened (<sup><3012></sup>Amos 4:2,3).

**prepare to meet thy God** — God is about to inflict the last and worst judgment on thee, the extinction of thy nationality; consider then what preparation thou canst make for encountering Him as thy foe (<sup><2434></sup>Jeremiah 46:14 <sup><2431></sup>Luke 14:31,32). But as that would be madness to think of (<sup><2304></sup>Isaiah 27:4 <sup><3224></sup>Ezekiel 22:14 <sup><3013></sup>Hebrews 10:31), see what can be done towards mitigating the severity of the coming judgment, by penitence (<sup><2304></sup>Isaiah 27:5 <sup><4113></sup>1 Corinthians 11:31). This latter exhortation is followed up in <sup><3006></sup>Amos 5:4,6,8,14,15.

**13. The God whom Israel is to “prepare to meet”** (<sup><3042></sup>Amos 4:12) is here described in sublime terms.

**wind** — not as the *Margin*, “spirit.” The God with whom thou hast to do is the Omnipotent Maker of things *seen*, such as the stupendous mountains,

and of things *too subtle* to be seen, though of powerful agency, as the “wind.”

***declareth unto man ... his thought*** — (<sup><49D02</sup>Psalm 139:2). Ye think that your secret thoughts escape My cognizance, but I am the searcher of hearts.

***maketh ... morning darkness*** — (<sup><30878</sup>Amos 5:8 8:9). Both literally turning the sunshine into darkness, and figuratively turning the prosperity of the ungodly into sudden adversity (<sup><49752</sup>Psalm 73:12,18,19; compare <sup><24516</sup>Jeremiah 13:16).

***treadeth upon ... high places*** — God treadeth down the proud of the earth. He subjects to Him all things however high they be (<sup><3000</sup>Micah 1:3). Compare <sup><6323</sup>Deuteronomy 32:13 33:29, where the same phrase is used of God’s people, elevated by God above every other human height.

# CHAPTER 5

## AMOS 5:1-27.

**ELEGY OVER THE PROSTRATE KINGDOM: RENEWED EXHORTATIONS TO REPENTANCE: GOD DECLARES THAT THE COMING DAY OF JUDGMENT SHALL BE TERRIBLE TO THE SCORNERS WHO DESPISE IT: CEREMONIAL SERVICES ARE NOT ACCEPTABLE TO HIM WHERE TRUE PIETY EXISTS NOT: ISRAEL SHALL THEREFORE BE REMOVED FAR EASTWARD.**

- 1. *lamentation*** — an elegy for the destruction coming on you. Compare <sup>2301</sup>Ezekiel 32:2, “take up,” namely, as a mournful *burden* (<sup>2301</sup>Ezekiel 19:1 27:2).
- 2. *virgin of Israel*** — the Israelite state heretofore unsubdued by foreigners. Compare <sup>2302</sup>Isaiah 23:12 <sup>2303</sup>Jeremiah 18:13 31:4,21 <sup>2304</sup>Lamentations 2:13; may be interpreted, Thou who wast once the “virgin daughter of Zion.” Rather, “virgin” as applied to a state implies its beauty, and the delights on which it prides itself, its luxuries, power, and wealth [CALVIN].
- no more rise*** — in the existing order of things: in the Messianic dispensation it is to rise again, according to many prophecies. Compare <sup>2305</sup>2 Kings 6:23 24:7, for the restricted sense of “no more.”
- forsaken upon her land*** — or, “prostrated upon,” etc. (compare <sup>2306</sup>Ezekiel 29:5 32:4) [MAURER].
- 3. *went out by a thousand*** — that is, “the city from which there used to go out a thousand” equipped for war. “City” is put for “the inhabitants of the city,” as in <sup>2307</sup>Amos 4:8.
- shall leave ... hundred*** — shall have only a hundred left, the rest being destroyed by sword and pestilence (<sup>2308</sup>Deuteronomy 28:62).
- 4. *Seek ye me, and ye shall live*** — literally, “Seek ... Me, and *live*.” The second imperative expresses the *certainty* of “life” (escape from judgment) resulting from obedience to the precept in the first imperative. If they perish, it is their own fault; God would forgive, if they would repent (<sup>2309</sup>Isaiah 55:3,6).

5. *seek not Beth-el* — that is, the calves at Beth-el.

*Gilgal* — (See on <sup><3004></sup>Amos 4:4).

*Beer-sheba* — in Judah on the southern frontier towards Edom. Once “the well of the oath” by Jehovah, ratifying Abraham’s covenant with Abimelech, and the scene of his calling on “the Lord, the everlasting God” (<sup><0231></sup>Genesis 21:31,33), now a stronghold of idolatry (<sup><3084></sup>Amos 8:14).

*Gilgal shall surely go into captivity* — a play on similar sounds in the Hebrew, *Gilgal, galoh, yigleh*: “Gilgal (the place of *rolling*) shall rolling be rolled away.”

*Beth-el shall come to naught* — Beth-el (that is, the “house of God”), called because of its vain idols Beth-aven (that is, “the house of vanity,” or “naught,” <sup><3045></sup>Hosea 4:15 10:5,8), shall indeed “come to naught.”

6. *break out like fire* — bursting through everything in His way. God is “a consuming fire” (<sup><0604></sup>Deuteronomy 4:24 <sup><3007></sup>Isaiah 10:17 <sup><3038></sup>Lamentations 2:3).

*the house of Joseph* — the kingdom of Israel, of which the tribe of Ephraim, Joseph’s son, was the chief tribe (compare <sup><3576></sup>Ezekiel 37:16).

*none to quench it in Beth-el* — that is, none in Beth-el to quench it; none of the Beth-el idols on which Israel so depended, able to remove the divine judgments.

7. *turn judgment to wormwood* — that is, pervert it to most bitter wrong. As justice is sweet, so injustice is bitter to the injured. “Wormwood” is from a Hebrew root, to “execrate,” on account of its noxious and bitter qualities.

*leave on righteousness in ... earth* — MAURER translates, “cast righteousness to the ground,” as in <sup><3302></sup>Isaiah 28:2 <sup><3782></sup>Daniel 8:12.

8. *the seven stars* — literally, the *heap* or cluster of *seven* larger stars and others smaller (<sup><3809></sup>Job 9:9 38:31). The former whole passage seems to have been in Amos mind. He names the stars well known to shepherds (to which class Amos belonged), Orion as the precursor of the tempests which are here threatened, and the Pleiades as ushering in spring.

*shadow of death* — Hebraism for *the densest darkness*.

*calleth for the waters of the sea* — both to send *deluges* in judgment, and the ordinary *rain* in mercy (<sup><1184></sup>1 Kings 18:44).

**9. *strengtheneth the spoiled*** — literally, “spoil” or “devastation”: hence the “person spoiled.” WINER, MAURER, and the best modern critics translate, “*maketh devastation (or destruction) suddenly to arise,*” literally, “maketh it to gleam forth like the dawn.” Ancient versions support *English Version*. The *Hebrew* is elsewhere used, *to make, to shine, to make glad*: and as *English Version* here (<sup><4983></sup>Psalm 39:13), “recover strength.”

***the spoiled shall come*** — “devastation,” or “destruction shall come upon” [MAURER]. *English Version* expresses that, strong as Israel fancies herself after the successes of Jeroboam II (<sup><1245></sup>2 Kings 14:25), even the *weakest* can be made by God to prevail against the strong.

**10. *him that rebuketh in the gate*** — the *judge* who condemns their iniquity *in the place of judgment* (<sup><2321></sup>Isaiah 29:21).

***abhor him that speaketh uprightly*** — the *prophet* telling them the unwelcome truth: answering in the parallelism to the *judge*, “that rebuketh in the gate” (compare <sup><1218></sup>1 Kings 22:8 <sup><1098></sup>Proverbs 9:8 12:1 <sup><3823></sup>Jeremiah 36:23).

**11. *burdens of wheat*** — *burdensome taxes* levied in kind from the wheat of the needy, to pamper the lusts of the great [HENDERSON]. Or wheat advanced in time of scarcity, and exacted again at a burdensome interest [RABBI SALOMON].

***built houses ... but not dwell in them ... vineyards, ... but not drink wine of them*** — according to the original prophecy of Moses (<sup><6331></sup>Deuteronomy 28:30,38,39). The converse shall be true in restored Israel (<sup><3094></sup>Amos 9:14 <sup><3521></sup>Isaiah 65:21,22).

**12. *they afflict ... they take*** — rather, “(ye) who afflict ... take.”

***bribe*** — literally, a *price* with which one who has an unjust cause *ransoms* himself from your sentence (<sup><0113></sup>1 Samuel 12:3, *Margin*; <sup><1065></sup>Proverbs 6:35).

***turn aside the poor in the gate*** — refuse them their right *in the place of justice* (<sup><3117></sup>Amos 2:7 <sup><2321></sup>Isaiah 29:21).

**13. *the prudent*** — the spiritually wise.

***shall keep silence*** — not mere silence of tongue, but the prudent shall keep himself quiet from taking part in any public or private affairs which he can avoid: as it is “an evil time,” and one in which all law is set at naught. <sup><4156></sup>Ephesians 5:16 refers to this. Instead of impatiently agitating against irremediable evils, the godly wise will not cast pearls before swine, who would trample these, and rend the offerers (<sup><4106></sup>Matthew 7:6), but will

patiently wait for God's time of deliverance in silent submission (<sup><390></sup>Psalm 39:9).

**14. *and so*** — on condition of your “seeking good.”

***shall be with you, as ye have spoken*** — as ye have boasted; namely, that God is with you, and that you are His people (<sup><381></sup>Micah 3:11).

**15. *Hate ... evil ... love ... good*** — (<sup><2016></sup>Isaiah 1:16,17 <sup><5129></sup>Romans 12:9).

***judgment in the gate*** — *justice* in the place where causes are tried.

***it may be that the Lord ... will be gracious*** — so, “peradventure” (<sup><923></sup>Exodus 32:30). Not that men are to come to God with an *uncertainty* whether or no He will be gracious: the expression merely implies the difficulty in the way, because of the want of true repentance on man's part, so as to stimulate the zealous earnestness of believers in seeking God (compare <sup><1160></sup>Genesis 16:2 <sup><2184></sup>Joel 2:14 <sup><4182></sup>Acts 8:22).

***the remnant of Joseph*** — (see <sup><306></sup>Amos 5:6). Israel (represented by “Ephraim,” the leading tribe, and descendant of Joseph) was, as compared to what it once was, now but a remnant, Hazael of Syria having smitten all the coasts from Jordan eastward, Gilead and Bashan, Gad, Reuben, and Manasseh (<sup><202></sup>2 Kings 10:32,33) [HENDERSON]. Rather, “the remnant of Israel that shall have been left after the wicked have been destroyed” [MAURER].

**16. *Therefore*** — resumed from <sup><1053></sup>Amos 5:13. God foresees they will not obey the exhortation (<sup><1054></sup>Amos 5:14,15), but will persevere in the unrighteousness stigmatized (<sup><307></sup>Amos 5:7,10,12).

***the Lord*** — JEHOVAH.

***the God of hosts, the Lord*** — an accumulation of titles, of which His lordship over all things is the climax, to mark that from His judgment there is no appeal.

***streets ... highways*** — the *broad open spaces* and the *narrow streets* common in the East.

***call the husbandman to mourning*** — The citizens shall call the inexperienced *husbandmen* to act the part usually performed by professional mourners, as there will not be enough of the latter for the universal mourning which prevails.

***such as are skillful of lamentation*** — professional mourners hired to lead off the lamentations for the deceased; alluded to in <sup>2112</sup>Ecclesiastes 12:5; generally women (<sup>2419</sup>Jeremiah 9:17-19).

**17. *in all vineyards ... wailing*** — where usually songs of joy were heard.

***pass through thee*** — taking vengeance (<sup>4121</sup>Exodus 12:12,23 <sup>Na</sup> 1:12). “Pass over” and “pass by,” on the contrary, are used of God’s *forgiving* (<sup>4123</sup>Exodus 12:23 <sup>2378</sup>Micah 7:18; compare <sup>3108</sup>Amos 7:8).

**18.** Woe unto you who do not scruple to say in irony, “We desire that the day of the Lord would come,” that is, “Woe to you who treat it as if it were a mere dream of the prophets” (<sup>2359</sup>Isaiah 5:19 <sup>2475</sup>Jeremiah 17:15 <sup>2422</sup>Ezekiel 12:22).

***to what end is it for you!*** — Amos taking their ironical words in earnest: for God often takes the blasphemer at his own word, in righteous retribution making the scoffer’s jest a terrible reality against himself. Ye have but little reason to desire the day of the Lord; for it will be to you calamity, and not joy.

**19. *As if a man did flee ... a lion, and a bear met him*** — Trying to escape one calamity, he falls into another. This perhaps implies that in <sup>3168</sup>Amos 5:18 their ironical desire for the day of the Lord was as if it would be an escape from existing calamities. The coming of the day of the Lord would be good news to us, if true: for we have served God (that is, the golden calves). So do hypocrites flatter themselves as to death and judgment, as if these would be a relief from existing ills of life. The lion may from generosity spare the prostrate, but the *bear* spares none (compare <sup>1814</sup>Job 20:24 <sup>2348</sup>Isaiah 24:18).

***leaned ... on the wall*** — on the side wall of the house, to support himself from falling. Snakes often hid themselves in fissures in a wall. Those not reformed by God’s judgments will be pursued by them: if they escape one, another is ready to seize them.

**21. *I hate, I despise*** — The two verbs joined without a conjunction express God’s strong abhorrence.

***your feast days*** — *yours*; not *Mine*; I do not acknowledge them: unlike those in Judah, yours are of human, not divine institution.

***I will not smell*** — that is, I will take *no delight in* the sacrifices offered (<sup>4082</sup>Genesis 8:21 <sup>4351</sup>Leviticus 26:31).

**in your solemn assemblies** — literally, “days of restraint.” <sup><2010></sup>Isaiah 1:10-15 is parallel. Isaiah is fuller; Amos, more condensed. Amos condemns Israel not only on the ground of their thinking to satisfy God by sacrifices without obedience (the charge brought by Isaiah against the Jews), but also because even their external ritual was a mere corruption, and unsanctioned by God.

**22. meat offerings** — flour, etc. Unbloody offerings.

**peace offerings** — offerings for obtaining from God peace and prosperity. Hebrew, “thank offerings.”

**23. Take ... away from me** — literally, “Take away, *from upon* Me”; the idea being that of a *burden* pressing *upon* the bearer. So <sup><2014></sup>Isaiah 1:14, “They are a trouble unto Me (literally, ‘a burden *upon* Me’): I am weary to bear them.”

**the noise of thy songs** — The hymns and instrumental music on sacred occasions are to Me nothing but a disagreeable *noise*.

**I will not hear** — Isaiah substitutes “prayers” (<sup><2015></sup>Isaiah 1:15) for the “songs” and “melody” here; but, like Amos, closes with “I will not hear.”

**24. judgment** — justice.

**run down** — literally, “roll,” that is, flow abundantly (<sup><2018></sup>Isaiah 48:18). Without the desire to fulfill righteousness in the offerer, the sacrifice is hateful to God (<sup><0952></sup>1 Samuel 15:22 <sup><0968></sup>Psalms 66:18 <sup><2016></sup>Hosea 6:6 Micah 6:8).

**25, 26. Have ye offered?** etc. — Yes: ye have. “But (all the time with strange inconsistency) ye have borne (aloft in solemn pomp) the tabernacle (that is, the portable shrine, or model *tabernacle*: small enough not to be detected by Moses; compare <sup><4424></sup>Acts 19:24) of your Molech” (that idol is “*your*” god; I am not, though ye go through the form of presenting offerings to Me). The question, “Have ye,” is not a denial (for they *did* offer in the wilderness to Jehovah sacrifices of the cattle which they took with them in their nomad life there, <sup><0204></sup>Exodus 24:4 <sup><0407></sup>Numbers 7:1-89 9:1, etc.), but a strong affirmation (compare <sup><0027></sup>1 Samuel 2:27,28 <sup><0820></sup>Jeremiah 31:20 <sup><0204></sup>Ezekiel 20:4). The sin of Israel in Amos’ time is the very sin of their forefathers, mocking God with worship, while at the same time worshipping idols (compare <sup><0209></sup>Ezekiel 20:39). It was clandestine in Moses’ time, else he would have put it down; he was aware generally of their unfaithfulness, though not knowing the particulars (<sup><0521></sup>Deuteronomy 31:21,27).

**Molech ... Chiun** — “Molech” means “king” answering to *Mars* [BENGEI]; *the Sun* [JABLONSKI]; *Saturn*, the same as “Chiun” [MAURER]. The *Septuagint* translates “Chiun” into *Remphan*, as Stephen quotes it (~~417B~~ Acts 7:42,43). The same god often had different names. *Molech* is the Ammonite name; *Chiun*, the Arabic and Persian name, written also *Chevan*. In an Arabic lexicon *Chiun* means “austere”; so astrologers represented *Saturn* as a planet baleful in his influence. Hence the Phoenicians offered human sacrifices to him, children especially; so idolatrous Israel also. *Rimmon* was the Syrian name (~~118B~~ 2 Kings 5:18); pronounced as *Remvan*, or “Remphan,” just as *Chiun* was also *Chevan*. Molech had the form of a king; Chevan, or Chiun, of a star [GROTIUS]. Remphan was the Egyptian name for *Saturn*: hence the *Septuagint* translator of Amos gave the Egyptian name for the *Hebrew*, being an Egyptian. [HODIUS II, *Deuteronomy Bibliorum Textibus Originalibus*. 4.115]. The same as the Nile, of which the Egyptians made the star *Saturn* the representative [HARENBERG]. BENGEI considers *Remphan* or *Rephan* akin to *Teraphim* and *Remphis*, the name of a king of Egypt. The Hebrews became infected with Sabeanism, the oldest form of idolatry, the worship of the *Saba* or starry hosts, in their stay in the Arabian desert, where Job notices its prevalence (~~832B~~ Job 31:26); in opposition, in ~~117B~~ Amos 5:27, Jehovah declares Himself “the God of *hosts*.”

**the star of your god** — R. ISAAC CARO says all the astrologers represented Saturn as *the star of Israel*. Probably there was a figure of a star on the head of the image of the idol, to represent the planet Saturn; hence “images” correspond to “star” in the parallel clause. A star in hieroglyphics represents God (~~0417~~ Numbers 24:17). “Images” are either a Hebraism for “image,” or refer to the many images made to represent Chiun.

**27. beyond Damascus** — In ~~417B~~ Acts 7:43 it is “beyond *Babylon*,” which includes *beyond Damascus*. In Amos time, Damascus was the object of Israel’s fear because of the Syrian wars. Babylon was not yet named as the place of their captivity. Stephen supplies this name. Their place of exile was in fact, as he states, “beyond Babylon,” in Halah and Habor by the river Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes (~~1271B~~ 2 Kings 17:6; compare here Amos 1:5 4:3 6:14). The road to Assyria lay through “Damascus.” It is therefore specified, that not merely shall they be carried captives to Damascus, as they had been by Syrian kings (~~1210B~~ 2 Kings 10:32,33 13:7), but, beyond that, to a region whence a return was not so possible as from Damascus. They were led captive by Satan into idolatry, therefore God caused them to go captive among idolaters. Compare ~~1219B~~ 2 Kings 15:29 16:9 ~~2301B~~ Isaiah 8:4, whence it appears Tiglath-pileser attacked Israel and Damascus at the same time at Ahaz’ request (~~1181B~~ Amos 3:1).

# CHAPTER 6

## <306>AMOS 6:1-14.

### DENUNCIATION OF BOTH THE SISTER NATIONS (ESPECIALLY THEIR NOBLES) FOR WANTON SECURITY — ZION, AS WELL AS SAMARIA: THREAT OF THE EXILE: RUIN OF THEIR PALACES AND SLAUGHTER OF THE PEOPLE: THEIR PERVERSE INJUSTICE.

1. *named chief of the nations* — that is, you nobles, so eminent in influence, that your names are celebrated among the chief nations [LUDOVICUS DE DIEU]. *Hebrew*, “Men designated by name among the first-fruits of the nations,” that is, men of note in Israel, the people chosen by God as first of the nations (<295>Exodus 19:5; compare <900>Numbers 24:20) [PISCATOR].

*to whom ... Israel came* — that is, the princes to whom the Israelites used to repair for the decision of controversies, recognizing their authority [MAURER]. I prefer to refer “which” to the antecedent “Zion” and “Samaria”; these were esteemed “chief” strongholds among the heathen nations “to whom ... Israel came” when it entered Canaan; <302>Amos 6:2 accords with this.

2. *Calneh* — on the east bank of the Tigris. Once powerful, but recently subjugated by Assyria (<2300>Isaiah 10:9; about 794 B.C.).

*Hameth* — subjugated by Jeroboam II (<2145>2 Kings 14:25). Also by Assyria subsequently (<2334>2 Kings 18:34). Compare <3064>Amos 6:14.

*Gath* — subjugated by Uzziah (<4016>2 Chronicles 26:6).

*be they better* — no. Their so recent subjugation renders it needless for Me to tell you they *are* not. And yet they *once were*; still they could not defend themselves against the enemy. How vain, then, *your* secure confidence in the strength of Mounts Zion and Samaria! He takes cities respectively east, north, south, and west of Israel (compare Na 3:8).

3. Ye persuade yourselves that “the evil day” foretold by the prophets is “far off,” though they declare it near (<3022>Ezekiel 12:22,27). Ye in your imagination put it far off, and therefore bring near *violent oppression*,

suffering it to *sit enthroned*, as it were, among you (<sup><1901></sup>Psalm 94:20). The notion of judgment being far off has always been an incentive to the sinner's recklessness of living (<sup><2182></sup>Ecclesiastes 8:12,13 <sup><1048></sup>Matthew 24:48). Yet that very recklessness brings near the evil day which he puts far off. "Ye bring on fever by your intemperance, and yet would put it far off" [CALVIN].

4. (See <sup><3008></sup>Amos 2:8).

***beds of ivory*** — that is, adorned, or inlaid, with ivory (<sup><3185></sup>Amos 3:15).

***stretch themselves*** — in luxurious self-indulgence.

***lambs out of the flock*** — picked out as the choicest, for their owners selfish gratification.

5. ***chant*** — literally, "mark distinct sounds and tones."

***viol*** — the lyre, or lute.

***invent ... instruments ... like David*** — They fancy they equal David in musical skill (<sup><1325></sup>1 Chronicles 23:5 <sup><1023></sup>Nehemiah 12:36). They defend their luxurious passion for music by his example: forgetting that *he* pursued this study when at peace and free from danger, and that for the praise of God; but *they* pursue for their own self-gratification, and that when God is angry and ruin is imminent.

6. ***drink ... in bowls*** — in the *large vessels* or basins in which wine was mixed; not satisfied with the smaller *cups* from which it was ordinarily drunk, after having been poured from the large mixer.

***chief ointments*** — that is, the most costly: not for health or cleanliness, but wanton luxury.

***not grieved for the affliction of Joseph*** — literally, "the breach," that is, the national wound or calamity (<sup><1901></sup>Psalm 60:2 <sup><3546></sup>Ezekiel 34:4) of the house of *Joseph* (<sup><3006></sup>Amos 5:6); resembling in this the heartlessness of their forefathers, the sons of Jacob, towards Joseph, "eating bread" while their brother lay in the pit, and then selling him to Ishmaelites.

7. ***Therefore ... shall they go captive with the first*** — As they were first among the people in rank (<sup><3001></sup>Amos 6:1), and anointed themselves "with the chief ointments" (<sup><3006></sup>Amos 6:6), so shall they be among the foremost in going into captivity.

**banquet** — literally, the “merry-making shout of revellers”; from an Arabic root, “to cry out.” In the Hebrew, *marzeach*; here, there is an allusion to *mizraq*, “bowls” (<sup><306></sup>Amos 6:6).

**them that stretched themselves** — on luxurious couches (<sup><304></sup>Amos 6:4).

**8. the excellency of Jacob** — (<sup><390></sup>Psalms 47:4). The *sanctuary* which was the great glory of the covenant-people [VATABLUS], (<sup><392></sup>Ezekiel 24:21). The priesthood, and kingdom, and dignity, conferred on them by God. These, saith God, are of no account in My eyes towards averting punishment [CALVIN].

**hate his palaces** — as being the storehouses of “robbery” (<sup><3180></sup>Amos 3:10,15). How sad a change from God’s *love* of Zion’s gates (<sup><3870></sup>Psalms 87:2) and palaces (<sup><388></sup>Psalms 48:3,13), owing to the people’s sin!

**the city** — collectively: both Zion and Samaria (Amos 6: 1).

**all that is therein** — literally, “its fullness”; the *multitude* of men and of riches in it (compare <sup><320></sup>Psalms 24:1).

**9. If as many as ten** (<sup><1835></sup>Leviticus 26:26 <sup><3025></sup>Zechariah 8:23) remain in a house (a rare case, and only in the scattered villages, as there will be scarcely a house in which the enemy will leave any), they shall all, to a man, die of the plague, a frequent concomitant of war in the East (<sup><340></sup>Jeremiah 24:10 44:13 <sup><3161></sup>Ezekiel 6:11).

**10. a man’s uncle** — The nearest relatives had the duty of burying the dead (<sup><129></sup>Genesis 25:9 35:29 <sup><1763></sup>Judges 16:31). No nearer relative was left of this man than an *uncle*.

**and he that burneth him** — the uncle, who is *also* at the same time the one that burneth him (one of the “ten,” <sup><3180></sup>Amos 6:9). Burial was the usual Hebrew mode of disposing of their dead. But in cases of necessity, as when the men of Jabesh-gilead took the bodies of Saul and his three sons from the walls of Beth-shan and burned them to save them from being insulted by the Philistines, burning was practiced. So in this case, to prevent contagion.

**the bones** — that is, the dead *body* (<sup><1525></sup>Genesis 50:25). Perhaps here there is an allusion in the phrase to the *emaciated* condition of the body, which was little else but skin and bones.

**say unto him that is by the sides of the house** — that is, to the only one left of the ten *in the interior of the house* [MAURER] (compare *Note*, see on <sup><343></sup>Isaiah 14:13).

**Hold thy tongue ... we may not ... mention ... the Lord** — After receiving the reply, that none is left besides the one addressed, when the man outside fancies the man still surviving inside to be on the point, as was customary, of expressing devout gratitude to God who spared him, the man outside interrupts him, “Hold thy tongue! for there is not now cause for mentioning with praise (<sup>4623B</sup>Joshua 23:7) the name of Jehovah”; for *thou* also must die; as all the ten are to die to the last man (<sup>308B</sup>Amos 6:9; compare <sup>308B</sup>Amos 8:3). Formerly ye boasted in the name of Jehovah, as if ye were His peculiar people; now ye shall be silent and shudder at His name, as hostile to you, and as one from whom ye wish to be hidden (<sup>666B</sup>Revelation 6:16), [CALVIN].

**11. commandeth, and he will smite** — His word of command, when once given, cannot but be fulfilled (<sup>2551I</sup>Isaiah 55:11). His mere word is enough to smite with destruction.

**great house ... little house** — He will spare none, great or small (<sup>3085</sup>Amos 3:15). JEROME interprets “the great house” as Israel, and “the small house” as Judah: the former being reduced to branches or ruins, literally, “small drops”; the latter, though injured with “clefts” or rents, which threaten its fall, yet still permitted to stand.

**12.** In turning “judgment (justice) into gall (poison), and ... righteousness into hemlock” (or wormwood, bitter and noxious), ye act as perversely as if one were to make “horses run upon the rock” or to “plough with oxen there” [MAURER]. As horses and oxen are useless on a rock, so ye are incapable of fulfilling justice [GROTIUS]. Ye impede the course of God’s benefits, because ye are as it were a hard rock on which His favor cannot run. “Those that will not be tilled as fields, shall be abandoned as rocks” [CALVIN].

**13. rejoice in a thing of naught** — that is, in your vain and fleeting riches.

**Have we not taken to us horns** — that is, acquired power, so as to conquer our neighbors (<sup>14252</sup>2 Kings 14:25). *Horns* are the Hebrew symbol of *power*, being the instrument of strength in many animals (<sup>9510</sup>Psalms 75:10).

**14. from the entering in of Hamath** — the point of entrance for an invading army (as Assyria) into Israel from the north; specified here, as Hamath had been just before subjugated by Jeroboam II (<sup>3082</sup>Amos 6:2). Do not glory in your recently acquired city, for it shall be the starting-point for the foe to afflict you. How sad the contrast to the feast of Solomon attended by a congregation *from* this same *Hamath*, the most northern boundary of Israel, *to* the Nile, the *river of Egypt*, the most southern boundary!

*unto the river of the wilderness* — that is, to Kedron, which empties itself into the north bay of the Dead Sea below Jericho (<sup><42815></sup>2 Chronicles 28:15), the southern boundary of the ten tribes (<sup><12425></sup>2 Kings 14:25, “from the entering of Hamath unto the sea of the plain”) [MAURER]. *To the river Nile*, which skirts the Arabian wilderness and separates Egypt from Canaan [GROTIUS]. If this verse includes Judah, as well as Israel (compare <sup><3001></sup>Amos 6:1, “Zion” and “Samaria”), GROTIUS’ view is correct; and it agrees with <sup><1085></sup>1 Kings 8:65.

# CHAPTER 7

## THE SEVENTH, EIGHTH, AND NINTH CHAPTERS CONTAIN VISIONS, WITH THEIR EXPLANATIONS.

The seventh chapter consists of two parts. First (<sup><307></sup>Amos 7:1-9):  
PROPHECIES ILLUSTRATED BY THREE SYMBOLS:

- (1) A vision of *grasshoppers* or young locusts, which devour the grass, but are removed at Amos' entreaty;
- (2) *Fire* drying up even the deep, and withering part of the land, but removed at Amos' entreaty;
- (3) A *plumb-line* to mark the buildings for destruction. Secondly (<sup><307></sup>Amos 7:10-17): NARRATIVE OF AMAZIAH'S INTERRUPTION OF AMOS IN CONSEQUENCE OF THE FOREGOING PROPHECIES, AND PREDICTION OF HIS DOOM.

1. *showed ... me; and, behold* — The same formula prefaces the three visions in this chapter, and the fourth in <sup><300></sup>Amos 8:1.

*grasshoppers* — rather, “locusts” in the caterpillar state, from a *Hebrew* root, “to creep forth.” In the autumn the eggs are deposited in the earth; in the spring the young come forth [MAURER].

*the latter growth* — namely, of grass, which comes up after the mowing. They do not in the East mow their grass and make hay of it, but cut it off the ground as they require it.

*the king's mowings* — the first-fruits of the mown grass, tyrannically exacted by the king from the people. The literal locusts, as in Joel, are probably symbols of human foes: thus the “growth” of grass “after the king's mowings” will mean the political revival of Israel under Jeroboam II (<sup><124></sup>2 Kings 14:25), after it had been mown down, as it were, by Hazael and Ben-hadad of Syria (<sup><123></sup>2 Kings 13:3), [GROTIUS].

2. *by whom shall Jacob arise?* — If Thou, O God, dost not spare, how can *Jacob maintain his ground*, reduced as he is by repeated attacks of the Assyrians, and ere long about to be invaded by the Assyrian Pul (<sup><125></sup>2 Kings 15:19,20)? Compare <sup><251></sup>Isaiah 51:19. The mention of “Jacob” is a plea that God should “remember for them His covenant” with their forefather, the patriarch (<sup><196></sup>Psalms 106:45).

**he is small** — reduced in numbers and in strength.

**3. repented for this** — that is, of this. The change was not in the mind of God (<sup><0129></sup>Numbers 2:19 <sup><3017></sup>James 1:17), but in the effect outwardly. God unchangeably does what is just; it is just that He should hear intercessory prayer (<sup><3016></sup>James 5:16-18), as it would have been just for Him to have let judgment take its course at once on the guilty nation, but for the prayer of one or two righteous men in it (compare <sup><0182></sup>Genesis 18:23-33 <sup><0151></sup>1 Samuel 15:11 <sup><3401></sup>Jeremiah 42:10). The repentance of the sinner, and God's regard to His own attributes of mercy and covenanted love, also cause God outwardly to deal with him as if he repented (Jon 3:10), whereas the change in outward dealing is in strictest harmony with God's own unchangeableness.

**It shall not be** — Israel's utter overthrow now. Pul was influenced by God to accept money and withdraw from Israel.

**4. called to contend** — that is with Israel judicially (<sup><3003></sup>Job 9:3 <sup><2766></sup>Isaiah 66:16 <sup><3322></sup>Ezekiel 38:22). He ordered to come at His call the infliction of punishment by "fire" on Israel, that is, drought (compare <sup><3046></sup>Amos 4:6-11), [MAURER]. Rather, *war* (<sup><0218></sup>Numbers 21:28), namely, Tiglath-pileser [GROTIUS].

**devoured the ... deep** — that is a great part of Israel, whom he carried away. *Waters* are the symbol for *many people* (<sup><0715></sup>Revelation 17:15).

**did eat up a part** — namely, all the *land* (compare <sup><3047></sup>Amos 4:7) of Israel east of Jordan (<sup><3326></sup>1 Chronicles 5:26 <sup><2301></sup>Isaiah 9:1). This was a worse judgment than the previous one: the locusts ate up the grass: the fire not only affects the surface of the ground, but burns up the very roots and reaches even to the deep.

**7. wall made by a plumb-line** — namely, perpendicular.

**8. plumb-line in ... midst of ... Israel** — No longer are the symbols, as in the former two, stated generally; this one is expressly applied to Israel. God's long-suffering is worn out by Israel's perversity: so Amos ceases to intercede (compare <sup><0183></sup>Genesis 18:33). The plummet line was used not only in building, but in destroying houses (<sup><1213></sup>2 Kings 21:13 <sup><2307></sup>Isaiah 28:17 <sup><3411></sup>Lamentations 2:8). It denotes that God's judgments are measured out by the most exact rules of justice. Here it is placed "in the midst" of Israel, that is, the judgment is not to be confined to an outer part of Israel, as by Tiglath-pileser; it is to reach the very center. This was fulfilled when Shalmaneser, after a three years' siege of Samaria, took it and carried away Israel captive finally to Assyria (<sup><1703></sup>2 Kings 17:3,5,6,23).

*not ... pass by ... any more* — not forgive them any more (<sup><3182></sup>Amos 8:2 <sup><1091></sup>Proverbs 19:11 <sup><3178></sup>Micah 7:18).

**9. high places** — dedicated to idols.

*of Isaac* — They boasted of their following the example of their forefather Isaac, in erecting high places at Beer-sheba (<sup><3185></sup>Amos 5:5; compare <sup><1073></sup>Genesis 26:23,24 46:1); but he and Abraham erected them before the temple was appointed at Jerusalem — and to God; whereas they did so, after the temple had been fixed as the only place for sacrifices — and to idols. In the *Hebrew* here “Isaac” is written with *s*, instead of the usual *ts*; both forms mean “laughter”; the change of spelling perhaps expresses that their “high places of Isaac” may be well so called, but not as they meant by the name; for they are only fit to be *laughed at* in scorn. Probably, however, the mention of “Isaac” and “Israel” simply expresses that these names, which their degenerate posterity boasted in as if ensuring their safety, will not save them and their idolatrous “sanctuaries” on which they depended from ruin (compare <sup><3084></sup>Amos 8:14).

*house of Jeroboam with ... sword* — fulfilled in the extinction of Zachariah, son of Jeroboam II, the last of the descendants of Jeroboam I, who had originated the idolatry of the calves (<sup><1257></sup>2 Kings 15:8-10).

## <sup><3170></sup>AMOS 7:10-17.

### AMAZIAH’S CHARGE AGAINST AMOS: HIS DOOM FORETOLD.

**10. priest of Beth-el** — chief priest of the royal sanctuary to the calves at Beth-el. These being a device of state policy to keep Israel separate from Judah. Amaziah construes Amos words against them as treason. So in the case of Elijah and Jeremiah (<sup><1187></sup>1 Kings 18:17 <sup><2573></sup>Jeremiah 37:13,14). So the antitype Jesus was charged (<sup><3912></sup>John 19:12); political expediency being made in all ages the pretext for dishonoring God and persecuting His servants (<sup><6148></sup>John 11:48-50). So in the case of Paul (<sup><4176></sup>Acts 17:6,7 24:5).

*in the midst of ... Israel* — probably alluding to Amos’ own words, “in the midst of ... Israel” (<sup><3108></sup>Amos 7:8), foretelling the state’s overthrow *to the very center*. Not secretly, or in a corner, but openly, in *the very center of the state*, so as to upset the whole utterly.

*land is not able to bear all his words* — They are so many and so intolerable. A sedition will be the result. The mention of his being “priest of

Beth-el” implies that it was for his own priestly gain, not for the king or state, he was so keen.

**11. *Jeroboam shall die***, etc. — Amos had not said this: but that “the *house* of Jeroboam” should fall “with the sword” (<sup><3079></sup>Amos 7:9). But Amaziah exaggerates the charge, to excite Jeroboam against him. The king, however, did not give ear to Amaziah, probably from religious awe of the prophet of Jehovah.

**12. *Also*** — Besides informing the king against Amos, lest that course should fail, as it did, Amaziah urges the troublesome prophet himself to go back to his own land Judah, pretending to advise him in friendliness.

*seer* — said contemptuously in reference to Amos *visions* which precede.

***there eat bread*** — You can earn a livelihood there, whereas remaining here you will be ruined. He judges of Amos by his own selfishness, as if regard to one’s own safety and livelihood are the paramount considerations. So the false prophets (<sup><2439></sup>Ezekiel 13:19) were ready to say whatever pleased their hearers, however false, for “handfuls of barley and pieces of bread.”

**13. *prophesy not again*** — (<sup><3122></sup>Amos 2:12).

***at Beth-el*** — Amaziah wants to be let alone at least in his own residence.

***the king’s chapel*** — Beth-el was preferred by the king to Dan, the other seat of the calf-worship, as being nearer Samaria, the capital, and as hallowed by Jacob of old (<sup><1236></sup>Genesis 28:16,19 35:6,7). He argues by implication against Amos’ presumption, as a private man, in speaking against the worship sanctioned by the king, and that in the very place consecrated to it for the king’s own devotions.

***king’s court*** — that is, residence: the seat of empire, where the king holds his court, and which thou oughtest to have revered. Samaria was the usual king’s residence: but for the convenience of attending the calf-worship, a royal palace was at Beth-el also.

**14. *I was no prophet*** — in answer to Amaziah’s insinuation (<sup><3172></sup>Amos 7:12), that he discharged the prophetic office to earn his “bread” (like Israel’s mercenary prophets). So far from being rewarded, Jehovah’s prophets had to expect imprisonment and even death as the result of their prophesying in Samaria or Israel: whereas the prophets of Baal were maintained at the king’s expense (compare <sup><1189></sup>1 Kings 18:19). I was not, says Amos, of the order of prophets, or educated in their schools, and deriving a livelihood from exercising the public functions of a prophet. I am a *shepherd* (compare <sup><3075></sup>Amos 7:15, “flock”; the *Hebrew* for “herdsman”

includes the meaning, *shepherd*, compare <sup><300></sup>Amos 1:1) in humble position, who did not even think of prophesying among you, until a divine call impelled me to it.

**prophet's son** — that is, disciple. Schools of prophets are mentioned first in First Samuel; in these youths were educated to serve the theocracy as public instructors. Only in the kingdom of the ten tribes is the continuance of the schools of the prophets mentioned. They were missionary stations near the chief seats of superstition in Israel, and associations endowed with the Spirit of God; none were admitted but those to whom the Spirit had been previously imparted. Their spiritual fathers traveled about to visit the training schools, and cared for the members and even their widows (<sup><1100></sup>2 Kings 4:1,2). The pupils had their common board in them, and after leaving them still continued members. The offerings which in Judah were given by the pious to the Levites, in Israel went to the schools of the prophets (<sup><1100></sup>2 Kings 4:42). Prophecy (for example, Elijah and Elisha) in Israel was more connected with extraordinary events than in Judah, inasmuch as, in the absence of the legal hierarchy of the latter, it needed to have more palpable divine sanction.

**sycamore** — abounding in Palestine. The fruit was like the fig, but inferior; according to PLINY, a sort of compound, as the name expresses, of the fig and the mulberry. It was only eaten by the poorest (compare <sup><1100></sup>1 Kings 10:27).

**gatherer** — one occupied with their cultivation [MAURER]. To cultivate it, an incision was made in the fruit when of a certain size, and on the fourth day afterwards it ripened [PLINY, *Natural History*, 13.7,14]. GROTIUS from JEROME says, if it be not plucked off and “gathered” (which favors *English Version*), it is spoiled by gnats.

**15. took me as I followed the flock** — So David was taken (<sup><1000></sup>2 Samuel 7:8 <sup><1000></sup>Psalms 78:70,71). Messiah is the antitypical *Shepherd* (<sup><1000></sup>Psalms 23:1-6 <sup><1000></sup>John 10:1-18).

**unto my people** — “against” [MAURER]; so <sup><1000></sup>Amos 7:16. Jehovah claims them still as *His* by right, though slighting His authority. God would recover them to His service by the prophet's ministry.

**16. drop** — distil as the refreshing drops of rain (<sup><1000></sup>Deuteronomy 32:2 <sup><1000></sup>Ezekiel 21:2; compare <sup><1000></sup>Micah 2:6,11).

**17. Thy wife shall be an harlot in the city** — that is, shall be forced by the enemy, while thou art looking on, unable to prevent her dishonor (<sup><1000></sup>Isaiah

13:16 <sup><2516></sup>Lamentations 5:11). The words, “saith the Lord,” are in striking opposition to “*Thou sayest*” (<sup><3076></sup>Amos 7:16).

*divided by line* — among the foe.

*a polluted land* — Israel regarded every foreign land as that which really her own land was now, “polluted” (<sup><2316></sup>Isaiah 24:5 <sup><2416></sup>Jeremiah 2:7).

# CHAPTER 8

## <300E>AMOS 8:1-14.

**VISION OF A BASKET OF SUMMER FRUIT SYMBOLICAL OF ISRAEL'S END. RESUMING THE SERIES OF SYMBOLS INTERRUPTED BY AMAZIAH, AMOS ADDS A FOURTH. THE AVARICE OF THE OPPRESSORS OF THE POOR: THE OVERTHROW OF THE NATION: THE WISH FOR THE MEANS OF RELIGIOUS COUNSEL, WHEN THERE SHALL BE A FAMINE OF THE WORD.**

1. **summer fruit** — *Hebrew, kitz*. In <300E>Amos 8:2 “end” is in *Hebrew, keetz*. The similarity of sounds implies that, as the *summer* is the *end* of the year and the time of the ripeness of fruits, so Israel is *ripe* for her *last* punishment, *ending* her national existence. As the fruit is plucked when ripe from the tree, so Israel from her land.

2. **end** — (<300E>Ezekiel 7:2,6).

3. **songs of ... temple** — (<30E3>Amos 5:23). The joyous hymns in the temple of Judah (or rather, in the *Beth-el* “royal temple,” <300E>Amos 7:13; for the allusion is to *Israel*, not Judah, throughout this chapter) shall be changed into “howlings.” GROTIUS translates, “palace”; compare <300E>Amos 6:5, as to the songs there. But <30E3>Amos 5:23, and <300E>Amos 7:13, favor *English Version*.

**they shall cast them forth with silence** — not as the *Margin*, “be silent.” It is an adverb, “silently.” There shall be such great slaughter as even to prevent the bodies being buried [CALVIN]. There shall be none of the usual professional mourners (<300E>Amos 5:16), but the bodies will be cast out in silence. Perhaps also is meant that terror, both of God (compare <300E>Amos 6:10) and of the foe, shall close their lips.

4. **Hear** — The nobles needed to be urged thus, as hating to *hear* reproof.

**swallow up the needy** — or, “gape after,” that is, pant for their goods; so the word is used, <300E>Job 7:2, *Margin*.

**to make the poor ... to fail** — “that they (themselves) may be placed alone in the midst of the earth” (<200E>Isaiah 5:8).

5. So greedy are they of unjust gain that they cannot spare a single day, however sacred, from pursuing it. They are strangers to God and enemies to themselves, who love market days better than sabbath days; and they who have lost piety will not long keep honesty. The new-moons (<sup><4100></sup>Numbers 10:10) and sabbaths were to be kept without working or trading (<sup><4301></sup>Nehemiah 10:31).

*set forth wheat* — literally, “open out” stores of wheat for sale.

*ephah* — containing three seahs, or above three pecks.

*making ... small* — making it below the just weight to purchasers.

*shekel great* — taking from purchasers a greater weight of money than was due. Shekels used to be *weighed out* in payments (<sup><4236></sup>Genesis 23:16). Thus they committed a double fraud against the law (<sup><4253></sup>Deuteronomy 25:13,14).

6. *buy ... poor for silver ... pair of shoes* — that is, that we may compel the needy for money, or any other thing of however little worth, to sell themselves to us as bondmen, in defiance of <sup><4259></sup>Leviticus 25:39; the very thing which brings down God’s judgment (<sup><3106></sup>Amos 2:6).

*sell the refuse of ... wheat* — which contains no nutriment, but which the poor eat at a low price, being unable to pay for flour.

7. *Lord hath sworn by the excellency of Jacob* — that is by Himself, in whom Jacob’s seed glory [MAURER]. Rather, by the spiritual privileges of Israel, the adoption as His peculiar people [CALVIN], the temple, and its Shekinah symbol of His presence. Compare <sup><3108></sup>Amos 6:8, where it means Jehovah’s *temple* (compare <sup><3102></sup>Amos 4:2).

*never forget* — not *pass by* without punishing (<sup><3102></sup>Amos 8:2 <sup><3083></sup>Hosea 8:13 9:9).

8. *the land ... rise up wholly as a flood* — The land will, as it were, be wholly turned into a flooding river (a flood being the image of overwhelming calamity, <sup><2102></sup>Daniel 9:26).

*cast out and drowned*, etc. — swept away and overwhelmed, as the land adjoining the Nile is by it, when flooding (<sup><3105></sup>Amos 9:5). The Nile rises generally twenty feet. The waters then “cast out” mire and dirt (<sup><2570></sup>Isaiah 57:20).

9. “Darkness” made to rise “at noon” is the emblem of great calamities (<sup><2459></sup>Jeremiah 15:9 <sup><2507></sup>Ezekiel 32:7-10).

**10. baldness** — a sign of mourning (<sup><2342></sup>Isaiah 15:2 <sup><2487></sup>Jeremiah 48:37 <sup><3078></sup>Ezekiel 7:18).

***I will make it as ... mourning of an only son*** — “it,” that is, “the earth” (<sup><3189></sup>Amos 8:9). I will reduce the land to such a state that there shall be the same occasion for mourning as when parents mourn for an only son (<sup><2463></sup>Jeremiah 6:26 <sup><3210></sup>Zechariah 12:10).

**11. famine of ... hearing the words of the Lord** — a just retribution on those who now will not hear the Lord’s prophets, nay even try to drive them away, as Amaziah did (<sup><3072></sup>Amos 7:12); they shall look in vain, in their distress, for divine counsel, such as the prophets now offer (<sup><3073></sup>Ezekiel 7:26 <sup><3107></sup>Micah 3:7). Compare as to the Jews’ rejection of Messiah, and their consequent rejection by Him (<sup><4014></sup>Matthew 21:43); and their desire for Messiah too late (<sup><4072></sup>Luke 17:22 <sup><4074></sup>John 7:34 8:21). So, the prodigal when he had sojourned awhile in the “far-off country, began to be in want” in the “mighty famine” which arose (<sup><4054></sup>Luke 15:14; compare <sup><0001></sup>1 Samuel 3:1 7:2). It is remarkable that the Jews’ religion is almost the only one that *could* be abolished *against the will of the people themselves*, on account of its being dependent on a particular *place*, namely, the temple. When that was destroyed, the Mosaic ritual, which could not exist without it, necessarily ceased. Providence designed it, that, as the law gave way to the Gospel, so all men should perceive it was so, in spite of the Jews’ obstinate rejection of the Gospel.

**12. they shall wander from sea to sea** — that is, from the Dead Sea to the Mediterranean, from east to west.

***from ... north ... to ... east*** — where we might expect “from north to south.” But so alienated was Israel from Judah, that no Israelite even then would think of repairing *southward*, that is, to Jerusalem for religious information. The circuit is traced as in <sup><0403></sup>Numbers 34:3, etc., except that the south is omitted. Their “seeking the word of the Lord” would not be from a sincere desire to obey God, but under the pressure of punishment.

**13. faint for thirst** — namely, thirst for hearing the words of the Lord, being destitute of all other comfort. If even the young and strong faint, how much more the infirm (<sup><2400></sup>Isaiah 40:30,31)!

**14. swear by the sin of Samaria** — namely, the calves (<sup><0802></sup>Deuteronomy 9:21 <sup><3015></sup>Hosea 4:15). “Swear by” means to *worship* (<sup><0611></sup>Psalms 63:11).

***The manner*** — that is, as “the way” is used (<sup><4009></sup>Psalms 139:24 <sup><4002></sup>Acts 9:2), *the mode of worship*.

***Thy god, O Daniel*** — the other golden calf at Daniel (~~1226~~ 1 Kings 22:26-30).

***liveth ... liveth*** — rather, “May thy god ... live ... may the manner ... live.” Or, “As (surely as) thy god, O Dan, liveth.” This is their formula when they swear; not “May Jehovah live!” or, “As Jehovah liveth!”

# CHAPTER 9

## <3100>AMOS 9:1-15.

### FIFTH AND LAST VISION.

None can escape the coming judgment in any hiding-place: for God is omnipresent and irresistible (<3100>Amos 9:1-6). As a kingdom, Israel shall perish as if it never was in covenant with Him: but as individuals the house of Jacob shall not utterly perish, nay, not one of the least of the righteous shall fall, but only all the sinners (<3100>Amos 9:7-10). Restoration of the Jews finally to their own land after the re-establishment of the fallen tabernacle of David; consequent conversion of all the heathen (<3100>Amos 9:11-15).

1. *Lord ... upon the altar* — namely, in the idolatrous temple at Beth-el; the calves which were spoken of in <3104>Amos 8:14. Hither they would flee for protection from the Assyrians, and would perish in the ruins, with the vain object of their trust [HENDERSON]. Jehovah stands here to direct the destruction of it, them, and the idolatrous nation. He demands many victims on the altar, but they are to be human victims. CALVIN and FAIRBAIRN, and others, make it in the *temple at Jerusalem*. Judgment was to descend both on Israel and Judah. As the services of both alike ought to have been offered on the Jerusalem temple-altar, it is there that Jehovah ideally stands, as if the whole people were assembled there, their abominations lying unpardoned there, and crying for vengeance, though in fact committed elsewhere (compare <3100>Ezekiel 8:1-18). This view harmonizes with the similarity of the vision in Amos to that in <3100>Isaiah 6:1-13, *at Jerusalem*. Also with the end of this chapter (<3100>Amos 9:11-15), which applies both to *Judah* and Israel: “the tabernacle of David,” namely, at Jerusalem. His attitude, “standing,” implies fixity of purpose.

*lintel* — rather, the sphere-like *capital* of the column [MAURER].

*posts* — rather, “thresholds,” as in <3100>Isaiah 6:4, *Margin*. The temple is to be smitten below as well as above, to ensure utter destruction.

*cut them in the head* — namely, with the broken fragments of the capitals and columns (compare <3102>Psalm 68:21 <3103>Habakkuk 3:13).

*slay the last of them* — their posterity [HENDERSON]. The survivors [MAURER]. Jehovah's directions are addressed to His angels, ministers of judgment (compare <sup><3108></sup>Ezekiel 9:1-11).

*he that fleeth ... shall not flee away* — He who fancies himself safe and out of reach of the enemy shall be taken (<sup><3104></sup>Amos 2:14).

2. *Though they dig into hell* — though they hide ever so deeply in the earth (<sup><3108></sup>Psalm 139:8).

*though they climb up to heaven* — though they ascend the greatest heights (<sup><3106></sup>Job 20:6,7 <sup><3153></sup>Jeremiah 51:53 <sup><3104></sup>Obadiah 1:4).

3. *Carmel* — where the forests, and, on the west side, the caves, furnished hiding-places (<sup><3100></sup>Amos 1:2 <sup><3102></sup>Judges 6:2 <sup><3136></sup>1 Samuel 13:6).

*the sea* — the Mediterranean, which flows at the foot of Mount Carmel; forming a strong antithesis to it.

*command the serpent* — the sea-serpent, a term used for any great water monster (<sup><3204></sup>Isaiah 27:1). The symbol of *cruel and oppressive kings* (<sup><3143></sup>Psalm 74:13,14).

4. *though they go into captivity* — hoping to save their lives by voluntarily surrendering to the foe.

5. As Amos had threatened that nowhere should the Israelites be safe from the divine judgments, he here shows God's omnipotent ability to execute His threats. So in the case of the threat in <sup><3088></sup>Amos 8:8, God is here stated to be the first cause of the mourning of "all that dwell" in the land, and of its rising "like a flood, and of its being "drowned, as by the flood of Egypt."

6. *stories* — literally, "ascents," that is, upper chambers, to which the ascent is by steps [MAURER]; evidently referring to the words in <sup><3143></sup>Psalm 104:3,13. GROTIUS explains it, *God's royal throne*, expressed in language drawn from Solomon's throne, to which the ascent was by steps (compare <sup><3108></sup>1 Kings 10:18,19).

*founded his troop* — namely, all animate creatures, which are God's *troop*, or *host* (<sup><3101></sup>Genesis 2:1), doing His will (<sup><3137></sup>Psalm 103:20,21 <sup><3111></sup>Joel 2:11). MAURER translates, "His *vault*," that is, the vaulted sky, which seems to rest on the earth supported by the horizon.

7. *unto me* — however great ye seem *to yourselves*. Do not rely on past privileges, and on My having delivered you from Egypt, as if therefore I never would remove you from Canaan. I make no more account of you

than of “the Ethiopian” (compare <sup><24123></sup>Jeremiah 13:23). “Have not I (who) brought you out of Egypt,” done as much for other peoples? For instance, did I not bring “the Philistines (see on <sup><23429></sup>Isaiah 14:29, etc.) from Capthor (compare <sup><18123></sup>Deuteronomy 2:23; see on <sup><24704></sup>Jeremiah 47:4), where they had been bond-servants, and the Syrians from Kir?” It is appropriate, that as the Syrians migrated into Syria from Kir (compare *Note*, see on <sup><22716></sup>Isaiah 22:6), so they should be carried back captive into the same land (see on <sup><3001></sup>Amos 1:15; <sup><2169></sup>2 Kings 16:9), just as elsewhere Israel is threatened with a return to Egypt whence they had been delivered. The “Ethiopians,” *Hebrew*, “Cushites,” were originally akin to the race that founded Babylon: the cuneiform inscriptions in this confirming independently the Scripture statement (<sup><1106></sup>Genesis 10:6,8,10).

**8. eyes ... upon the sinful kingdom** — that is, I am watching all its sinful course in order to punish it (compare <sup><3004></sup>Amos 9:4 <sup><1845></sup>Psalms 34:15,16).

**not utterly destroy the house of Jacob** — Though as a “kingdom” the nation is now utterly to perish, a remnant is to be spared for “Jacob,” their forefather’s sake (compare <sup><24117></sup>Jeremiah 30:11); to fulfill the covenant whereby “the seed of Israel” is hereafter to be “a nation for ever” (<sup><24337></sup>Jeremiah 31:36).

**9. sift** — I will cause the Israelites to be tossed about through all nations as corn is shaken about in a sieve, in such a way, however, that while the chaff and dust (the wicked) fall through (perish), all the solid grains (the godly elect) remain (are preserved), (<sup><5123></sup>Romans 11:26; compare *Note*, see on <sup><24184></sup>Jeremiah 3:14). So spiritual Israel’s final safety is ensured (<sup><12239></sup>Luke 22:32 <sup><6103></sup>John 10:28 6:39).

**10. All the sinners** — answering to the chaff in the image in <sup><3109></sup>Amos 9:9, which falls on the earth, in opposition “to the grain” that does not “fall.”

**overtake ... us** — “come on us from behind” [MAURER].

**11. In that day** — quoted by James (<sup><44516></sup>Acts 15:16,17), “After this,” that is, in the dispensation of Messiah (<sup><14910></sup>Genesis 49:10 <sup><3734></sup>Hosea 3:4,5 <sup><2423></sup>Joel 2:28 3:1).

**tabernacle of David** — not “the house of David,” which is used of his affairs when prospering (<sup><1011></sup>2 Samuel 3:1), but the *tent* or *booth*, expressing the low condition to which his kingdom and family had fallen in Amos’ time, and subsequently at the Babylonian captivity before the restoration; and secondarily, in the last days preceding Israel’s restoration under Messiah, the antitype to David (<sup><194213></sup>Psalms 102:13,14 <sup><2410></sup>Jeremiah 30:9 <sup><3524></sup>Ezekiel 34:24 37:24; see on <sup><23111></sup>Isaiah 12:1). The type is taken from

architecture (<sup><402></sup>Ephesians 2:20). The restoration under Zerubbabel can only be a partial, temporary fulfillment; for it did not include Israel, which nation is the main subject of Amos prophecies, but only Judah; also Zerubbabel's kingdom was not independent and settled; also all the prophets end their prophecies with Messiah, whose advent is the cure of all previous disorders. "Tabernacle" is appropriate to Him, as His human nature is the tabernacle which He assumed in becoming Immanuel, "God with us" (<sup><4014></sup>John 1:14). "Dwelt," literally, *tabernacled* "among us" (compare <sup><4218></sup>Revelation 21:3). Some understand "the tabernacle of David" as that which David pitched for the ark in Zion, after bringing it from Obed-edom's house. It remained there all his reign for thirty years, till the temple of Solomon was built, whereas the "tabernacle of the congregation" remained at Gibeon (<sup><4002></sup>2 Chronicles 1:3), where the priests ministered in sacrifices (<sup><1369></sup>1 Chronicles 16:39). Song and praise was the service of David's attendants before the ark (Asaph, etc.): a type of the gospel separation between the sacrificial service (*Messiah's* priesthood now *in heaven*) and the access of *believers on earth* to the presence of God, apart from the former (compare <sup><4012></sup>2 Samuel 6:12-17 <sup><1367></sup>1 Chronicles 16:37-39 <sup><4002></sup>2 Chronicles 1:3).

***breaches thereof*** — literally, "of them," that is, of the *whole* nation, Israel as well as Judah.

***as in ... days of old*** — as it was formerly in the days of David and Solomon, when the kingdom was in its full extent and undivided.

**12. *That they may possess ... remnant of Edom, and of all the heathen*** — "Edom," the bitter foe, though the brother, of Israel; therefore to be punished (<sup><3001></sup>Amos 1:11,12), Israel shall be lord of the "remnant" of Edom left after the punishment of the latter. James quotes it, "That *the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles,*" etc. For "all the heathen" nations stand on the same footing as *Edom*: Edom is the representative of them all. The *residue* or *remnant* in both cases expresses those left after great antecedent calamities (<sup><4927></sup>Romans 9:27 <sup><3446></sup>Zechariah 14:16). Here the conversion of "all nations" (of which the earnest was given in James's time) is represented as only to be realized on the re-establishment of the theocracy under Messiah, the Heir of the throne of David (<sup><1011></sup>Amos 9:11). The possession of the heathen nations by Israel is to be spiritual, the latter being the ministers to the former for their conversion to Messiah, King of the Jews; just as the first conversions of pagans were through the ministry of the apostles, who were Jews. Compare <sup><2501></sup>Isaiah 54:3, "thy seed shall *inherit the Gentiles*" (compare <sup><2408></sup>Isaiah 49:8 <sup><4013></sup>Romans 4:13). A remnant of Edom became Jews under John Hyrcanus,

and the rest amalgamated with the Arabians, who became Christians subsequently.

***which are called by my name*** — that is, who belong to Me, whom I claim as Mine (<sup>4008</sup>Psalm 2:8); in the purposes of electing grace, God terms them already *called by His name*. Compare the title, “the children,” applied by anticipation, <sup>3024</sup>Hebrews 2:14. Hence as an act of sovereign grace, fulfilling His promise, it is spoken of God. Proclaim His title as sovereign, “the Lord that doeth this” (“all these things,” <sup>4457</sup>Acts 15:17, namely, all these and such like acts of sovereign love).

**13. *the days come*** — at the future restoration of the Jews to their own land.

***ploughman shall overtake ... reaper ... treader of grapes him that soweth*** — fulfilling <sup>4318</sup>Leviticus 26:5. Such shall be the abundance that the harvest and vintage can hardly be gathered before the time for preparing for the next crop shall come. Instead of the greater part of the year being spent in war, the whole shall be spent in sowing and reaping the fruits of earth. Compare <sup>2352</sup>Isaiah 65:21-23, as to the same period.

***soweth seed*** — literally, “draweth it forth,” namely, from the sack in order to sow it.

***mountains ... drop sweet wine*** — an appropriate image, as the vines in Palestine were trained on *terraces at the sides of the hills*.

**14. *build the waste cities*** — (<sup>2304</sup>Isaiah 61:4 <sup>2653</sup>Ezekiel 36:33-36).

**15. *plant them ... no more be pulled up*** — (<sup>2434</sup>Jeremiah 32:41).

***thy God*** — Israel’s; this is the ground of their restoration, God’s original choice of them as His.

# THE BOOK OF OBADIAH

*Commentary by* **A. R. FAUSSETT**

## INTRODUCTION

This is the shortest book in the Old Testament. The name means “servant of Jehovah.” Obadiah stands fourth among the minor prophets according to the Hebrew arrangement of the canon, the fifth according to the Greek. Some consider him to be the same as the Obadiah who superintended the restoration of the temple under Josiah, 627 B.C. (<sup><1642></sup>2 Chronicles 34:12). But Obadiah 2:11-16,20 imply that Jerusalem was by this time overthrown by the Chaldeans, and that he refers to the cruelty of Edom towards the Jews on that occasion, which is referred to also in <sup><2102></sup>Lamentations 4:21,22 <sup><3552></sup>Ezekiel 25:12-14 35:1-15 <sup><1970></sup>Psalms 137:7. From comparing Obadiah 2:5 with <sup><3409></sup>Jeremiah 49:9, Obadiah 2:6 with <sup><3490></sup>Jeremiah 49:10, Obadiah 2:8 with <sup><3407></sup>Jeremiah 49:7, it appears that Jeremiah embodied in his prophecies part of Obadiah’s, as he had done in the case of other prophets also (compare <sup><2351></sup>Isaiah 15:1-16:14 with <sup><3481></sup>Jeremiah 48:1-47). The reason for the present position of Obadiah before other of the minor prophets anterior in date is: Amos at the close of his prophecies foretells the subjugation of Edom hereafter by the Jews; the arranger of the minor prophets in one volume, therefore, placed Obadiah next, as being a fuller statement, and, as it were, a commentary on the foregoing briefer prophecy of Amos as to Edom [MAURER]. (Compare <sup><3006></sup>Amos 1:11). The date of Obadiah’s prophecies was probably immediately after the taking of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, 588 B.C. Five years afterwards (583 B.C.) Edom was conquered by Nebuchadnezzar. Jeremiah must have incorporated part of Obadiah’s prophecies with his own immediately after they were uttered, thus stamping his canonicity.

JEROME makes him contemporary with Hosea, Joel, and Amos. It is an argument in favor of this view that Jeremiah would be more likely to insert in his prophecies a portion from a preceding prophet than from a contemporary. If so, the allusion in Obadiah 2:11-14 will be to one of the former captures of Jerusalem: by the Egyptians under Rehoboam (<sup><1142></sup>1

Kings 14:25,26 <sup><4412></sup>2 Chronicles 12:2, etc.), or that by the Philistines and Arabians in the reign of Joram (<sup><4216></sup>2 Chronicles 21:16,17); or that by Joash, king of Israel, in the reign of Amaziah (<sup><4252></sup>2 Chronicles 25:22,23); or that in the reign of Jehoiakim (<sup><1201></sup>2 Kings 24:1, etc.); or that in the reign of Jehoiachin (<sup><1218></sup>2 Kings 24:8-16). On all occasions the Idumeans were hostile to the Jews; and the terms in which that enmity is characterized are not stronger in Obadiah than in <sup><2189></sup>Joel 3:19 (compare <sup><3010></sup>Obadiah 1:10 <sup><3001></sup>Amos 1:11,12). The probable capture of Jerusalem alluded to by Obadiah is that by Joash and the Israelites in the reign of Amaziah. For as, a little before, in the reign of the same Amaziah, the Jews had treated harshly the Edomites after conquering them in battle (<sup><4251></sup>2 Chronicles 25:11-23), it is probable that the Edomites, in revenge, joined the Israelites in the attack on Jerusalem [JAEGER].

This book may be divided into two parts:

- (1) <sup><3000></sup>Obadiah 1:1-6 set forth Edom's violence toward his brother Israel in the day of the latter's distress, and his coming destruction with the rest of the foes of Judah;
- (2) <sup><3017></sup>Obadiah 1:17-21, the coming re-establishment of the Jews in their own possessions, to which shall be added those of the neighboring peoples, and especially those of Edom.

# CHAPTER 1

## <300>OBADIAH 1:1-21.

### DOOM OF EDOM FOR CRUELTY TO JUDAH, EDOM'S BROTHER; RESTORATION OF THE JEWS.

1. **Obadiah** — that is, servant of Jehovah; same as *Abdeel* and *Arabic Abdallah*.

**We** — I and my people.

**heard** — (<2210>Isaiah 21:10).

**and an ambassador is sent** — Yea, an ambassador is *already* sent, namely, an angel, to stir up the Assyrians (and afterwards the Chaldeans) against Edom. The result of the ambassador's message on the heathen is, they simultaneously exclaim, "Arise ye, and let us (with united strength) rise," etc. <4945>Jeremiah 49:14 quotes this.

2. **I have made thee small** — Thy reduction to insignificance is *as sure as if it were already accomplished*; therefore the past tense is used [MAURER]. Edom then extended from Dedan of Arabia to Bozrah in the north (<4908>Jeremiah 49:8,13). CALVIN explains it, "Whereas thou wast made by Me an insignificant people, why art thou so *proud*?" (<3000>Obadiah 1:3)? But if so, why should the heathen peoples be needed to subdue one so insignificant? <4905>Jeremiah 49:15, confirms MAURER'S view.

3. **clefts of ... rock** — (So 2:14 <4885>Jeremiah 48:28). The cities of Edom, and among them Petra (*Hebrew, sela*, meaning "rock," <2402>2 Kings 14:7, *Margin*), the capital, in the Wady Musa, consisted of houses mostly cut in the rocks.

4. **exalt thyself** — or supply from the second clause, "thy nest" [MAURER] (Compare <3106>Job 20:6 <4906>Jeremiah 49:16 <3100>Amos 9:2).

**set ... nest among ... stars** — namely, on the loftiest hills which seem to reach the very stars. Edom is a type of Antichrist (<2843>Isaiah 14:13 <2780>Daniel 8:10 11:37).

**thence will I bring thee down** — in spite of thy boast (<3000>Obadiah 1:3), "Who shall bring me down?"

5. The spoliation which thou shalt suffer shall not be such as that which thieves cause, bad as that is, for these when they have seized enough, or all they can get in a hurry, leave the rest — nor such as grape-gatherers cause in a vineyard, for they, when they have gathered most of the grapes, leave gleanings behind — but it shall be utter, so as to leave thee nothing. The exclamation, “How art thou cut off!” bursting in amidst the words of the image, marks strongly excited feeling. The contrast between Edom where no gleanings shall be left, and Israel where at the worst a gleaning is left (<sup><2376></sup>Isaiah 17:6 24:13), is striking.

6. *How are the things of Esau searched out!* — by hostile soldiers seeking booty. Compare with <sup><300F></sup>Obadiah 1:5,6 here, <sup><2409></sup>Jeremiah 49:9,10.

*hidden things* — or “places.” Edom abounded in such hiding-places, as caves, clefts in the rock, etc. None of these would be left unexplored by the foe.

7. *Men of thy confederacy* — that is, thy confederates.

*brought thee ... to the border* — that is, when Idumean ambassadors shall go to confederate states seeking aid, these latter shall conduct them with due ceremony to their border, giving them empty compliments, but not the aid required [DRUSIUS]. This view agrees with the context, which speaks of false friends *deceiving* Edom: that is, failing to give help in need (compare <sup><4864></sup>Job 6:14,15). CALVIN translates, “have driven,” that is, *shall drive thee*; shall help to drive thee *to thy border* on thy way into captivity in foreign lands.

*the men that were at peace with thee* — literally, “the men of thy peace.” Compare <sup><1910></sup>Psalms 41:9 <sup><2322></sup>Jeremiah 38:22, *Margin*, where also the same formula occurs, “prevailed against thee.”

*they that eat thy bread* — the poorer tribes of the desert who subsisted on the bounty of Edom. Compare again <sup><1910></sup>Psalms 41:9, which seems to have been before Obadiah’s mind, as his words were before Jeremiah’s.

*have laid a wound under thee* — “laid” implies that their intimacy was used as a SNARE *laid* with a view to wound; also, these guest friends of Edom, instead of the cushions ordinarily *laid* under guests at table, *laid* snares to wound, that is, had a secret understanding with Edom’s foe for that purpose. MAURER translates, “a snare.” But *English Version* agrees with the *Hebrew*, which means, literally, “a bandage for a wound.”

*none understanding* — none of the wisdom for which Edom was famed (see <sup><300B></sup>Obadiah 1:8) to extricate him from his perilous position.

**in him** — instead of “in thee.” The change implies the alienation of God from Edom: Edom has so estranged himself from God, that He speaks now of him, not to him.

8. (<sup>2397</sup>Isaiah 49:7; compare <sup>1852</sup>Job 5:12,13 <sup>2398</sup>Isaiah 19:3 <sup>2400</sup>Jeremiah 19:7).

**in that day ... even destroy** — Heretofore Edom, through its intercourse with Babylon and Egypt, and from its means of information through the many caravans passing to and fro between Europe and India, has been famed for knowledge; but in that day *at last* (“even”) I will destroy its wise men.

**mount of Esau** — that is, Idumea, which was a mountainous region.

9. **cut off by slaughter** — MAURER translates, “on account of the slaughter,” namely, that inflicted on Judea by Edom (compare <sup>3014</sup>Obadiah 1:14). The *Septuagint*, *Syriac*, and *Vulgate* connect these words with <sup>3010</sup>Obadiah 1:10, “for the slaughter, for the violence (of which thou art guilty) against thy brother Jacob.” *English Version*, “cut off by slaughter” (that is, an utter cutting off), answers well to “cut off for ever” (<sup>3010</sup>Obadiah 1:10). However, the arrangement of the *Septuagint* gives a better parallelism in <sup>3010</sup>Obadiah 1:10. “For the slaughter”

- (1) being balanced in just retribution by “thou shalt be *cut off* for ever”
- (2); as “For thy *violence* (not so bad as *slaughter*) against thy brother Jacob”
- (3) is balanced by “*shame* (not so bad as being *cut off*) shall cover thee”
- (4). Shame and extinction shall repay violence and slaughter (<sup>1852</sup>Matthew 26:52 <sup>1830</sup>Revelation 13:10). Compare as to Edom’s violence, <sup>1970</sup>Psalms 137:7 <sup>2512</sup>Ezekiel 25:12 <sup>3008</sup>Amos 1:11.

10. **against thy brother** — This aggravates the sin of Esau, that it was against him who was his brother by birth and by circumcision. The posterity of Esau followed in the steps of their father’s hatred to Jacob by violence against Jacob’s seed (<sup>1271</sup>Genesis 27:41).

**Jacob** — not merely his own brother, but his *twin* brother; hence the name *Jacob*, not *Israel*, is here put emphatically. Compare <sup>1620</sup>Deuteronomy 23:7 for the opposite feeling which Jacob’s seed was commanded to entertain towards Edom’s.

**shame ... cover thee** — (<sup>1852</sup>Psalms 35:26 69:7).

**for ever** — (<sup><2340></sup>Isaiah 34:10 <sup><2589></sup>Ezekiel 35:9 Malachi 1:4). Idumea, *as a nation*, should be “cut off for ever,” though the land should be again inhabited.

**11. *thou stoodest on the other side*** — in an attitude of hostility, rather than the sympathy which became a brother, feasting thine eyes (see <sup><3012></sup>Obadiah 1:12) with the misery of Jacob, and eagerly watching for his destruction. So Messiah, the antitype to Jerusalem, abandoned by His kinsmen (<sup><1381></sup>Psalms 38:11).

**strangers** — the Philistines, Arabians in the reign of Jehoram, etc. (<sup><4216></sup>2 Chronicles 21:16); the Syrians in the reign of Joash of Judah (<sup><4042></sup>2 Chronicles 24:24); the Chaldeans (<sup><4402></sup>2 Chronicles 36:1-23).

**carried ... captive his forces** — his “host” (<sup><3003></sup>Obadiah 1:20): the multitude of Jerusalem’s inhabitants.

**cast lots upon Jerusalem** — (<sup><2983></sup>Joel 3:3). So Messiah, Jerusalem’s antitype, had lots cast for His only earthly possessions (<sup><4228></sup>Psalms 22:18).

**12. looked on** — with malignant pleasure, and a brutal stare. So the antitypes, Messiah’s foes (<sup><4227></sup>Psalms 22:17). MAURER translates, as the *Margin*, “thou shouldst not look” any more. *English Version* agrees with the context better.

**the day of thy brother** — his day of calamity.

**became a stranger** — that is, was banished as an alien from his own land. God sends heavy calamities on those who rejoice in the calamities of their enemies (<sup><1775></sup>Proverbs 17:5 24:17,18). Contrast the opposite conduct of David and of the divine Son of David in a like case (<sup><4953></sup>Psalms 35:13-15).

**spoken proudly** — literally, “made great the mouth”; proudly insulting the fallen (<sup><2553></sup>Ezekiel 35:13, *Margin*; compare <sup><9083></sup>1 Samuel 2:8 <sup><6330></sup>Revelation 13:6).

**13. substance** — translated “forces” in <sup><3011></sup>Obadiah 1:11.

**14. stood in the crossway, to cut off those of his** — Judah’s.

**that did escape** — The Jews naturally fled by the crossways. (MAURER translates, “narrow mountain passes”) well known to them, to escape to the desert, and through Edom to Egypt; but the Edomites stood ready to intercept the fugitives and either kill or “deliver them up” to the foe.

**15. For** — resumptive in connection with <sup><3010></sup>Obadiah 1:10, wherein Edom was threatened with *cutting off for ever*.

**the day of the Lord** — the day in which He will manifest Himself as the Righteous Punisher of the ungodly peoples (<sup><2184></sup>Joel 3:14). The “all” shows that the fulfillment is not exhausted in the punishment inflicted on the surrounding nations by the instrumentality of Nebuchadnezzar; but, as in <sup><2184></sup>Joel 3:14, and Zechariah 12:3, that the last judgment to come on the nations confederate against Jerusalem is referred to.

**as thou hast done, it shall be done unto thee** — the righteous principle of retribution in kind (<sup><1047></sup>Leviticus 24:17 <sup><1070></sup>Matthew 7:2; compare <sup><1006></sup>Judges 1:6,7 8:19 <sup><1070></sup>Esther 7:10).

**thy reward** — the reward of thy deed (compare <sup><2187></sup>Isaiah 3:9-11).

**16. ye ... upon my holy mountain** — a periphrasis for, “ye Jews” [MAURER], whom Obadiah now by a sudden apostrophe addresses. The clause, “upon My holy mountain,” expresses the reason of the vengeance to be taken on Judah’s foes; namely, that Jerusalem is God’s holy mountain, the seat of His temple, and Judah His covenant-people. <sup><2492></sup>Jeremiah 49:12, which is copied from Obadiah, establishes this view (compare <sup><1047></sup>1 Peter 4:17).

**as ye have drunk**, etc. — namely, the cup of wrath, being dispossessed of your goods and places as a nation, by Edom and all the heathen; so shall all the heathen (Edom included) drink the same cup (<sup><3103></sup>Psalm 60:3 <sup><2517></sup>Isaiah 51:17,22 <sup><2432></sup>Jeremiah 13:12,13 25:15-33 49:12 51:7; <sup><2102></sup>Lamentations 4:21,22 Na 3:11 <sup><3126></sup>Habakkuk 2:16).

**continually** — whereas Judah’s calamity shall be temporary (<sup><3107></sup>Obadiah 1:17). The foes of Judah shall never regain their former position (<sup><3108></sup>Obadiah 1:18,19).

**swallow down** — so as not to leave anything in the cup of calamity; not merely “drink” (<sup><3753></sup>Psalm 75:8).

**be as though they had not been** — not a trace left of their national existence (<sup><3109></sup>Job 10:19 <sup><3573></sup>Psalm 37:36 <sup><2521></sup>Ezekiel 26:21).

**17. upon ... Zion ... deliverance** — both in the literal sense and spiritual sense (<sup><2102></sup>Joel 2:32 <sup><2343></sup>Isaiah 46:13 59:20 <sup><5112></sup>Romans 11:26). MAURER as the *Margin* explains it, “there shall be a remnant that shall escape.” Compare <sup><2373></sup>Isaiah 37:32; to the deliverance from Sennacherib there described GROTIUS thinks Obadiah here refers. “Jerusalem shall not be taken, and many of the neighboring peoples also shall find deliverance there.” Unlike Judah’s heathen foes of whom no remnant shall escape (<sup><3109></sup>Obadiah 1:9,16), a remnant of Jews shall escape when the rest of the nation has perished, and shall regain their ancient “possessions.”

**there shall be holiness** — that is, Zion shall be sacrosanct or inviolable: no more violated by foreign invaders (<sup>2301</sup>Isaiah 42:1 <sup>2187</sup>Joel 3:17).

**18. fire** — See the same figure, <sup>9028</sup>Numbers 21:28 <sup>2124</sup>Isaiah 5:24 10:17.

**house of Jacob ... Joseph** — that is, the two kingdoms, Judah and Ephraim or Israel [JEROME]. The two shall form one kingdom, their former feuds being laid aside (<sup>29112</sup>Isaiah 11:12,13 37:22-28 <sup>2088</sup>Jeremiah 3:18 <sup>2011</sup>Hosea 1:11). The Jews returned with some of the Israelites from Babylon; and, under John Hyrcanus, so subdued and, compelling them to be circumcised, incorporated the Idumeans with themselves that they formed part of the nation [JOSEPHUS, *Antiquities*, 13.17; 12.11]. This was but an earnest of the future union of Israel and Judah in the possession of the enlarged land as one kingdom (<sup>2576</sup>Ezekiel 37:16, etc.).

**stubble** — (Malachi 4:1).

**19. they of the south** — The Jews who in the coming time are to occupy the south of Judea shall possess, in addition to their own territory, the adjoining *mountainous region of Edom*.

**they of the plain** — The Jews who shall occupy the low country along the Mediterranean, south and southwest of Palestine, shall possess, in addition to their own territory, the land of “the Philistines,” which runs as a long strip between the hills and the sea.

**and they shall possess the fields of Ephraim** — that is, the rightful owners shall be restored, the Ephraimites to the fields of Ephraim.

**Benjamin shall possess Gilead** — that is, the region east of Jordan, occupied formerly by Reuben, Gad, and half Manasseh. Benjamin shall possess besides its own territory the adjoining territory eastward, while the two and a half tribes shall in the redistribution occupy the adjoining territory of Moab and Ammon.

**20. the captivity of this host** — that is, the captives of this multitude of Israelites.

**shall possess that of the Canaanites** — MAURER translates, “the captives ... whom the Canaanites (carried away captive into Phoenicia) even unto Zarephath, shall possess the south,” namely, Idumea as well as the south (<sup>2019</sup>Obadiah 1:19). HENDERSON, similarly, “the captives that are among the Canaanites,” etc. But the corresponding clauses of the parallelism are better balanced in *English Version*, “the ten tribes of Israel shall possess the territory of the Canaanites,” namely, Western Palestine and Phoenicia (<sup>4088</sup>Judges 3:3). “And the captives of Jerusalem (and Judah) shall possess

the southern cities,” namely, Edom, etc. Each has the region respectively adjoining assigned to it; Israel has the western Canaanite region; Judah, the southern.

**even unto Zarephath** — near Zidon; called Sarepta in <sup><4045></sup>Luke 4:26. The name implies it was a place for smelting metals. From this quarter came the “woman of Canaan” (<sup><4052></sup>Matthew 15:21,22). Captives of the Jews had been carried into the coasts of Palestine or Canaan, about Tyre and Zidon (<sup><2918></sup>Joel 3:3,4 Amos 1:9). The Jews when restored shall possess the territory of their ancient oppressors.

**in Sepharad** — that is, the Bosphorus [JEROME, from his *Hebrew Instructor*]. Sephar, according to others (<sup><4009></sup>Genesis 10:30). Palaeography confirms JEROME. In the cuneiform inscription containing a list of the tribes of Persia [*Niebuhr tab.* 31.1], before Ionia and Greece, and after Cappadocia, comes the name CPaRaD. It was therefore a district of Western Asia Minor, about Lydia, and near the Bosphorus. It is made an appellative by MAURER. “The Jerusalem captives *of the dispersion*” (compare <sup><3003></sup>James 1:1), wherever they be dispersed, shall return and possess the southern cities. Sepharad, though literally the district near the Bosphorus, represents the Jews’ far and wide dispersion. JEROME says the name in Assyrian means a *boundary*, that is, “the Jews scattered in all boundaries and regions.”

**21. saviours** — There will be in the kingdom yet to come no king, but a prince; the sabbatic period of the judges will return (compare the phrase so frequent in Judges, only once found in the times of the kings, <sup><4402></sup>2 Chronicles 14:1, “the land had *rest*”), when there was no visible king, but God reigned in the theocracy. Israelites, not strangers, shall dispense justice to a God-fearing people (<sup><2302></sup>Isaiah 1:26 <sup><3601></sup>Ezekiel 45:1-25). The judges were not such a burden to the people as the kings proved afterwards (<sup><4081></sup>1 Samuel 8:11-20). In their time the people more readily repented than under the kings (compare <sup><4457></sup>2 Chronicles 15:17), [ROOS]. Judges were from time to time raised up as *saviours* or *deliverers* of Israel from the enemy. These, and the similar deliverers in the long subsequent age of Antiochus, the Maccabees, who conquered the *Idumeans* (as here foretold, compare II Maccabees 10:15,23), were types of the peaceful period yet to come to Israel.

**to judge ... Esau** — *to punish* (so “judge,” <sup><4933></sup>1 Samuel 3:13) ... Edom (compare <sup><3004></sup>Obadiah 1:1-9,15-19). Edom is the type of Israel’s and God’s last foes (<sup><2304></sup>Isaiah 63:1-4).

**kingdom shall be the Lord’s** — under Messiah (<sup><2044></sup>Daniel 2:44 7:14,27 Zechariah 14:9 <sup><4033></sup>Luke 1:33 <sup><6115></sup>Revelation 11:15 19:6).

## THE BOOK OF

# JONAH

*Commentary by* **A. R. FAUSSETT**

## INTRODUCTION

JONAH was the son of Amittai, of Gath-hepher in Zebulun (called Gittah-hepher in <sup><690></sup>Joshua 19:10-13), so that he belonged to the kingdom of the ten tribes, not to Judah. His date is to be gathered from <sup><1245></sup>2 Kings 14:25-27, "He (Jeroboam II) restored the coast of Israel from the entering of Hamath unto the sea of the plain, according to the word of the Lord God of Israel, which He spake by the hand of His servant Jonah, the son of Amittai, the prophet, which was of Gath-hepher. For the Lord saw the affliction of Israel, that it was very bitter: for there was not any shut up, nor any left, nor any helper for Israel. And the Lord said not that He would blot out the name of Israel from under heaven: but He saved them by the hand of Jeroboam the son of Joash." Now as this prophecy of Jonah was given at a time when Israel was at the lowest point of depression, when "there was not any shut up or left," that is, confined or left at large, none to act as a helper for Israel, it cannot have been given in Jeroboam's reign, which was marked by prosperity, for in it Syria was worsted in fulfillment of the prophecy, and Israel raised to its former "greatness." It must have been, therefore, in the early part of the reign of Joash, Jeroboam's father, who had found Israel in subjection to Syria, but had raised it by victories which were followed up so successfully by Jeroboam. Thus Jonah was the earliest of the prophets, and close upon Elisha, who died in Joash's reign, having just before his death given a token prophetic of the thrice defeat of Syria (<sup><1234></sup>2 Kings 13:14-21). Hosea and Amos prophesied also in the reign of Jeroboam II, but towards the closing part of his forty-one years' reign. The transactions in the Book of Jonah probably occurred in the latter part of his life; if so, the book is not much older than part of the writings of Hosea and Amos. The use of the third person is no argument against Jonah himself being the writer: for the sacred writers in mentioning themselves do so in the third person (compare <sup><685></sup>John 19:26). Nor is the use of the past tense (Jon 3:3, "Now Nineveh *was* an exceeding great city") a proof that Nineveh's greatness was past when the Book of Jonah was being written; it

is simply used to carry on the negative uniformly, — “the word of the Lord *came* to Jonah ... so Jonah *arose* ... now Nineveh *was*,” etc. (Jon 1:1 3:3). The mention of its *greatness* proves rather that the book was written at an early date, *before* the Israelites had that intimate knowledge of it which they must have had soon afterwards through frequent Assyrian inroads.

As early as JULIAN and PORPHYRY, pagans ridiculed the credulity of Christians in believing the deliverance of Jonah by a fish. Some infidels have derived it from the heathen fable of the deliverance of Andromeda from a sea monster by Perseus [APOLLONORUS, *The Library*, 2.4,3]; or from that of Arion the musician thrown into the sea by sailors, and carried safe to shore on a dolphin [HERODOTUS, *History*, 1.24]; or from that of Hercules, who sprang into the jaws of a sea monster, and was three days in its belly, when he undertook to save Hesione [DIODORUS SICULUS, *Historical Library*, 4.42; HOMER, *The Iliad*, 20.145; 21.442]. Probably the heathen fables are, vice versa, corruptions of the sacred narrative, if there be any connection. JEROME states that near Joppa lay rocks, pointed out as those to which Andromeda was bound when exposed to the sea monster. This fable implies the likelihood of the story of Jonah having passed through the Phoenicians in a corrupted form to Greece. That the account of Jonah is history, and not parable (as rationalists represent), appears from our Lord’s reference to it, in which the *personal existence*, *miraculous fate*, and *prophetical office* of Jonah are explicitly asserted: “No sign shall be given but the *sign of the prophet* Jonas: for, as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale’s belly, so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth” (<sup>4023</sup>Matthew 12:39,40). The Lord recognizes his being in the belly of the fish as a “sign,” that is, a real miracle, typical of a similar event in His own history; and assumes the execution of the prophet’s commission to Nineveh, “The men of Nineveh ... repented at the preaching of Jonas; and behold, a greater than Jonas is here” (<sup>4024</sup>Matthew 12:41).

It seemed strange to KIMCHI, a Jew himself, that the Book of Jonah is among the Scriptures, as the only prophecy in it concerns Nineveh, a heathen city, and makes no mention of Israel, which is referred to by every other prophet. The reason seems to be: a tacit reproof of Israel is intended; a heathen people were ready to repent at the first preaching of the prophet, a stranger to them; but Israel, who boasted of being God’s elect, repented not, though warned by their own prophets at all seasons. This was an anticipatory streak of light before the dawn of the full “light to lighten the Gentiles” (<sup>4025</sup>Luke 2:32). Jonah is himself a strange paradox: a prophet of God, and yet a runaway from God: a man drowned, and yet alive: a preacher of repentance, yet one that repines at repentance. Yet Jonah, saved

from the jaws of death himself on repentance, was the fittest to give a hope to Nineveh, doomed though it was, of a merciful respite on its repentance. The patience and pity of God stand in striking contrast with the selfishness and hard-heartedness of man.

Nineveh in particular was chosen to teach Israel these lessons, on account of its being capital of the then world kingdom, and because it was now beginning to make its power felt by Israel. Our Lord (<sup><402H></sup>Matthew 12:41) makes Nineveh's repentance a reproof of the Jews' impenitence in His day, just as Jonah provoked Israel to jealousy (<sup><452H></sup>Deuteronomy 32:21) by the same example. Jonah's mission to Nineveh implied that a heathen city afforded as legitimate a field for the prophet's labors as Israel, and with a more successful result (compare <sup><400E></sup>Amos 9:7).

The book is prose narrative throughout, except the prayer of thanksgiving in the second chapter (Jon 2:1-9). The Chaldaisms in the original do not prove spuriousness, or a later age, but were natural in the language of one living in Zebulun on the borders of the north, whence *Aramaic* peculiarities would readily arise; moreover, his message to Nineveh implies acquaintance with Assyrian. Living as Jonah did in a part of Israel exposed to Assyrian invasions, he probably stood in the same relation to Assyria as Elijah and Elisha had stood to Syria. The purity of the language implies the antiquity of the book, and the likelihood of its being Jonah's own writing. Indeed, none but Jonah could have written or dictated such peculiar details, known only to himself.

The tradition that places the tomb of Jonah opposite to Mosul, and names it "Nebbi Junus" (that is, "prophet Jonah"), originated probably in the spot having been occupied by a Christian church or convent dedicated to him [LAYARD]. A more ancient tradition of JEROME'S time placed the tomb in Jonah's native village of Gath-hepher.

# CHAPTER 1

## JONAH 1:1-17.

### JONAH'S COMMISSION TO NINEVEH, FLIGHT, PUNISHMENT, AND PRESERVATION BY MIRACLE.

1. **Jonah** — meaning in *Hebrew*, “dove.” Compare <sup><0088></sup>Genesis 8:8,9, where the dove in vain seeks rest after flying from Noah and the ark: so Jonah. GROTIUS not so well explains it, “one sprung from Greece” or Ionia, where there were prophets called *Amythaonidae*.

**Amittai** — *Hebrew* for “truth,” “truth-telling”; appropriate to a prophet.

2. **to Nineveh** — east of the Tigris, opposite the modern Mosul. The only case of a prophet being sent to the heathen. Jonah, however, is sent to Nineveh, not solely for Nineveh’s good, but also to shame *Israel*, by the fact of a heathen city repenting at the first preaching of a single stranger, Jonah, whereas God’s people will not repent, though preached to by their many national prophets, late and early. Nineveh means “the residence of Ninus,” that is, Nimrod. <sup><0088></sup>Genesis 10:11, where the translation ought to be, “*He* (Nimrod) went forth *into Assyria* and builded Nineveh.” Modern research into the cuneiform inscriptions confirms the Scripture account that Babylon was founded earlier than Nineveh, and that both cities were built by descendants of Ham, encroaching on the territory assigned to Shem (<sup><0088></sup>Genesis 10:5,6,8,10,25).

**great city** — four hundred eighty stadia in circumference, one hundred fifty in length, and ninety in breadth [DIODORUS SICULUS, 2.3]. Taken by Arbaces the Mede, in the reign of Sardanapalus, about the seventh year of Uzziah; and a second time by Nabopolassar of Babylon and Cyaxares the Mede in 625 B.C. See on Jon 3:3.

**cry** — (<sup><2406></sup>Isaiah 40:6 58:1).

**come up before me** — (<sup><0088></sup>Genesis 4:10 6:13 18:21 <sup><5006></sup>Ezra 9:6 <sup><6805></sup>Revelation 18:5); that is, their wickedness is so great as to require My open interposition for punishment.

3. **flee** — Jonah’s motive for flight is hinted at in Jon 4:2: fear that after venturing on such a dangerous commission to so powerful a heathen city,

his prophetic threats should be set aside by God's "repenting of the evil," just as God had so long spared Israel notwithstanding so many provocations, and so he should seem a false prophet. Besides, he may have felt it beneath him to discharge a commission to a foreign idolatrous nation, whose destruction he desired rather than their repentance. This is the only case of a prophet, charged with a prophetic message, concealing it.

**from the presence of the Lord** — (Compare <sup><0046</sup>Genesis 4:16). Jonah thought in fleeing from the land of Israel, where Jehovah was peculiarly present, that he should escape from Jehovah's prophecy-inspiring influence. He probably knew the truth stated in <sup><1307</sup>Psalms 139:7-10, but virtually ignored it (compare <sup><0088</sup>Genesis 3:8-10 <sup><2324</sup>Jeremiah 23:24).

**went down** — appropriate in going from land to the sea (<sup><1973</sup>Psalms 107:23).

**Joppa** — now Jaffa, in the region of Dan; a harbor as early as Solomon's time (<sup><4216</sup>2 Chronicles 2:16).

**Tarshish** — Tartessus in Spain; in the farthest west at the greatest distance from Nineveh in the east.

**4. sent out** — literally, *caused a wind to burst forth*. COVERDALE translates, "hurled a greate wynde into the see."

**5. mariners were afraid** — though used to storms; the danger therefore must have been extreme.

**cried every man unto his god** — The idols proved unable to save them, though each, according to Phoenician custom, called on his tutelary god. But Jehovah proved able: and the heathen sailors owned it in the end by sacrificing to Him (Jon 1:16).

**into the sides** — that is, the interior recesses (compare <sup><0243</sup>1 Samuel 24:3 <sup><3143</sup>Isaiah 14:13,15). Those conscious of guilt shrink from the presence of their fellow man into concealment.

**fast asleep** — Sleep is no necessary proof of innocence; it may be the fruit of carnal security and a seared conscience. How different was Jesus' sleep on the Sea of Galilee! (<sup><4037</sup>Mark 4:37-39). Guilty Jonah's indifference to fear contrasts with the unoffending mariners' alarm. The original therefore is in the nominative absolute: "But *as for Jonah*, he," etc. Compare spiritually, <sup><4054</sup>Ephesians 5:14.

**6. call upon thy God** — The ancient heathen in dangers called on foreign gods, besides their national ones (compare <sup><1973</sup>Psalms 107:28). MAURER translates the preceding clause, "What is the reason that thou sleepest?"

**think upon us** — for good (compare <sup><0081></sup>Genesis 8:1 <sup><0125></sup>Exodus 2:25 3:7,9 <sup><0107></sup>Psalms 40:17).

**7. cast lots** — God sometimes sanctioned this mode of deciding in difficult cases. Compare the similar instance of Achan, whose guilt involved Israel in suffering, until God revealed the offender, probably by the casting of lots (<sup><0163></sup>Proverbs 16:33 <sup><0402></sup>Acts 1:26). Primitive tradition and natural conscience led even the heathen to believe that one guilty man involves all his associates, though innocent, in punishment. So CICERO [*The Nature of the Gods*, 3.37] mentions that the mariners sailing with Diagoras, an atheist, attributed a storm that overtook them to his presence in the ship (compare HORACE'S *Odes*, 3.2.26).

**8.** The guilty individual being discovered is interrogated so as to make full confession with his own mouth. So in Achan's case (<sup><0079></sup>Joshua 7:19).

**9. I am an Hebrew** — He does not say "an Israelite." For this was the name used among themselves; "Hebrew," among foreigners (<sup><0415></sup>Genesis 40:15 <sup><0188></sup>Exodus 3:18).

**I fear the Lord** — in profession: his practice belied his profession: his profession aggravated his guilt.

**God ... which ... made the sea** — appropriately expressed, as accounting for the tempest sent on the *sea*. The heathen had distinct gods for the "heaven," the "sea," and the "land." Jehovah is the one and only true God of all alike. Jonah at last is awakened by the violent remedy from his lethargy. Jonah was but the reflection of Israel's backsliding from God, and so must bear the righteous punishment. The guilt of the minister is the result of that of the people, as in Moses' case (<sup><0101></sup>Deuteronomy 4:21). This is what makes Jonah a suitable type of Messiah, who bore the *imputed* sin of the people.

**10.** "The men were exceedingly afraid," when made aware of the wrath of so powerful a God at the flight of Jonah.

**Why hast thou done this?** — If professors of religion do wrong, they will hear of it from those who make no such profession.

**11. What shall we do unto thee?** — They ask this, as Jonah himself must best know how his God is to be appeased. "We would gladly save thee, if we can do so, and yet be saved ourselves" (Jon 1:13,14).

**12. cast me ... into the sea** — Herein Jonah is a type of Messiah, the one man who offered Himself to die, in order to allay the stormy flood of God's wrath (compare <sup><0391></sup>Psalms 69:1,2, as to Messiah), which otherwise

must have engulfed all other men. So Caiaphas by the Spirit declared it expedient that one man should die, and that the whole nation should not perish (<sup><6153></sup>John 11:50). Jonah also herein is a specimen of true repentance, which leads the penitent to “accept the punishment of his iniquity” (<sup><6364></sup>Leviticus 26:41,43), and to be more indignant at his sin than at his suffering.

**13. *they could not*** — (<sup><6163></sup>Proverbs 21:30). Wind and tide — God’s displeasure and God’s counsel were against them.

**14. *for this man’s life*** — that is, for taking this man’s life.

***innocent blood*** — Do not punish us as Thou wouldst punish the shedders of innocent blood (compare <sup><6208></sup>Deuteronomy 21:8). In the case of the Antitype, Pontius Pilate washed his hands and confessed Christ’s *innocence*, “I am innocent of the blood of this *just* person.” But whereas Jonah the victim was guilty and the sailors innocent, Christ our sacrificial victim was innocent and Pontius Pilate and nil of us men were guilty. But by *imputation* of our guilt to Him and His righteousness to us, the spotless Antitype exactly corresponds to the guilty type.

***thou ... Lord, hast done as it pleased thee*** — That Jonah has embarked in this ship, that a tempest has arisen, that he has been detected by casting of lots, that he has passed sentence on himself, is all Thy doing. We reluctantly put him to death, but it is Thy pleasure it should be so.

**15. *sea ceased ... raging*** — so at Jesus’ word (<sup><6184></sup>Luke 8:24). God spares the prayerful penitent, a truth illustrated now in the case of the sailors, presently in that of Jonah, and thirdly, in that of Nineveh.

**16. *offered a sacrifice*** — They offered some sacrifice of thanksgiving at once, and vowed more when they should land. GLASSIUS thinks it means only, “They *promised* to offer a sacrifice.”

**17. *prepared a great fish*** — not *created* specially for this purpose, but appointed in His providence, to which all creatures are subservient. The fish, through a mistranslation of <sup><6240></sup>Matthew 12:40, was formerly supposed to be a whale; there, as here, the original means “a great fish.” The whale’s neck is too narrow to receive a man. BOCHART thinks, the *dog-fish*, the stomach of which is so large that the body of a man in armor was once found in it [*Hierozoicon*, 2.5.12]. Others, the *shark* [JEBB]. The *cavity in the whale’s throat*, large enough, according to CAPTAIN SCORESBY, to hold a ship’s jolly boat full of men. A *miracle* in any view is needed, and we have no data to speculate further. A “sign” or miracle it is expressly called by our Lord in <sup><6129></sup>Matthew 12:39. Respiration in such a position could only

be by miracle. The miraculous interposition was not without a sufficient reason; it was calculated to affect not only Jonah, but also Nineveh and Israel. The life of a prophet was often marked by experiences which made him, through sympathy, best suited for discharging the prophetic function to his hearers and his people. The infinite resources of God in mercy as well as judgment are prefigured in the devourer being transformed into Jonah's preserver. Jonah's condition under punishment, shut out from the outer world, was rendered as much as possible the emblem of death, a present type to Nineveh and Israel, of the death in sin, as his deliverance was of the spiritual resurrection on repentance; as also, a future type of Jesus' literal death for sin, and resurrection by the Spirit of God.

*three days and three nights* — probably, like the Antitype, Christ, Jonah was cast forth on the land on the *third* day (<sup>4020</sup>Matthew 12:40); the Hebrew counting the first and third parts of days as whole twenty-four hour days.

# CHAPTER 2

## JONAH 2:1-10.

### JONAH'S PRAYER OF FAITH AND DELIVERANCE.

**1. his God** — “his” still, though Jonah had fled from Him. Faith enables Jonah now to feel this; just as the returning prodigal says of the Father, from whom he had wandered, “I will arise and go to my Father” (<sup><4258></sup>Luke 15:18).

**out of the fish's belly** — Every place may serve as an oratory. No place is amiss for prayer. Others translate, “when (delivered) out of the fish's belly.” *English Version* is better.

**2.** His prayer is partly descriptive and precatory, partly eucharistical. Jonah incorporates with his own language inspired utterances familiar to the Church long before in Jon 2:2, <sup><4300></sup>Psalm 120:1; in Jon 2:3, <sup><4307></sup>Psalm 42:7; in Jon 2:4, <sup><4302></sup>Psalm 31:22; in Jon 2:5, <sup><4300></sup>Psalm 69:1; in Jon 2:7, <sup><4318></sup>Psalm 142:3 18:6; in Jon 2:8, <sup><4306></sup>Psalm 31:6; in Jon 2:9, <sup><4307></sup>Psalm 116:17,18,3:8. Jonah, an inspired man, thus attests both the antiquity and inspiration of the Psalms. It marks the spirit of faith, that Jonah identifies himself with the saints of old, appropriating their experiences as recorded in the Word of God (<sup><4300></sup>Psalm 119:50). Affliction opens up the mine of Scripture, before seen only on the surface.

**out of the belly of hell** — *Sheol*, the unseen world, which the belly of the fish resembled.

**3. thou hadst cast ... thy billows ... thy waves** — Jonah recognizes the source whence his sufferings came. It was no mere chance, but *the hand of God* which sent them. Compare Job's similar recognition of God's hand in calamities, <sup><4002></sup>Job 1:21 2:10; and David's, <sup><4005></sup>2 Samuel 16:5-11.

**4. cast out from thy sight** — that is, from Thy favorable regard. A just retribution on one who had fled “*from the presence of the Lord*” (Jon 1:3). Now that he has got his desire, he feels it to be his bitterest sorrow to be deprived of God's presence, which once he regarded as a burden, and from which he desired to escape. He had turned his back on God; so God turned His back on him, making his sin his punishment.

**toward thy holy temple** — In the confidence of faith he anticipates yet to see the temple at Jerusalem, the appointed place of worship (<sup><1038></sup>1 Kings 8:38), and there to render thanksgiving [HENDERSON]. Rather, I think, “Though cast out of Thy sight, I will still *with the eye of faith* once more *look in prayer* towards Thy temple at Jerusalem, whither, as Thy earthly throne, Thou hast desired Thy worshippers to direct their prayers.”

**5. even to the soul** — that is, threatening to extinguish the *animal life*.

**weeds** — He felt as if the seaweeds through which he was dragged were wrapped about his head.

**6. bottoms of ... mountains** — their *extremities* where they *terminate* in the hidden depths of the sea. Compare <sup><9107></sup>Psalms 18:7, “the foundations of the hills” (<sup><9185></sup>Psalms 18:15).

**earth with her bars was about me** — Earth, the land of the living, is (not “was”) shut against me.

**for ever** — so far as any effort of *mine* can deliver me.

**yet hast thou brought up my life from corruption** — rather, “Thou bringest ... from the pit” [MAURER]. As in the previous clauses he expresses the hopelessness of his state, so in this, his sure hope of deliverance through Jehovah’s infinite resources. “Against hope he believes in hope,” and speaks as if the deliverance were actually being accomplished. Hezekiah seems to have incorporated Jonah’s very words in his prayer (<sup><2387></sup>Isaiah 38:17), just as Jonah appropriated the language of the Psalms.

**7. soul fainted ... I remembered the Lord** — beautifully exemplifying the triumph of spirit over flesh, of faith over sense (<sup><9739></sup>Psalms 73:26 42:6). For a time troubles shut out hope; but faith revived when Jonah “remembered the Lord,” what a gracious God He is, and how now He still preserves his life and consciousness in his dark prison-house.

**into thine holy temple** — the temple at Jerusalem (Jon 2:4). As there he looks in believing prayer towards it, so here he regards his prayer as already heard.

**8. observe lying vanities** — regard or reverence idols, powerless to save (<sup><9307></sup>Psalms 31:6).

**mercy** — Jehovah, the very idea of whom is identified now in Jonah’s mind with mercy and loving-kindness. As the Psalmist (<sup><9347></sup>Psalms 144:2) styles Him, “my goodness”; God who is to me all beneficence. Compare

<sup><4547></sup>Psalm 59:17, “the God of my mercy,” literally, “my kindness-God.” Jonah had “forsaken His own mercy,” God, to flee to heathen lands where “lying vanities” (idols) were worshipped. But now, taught by his own preservation in conscious life in the fish’s belly, and by the inability of the mariners idols to lull the storm (Jon 1:5), estrangement from God seems estrangement from his own happiness (<sup><2403></sup>Jeremiah 2:13 17:13). Prayer has been restrained in Jonah’s case, so that he was “fast asleep” in the midst of danger, heretofore; but now prayer is the sure sign of his return to God.

**9. *I will sacrifice ... thanksgiving*** — In the believing anticipation of sure deliverance, he offers thanksgivings already. So Jehoshaphat (<sup><4402></sup>Chronicles 20:21) appointed singers to *praise* the Lord in front of the army before the battle with Moab and Ammon, as if the victory was already gained. God honors such confidence in Him. There is also herein a mark of sanctified affliction, that he vows amendment and thankful obedience (<sup><4362></sup>Psalm 119:67).

**10. *upon the dry land*** — probably on the coast of Palestine.

# CHAPTER 3

## JONAH 3:1-10.

### JONAH'S SECOND COMMISSION TO NINEVEH: THE NINEVITES REPENT OF THEIR EVIL WAY: SO GOD REPENTS OF THE EVIL THREATENED.

2. *preach ... the preaching* — literally, “proclaim the proclamation.” On the former occasion the specific object of his commission to Nineveh was declared; here it is indeterminate. This is to show how freely he yields himself, in the spirit of unconditional obedience, to speak whatever God may please.

3. *arose and went* — like the son who was at first disobedient to the father’s command, “Go work in my vineyard,” but who afterwards “repented and went” (<sup><1218></sup>Matthew 21:28,29). Jonah was thus the fittest instrument for proclaiming judgment, and yet hope of mercy on repentance to Nineveh, being himself a living exemplification of both — judgment in his entombment in the fish, mercy on repentance in his deliverance. Israel professing to obey, but not obeying, and so doomed to exile in the same Nineveh, answers to the son who said, “I go, sir, and went not.” In <sup><213></sup>Luke 11:30 it is said that Jonas was not only a sign to the men in Christ’s time, but also “unto the Ninevites.” On the latter occasion (<sup><1618></sup>Matthew 16:1-4) when the Pharisees and Sadducees tempted Him, asking a sign *from heaven*, He answered, “No sign shall be given, but the sign of the prophet Jonas,” <sup><1239></sup>Matthew 12:39. Thus the sign had a *twofold* aspect, a direct bearing on the Ninevites, an indirect bearing on the Jews in Christ’s time. To the Ninevites he was not merely a prophet, but himself a wonder in the earth, as one who had tasted of death, and yet had not seen corruption, but had now returned to witness among them for God. If the Ninevites had indulged in a captious spirit, they never would have inquired and so known Jonah’s wonderful history; but being humbled by God’s awful message, they learned from Jonah himself that it was the previous concealing in his bosom of the same message of their own doom that caused him to be entombed as an outcast from the living. Thus he was a “sign” to them of wrath on the one hand, and, on the other, of mercy. Guilty Jonah saved from the jaws of death gives a ray of hope to guilty Nineveh. Thus God, who brings good from evil, made Jonah in his fall, punishment, and

restoration, a sign (an *embodied lesson* or *living symbol*) through which the Ninevites were roused to hear and repent, as they would not have been likely to do, had he gone on the first commission before his living entombment and resurrection. To do evil that good may come, is a policy which can only come from Satan; but from evil already done to extract an instrument against the kingdom of darkness, is a triumphant display of the grace and wisdom of God. To the Pharisees in Christ's time, who, not content with the many signs exhibited by Him, still demanded a sign *from heaven*, He gave a sign in the opposite quarter, namely, Jonah, who came "out of the belly of *hell*" (the unseen region). They looked for a Messiah gloriously coming in the clouds of *heaven*; the Messiah, on the contrary, is to pass through a like, though a deeper, humiliation than Jonah; He is to lie "in the heart of *the earth*." Jonah and his Antitype alike appeared low and friendless among their hearers; both victims to death for God's wrath against sin, both preaching repentance. Repentance derives all its efficacy from the death of Christ, just as Jonah's message derived its weight with the Ninevites from his entombment. The Jews stumbled at Christ's death, the very fact which ought to have led them to Him, as Jonah's entombment attracted the Ninevites to his message. As Jonah's restoration gave hope of God's placability to Nineveh, so Christ's resurrection assures us God is fully reconciled to man by Christ's death. But Jonah's entombment only had the effect of a *moral suasive*; Christ's resurrection assures us God is fully reconciliation between God and man [FAIRBAIRN].

***Nineveh was an exceeding great city*** — literally, "great to God," that is, before God. All greatness was in the Hebrew mind associated with GOD; hence arose the idiom (compare "great mountains," *Margin*, "mountains of God," <sup>4816</sup>Psalm 36:6; "goodly cedars," *Margin*, "cedars of God," <sup>4810</sup>Psalm 80:10; "a mighty hunter *before the Lord*," <sup>4119</sup>Genesis 10:9).

***three days' journey*** — that is, about sixty miles, allowing about twenty miles for a day's journey. Jonah's statement is confirmed by heathen writers, who describe Nineveh as four hundred eighty stadia in circumference [DIODORUS SICULUS, 2.3]. HERODOTUS defines a day's journey to be one hundred fifty stadia; so three days' journey will not be much below DIODORUS' estimate. The parallelogram in Central Assyria covered with remains of buildings has Khorsabad northeast; Koyunjik and Nebbi Yunus near the Tigris, northwest; Nimroud, between the Tigris and the Zab, southwest; and Karamless, at a distance inward from the Zab, southeast. From Koyunjik to Nimroud is about eighteen miles; from Khorsabad to Karamless, the same; from Koyunjik to Khorsabad, thirteen or fourteen miles; from Nimroud to Karamless, fourteen miles. The length thus was greater than the breadth; compare Jon 3:4, "a day's journey,"

which is confirmed by heathen writers and by modern measurements. The walls were a hundred feet high, and broad enough to allow three chariots abreast, and had moreover fifteen hundred lofty towers. The space between, including large parks and arable ground, as well as houses, was Nineveh in its full extent. The oldest palaces are at Nimroud, which was probably the original site. LAYARD latterly has thought that the name Nineveh belonged originally to Koyunjik, rather than to Nimroud. Jonah (Jon 4:11) mentions the children as numbering one hundred twenty thousand, which would give about a million to the whole population. Existing ruins show that Nineveh acquired its greatest extent under the kings of the second dynasty, that is, the kings mentioned in Scripture; it was then that Jonah visited it, and the reports of its magnificence were carried to the west [LAYARD].

**4. *a day's journey*** — not going straight forward without stopping: for the city was but eighteen miles in length; but stopping in his progress from time to time to announce his message to the crowds gathering about him.

***Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown*** — The commission, given indefinitely at his setting out, assumes now on his arrival a definite form, and that severer than before. It is no longer a cry against the sins of Nineveh, but an announcement of its ruin in forty days. This number is in Scripture associated often with humiliation. It was forty days that Moses, Elijah, and Christ fasted. Forty years elapsed from the beginning of Christ's ministry (the antitype of Jonah's) to the destruction of Jerusalem. The more definite form of the denunciation implies that Nineveh has now almost filled up the measure of her guilt. The change in the form which the Ninevites would hear from Jonah on anxious inquiry into his history, would alarm them the more, as implying the increasing nearness and certainty of their doom, and would at the same time reprove Jonah for his previous guilt in delaying to warn them. The very solitariness of the one message announced by the stranger thus suddenly appearing among them, would impress them with the more awe. Learning from him, that so far from lightly prophesying evil against them, he had shrunk from announcing a less severe denunciation, and therefore had been east into the deep and only saved by miracle, they felt how imminent was their peril, threatened as they now were by a prophet whose fortunes were so closely bound up with theirs. In Noah's days one hundred twenty years of warning were given to men, yet they repented not till the flood came, and it was too late. But in the case of Nineveh, God granted a double mercy: first, that its people should repent immediately after threatening; second, that pardon should immediately follow their repentance.

**5. *believed God*** — gave credit to Jonah's message from God; thus recognizing Jehovah as the true God.

**fast ... sackcloth** — In the East outward actions are often used as symbolical expressions of inward feelings. So fasting and clothing in sackcloth were customary in humiliation. Compare in Ahab's case, parallel to that of Nineveh, both receiving a *respite* on penitence (<sup>1277</sup>1 Kings 21:27 20:31,32 <sup>2013</sup>Joel 1:13).

**from the greatest ... to the least** — The penitence was not partial, but pervading all classes.

**6. in ashes** — emblem of the deepest humiliation (<sup>808</sup>Job 2:8 <sup>3273</sup>Ezekiel 27:30).

**7. neither ... beast ... taste any thing** — The brute creatures share in the evil effects of man's sin (Jon 4:11 <sup>6101</sup>Romans 8:20,22); so they here according to Eastern custom, are made to share in man's outward indications of humiliation. "When the Persian general Masistias was slain, the horses and mules of the Persians were shorn, as well as themselves" [NEWCOME from PLUTARCH; also HERODOTUS, 9.24].

**8. cry ... turn** — Prayer without reformation is a mockery of God (<sup>668</sup>Psalms 66:18 <sup>2806</sup>Isaiah 58:6). Prayer, on the other hand, must precede true reformation, as we cannot turn to God from our evil way unless God first turns us (<sup>2818</sup>Jeremiah 31:18,19).

**9. Who can tell** — (Compare <sup>2014</sup>Joel 2:14). Their acting on a vague possibility of God's mercy, without any special ground of encouragement, is the more remarkable instance of faith, as they had to break through long-rooted prejudices in giving up idols to seek Jehovah at all. The only ground which their ready faith rested on, was the fact of God sending one to warn them, instead of destroying them at once; this suggested the thought of a possibility of pardon. Hence they are cited by Christ as about to condemn in the judgment those who, with much greater light and privileges, yet repent not (<sup>4024</sup>Matthew 12:41).

**10. God repented of the evil** — When the message was sent to them, they were so ripe for judgment that a purpose of destruction to take effect in forty days was the only word God's righteous abhorrence of sin admitted of as to them. But when they repented, the position in which they stood towards God's righteousness was altered. So God's mode of dealing with them must alter accordingly, if God is not to be inconsistent with His own immutable character of dealing with men according to their works and state of heart, taking vengeance at last on the hardened impenitent, and delighting to show mercy on the penitent. Compare Abraham's reasoning, <sup>0182</sup>Genesis 18:25 <sup>3201</sup>Ezekiel 18:21-25 <sup>3107</sup>Jeremiah 18:7-10. What was really a change in them and in God's corresponding dealings is, in condescension to human

conceptions, represented as a change in God (compare <sup><E214</sup>Exodus 32:14), who, in His essential righteousness and mercy, changeth not (<sup><O239</sup>Numbers 23:19 <sup><O159</sup>1 Samuel 15:29 Malachi 3:6 <sup><S017</sup>James 1:17). The reason why the announcement of destruction was made absolute, and not dependent on Nineveh's continued impenitence, was that this form was the only one calculated to rouse them; and at the same time it was a *truthful* representation of God's purpose towards Nineveh under its existing state, and of Nineveh's due. When that state ceased, a new relation of Nineveh to God, not contemplated in the message, came in, and room was made for the word to take effect, "the curse causeless shall not come" [FAIRBAIRN]. Prophecy is not merely for the sake of proving God's omniscience by the verification of predictions of the future, but is mainly designed to vindicate God's justice and mercy in dealing with the impenitent and penitent respectively (<sup><S122</sup>Romans 11:22). The Bible ever assigns the first place to the eternal principles of righteousness, rooted in the character of God, subordinating to them all divine arrangements. God's sparing Nineveh, when in the jaws of destruction, on the first dawn of repentance encourages the timid penitent, and shows beforehand that Israel's doom, soon after accomplished, is to be ascribed, not to unwillingness to forgive on God's part, but to their own obstinate impenitence.

# CHAPTER 4

## JONAH 4:1-11.

### JONAH FRETS AT GOD'S MERCY TO NINEVEH: IS REPROVED BY THE TYPE OF A GOURD.

1. **angry** — literally, “hot,” probably, with *grief* or *vexation*, rather than *anger* [FAIRBAIRN]. How sad the contrast between God’s feeling on the repentance of Nineveh towards Him, and Jonah’s feeling on the repentance of God towards Nineveh. Strange in one who was himself a monument of mercy on his repentance! We all, like him, need the lesson taught in the parable of the unforgiving, though forgiven, debtor (<sup><41823></sup>Matthew 18:23-35). Jonah was grieved because Nineveh’s preservation, after his denunciation, made him seem a false prophet [CALVIN]. But it would make Jonah a demon, not a man, to have preferred the destruction of six hundred thousand men rather than that his prophecy should be set aside through God’s mercy triumphing over judgment. And God in that case would have severely chastised, whereas he only expostulates mildly with him, and by a mode of dealing, at once gentle and condescending, tries to show him his error. Moreover, Jonah himself, in apologizing for his vexation, does not mention *the failure of his prediction* as the cause: but solely the thought of God’s *slowness to anger*. This was what led him to flee to Tarshish at his first commission; not the likelihood *then* of his prediction being falsified; for in fact his commission then was not to foretell Nineveh’s downfall, but simply to “cry against” Nineveh’s “wickedness” as having “come up before God.” Jonah could hardly have been so vexed for the letter of his prediction failing, when the end of his commission had virtually been gained in leading Nineveh to repentance. This then cannot have been regarded by Jonah as the *ultimate* end of his commission. If Nineveh had been the prominent object with him, he would have rejoiced at the result of his mission. But Israel was the prominent aim of Jonah, as a prophet of the elect people. Probably then he regarded the destruction of Nineveh as fitted to be an example of God’s judgment at last suspending His long forbearance so as to startle Israel from its desperate degeneracy, heightened by its new prosperity under Jeroboam II at that very time, in a way that all other means had failed to do. Jonah, despairing of anything effectual being done for God in Israel, unless there were first given a striking example of severity, thought when he proclaimed the downfall of Nineveh in forty

days, that now at last God is about to give such an example; so when this means of awakening Israel was set aside by God's mercy on Nineveh's repentance, he was bitterly disappointed, not from pride or mercilessness, but from hopelessness as to anything being possible for the reformation of Israel, now that his cherished hope is baffled. But GOD'S plan was to teach Israel, by the example of Nineveh, how inexcusable is their own impenitence, and how inevitable their ruin if they persevere. Repenting Nineveh has proved herself more worthy of God's favor than apostate Israel; the children of the covenant have not only fallen down to, but actually below, the level of a heathen people; Israel, therefore, must go down, and the heathen rise above her. Jonah did not know the important lessons of hope to the penitent, and condemnation to those amidst outward privileges impenitent, which Nineveh's preservation on repentance was to have for aftertimes, and to all ages. He could not foresee that Messiah Himself was thus to apply that history. A lesson to us that if we *could* in any particular alter the plan of Providence, it would not be for the better, but for the worse [FAIRBAIRN].

**2. *my saying*** — my thought, or feeling.

***fled before*** — *I anticipated by fleeing*, the disappointment of my design through Thy long-suffering mercy.

***gracious ... and merciful***, etc. — Jonah here has before his mind <sup><2306</sup>Exodus 34:6; as Joel (<sup><2023</sup>Joel 2:13) in his turn quotes from Jonah.

**3.** Jonah's impatience of life under disappointed hopes of Israel's reformation through the destruction of Nineveh, is like that of Elijah at his plan for reforming Israel (<sup><1801</sup>1 Kings 18:1-46) failing through Jezebel (<sup><1904</sup>1 Kings 19:4).

**4. *Doest thou well to be angry?*** — or *grieved*; rather as the *Margin*, "Art thou *much* angry," or "grieved?" [FAIRBAIRN with the *Septuagint* and *Syriac*]. But *English Version* suits the spirit of the passage, and is quite tenable in the *Hebrew* [GESENIUS].

**5. *made him a booth*** — that is, a temporary hut of branches and leaves, so slightly formed as to be open to the wind and sun's heat.

***see what would become of the city*** — The term of forty days had not yet elapsed, and Jonah did not know that anything more than a suspension, or mitigation, of judgment had been granted to Nineveh. Therefore, not from sullenness, but in order to watch the event from a neighboring station, he lodged in the booth. As a stranger, he did not know the depth of Nineveh's repentance; besides, from the Old Testament standpoint he knew that

chastening judgments often followed, as in David's case (<sup>4020</sup>2 Samuel 12:10-12,14), even where sin had been repented of. To show him what he knew not, the largeness and completeness of God's mercy to penitent Nineveh, and the reasonableness of it, God made his booth a school of discipline to give him more enlightened views.

**6. gourd** — *Hebrew, kikaion*; the Egyptian *kiki*, the "ricinus" or castor-oil plant, commonly called "palm-christ" (*palma-christi*). It grows from eight to ten feet high. Only one leaf grows on a branch, but that leaf being often more than a foot large, the collective leaves give good shelter from the heat. It grows rapidly, and fades as suddenly when injured.

**to deliver him from his grief** — It was therefore *grief*, not selfish anger, which Jonah felt (see on Jon 4:1). Some external comforts will often turn the mind away from its sorrowful bent.

**7. a worm** — of a particular kind, deadly to the ricinus. A small worm at the root destroys a large gourd. So it takes but little to make our creature comforts wither. It should silence discontent to remember, that when our gourd is gone, our God is not gone.

**the next day** — after Jonah was so "exceeding glad" (compare <sup>4800</sup>Psalm 80:7).

**8. vehement** — rather, "scorching"; the *Margin*, "silent," expressing sultry *stillness*, not *vehemence*.

**9.** (See on Jon 4:4).

**I do well to be angry, even unto death** — "I am very much grieved, even to death" [FAIRBAIRN]. So the Antitype (<sup>4125</sup>Matthew 26:38).

**10, 11.** The main lesson of the book. If Jonah so pities a plant which cost him no toil to rear, and which is so short lived and valueless, much more must Jehovah pity those hundreds of thousands of immortal men and women in great Nineveh whom He has made with such a display of creative power, especially when many of them repent, and seeing that, if all in it were destroyed, "more than six score thousand" of *unoffending* children, besides "much cattle," would be involved in the common destruction: Compare the same argument drawn from God's justice and mercy in <sup>4182</sup>Genesis 18:23-33. A similar illustration from the insignificance of a plant, which "to-day is and to-morrow is cast into the oven," and which, nevertheless, is clothed by God with surpassing beauty, is given by Christ to prove that God will care for the infinitely more precious bodies and souls of men who are to live for ever (<sup>4165</sup>Matthew 6:28-30). One soul is of more value than the whole world; surely, then, one soul is of more

value than many gourds. The point of comparison spiritually is the *need* which Jonah, for the time being, had of the foliage of the gourd. However he might dispense with it at other times, now it was necessary for his comfort, and almost for his life. So now that Nineveh, as a city, fears God and turns to Him, God's cause needs it, and would suffer by its overthrow, just as Jonah's material well-being suffered by the withering of the gourd. If there were any hope of Israel's being awakened by Nineveh's destruction to fulfill her high destination of being a light to surrounding heathenism, then there would not have been the same need to God's cause of Nineveh's preservation, (though there would have always been need of saving the penitent). But as Israel, after judgments, now with returning prosperity turns back to apostasy, the means *needed* to vindicate God's cause, and provoke Israel, if possible, to jealousy, is the example of the great capital of heathendom suddenly repenting at the first warning, and consequently being spared. Thus Israel would see the kingdom of heaven transplanted from its ancient seat to another which would willingly yield its spiritual fruits. The tidings which Jonah brought back to his countrymen of Nineveh's repentance and rescue, would, if believably understood, be far more fitted than the news of its overthrow to recall Israel to the service of God. Israel failed to learn the lesson, and so was cast out of her land. But even this was not an unmitigated evil. Jonah was a type, as of Christ, so also of Israel. Jonah, though an outcast, was highly honored of God in Nineveh; so Israel's outcast condition would prove no impediment to her serving God's cause still, if only she was faithful to God. Ezekiel and Daniel were so at Babylon; and the Jews, scattered in all lands as witnesses for the one true God, pioneered the way for Christianity, so that it spread with a rapidity which otherwise was not likely to have attended it [FAIRBAIRN].

**11. *that cannot discern between their right hand and their left*** — children under three of four years old (<sup>(~~RE~~39)</sup>Deuteronomy 1:39). *Six score thousand* of these, allowing them to be a fifth of the whole, would give a *total* population of six hundred thousand.

***much cattle*** — God cares even for the brute creatures, of which man takes little account. These in wonderful powers and in utility are far above the shrub which Jonah is so concerned about. Yet Jonah is reckless as to their destruction and that of innocent children. The abruptness of the close of the book is more strikingly suggestive than if the thought had been followed out in detail.

# THE BOOK OF MICAH

Commentary by **A. R. FAUSSETT**

## INTRODUCTION

MICAH was a native of Moresheth, not the same as Mareshah in <sup><300E></sup>Micah 1:15, but the town called Moresheth-gath (<sup><300E></sup>Micah 1:14), which lay near Eleutheropolis, west of Jerusalem, on the border of the Philistine country; so called to distinguish it from Moresheth of Judah. His full name is *Micaiah* (not the Micaiah mentioned <sup><1218></sup>1 Kings 22:8, the son of Imlah), signifying, *Who is like Jehovah?* The time of his prophesying is stated in the introduction to be in the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, that is, between 757 and 699 B.C. Jeremiah (<sup><2038></sup>Jeremiah 26:18) quotes <sup><3012></sup>Micah 3:12, as delivered in the reign of Hezekiah. He was thus a contemporary of Isaiah and Hosea. The idolatries practiced in the reign of Ahaz accord with Micah's denunciations of such gross evils, and confirm the truth of the time assigned <sup><300E></sup>Micah 1:1. His prophecies are partly against Israel (Samaria), partly against Judah. As Samaria, Israel's metropolis, was taken first, and Jerusalem, the capital of Judah subsequently, in the introductory heading, <sup><300E></sup>Micah 1:1, *Samaria* is put first, then *Jerusalem*. He prophesies the capture of both; the Jews captivity and restoration; and the coming and reign of Messiah. His style is full, round, and perspicuous; his diction pure, and his parallelisms regular. His description of Jehovah (<sup><3078></sup>Micah 7:18,19) is not surpassed by any elsewhere in Scripture. The similarity between Isaiah and Micah in some passages (compare <sup><300E></sup>Micah 4:1-3, with <sup><201E></sup>Isaiah 2:2-4) is to be accounted for by their being contemporaries, acquainted with each other's inspired writings, and having the same subjects for their theme. HENGSTENBERG maintains that the passage in Micah is the original. Isaiah was somewhat the older, being a prophet in the reign of Uzziah, Jotham's predecessor, whereas Micah began his prophecies under Jotham.

The book consists of two parts:

- (1) the first through fifth chapters;

(2) the sixth and seventh chapters, a dialogue or contestation between Jehovah and His people, in which He reproaches them with their unnatural and ungrateful conduct, and threatens judgment for their corruptions, but consoles them with the promise of restoration from captivity.

Micah stands sixth of the minor prophets in the *Hebrew* canon, but third in the *Septuagint*.

# CHAPTER 1

## ⋈ MICAH 1:1-16.

### GOD'S WRATH AGAINST SAMARIA AND JUDAH; THE FORMER IS TO BE OVERTHROWN; SUCH JUDGMENTS IN PROSPECT CALL FOR MOURNING.

**2. *all that therein is*** — *Hebrew*, “whatever fills it.” Micaiah, son of Imlah, begins his prophecy similarly, “Hearken, O people, every one of you.” Micah designedly uses the same preface, implying that his ministrations are a continuation of his predecessor’s of the same name. Both probably had before their mind Moses’ similar attestation of heaven and earth in a like case (⋈ Deuteronomy 31:28 32:1; compare ⋈ Isaiah 1:2).

***God be witness against you*** — namely, that none of you can say, when the time of your punishment shall come, that you were not forewarned. The punishment denounced is stated in ⋈ Micah 1:3, etc.

***from his holy temple*** — that is, heaven (⋈ 1 Kings 8:30 ⋈ Psalm 11:4 Jon 2:7; compare ⋈ Romans 1:18).

**3. *tread upon the high places of the earth*** — He shall destroy the fortified heights (compare ⋈ Deuteronomy 32:13 33:29) [GROTIUS].

**4.** Imagery from earthquakes and volcanic agency, to describe the terrors which attend Jehovah’s coming in judgment (compare ⋈ Judges 5:5). Neither men of high degree, as the mountains, nor men of low degree, as the valleys, can secure themselves or their land from the judgments of God.

***as wax*** — (⋈ Psalm 97:5; compare ⋈ Isaiah 64:1-3). The third clause, “as wax,” etc.; answers to the first in the parallelism, “the mountains shall be molten”; the fourth, “as the waters,” etc.; to the second, “the valleys shall be cleft.” As wax melts by fire, so the mountains before God, at His approach; and as waters poured down a steep cannot stand but are diffused abroad, so the valleys shall be cleft before Jehovah.

**5. *For the transgression of Jacob is all this*** — All these terrors attending Jehovah’s coming are caused by the sins of Jacob or Israel, that is, the whole people.

***What is the transgression of Jacob?*** — Taking up the question often in the mouths of the people when reproved, “What is our transgression?” (compare Malachi 1:6,7), He answers, Is it not Samaria? Is not that city (the seat of the calf-worship) the cause of Jacob’s apostasy (<sup><1146></sup>1 Kings 14:16 15:26,34 16:13,19,25,30)?

***and what are the high places of Judah?*** — What city is the cause of the idolatries on the high places of Judah? Is it not Jerusalem (compare <sup><1204></sup>2 Kings 18:4)?

6. Samaria’s punishment is mentioned first, as it was to fall before Jerusalem.

***as an heap of the field*** — (<sup><382></sup>Micah 3:12). Such a heap of stones and rubbish as is gathered out of fields, to clear them (<sup><2821></sup>Hosea 12:11). Palestine is of a soil abounding in stones, which are gathered out before the vines are planted (<sup><2182></sup>Isaiah 5:2).

***as plantings of a vineyard*** — as a place where vines are planted. Vineyards were cultivated on the sides of hills exposed to the sun. The hill on which Samaria was built by Omri, had been, doubtless, planted with vines originally; now it is to be reduced again to its original state (<sup><1163></sup>1 Kings 16:24).

***pour down*** — dash down the stones of the city into the valley beneath. A graphic picture of the present appearance of the ruins, which is as though “the buildings of the ancient city had been thrown down from the brow of the hill” [*Scottish Mission of Inquiry*, pp. 293,294].

***discover the foundations*** — destroy it so utterly as to lay bare its foundations (<sup><2634></sup>Ezekiel 13:14). Samaria was destroyed by Shalmaneser.

7. ***all the hires*** — the wealth which Israel boasted of receiving from her idols as the “rewards” or “hire” for worshipping them (<sup><305></sup>Hosea 2:5,12).

***idols ... will I ... desolate*** — that is, give them up to the foe to strip off the silver and gold with which they are overlaid.

***she gathered it of the hire of an harlot, and they shall return to the hire of an harlot*** — Israel gathered (made for herself) her idols from the gold and silver received from false gods, as she thought, the “hire” of her worshipping them; and they shall again become what they had been before, the hire of spiritual harlotry, that is, the prosperity of the foe, who also being worshippers of idols will ascribe the acquisition to their idols [MAURER]. GROTIUS explains it, *The offerings sent to Israel’s temple by the Assyrians*, whose idolatry Israel adopted, shall go back to the Assyrians,

her teachers in idolatry, as the hire or *fee for having taught it*. The image of a *harlot's hire* for the supposed temporal reward of spiritual fornication, is more common in Scripture (<sup><2300></sup>Hosea 9:1).

**8. *Therefore I will wail*** — The prophet first shows how the coming judgment affects himself, in order that he might affect the minds of his countrymen similarly.

***stripped*** — that is, *of shoes, or sandals*, as the *Septuagint* translates. Otherwise “naked” would be a tautology.

***naked*** — “Naked” means *divested of the upper garment* (<sup><2310></sup>Isaiah 20:2). “Naked and barefoot,” the sign of mourning (<sup><1053></sup>2 Samuel 15:30). The prophet’s upper garment was usually rough and coarse-haired (<sup><1200></sup>2 Kings 1:8 Zechariah 13:4).

***like the dragons*** — so JEROME. Rather, “the wild dogs,” jackals or wolves, which wail like an infant when in distress or alone [MAURER]. (See on <sup><3810></sup>Job 30:29).

***owls*** — rather, “ostriches,” which give a shrill and long-drawn, sigh-like cry, especially at night.

**9. *wound ... incurable*** — Her case, politically and morally, is desperate (<sup><2402></sup>Jeremiah 8:22).

***it is come*** — the wound, or impending calamity (compare <sup><2303></sup>Isaiah 10:28).

***he is come ... even to Jerusalem*** — The evil is no longer limited to Israel. The prophet foresees Sennacherib coming even “to the gate” of the principal city. The use of “it” and “he” is appropriately distinct. “It,” the calamity, “came unto” Judah, many of the inhabitants of which suffered, but did not reach the citizens of Jerusalem, “the gate” of which the foe (“he”) “came unto,” but did not enter (<sup><2301></sup>Isaiah 36:1;37:33-37).

**10. *Declare ye it not at Gath*** — on the borders of Judea, one of the five cities of the Philistines, who would exult at the calamity of the Hebrews (<sup><3010></sup>2 Samuel 1:20). Gratify not those who exult over the falls of the Israel of God.

***weep ye not at all*** — Do not betray your inward sorrow by outward weeping, within the cognizance of the enemy, lest they should exult at it. RELAND translates, “Weep not *in Acco*,” that is, Ptolemais, now St. Jean d’Acre, near the foot of Mount Carmel; allotted to Asher, but never occupied by that tribe (<sup><1003></sup>Judges 1:31); Acco’s inhabitants would, therefore, like Gath’s, rejoice at Israel’s disaster. Thus the parallelism is

best carried out in all the three clauses of the verse, and there is a similar play on sounds in each, in the *Hebrew Gath*, resembling in sound the *Hebrew* for “declare”; *Acco*, resembling the *Hebrew* for “weep”; and *Aphrah*, meaning “dust.” While the Hebrews were not to expose their misery to foreigners, they ought to bewail it in their own cities, for example, Aphrah or Ophrah (<sup>46823</sup>Joshua 18:23 <sup>49371</sup>1 Samuel 13:17), in the tribe of Benjamin. To “roll in the dust” marked deep sorrow (<sup>24636</sup>Jeremiah 6:26 <sup>25730</sup>Ezekiel 27:30).

**11. *Pass ye away*** — that is, Thou shall go into captivity.

***inhabitant of Saphir*** — a village amidst the hills of Judah, between Eleutheropolis and Ascalon, called so, from the *Hebrew* word for “beauty.” Though thy name be “beauty,” which heretofore was thy characteristic, thou shalt have thy “shame” made “naked.” This city shall be dismantled of its walls, which are the garments, as it were, of cities; its citizens also shall be hurried into captivity, with persons exposed (<sup>23078</sup>Isaiah 47:3 <sup>23670</sup>Ezekiel 16:37 <sup>23210</sup>Hosea 2:10).

***the inhabitant of Zaanan came not forth*** — Its inhabitants did not come forth to console the people of Beth-ezel in their mourning, because the calamity was universal; none was exempt from it (compare <sup>23025</sup>Jeremiah 6:25). “Zaanan” is the same as Zenan, in Judah (<sup>46557</sup>Joshua 15:37), meaning the “place of flocks.” The form of the name used is made like the *Hebrew* for “came forth.” Though in name seeming to imply that thou dost *come forth*, thou “camest not forth.”

***Beth-ezel*** — perhaps Azal (Zechariah 14:5), near Jerusalem. It means a “house on the side,” or “near.” Though *so near*, as its name implies, to Zaanan, Beth-ezel received no succor or sympathy from Zaanan.

***he shall receive of you his standing*** — “he,” that is, the foe; “his standing,” that is, his sustenance [PISCATOR]. Or, “he shall be caused a delay by you, Zaanan.” He shall be brought to a stand for a time in besieging you; hence it is said just before, “Zaanan came not forth,” that is, shut herself up within her walls to withstand a siege. But it was only for a time. She, too, fell like Beth-ezel before her [VATABLUS]. MAURER construes thus: “The inhabitant of Zaanan came not forth; the mourning of Beth-ezel *takes away from you* her shelter.” Though Beth-ezel be *at your side* (that is, near), according to her name, yet as she also mourns under the oppression of the foe, she cannot give you shelter, or be *at your side* as a helper (as her name might lead you to expect), if you come forth and be intercepted by him from returning to Zaanan.

**12. *Maroth*** — possibly the same as Maarath (<sup><0159></sup>Joshua 15:59). Perhaps a different town, lying between the previously mentioned towns and the capital, and one of those plundered by Rab-shakeh on his way to it.

***waited carefully for good*** — that is, for better fortune, but in vain [CALVIN]. GESENIUS translates, “*is grieved* for her goods,” “taken away” from her. This accords with the meaning of Maroth, “bitterness,” to which allusion is made in “*is grieved.*” But the antithesis favors *English Version*, “waited carefully (that is, anxiously) for *good*, but *evil* came down.”

***from the Lord*** — not from *chance*.

***unto the gate of Jerusalem*** — after the other cities of Judah have been taken.

**13.** “Bind the chariot to the swift *steed*,” in order by a hasty flight to escape the invading foe. Compare *Note*, see on <sup><2301></sup>Isaiah 36:2, on “Lachish,” at which Sennacherib fixed his headquarters (<sup><1294></sup>2 Kings 18:14,17 <sup><3617></sup>Jeremiah 34:7).

***she is the beginning of the sin to ... Zion*** — Lachish was the first of the cities of Judah, according to this passage, to introduce the worship of false gods, imitating what Jeroboam had introduced in Israel. As lying near the border of the north kingdom, Lachish was first to be infected by its idolatry, which thence spread to Jerusalem.

**14. *shalt thou give presents to Moresheth-gath*** — that its inhabitants may send thee help. MAURER explains it, “thou shalt give a writing of renunciation to Moresheth-gath,” that is, thou shalt renounce all claim to it, being compelled to yield it up to the foe. “Thou,” that is, Judah. “Israel” in this verse is used for the kingdom of *Judah*, which was the chief representative of the whole nation of Israel. Moresheth-gath is so called because it had fallen for a time under the power of the neighboring Philistines of *Gath*. It was the native town of Micah (<sup><3001></sup>Micah 1:1).

***Achzib*** — meaning “lying.” Achzib, as its name implies, shall prove a “lie to ... Israel,” that is, shall disappoint Israel’s hopes of succor from her (compare <sup><8065></sup>Job 6:15-20 <sup><21518></sup>Jeremiah 15:18). Achzib was in Judah between Keilah and Mareshah (<sup><0154></sup>Joshua 15:44). Perhaps the same as Chezib (<sup><0085></sup>Genesis 38:5).

**15. *Yet will I bring an heir unto thee*** — rather, “*the heir.*” As thou art now occupied by possessors who expelled the former inhabitants, so will I bring “yet” again *the new possessor*, namely, the Assyrian foe. Other heirs will supplant us in every inheritance but that of heaven. There is a play upon

the meaning of Mareshah, “an inheritance”: there shall come the new *heir* of the *inheritance*.

***Adullam the glory of Israel*** — so called as being superior in situation; when it and the neighboring cities fell, Israel’s glory was gone. MAURER, as the *Margin*, translates, “the glory of Israel” (her chief citizens: answering to “thy delicate children,” Micah 1: 16) “shall come in flight to Adullam.” *English Version* better preserves the parallelism, “the heir” in the first clause answering to “he” in the second.

**16. *Make thee bald***, etc. — a token of deep mourning (<sup>-1908</sup>Ezra 9:3 <sup>-1909</sup>Job 1:20). Mourn, O land, for thy darling children.

***poll*** — shave off thy hair.

***enlarge thy baldness*** — Mourn grievously. The land is compared to a mother weeping for her children.

***as the eagle*** — the bald eagle, or the dark-winged vulture. In the moulting season all eagles are comparatively bald (compare <sup>-1936</sup>Psalm 103:5).

## CHAPTER 2

### ⋈ MICAH 2:1-13.

#### DENUNCIATION OF THE EVILS PREVALENT: THE PEOPLE'S UNWILLINGNESS TO HEAR THE TRUTH: THEIR EXPULSION FROM THE LAND THE FITTING FRUIT OF THEIR SIN: YET JUDAH AND ISRAEL ARE HEREAFTER TO BE RESTORED.

1. *devise ... work ... practice* — They do evil not merely on a sudden impulse, but with deliberate design. As in the former chapter sins against the first table are reprov'd, so in this chapter sins against the second table. A gradation: “devise” is the *conception* of the evil purpose; “work” (<sup>⋈</sup>Psalm 58:2), or “fabricate,” the *maturing* of the scheme; “practice,” or “effect,” the *execution* of it.

*because it is in the power of their hand* — for the phrase see <sup>⋈</sup>Genesis 31:29 <sup>⋈</sup>Proverbs 3:27. Might, not right, is what regulates their conduct. Where they can, they commit oppression; where they do not, it is because they cannot.

2. Parallelism, “Take by violence,” answers to “take away”; “fields” and “houses,” to “house” and “heritage” (that is, one’s land).

3. *against this family* — against the nation, and especially against those reprobates in <sup>⋈</sup>Micah 2:1,2.

*I devise an evil* — a happy antithesis between God’s dealings and the Jews dealings (<sup>⋈</sup>Micah 2:1). Ye “devise evil” against your fellow countrymen; I devise evil against you. Ye devise it wrongfully, I by righteous retribution in kind.

*from which ye shall not remove your necks* — as ye have done from the law. The yoke I shall impose shall be one which ye cannot shake off. They who will not bend to God’s “easy yoke” (<sup>⋈</sup>Matthew 11:29,30), shall feel His iron yoke.

*go haughtily* — (Compare Note, see on <sup>⋈</sup>Jeremiah 6:28). Ye shall not walk as now with neck haughtily uplifted, for the yoke shall press down your “neck.”

**this time is evil** — rather, “for *that* time shall be an evil time,” namely, the time of the carrying away into captivity (compare <sup><30B></sup>Amos 5:13 <sup><41B></sup>Ephesians 5:16).

**4. one take up a parable against you** — that is, Some of your foes shall do so, taking in derision from your own mouth your “lamentation,” namely, “We be spoiled,” etc.

**lament with a doleful lamentation** — literally, “lament with a lamentation of lamentations.” *Hebrew, naha, nehi, niyah*, the repetition representing the continuous and monotonous wail.

**he hath changed the portion of my people** — a charge of injustice against Jehovah. He transfers to other nations the sacred territory assigned as the rightful portion of our people (<sup><30B></sup>Micah 1:15).

**turning away he hath divided our fields** — Turning away from us to the enemy, He hath divided among them our fields. CALVIN, as the *Margin*, explains, “*Instead of restoring* our territory, He hath divided our fields among our enemies, each of whom henceforward will have an interest in keeping what he hath gotten: so that we are utterly shut out from hope of restoration.” MAURER translates as a noun, “He hath divided our fields *to a rebel*,” that is, to the foe who is a rebel against the true God, and a worshipper of idols. So “backsliding,” that is, backslider (<sup><34B></sup>Jeremiah 49:4). *English Version* gives a good sense; and is quite tenable in the *Hebrew*.

**5. Therefore** — resumed from <sup><30B></sup>Micah 2:3. On account of your crimes described in <sup><31B></sup>Micah 2:1,2.

**thou** — the ideal individual (“me,” <sup><31B></sup>Micah 2:4), representing the guilty people in whose name he spoke.

**none that ... cast a cord by lot** — none who shall have any possession *measured out*.

**in the congregation of the Lord** — among the people consecrated to Jehovah. By covetousness and violence (<sup><31B></sup>Micah 2:2) they had forfeited “the portion of Jehovah’s people.” This is God’s implied answer to their complaint of injustice (<sup><31B></sup>Micah 2:4).

**6. Prophecy ye not, say they** — namely, the Israelites say to the true prophets, when announcing unwelcome truths. Therefore God judicially abandons them to their own ways: “The prophets, by whose ministry they might have been saved from *shame* (ignominious captivity), shall not (that is, no longer) prophesy to them” (<sup><33B></sup>Isaiah 30:10 <sup><31B></sup>Amos 2:12 7:16).

MAURER translates the latter clause, “they shall not prophesy of *such things*” (as in <sup><318B></sup>Micah 2:3-5, these being rebellious Israel’s words); “let them not prophesy”; “they never cease from insult” (from prophesying insults to us). *English Version* is supported by the parallelism: wherein the similarity of sound and word implies how exactly God makes their punishment answer to their sin, and takes them at their own word. “Prophesy,” literally, “drop” (<sup><631B></sup>Deuteronomy 32:2 <sup><320C></sup>Ezekiel 21:2).

**7. *O thou ... named the house of Jacob*** — priding thyself on the *name*, though having naught of the spirit, of thy progenitor. Also, bearing the name which ought to remind thee of God’s favors granted to thee because of His covenant with Jacob.

***is the Spirit of the Lord straitened?*** — Is His *compassion* contracted within narrower limits now than formerly, so that He should delight in your destruction (compare <sup><571B></sup>Psalm 77:7-9 <sup><251B></sup>Isaiah 59:1,2)?

***are these his doings?*** — that is, Are such threatenings His delight? Ye dislike the prophets’ threatenings (<sup><318B></sup>Micah 2:6):but who is to blame? Not God, for He delights in blessing, rather than threatening; but yourselves (<sup><318B></sup>Micah 2:8) who provoke His threatenings [GROTIUS]. CALVIN translates, “Are your doings such as are prescribed by Him?” Ye boast of being God’s peculiar people: Do ye then conform your lives to God’s law?

***do not my words do good to him that walketh uprightly*** — Are not My words good to the upright? If your ways were upright, My words would not be threatening (compare <sup><983B></sup>Psalm 18:26 <sup><1119B></sup>Matthew 11:19 <sup><1077B></sup>John 7:17).

**8.** Your ways are not such that I can deal with you as I would with the upright.

***Even of late*** — literally, “yesterday,” “long ago.” So “of old.” *Hebrew*, “yesterday” (<sup><231B></sup>Isaiah 30:33); “heretofore,” *Hebrew*, “since yesterday” (<sup><118B></sup>Joshua 3:4).

***my people is risen up as an enemy*** — that is, has rebelled against My precepts; also has become *an enemy* to the unoffending passers-by.

***robe with the garment*** — Not content with the outer “garment,” ye greedily rob passers-by of the ornamental “robe” fitting the body closely and flowing down to the feet [LUDOVICUS DE DIEU] (<sup><165B></sup>Matthew 5:40).

***as men averse from war*** — in antithesis to (*My people*) “as an enemy.” Israel treats the innocent passers-by, though “averse from war,” as an enemy” would treat captives in his power, stripping them of their

habiliments as lawful spoils. GROTIUS translates, “as men *returning* from war,” that is, as captives over whom the right of war gives the victors an absolute power. *English Version* is supported by the antithesis.

**9. *The women of my people*** — that is, the *widows* of the men slain by you (<sup><3100></sup>Micah 2:2) ye cast out from their homes which had been their delight, and seize on them for yourselves.

***from their children*** — that is, from the orphans of the widows.

***taken away my glory*** — namely, their substance and raiment, which, being the fruit of God’s blessing on the young, reflected *God’s glory*. Thus Israel’s crime was not merely robbery, but sacrilege. Their sex did not save the women, nor their age the children from violence.

***for ever*** — There was no repentance. They persevered in sin. The pledged garment was to be restored to the poor before sunset (<sup><1022></sup>Exodus 22:26,27); but these *never* restored their unlawful booty.

**10. *Arise ye, and depart*** — not an exhortation to the children of God to depart out of an ungodly world, as it is often applied; though that sentiment is a scriptural one. This world is doubtless not our “rest,” being “polluted” with sin: it is our passage, not our portion; our aim, not our home (<sup><4017></sup>2 Corinthians 6:17 <sup><3834></sup>Hebrews 13:14). The imperatives express the *certainty* of the *future* event *predicted*. “Since such are your doings (compare <sup><3100></sup>Micah 2:7,8, etc.), My sentence on you is irrevocable (<sup><3100></sup>Micah 2:4,5), however distasteful to you (<sup><3100></sup>Micah 2:6); ye who have *cast out* others from their homes and possessions (<sup><3100></sup>Micah 2:2,8,9) must *arise, depart*, and be cast out of your own (<sup><3100></sup>Micah 2:4,5): *for this is not your rest*” (<sup><4013></sup>Numbers 10:33 <sup><6119></sup>Deuteronomy 12:9 <sup><4951></sup>Psalm 95:11). Canaan was designed to be a *rest* to them after their wilderness fatigues. But it is to be so no longer. Thus God refutes the people’s self-confidence, as if God were bound to them inseparably. The promise (<sup><4924></sup>Psalm 132:14) is quite consistent with temporary withdrawal of God from Israel for their sins.

***it shall destroy you*** — *The land* shall spew you out, because of the defilements wherewith ye “polluted” it (<sup><4885></sup>Leviticus 18:25,28 <sup><3100></sup>Jeremiah 3:2 <sup><4012></sup>Ezekiel 36:12-14).

**11. *walking in the spirit*** — The *Hebrew* means also “wind.” “If a man professing to have the ‘spirit’ of inspiration (<sup><2433></sup>Ezekiel 13:3; so ‘man of the spirit,’ that is, one claiming inspiration, <sup><3100></sup>Hosea 9:7), but really walking in ‘wind’ (prophecy void of nutriment for the soul, and unsubstantial as the *wind*) and falsehood, do lie, saying (that which ye like to hear), I will prophesy,” etc., even such a one, however false his prophecies, since he

flatters your wishes, shall be your prophet (compare <sup><3116></sup>Micah 2:6 <sup><3151></sup>Jeremiah 5:31).

**prophesy ... of wine** — that is, of an abundant supply of wine.

**12.** A sudden transition from threats to the promise of a glorious restoration. Compare a similar transition in <sup><3009></sup>Hosea 1:9,10. Jehovah, too, prophesies of good things to come, but not like the false prophets, “of wine and strong drink” (<sup><3111></sup>Micah 2:11). After I have sent you into captivity as I have just threatened, I will thence assemble you again (compare <sup><3106></sup>Micah 4:6,7).

**all of thee** — The restoration from Babylon was partial. Therefore that here meant must be still future, when “*all* Israel shall be saved” (<sup><5128></sup>Romans 11:26). The restoration from “Babylon” (specified (<sup><3104></sup>Micah 4:10) is the type of the future one.

**Jacob ... Israel** — the ten tribes’ kingdom (<sup><3112></sup>Hosea 12:2) and Judah (<sup><4008></sup>2 Chronicles 19:8 21:2,4).

**remnant** — the elect remnant, which shall survive the previous calamities of Judah, and from which the nation is to spring into new life (<sup><2133></sup>Isaiah 6:13 10:20-22).

**as the sheep of Bozrah** — a region famed for its rich pastures (compare <sup><1002></sup>2 Kings 3:4). GESENIUS for Bozrah translates, “sheepfold.” But thus there will be tautology unless the next clause be translated, “in the midst of their *pasture*.” *English Version* is more favored by the *Hebrew*.

**13. The breaker** — Jehovah-Messiah, who *breaks* through every obstacle in the way of their restoration: not as formerly *breaking forth* to destroy them for transgression (<sup><1022></sup>Exodus 19:22 <sup><0215></sup>Judges 21:15), but breaking a way for them through their enemies.

**they** — the returning Israelites and Jews.

**passed through the gate** — that is, through the gate of the foe’s city in which they had been captives. So the image of the resurrection (<sup><3134></sup>Hosea 13:14) represents Israel’s restoration.

**their king** — “the Breaker,” peculiarly “*their* king” (<sup><3005></sup>Hosea 3:5 <sup><1237></sup>Matthew 27:37).

**pass before them** — as He did when they went up out of Egypt (<sup><1031></sup>Exodus 13:21 <sup><1033></sup>Deuteronomy 1:30,33).

*the Lord on the head of them* — Jehovah at their head (<sup>2512</sup>Isaiah 52:12).  
Messiah, the second person, is meant (compare <sup>1231</sup>Exodus 23:20 33:14  
<sup>2319</sup>Isaiah 63:9).

# CHAPTER 3

## ⋈ MICAH 3:1-12.

### THE SINS OF THE PRINCES, PROPHETS, AND PRIESTS: THE CONSEQUENT DESOLATION OF ZION.

1. *princes* — magistrates or judges.

*Is it not for you?* — Is it not your special function (⋈ Jeremiah 5:4,5)?

*judgment* — justice. Ye sit in judgment on others; surely then ye ought to know the judgment for injustice which awaits yourselves (⋈ Romans 2:1).

2. *pluck off their skin ... flesh* — rob their fellow countrymen of all their substance (⋈ Psalm 14:4 ⋈ Proverbs 30:14).

3. *pot ... flesh within ... caldron* — manifold species of cruel oppressions. Compare ⋈ Ezekiel 24:3, etc., containing, as to the coming punishment, the same figure as is here used of the sin: implying that the sin and punishment exactly correspond.

4. *Then* — at the time of judgment, which Micah takes for granted, so certain is it (compare ⋈ Micah 2:3).

*they cry ... but he will not hear* — just as those oppressed by them had formerly cried, and they would not hear. Their prayer shall be rejected, because it is the mere cry of nature for deliverance from pain, not that of repentance for deliverance from sin.

*ill in their doings* — Men cannot expect to do ill and fare well.

5. Here he attacks the false prophets, as before he had attacked the “princes.”

*make my people err* — knowingly mislead My people by not denouncing their sins as incurring judgment.

*bite with ... teeth, and cry, Peace* — that is, who, so long as they are supplied with food, promise *peace* and prosperity in their prophecies.

*he that putteth not into their mouths, they ... prepare war against him* — Whenever they are not supplied with food, they foretell war and calamity.

**prepare war** — literally, “sanctify war,” that is, proclaim it as a *holy* judgment of God because they are not fed (see on <sup><2466></sup>Jeremiah 6:4; compare <sup><2318></sup>Isaiah 13:3 <sup><2914></sup>Joel 1:14).

**6. night ... dark** — Calamities shall press on you so overwhelming as to compel you to cease pretending to *divine* (Zechariah 13:4). Darkness is often the image of calamity (<sup><2382></sup>Isaiah 8:22 <sup><3158></sup>Amos 5:18 8:9).

**7. cover their lips** — The Orientals prided themselves on the moustache and beard (“upper lip,” *Margin*). To *cover* it, therefore, was a token of shame and sorrow (<sup><1836></sup>Leviticus 13:45 <sup><2417></sup>Ezekiel 24:17,22). “They shall be so ashamed of themselves as *not to dare to open their mouths* or boast of the name of prophet” [CALVIN].

**there is no answer of God** — They shall no more profess to have responses from God, being struck dumb with calamities (<sup><3106></sup>Micah 3:6).

**8. I** — in contrast to the false prophets (<sup><3106></sup>Micah 3:5,7).

**full of power** — that which “the Spirit of Jehovah” imparts for the discharge of the prophetic function (<sup><4017></sup>Luke 1:17 24:49 <sup><4008></sup>Acts 1:8).

**judgment** — a sense of *justice* [MAURER]; as opposed to the false prophets’ speaking to please men, not from a regard to truth. Or, “judgment” to discern between graver and lighter offenses, and to denounce punishments accordingly [GROTIUS].

**might** — moral *intrepidity* in speaking the truth at all costs (<sup><5001></sup>2 Timothy 1:7).

**to declare unto Jacob his ... sin** — (<sup><2801></sup>Isaiah 58:1). Not to flatter the sinner as the false prophets do with promises of peace.

**9. Hear** — resumed from <sup><3106></sup>Micah 3:1. Here begins the leading subject of the prophecy: a demonstration of his assertion that he is “full of power by the Spirit of Jehovah” (<sup><3106></sup>Micah 3:8).

**10. They** — change of person from “ye” (<sup><3106></sup>Micah 3:9); the third person puts them to a greater distance as estranged from Him. It is, literally, “*Whosoever* builds,” *singular*.

**build up Zion with blood** — build on it stately mansions with wealth obtained by the condemnation and murder of the innocent (<sup><2213></sup>Jeremiah 22:13 <sup><3227></sup>Ezekiel 22:27 <sup><3102></sup>Habakkuk 2:12).

**11. heads thereof** — the princes of Jerusalem.

**judges for reward** — take bribes as judges (Micah 7:3).

***priests teach for hire*** — It was their duty to teach the law and to decide controversies gratuitously (<sup><6801></sup>Leviticus 10:11 <sup><6571></sup>Deuteronomy 17:11 Malachi 2:7; compare <sup><2063></sup>Jeremiah 6:13 <sup><6011></sup>Jude 1:11).

***prophets ... divine*** — that is, false prophets.

***Is not the Lord among us?*** — namely in the temple (<sup><2382></sup>Isaiah 48:2 <sup><2076></sup>Jeremiah 7:4,8-11).

**12.** <sup><2038></sup>Jeremiah 26:18 quotes this verse. The Talmud and MAIMONIDES record that at the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans under Titus, Terentius Rufus, who was left in command of the army, with a ploughshare tore up the foundations of the temple.

***mountain of the house*** — the height on which the temple stands.

***as the high places of the forest*** — shall become as heights in a forest overrun with wild shrubs and brushwood.

# CHAPTER 4

## ⋈ MICAH 4:1-13.

### TRANSITION TO THE GLORY, PEACE, KINGDOM, AND VICTORY OF ZION.

**1-3.** Almost identical with ⋈ Isaiah 2:2-4.

*the mountain of the house of the Lord* — which just before (⋈ Micah 3:12) had been doomed to be a wild forest height. Under Messiah, its elevation is to be not that of situation, but of moral dignity, as the seat of God’s universal empire.

*people shall flow into it* — In Isaiah it is “all nations”: a more universal prophecy.

**3. rebuke** — convict of sin (⋈ John 16:8,9); and subdue with judgments (⋈ Psalm 2:5,9 110:5,6 ⋈ Revelation 2:27 12:5).

*many people ... strong nations afar off* — In ⋈ Isaiah 2:4 it is “the nations ... many people.”

**4. sit every man under his vine**, etc. — that is, enjoy the most prosperous tranquillity (⋈ 1 Kings 4:25 ⋈ Zechariah 3:10). The “vine” and “fig tree” are mentioned rather than a *house*, to signify, there will be no need of a covert; men will be safe even in the fields and open air.

*Lord of hosts hath spoken it* — Therefore it must come to pass, however unlikely now it may seem.

**5. For** — rather, *Though it be that* all people walk after their several gods, yet we (the Jews in the dispersion) will walk in the name of the Lord. So the *Hebrew* particle means in the *Margin*, ⋈ Genesis 8:21 ⋈ Exodus 13:17 ⋈ Joshua 17:18. The resolution of the exile Jews is: As Jehovah gives us hope of so glorious a restoration, notwithstanding the overthrow of our temple and nation, we must in confident reliance on His promise persevere in the true worship of Him, however the nations around, our superiors now in strength and numbers, walk after their gods [ROSENMULLER]. As the Jews were thoroughly weaned from idols by the Babylonian captivity, so they shall be completely cured of unbelief by their present long dispersion (Zechariah 10:8-12).

**6. assemble her that halteth** — feminine for neuter in *Hebrew* idiom, “whatever halteth”: metaphor from sheep wearied out with a journey: all the suffering exiles of Israel (<sup>2546</sup>Ezekiel 34:16 <sup>3189</sup>Zephaniah 3:19).

**her ... driven out** — all Israel’s outcasts. Called “the Lord’s flock” (<sup>2437</sup>Jeremiah 13:17 <sup>2543</sup>Ezekiel 34:13 37:21).

**7. I will make her that halted a remnant** — I will cause a remnant to remain which shall not perish.

**Lord shall reign ... in ... Zion** — David’s kingdom shall be restored in the person of Messiah, who is the seed of David and at the same time Jehovah (<sup>2202</sup>Isaiah 24:23).

**for ever** — (<sup>2306</sup>Isaiah 9:6,7 <sup>2704</sup>Daniel 7:14,27 <sup>4033</sup>Luke 1:33 <sup>6115</sup>Revelation 11:15).

**8. tower of the flock** — following up the metaphor of *sheep* (see on <sup>3306</sup>Micah 4:6). Jerusalem is called the “tower,” from which the King and Shepherd observes and guards His flock: both the spiritual Jerusalem, the Church now whose tower-like elevation is that of doctrine and practice (So 4:4, “Thy neck is like the *tower* of David”), and the literal hereafter (<sup>2487</sup>Jeremiah 3:17). In large pastures it was usual to erect a high wooden tower, so as to oversee the flock. JEROME takes the *Hebrew* for “flock,” *Eder* or *Edar*, as a proper name, namely, a village near Beth-lehem, for which it is put, Beth-lehem being taken to represent the *royal stock of David* (<sup>3302</sup>Micah 5:2; compare <sup>4152</sup>Genesis 35:21). But the explanatory words, “the stronghold of the daughter of Zion,” confirm *English Version*.

**stronghold** — *Hebrew*, “Ophel”; an impregnable height on Mount Zion (<sup>4202</sup>2 Chronicles 27:3 33:14 <sup>4635</sup>Nehemiah 3:26,27).

**unto thee shall ... come ... the first dominion** — namely, the dominion formerly exercised by thee shall come back to thee.

**kingdom shall come to the daughter of Jerusalem** — rather, “the kingdom of the daughter of Jerusalem shall come (again)”; such as it was under David, before its being weakened by the secession of the ten tribes.

**9.** Addressed to the daughter of Zion, in her consternation at the approach of the Chaldeans.

**is there no king in thee?** — asked tauntingly. There is a king in her; but it is the same as if there were none, so helpless to devise means of escape are he and his counsellors [MAURER]. Or, Zion’s pains are because her king is taken away from her (<sup>2619</sup>Jeremiah 52:9 <sup>2901</sup>Lamentations 4:20 <sup>2723</sup>Ezekiel

12:13) [CALVIN]. The former is perhaps the preferable view (compare <sup><2407></sup>Jeremiah 49:7). The latter, however, describes better Zion's kingly state during her present long dispersion (<sup><2806></sup>Hosea 3:4,5).

**10. *Be in pain, and labor*** — carrying on the metaphor of a pregnant woman. Thou shalt be affected with bitter sorrows before thy deliverance shall come. I do not forbid thy grieving, but I bring thee consolation. Though God cares for His children, yet they must not expect to be exempt from trouble, but must prepare for it.

***go forth out of the city*** — on its capture. So “come out” is used <sup><12412></sup>2 Kings 24:12 <sup><2336></sup>Isaiah 36:16.

***dwelt in the field*** — namely, in the open country, defenseless, instead of their fortified *city*. Beside the Chebar (<sup><4507></sup>Psalms 137:1 <sup><2815></sup>Ezekiel 3:15).

***Babylon*** — Like Isaiah, Micah looks beyond the existing Assyrian dynasty to the Babylonian, and to Judah's captivity under it, and restoration (<sup><2307></sup>Isaiah 39:7 43:14 48:20). Had they been, as rationalists represent, merely sagacious politicians, they would have restricted their prophecies to the sphere of the existing *Assyrian* dynasty. But their seeing into the far-off future of *Babylon's* subsequent supremacy, and Judah's connection with her, proves them to be inspired prophets.

***there ... there*** — emphatic repetition. The very scene of thy calamities is to be the scene of thy deliverance. In the midst of enemies, where all hope seems cut off, *there* shall Cyrus, the deliverer, appear (compare <sup><07444></sup>Judges 14:14). Cyrus again being the type of the greater Deliverer, who shall finally restore Israel.

**11. *many nations*** — the subject peoples composing Babylon's armies: and also Edom, Ammon, etc., who exulted in Judah's fall (<sup><2726></sup>Lamentations 2:16 <sup><3011></sup>Obadiah 1:11-13).

***defiled*** — metaphor from a virgin. Let her be defiled (that is, outraged by violence and bloodshed), and let our eye gaze insultingly on her shame and sorrow (<sup><3070></sup>Micah 7:10). Her foes desired to feast their *eyes* on her calamities.

**12. *thoughts of the Lord*** — Their *unsearchable wisdom*, overruling seeming disaster to the final good of His people, is the very ground on which the restoration of Israel hereafter (of which the restoration from Babylon is a type) is based in <sup><2558></sup>Isaiah 55:8; compare with <sup><3003></sup>Micah 4:3,12,13, which prove that *Israel*, not merely the Christian Church, is the ultimate subject of the prophecy; also in <sup><5113></sup>Romans 11:13. God's counsel

is to discipline His people for a time with the foe as a scourge; and then to destroy the foe by the hands of His people.

***gather them as ... sheaves*** — them who “gathered” themselves for Zion’s destruction (<sup>3704E</sup>Micah 4:11) the Lord “shall gather” for destruction by Zion (<sup>3704E</sup>Micah 4:13), like *sheaves gathered to be threshed* (compare <sup>2210E</sup>Isaiah 21:10 <sup>2613E</sup>Jeremiah 51:33). The *Hebrew* is *singular*, “sheaf.” However great the numbers of the foe, they are all but as *one sheaf* ready to be threshed [CALVIN]. Threshing was done by treading with the feet: hence the propriety of the image for treading under foot and breaking asunder the foe.

**13. *thresh*** — destroy thy foes “gathered” by Jehovah as “sheaves” (<sup>2341E</sup>Isaiah 41:15,16).

***thine horn*** — Zion being compared to an ox treading corn, and an ox’s strength lying in the horns, her *strength* is implied by giving her a *horn of iron* (compare <sup>1221E</sup>1 Kings 22:11).

***beat in pieces many*** — (<sup>2704E</sup>Daniel 2:44).

***I will consecrate their gain unto the Lord*** — God subjects the nations to Zion, not for her own selfish aggrandizement, but for His glory (<sup>2306E</sup>Isaiah 60:6,9 <sup>3407E</sup>Zechariah 14:20, with which compare <sup>2328E</sup>Isaiah 23:18) and for their ultimate good; therefore He is here called, not merely God of Israel, but “Lord of the whole earth.”

# CHAPTER 5

## ⋄ MICAH 5:1-15.

### THE CALAMITIES WHICH PRECEDE MESSIAH'S ADVENT. HIS KINGDOM, CONQUEST OF JACOB'S FOES, AND BLESSING UPON HIS PEOPLE.

1. *gather thyself in troops* — that is, thou shalt do so, to resist the enemy. Lest the faithful should fall into carnal security because of the previous promises, he reminds them of the calamities which are to precede the prosperity.

*daughter of troops* — Jerusalem is so called on account of her numerous troops.

*he hath laid siege* — *the enemy* hath.

*they shall smite the judge of Israel with a rod upon the cheek* — the greatest of insults to an Oriental. Zedekiah, the judge (or king, ⋄ Amos 2:3) of Israel, was loaded with insults by the Chaldeans; so also the other princes and judges (⋄ Lamentations 3:30). HENGSTENBERG thinks the expression, “the judge,” marks a time when no king of the house of David reigned. The smiting on the cheek of other judges of Israel was a type of the same indignity offered to Him who nevertheless is the Judge, not only of Israel, but also of the world, and who is “from everlasting” (⋄ Micah 5:2 ⋄ Isaiah 50:6 ⋄ Matthew 26:67 27:30).

2. *Beth-lehem Ephratah* — (⋄ Genesis 48:7), or, Beth-lehem Judah; so called to distinguish it from Beth-lehem in Zebulun. It is a few miles southwest of Jerusalem. Beth-lehem means “the house of bread”; *Ephratah* means “fruitful”: both names referring to the fertility of the region.

*though thou be little among* — *though thou be scarcely large enough to be reckoned among*, etc. It was insignificant in size and population; so that in ⋄ Joshua 15:21, etc., it is not enumerated among the cities of Judah; nor in the list in ⋄ Nehemiah 11:25, etc. Under Rehoboam it became a city: ⋄ 2 Chronicles 11:6, “He built Beth-lehem.” ⋄ Matthew 2:6 seems to contradict Micah, “thou art *not* the least.” But really he, by an independent testimony of the Spirit, confirms the prophet, Little in *worldly* importance,

thou art not least (that is, far from least, yea, *the very greatest*) among the thousands, of princes of Judah, in the spiritual significance of being the birthplace of Messiah (<sup><B12></sup>John 7:42). God chooses the little things of the world to eclipse in glory its greatest things (<sup><C15></sup>Judges 6:15 <sup><B14></sup>John 1:46 <sup><B17></sup>1 Corinthians 1:27,28). The low state of David's line when Messiah was born is also implied here.

**thousands** — Each tribe was divided into *clans* or “thousands” (each thousand containing a thousand families), which had their several heads or “princes”; hence in <sup><B16></sup>Matthew 2:6 it is quoted “princes,” substantially the same as in Micah, and authoritatively explained in Matthew. It is not so much this thousand that is preferred to the other thousands of Judah, but the Governor or Chief Prince out of it, who is preferred to the governors of all the other thousands. It is called a “town” (rather in the *Greek*, “village”), <sup><B12></sup>John 7:42; though scarcely containing a thousand inhabitants, it is ranked among the “thousands” or larger divisions of the tribe, because of its being the cradle of David's line, and of the Divine Son of David. Moses divided the people into thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens, with their respective “rulers” (<sup><D85></sup>Exodus 18:25; compare <sup><D19></sup>1 Samuel 10:19).

**unto me** — unto God the Father (<sup><B13></sup>Luke 1:32): to fulfill all the Father's will and purpose from eternity. So the Son declares (<sup><B17></sup>Psalm 2:7 40:7,8 <sup><B18></sup>John 4:34); and the Father confirms it (<sup><B17></sup>Matthew 3:17 12:18, compare with <sup><B18></sup>Isaiah 42:1). God's glory is hereby made the ultimate end of redemption.

**ruler** — the “Shiloh,” “Prince of peace,” “on whose shoulders the government is laid” (<sup><B10></sup>Genesis 49:10 <sup><B11></sup>Isaiah 9:6). In <sup><B12></sup>2 Samuel 23:3, “*He that ruleth* over men must be just,” the same *Hebrew* word is employed; Messiah alone realizes David's ideal of a ruler. Also in <sup><B12></sup>Jeremiah 30:21, “*their governor* shall proceed from the midst of them”; answering closely to “out of thee shall come forth *the ruler*,” here (compare <sup><B11></sup>Isaiah 11:1-4).

**goings forth ... from everlasting** — The plain antithesis of this clause, to “come forth out of thee” (*from Beth-lehem*), shows that the eternal generation of the Son is meant. The terms convey the strongest assertion of infinite duration of which the *Hebrew* language is capable (compare <sup><B10></sup>Psalm 90:2 <sup><B12></sup>Proverbs 8:22,2 <sup><B13></sup>John 1:1). Messiah's generation as man coming forth unto God to do His will on earth is *from Beth-lehem*; but as Son of God, His goings forth are *from everlasting*. The promise of the Redeemer at first was vaguely general (<sup><B15></sup>Genesis 3:15). Then the Shemitic division of mankind is declared as the quarter in which He was to be looked for (<sup><B15></sup>Genesis 9:26,27); then it grows clearer, defining the race and nation

whence the Deliverer should come, namely, the seed of Abraham, the Jews (<sup><012B></sup>Genesis 12:3); then the particular tribe, Judah (<sup><0490></sup>Genesis 49:10); then the family, that of David (<sup><0909></sup>Psalms 89:19,20); then the very town of His birth, here. And as His coming drew nigh, the very parentage (<sup><000E></sup>Matthew 1:1-17 <sup><012B></sup>Luke 1:26-35 2:1-7); and then all the scattered rays of prophecy concentrate in Jesus, as their focus (<sup><300E></sup>Hebrews 1:1,2).

3. “Therefore (because of His settled plan) will God give up to their foes His people Israel, until,” etc.

**she which travaileth hath brought forth** — namely, “the virgin” mother, mentioned by Micah’s contemporary, <sup><2074></sup>Isaiah 7:14. Zion “in travail” (<sup><3009></sup>Micah 4:9,10) answers to the *virgin* in travail of Messiah. Israel’s deliverance from her long travail-pains of sorrow will synchronize with the appearance of Messiah as her Redeemer (<sup><612B></sup>Romans 11:26) in the last days, as the Church’s spiritual deliverance synchronized with the virgin’s giving birth to H.,’m at His first advent. The ancient *Church’s* travail-like waiting for Messiah is represented by *the virgin’s* travail. Hence, *both* may be meant. It cannot be *restricted* to the Virgin Mary: for Israel is still “given up,” though Messiah has been “brought forth” almost two thousand years ago. But the Church’s throes are included, which are only to be ended when Christ, having been preached for a witness to all nations, shall at last appear as the Deliverer of Jacob, and when the times of the Gentiles shall be fulfilled, and Israel as a nation shall be born in a day (<sup><2307></sup>Isaiah 66:7-11 <sup><022B></sup>Luke 21:24 <sup><0111></sup>Revelation 12:1,2,4; compare <sup><0822></sup>Romans 8:22).

**the remnant of his brethren shall return unto the children of Israel** — (Compare <sup><300E></sup>Micah 4:7). The remainder of the Israelites dispersed in foreign lands shall return to join their countrymen in Canaan. The *Hebrew* for “unto” is, literally, “upon,” implying superaddition to those already gathered.

4. **he shall stand** — that is, persevere: implying the endurance of His kingdom [CALVIN]. Rather, His sedulous care and pastoral circumspection, as a shepherd *stands* erect to survey and guard His flock on every side (<sup><230E></sup>Isaiah 61:5) [MAURER].

**feed** — that is, rule: as the *Greek* word similarly in <sup><0026></sup>Matthew 2:6, *Margin*, means both “feed” and “rule” (<sup><2301></sup>Isaiah 40:11 49:10 <sup><0923></sup>Ezekiel 34:23; compare <sup><008E></sup>2 Samuel 5:2 7:8).

**in the majesty of the name of the Lord** — possessing the majesty of all Jehovah’s revealed attributes (“name”) (<sup><230E></sup>Isaiah 11:2 <sup><0709></sup>Philippians 2:6,9 <sup><300E></sup>Hebrews 2:7-9).

**his God** — God is “*His God*” in a oneness of relation distinct from the sense in which God is *our God* (<sup><307></sup>John 20:17).

**they shall abide** — the Israelites (“they,” namely, the *returning remnant* and the “children of Israel previously in Canaan) shall  *dwell in permanent security and prosperity* (<sup><308></sup>Micah 4:4 <sup><349></sup>Isaiah 14:30).

**unto the ends of the earth** — (<sup><309></sup>Micah 4:1 <sup><3728></sup>Psalm 72:8 <sup><3907></sup>Zechariah 9:10).

**5. this man** — in *Hebrew* simply “This.” The One just mentioned; He and He alone. Emphatical for Messiah (compare <sup><1059></sup>Genesis 5:29).

**the peace** — the fountainhead of peace between God and man, between Israel and Israel’s justly offended God (<sup><0490></sup>Genesis 49:10 <sup><2096></sup>Isaiah 9:6 <sup><1124></sup>Ephesians 2:14,17 <sup><501></sup>Colossians 1:20), and, as the consequence, the fountain of “peace on earth,” where heretofore all is strife (<sup><3038></sup>Micah 4:3 <sup><308></sup>Hosea 2:18 <sup><3907></sup>Zechariah 9:10 <sup><1214></sup>Luke 2:14).

**the Assyrian** — Being Israel’s most powerful foe at that time, Assyria is made the representative of all the foes of Israel in all ages, who shall receive their final destruction at Messiah’s appearing (<sup><2581></sup>Ezekiel 38:1-23).

**seven shepherds, and eight** — “Seven” expresses perfection; “seven and eight” is an idiom for *a full and sufficient number* (<sup><369></sup>Job 5:19 <sup><1669></sup>Proverbs 6:16 <sup><1102></sup>Ecclesiastes 11:2).

**principal men** — literally, “anointed (humble) men” (<sup><1319></sup>Psalm 62:9), such as the apostles were. Their anointing, or consecration and qualification to office, was by the Holy Spirit [CALVIN] (<sup><1221></sup>1 John 2:20,27). “Princes” also were anointed, and they are mentioned as under Messiah (<sup><2331></sup>Isaiah 32:1). *English Version* therefore gives the probable sense.

**6. waste** — literally, “eat up”: following up the metaphor of “shepherds” (compare <sup><1029></sup>Numbers 22:4 <sup><3103></sup>Jeremiah 6:3).

**land of Nimrod** — Babylon (<sup><3040></sup>Micah 4:10 <sup><0100></sup>Genesis 10:10); or, including Assyria also, to which he extended his borders (<sup><1001></sup>Genesis 10:11).

**in the entrances** — the passes into Assyria (<sup><1301></sup>2 Kings 3:21). The *Margin* and JEROME, misled by a needless attention to the parallelism, “with the sword,” translate, “with her own naked swords”; as in <sup><1852></sup>Psalm 55:21 the *Hebrew* is translated. But “in the entrances” of Assyria, answers to, “within our borders.” As the Assyrians invade *our borders*, so shall *their own borders* or “entrances” be invaded.

**he ... he** — *Messiah* shall deliver us, when the *Assyrian* shall come.

**7. remnant of Jacob** — already mentioned in <sup><318B></sup>Micah 5:3. It in comparative smallness stands in antithesis to the “many people.” Though Israel be but a remnant amidst many nations after her restoration, yet she shall exercise the same blessed influence in quickening them spiritually that the small imperceptible dew exercises in refreshing the grass (<sup><631D></sup>Deuteronomy 32:2 <sup><4716></sup>Psalms 72:6 110:3). The influence of the Jews restored from Babylon in making many Gentile proselytes is an earnest of a larger similar effect hereafter (<sup><2669></sup>Isaiah 66:19 <sup><3183></sup>Zechariah 8:13).

**from the Lord** — Israel’s restoration and the consequent conversion of the Gentiles are solely of grace.

**tarrieth not for man** — entirely God’s work, as independent of human contrivance as the dew and rains that fertilize the soil.

**8. as a lion** — In <sup><318E></sup>Micah 5:7 Israel’s benignant influence on the nations is described; but here her vengeance on the godless hosts who assail her (<sup><2665></sup>Isaiah 66:15,16,19,24 <sup><3183></sup>Zechariah 12:3,6,8,9 14:17,18). Judah will be “as a lion,” not in respect to its cruelty, but in its power of striking terror into all opponents. Under the Maccabees, the Jews acquired Idumea, Samaria, and parts of the territory of Ammon and Moab [GROTIUS]. But this was only the earnest of their future glory on their coming restoration.

**9. Thine hand shall be lifted up** — In <sup><231E></sup>Isaiah 26:11 it is *Jehovah’s* hand that is lifted up; here *Israel’s* as <sup><318B></sup>Micah 5:8 implies, just as “Zion” is addressed and directed to “beat in pieces many people” (<sup><3183></sup>Micah 4:13; compare <sup><2545></sup>Isaiah 54:15,17). For Israel’s foes are *Jehovah’s* foes. When her hand is said to be lifted up, it is *Jehovah’s* hand that strikes the foe by her (compare <sup><1213></sup>Exodus 13:9, with <sup><1218></sup>Exodus 14:8).

**10. cut off thy horses ... chariots** — namely, those used for the purposes of war. Israel had been forbidden the use of cavalry, or to go to Egypt for horses (<sup><4716></sup>Deuteronomy 17:16), lest they should trust in worldly forces, rather than in God (<sup><4107></sup>Psalms 20:7). Solomon had disregarded this command (<sup><1103></sup>1 Kings 10:26,28). Hereafter, saith God, I will remove these impediments to the free course of My grace: horses, chariots, etc., on which ye trust. The Church will never be safe, till she is stripped of all creature trusts, and rests on *Jehovah* alone [CALVIN]. The universal peace given by God shall cause warlike instruments to be needless. He will *cut them off* from Israel (<sup><3107></sup>Zechariah 9:10); as she will cut them off from Babylon, the representative of the nations (<sup><2617></sup>Jeremiah 50:37 51:21).

**11. *cut off ... cities ... strongholds*** — such as are fortified for war. In that time of peace, men shall live in unwall'd villages (<sup><3811></sup>Ezekiel 38:11; compare <sup><2016></sup>Jeremiah 23:6 49:31 Zechariah 2:8).

**12. *witchcrafts out of thine hand*** — that is, which thou now usest.

**13. *graven images ... cut off*** — (Compare <sup><2108></sup>Isaiah 2:8,18-21 30:22 Zechariah 13:2).

***standing images*** — statues.

**14. *groves ... cities*** — The “groves” are the idolatrous symbol of Astarte (<sup><6101></sup>Deuteronomy 16:21 <sup><1205></sup>2 Kings 21:7). “Cities” being parallel to “groves,” must mean cities in or near which such idolatrous groves existed. Compare “city of the house of Baal” (<sup><1015></sup>2 Kings 10:25), that is, a portion of the city sacred to Baal.

**15. *vengeance ... such as they have not heard*** — or, as the *Hebrew order* favors, “the *nations* that have not hearkened to My warnings.” So the *Septuagint* (<sup><4907></sup>Psalms 149:7).

# CHAPTER 6

## MICAH 6:1-16.

**APPEAL BEFORE ALL CREATION TO THE ISRAELITES TO TESTIFY, IF THEY CAN, IF JEHOVAH EVER DID AUGHT BUT ACTS OF KINDNESS TO THEM FROM THE EARLIEST PERIOD: GOD REQUIRES OF THEM NOT SO MUCH SACRIFICES, AS REAL PIETY AND JUSTICE: THEIR IMPIETIES AND COMING PUNISHMENT.**

1. *contend thou* — Israel is called by Jehovah to pie ad with Him in controversy. <sup><381></sup>Micah 5:11-13 suggested the transition from those happy times described in the fourth and fifth chapters, to the prophet's own degenerate times and people.

*before the mountains* — in their presence; personified as if witnesses (compare <sup><300></sup>Micah 1:2 <sup><611></sup>Deuteronomy 32:1 <sup><200></sup>Isaiah 1:2). Not as the *Margin*, "with"; as God's controversy is with Israel, not *with* them.

2. *Lord's controversy* — How great is Jehovah's condescension, who, though the supreme Lord of all, yet wishes to prove to worms of the earth the equity of His dealings (<sup><218></sup>Isaiah 5:3 43:26).

3. *my people* — the greatest aggravation of their sin, that God always treated them, and still treats them, as *His people*.

*what have I done unto thee?* — save kindness, that thou revoltest from Me (<sup><418></sup>Jeremiah 2:5,31).

*wherein have I wearied thee?* — What commandments have I enjoined that should have wearied thee as irksome (<sup><118></sup>1 John 5:3)?

4. *For* — *On the contrary*, so far from doing anything harsh, I did thee every kindness from the earliest years of thy nationality.

*Miriam* — mentioned, as being the prophetess who led the female chorus who sang the song of Moses (<sup><123></sup>Exodus 15:20). God sent Moses to give the best laws; Aaron to pray for the people; Miriam as an example to the women of Israel.

**5. *what Balak ... consulted*** — how Balak plotted to destroy thee by getting Balaam to curse thee (<sup><0215></sup>Numbers 22:5).

***what Balaam ... answered*** — how the avaricious prophet was constrained against his own will, to bless Israel whom he had desired to curse for the sake of Balak's reward (<sup><0219></sup>Numbers 24:9-11) [MAURER]. GROTIUS explains it, "how Balaam *answered*, that the only way to injure thee was by tempting thee to idolatry and whoredom" (<sup><0316></sup>Numbers 31:16). The mention of "Shittim" agrees with this: as it was the scene of Israel's sin (<sup><0231></sup>Numbers 25:1-5 <sup><0215></sup>2 Peter 2:15 <sup><0214></sup>Revelation 2:14).

***from Shittim unto Gilgal*** — not that Balaam accompanied Israel from Shittim to Gilgal: for he was slain in Midian (<sup><0318></sup>Numbers 31:8). But the clause, "from Shittim," alone applies to Balaam. "Remember" God's kindnesses "from Shittim," the scene of Balaam's wicked counsel taking effect in Israel's sin, whereby Israel merited utter destruction but for God's sparing mercy, "to Gilgal," the place of Israel's first encampment in the promised land between Jericho and Jordan, where God renewed the covenant with Israel by circumcision (<sup><0312></sup>Joshua 5:2-11).

***know the righteousness*** — Recognize that, so far from God having treated thee harshly (Micah 6:3), His dealings have been kindness itself (so "righteous acts" for *gracious*, <sup><0311></sup>Judges 5:11 <sup><0215></sup>Psalms 24:5, 112:9).

**6. *Wherewith shall I come before the Lord?*** — The people, convicted by the previous appeal of Jehovah to them, ask as if they knew not (compare Micah 6:8) what Jehovah requires of them to appease Him, adding that they are ready to offer an immense heap of sacrifices, and those the most costly, even to the fruit of their own body.

***burnt offerings*** — (<sup><0301></sup>Leviticus 1:1-17).

***calves of a year old*** — which used to be offered for a priest (<sup><0302></sup>Leviticus 9:2,3).

**7. *rivers of oil*** — used in sacrifices (<sup><0301></sup>Leviticus 2:1,15). Will God be appeased by my offering so much oil that it shall flow in myriads of torrents?

***my first-born*** — (<sup><0302></sup>2 Kings 3:27). As the king of Moab did.

***fruit of my body*** — *my children*, as an atonement (<sup><0211></sup>Psalms 132:11). The Jews offered human sacrifices in the valley of Hinnom (<sup><0215></sup>Jeremiah 19:5 32:35 <sup><0227></sup>Ezekiel 23:27).

**8. *He*** — Jehovah.

***hath showed thee*** — long ago, so that thou needest not ask the question as if thou hadst never heard (Micah 6:6; compare <sup><502></sup>Deuteronomy 10:12 30:11-14).

***what is good*** — “the good things to come” under Messiah, of which “the law had the shadow.” The Mosaic sacrifices were but suggestive foreshadowings of His *better* sacrifice (<sup><303></sup>Hebrews 9:23 10:1). To have this “good” first “showed,” or *revealed* by the Spirit, is the only basis for the superstructure of the moral requirements which follow. Thus the way was prepared for the Gospel. The banishment of the Jews from Palestine is designed to preclude the possibility of their looking to the Mosaic rites for redemption, and shuts them up to Messiah.

***justly ... mercy*** — preferred by God to sacrifices. For the latter being *positive* ordinances, are only *means* designed with a view to the former, which being *moral* duties are the *ends*, and of everlasting obligation (<sup><492></sup>1 Samuel 15:22 <sup><306></sup>Hosea 6:6 12:6 <sup><162></sup>Amos 5:22,24). Two duties towards *man* are specified — *justice*, or strict equity; and *mercy*, or a kindly abatement of what we might justly demand, and a hearty desire to do good to others.

***to walk humbly with thy God*** — passive and active obedience towards God. The three moral duties here are summed up by our Lord (<sup><123></sup>Matthew 23:23), “judgment, mercy, and faith” (in <sup><142></sup>Luke 11:42, “the love of God). Compare <sup><102></sup>James 1:27. *To walk with God* implies constant prayer and watchfulness, familiar yet “humble” converse with God (<sup><152></sup>Genesis 5:24 17:1).

**9. unto the city** — Jerusalem.

***the man of wisdom*** — As in <sup><136></sup>Proverbs 13:6, *Hebrew*, “sin” is used for “*a man of sin*,” and in <sup><940></sup>Psalms 109:4, “prayer” for “*a man of prayer*”; so here “wisdom” for “*the man of wisdom*.”

***shall see thy name*** — shall regard Thee, in Thy revelations of Thyself. Compare the end of <sup><317></sup>Micah 2:7. God’s “name” expresses the sum-total of His revealed attributes. Contrast with this <sup><230></sup>Isaiah 26:10, “will not behold the majesty of the Lord.” Another reading is adopted by the *Septuagint*, *Syriac*, and *Vulgate*, “there is deliverance for those who *fear* Thy name.” *English Version* is better suited to the connection; and the rarity of the *Hebrew* expression, as compared with the frequency of that in the other reading, makes it less likely to be an interpolation.

***hear ... the rod***, etc. — Hear what punishment (compare <sup><313></sup>Micah 6:13, etc. <sup><213></sup>Isaiah 9:3 10:5,24) awaits you, and from whom. I am but a man,

and so ye may disregard me; but remember my message is not mine, but God's. Hear the rod when it is come, and you feel its smart. Hear what counsels, what cautions it speaks.

**appointed it** — (<sup>3407E</sup>Jeremiah 47:7).

**10. Are there yet** — notwithstanding all My warnings. Is there to be no end of acquiring treasures by wickedness? Jehovah is speaking (Micah 6:9).

**scant measure ... abominable** — (<sup>3100E</sup>Proverbs 11:1 <sup>3108E</sup>Amos 8:5).

**11. Shall I count them pure** — literally, “Shall I be pure with?” etc. *With the pure God shows Himself pure; but with the froward God shows Himself froward* (<sup>4933E</sup>Psalm 18:26). Men often are changeable in their judgments. But God, in the case of the impure who use “wicked balances,” cannot be pure, that is, cannot deal with them as He would with the pure. VATABLUS and HENDERSON make the “I” to be “any one”; “Can I (that is, one) be innocent with wicked balances?” But as “I,” in <sup>3103E</sup>Micah 6:13, refers to Jehovah, it must refer to Him also here.

**the bag** — in which weights used to be carried, as well as money (<sup>4853E</sup>Deuteronomy 25:13 <sup>4161E</sup>Proverbs 16:11).

**12. For** — rather, “Inasmuch as”; the conclusion “therefore,” etc. following in <sup>3103E</sup>Micah 6:13.

**thereof** — of Jerusalem.

**13. make thee sick in smiting** — (<sup>4836E</sup>Leviticus 26:16, to which perhaps the allusion here is, as in <sup>3104E</sup>Micah 6:14 <sup>4947E</sup>Psalm 107:17,18 <sup>4153E</sup>Jeremiah 13:13).

**14. eat ... not be satisfied** — fulfilling the threat, <sup>4836E</sup>Leviticus 26:26.

**thy casting down shall be in the midst of thee** — Thou shalt be cast down, not merely on My borders, but in the midst of thee, thy metropolis and temple being overthrown [TIRINUS]. Even though there should be no enemy, yet thou shalt be consumed with intestine evils [CALVIN]. MAURER translates as from an *Arabic* root, “there shall be *emptiness* in thy belly.” Similarly GROTIUS, “there shall be a sinking of thy belly (once filled with food), through hunger.” This suits the parallelism to the first clause. But *English Version* maintains the parallelism sufficiently. The casting down in the midst of the land, including the failure of food, through the invasion thus answering to, “Thou shalt eat, and not be satisfied.”

**thou shalt take hold, but ... not deliver** — Thou shalt take hold (with thine arms), in order to save [CALVIN] thy wives, children and goods. MAURER,

from a different root, translates, “thou shalt remove them,” in order to save them from the foe. But thou shalt fail in the attempt to deliver them (<sup><2418></sup>Jeremiah 50:37).

**that which thou deliverest** — If haply thou dost rescue aught, it will be for a time: I will give it up to the foe’s sword.

**15. sow ... not reap** — fulfilling the threat (<sup><4336></sup>Leviticus 26:16 <sup><4338></sup>Deuteronomy 28:38-40 <sup><3181></sup>Amos 5:11).

**16. statutes of Omri** — the founder of Samaria and of Ahab’s wicked house; and a supporter of Jeroboam’s superstitions (<sup><1136></sup>1 Kings 16:16-28). This verse is a recapitulation of what was more fully stated before, Judah’s sin and consequent punishment. Judah, though at variance with Israel on all things else, imitated her impiety.

**works of ... Ahab** — (<sup><1215></sup>1 Kings 21:25,26).

**ye walk in their counsels** — Though these superstitions were the fruit of their king’s “counsels” as a master stroke of state policy, yet these pretexts were no excuse for setting at naught the counsels and will of God.

**that I should make thee a desolation** — Thy conduct is framed so, as if it was thy set purpose “that I should make thee a desolation.”

**inhabitants thereof** — namely, of Jerusalem.

**hissing** — (<sup><2215></sup>Lamentations 2:15).

**the reproach of my people** — The very thing ye boast of, namely, that ye are “My people,” will only increase the severity of your punishment. The greater My grace to you, the greater shall be your punishment for having despised it, Your being God’s people in name, while walking in His love, was an honor; but now the name, without the reality, is only a “reproach” to you.

# CHAPTER 7

## MICAH 7:1-20.

**THE UNIVERSALITY OF THE CORRUPTION; THE CHOSEN REMNANT, DRIVEN FROM EVERY HUMAN CONFIDENCE, TURNS TO GOD; TRIUMPHS BY FAITH OVER HER ENEMIES; IS COMFORTED BY GOD'S PROMISES IN ANSWER TO PRAYER, AND BY THE CONFUSION OF HER ENEMIES, AND SO BREAKS FORTH INTO PRAISES OF GOD'S CHARACTER.**

1. *I am as when*, etc. — It is the same with me as with one seeking fruits after the harvest, grapes after the vintage. “There is not a cluster” to be found: no “first-ripe fruit” (or “early fig”; see on <sup><3306></sup>Isaiah 28:4) which “my soul desireth” [MAURER]. So I look in vain for any good men left (Micah 7:2).

2. The *Hebrew* expresses “one *merciful and good* in relation to man,” rather than to God.

*is perished out of the earth* — (<sup><3906></sup>Psalm 12:1).

3. *That they may do evil with both hands earnestly* — literally, “Their hands are for evil that they may do it well” (that is, cleverly and successfully).

*the great man, he* — emphatic repetition. *As for the great man, he* no sooner has expressed his bad desire (literally, the “mischief or lust of his soul), than the venal judges are ready to wrest the decision of the case according to his wish.

*so they wrap it up* — The *Hebrew* is used of *intertwining cords together*. The “threefold cord is not quickly broken” (<sup><2102></sup>Ecclesiastes 4:12); here the “prince,” the “judge,” and the “great man” are the three in guilty complicity. “They wrap it up,” namely, they conspire to carry out the great man’s desire at the sacrifice of justice.

4. *as a brier* — or *thorn*; pricking with injury all who come in contact with them (<sup><1216></sup>2 Samuel 23:6,7 <sup><2553></sup>Isaiah 55:13 <sup><3106></sup>Ezekiel 2:6).

***the day of thy watchmen*** — the day foretold by thy (true) prophets, as the time of “thy visitation” in wrath [GROTIUS]. Or, “the day of thy *false* prophets being punished”; they are specially threatened as being not only blind themselves, but leading others blindfold [CALVIN].

***now*** — at the time foretold, “at that time”; the prophet transporting himself into it.

***perplexity*** — (<sup>23216</sup>Isaiah 22:5). They shall not know whither to turn.

**5. *Trust ye not in a friend*** — Faith is kept nowhere: all to a man are treacherous (<sup>21016</sup>Jeremiah 9:2-6). When justice is perverted by the great, faith nowhere is safe. So, in gospel times of persecution, “a man’s foes are they of his own household” (<sup>41015</sup>Matthew 10:35,36 <sup>21253</sup>Luke 12:53).

***guide*** — a counsellor [CALVIN] able to help and advise (compare <sup>44888</sup>Psalms 118:8,9 146:3). *The head of your family*, to whom all the members of the family would naturally repair in emergencies. Similarly the *Hebrew* is translated in (<sup>41214</sup>Joshua 22:14 and “chief friends” in <sup>21638</sup>Proverbs 16:28 [GROTIUS].

***her that lieth in thy bosom*** — thy wife (<sup>451316</sup>Deuteronomy 13:6).

**6. *son dishonoreth the father*** — The state of unnatural lawlessness in all relations of life is here described which is to characterize the last times, before Messiah comes to punish the ungodly and save Israel (compare <sup>42116</sup>Luke 21:16 <sup>43102</sup>2 Timothy 3:1-3).

**7. *Therefore I will look unto the Lord*** — as if no one else were before mine eyes. We must not only “look *unto* the Lord,” but also “wait *for* Him.” Having no hope from man (Micah 7:5,6), Micah speaks in the name of Israel, who herein, taught by chastisement (Micah 7:4) to feel her sin (Micah 7:9), casts herself on the Lord as her only hope,” in patient waiting (<sup>28188</sup>Lamentations 3:26). She did so under the Babylonian captivity; she shall do so again hereafter when the spirit of grace shall be poured on her (<sup>432107</sup>Zechariah 12:10-13).

**8. *Rejoice not*** — at my fall.

***when I fall, I shall arise*** — (<sup>45724</sup>Psalms 37:24 <sup>41046</sup>Proverbs 24:16).

***when I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light*** — Israel reasons as her divine representative, Messiah, reasoned by faith in His hour of darkness and desertion (<sup>28101</sup>Isaiah 50:7,8,10). Israel addresses Babylon, her triumphant foe (or Edom), as *a female*; the type of her last and worst foes (<sup>43107</sup>Psalms 137:7,8). “Mine enemy,” in *Hebrew*, is feminine.

9. *bear* — patiently.

*the indignation of the Lord* — His punishment inflicted on me (<sup><2989></sup>Lamentations 3:39). The true penitent “accepts the punishment of his iniquity” (<sup><6348></sup>Leviticus 26:41,43); they who murmur against God, do not yet know their guilt (<sup><3804></sup>Job 40:4,5).

*execute judgment for me* — against my foe. God’s people plead guilty before God; but, in respect to their human foes, they are innocent and undeserving of their foes’ injuries.

*bring me forth to the light* — to the temporal and spiritual redemption.

*I shall behold his righteousness* — His gracious faithfulness to His promises (<sup><4937></sup>Psalms 103:17).

10. *shame shall cover her* — in seeing how utterly mistaken she was in supposing that I was utterly ruined.

*Where is ... thy God* — (<sup><4908></sup>Psalms 42:3,10). If He be “thy God,” as thou sayest, let Him come now and deliver thee. So as to Israel’s representative, Messiah (<sup><4273></sup>Matthew 27:43).

*mine eyes shall behold her* — a just retribution in kind upon the foe who had said, “Let our eye look upon Zion.” Zion shall behold her foe prostrate, not with the carnal joy of revenge, but with spiritual joy in God’s vindicating His own righteousness (<sup><2964></sup>Isaiah 66:24 <sup><6615></sup>Revelation 16:5-7).

*shall she be trodden down* — herself, who had trodden down me.

11. *thy walls ... be built* — under Cyrus, after the seventy years’ captivity; and again, hereafter, when the Jews shall be restored (<sup><3091></sup>Amos 9:11 Zechariah 12:6).

*shall the decree be far removed* — namely, thy tyrannical decree or rule of Babylon shall be put away from thee, “the statutes that were not good” (<sup><3015></sup>Ezekiel 20:25) [CALVIN]. <sup><4923></sup>Psalms 102:13-16 <sup><2904></sup>Isaiah 9:4. The Hebrew is against MAURER’S translation, “the boundary of the city shall be far extended,” so as to contain the people flocking into it from all nations (<sup><3072></sup>Micah 7:12 <sup><2940></sup>Isaiah 49:20 54:2).

12. *In that day also* — rather, an answer to the supposed question of Zion, When shall my walls be built? “The day (of thy walls being built) is the day when he (that is, many) shall come to thee from Assyria,” etc. [LUDOVICUS DE DIEU]. The Assyrians (including the Babylonians) who spoiled thee shall come.

**and from the fortified cities** — rather, to suit the parallelism, “from Assyria even to Egypt.” (*Matzor* may be so translated). So Assyria and Egypt are contrasted in <sup><23029></sup>Isaiah 19:23 [MAURER]. CALVIN agrees with *English Version*, “from all fortified cities.”

**from the fortress even to the river** — “from Egypt even to the river” Euphrates (answering in parallelism to “Assyria”) [MAURER]. Compare <sup><23115></sup>Isaiah 11:15,16 19:23-25 27:13 <sup><23111></sup>Hosea 11:11 <sup><23100></sup>Zechariah 10:10.

**13.** However glorious the prospect of restoration, the Jews are not to forget the visitation on their “land” which is to intervene for the “fruit of (evil caused by) their doings” (compare <sup><23131></sup>Proverbs 1:31 <sup><23130></sup>Isaiah 3:10,11 <sup><23114></sup>Jeremiah 21:14).

**14. Feed thy people** — Prayer of the prophet, in the name of his people to God, which, as God fulfils believing prayer, is prophetic of what God *would* do. When God is about to deliver His people, He stirs up their friends to pray for them.

**Feed** — including the idea of both pastoral *rule* and care over His people (<sup><23104></sup>Micah 5:4, *Margin*), regarded as a flock (<sup><23100></sup>Psalms 80:1 100:3). Our calamity must be fatal to the nation, unless Thou of Thy unmerited grace, remembering Thy covenant with “Thine heritage” (<sup><23100></sup>Deuteronomy 4:20 7:6 32:9), shalt restore us.

**thy rod** — the shepherd’s rod, wherewith He directs the flock (<sup><23100></sup>Psalms 23:4). No longer the rod of punishment (Micah 6:9).

**which dwell solitarily in the wood, in ... Carmel** — Let Thy people who have been dwelling as it were in a solitude of woods (*in* the world, but not *of* it), scattered among various nations, dwell in Carmel, that is, where there are fruit-bearing lands and vineyards [CALVIN]. Rather, “which are about to dwell (that is, that they may dwell) separate in the wood, in ... Carmel” [MAURER], which are to be no longer mingled with the heathen, but are to dwell as a distinct people in their own land. Micah has here Balaam’s prophecy in view (compare Micah 6:5, where also Balaam is referred to). “Lo, the people shall dwell *alone*” (<sup><23109></sup>Numbers 23:9; compare <sup><23133></sup>Deuteronomy 33:28). To “feed in the wood in Carmel,” is to feed in the rich pastures among its woods. To “sleep in the woods,” is the image of *most perfect security* (<sup><23125></sup>Ezekiel 34:25). So that the Jews’ “security,” as well as their *distinct nationality*, is here foretold. Also <sup><23131></sup>Jeremiah 49:31.

**Bashan** — famed for its cattle (<sup><23122></sup>Psalms 22:12 <sup><23101></sup>Amos 4:1). Parallel to this passage is <sup><23109></sup>Jeremiah 50:19. Bashan and Gilead, east of Jordan, were chosen by Reuben, Gad, and half Manasseh, as abounding in pastures

sued for their many cattle (<sup><4631></sup>Numbers 32:1-42 <sup><4182></sup>Deuteronomy 3:12-17).

**15. *thy ... him*** — both referring to Israel. So in <sup><3769></sup>Micah 7:19 the person is changed from the first to the third, “us ... our ... their.” Jehovah here answers Micah’s prayer in <sup><3744></sup>Micah 7:14, assuring him, that as He delivered His people from Egypt by miraculous power, so He would again “show” it in their behalf (<sup><24644></sup>Jeremiah 16:14,15).

**16. *shall see*** — the “marvellous things” (<sup><3765></sup>Micah 7:15 <sup><23414></sup>Isaiah 26:11).

***confounded at all their might*** — having so suddenly proved unavailing: that might wherewith they had thought that there is nothing which they could not effect against God’s people.

***lay ... hand upon ... mouth*** — the gesture of silence (<sup><3216></sup>Job 21:5 40:4 <sup><19420></sup>Psalms 107:42 <sup><25215></sup>Isaiah 52:15). They shall be struck dumb at Israel’s marvellous deliverance, and no longer boast that God’s people is destroyed.

***ears ... deaf*** — They shall stand astounded so as not to hear what shall be said [GROTIUS]. Once they had eagerly drunk in all rumors as so many messages of victories; but then they shall be afraid of hearing them, because they continually fear new disasters, when they see the God of Israel to be so powerful [CALVIN]. They shall close their ears so as not to be compelled to hear of Israel’s successes.

**17. *lick the dust*** — in abject prostration as suppliants (<sup><4719></sup>Psalms 72:9; compare <sup><23423></sup>Isaiah 49:23 65:25).

***move out of their holes*** — As reptiles from their holes, they shall come forth from their hiding-places, or fortresses (<sup><49385></sup>Psalms 18:45), to give themselves up to the conquerors. More literally, “they shall tremble from,” that is, tremblingly come forth from their coverts.

***like worms*** — reptiles or crawlers (<sup><1524></sup>Deuteronomy 32:24).

***they shall be afraid of the Lord*** — or, they shall *in fear turn with haste* to the Lord. Thus the antithesis is brought out. They shall tremble forth *from* their holes: they shall in trepidation turn to the Lord for salvation (compare *Note*, see on <sup><3885></sup>Hosea 3:5, and <sup><4319></sup>Jeremiah 33:9).

***fear because of thee*** — shall fear Thee, Jehovah (and so fear Israel as under Thy guardianship). There is a change here from speaking *of* God to speaking *to* God [MAURER]. Or rather, “shall fear thee, Israel” [HENDERSON].

**18.** Grateful at such unlooked-for grace being promised to Israel, Micah breaks forth into praises of Jehovah.

***passeth by the transgression*** — not conniving at it, but forgiving it; leaving it unpunished, as a traveler *passes by* what he chooses not to look into (<sup><2191></sup>Proverbs 19:11). Contrast <sup><3008></sup>Amos 7:8, and “*mark iniquities,*” <sup><4008></sup>Psalm 130:3.

***the remnant*** — who shall be permitted to survive the previous judgment: the elect remnant of grace (<sup><3307></sup>Micah 4:7 5:3,7,8).

***retaineth not ... anger*** — (<sup><1931></sup>Psalm 103:9).

***delighteth in mercy*** — God’s forgiving is founded on His nature, which delights in loving-kindness, and is averse from wrath.

**19. *turn again*** — to us, from having been turned away from us.

***subdue our iniquities*** — literally, “tread under foot,” as being hostile and deadly to us. Without subjugation of our bad propensities, even pardon could not give us peace. When God takes away the guilt of sin that it may not condemn us, He takes away also the power of sin that it may not rule us.

***cast ... into ... depths of the sea*** — never to rise again to view, buried out of sight in eternal oblivion: not merely at the shore side, where they may rise again.

***our ... their*** — change of person. Micah in the first case identifying himself and his sins with his people and their sins; in the second, speaking *of* them and their sins.

**20. *perform the truth*** — the faithful promise.

***to Jacob ... Abraham*** — Thou shalt make good to their posterity the promise made to the patriarchs. God’s promises are called “mercy,” because they flow slowly from grace; “truth,” because they will be surely performed (<sup><4172></sup>Luke 1:72,73 <sup><5134></sup>1 Thessalonians 5:24).

***sworn unto our fathers*** — (<sup><1949></sup>Psalm 105:9,10). The promise to Abraham is in <sup><1112></sup>Genesis 12:2; to Isaac, in <sup><1134></sup>Genesis 26:24; to Jacob, in <sup><1283></sup>Genesis 28:13. This unchangeable promise implied an engagement that the seed of the patriarchs should never perish, and should be restored to their inheritance as often as they turned wholly to God (<sup><4816></sup>Deuteronomy 30:1,2).

# THE BOOK OF NAHUM

Commentary by **A. R. FAUSSETT**

## INTRODUCTION

NAHUM means “consolation” and “vengeance”; symbolizing the “consolation” in the book for God’s people, and the “vengeance” coming on their enemies. In the first chapter the two themes alternate; but as the prophet advances, vengeance on the capital of the Assyrian foe is the predominant topic. He is called “the Elkoshite” (Na 1:1), from *Elkosh*, or *Elkesi*, a village of Galilee, pointed out to JEROME [*Preface in Nahum*] as a place of note among the Jews, having traces of ancient buildings. The name *Capernaum*, that is, “village of Nahum,” seems to take its name from Nahum having resided in it, though born in Elkosh in the neighborhood. There is another Elkosh east of the Tigris, and north of Mosul, believed by Jewish pilgrims to be the birthplace and burial place of the prophet. But the book of Nahum in its allusions shows a particularity of acquaintance with Palestine (Na 1:4), and only a more general knowledge as to Nineveh (Na 2:4-6 3:2,3).

His graphic description of Sennacherib and his army (Na 1:9-12) makes it not unlikely that he was in or near Jerusalem at the time: hence the number of phrases corresponding to those of Isaiah (compare Na 1:8,9, with <sup><2108></sup>Isaiah 8:8 10:23; Na 2:10, with <sup><2201></sup>Isaiah 24:1 21:3; Na 1:15, with <sup><2510></sup>Isaiah 52:7). The prophecy in Na 1:14 probably refers to the murder of Sennacherib twenty years after his return from Palestine (<sup><2538></sup>Isaiah 37:38). The date of his prophecies, thus, seems to be about the former years of Hezekiah. So JEROME thinks. He plainly writes while the Assyrian power was yet unbroken (Na 1:12 2:11-13 Na 3:15-17). The correspondence between the sentiments of Nahum and those of Isaiah and Hezekiah, as recorded in Second Kings and Isaiah, proves the likelihood of Nahum’s prophecies belonging to the time when Sennacherib was demanding the surrender of Jerusalem, and had not yet raised the siege (compare Na 1:2, etc., with <sup><1294></sup>2 Kings 19:14,15; Na 1:7, with <sup><1282></sup>2 Kings 18:22 19:19,31 <sup><4317></sup>2 Chronicles 32:7,8; Na 1:9,11, with <sup><1292></sup>2 Kings 19:22,27,28; Na 1:14, with

2 Kings 19:6,7; Na 1:15 2:1,2, with 2 Kings 19:32,33; Na 2:13, with 2 Kings 19:22,23). The historical data in the book itself are the humiliation of Israel and Judah by Assyria (Na 2:2); the invasion of Judah (Na 1:9,11); and the conquest of No-ammon, or Thebes, in Upper Egypt (Na 3:8-10). Tiglath-pileser and Shalmaneser had carried away Israel. The Jews were harassed by the Syrians, and impoverished by Ahaz' payments to Tiglath-pileser (2 Chronicles 28:1-27 Isaiah 7:9). Sargon, Shalmaneser's successor, after the reduction of Phoenicia by the latter, fearing lest Egypt should join Palestine against him, undertook an expedition to Africa (Isaiah 20:1-6), and took Thebes; the latter fact we know only from Nahum, but the success of the expedition in general is corroborated in Isaiah 20:1-6.

Sennacherib, Sargon's successor, made the last Assyrian attempt against Judea, ending in the destruction of his army in the fourteenth year of Hezekiah (713-710 B.C.). As Nahum refers to this in part prophetically, in part as matter of history (Na 1:9-13 2:13), he must have lived about 720-714 B.C., that is, almost a hundred years before the event foretold, namely, the overthrow of Nineveh by the joint forces of Cyaxares and Nabopolassar in the reign of Chyniladanus, 625 or 603 B.C.

The prophecy is remarkable for its unity of aim. Nahum's object was to inspire his countrymen, the Jews, with the assurance that, however alarming their position might seem, exposed to the attacks of the mighty Assyrian, who had already carried away the ten tribes, yet that not only should the Assyrian (Sennacherib) fail in his attack on Jerusalem, but Nineveh, his own capital, be taken and his empire overthrown; and this, not by an arbitrary exercise of Jehovah's power, but for the iniquities of the city and its people. His position in the canon is seventh of the minor prophets in both the Hebrew and Greek arrangement. He is seventh in point of date.

His style is clear, elegant, and forcible. Its most striking characteristic is the power of representing several phases of an idea in the briefest sentences, as in the majestic description of God in the commencement, the conquest of Nineveh, and the destruction of No-ammon [EICHORN]. DE WETTE calls attention to his variety of manner in presenting ideas, as marking great poetic talent. "Here there is something sonorous in his language there something murmuring; with both these alternates something that is soft, delicate, and melting, as the subject demands." Excepting two alleged Assyrian words (Na 3:17), *English Version*, "crowned," or *princes*, and *English Version*, "captains," or *satraps* (used by Jeremiah 51:27), the language is pure. These two, doubtless, came to be known in Judea from the intercourse with Assyria in the eighth and seventh centuries B.C.

# CHAPTER 1

## NAHUM 1:1-15.

**JEHOVAH'S ATTRIBUTES AS A JEALOUS JUDGE OF SIN, YET MERCIFUL TO HIS TRUSTING PEOPLE, SHOULD INSPIRE THEM WITH CONFIDENCE. HE WILL NOT ALLOW THE ASSYRIANS AGAIN TO ASSAIL THEM, BUT WILL DESTROY THE FOE.**

1. *burden of Nineveh* — the *prophetic doom* of Nineveh. Nahum prophesied against that city a hundred fifty years after Jonah.

2. *jealous* — In this there is sternness, yet tender affection. We are jealous only of those we love: a husband, of a wife; a king, of his subjects' loyalty. God is jealous of men because He loves them. God will not bear a rival in His claims on them. His burning jealousy for His own wounded honor and their love, as much as His justice, accounts for all His fearful judgments: the flood, the destruction of Jerusalem, that of Nineveh. His jealousy will not admit of His friends being oppressed, and their enemies flourishing (compare <sup><0216></sup>Exodus 20:5 <sup><0462></sup>1 Corinthians 16:22 <sup><0712></sup>2 Corinthians 11:2). *Burning zeal* enters into the idea in "jealous" here (compare <sup><0251></sup>Numbers 25:11,13 <sup><1190></sup>1 Kings 19:10).

*the Lord revengeth ... Lord revengeth* — The repetition of the incommunicable name JEHOVAH, and of His *revenging*, gives an awful solemnity to the introduction.

*furios* — literally, "a master of fury." So *a master of the tongue*, that is, "eloquent." "One who, if He pleases, can most readily give effect to His fury" [GROTIUS]. Nahum has in view the provocation to fury given to God by the Assyrians, after having carried away the ten tribes, now proceeding to invade Judea under Hezekiah.

*reserveth wrath for his enemies* — *reserves it* against His own appointed time (<sup><0319></sup>2 Peter 2:9). After long waiting for their repentance in vain, at length punishing them. A wrong estimate of Jehovah is formed from His suspending punishment: it is not that He is insensible or dilatory, but He reserves wrath for His own fit time. In the case of the penitent, He does not *reserve* or retain His anger (<sup><0430></sup>Psalms 103:9 <sup><0475></sup>Jeremiah 3:5,12 <sup><0375></sup>Micah 7:18).

3. *slow to anger, and great in power* — that is, *but* great in power, so as to be able in a moment, if He pleases, to destroy the wicked. His long-suffering is not from want of power to punish (<sup>4036</sup>Exodus 34:6,7).

*not at all acquit* — literally, “will not acquitting acquit,” or treat as innocent.

*Lord hath his way in the whirlwind* — From this to Na 1:5, inclusive, is a description of His power exhibited in the phenomena of nature, especially when He is wroth. His vengeance shall sweep away the Assyrian foe like a whirlwind (<sup>3005</sup>Proverbs 10:25).

*clouds are the dust of his feet* — Large as they are, He treads on them, as a man would on the small dust; He is Lord of the clouds, and uses them as He pleases.

4. *rebuketh the sea* — as Jesus did (<sup>4185</sup>Matthew 8:26), proving Himself God (compare <sup>2810</sup>Isaiah 50:2).

*Bashan languisheth* — through drought; ordinarily it was a region famed for its rich pasturage (compare <sup>2110</sup>Joel 1:10).

*flower of Lebanon* — *its bloom*; all that blooms so luxuriantly on Lebanon (<sup>2847</sup>Hosea 14:7). As Bashan was famed for its pastures, Carmel for its corn fields and vineyards, so Lebanon for its forests (<sup>2309</sup>Isaiah 33:9). There is nothing in the world so blooming that God cannot change it when He is wroth.

5. *earth is burned* — so GROTIUS. Rather, “lifts itself,” that is, “heaveth” [MAURER]: as the *Hebrew* is translated in <sup>4809</sup>Psalms 89:9 <sup>2831</sup>Hosea 13:1; compare <sup>4121</sup>2 Samuel 5:21, *Margin*.

6. *fury is poured out like fire* — like the liquid fire poured out of volcanoes in all directions (see <sup>2472</sup>Jeremiah 7:20).

*rocks are thrown down* — or, “are burnt asunder”; the usual effect of volcanic fire (<sup>2515</sup>Jeremiah 51:25,56). As Hannibal burst asunder the Alpine rocks by fire to make a passage for his army [GROTIUS].

7. Here Nahum enters on his special subject, for which the previous verses have prepared the way, namely, to assure his people of safety in Jehovah under the impending attack of Sennacherib (Na 1:7), and to announce the doom of Nineveh, the capital of the Assyrian foe (Na 1:8). The contrast of Na 1:7,8 heightens the force.

*he knoweth* — recognizes as His own (<sup>2835</sup>Hosea 13:5 <sup>4182</sup>Amos 3:2); and so, cares for and guards (<sup>4506</sup>Psalms 1:6 <sup>5119</sup>2 Timothy 2:19).

**8. *with an overrunning flood*** — that is, with irresistible might which *overruns* every barrier like a flood. This image is often applied to overwhelming *armies* of invaders. Also of *calamity* in general (<sup><4916></sup>Psalm 32:6 42:7 90:5). There is, perhaps, a special allusion to the mode of Nineveh's capture by the Medo-Babylonian army; namely, through a *flood* in the river which broke down the wall twenty furlongs (see on Na 2:6; <sup><2308></sup>Isaiah 8:8 <sup><2026></sup>Daniel 9:26 11:10,22,40).

***end of the place thereof*** — Nineveh is personified as a queen; and “*her place*” of residence (the *Hebrew* for “thereof” is feminine) is *the city itself* (Na 2:8), [MAURER]. Or, He shall so utterly destroy Nineveh that its place cannot be found; Na 3:17 confirms this (compare <sup><4876></sup>Psalm 37:36 <sup><1285></sup>Daniel 2:35 <sup><6118></sup>Revelation 12:8 20:11).

***darkness*** — the severest calamities.

**9. *What do ye imagine against the Lord?*** — abrupt address to the Assyrians. How mad is your attempt, O Assyrians, to resist so powerful a God! What can ye do against such an adversary, successful though ye have been against all other adversaries? Ye *imagine* ye have to *do* merely with mortals and with a weak people, and that so you will gain an easy victory; but you have to encounter God, the protector of His people. Parallel to <sup><2373></sup>Isaiah 37:23-29; compare <sup><3100></sup>Psalm 1:1.

***he will make an utter end*** — The utter overthrow of Sennacherib's host, soon about to take place, is an earnest of the “utter end” of Nineveh itself.

***affliction shall not rise up the second time*** — Judah's “affliction” caused by the invasion shall never rise again. So Na 1:12. But CALVIN takes the “affliction” to be that of *Assyria*: “There will be no need of His inflicting on you a second blow: He will make an utter end of you once for all” (<sup><4912></sup>1 Samuel 3:12 26:8 <sup><1100></sup>2 Samuel 20:10). If so, this verse, in contrast to Na 1:12, will express, Affliction shall visit the Assyrian no more, in a sense very different from that in which God will afflict Judah no more. In the Assyrian's case, because the blow will be fatally final; the latter, because God will make lasting blessedness in Judah's case succeed temporary chastisement. But it seems simpler to refer “affliction” here, as in Na 1:12, to Judah; indeed *destruction*, rather than *affliction*, applies to the Assyrian.

**10. *while they are folden together as thorns*** — literally, “*to the same degree as thorns*” (compare <sup><1302></sup>1 Chronicles 4:27, *Margin*). As thorns, so folded together and entangled that they cannot be loosed asunder without trouble, are thrown by the husbandmen all in a mass into the fire, so the Assyrians shall all be given together to destruction. Compare <sup><4136></sup>2 Samuel 23:6,7, where also “thorns” are the image of the wicked. As this image

represents the speediness of their destruction *in a mass*, so that of “drunkards,” their rushing as it were *of their own accord* into it; for drunkards fall down without any one pushing them [KIMCHI]. CALVIN explains, *Although ye be dangerous to touch* as thorns (that is, full of rage and violence), yet the Lord can easily consume you. But “although” will hardly apply to the next clause. *English Version* and KIMCHI, therefore, are to be preferred. The comparison to drunkards is appropriate. For drunkards, though exulting and bold, are weak and easily thrown down by even a finger touching them. So the insolent self-confidence of the Assyrians shall precipitate their overthrow by God. The *Hebrew* is “soaked,” or “drunken as with their own wine.” Their drunken revelries are perhaps *alluded to*, during which the foe (according to DIODORUS SICULUS [2]) broke into their city, and Sardanapalus *burned* his palace; though the main and ultimate destruction of Nineveh referred to by Nahum was long subsequent to that under Sardanapalus.

**11.** The cause of Nineveh’s overthrow: Sennacherib’s plots against Judah.

***come out of thee*** — O Nineveh. From thyself shall arise the source of thy own ruin. Thou shalt have only thyself to blame for it.

***imagineth evil*** — Sennacherib carried out the *imaginings* of his countrymen (Na 1:9) against the Lord and His people (<sup>2192</sup>2 Kings 19:22,23).

***a wicked counsellor*** — literally, “a counsellor of Belial.” Belial means “without profit,” worthless, and so bad (<sup>1025</sup>1 Samuel 25:25 <sup>4715</sup>2 Corinthians 6:15).

**12-14.** The same truths repeated as in Na 1:9-11, Jehovah here being the speaker. He addresses Judah, prophesying good to it, and evil to the Assyrian.

***Though they be quiet*** — that is, without fear, and tranquilly secure. So *Chaldee* and CALVIN. Or, “entire,” “complete”; “Though their power be *unbroken* [MAURER], and though they be *so many, yet even so* they shall be cut down” (literally, “shorn”; as *hair shaved off closely by a razor*, <sup>3020</sup>Isaiah 7:20). As the Assyrian was a razor shaving others, so shall he be shaven himself. Retribution in kind. In the height of their pride and power, they shall be clean cut off. The same *Hebrew* stands for “likewise” and “yet thus.” So *many* as they are, so many shall they perish.

***when he shall pass through*** — or, “and he shall pass away,” namely, “the wicked counsellor” (Na 1:11), Sennacherib. The change of number to the *singular* distinguishes *him* from *his host*. *They* shall be cut down, *he* shall

pass away home (<sup>4295</sup>2 Kings 19:35,36) [HENDERSON]. *English Version* is better, “they shall be cut down, “when” He (Jehovah) shall pass through,” destroying by one stroke the Assyrian host. This gives the reason why they with all their numbers and power are to be so utterly cut off. Compare “pass through,” that is, in destroying power (<sup>3322</sup>Ezekiel 12:12,23 <sup>2388</sup>Isaiah 8:8 <sup>2711</sup>Daniel 11:10).

***Though I have afflicted thee*** — Judah, “I will afflict thee no more” (<sup>2310</sup>Isaiah 40:1,2 52:1,2). The contrast is between “they,” the Assyrians, and “thee,” Judah. *Their* punishment is fatal and final. Judah’s was temporary and corrective.

**13. *will I break his yoke*** — the Assyrian’s yoke, namely, the tribute imposed by Sennacherib on Hezekiah (<sup>4284</sup>2 Kings 18:14).

***from off thee*** — O Judah (<sup>2307</sup>Isaiah 10:27).

**14. *that no more of thy name be sown*** — that no more of thy seed, bearing thy name, as kings of Nineveh, be propagated; that thy dynasty become extinct, namely, on the destruction of Nineveh here foretold; “thee” means the *king of Assyria*.

***will I cut off ... graven image*** — The Medes under Cyaxares, the joint destroyers of Nineveh with the Babylonians, hated idolatry, and would delight in destroying its idols. As the Assyrians had treated the gods of other nations, so their own should be treated (<sup>4295</sup>2 Kings 19:18). The Assyrian palaces partook of a sacred character [LAYARD]; so that “house of thy gods” *may* refer to the *palace*. At Khorsabad there is remaining a representation of a man cutting an idol to pieces.

***I will make thy grave*** — rather, “I will make it (namely, ‘the house of thy gods,’ that is, ‘Nisroch’) thy grave” (<sup>4295</sup>2 Kings 19:37 <sup>2378</sup>Isaiah 37:38). Thus, by Sennacherib’s being slain in it, Nisroch’s house should be defiled. Neither thy gods, nor thy temple, shall save thee; but the latter shall be thy sepulcher.

***thou art vile*** — or, thou art lighter than due weight (<sup>2752</sup>Daniel 5:27; compare <sup>3306</sup>Job 31:6) [MAURER].

**15.** This verse is joined in the *Hebrew* text to the second chapter. It is nearly the same as <sup>2317</sup>Isaiah 52:7, referring to the similar deliverance from Babylon.

***him that bringeth good tidings*** — announcing the overthrow of Sennacherib and deliverance of Jerusalem. The “mountains” are those round Jerusalem, on which Sennacherib’s host had so lately encamped,

preventing Judah from keeping her “feasts,” but on which messengers now speed to Jerusalem, publishing his overthrow with a loud voice where lately they durst not have opened their mouths. A type of the far more glorious spiritual deliverance of God’s people from Satan by Messiah, heralded by ministers of the Gospel ( ~~615~~Romans 10:15).

***perform thy vows*** — which thou didst promise if God would deliver thee from the Assyrian.

***the wicked*** — literally, “Belial”; the same as the “counsellor of Belial” (Na 1:11, *Margin*); namely, Sennacherib.

# CHAPTER 2

## NAHUM 2:1-13.

### THE ADVANCE OF THE DESTROYING FORCES AGAINST NINEVEH, AFTER IT WAS USED AS GOD'S ROD FOR A TIME TO CHASTISE HIS PEOPLE: THE CAPTURE OF THAT LION'S DWELLING, ACCORDING TO THE SURE WORD OF JEHOVAH.

1. *He that dasheth in pieces* — God's "battle axe," wherewith He "breaks in pieces" His enemies. <sup><3513></sup>Jeremiah 51:20 applies the same *Hebrew* term to Nebuchadnezzar (compare <sup><1518></sup>Proverbs 25:18 <sup><3413></sup>Jeremiah 50:23, "the hammer of the whole earth"). Here the Medo-Babylonian army under Cyaxares and Nabopolassar, that destroyed Nineveh, is prophetically meant.

*before thy face* — before Nineveh. *Openly*, so that the work of God may be manifest.

*watch the way* — by which the foe will attack, so as to be ready to meet him. Ironical advice; equivalent to a prophecy, Thou shalt have need to use all possible means of defense; but use what thou wilt, all will be in vain.

*make thy loins strong* — The loins are the seat of strength; to gird them up is to prepare all one's strength for conflict (<sup><3817></sup>Job 40:7). Also gird on thy sword (<sup><1118></sup>2 Samuel 20:8 <sup><1119></sup>2 Kings 4:29).

2. *For the Lord hath turned away the excellency of Jacob* — that is, the time for Nineveh's overthrow is ripe, because Jacob (Judah) and Israel (the ten tribes) have been sufficiently chastised. The Assyrian rod of chastisement, having done its work, is to be thrown into the fire. If God chastised Jacob and Israel with all their "excellency" (Jerusalem and the temple, which was their pre-eminent excellency above all nations in God's eyes, <sup><3414></sup>Psalms 47:4 87:2 <sup><3321></sup>Ezekiel 24:21; see on <sup><3118></sup>Amos 6:8), how much more will He punish fatally Nineveh, an alien to Him, and idolatrous? MAURER, not so well, translates, "restores," or "will restore the excellency of Jacob."

*emptiers* — the Assyrian spoilers.

**have emptied them out** — have spoiled the Israelites and Jews (<sup>2001</sup>Hosea 10:1). Compare <sup>8008</sup>Psalm 80:8-16, on “vine branches,” as applied to Israel.

**3. his mighty men** — the Medo-Babylonian generals *mighty men* attacking Nineveh.

**made red** — The ancients dyed their bull’s-hide shields *red*, partly to strike terror into the enemy, chiefly lest the blood from wounds which they might receive should be perceived and give confidence to the foe [CALVIN]. G. V. SMITH conjectures that the reference is to the red reflection of the sun’s rays from shields of bronze or copper, such as are found among the Assyrian remains.

**in scarlet** — or *crimson* military tunics (compare <sup>4728</sup>Matthew 27:28). XENOPHON mentions that the Medes were fond of this color. The Lydians and Tyrians extracted the dye from a particular worm.

**chariots ... with flaming torches** — that is, the chariots shall be like flaming torches, their wheels in lightning-like rapidity of rotation flashing light and striking sparks from the stones over which they pass (compare <sup>2368</sup>Isaiah 5:28). *English Version* supposes a transposition of the *Hebrew* letters. It is better to translate the *Hebrew* as it is, “the chariots (shall be furnished) with fire-flashing *scythes*” (literally, “with the fire,” or glitter, of *iron weapons*). Iron scythes were fixed at right angles to the axles and turned down, or parallel to it, inserted into the felly of the wheel. The Medes, perhaps, had such chariots, though no traces of them are found in Assyrian remains. On account of the latter fact, it may be better to translate, “the chariots (shall come) with the glitter of *steel weapons*” [MAURER and G. V. SMITH].

**in the day of his preparation** — JEHOVAH’S (<sup>2313</sup>Isaiah 13:3). Or, “*Medo-Babylonian commander’s* day of preparation for the attack” (Na 2:1). “He” confirms this, and “his” in this verse.

**the fir trees** — their fir-tree lances.

**terribly shaken** — branded so as to strike terror. Or, “shall be tremulous with being brandished” [MAURER].

**4. rage** — are driven in furious haste (<sup>2409</sup>Jeremiah 46:9).

**justle one against another** — run to and fro [MAURER].

**in the broad ways** — (<sup>4306</sup>2 Chronicles 32:6). Large open spaces in the suburbs of Nineveh.

**they shall seem like torches** — literally, “their (feminine in *Hebrew*) appearance (is)”: namely, the appearance of *the broad places* is like that of torches, through the numbers of chariots in them flashing in the sun (<sup><318></sup>Proverbs 8:26, *Margin*).

**run like the lightnings** — with rapid violence (<sup><402></sup>Matthew 24:27 <sup><208></sup>Luke 10:18).

5. The Assyrian king. The Assyrian preparations for defense.

**shall recount his worthies** — (Na 3:18). *Review*, or *count over in his mind*, his nobles, choosing out the bravest to hasten to the walls and repel the attack. But in vain; for

**they shall stumble in their walk** — “they shall stumble in their *advance*” through fear and hurry.

**the defense shall be prepared** — rather, *the covering machine* used by *besiegers* to protect themselves in advancing to the wall. Such sudden transitions, as here from the besieged to the besiegers, are frequent (compare <sup><304></sup>Ezekiel 4:2), [MAURER]. Or, used *by the besieged Assyrians* [CALVIN].

6. **The gates of the rivers ... opened** — The river wall on the Tigris (the west defense of Nineveh) was 4,530 yards long. On the north, south, and east sides, there were large moats, capable of being easily filled with water from the Khosru. Traces of dams (“gates,” or sluices) for regulating the supply are still visible, so that the whole city could be surrounded with a water barrier (Na 2:8). Besides, on the east, the weakest side, it was further protected by a lofty double rampart with a moat two hundred feet wide between its two parts, cut in the rocky ground. The moats or canals, flooded by the Ninevites before the siege to repel the foe, were made a dry bed to march into the city, by the foe turning the waters into a different channel: as Cyrus did in the siege of Babylon [MAURER]. In the earlier capture of Nineveh by Arbaces the Mede, and Belesis the Babylonian, DIODORUS SICULUS, [1.2.80], states that there was an old prophecy that it should not be taken till the river became its enemy; so in the third year of the siege, the river by a flood broke down the walls twenty furlongs, and the king thereupon burnt himself and his palace and all his concubines and wealth together, and the enemy entered by the breach in the wall. Fire and water were doubtless the means of the second destruction here foretold, as of the first.

**dissolved** — by the inundation [HENDERSON]. Or, those in the palace shall melt with fear, namely, the king and his nobles [GROTIUS].

**7. *Huzzab*** — the name of the queen of Nineveh, from a *Hebrew* root implying that she *stood by* the king (<sup>4981P</sup>Psalm 45:9), [VATABLUS]. Rather, Nineveh personified as a queen. She who had long *stood* in the most supreme prosperity. Similarly CALVIN. MAURER makes it not a proper name, and translates, “It is established,” or “determined” (compare <sup>0443P</sup>Genesis 41:32). *English Version* is more supported by the parallelism.

***led away captive*** — The *Hebrew* requires rather, “she is laid bare”; brought forth from the apartments where Eastern women remained secluded, and is stripped of her ornamental attire. Compare <sup>2370P</sup>Isaiah 47:2,3, where the same image of a woman with face and legs exposed is used of a city captive and dismantled (compare Na 3:5), [MAURER].

***brought up*** — Her people shall be *made to go up* to Babylon. Compare the use of “go up” for *moving from* a place in <sup>291P</sup>Jeremiah 21:2.

***her maids ... as ... doves*** — As Nineveh is compared to a queen dethroned and dishonored, so she has here assigned to her in the image *handmaids attending her with dove-like plaints* (<sup>2384P</sup>Isaiah 38:14 59:11. The image implies *helplessness and grief suppressed, but at times breaking out*). The minor cities and dependencies of Nineveh may be meant, or her captive women [JEROME]. GROTIUS and MAURER translate, for “lead her,” “moan,” or “sigh.”

***tabering*** — *beating* on their breasts *as on a tambourine*.

**8. *But*** — rather, “Though” [G. V. SMITH].

***of old*** — rather, “from the days that she hath been”; from the earliest period of her existence. Alluding to Nineveh’s antiquity (<sup>0101P</sup>Genesis 10:11). “Though Nineveh has been of old defended by water surrounding her, yet her inhabitants shall flee away.” GROTIUS, less probably (compare Na 3:8-12), interprets, the “waters” of her *numerous population* (<sup>2300P</sup>Isaiah 8:7 <sup>2513P</sup>Jeremiah 51:13 <sup>6175P</sup>Revelation 17:15).

***Stand, stand, shall they cry*** — that is, the few patriotic citizens *shall cry* to their *fleeing* countrymen; “but none looketh back,” much less stops in flight, so panic-stricken are they.

**9. *silver ... gold*** — The conquerors are summoned to plunder the city. Nineveh’s riches arose from the annual tribute paid by so many subject states, as well as from its extensive merchandise (Na 3:16 <sup>2372P</sup>Ezekiel 27:23,24).

***store*** — accumulated by the plunder of subject nations. It is remarkable, that while small articles of value (bronze inlaid with gold, gems, seals, and

alabaster *vases*) are found in the ruins of Nineveh, there are is none of *gold* and *silver*. These, as here foretold, were “taken for spoil” before the palaces were set on fire.

***glory out of all the pleasant furniture*** — or, “there is abundance of precious vessels of every kind” [MAURER].

**10.** Literally, “emptiness, and emptiedness, and devastation.” The accumulation of substantives without a verb (as in Na 3:2), the two first of the three being derivatives of the same root, and like in sound, and the number of syllables in them increasing in a kind of climax, intensify the gloomy effectiveness of the expression. *Hebrew, Bukah, Mebukah, Mebullakah* (compare <sup>2304</sup>Isaiah 24:1,3,4 <sup>3015</sup>Zephaniah 1:15).

***faces of all gather blackness*** — (See on <sup>2306</sup>Joel 2:6). CALVIN translates, “withdraw (literally, ‘gather up’) their glow,” or flush, that is grow pale. This is probably the better rendering. So MAURER.

**11. *dwelling of ... lions*** — Nineveh, the seat of empire of the rapacious and destructive warriors of various ranks, typified by the “lions,” “young lions,” “old lion” (or *lioness* [MAURER]), “the lion’s whelp.” The image is peculiarly appropriate, as lions of every form, winged, and sometimes with the head of a man, are frequent in the Assyrian sepulchres. It was as full of spoils of all nations as a lion’s den is of remains of its prey. The question, “Where,” etc. implies that Jehovah “would make an utter end of *the place*,” so that its very site could not be found (Na 1:8). It is a question expressing wonder, so incredible did it then seem.

**12. *prey ... ravin*** — different kinds of prey. Compare <sup>2301</sup>Isaiah 3:1, “the stay and the staff.”

**13. *burn ... in the smoke*** — or (so as to pass) “*into smoke*,” that is, “entirely” [MAURER], (<sup>4823</sup>Psalms 37:20 46:9). CALVIN, like *English Version*, explains, As soon as the flame catches, and the fire smokes, by the mere smoke I will burn her chariots.

***cut off thy prey from the earth*** — Thou shalt no more carry off prey from the nations of the earth.

***the voice of thy messengers ... no more ... heard*** — No more shall thy emissaries be heard throughout thy provinces conveying thy king’s commands, and exacting tribute of subject nations.

# CHAPTER 3

## NAHUM 3:1-19.

**REPETITION OF NINEVEH'S DOOM, WITH NEW FEATURES; THE CAUSE IS HER TYRANNY, RAPINE, AND CRUELTY: NO-AMMON'S FORTIFICATIONS DID NOT SAVE HER; IT IS VAIN, THEREFORE, FOR NINEVEH TO THINK HER DEFENSES WILL SECURE HER AGAINST GOD'S SENTENCE.**

1. *the bloody city!* — literally, “city of blood,” namely, shed by Nineveh; just so now her own blood is to be shed.

*robbery* — violence [MAURER]. Extortion [GROTIUS].

*the prey departeth not* — Nineveh never ceases to live by rapine. Or, the *Hebrew* verb is transitive, “she (Nineveh) does not make the prey depart”; she ceases not to plunder.

2. The reader is transported into the midst of the fight (compare <sup>צחצח</sup> Jeremiah 47:3). The “noise of the whips” urging on the horses (in the chariots) is heard, and of “the rattling of the wheels” of war chariots, and the “horses” are seen “prancing,” and the “chariots jumping,” etc.

3. *horseman* — distinct from “the horses” (in the chariots, Na 3:2).

*lifteth up* — denoting readiness for fight [EWALD]. GESENIUS translates, “lifteth up (literally, ‘makes to ascend’) his horse.” Similarly MAURER, “makes his horse to rise up on his hind feet.” *Vulgate* translates, “ascending,” that is, making his horse to advance up to the assault. This last is perhaps better than *English Version*.

*the bright sword and the glittering spear* — literally, “the glitter of the sword and the flash of the spear!” This, as well as the translation, “the horseman advancing up,” more graphically presents the battle scene to the eye.

*they stumble upon their corpses* — The *Medo-Babylonian* enemy stumble upon the *Assyrian corpses*.

**4. *Because of the multitude of the whoredoms*** — This assigns the reason for Nineveh's destruction.

***of the well-favored harlot*** — As Assyria was not a worshipper of the true God, “whoredoms” cannot mean, as in the case of Israel, apostasy to the worship of false gods; but, her *harlot-like artifices* whereby she allured neighboring states so as to subject them to herself. As the unwary are allured by the “well-favored harlot's” looks, so Israel, Judah (for example, under Ahaz, who, calling to his aid Tiglath-pileser, was made tributary by him, <sup><2K16></sup>2 Kings 16:7-10), and other nations, were tempted by the plausible professions of Assyria, and by the lure of commerce (<sup><6812></sup>Revelation 18:2,3), to trust her.

***witchcrafts*** — (<sup><2109></sup>Isaiah 47:9,12). Alluding to the love incantations whereby harlots tried to dement and ensnare youths; answering to the subtle machinations whereby Assyria attracted nations to her.

***selleth*** — deprives of their liberty; as slaves used to be *sold*: and in other property also *sale* was a usual mode of transfer. MAURER understands it of depriving nations of their freedom, and literally *selling* them as slaves to distant peoples (<sup><2109></sup>Joel 3:2,3,6-8). But elsewhere there is no evidence that the Assyrians did this.

***families*** — peoples.

**5. *I will discover thy skirts upon thy face*** — that is, discover thy nakedness by *throwing up thy skirts upon thy face* (the greatest possible insult), pulling them up as high as thy head (<sup><2109></sup>Jeremiah 13:22 <sup><2109></sup>Ezekiel 16:37-41). I will treat thee not as a matron, but as a harlot whose shame is exposed; her gaudy finery being lifted up off her (<sup><2109></sup>Isaiah 47:2,3). So Nineveh shall be stripped of all her glory and defenses on which she prides herself.

**6. *cast abominable filth upon thee*** — as infamous harlots used to be treated.

***gazing stock*** — exposed to public ignominy as a warning to others (<sup><2109></sup>Ezekiel 28:17).

**7. *all ... that look upon thee*** — when thou hast been made “a gazing stock” (Na 3:6).

***shall flee from thee*** — as a thing horrible to look upon. Compare “standing *afar off*,” <sup><6810></sup>Revelation 18:10.

*whence shall I seek comforters for thee?* — Compare <sup><2519></sup>Isaiah 51:19, which Nahum had before his mind.

**8. populous No** — rather, as *Hebrew*, “No-ammon,” the Egyptian name for Thebes in Upper Egypt; meaning the *portion* or *possession of Ammon*, the Egyptian Jupiter (whence the Greeks called the city Diospolis), who was especially worshipped there. The Egyptian inscriptions call the god *Amon-re*, that is, *Amon the Sun*; he is represented as a human figure with a ram’s head, seated on a chair (<sup><2465></sup>Jeremiah 46:25 <sup><2514></sup>Ezekiel 30:14-16). The blow inflicted on No-ammon, described in Na 3:10, was probably by the Assyrian Sargon (see on <sup><2301></sup>Isaiah 18:1; <sup><2310></sup>Isaiah 20:1). As Thebes, with all her resources, was overcome by Assyria, so Assyrian Nineveh, notwithstanding all her might, in her turn, shall be overcome by Babylon. *English Version*, “populous,” if correct, implies that No’s large population did not save her from destruction.

*situate among the rivers* — probably the *channels* into which the Nile here divides (compare <sup><2306></sup>Isaiah 19:6-8). Thebes lay on both sides of the river. It was famed in HOMER’s time for its hundred gates [*Iliad*, 9.381]. Its ruins still describe a circumference of twenty-seven miles. Of them the temples of Luxor and Karnak, east of the river, are most famous. The colonnade of the former, and the grand hall of the latter, are of stupendous dimensions. One wall still represents the expedition of Shishak against Jerusalem under Rehoboam (<sup><1145></sup>1 Kings 14:25 <sup><1112></sup>2 Chronicles 12:2-9).

*whose ... wall was from the sea* — that is, *rose up* “from the sea.” MAURER translates, “whose wall consisted of the sea.” But this would be a mere repetition of the former clause. The Nile is called a *sea*, from its appearance in the annual flood (<sup><2305></sup>Isaiah 19:5).

**9. Ethiopia** — *Hebrew, Cush*. Ethiopia is thought at this time to have been mistress of Upper Egypt.

*Egypt* — Lower Egypt.

*her strength* — her safeguard as an ally.

*it was infinite* — The resources of these, her allies, were endless.

*Put* — or Phut (<sup><1006></sup>Genesis 10:6); descended from Ham (<sup><2710></sup>Ezekiel 27:10). From a root meaning a *bow*; as they were famed as archers [GESENIUS]. Probably west of Lower Egypt. JOSEPHUS [*Antiquities*, 1:6.2] identifies it with Mauritania (compare <sup><2419></sup>Jeremiah 46:9, *Margin*; <sup><2305></sup>Ezekiel 38:5).

*Lubim* — the Libyans, whose capital was Cyrene; extending along the Mediterranean west of Egypt (<sup><1123></sup>2 Chronicles 12:3 16:8 <sup><1120></sup>Acts 2:10). As,

however, the *Lubim* are always connected with the Egyptians and Ethiopians, they are perhaps distinct from the *Libyans*. The Lubim were probably at first wandering tribes, who afterwards were settled under Carthage in the region of Cyrene, under the name Libyans.

*thy* — No's.

*helpers* — literally, “in thy help,” that is, among thy auxiliaries.

10. Notwithstanding all her might, she was overcome.

*cast lots for her honorable men* — They divided them among themselves by lot, as slaves (<sup>248B</sup>Joel 3:3).

11. *drunken* — made to drink of the cup of Jehovah's wrath (<sup>251D</sup>Isaiah 51:17,21 <sup>245E</sup>Jeremiah 25:15).

*hid* — covered out of sight: a prediction remarkably verified in the state in which the ruins of Nineveh have been found [G. V. SMITH]. But as “hid” precedes “seek strength,” etc., it rather refers to Nineveh's state when attacked by her foe: “Thou who now so vauntest thyself, shalt be compelled to seek a hiding-place from the foe” [CALVIN]; or, shalt be neglected and slighted by all [MAURER].

*seek strength because of the enemy* — Thou too, like Thebes (Na 3:9), shalt have recourse to other nations for help against thy Medo-Babylonian enemy.

12. *thy strongholds* — on the borders of Assyria, protecting the approaches to Nineveh: “the gates of thy land” (Na 3:13).

*fig trees with the first ripe figs* — expressing the rapidity and ease of the capture of Nineveh (compare <sup>233D</sup>Isaiah 28:4 <sup>408E</sup>Revelation 6:13).

13. *thy people* — thy soldiers.

*women* — unable to fight for thee (<sup>239G</sup>Isaiah 19:16 <sup>247E</sup>Jeremiah 50:37 51:30).

*gates on thy land* — the fortified passes or entrances to the region of Nineveh (compare <sup>241E</sup>Jeremiah 15:7). Northeast of Nineveh there were hills affording a natural barrier against an invader; the guarded passes through these are probably “the gates of the land” meant.

*fire shall devour thy bars* — the “bars” of the fortresses at the passes into Assyria. So in Assyrian remains the Assyrians themselves are represented as setting fire to the gates of a city [BONOMI, *Nineveh*, pp. 194, 197].

**14.** Ironical exhortation to Nineveh to defend herself.

*Draw ... waters* — so as not to be without water for drinking, in the event of being cut off by the besiegers from the fountains.

*make strong the brick-kiln* — or “repair” so as to have a supply of bricks formed of kiln-burnt clay, to repair breaches in the ramparts, or to build new fortifications inside when the outer ones are taken by the foe.

**15.** *There* — in the very scene of thy great preparations for defense; and where thou now art so secure.

*fire* — even as at the former destruction; Sardanapalus (Pul?) perished with all his household in the conflagration of his palace, having in despair set it on fire, the traces of which are still remaining.

*cankerworm* — “the licking locust” [HENDERSON].

*make thyself many as the locusts* — “the swarming locusts” [HENDERSON]; that is, however “many” be thy forces, like those of “the swarming locusts,” or the “licking locusts,” yet the foe shall consume thee as the “licking locust” licks up all before it.

**16.** *multiplied thy merchants* — (<sup>2723</sup>Ezekiel 27:23,24). Nineveh, by large canals, had easy access to Babylon; and it was one of the great routes for the people of the west and northwest to that city; lying on the Tigris it had access to the sea. The Phoenicians carried its wares everywhere. Hence its merchandise is so much spoken of.

*the cankerworm spoileth, and fleeth away* — that is, spoiled *thy merchants*. The “cankerworm,” or licking locust, answers to the Medo-Babylonian invaders of Nineveh [G. V. SMITH]. CALVIN explains less probably, “Thy merchants spoiled many regions; but the same shall befall them as befalls locusts, they in a moment shall be scattered and flee away.” MAURER, somewhat similarly, “The licking locust puts off (the envelope in which his wings had been folded), and teeth away” (Na 2:9; compare <sup>2004</sup>Joel 1:4). The *Hebrew* has ten different names for the locust, so destructive was it.

**17.** *Thy crowned* — Thy princes (<sup>6907</sup>Revelation 9:7). The king’s nobles and officers wore the tiara, as well as the king; hence they are called here “thy crowned ones.”

*as the locusts* — as many as *the swarming locusts*.

*thy captains* — *Tiphisar*, an Assyrian word; found also in <sup>26127</sup>Jeremiah 51:27, meaning *satraps* [MICHAELIS]; or rather, “military leaders”

[MAURER]. The last syllable, *sar* means a “prince,” and is found in *Belshaz-zar*, *Nabopolas-sar*, *Nebuchadnezzar*.

**as the great grasshoppers** — literally, “as the locust of locusts,” that is, the largest locust. MAURER translates, “as many as *locusts upon locusts*,” that is, swarms of locusts. *Hebrew* idiom favors *English Version*.

**in the hedges in the cold** — Cold deprives the locust of the power of flight; so they alight in cold weather and at night, but when warmed by the sun soon “flee away.” So shall the Assyrian multitudes suddenly disappear, not leaving a trace behind (compare PLINY, *Natural History*, 11.29).

**18. Thy shepherds** — that is, Thy leaders.

**slumber** — are carelessly secure [MAURER]. Rather, “lie in death’s sleep, having been slain” [JEROME] (<sup><12516></sup>Exodus 15:16 <sup><13716></sup>Psalms 76:6).

**shall dwell in the dust** — (<sup><13716></sup>Psalms 7:5 94:17).

**thy people is scattered** — the necessary consequence of their leaders being laid low (<sup><12217></sup>1 Kings 22:17).

**19. bruit** — the report.

**clap the hands** — with joy at thy fall. The sole descendants of the ancient Assyrians and Babylonians in the whole country are the Nestorian Christians, who speak a Chaldean language [LAYARD].

**upon whom hath not thy wickedness passed continually?** — implying God’s long forbearance, and the consequent enormity of Assyria’s guilt, rendering her case one that admitted no hope of restoration.

# THE BOOK OF HABAKKUK

Commentary by **A. R. FAUSSETT**

## INTRODUCTION

HABAKKUK, from a *Hebrew* root meaning to “embrace,” denoting a “favorite” (namely, of God) and a “struggler” (for his country’s good). Some ancient authors represent him as belonging to the tribe of Levi; others [PSEUDO EPIPHANIUS], to that of Simeon. The inscription to Bel and the dragon in the *Septuagint* asserts the former; and <sup><4018></sup>Habakkuk 3:19 perhaps favors this. EUSEBIUS [*Ecclesiastical History*, 7.29] states that in his time Habakkuk’s tomb was shown at Ceila in Palestine.

The time seems to have been about 610 B.C. For the Chaldeans attacked Jerusalem in the ninth month of the fifth year of Jehoiakim, 605 B.C. (<sup><4202></sup>Kings 24:1 <sup><4018></sup>2 Chronicles 36:6 <sup><4402></sup>Jeremiah 46:2 36:9). And Habakkuk (Habakkuk 1:5,6, etc.) speaks of the Chaldeans as about to invade Judah, but not as having actually done so. In the second chapter he proceeds to comfort his people by foretelling the humiliation of their conquerors, and that the vision will soon have its fulfillment. In the third chapter the prophet in a sublime ode celebrates the deliverances wrought by Jehovah for His people in times past, as the ground of assurance, notwithstanding all their existing calamities, that He will deliver them again. <sup><4016></sup>Habakkuk 3:16 shows that the invader is still coming, and not yet arrived; so that the whole refers to the invasion in Jehoiakim’s times, not those under Jehoiachin and Zedekiah. The Apocryphal appendix to Daniel states that he lived to see the Babylonian exile (588 B.C), which accords with his prophesying early in Jehoiakim’s reign, about 610 B.C.

The position of the book immediately after Nahum is appropriate; as Nahum treated of the judgments of the Lord on Assyria, for its violence against Israel, so Habakkuk, those inflicted by, and on, the Chaldeans for the same reason.

The style is poetical and sublime. The parallelisms are generally regular. Borrowed ideas occur (compare <sup><3189></sup>Habakkuk 3:19, with <sup><4833></sup>Psalm 18:33; Habakkuk 2:6, with <sup><3146></sup>Isaiah 14:4; <sup><3124></sup>Habakkuk 2:14, with <sup><3109></sup>Isaiah 11:9).

The ancient catalogues imply that his book is part of the canon of Scripture. In the New Testament, <sup><8117></sup>Romans 1:17 quotes Habakkuk 2:4 (though not naming him); compare also <sup><8011></sup>Galatians 3:11 <sup><3108></sup>Hebrews 10:38. <sup><4130></sup>Acts 13:40,41 quotes Habakkuk 1:5. One or two *Hebrew* words peculiar to Habakkuk occur (Habakkuk 1:9 2:6,16).

# CHAPTER 1

## HABAKKUK 1:1-17.

**HABAKKUK'S EXPOSTULATION WITH JEHOVAH ON ACCOUNT OF THE PREVALENCE OF INJUSTICE: JEHOVAH SUMMONS ATTENTION TO HIS PURPOSE OF SENDING THE CHALDEANS AS THE AVENGERS. THE PROPHET COMPLAINS, THAT THESE ARE WORSE THAN THOSE ON WHOM VENGEANCE WAS TO BE TAKEN.**

1. *burden* — the prophetic sentence.

2, 3. *violence ... Why dost thou show me iniquity?* — Similar language is used of the Chaldeans (Habakkuk 1:9,13), as here is used of the Jews: implying, that as the Jews sinned by *violence* and *injustice*, so they should be punished by *violence* and *injustice* (<sup>401B</sup>Proverbs 1:31). Jehoiakim's reign was marked by injustice, treachery, and bloodshed (<sup>402B</sup>Jeremiah 22:3,13-17). Therefore the Chaldeans should be sent to deal with him and his nobles according to their dealings with others (Habakkuk 1:6,10,11,17). Compare Jeremiah's expostulation with Jehovah, <sup>411E</sup>Jeremiah 12:1 20:8; and <sup>489E</sup>Job 19:7,8.

3. *cause me to behold grievance* — MAURER denies that the *Hebrew* verb is ever *active*; he translates, "(Wherefore) dost Thou behold (without doing aught to check) grievance?" The context favors *English Version*.

*there are that raise up strife and contention* — so CALVIN. But MAURER, not so well, translates, "There is strife, and contention raises *itself*."

4. *Therefore* — because Thou dost suffer such crimes to go unpunished.

*law is slacked* — is chilled. It has no authority and secures no respect.

*judgment* — justice.

*wrong judgment proceedeth* — Decisions are given contrary to right.

5. *Behold ... marvellously ... a work* — (Compare <sup>2394E</sup>Isaiah 29:14). Quoted by Paul (<sup>441E</sup>Acts 13:41).

*among the heathen* — In <sup>441E</sup>Acts 13:41, "ye despisers," from the *Septuagint*. So the *Syriac* and *Arabic* versions; perhaps from a different

*Hebrew* reading. In the *English Version* reading of Habakkuk, God, in reply to the prophet's expostulation, addresses the Jews as about to be punished, "Behold ye *among the heathen* (with whom ye deserve to be classed, and by whom ye shall be punished, as despisers; the sense *implied*, which Paul *expresses*): learn from them what ye refused to learn from Me!" For "wonder marvellously," Paul, in <sup><4413></sup>Acts 13:41, has, "wonder *and perish*," which gives the *sense*, not the literal wording, of the *Hebrew*, "Wonder, wonder," that is, be overwhelmed in wonder. The despisers are to be given up to their own stupefaction, and so perish. The Israelite unbelievers would not credit the prophecy as to the fearfulness of the destruction to be wrought by the Chaldeans, nor afterwards the deliverance promised from that nation. So analogously, in Paul's day, the Jews would not credit the judgment coming on them by the Romans, nor the salvation proclaimed through Jesus. Thus the same Scripture applied to both.

*ye will not believe, though it be told you* — that is, ye will not believe *now* that I foretell it.

**6. *I raise up*** — not referring to God's having brought the Chaldeans from their original seats to Babylonia (see on <sup><23213></sup>Isaiah 23:13), for they had already been upwards of twenty years (since Nabopolassar's era) in political power there; but to His being about now to raise them up as the instruments of God's "work" of judgment on the Jews (<sup><143016></sup>2 Chronicles 36:6). The *Hebrew* is *future*, "I will raise up."

***bitter*** — that is, cruel (<sup><25142></sup>Jeremiah 50:42; compare <sup><171825></sup>Judges 18:25, *Margin*; <sup><19178></sup>1 Samuel 17:8).

***hasty*** — not *passionate*, but "impetuous."

**7. *their judgment and ... dignity ... proceed of themselves*** — that is, they recognize no *judge* save themselves, and they get for themselves and keep their own "dignity" without needing others' help. It will be vain for the Jews to complain of their tyrannical *judgments*; for whatever the Chaldeans decree they will do according to their own will, they will not brook anyone attempting to interfere.

**8. *swifter than the leopards*** — OPIAN [*Cynegeticks*, 3.76], says of the leopard, "It runs most swiftly straight on: you would fancy it was flying through the air."

***more fierce*** — rather, "more keen"; literally, "sharp."

***evening wolves*** — wolves famished with fasting all day and so most keen in attacking the fold under covert of the approaching night (<sup><21116></sup>Jeremiah 5:6)

Zephaniah 3:3; compare <sup><0427></sup>Genesis 49:27). Hence “twilight” is termed in *Arabic* and *Persian* “the wolf’s tail”; and in French, *entre chien et loup*.

**spread themselves** — proudly; as in <sup><2611></sup>Jeremiah 50:11, and Malachi 4:2, it implies *strength* and *vigor*. So also the *Arabic* cognate word [MAURER].

**their horsemen ... come from far** — and yet are not wearied by the long journey.

**9. all for violence** — The sole object of all is not to establish just rights, but to get all they can by violence.

**their faces shall sup up as the east wind** — that is, they shall, as it were, *swallow up* all before them; so the horse in <sup><8324></sup>Job 39:24 is said to “*swallow* the ground with fierceness and rage.” MAURER takes it from an *Arabic* root, “the *desire* of their faces,” that is, the eager desire expressed by their faces. HENDERSON, with SYMMACHUS and *Syriac*, translates, “the aspect.”

**as the east wind** — the simoon, which spreads devastation wherever it passes (<sup><2708></sup>Isaiah 27:8). GESENIUS translates, “(is) forwards.” The rendering proposed, *eastward*, as if it referred to the Chaldeans’ return home *eastward* from Judea, laden with spoils, is improbable. Their “gathering the sand” accords with the simoon being meant, as it carries with it whirlwinds of sand collected in the desert.

**10. scoff at ... kings** — as unable to resist them.

**they shall heap dust, and take it** — “they shall heap” earth mounds outside, and so “take every stronghold” (compare <sup><1115></sup>2 Samuel 20:15 <sup><1242></sup>2 Kings 19:32) [GROTIUS].

**11. Then** — when elated by his successes.

**shall his mind change** — He shall lose whatever of reason or moderation ever was in him, with pride.

**he shall pass over** — all bounds and restraints: his pride preparing the sure way for his destruction (<sup><2168></sup>Proverbs 16:18). The language is very similar to that describing Nebuchadnezzar’s “change” from man’s heart (understanding) to that of a beast, because of pride (see on <sup><2016></sup>Daniel 4:16; <sup><2016></sup>Daniel 4:30,31; <sup><2016></sup>Daniel 4:33,34). An undesigned coincidence between the two sacred books written independently.

**imputing this his power unto his god** — (<sup><2114></sup>Daniel 5:4). Sacrilegious arrogance, in ascribing to his idol Bel the glory that belongs to God [CALVIN]. GROTIUS explains, “(saying that) his power is his own as one who is a god to himself” (compare <sup><3016></sup>Habakkuk 1:16, and <sup><2114></sup>Daniel 3:1-

30). So MAURER, “He shall offend as one to whom his power is his god” (<sup><3126></sup>Job 12:6; see on <sup><3116></sup>Micah 2:1).

**12.** In opposition to the impious deifying of the Chaldeans power as their god (MAURER, or, as the *English Version*, their attributing of their successes to their idols), the prophet, in an impassioned address to Jehovah, vindicates His being “from everlasting,” as contrasted with the Chaldean so-called “god.”

*my God, mine Holy One* — Habakkuk speaks in the name of his people. God was “the Holy One of *Israel*,” against whom the Chaldean was setting up himself (<sup><23723></sup>Isaiah 37:23).

*we shall not die* — Thou, as being *our* God, wilt not permit the Chaldeans utterly to destroy us. This reading is one of the eighteen called by the Hebrews “the appointment of the scribes”; the Rabbis think that Ezra and his colleagues corrected the old reading, “*Thou shalt* not die.”

*thou hast ordained them for judgment* — that is, to execute Thy judgments.

*for correction* — to chastise transgressors (<sup><23105></sup>Isaiah 10:5-7). But not that they may deify their own power (<sup><3111></sup>Habakkuk 1:11, for their power is from Thee, and but for a time); nor that they may destroy utterly Thy people. The *Hebrew* for “mighty God” is *Rock* (<sup><45314></sup>Deuteronomy 32:4). However the world is shaken, or man’s faith wavers, God remains unshaken as the Rock of Ages (<sup><23104></sup>Isaiah 26:4, *Margin*).

**13.** *purser ... than to behold evil* — without being displeased at it.

*canst not look on iniquity* — unjust injuries done to Thy people. The prophet checks himself from being carried too far in his expostulatory complaint, by putting before himself honorable sentiments of God.

*them that deal treacherously* — the Chaldeans, once allies of the Jews, but now their violent oppressors. Compare “treacherous dealers,” (<sup><22012></sup>Isaiah 21:2 24:16). Instead of speaking evil against God, he goes to God Himself for the remedy for his perplexity (<sup><457311></sup>Psalms 73:11-17).

*devoureth the man that is more righteous* — The Chaldean oppresses the Jew, who with all his faults, is better than his oppressor (compare <sup><24651></sup>Ezekiel 16:51,52).

**14.** *And* — that is, *And so*, by suffering oppressors to go unpunished, “Thou makest men as the fishes ... that have no ruler”; that is, no defender. All may fish in the sea with impunity; so the Chaldeans with impunity

afflict Thy people, as these have no longer the God of the theocracy, their King, to defend them. Thou reducest men to such a state of anarchy, by wrong going unpunished, as if there were no God. He compares the world to the *sea*; men to *fishes*; Nebuchadnezzar to a *fisherman* (<sup><3015></sup>Habakkuk 1:15-17).

**15. *they take up all of them*** — all kinds of fishes, that is, *men*, as captives, and all other prey that comes in their way.

***with the angle*** — that is, the hook. Some they take up as with the hook, one by one; others in shoals, as in a “net” and “drag” or enclosing net.

***therefore*** — because of their successes.

***they rejoice*** — They glory in their crimes because attended with success (compare <sup><3011></sup>Habakkuk 1:11).

**16. *sacrifice unto their net*** — that is, their arms, power, and military skill, wherewith they gained their victories; instead of to God. Compare <sup><3011></sup>Habakkuk 1:11, MAURER’S interpretation. They idolize themselves for their own cleverness and might (<sup><0817></sup>Deuteronomy 8:17 <sup><2903></sup>Isaiah 10:13 37:24,25).

***by them*** — by their net and dragnet.

***their portion*** — image from a banquet: the prey which they have gotten.

**17. *Shall they ... empty their net?*** — Shall they be allowed without interruption to enjoy the fruits of their violence?

***therefore*** — seeing that they attribute all their successes to themselves, and not to Thee. The answer to the prophet’s question, he by inspiration gives himself in the second chapter.

# CHAPTER 2

## HABAKKUK 2:1-20.

**THE PROPHET, WAITING EARNESTLY FOR AN ANSWER TO HIS COMPLAINTS (FIRST CHAPTER), RECEIVES A REVELATION, WHICH IS TO BE FULFILLED, NOT IMMEDIATELY, YET IN DUE TIME, AND IS THEREFORE TO BE WAITED FOR IN FAITH: THE CHALDEANS SHALL BE PUNISHED FOR THEIR CRUEL RAPACITY, NOR CAN THEIR FALSE GODS AVERT THE JUDGMENT OF JEHOVAH, THE ONLY TRUE GOD.**

1. *stand upon ... watch* — that is, watch-post. The prophets often compare themselves, awaiting the revelations of Jehovah with earnest patience, to watchmen on an eminence watching with intent eye all that comes within their view (<sup><3208></sup>Isaiah 21:8,11 <sup><3167></sup>Jeremiah 6:17 <sup><3187></sup>Ezekiel 3:17 33:2,3; compare <sup><3488></sup>Psalms 5:3 85:8). The “watch-post” is the withdrawal of the whole soul from earthly, and fixing it on heavenly, things. The accumulation of synonyms, “stand open ... watch ... set me upon ... tower ... watch to see” implies persevering fixity of attention.

*what he will say unto me* — in answer to my complaints (<sup><3013></sup>Habakkuk 1:13). Literally, “in me,” God speaking, not to the prophet’s outward ear, but *inwardly*. When we have prayed to God, we must observe what answers God gives by His word, His Spirit, and His providences.

*what I shall answer when I am reproved* — what answer I am to make to the *reproof* which I anticipate from God on account of the liberty of my expostulation with Him. MAURER translates, “What I am to answer in respect to my complaint against Jehovah” (<sup><3012></sup>Habakkuk 1:12-17).

2. *Write the vision* — which I am about to reveal to thee.

*make it plain* — (<sup><4578></sup>Deuteronomy 27:8). In large legible characters.

*upon tables* — boxwood tables covered with wax, on which national affairs were engraved with an iron pen, and then hung up in public, at the prophets own houses, or at the temple, that those who passed might read them. Compare <sup><4163></sup>Luke 1:63, “writing table,” that is, tablet.

**that he may run that readeth it** — commonly explained, “so intelligible as to be easily read by any one running past”; but then it would be, *that he that runneth may read it*. The true sense is, “so legible that whoever readeth it, may run to tell all whom he can the good news of the foe’s coming doom, and Judah’s deliverance.” Compare <sup><2704></sup>Daniel 12:4, “many shall *run* to and fro,” namely, with the explanation of the prophecy, then unsealed; also, <sup><627></sup>Revelation 22:17, “let him that heareth (the good news) say (to every one within his reach), Come.” “Run” is equivalent to *announce the divine revelation* (<sup><2231></sup>Jeremiah 23:21); as everyone who becomes informed of a divine message is bound to *run*, that is, use all despatch to make it known to others [HENDERSON]. GROTIUS, LUDOVICUS DE DIEU, and MAURER interpret it: “Run” is not literal *running*, but “that he who reads it may run through it,” that is, read it *at once without difficulty*.

**3. for** — assigning the cause why it ought to be *committed to writing*: *because* its fulfillment belongs to the future.

**the vision is yet for an appointed time** — (<sup><2704></sup>Daniel 10:14 11:27,35). Though the time appointed by God for the fulfillment be yet future, it should be enough for your faith that God hath spoken it (<sup><2313></sup>Lamentations 3:26).

**at the end it shall speak** — MAURER translates, “it *pants* for the end.” But the antithesis between, “it shall *speak*,” and “not be silent,” makes *English Version* the better rendering. So the *Hebrew* is translated in <sup><1217></sup>Proverbs 12:17. Literally, “breathe out words,” “break forth as a blast.”

**though it tarry, wait for it** — (<sup><0418></sup>Genesis 49:18).

**4. his soul which is lifted up** — the Chaldean’s [MAURER]. The unbelieving Jew’s [HENDERSON].

**is not upright in him** — that is, is not accounted upright in God’s sight; in antithesis to “shall live.” So <sup><3018></sup>Hebrews 10:38, which with inspired authority applies the general sense to the particular case which Paul had in view, “If any man *draw back* (one result of being ‘lifted up’ with overweening arrogance), *my soul shall have no pleasure in him*.”

**the just shall live by his faith** — the *Jewish nation*, as opposed to the unbelieving Chaldean (compare Habakkuk 2:5, etc. Habakkuk 1:6, etc., <sup><3013></sup>Habakkuk 1:13) [MAURER]. HENDERSON’S view is that the *believing Jew* is meant, as opposed to the unbelieving Jew (compare <sup><617></sup>Romans 1:17 <sup><811></sup>Galatians 3:11). The believing Jew, though God’s promise tarry, will wait for it; the unbelieving “draws back,” as <sup><3018></sup>Hebrews 10:38 expresses it. The sense, in MAURER’S view, which accords better with the context

(Habakkuk 2:5, etc.). is: the Chaldean, though for a time seeming to prosper, yet being lifted up with haughty unbelief (<sup>301B</sup>Habakkuk 1:11,16), is not upright; that is, has *no right* stability of soul resting on God, to ensure permanence of prosperity; hence, though for a time executing God's judgments, he at last becomes "lifted up" so as to attribute to his own power what is the work of God, and in this sense "draws back" (<sup>308B</sup>Hebrews 10:38), becoming thereby a type of all backsliders who thereby incur God's displeasure; as the believing Jew is of all who *wait* for God's promises with patient *faith*, and so "live" (stand accepted) before God. The *Hebrew* accents induce BENGEL to translate, "he who is just by his faith shall live." Other manuscripts read the accents as *English Version*, which agrees better with *Hebrew* syntax.

**5. *Yea also, because*** — additional reason why the Jews may look for God punishing their Chaldean foe, namely, *because ... he is*

***a proud man*** — rather, this clause continues the reason for the Jews expecting the punishment of the Chaldeans, "because he transgresseth by wine (a besetting sin of Babylon, compare <sup>271B</sup>Daniel 5:1-31, and CURTIUS [5.1]), *being* a proud man." Love of wine often begets a *proud* contempt of divine things, as in Belshazzar's case, which was the immediate cause of the fall of Babylon (<sup>278B</sup>Daniel 5:2-4,30; compare <sup>311B</sup>Proverbs 20:1 30:9 31:5).

***enlargeth his desire as hell*** — the grave, or the unseen world, which is "never full" (<sup>317B</sup>Proverbs 27:20 30:16 <sup>235B</sup>Isaiah 5:14). The Chaldeans under Nebuchadnezzar were filled with an insatiable desire of conquest. Another reason for their punishment.

**6. *Shall not all these*** — the "nations" and "peoples" (Habakkuk 2:5) "heaped unto him" by the Chaldean.

***take up a parable*** — a derisive song. Habakkuk follows Isaiah (<sup>234B</sup>Isaiah 14:4) and Micah (<sup>310B</sup>Micah 2:4) in the phraseology.

***against him*** — when dislodged from his former eminence.

***Woe*** — The "derisive song" here begins, and continues to the end of the chapter. It is a symmetrical whole, and consists of five stanzas, the first three consisting of three verses each, the fourth of four verses, and the last of two. Each stanza has its own subject, and all except the last begin with "Woe"; and all have a closing verse introduced with "for," "because," or "but."

***how long?*** — *how long* destined to retain his ill-gotten gains? But for a short time, as his fall now proves [MAURER]. "Covetousness is the greatest

bane to men. For they who invade others' goods, often lose even their own" [MENANDER]. CALVIN makes "how long?" to be the cry of those groaning under the Chaldean oppression while it still lasted: How long shall such oppression be permitted to continue? But it is plainly part of the *derisive song*, after the Chaldean tyranny had passed away.

***ladeth himself with thick clay*** — namely, gold and silver dug out of the "clay," of which they are a part. The covetous man in heaping them together is only lading himself with a clay burden, as he dares not enjoy them, and is always anxious about them. LEE and FULLER translate the *Hebrew* as a reduplicated single noun, and not two words, "an accumulation of pledges" (<sup><6340></sup>Deuteronomy 24:10-13). The Chaldean is compared to a harsh usurer, and his ill-gotten treasures to heaps of pledges in the hands of a usurer.

**7. *suddenly*** — the answer to the question, "How long?" (Habakkuk 2:6).

***bite*** — often used of *usury*; so favoring LEE's rendering (Habakkuk 2:6). As the Chaldean, like a usurer, oppressed others, so other nations shall, like usurers, *take pledges of*, that is, spoil, him.

**8. *the remnant of the people*** — Those remaining of the peoples spoiled by thee, though but a remnant, will suffice to inflict vengeance on thee.

***the violence of the land ... city*** — that is, on account of *thy violent oppression of the lands and cities* of the earth [GROTIUS] (compare Habakkuk 2:5,6,12). The same phrase occurs in <sup><3127></sup>Habakkuk 2:17, where the "land" and "city" are Judea and Jerusalem.

**9. *coveteth an evil covetousness*** — that is, a covetousness so surpassingly evil as to be fatal to himself.

***to his house*** — greedily seizing enormous wealth, not merely for himself, but for his family, to which it is destined to be fatal. The very same "evil covetousness" that was the cause of Jehoiakim's being given up to the Chaldean oppressor (<sup><3223></sup>Jeremiah 22:13) shall be the cause of the Chaldean's own destruction.

***set his nest on high*** — (<sup><022></sup>Numbers 24:21 <sup><3496></sup>Jeremiah 49:16 <sup><3104></sup>Obadiah 1:4). The image is from an eagle (<sup><1327></sup>Job 39:27). The *royal citadel* is meant. The Chaldean built high towers, like the Babel founders, to "be delivered from the power of evil" (<sup><0104></sup>Genesis 11:4).

**10. *Thou hast consulted shame ... by cutting off many*** — MAURER, more literally, "Thou hast consulted shame ... to destroy many," that is, in

consulting (determining) to cut off many, thou hast consulted shame to thy house.

***sinned against thy soul*** — that is, against thyself; thou art the guilty cause of thine own ruin (<sup>2088</sup>Proverbs 8:36 20:2). They who wrong their neighbors, do much greater wrong to their own souls.

**11. *stone ... cry out*** — personification. The very stones of thy palace built by rapine shall testify against thee (<sup>2094</sup>Luke 19:40).

***the beam out of the timber*** — the crossbeam or main rafter connecting the timbers in the walls.

***shall answer it*** — namely, the stone. The stone shall begin and the crossbeam continue the cry against thy rapine.

**12. *buildeth a town with blood*** — namely, Babylon rebuilt and enlarged by blood-bought spoils (compare <sup>2083</sup>Daniel 4:30).

**13. *is it not of the Lord of hosts*** — JEHOVAH, who has at His command all the *hosts* of heaven and earth, is the righteous author of Babylon's destruction. "Shall not God have His turn, when cruel rapacious men have triumphed so long, though He seem now to be still?" [CALVIN].

***people ... labor in the ... fire ... weary themselves for ... vanity*** — The Chaldeans labor at what is to be food for the fire, namely, their city and fortresses which shall be burnt. <sup>2583</sup>Jeremiah 51:58 adopts the same phraseology to express the vanity of the Chaldean's labor on Babylon, as doomed to the flames.

**14.** Adapted from <sup>2109</sup>Isaiah 11:9. Here the sense is, "The Jews shall be restored and the temple rebuilt, so that God's glory in saving His people, and punishing their Chaldean foe, shall be manifested throughout the world," of which the Babylonian empire formed the greatest part; a type of the ultimate full manifestation of His glory in the final salvation of Israel and His Church, and the destruction of all their foes.

***waters cover the sea*** — namely, the bottom of the sea; the sea-bed.

**15. *giveth ... neighbor drink ... putteth ... bottle to him*** — literally, "skin," as the Easterns use "bottles" of skin for wine. MAURER, from a different Hebrew root, translates, "that pourest in thy wrath." *English Version* keeps up the metaphor better. It is not enough for thee to be "drunken" thyself, unless thou canst lead others into the same state. The thing meant is, that the Chaldean king, with his insatiable desires (a kind of *intoxication*), allured neighboring states into the same mad thirst for war to obtain booty, and

then at last exposed them to loss and shame (compare <sup><2517></sup>Isaiah 51:17 <sup><3016></sup>Obadiah 1:16). An appropriate image of Babylon, which at last fell during a drunken revel (<sup><2788></sup>Daniel 5:1-31).

**that thou mayest look on their nakedness!** — with light, like Ham of old (<sup><0022></sup>Genesis 9:22).

**16. art filled** — now that thou art fallen. “Thou art filled” indeed (though so insatiable), but it is “with shame.”

**shame for glory** — instead of thy former glory (<sup><3047></sup>Hosea 4:7).

**drink thou also** — The cup of sorrow is now in thy turn to pass to thee (<sup><2525></sup>Jeremiah 25:15-17 <sup><2542></sup>Lamentations 4:21).

**thy foreskin** — expressing in Hebrew feeling the most utter contempt. So of Goliath (<sup><0176></sup>1 Samuel 17:36). It is not merely thy “nakedness,” as in <sup><3015></sup>Habakkuk 2:15, that shall be “uncovered,” but the foreskin, the badge of thy being an uncircumcised alien from God. The same shall be done to thee, as thou didst to others, and worse.

**cup ... shall be turned unto thee** — literally, “shall *turn itself*,” namely, from the nations whom thou hast made to drink it. “Thou shalt drink it *all*, so that it may be *turned* as being drained” [GROTIVS].

**shameful spewing** — that is, vomiting; namely, that of the king of Babylon, compelled to disgorge the spoil he had swallowed. It expresses also the ignominious state of Babylon in its calamity (<sup><2527></sup>Jeremiah 25:27). “Be drunken, spew, and fall.” Less appropriately it is explained *of the foe* spewing in the face of the Babylonian king.

**17. the violence of Lebanon** — thy “violence” against “Lebanon,” that is, Jerusalem (<sup><2578></sup>Isaiah 37:24 <sup><2523></sup>Jeremiah 22:23 <sup><2478></sup>Ezekiel 17:3,12; for Lebanon’s cedars were used in building the temple and houses of Jerusalem; and its beauty made it a fit type of the metropolis), shall fall on thine own head.

**cover** — that is, *completely* overwhelm.

**the spoil of beasts, which made them afraid** — MAURER explains, “*the spoiling* inflicted on *the beasts* of Lebanon (that is, on the people of Jerusalem, of which city ‘Lebanon’ is the type), *which made them afraid* (shall cover thee).” But it seems inappropriate to compare the elect people to “beasts.” I therefore prefer explaining, “the spoiling of beasts,” that is, such as is inflicted on beasts caught in a net, and “which makes them afraid (shall cover thee).” Thus the Babylonians are compared to wild beasts

terrified at being caught suddenly in a net. In cruel rapacity they resembled wild beasts. The ancients read, “the spoiling of wild beasts *shall make* THEE *afraid*.” Or else explain, “the spoiling of beasts (the Medes and Persians) which (*inflicted by thee*) made them afraid (shall in turn cover thyself — revert on thyself from them).” This accords better with the parallel clause, “the violence of Lebanon,” that is, inflicted by thee on Lebanon. As thou didst hunt men as wild beasts, so shalt thou be hunted thyself as a wild beast, which thou resemblest in cruelty.

***because of men’s blood*** — shed by thee; repeated from Habakkuk 2:8. But here the “land” and “city” are used of *Judea* and *Jerusalem*: not of the *earth* and cities *generally*, as in Habakkuk 2:8.

***the violence of the land***, etc. — that is, inflicted *on the land* by thee.

**18.** The powerlessness of the idols to save Babylon from its doom is a fitting introduction to the last stanza (<sup><3109></sup>Habakkuk 2:19), which, as the former four, begins with “Woe.”

***teacher of lies*** — its priests and prophets uttering lying oracles, as if from it.

***make dumb idols*** — Though men can “make” idols, they cannot *make them speak*.

**19. *Awake*** — Arise to my help.

***it shall teach!*** — rather, An exclamation *of the prophet*, implying an ironical question to which a negative answer must be given. What! “It teach?” Certainly not [MAURER]. Or, “It (the idol itself) shall (that is, ought to) teach you that it is deaf, and therefore no God” [CALVIN]. Compare “they are their own witnesses” (<sup><2409></sup>Isaiah 44:9).

***Behold*** — The *Hebrew* is nominative, “There it is” [HENDERSON].

***it is laid over with gold ... no breath ... in the midst*** — Outside it has some splendor, within none.

**20. *But the Lord*** — JEHOVAH; in striking contrast with the idols.

***in his holy temple*** — “His place” (<sup><2302></sup>Isaiah 26:21); heaven (<sup><3108></sup>Psalms 11:4; Jon 2:7; <sup><3108></sup>Micah 1:2). The temple at Jerusalem is a type of it, and there God is to be worshipped. He does not lie hid under gold and silver, as the idols of Babylon, but reigns in heaven and fills heaven, and thence succors His people.

*keep silence* — in token of reverent submission and subjection to His judgments (<sup><B10></sup>Job 40:4 <sup><B10></sup>Psalm 76:8 Zephaniah 1:7 <sup><B10></sup>Zechariah 2:13).

# CHAPTER 3

## HABAKKUK 3:1-19.

### HABAKKUK'S PRAYER TO GOD: GOD'S GLORIOUS REVELATION OF HIMSELF AT SINAI AND AT GIBEON, A PLEDGE OF HIS INTERPOSING AGAIN IN BEHALF OF ISRAEL AGAINST BABYLON, AND ALL OTHER FOES; HENCE THE PROPHET'S CONFIDENCE AMID CALAMITIES.

This sublime ode begins with an exordium (Habakkuk 3:1,2), then follows the main subject, then the peroration (<sup>3816</sup>Habakkuk 3:16-19), a summary of the practical truth, which the whole is designed to teach. (<sup>4832</sup>Deuteronomy 33:2-5 <sup>4973</sup>Psalms 77:13-20 are parallel odes). This was probably designed by the Spirit to be a fit formula of prayer for the people, first in their Babylonian exile, and now in their dispersion, especially towards the close of it, just before the great Deliverer is to interpose for them. It was used in public worship, as the musical term, "Selah!" (Habakkuk 3:3,9,13), implies.

**1. prayer** — the only strictly called prayers are in Habakkuk 3:2. But all devotional addresses to God are called "prayers" (<sup>4923</sup>Psalms 72:20). The *Hebrew* is from a root "to apply to a judge for a favorable decision." *Prayers* in which *praises* to God for deliverance, anticipated in the sure confidence of faith, are especially calculated to enlist Jehovah on His people's side (<sup>4403</sup>2 Chronicles 20:20-22,26).

**upon Shigionoth** — a musical phrase, "after the manner of elegies," or mournful odes, from an *Arabic* root [LEE]; the phrase is *singular* in <sup>4104</sup>Psalms 7:1, title. More simply, from a *Hebrew* root to "err," "on account of *sins of ignorance*." Habakkuk thus teaches his countrymen to confess not only their more grievous sins, but also their *errors* and *negligences*, into which they were especially likely to fall when in exile away from the Holy Land [CALVIN]. So *Vulgate* and AQUILA, and SYMMACHUS. "For voluntary transgressors" [JEROME]. Probably the subject would regulate the kind of music. DELITZSCH and HENDERSON translate, "With triumphal music," from the same root "to err," implying its enthusiastic irregularity.

**2. I have heard thy speech** — Thy revelation to me concerning the coming chastisement of the Jews [CALVIN], and the destruction of their oppressors.

This is Habakkuk's reply to God's communication [GROTIUS]. MAURER translates, "the report of Thy coming," literally, "Thy report."

**and was afraid** — reverential fear of God's judgments (<sup>3816</sup>Habakkuk 3:16).

**revive thy work** — Perfect the *work* of delivering *Thy* people, and do not let Thy promise lie as if it were dead, but *give it new life* by performing it [MENOCHIUS]. CALVIN explains "thy work" to be *Israel*; called "the work of My hands" (<sup>2351</sup>Isaiah 45:11). God's elect people are peculiarly His work (<sup>2381</sup>Isaiah 43:1), pre-eminently illustrating His power, wisdom, and goodness. "Though we seem, as it were, dead nationally, *revive us*" (<sup>4816</sup>Psalms 85:6). However (<sup>4549</sup>Psalms 64:9), where "the work of God" refers to *His judgment on their enemies*, favors the former view (<sup>4906</sup>Psalms 90:16,17 <sup>2509</sup>Isaiah 51:9,10).

**in the midst of the years** — namely, of calamity in which we live. Now that our calamities are at their height; during our seventy years' captivity. CALVIN more fancifully explains it, in the midst of the years of Thy people, extending from Abraham to Messiah; if they be cut off before His coming, they will be cut off as it were *in the midst of their years*, before attaining their maturity. So BENGEL makes *the midst of the years* to be the middle point of the years of the world. There is a strikingly similar phrase (<sup>2102</sup>Daniel 9:27), *In the midst of the week*. The parallel clause, "in wrath" (that is, *in the midst of wrath*), however, shows that "in the midst of the years" means "in the years of our present exile and calamity."

**make known** — Made *it* (*Thy work*) known by experimental proof; show in very deed, that this is Thy work.

**3. God** — *singular* in the *Hebrew*, "Eloah," instead of "Elohim," *plural*, usually employed. The *singular* is not found in any other of the minor prophets, or Jeremiah, or Ezekiel; but it is in Isaiah, Daniel, Job, and Deuteronomy.

**from Teman** — the country south of Judea and near Edom, in which latter country Mount Paran was situated [HENDERSON]. "Paran" is the desert region, extending from the south of Judah to Sinai. Seir, Sinai, and Paran are adjacent to one another, and are hence associated together, in respect to God's giving of the law (<sup>4532</sup>Deuteronomy 33:2). Teman is so identified with Seir or *Edom*, as here to be substituted for it. Habakkuk appeals to God's glorious manifestations to His people at Sinai, as the ground for praying that God will "revive His work" (Habakkuk 3:2) now. For He is the same God now as ever.

**Selah** — a musical sign, put at the close of sections and strophes, always at the end of a verse, except thrice; namely, here, and Habakkuk 3:9, and <sup><1519></sup>Psalm 55:19 57:3, where, however, it closes the hemistich. It implies a change of the modulation. It comes from a root to “rest” or “pause” [GESENIUS]; implying a cessation of the chant, during an instrumental interlude. The solemn pause here prepares the mind for contemplating the glorious description of Jehovah’s manifestation which follows.

**earth ... full of his praise** — that is, of His glories which were calculated to call forth universal *praise*; the parallelism to “glory” proves this to be the sense.

**4. as the light** — namely, of the sun (<sup><1872></sup>Job 37:21 <sup><1048></sup>Proverbs 4:18).

**horns** — the emblem of *power* wielded by “His hand” [LUDOVICUS DE DIEU]. “Rays” emanating from “His hand,” compared by the Arabs to the horns of the gazelle (compare “hind of the morning,” <sup><1921></sup>Psalm 22:1, title, *Margin*). The *Hebrew* verb for to “emit rays,” is from the root meaning “horns” (<sup><1309></sup>Exodus 34:29,30,35) [GROTIUS]. The rays are His *lightnings* (<sup><1918></sup>Psalm 18:8), [MAURER].

**there** — *in that “brightness.”* *In it*, notwithstanding its brilliancy, there was but the veil “(the *hiding*) of His power.” Even “light,” God’s “garment,” covers, instead of revealing fully, His surpassing glory (<sup><1941></sup>Psalm 104:2) [HENDERSON]. Or, *on Mount Sinai* [DRUSIUS]. (Compare <sup><1247></sup>Exodus 24:17). The *Septuagint* and *Syriac* versions read for “there,” *He made a hiding*, etc.; He hid Himself with clouds. *English Version* is better, which CALVIN explains, there is said to be “a hiding of God’s power,” because God did not reveal it indiscriminately to all, but specially to His people (<sup><1911></sup>Psalm 31:20). The contrast seems to me to be between the “horns” or *emanations* out of His power (“hand”), and that “power” itself. The latter was *hidden*, whereas the “horns” or *emanations* alone were manifested. If the mere scintillations were so awfully overwhelming, how much more so the hidden power itself! This was especially true of His manifestation at Sinai (<sup><1911></sup>Psalm 18:11; compare <sup><2365></sup>Isaiah 45:15,17).

**5. pestilence** — to destroy His people’s foes (<sup><1019></sup>1 Samuel 5:9,11). As Jehovah’s advent is glorious to His people, so it is terrible to His foes.

**burning coals** — <sup><1918></sup>Psalm 18:8 favors *English Version*. But the parallelism requires, as the *Margin* translates, “burning disease” (compare <sup><1524></sup>Deuteronomy 32:24 <sup><1910></sup>Psalm 91:6).

**went ... at his feet** — that is, after Him, as His attendants (<sup><1040></sup>Judges 4:10).

**6. *He stood, and measured the earth*** — Jehovah, in His advance, is represented as stopping suddenly, and *measuring* the earth with His all-seeing glance, whereat there is universal consternation. MAURER, from a different root, translates, “*rocked the earth*”; which answers better to the parallel “drove asunder”; the *Hebrew* for which latter, however, may be better translated, “made to tremble.”

***everlasting mountains*** — which have ever been remembered as retaining the same place and form from the foundation of the world.

***did bow*** — as it were, in reverent submission.

***his ways are everlasting*** — His marvellous ways of working for the salvation of His people mark His everlasting character: such as He was in His workings for them formerly, such shall He be now.

**7. *the tents*** — that is, the dwellers.

***Cushan*** — the same as *Cush*; made “Cush-an” to harmonize with “Midian” in the parallel clause. So *Lotan* is found in the *Hebrew* of Genesis for *Lot*. BOCHART therefore considers it equivalent to Midian, or a part of Arabia. So in <sup><0420></sup>Numbers 12:1, Moses’ Midianite wife is called an Ethiopian (*Hebrew*, *Cushite*). MAURER thinks *the dwellers on both sides of the Arabian Gulf, or Red Sea*, are meant; for in Habakkuk 3:6 God’s *everlasting* or ancient ways of delivering His people are mentioned; and in Habakkuk 3:8, the dividing of the Red Sea for them. Compare Miriam’s song as to the *fear* of Israel’s foes far and near caused thereby (<sup><0254></sup>Exodus 15:14-16). Hebrew expositors refer it to Chushan-rishathaim, king of Mesopotamia, or Syria, the first oppressor of Israel (<sup><0008></sup>Judges 3:8,10), from whom Othniel delivered them. Thus the second hemistich of the verse will refer to the deliverance of Israel from Midian by Gideon (<sup><0008></sup>Judges 6:1-7:25) to which <sup><3011></sup>Habakkuk 3:11 plainly refers. Whichever of these views be correct, the general reference is to God’s interpositions against Israel’s foes of old.

***in affliction*** — rather, “*under affliction*” (regarded) as a heavy burden. Literally, “vanity” or “iniquity,” hence the *punishment* of it (compare <sup><0257></sup>Numbers 25:17,18).

***curtains*** — the coverings of their tents; the shifting habitations of the nomad tribes, which resembled the modern Bedouins.

***tremble*** — namely, at Jehovah’s terrible interposition for Israel against them.

**8. *Was the Lord displeased against the rivers?*** — “Was the cause of His dividing the Red Sea and Jordan His displeasure against these waters?” The answer to this is tacitly implied in “Thy chariots *of salvation*.” “Nay; it was not displeasure against the waters, but His pleasure in interposing for His people’s *salvation*” (compare <sup><3880></sup>Habakkuk 3:10).

***thy chariots*** — in antithesis to Thy foe, *Pharaoh’s chariots*,” which, notwithstanding their power and numbers, were engulfed in the waters of *destruction*. God can make the most unlikely means work for His people’s salvation (<sup><2147></sup>Exodus 14:7,9,23,25-28 15:3-8,19). Jehovah’s chariots are His angels (<sup><3887></sup>Psalms 68:17), or the cherubim, or the ark (<sup><4683></sup>Joshua 3:13 4:7; compare <sup><2209></sup>Song of Solomon 1:9).

**9. *bow ... made ... naked*** — that is, was drawn forth from its cover, in which bows usually were cased when not in use. Compare <sup><2216></sup>Isaiah 22:6, “Kir uncovered the shield.”

***according to the oaths of the tribes even thy word*** — that is, Thy *oaths* of promise to *the tribes* of Israel (<sup><1978></sup>Psalms 77:8 <sup><2173></sup>Luke 1:73,74). Habakkuk shows that God’s miraculous interpositions for His people were not limited to one time, but that God’s *oaths* to His people are sure ground for their always expecting them. The mention of the *tribes*, rather than *Abraham* or *Moses*, is in order that they may not doubt that to them belongs this grace of which Abraham was the depository [CALVIN and JEROME]. MAURER translates, “The spears were glutted with blood, the triumphal song!” that is, no sooner did Jehovah begin the battle by baring His bow, than the spears were glutted with blood and the triumphal song sung.

***Thou didst cleave the earth with rivers*** — the result of the earthquake caused by God’s approach [MAURER]. GROTIUS refers it to the bringing forth water from the rock (<sup><2176></sup>Exodus 17:6 <sup><4100></sup>Numbers 20:10,11 <sup><1985></sup>Psalms 78:15,16 105:4). But the context implies not the giving of water to His people to drink, but the fearful physical phenomena attending Jehovah’s attack on Israel’s foes.

**10. *The mountains*** — repetition with increased emphasis of some of the tremendous phenomena mentioned in Habakkuk 3:6.

***overflowing of the water passed by*** — namely, of the Red Sea; and again, of the Jordan. God marked His favor to His people in all the elements, causing every obstacle, whether mountains or waters, which impeded their progress, to “pass away” [CALVIN]. MAURER, not so well, translates, “torrents (rains) of water rush down.”

**lifted ... hands on high** — namely, its billows *lifted on high* by the tempest. Personification. As men signify by voice or gesture of *hand* that they will do what they are commanded, so these parts of nature testified their obedience to God's will (<sup><0142></sup>Exodus 14:22 <sup><0186></sup>Joshua 3:16 <sup><0171></sup>Psalm 77:17,18 114:4).

**11. sun ... moon stood still** — at Joshua's command (<sup><0602></sup>Joshua 10:12,13). MAURER wrongly translates, "stand" (*withdrawn*, or *hidden from view*, by the clouds which covered the sky during the thunders).

**light of thine arrows** — hail mixed with lightnings (<sup><0600></sup>Joshua 10:10,11).

**they went** — The *sun* and *moon* "went," not as always heretofore, but according to the light and direction of Jehovah's arrows, namely, His lightnings hurled in defense of His people; astonished at these they stood still [CALVIN]. MAURER translates, "At the light of Thine arrows (which) went" or flew.

**12. march** — implying Jehovah's majestic and irresistible progress before His people (<sup><0604></sup>Judges 5:4 <sup><0607></sup>Psalm 68:7). Israel would not have dared to attack the nations, unless Jehovah had gone before.

**thresh** — (<sup><0303></sup>Micah 4:13).

**13. with thine anointed** — with Messiah; of whom Moses, Joshua, and David, God's anointed leaders of Israel, were the types (<sup><0609></sup>Psalm 89:19,20,38). God from the beginning delivered His people in person, or by the hand of a Mediator (<sup><0351></sup>Isaiah 63:11). Thus Habakkuk confirms believers in the hope of their deliverance, as well because God is always the same, as also because the same anointed Mediator is ready now to fulfill God's will and interpose for Israel, as of old [CALVIN]. MAURER translates to suit the parallelism, "for salvation to Thine anointed," namely, Israel's *king* in the abstract, answering to the "people" in the former clause (compare <sup><0208></sup>Psalm 28:8 <sup><0209></sup>Lamentations 4:20). Or Israel is meant, the *anointed*, that is, consecrated people of Jehovah (<sup><0155></sup>Psalm 105:15).

**woundedst the head out of the house of the wicked** — probably an allusion to <sup><0621></sup>Psalm 68:21. Each *head person* sprung from and belonging to *the house of Israel's wicked* foes; such as Jabin, whose city Hazor was "the head of all the kingdoms" of Canaan (<sup><0110></sup>Joshua 11:10; compare <sup><0042></sup>Judges 4:2,3,13).

**discovering the foundation** — Thou destroyedst high and low. As "the *head of the house*" means the prince, so the "foundation" means the general *host* of the enemy.

**unto the neck** — image from a flood reaching *to the neck* (<sup><2108></sup>Isaiah 8:8 30:28). So God, by His wrath overflowing on the foe, caused their princes' *necks* to be trodden under foot by Israel's leaders (<sup><1618></sup>Joshua 10:24 11:8,12).

**14. strike ... with his staves** — with the “wicked” (<sup><3183></sup>Habakkuk 3:13) foe's own sword (MAURER translates, “spears”) (<sup><1022></sup>Judges 7:22).

**head of his villages** — Not only kings were overthrown by God's hand, but His vengeance passed through the foe's *villages* and dependencies. A just retribution, as the foe had made “the inhabitants of Israel's villages to cease” (<sup><1003></sup>Judges 5:7). GROTIUS translates, “of his warriors”; GESENIUS, “the chief of his captains.”

**to scatter me** — *Israel*, with whom Habakkuk identifies himself (compare <sup><3012></sup>Habakkuk 1:12).

**rejoicing ... to devour the poor secretly** — “The poor” means the *Israelites*, for whom in their helpless state the foe lurks *in his lair*, like a wild beast, to pounce on and *devour* (<sup><9109></sup>Psalms 10:9 17:12).

**15. Thou didst walk through the sea with thine horses** — (Habakkuk 3:8). No obstacle could prevent Thy progress when leading Thy people in safety to their inheritance, whether the Red Sea, Jordan, or the figurative waves of foes raging against Israel (<sup><1917></sup>Psalms 65:7 77:19).

**16. When I heard ... trembled** — namely, at the judgments which God had declared (Habakkuk 1:1-17) were to be inflicted on Judea by the Chaldeans.

**belly** — The *bowels* were thought by the Hebrews to be the seat of yearning compassion (<sup><2811></sup>Jeremiah 31:20). Or “heard” may refer to Habakkuk 3:2, “When I *heard* as to Jehovah's coming interposition for Israel against the Chaldeans being still at some distance” (Habakkuk 2:3); so also the voice” [MAURER].

**at the voice** — of the divine threatenings (Habakkuk 1:6). The faithful tremble at the *voice* alone of God before He inflicts punishment. Habakkuk speaks in the person of all the faithful in Israel.

**trembled in myself** — that is, I trembled all over [GROTIUS].

**that I might rest in the day of trouble** — The true and only path to *rest* is through such fear. Whoever is securely torpid and hardened towards God, will be tumultuously agitated in the day of affliction, and so will bring on himself a worse destruction; but he who in time meets God's wrath and trembles at His threats, prepares the best *rest* for himself in the day of

affliction [CALVIN]. HENDERSON translates, “Yet I shall have rest.” Habakkuk thus consoling his mind, Though trembling at the calamity coming, yet I shall have rest in God (<sup><2308></sup>Isaiah 26:3). But that sentiment does not seem to be directly asserted till <sup><3187></sup>Habakkuk 3:17, as the words following at the close of this verse imply.

*when he cometh up unto the people, he will invade* — rather (as *English Version* is a mere truism), connected with the preceding clause, “that I might rest ... when he (the Chaldean foe) cometh up unto the people (the Jews), *that he may cut them off*” [CALVIN]. The *Hebrew* for “invade” means, *to rush upon, or to attack and cut off with congregated troops*.

17. Destroy the “vines” and “fig trees” of the carnal heart, and his mirth ceases. But those who when full enjoyed God in all, when emptied can enjoy all in God. They can sit down upon the heap of ruined creature comforts, and rejoice in Him as the “God of their salvation.” Running in the way of His commandments, we outrun our troubles. Thus Habakkuk, beginning his prayer with trembling, ends it with a song of triumph (<sup><3185></sup>Job 13:15 <sup><3047></sup>Psalms 4:7 43:3,5).

*labor of the olive* — that is, the *fruit* expected from the olive.

*fail* — literally, “lie,” that is, disappoint the hope (<sup><2881></sup>Isaiah 58:11, *Margin*).

*fields* — from a *Hebrew* root meaning “to be yellow”; as they look at harvest-time.

*meat* — food, grain.

*cut off* — that is, cease.

18. *yet I will rejoice* — The prophet speaks in the name of his people.

19. *hinds’ feet ... walk upon ... high places* — Habakkuk has here before his mind <sup><3183></sup>Psalms 18:33,34 <sup><2813></sup>Deuteronomy 32:13. “Hinds’ (gazelles’) feet” imply the *swiftness* with which God enables him (the prophet and his people) to escape from his enemies, and return to his native land. The “high places” are called “mine,” to imply that Israel shall be restored to *his own* land, a land of hills which are places of safety and of eminence (compare <sup><1197></sup>Genesis 19:17 <sup><1219></sup>Matthew 24:16). Probably not only the *safety*, but the *moral elevation*, of Israel above all the lands of the earth is implied (<sup><3333></sup>Deuteronomy 33:29).

*on my stringed instruments* — *neginoth*. This is the prophet’s direction to the *precentor* (“chief singer”) as to how the preceding ode (Habakkuk 3:1-19) is to be performed (compare <sup><3001></sup>Psalms 4:1 6:1, titles). The prophet had

in mind a certain form of stringed instrument adapted to certain numbers and measures. This formula at the end of the ode, directing the kind of instrument to be used, agrees with that in the beginning of it, which directs the kind of melody (compare <sup>2380</sup>Isaiah 38:20).

# THE BOOK OF ZEPHANIAH

Commentary by **A. R. FAUSSETT**

## INTRODUCTION

ZEPHANIAH, ninth in order of the minor prophets, prophesied “in the days of Josiah” (Zephaniah 1:1), that is, between 642 and 611 B.C. The name means “Jehovah hath guarded,” literally, “hidden” (<sup><4276></sup>Psalm 27:5 <sup><4818></sup>Psalm 83:3). The specification in the introductory heading, of not only his father, but also his grandfather, and great-grandfather, and great-great-grandfather, implies that the latter were persons of note, or else the design was to distinguish him from another Zephaniah of note at the time of the captivity. The Jews’ supposition, that persons recorded as a prophet’s ancestors were themselves endowed with the prophetic spirit, seems groundless. There is no impossibility of the Hezekiah, who was Zephaniah’s great-great-grandfather, being King Hezekiah as to the number of generations; for Hezekiah’s reign of twenty-nine years, and his successor’s reign of fifty-five years, admit of *four* generations interposing between. Yet the omission of the designation, “king of Judah,” is fatal to the theory (compare <sup><4181></sup>Proverbs 25:1 <sup><4389></sup>Isaiah 38:9).

He must have flourished in the earlier part of Josiah’s reign. In <sup><4123></sup>Zephaniah 2:13-15 he foretells the doom of Nineveh, which happened in 625 B.C.; and in Zephaniah 1:4 he denounces various forms of idolatry, and specially that of Baal. Now Josiah’s reformation began in the twelfth and was completed in the eighteenth year of his reign. Zephaniah, therefore, in denouncing Baal worship, co-operated with that good king in his efforts, and so must have prophesied somewhere between the twelfth and eighteenth years of his reign. The silence of the historical books is no argument against this, as it would equally apply against Jeremiah’s prophetic existence at the same time. Jewish tradition says that Zephaniah had for his colleagues Jeremiah, whose sphere of labor was the thoroughfares and market places, and Huldah the prophetess, who exercised her vocation in the college in Jerusalem.

The prophecy begins with the nation's sin and the fearful retribution coming at the hands of the Chaldeans. These are not mentioned by name, as in Jeremiah; for the prophecies of the latter, being nearer the fulfillment, become more explicit than those of an earlier date. The second chapter dooms the persecuting states in the neighborhood as well as Judea itself. The third chapter denounces Jerusalem, but concludes with the promise of her joyful re-establishment in the theocracy.

The style, though not generally sublime, is graphic and vivid in details (compare Zephaniah 1:4-12). The language is pure, and free from Aramaisms. There are occasional coincidences with former prophets (compare <sup><3124></sup>Zephaniah 2:14, with <sup><2341></sup>Isaiah 34:11; <sup><3125></sup>Zephaniah 2:15, with <sup><2408></sup>Isaiah 47:8; <sup><3130></sup>Zephaniah 3:10, with <sup><2380></sup>Isaiah 18:1; Zephaniah 2:8, with <sup><2406></sup>Isaiah 16:6; also Zephaniah 1:5, with <sup><2481></sup>Jeremiah 8:2; <sup><3112></sup>Zephaniah 1:12, with <sup><2481></sup>Jeremiah 48:11). Such coincidences in part arise from the phraseology of *Hebrew* prophetic poetry being the common language of the inspired brotherhood. The New Testament, at <sup><6156></sup>Romans 15:6, seems to refer to Zephaniah 3:9.

# CHAPTER 1

## ZEPHANIAH 1:1-18.

### GOD'S SEVERE JUDGMENT ON JUDAH FOR ITS IDOLATRY AND NEGLECT OF HIM: THE RAPID APPROACH OF THE JUDGMENT, AND THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF ESCAPE.

**1. *days of Josiah*** — Had their idolatries been under former kings, they might have said, Our kings have forced us to this and that. But under Josiah, who did all in his power to reform them, they have no such excuse.

***son of Amon*** — the idolater, whose bad practices the Jews clung to, rather than the good example of Josiah, his son; so incorrigible were they in sin.

***Judah*** — Isra\_el's ten tribes had gone into captivity before this.

**2. *utterly consume*** — from a root to “sweep away,” or “scrape off utterly.” See <sup><2483></sup>Jeremiah 8:13, *Margin*, and here.

***from off the land*** — of Judah.

**3.** Enumeration in detail of the “all things” (Zephaniah 1:2; compare <sup><2490></sup>Jeremiah 9:10 <sup><2403></sup>Hosea 4:3).

***the stumbling-blocks*** — idols which cause Judah to offend or stumble (<sup><2348></sup>Ezekiel 14:3,4,7).

***with the wicked*** — The idols and their worshippers shall be involved in a common destruction.

**4. *stretch out mine hand*** — indicating some remarkable and unusual work of vengeance (<sup><2155></sup>Isaiah 5:25 9:12,17,21).

***Judah*** — including Benjamin. These two tribes are to suffer, which thought themselves perpetually secure, because they escaped the captivity in which the ten tribes were involved.

***Jerusalem*** — the fountainhead of the evil. God begins with His sanctuary (<sup><2398></sup>Ezekiel 9:6), and those who are nigh Him (<sup><6103></sup>Leviticus 10:3).

***the remnant of Baal*** — the remains of Baal worship, which as yet Josiah was unable utterly to eradicate in remote places. Baal was the Phoenician

tutelary god. From the time of the Judges (<sup><4023></sup>Judges 2:13), Isra\_el had fallen into this idolatry; and Manasseh lately had set up this idol within Jehovah's temple itself (<sup><4221></sup>2 Kings 21:3,5,7). Josiah began his reformation in the twelfth year of his reign (<sup><4304></sup>2 Chronicles 34:4,8), and in the eighteenth had as far as possible completed it.

**Chemarims** — idol priests, who had not reached the age of puberty; meaning “ministers of the gods” [SERVIUS on *aeneid*, 11], the same name as the Tyrian *Camilli*, *r* and *l* being interchangeable (compare <sup><3305></sup>Hosea 10:5, *Margin*). Josiah is expressly said (<sup><4218></sup>2 Kings 23:5, *Margin*) to have “put down the Chemarim.” The *Hebrew* root means “black” (from the *black garments* which they wore or the *marks* which they branded on their foreheads); or “zealous,” from their idolatrous fanaticism. The very “name,” as well as themselves, shall be forgotten.

**the priests** — of Jehovah, of Aaronic descent, who ought to have used all their power to eradicate, but who secretly abetted, idolatry (compare Zephaniah 3:4 Ezekiel 8 22:26 44:10). From the *priests* Zephaniah passes to the *people*.

**5. worship the host of heaven** — *Saba*: whence, in contrast to Sabeanism, Jehovah is called *Lord of Sabaoth*.

**upon the housetops** — which were flat (<sup><4221></sup>2 Kings 23:5,6,12 <sup><4493></sup>Jeremiah 19:13 32:29).

**swear by the Lord** — rather, “swear to JEHOVAH” (<sup><4454></sup>2 Chronicles 15:14); solemnly dedicating themselves to Him (compare <sup><3301></sup>Isaiah 48:1 <sup><3045></sup>Hosea 4:15).

**and** — “and yet (with strange inconsistency, <sup><4182></sup>1 Kings 18:21 <sup><4319></sup>Ezekiel 20:39 <sup><4023></sup>Matthew 6:24) swear by Malcham,” that is, “*their king*” [MAURER]: the same as Molech (see on <sup><3165></sup>Amos 5:25), and “Milcom the god of ... Ammon” (<sup><4113></sup>1 Kings 11:33). If Satan have half the heart, he will have all; if the Lord have but half offered to Him, He will have none.

**6.** This verse describes more comprehensively those guilty of defection from Jehovah in any way (<sup><3023></sup>Jeremiah 2:13,17).

**7. Hold thy peace at the presence of the Lord** — (<sup><3121></sup>Habakkuk 2:20). Let the *earth* be silent at His approach [MAURER]. Or, “Thou whosoever hast been wont to speak against God, as if He had no care about earthly affairs, cease thy murmurs and self-justifications; submit thyself to God, and repent in time” [CALVIN].

**Lord ... prepared a sacrifice** — namely, a slaughter of the guilty Jews, the victims due to His justice (<sup><2316></sup>Isaiah 34:6 <sup><2460></sup>Jeremiah 46:10 <sup><2597></sup>Ezekiel 39:17).

**bid his guests** — literally, “sanctified His called ones” (compare <sup><2338></sup>Isaiah 13:3). It enhances the bitterness of the judgment that the heathen Chaldeans should be *sanctified*, or consecrated as it were, by God as His priests, and be *called* to eat the flesh of the elect people; as on feast days the priests used to feast among themselves on the remains of the sacrifices [CALVIN]. *English Version* takes it not of the *priests*, but the *guests bidden*, who also had to “sanctify” or purify themselves before coming to the sacrificial feast (<sup><0933></sup>1 Samuel 9:13,22 16:5). Nebuchadnezzar was *bidden* to come to take vengeance on guilty Jerusalem (<sup><2439></sup>Jeremiah 25:9).

**8. the princes** — who ought to have been an example of good to others, but were ringleaders in all evil.

**the king’s children** — fulfilled on Zedekiah’s children (<sup><2496></sup>Jeremiah 39:6); and previously, on Jehoahaz and Eliakim, the sons of Josiah (<sup><1236></sup>2 Kings 23:31,36 <sup><4306></sup>2 Chronicles 36:6; compare also <sup><1218></sup>2 Kings 20:18 21:13). Huldah the prophetess (<sup><1229></sup>2 Kings 22:20) intimated that which Zephaniah now more expressly foretells.

**all such as are clothed with strange apparel** — the *princes* or *courtiers* who attired themselves in costly garments, imported from abroad; partly for the sake of luxury, and partly to ingratiate themselves with foreign great nations whose costume as well as their idolatries they imitated, [CALVIN]; whereas in costume, as in other respects, God would have them to be separate from the nations. GROTIUS refers the “strange apparel” to garments forbidden by the law, for example, men’s garments worn by women, and vice versa, a heathen usage in the worship of Mars and Venus (<sup><4628></sup>Deuteronomy 22:5).

**9. those that leap on the threshold** — the servants of the princes, who, after having gotten prey (like hounds) for their masters, leap exultingly on their masters’ thresholds; or, on the thresholds of the houses which they break into [CALVIN]. JEROME explains it of those *who walk up the steps into the sanctuary with haughtiness*. ROSENMULLER translates, “Leap over the threshold”; namely, in imitation of the Philistine custom of not treading on the threshold, which arose from the head and hands of Dragon being broken off on the threshold before the ark (<sup><0955></sup>1 Samuel 5:5). Compare <sup><2106></sup>Isaiah 2:6, “thy people ... are soothsayers *like the Philistines*.” CALVIN’S view agrees best with the latter clause of the verse.

*fill ... masters' houses with violence*, etc. — that is, with goods obtained *with violence*, etc.

**10. fish gate** — (<sup>4634</sup>2 Chronicles 33:14 <sup>408B</sup>Nehemiah 3:3 12:39). Situated on the east of the lower city, north of the sheep gate [MAURER]: near the stronghold of David in Milo, between Zion and the lower city, towards the west [JEROME]. This verse describes the state of the city when it was besieged by Nebuchadnezzar. It was through the fish gate that he entered the city. It received its name from the fish market which was near it. Through it passed those who used to bring fish from the lake of Tiberias and Jordan. It answers to what is now called the Damascus gate [HENDERSON].

*the second* — namely, the gate which was *second* in dignity [CALVIN]. Or, the *second* or lower part of the city. Appropriately, the fish gate, or extreme end of the lower part of the city, first resounds with the cries of the citizens as the foe approaches; then, as he advances further, that part of the city itself, namely, its inner part; lastly, when the foe is actually come and has burst in, the hills, the higher ones, especially Zion and Moriah, on which the upper city and temple were founded [MAURER]. The *second*, or lower city, answers to Akra, north of Zion, and separated from it by the valley of Tyropoeon running down to the pool of Siloam [HENDERSON]. The *Hebrew* is translated “college,” <sup>4224</sup>2 Kings 22:14; so VATABLUS would translate here.

*hills* — not here those outside, but those within the walls: Zion, Moriah, and Ophel.

**11. Maktesh** — rather, “the mortar,” a name applied to the valley of Siloam from its hollow shape [JEROME]. The valley between Zion and Mount Olivet, at the eastern extremity of Mount Moriah, where the merchants dwelt. <sup>3441</sup>Zechariah 14:21, “The Canaanite,” namely, merchant [*Chaldee Version*]. The Tyropoeon (that is, *cheese-makers*) valley below Mount Akra [ROSENMULLER]. Better *Jerusalem itself*, so called as lying in the midst of hills (<sup>2211</sup>Isaiah 22:1 <sup>4213</sup>Jeremiah 21:13) and as doomed to be the scene of its people being destroyed as corn or drugs are pounded in a mortar (<sup>4172</sup>Proverbs 27:22) [MAURER]. Compare the similar image of a “pot” (<sup>4248</sup>Ezekiel 24:3,6). The reason for the destruction is subjoined, namely, its *merchant people’s* greediness of gain.

*all the merchant people* — literally, the “Canaanite people”: irony: all the merchant people of Jerusalem are very *Canaanites* in greed for gain and in idolatries (see on <sup>4817</sup>Hosea 12:7).

**all ... that bear silver** — loading themselves with that which will prove but a *burden* (Habakkuk 2:6).

**12. search ... with candles** — or lamps; so as to leave no dark corner in it wherein sin can escape the punishment, of which the Chaldeans are My instruments (compare <sup><30137></sup>Zephaniah 1:13 <sup><2158></sup>Luke 15:8).

**settled on their lees** — “hardened” or crusted; image from the crust formed at the bottom of wines long left undisturbed (<sup><3481></sup>Jeremiah 48:11). The effect of *wealthy undisturbed ease* (“lees”) on the ungodly is *hardening*: they become stupidly secure (compare <sup><3559></sup>Psalms 55:19 <sup><3161></sup>Amos 6:1).

**Lord will not do good ... evil** — They deny that God regards human affairs, or renders good to the good; or evil to the evil, but that all things go haphazard (<sup><5008></sup>Psalms 10:4 <sup><3127></sup>Malachi 2:17).

**13. Therefore their goods shall become a booty**, etc. — Fulfilling the prophecy in (<sup><6330></sup>Deuteronomy 28:30,39 (compare <sup><3161></sup>Amos 5:11).

**14. voice of ... day of ... Lord** — that is, Jehovah ushering in that day with a roar of vengeance against the guilty (<sup><2530></sup>Jeremiah 25:30 <sup><3102></sup>Amos 1:2). They who will not now heed (<sup><3012></sup>Zephaniah 1:12) His voice by His prophets, must heed it when uttered by the avenging foe.

**mighty ... shall cry ... bitterly** — in hopeless despair; the might on which Jerusalem now prides itself, shall then fail utterly.

**15. wasteness ... desolation** — The *Hebrew* terms by their similarity of sounds, *Shoah*, *Umeshoah*, express the dreary monotony of desolation (see on Na 2:10).

**16. the trumpet** — namely, of the besieging enemy (<sup><3162></sup>Amos 2:2).

**alarm** — the war shout [MAURER].

**towers** — literally “angles”; for city walls used not to be built in a direct line, but with sinuous curves and angles, so that besiegers advancing might be assailed not only in front, but on both sides, caught as it were in a cul-de-sac; towers were built especially at the angles. So TACITUS describes the walls of Jerusalem [*Histories*, 5.11.7].

**17. like blind men** — unable to see whither to turn themselves so as to find an escape from existing evils.

**flesh** — *Hebrew*, “bread”; so the *Arabic* term for “bread” is used for “flesh” (<sup><4025></sup>Matthew 26:26).

18. *Neither ... silver nor ... gold shall ... deliver them*, etc. — (<sup>2110</sup>Proverbs 11:4).

*fire of his jealousy* — (<sup>2389</sup>Ezekiel 38:19); His wrath jealous for His honor consuming the guilty like fire.

*make even a speedy riddance of all* — rather, a “consummation” (complete destruction: “full end,” <sup>2468</sup>Jeremiah 46:28 <sup>2811</sup>Ezekiel 11:13) “altogether sudden” [MAURER]. “A consumption, *and that* a sudden one” [CALVIN].

# CHAPTER 2

## ZEPHANIAH 2:1-15.

### EXHORTATION TO REPENT BEFORE THE CHALDEAN INVADERS COME. DOOM OF JUDAH'S FOES, THE PHILISTINES, MOAB, AMMON, WITH THEIR IDOLS, AND ETHIOPIA AND ASSYRIA.

**1. *Gather yourselves*** — *to a religious assembly*, to avert the judgment by prayers (<sup><216></sup>Joel 2:16) [GROTIUS]. Or, so as not to be dissipated “as chaff” (Zephaniah 2:2). The *Hebrew* is akin to a root meaning “chaff.” Self-confidence and corrupt desires are the dissipation from which they are exhorted to *gather themselves* [CALVIN]. The foe otherwise, like the wind, will scatter you “as the chaff.” Repentance is the *gathering of themselves* meant.

***nation not desired*** — (Compare <sup><421></sup>2 Chronicles 21:20), that is, not desirable; unworthy of the grace or favor of God; and yet God so magnifies that grace as to be still solicitous for their safety, though they had destroyed themselves and forfeited all claims on His grace [CALVIN]. The *Margin* from *Chaldee Version* has, “not desirous,” namely of returning to God. MAURER and GESENIUS translate, “Not waxing pale,” that is, dead to shame. *English Version* is best.

**2. *Before the decree bring forth*** — that is, Before God’s decree against you announced by me (Zephaniah 1:1-18) *have its fulfillment*. As the embryo lies hid in the womb, and then emerges to light in its own due time, so though God for a time hides His vengeance, yet He *brings it forth* at the proper season.

***before the day pass as the chaff*** — that is, before *the day* for repentance pass, and with it you, the ungodly, pass away *as the chaff* (<sup><1818></sup>Job 21:18 <sup><1006></sup>Psalms 1:4). MAURER puts it parenthetically, “the day (that is, time) passes as the chaff (that is, most quickly).” CALVIN, “before the decree bring forth” (the predicted vengeance), (then) the chaff (the Jews) shall pass in a day, that is, in a moment, though they thought that it would be long before they could be overthrown. *English Version* is best; the latter clause being explanatory of the former, and so the *before* being understood, not expressed.

3. As in Zephaniah 2:1 (compare *Note*, see on <sup>3112</sup>Zephaniah 1:12) he had warned the hardened among the people to humble themselves, so now he admonishes “the meek” to proceed in their right course, that so they may escape the general calamity (<sup>3719</sup>Psalms 76:9). The *meek* bow themselves under God’s chastisements to God’s will, whereas the ungodly become only the more hardened by them.

***Seek ye the Lord*** — in contrast to those that “sought not the Lord” (Zephaniah 1:6). The *meek* are not to regard what the multitudes do, but seek God at once.

***his judgment*** — that is, law. The true way of “seeking the Lord” is to “work judgment,” not merely to be zealous about outward ordinances.

***seek meekness*** — not perversely murmuring against God’s dealings, but patiently submitting to them, and composedly waiting for deliverance.

***it may be ye shall be hid*** — (<sup>2319</sup>Isaiah 26:20 <sup>3116</sup>Amos 5:6). This phrase does not imply doubt of the deliverance of the godly, but expresses the difficulty of it, as well that the ungodly may see the certainty of their doom, as also that the faithful may value the more the grace of God in their case (<sup>1117</sup>1 Peter 4:17-19) [CALVIN]. Compare <sup>1252</sup>2 Kings 25:12.

4. ***For*** — He makes the punishment awaiting the neighboring states an argument why the ungodly should repent (Zephaniah 2:1) and the godly persevere, namely, that so they may escape from the general calamity.

***Gaza shall be forsaken*** — In the *Hebrew* there is a play of similar sounds, *Gaza Gazubah*; Gaza shall be forsaken, as its name implies. So the *Hebrew* of the next clause, *Ekron teekeer*.

***at the noonday*** — when on account of the heat Orientals usually sleep, and military operations are suspended (<sup>1015</sup>2 Samuel 4:5). Hence an attack *at noon* implies one sudden and unexpected (<sup>2104</sup>Jeremiah 6:4,5 15:8).

***Ekron*** — *Four* cities of the Philistines are mentioned, whereas *five* was the normal number of their leading cities. Gath is omitted, being at this time under the Jews’ dominion. David had subjugated it (<sup>1310</sup>1 Chronicles 18:1). Under Joram the Philistines almost regained it (<sup>1216</sup>2 Chronicles 21:16), but Uzziah (<sup>1216</sup>2 Chronicles 26:6) and Hezekiah (<sup>1218</sup>2 Kings 18:8) having conquered them, it remained under the Jews. Amos 1:6 Zechariah 9:5,6 <sup>1219</sup>Jeremiah 25:20, similarly mention only *four* cities of the Philistines.

5. ***inhabitants of the seacoast*** — the Philistines dwelling on the strip of seacoast southwest of Canaan. Literally, the “cord” or “line” of sea (compare <sup>1410</sup>Jeremiah 47:7 <sup>1216</sup>Ezekiel 25:16).

**the Cherethites** — the Cretans, a name applied to the Philistines as sprung from Crete (<sup><4123></sup>Deuteronomy 2:23 <sup><2474></sup>Jeremiah 47:4 <sup><107></sup>Amos 9:7). *Philistine* means “an emigrant.”

**Canaan ... land of the Philistines** — They occupied the southwest of *Canaan* (<sup><4123></sup>Joshua 13:2,3); a name which hints that they are doomed to the same destruction as the early occupants of the land.

**6. dwellings and cottages for shepherds** — rather, “dwellings with cisterns” (that is, water-tanks *dug* in the earth) *for shepherds*. Instead of a thick population and tillage, the region shall become a pasturage for nomad shepherds’ flocks. The *Hebrew* for “dug cisterns,” *Ceroth*, seems a play on sounds, alluding to their name Cherethites (Zephaniah 2:5): Their land shall become what their national name implies, a land of *cisterns*. MAURER translates, “*Feasts* for shepherds’ (flocks),” that is, one wide pasturage.

**7. remnant of ... Judah** — those of the Jews who shall be left after the coming calamity, and who shall return from exile.

**feed thereupon** — namely, in the pastures of that seacoast region (Zephaniah 2:6).

**visit** — in mercy (<sup><1061></sup>Exodus 4:31).

**8. I have heard** — A seasonable consolation to Judah when wantonly assailed by Moab and Ammon with impunity: God saith, “I have heard it all, though I might seem to men not to have observed it because I did not immediately inflict punishment.”

**magnified themselves** — acted haughtily, invading the territory of Judah (<sup><2489></sup>Jeremiah 48:29 49:1; compare <sup><3120></sup>Zephaniah 2:10 <sup><4923></sup>Psalms 35:26 <sup><3012></sup>Obadiah 1:12).

**9. the breeding of nettles** — or, *the overspreading* of nettles, that is, a place overrun with them.

**salt pits** — found at the south of the Dead Sea. The water overflows in the spring, and salt is left by the evaporation. Salt land is barren (<sup><1095></sup>Judges 9:45 <sup><4923></sup>Psalms 107:34, *Margin*).

**possess them** — that is, their land; in retribution for their having occupied Judah’s land.

**10.** (Compare Zephaniah 2:8).

**their pride** — in antithesis to the *meek* (Zephaniah 2:3).

**11. *famish*** — bring low by taking from the idols their former fame; as beasts are famished by their food being withheld. Also by destroying the kingdoms under the tutelage of idols (<sup>1906</sup>Psalm 96:4 <sup>2341</sup>Isaiah 46:1).

***gods of the earth*** — who have their existence only *on earth*, not in heaven as the true God.

***every one from his place*** — each *in his own* Gentile *home*, taught by the Jews in the true religion: not in Jerusalem alone shall men worship God, but everywhere (<sup>4683</sup>Psalm 68:29,30 Malachi 1:1 <sup>6021</sup>John 4:21 <sup>41021</sup>Corinthians 1:2 <sup>51081</sup>1 Timothy 2:8). It does not mean, as in <sup>2302</sup>Isaiah 2:2 <sup>3001</sup>Micah 4:1,2 <sup>3022</sup>Zechariah 8:22 14:16 that they shall come *from* their several *places* to Jerusalem to worship [MAURER].

***all ... isles of ... heathen*** — that is, all the maritime regions, especially the west, now being fulfilled in the gathering in of the Gentiles to Messiah.

**12.** Fulfilled when Nebuchadnezzar (God's *sword*, <sup>2305</sup>Isaiah 10:5) conquered Egypt, with which Ethiopia was closely connected as its ally (<sup>3442</sup>Jeremiah 46:2-9 <sup>3415</sup>Ezekiel 30:5-9).

***Ye*** — literally, "They." The third person expresses estrangement; while doomed before God's tribunal in the second person, they are spoken of in the third as aliens from God.

**13.** Here he passes suddenly to the north. Nineveh was destroyed by Cyaxares and Nabopolassar, 625 B.C. The Scythian hordes, by an inroad into Media and thence in the southwest of Asia (thought by many to be the forces described by Zephaniah, as the invaders of Judea, rather than the Chaldeans), for a while interrupted Cyaxares' operations; but he finally succeeded. Arbaces and Belesis previously subverted the Assyrian empire under Sardanapalus (that is, Pul?), 877 B.C.

**14. *flocks*** — of sheep; answering to "beasts" in the parallel clause. Wide pastures for sheep and haunts for wild beasts shall be where once there was a teeming population (compare Zephaniah 2:6). MAURER, needlessly for the parallelism, makes it "*flocks of savage animals*."

***beasts of the nations*** — that is, beasts of the earth (<sup>4002</sup>Genesis 1:24). Not as ROSENMULLER, "all kinds of beasts that form a nation," that is, gregarious beasts (<sup>3415</sup>Proverbs 30:25,26).

***cormorant*** — rather, the "pelican" (so <sup>4926</sup>Psalm 102:6 <sup>2341</sup>Isaiah 34:11, *Margin*).

***bittern*** — (<sup><23423></sup>Isaiah 14:23). MAURER translates, “the hedgehog”; HENDERSON, “the porcupine.”

***upper lintels*** — rather, “*the capitals* of her columns,” namely, in her temples and palaces [MAURER]. Or, “on the pomegranate-like knobs at the tops of the houses” [GROTIUS].

***their voice shall sing in the windows*** — The desert-frequenting birds’ “voice in the windows” implies desolation reigning in the upper parts of the palaces, answering to “desolation ... in the thresholds,” that is, in the lower.

***he shall uncover the cedar work*** — laying the cedar wainscoting on the walls, and beams of the ceiling, bare to wind and rain, the roof being torn off, and the windows and doors broken through. All this is designed as a consolation to the Jews that they may bear their calamities patiently, knowing that God will avenge them.

15. Nothing then seemed more improbable than that the capital of so vast an empire, a city sixty miles in compass, with walls one hundred feet high, and so thick that three chariots could go abreast on them, and with fifteen hundred towers, should be so totally destroyed that its site is with difficulty discovered. Yet so it is, as the prophet foretold.

***there is none beside me*** — This peculiar phrase, expressing self-gratulation as if peerless, is plainly adopted from <sup><23408></sup>Isaiah 47:8. The later prophets, when the spirit of prophecy was on the verge of departing, leaned more on the predictions of their predecessors.

***hiss*** — in astonishment at a desolation so great and sudden (<sup><1008></sup>1 Kings 9:8); also in derision (<sup><38723></sup>Job 27:23 <sup><21215></sup>Lamentations 2:15 <sup><32730></sup>Ezekiel 27:36).

# CHAPTER 3

## ZEPHANIAH 3:1-20.

**RESUMPTION OF THE DENUNCIATION OF JERUSALEM, AS BEING UNREFORMED BY THE PUNISHMENT OF OTHER NATIONS: AFTER HER CHASTISEMENT JEHOVAH WILL INTERPOSE FOR HER AGAINST HER FOES; HIS WORSHIP SHALL FLOURISH IN ALL LANDS, BEGINNING AT JERUSALEM, WHERE HE SHALL BE IN THE MIDST OF HIS PEOPLE, AND SHALL MAKE THEM A PRAISE IN ALL THE EARTH.**

1. *filthy* — MAURER translates from a different root, “rebellious,” “contumacious.” But the following term, “polluted,” refers rather to her inward moral *filth*, in spite of her outward ceremonial purity [CALVIN]. GROTIUS says, the *Hebrew* is used of women who have prostituted their virtue. There is in the *Hebrew Moreah*; a play on the name *Moriah*, the hill on which the temple was built; implying the glaring contrast between their *filthiness* and the holiness of the worship on *Moriah* in which they professed to have a share.

*oppressing* — namely, the poor, weak, widows, orphans and strangers (<sup><2121></sup>Jeremiah 22:3).

2. *received not correction* — Jerusalem is incurable, obstinately rejecting salutary admonition, and refusing to be reformed by “correction” (<sup><2118></sup>Jeremiah 5:3).

*trusted not in ... Lord* — Distrust in the Lord as if He were insufficient, is the parent of all superstitions and wickednesses [CALVIN].

*drew not near to her God* — Though God was specially near to her (<sup><1848></sup>Deuteronomy 4:7) as “her God,” yet she drew not near to Him, but gratuitously estranged herself from Him.

3. *roaring* — for prey (<sup><1885></sup>Proverbs 28:15 <sup><2277></sup>Ezekiel 22:27 <sup><1894></sup>Amos 3:4 <sup><3112></sup>Micah 2:2).

*evening wolves* — which are most ravenous at evening after being foodless all day (<sup><2116></sup>Jeremiah 5:6 Habakkuk 1:8).

*they gnaw not the bones till the morrow* — rather, “they put not off till to-morrow to gnaw the bones”; but devour all at once, bones and flesh, so ragingly ravenous are they [CALVIN].

**4. light** — in whose life and teaching there is no truth, gravity, or steadiness.

*treacherous* — false to Jehovah, whose prophets they profess to be (<sup>23:32</sup>Jeremiah 23:32 <sup>22:28</sup>Ezekiel 22:28).

*polluted ... sanctuary* — by their profane deeds.

**5-7.** The Jews regard not God’s justice manifested in the midst of them, nor His judgments on the guilty nations around.

*The just Lord* — Why then are ye so unjust?

*is in the midst thereof* — He retorts on them their own boast, “Is not the Lord among us” (<sup>3:11</sup>Micah 3:11)? True He is, but it is for another end from what ye think [CALVIN]; namely, to lead you *by the example of His righteousness* to be righteous. <sup>19:2</sup>Leviticus 19:2, “Ye shall be holy: for I the Lord your God am holy” [MAURER]. But CALVIN, “That ye may feel His hand to be the nearer *for taking vengeance for your crimes*: ‘He will not do iniquity’ by suffering your sins to go unpunished” (<sup>32:4</sup>Deuteronomy 32:4).

*every morning* — literally, “morning by morning.” The time in the sultry East for dispensing justice.

*bring ... to light* — publicly and manifestly by the teaching of His prophets, which aggravates their guilt; also by samples of His judgments on the guilty.

*he faileth not* — He is continually setting before you samples of His justice, sparing no pains. Compare <sup>5:4</sup>Isaiah 5:4 <sup>50:4</sup>Isaiah 50:4, “he wakeneth morning by morning.”

*knoweth no shame* — The unjust Jews are not shamed by His justice into repentance.

**6.** I had hoped that My people by My judgments on other nations would be led to amendment; but they are not, so blinded by sin are they.

*towers* — literally, “angles” or “corners”; hence the *towers* built at the angles of their city walls. Under Josiah’s long and peaceful reign the Jews were undisturbed, while the great incursion of Scythians into Western Asia took place. The judgment on the ten tribes in a former reign also is here alluded to.

**7. *I said, Surely***, etc. — God speaks after the manner of men in condescension to man's infirmity; not as though God was ignorant of the future contingency, but in their sense, *Surely one might have expected* ye would under such circumstances repent: but no!

***thou*** — at least, O Jerusalem! Compare “*thou, even thou*, at least in this thy day” (<sup><099></sup>Luke 19:42).

***their dwelling*** — the *sanctuary* [BUXTORF]. Or, the *city*. Compare Jesus' words (<sup><035></sup>Luke 13:35), “Behold, *your house* is left unto you desolate” (<sup><035></sup>Leviticus 26:31,32 <sup><092></sup>Psalms 69:25); and used as to *the temple* (<sup><312></sup>Micah 3:12). “Their” is used instead of “thy”; this change of person implies that God puts them to a greater distance.

***howsoever I punished them*** — Howsoever I might have punished them, I would not have *cut off their dwelling*. CALVIN, “Howsoever I had marked them out for punishment” because of their provocations, still, if even then they had repented, taught by My corrections, I was ready to have pardoned them. MAURER, “Altogether in accordance with what I had long ago decreed (ordained) concerning you” (<sup><031></sup>Deuteronomy 28:1-14, and, on the other hand, <sup><035></sup>Deuteronomy 28:15-68 27:15-26). *English Version*, or CALVIN'S view, is better.

***rose early, and corrupted***, etc. — Early morning is in the East the best time for transacting serious business, before the relaxing heat of midday comes on. Thus it means, With the greatest earnestness they set themselves to “corrupt all their doings” (<sup><002></sup>Genesis 6:12 <sup><211></sup>Isaiah 5:11 <sup><310></sup>Jeremiah 11:7 25:3).

**8. *wait ye upon me*** — Here Jehovah turns to the pious Jews. Amidst all these judgments on the Jewish nation, look forward to the glorious time of restoration to be ushered in by God's precious outpouring of wrath on all nations, <sup><210></sup>Isaiah 30:18-33; where the same phrase, “blessed are all they that *wait for Him*,” is used as to the same great event. CALVIN erroneously makes this verse an address to the ungodly; and so MAURER, “Ye shall not have to wait for Me in vain”; I will presently come armed with indignation: I will no longer contend with you by My prophets.

***until the day*** — that is, waiting for the day (Habakkuk 2:3).

***rise up to the prey*** — like a savage beast rising from his lair, greedy for the prey (compare <sup><035></sup>Matthew 24:28). Or rather, as a warrior leading Isra\_el to *certain victory*, which is expressed by “the prey,” or *booty*, which is the reward of victory. The *Septuagint* and *Syriac* versions read the *Hebrew*, “I rise up as a *witness*” (compare <sup><310></sup>Job 16:8 Malachi 3:5). Jehovah being in

this view *witness*, accuser, and judge. *English Version* is better (compare <sup><3833></sup>Isaiah 33:23).

***gather the nations*** — against Jerusalem (Zechariah 14:2), to pour out His indignation upon them there (<sup><2902></sup>Joel 3:2 Zechariah 12:2,3).

**9. *For*** — The blessed things promised in this and <sup><3805></sup>Zephaniah 3:10 are the immediate results of the punishment inflicted on the nations, mentioned in Zephaniah 3:8 (compare <sup><3887></sup>Zephaniah 3:19).

***turn to the people a pure language*** — that is, *changing* their impure language I will *give* to them again *a pure language* (literally, “lip”). Compare for this *Hebrew* idiom, <sup><0910></sup>1 Samuel 10:9, *Margin*. The confusion of languages was of the penalty sin, probably idolatry at Babel (<sup><0110></sup>Genesis 11:1-6, *Margin*, where also “lip” expresses *language*, and perhaps also *religion*; Zephaniah 3:4, “a tower whose top *may reach* unto heaven,” or rather, *points to heaven*, namely, dedicated to *the heavens* idolized, or Bel); certainly, of rebellion against God’s will. An earnest of the removal of this penalty was the gift of tongues on pentecost (<sup><4016></sup>Acts 2:6-13). The full restoration of the earth’s unity of language and of worship is yet future, and is connected with the restoration of the Jews, to be followed by the conversion of the world. Compare <sup><2908></sup>Isaiah 19:18 Zechariah 14:9 <sup><6106></sup>Romans 15:6, “with one mind and *one mouth* glorify God.” The Gentiles’ *lips* have been rendered impure through being the instruments of calling on idols and dishonoring God (compare <sup><6904></sup>Psalms 16:4 <sup><3017></sup>Hosea 2:17). Whether *Hebrew* shall be the one universal language or not, the God of the Hebrews shall be the one only object of worship. Until the Holy Ghost purify the *lips*, we cannot rightly call upon God (<sup><2068></sup>Isaiah 6:5-7).

***serve him with one consent*** — literally, “shoulder” or “back”; metaphor from a yoke, or burden, borne between two (<sup><0423></sup>Numbers 13:23); helping one another with conjoint effort. If one of the two bearers of a burden, laid on both conjointly, give way, the burden must fall to the earth [CALVIN]. Christ’s rule is called a *burden* (<sup><4013></sup>Matthew 11:30 <sup><4153></sup>Acts 15:28 <sup><6123></sup>Revelation 2:24; compare <sup><4044></sup>2 Corinthians 6:14 for the same image).

**10. *From beyond ... Ethiopia my suppliants*** — literally, “burners of incense” (compare <sup><3802></sup>Psalms 141:2 <sup><6108></sup>Revelation 5:8 8:3,4). The Isra\_elites are meant, called “the daughter of My dispersed,” a *Hebrew* idiom for *My dispersed people*. “The rivers of Ethiopia” are those which enclose it on the north. In the west of Abyssinia there has long existed a people called *Falashas*, or “emigrants” (akin to the synonym “Philistine”). These trace their origin to Palestine and profess the Jewish religion. In physical traits they resemble the Arabs. When Bruce was there, they had a Jewish king, Gideon, and his queen, Judith. Probably the Abyssinian Christians were

originally in part converted Jews. They are here made the representatives of all Isra\_el which is to be restored.

**shall bring mine offering** — that is, the *offering* that is *My right*. I prefer, with DE WETTE and *Chaldee Version*, making “suppliants” the objective case, not the nominative. The *peoples*: (Zephaniah 3:8,9), brought to fear Me by My judgments, “shall bring as Mine offering My suppliants (an appropriate term for the Jews, on whom then there shall have been poured the spirit of *supplications*, <sup><3820></sup>Zechariah 12:10), the daughter of My dispersed.” So <sup><2660></sup>Isaiah 66:20, “they shall bring all your brethren for an *offering* unto the Lord.” Compare HORSLEY’S view of <sup><2800></sup>Isaiah 18:1,2,7. England in this view may be the naval power to restore Isra\_el to Palestine (<sup><2800></sup>Isaiah 60:9). The *Hebrew* for “Ethiopia” is *Cush*, which may include not only Ethiopia, but also the region of the Tigris and Babylon, where Nimrod, Cush’s son (<sup><0000></sup>Genesis 10:8-12), founded Nineveh and acquired Babylon, and where the ten tribes are mentioned as being scattered (<sup><6000></sup>1 Peter 1:1 5:13; compare <sup><2810></sup>Isaiah 11:11). The restoration under Cyrus of the Jews transported under Pharaoh-necho to Egypt and Ethiopia, was an earnest of the future restoration under Christ.

**11. shalt thou not be ashamed** — Thou shalt then have no cause to be ashamed; for I will then *take away out of the midst of thee* those who by their sins gave thee cause for shame (Zephaniah 3:7).

**them that rejoice in thy pride** — those priding themselves *on that which thou boastest of*, thy temple (“My holy mountain”), thy election as God’s people, etc., in the Pharisaic spirit (<sup><2400></sup>Jeremiah 7:4 <sup><2810></sup>Micah 3:11 <sup><4000></sup>Matthew 3:9). Compare <sup><2430></sup>Jeremiah 13:17, “mine eyes shall weep for *your pride*.” The converted remnant shall be of a humble spirit (<sup><3820></sup>Zephaniah 3:12 <sup><2660></sup>Isaiah 66:2,10).

**12. afflicted ... they shall trust in ... Lord** — the blessed effect of sanctified affliction on the Jewish remnant. Entire trust in the Lord cannot be, except where all cause for boasting is taken away (<sup><2430></sup>Isaiah 14:32 <sup><3810></sup>Zechariah 11:11).

**13. nor speak lies** — worshipping God in truth, and towards man having love without dissimulation. The characteristic of the 144,000 *sealed of Isra\_el*.

**none shall make them afraid** — either foreign foe, or unjust prince (Zephaniah 3:3), prophet, or priest (Zephaniah 3:4).

**14.** The prophet in mental vision sees the joyful day of Zion present, and bids her rejoice at it.

**15.** The cause for joy: “The Lord hath taken away thy judgments,” namely, those sent by Him upon thee. After the taking away of sin (<sup><3181></sup>Zephaniah 3:13) follows the taking away of trouble. When the cause is removed, the effect will cease. Happiness follows in the wake of holiness.

*the Lord is in the midst of thee* — Though He seemed to desert thee for a time, He is now present as thy safeguard (<sup><3187></sup>Zephaniah 3:17).

*not see evil any more* — Thou shalt not *experience* it (<sup><2452></sup>Jeremiah 5:12 44:17).

**16.** *Let not thine hands be slack* — (<sup><3122></sup>Hebrews 12:12). Do not faint in the work of the Lord.

**17.** *he will rest in his love* — content with it as His supreme delight (compare <sup><2157></sup>Luke 15:7,10) [CALVIN], (<sup><2316></sup>Isaiah 62:5 65:19). Or, *He shall be silent*, namely as to thy faults, not imputing them to thee [MAURER] (<sup><3310></sup>Psalms 32:2 <sup><3516></sup>Ezekiel 33:16). I prefer explaining it of that calm *silent* joy in the possession of the object of one’s love, too great for words to express: just as God after the six days of creation *rested* with silent satisfaction in His work, for “behold it was very good” (<sup><1003></sup>Genesis 1:31 2:2). So the parallel clause by contrast expresses the joy, not kept silent as this, but uttered in “singing.”

**18.** *sorrowful for the solemn assembly* — pining after the solemn assembly which they cannot celebrate in exile (<sup><2100></sup>Lamentations 1:4 2:6).

*who are of thee* — that is, of thy true citizens; and whom therefore I will restore.

*to whom the reproach of it was a burden* — that is, to whom *thy* reproach (“the reproach of My people,” <sup><3316></sup>Micah 6:16; their ignominious captivity) was a burden. “Of it” is put *of thee*, as the person is often changed. Those who shared in the burden of reproach which fell on My people. Compare <sup><2318></sup>Isaiah 25:8, “the rebuke of His people shall He take away from off all the earth.”

**19.** *undo* — MAURER translates, “I will deal with,” that is, as they deserve. Compare <sup><3223></sup>Ezekiel 23:25, where the *Hebrew* is similarly translated. The destruction of Isra\_el’s foes precedes Israel’s restoration (<sup><2315></sup>Isaiah 66:15,16).

*her that halteth* — all that are helpless. Their weakness will be no barrier in the way of My restoring them. So in <sup><1055></sup>Psalms 35:15, *Margin*, “halting” is used for *adversity*. Also <sup><2316></sup>Ezekiel 34:16 <sup><3106></sup>Micah 4:6,7.

***I will get them praise***, etc. — literally, “I will make them (to become) a praise and a name,” etc.

***shame*** — (<sup>2883</sup>Ezekiel 34:29).

**20. *make you a name ... praise*** — make you to become celebrated and praised.

***turn back your captivity*** — bring back your captives [MAURER]. The *Hebrew* is *plural*, “captivities”; to express the captivities of different ages of their history, as well as the diversity of places in which they were and are dispersed.

***before your eyes*** — Incredible as the event may seem, *your own eyes* with delight shall see it. You will scarcely believe it for joy, but the testimony of your own eyes shall convince you of the delightful reality (compare <sup>4241</sup>Luke 24:41).

# THE BOOK OF HAGGAI

Commentary by **A. R. FAUSSETT**

## INTRODUCTION

THE name *Haggai* means “my feast”; given, according to COCCEIUS, in anticipation of the joyous return from exile. He probably was one of the Jewish exiles (of the tribes Judah, Benjamin, and Levi) who returned under Zerubbabel, the civil head of the people, and Joshua, the high priest, 536 B.C., when Cyrus (actuated by the striking prophecies as to himself, <sup><3428></sup>Isaiah 44:28 45:1) granted them their liberty, and furnished them with the necessaries for restoring the temple (<sup><4822></sup>2 Chronicles 36:23 <sup><4500></sup>Ezra 1:1 2:2). The work of rebuilding went on under Cyrus and his successor Cambyses (called Ahasuerus in <sup><4506></sup>Ezra 4:6) in spite of opposition from the Samaritans, who, when their offers of help were declined, began to try to hinder it. These at last obtained an interdict from the usurper Smerdis the Magian (called Artaxerxes in <sup><4507></sup>Ezra 4:7-23), whose suspicions were easy to rouse. The Jews thereupon became so indifferent to the work that when Darius came to the throne (521 B.C.), virtually setting aside the prohibitions of the usurper, instead of recommencing their labors, they pretended that as the prophecy of *the seventy years* applied to the temple as well as to the captivity in Babylon (Haggai 1:2), they were only in the sixty-eighth year of it [HENDERSON]; so that, the proper time not having yet arrived, they might devote themselves to building splendid mansions for themselves. Haggai and Zechariah were commissioned by Jehovah (Haggai 1:1) in the second year of Darius (Hystaspes), 520 B.C., sixteen years after the return under Zerubbabel, to rouse them from their selfishness to resume the work which for fourteen years had been suspended. Haggai preceded Zechariah in the work by two months.

The dates of his four distinct prophecies are accurately given:

- (1) The first (Haggai 1:1-15), on the first day of the sixth month of the second year of Darius, 520 B.C., reproved the people for their apathy in allowing the temple to lie in ruins and reminded them of their ill success in everything because of their not honoring God as to His house. The

result was that twenty-four days afterwards they commenced building under Zerubbabel (<sup><3012></sup>Haggai 1:12-15).

(2) The second, on the twenty-first day of the seventh month (Haggai 2:1-9), predicts that the glory of the new temple would be greater than that of Solomon's, so that the people need not be discouraged by the inferiority in outward splendor of the new, as compared with the old temple, which had so moved to tears the elders who had remembered the old (<sup><15102></sup>Ezra 3:12,13). Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel had implied the same prediction, whence some had doubted whether they ought to proceed with a building so inferior to the former one; but Haggai shows wherein the superior glory was to consist, namely, in the presence of Him who is the "desire of all nations" (Haggai 2:7).

(3) The third, on the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month (<sup><3020></sup>Haggai 2:10-19), refers to a period when building materials had been collected, and the workmen had begun to put them together, from which time forth God promises His blessing; it begins with removing their past error as to the efficacy of mere outward observances to cleanse from the taint of disobedience as to the temple building.

(4) The fourth (<sup><3020></sup>Haggai 2:20-23), on the same day as the preceding, was addressed to Zerubbabel, as the representative of the theocratic people, and as having asked as to the national revolutions spoken of in the second prophecy (Haggai 2:7).

The prophecies are all so brief as to suggest the supposition that they are only a summary of the original discourses. The space occupied is but three months from the first to the last.

The Jews' adversaries, on the resumption of the work under Zerubbabel, Haggai, and Zechariah, tried to set Darius against it; but that monarch confirmed Cyrus' decree and ordered all help to be given to the building of the temple (<sup><15103></sup>Ezra 5:3, etc. <sup><15101></sup>Ezra 6:1, ). So the temple was completed in the sixth year of Darius' reign 516-515 B.C. (<sup><15104></sup>Ezra 6:14).

The style of Haggai is consonant with his messages: pathetic in exhortation, vehement in reproofs, elevated in contemplating the glorious future. The repetition of the same phrases (for example, "saith the Lord," or "the Lord of hosts," Haggai 1:2,5,7; and thrice in one verse, Haggai 2:4; so "the spirit," thrice in one verse, <sup><3014></sup>Haggai 1:14) gives a simple earnestness to his style, calculated to awaken the solemn attention of the people, and to awaken them from their apathy, to which also the interrogatory form, often adopted, especially tends. Chaldaisms occur (Haggai 2:3 2:6 2:16), as might have been expected in a writer who was so long in Chaldea. Parts are

purely prose history; the rest is somewhat rhythmical, and observant of poetic parallelism.

Haggai is referred to in <sup><1510E></sup>Ezra 5:1 6:14; and in the New Testament (<sup><3922F></sup>Hebrews 12:26; compare Haggai 2:6,7,22).

# CHAPTER 1

## HAGGAI 1:1-15.

**HAGGAI CALLS THE PEOPLE TO CONSIDER THEIR WAYS IN NEGLECTING TO BUILD GOD'S HOUSE: THE EVIL OF THIS NEGLECT TO THEMSELVES: THE HONOR TO GOD OF ATTENDING TO IT: THE PEOPLE'S PENITENT OBEDIENCE UNDER ZERUBBABEL FOLLOWED BY GOD'S GRACIOUS ASSURANCE.**

**1. *second year of Darius*** — Hystaspes, the king of Medo-Persia, the second of the world empires, Babylon having been overthrown by the Persian Cyrus. The Jews having no king of their own, dated by the reign of the world kings to whom they were subject. Darius was a common name of the Persian kings, as Pharaoh of those of Egypt, and Caesar of those of Rome. The name in the cuneiform inscriptions at Persepolis is written *Daryawus*, from the root *Darh*, “to preserve,” the *Conservator* [LASSEN]. HERODOTUS [6.98] explains it *Coercer*. Often opposite attributes are assigned to the same god; in which light the Persians viewed their king. <sup><404F></sup>Ezra 4:24 harmonizes with Haggai in making this year the date of the resumption of the building.

***sixth month*** — of the Hebrew year, not of Darius' reign (compare Zechariah 1:7 7:1,3 8:19). Two months later (“the eighth month,” Zechariah 1:1) Zechariah began to prophesy, seconding Haggai.

***the Lord*** — *Hebrew*, JEHOVAH: God's covenant title, implying His unchangeableness, the guarantee of His faithfulness in keeping His promises to His people.

***by Haggai*** — *Hebrew*, “in the hand of Haggai”; God being the real speaker, His prophet but the instrument (compare <sup><407S></sup>Acts 7:35 <sup><408F></sup>Galatians 3:19).

***Zerubbabel*** — called also Shesh-bazzar in <sup><4508F></sup>Ezra 1:8 5:14,16, where the same work is attributed to Shesh-bazzar that in <sup><4508F></sup>Ezra 3:8 is attributed to Zerubbabel. Shesh-bazzar is probably his *Chaldean* name; as Belteshazzar was that of Daniel. Zerubbabel, his *Hebrew* name, means “one born in Babylon.”

**son of Shealtiel** — or Salathiel. But <sup><1387></sup>1 Chronicles 3:17,19 makes Pedaiah his father. Probably he was adopted by his *uncle* Salathiel, or Shealtiel, at the death of his father (compare <sup><4012></sup>Matthew 1:12 <sup><4187></sup>Luke 3:27).

**governor of Judah** — to which office Cyrus had appointed him. The *Hebrew Pechah* is akin to the original of the modern Turkish *Pasha*; one ruling a region of the Persian empire of less extent than that under a satrap.

**Joshua** — called Jeshua (<sup><4502></sup>Ezra 2:2); so the son of Nun in <sup><4687></sup>Nehemiah 8:17.

**Josedech** — or Jehozadak (<sup><1365></sup>1 Chronicles 6:15), one of those carried captive by Nebuchadnezzar. Haggai addresses the civil and the religious representatives of the people, so as to have them as his associates in giving God's commands; thus priest, prophet, and ruler jointly testify in God's name.

**2. the Lord of hosts** — Jehovah, Lord of the powers of heaven and earth, and therefore requiring implicit obedience.

**This people** — "This" sluggish and selfish "people." He does not say, *My* people, since they had neglected the service of God.

**The time** — the proper time for building the temple. Two out of the seventy predicted years of captivity (dating from the destruction of the temple, 558 B.C., <sup><4281></sup>2 Kings 25:9) were yet unexpired; this they make their plea for delay [HENDERSON]. The seventy years of captivity were completed long ago in the first year of Cyrus, 536 B.C. (<sup><2090></sup>Jeremiah 29:10); dating from 606 B.C., Jehoiakim's captivity (<sup><4862></sup>2 Chronicles 36:6). The seventy years to the completion of the temple (<sup><2452></sup>Jeremiah 25:12) were completed this very year, the second of Darius [VATABLUS]. Ingenious in excuses, they pretended that the interruption in the work caused by their enemies proved it was *not yet the proper time*; whereas their real motive was selfish dislike of the trouble, expense, and danger from enemies. "God," say they, "hath interposed many difficulties to punish our rash haste" [CALVIN]. Smerdis' interdict was no longer in force, now that Darius the rightful king was on the throne; therefore they had no real excuse for not beginning at once to build. AUBERLEN denies that by "Artaxerxes" in <sup><4907></sup>Ezra 4:7-22 is meant Smerdis. Whether Smerdis or Artaxerxes Longimanus be meant, the interdict referred only to the rebuilding of the *city*, which the Persian kings feared might, if rebuilt, cause them trouble to subdue; not to the rebuilding of the *temple*. But the Jews were easily turned aside from the work. Spiritually, like the Jews, men do not say they will never be religious, but, it is not time yet. So the great work of life is left undone.

**4. *Is it time*** — It is not time (Haggai 1:2), ye say, to build Jehovah's house; yet how is it that ye make it a fit time not only to *build*, but to “dwell” at ease in your own houses?

***you, O ye*** — rather, for “you, you”; the repetition marking the shameful contrast between their concern for *themselves*, and their unconcern for God [MAURER]. Compare a similar repetition in <sup><1023></sup>1 Samuel 25:24 Zechariah 7:5.

***ceiled*** — rather, “wainscoted,” or “paneled,” referring to the walls as well as the ceilings; furnished not only with comfort but luxury, in sad contrast to God's house not merely unadorned, but the very walls not raised above the foundations. How different David's feelings (<sup><1002></sup>2 Samuel 7:2)!

**5. *Consider your ways*** — literally, “Set your heart” on your ways. The *plural* implies, Consider both what ye have done (actively, <sup><2340></sup>Lamentations 3:40) and what ye have suffered (passively) [JEROME]. Ponder earnestly whether ye have gained by seeking self at the sacrifice of God.

**6.** Nothing has prospered with you while you neglected your duty to God. The punishment corresponds to the sin. They thought to escape poverty by not building, but keeping their money to themselves; God brought it on them *for* not building (<sup><1137></sup>Proverbs 13:7 11:24 <sup><1053></sup>Matthew 6:33). Instead of cheating God, they had been only cheating themselves.

***ye clothe ... but ... none warm*** — through insufficiency of clothing; as ye are unable through poverty from failure of your crops to purchase sufficient clothing. The verbs are infinitive, implying a *continued state*: “Ye have sown, and *been bringing in* but little; ye have *been eating*, but not to *being satisfied*; ye have *been drinking*, but not to *being filled*; ye have been *putting* on clothes, but not to *being warmed*” [MOORE]. Careful consideration of God's dealings with us will indicate God's will regarding us. The events of life are the hieroglyphics in which God records His feelings towards us, the key to which is found in the Bible [MOORE].

***wages ... put ... into a bag with holes*** — proverbial for labor and money spent profitlessly (<sup><3007></sup>Zechariah 8:10; compare <sup><2519></sup>Isaiah 55:2 <sup><3123></sup>Jeremiah 2:13). Contrast, spiritually, the “bags that wax not old, the treasure in heaven that faileth not” (<sup><1233></sup>Luke 12:33). Through the high cost of necessaries, those who wrought for a day's wages parted with them at once, as if they had put them into a bag with holes.

**8. *Go up to the mountain*** — Moriah [ROSENMULLER]; Lebanon [HENDERSON]. Rather, generally, *the mountains* around, now covered with

wood, the growth of the long period of the captivity. So <sup><4085></sup>Nehemiah 8:15, “Go forth unto *the mount*,” that is, the neighboring hills [MAURER].

**wood** — Haggai specifies this as being the first necessary; not to the exclusion of other materials. *Stones* also were doubtless needed. That the old walls were not standing, as the Hebrew interpreters quoted by JEROME state, or the new walls partly built, appears from <sup><3028></sup>Haggai 2:18, where express mention is made of *laying the foundations*.

***I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified*** — I will be propitious to suppliants in it (<sup><10891></sup>1 Kings 8:30), and shall receive the honor due to Me which has been withheld. In neglecting the temple, which is the mirror of My presence, ye dishonor Me [CALVIN]; in its being built, ye shall glorify Me.

**9. *Ye looked for much*** — literally “looked” so as to turn your eyes “to much.” The *Hebrew* infinitive here expresses *continued* looking. Ye hoped to have your store made “much” by neglecting the temple. The greater was your greediness, the more bitter your disappointment in being poorer than ever.

***when ye brought it home, I did blow upon it*** — even the little crop brought into your barns I *dissipated*. “I did blow upon,” that is, I scattered and caused to perish with My mere breath, as scattered and blighted corn.

***mine house ... his own house*** — in emphatic antithesis.

***ye run*** — expressing the keenness of everyone of them in pursuing their own selfish interests. Compare “run,” <sup><4932></sup>Psalm 119:32 <sup><2016></sup>Proverbs 1:16, contrasted with their apathy about God’s house.

**10. *heaven ... is stayed from dew*** — literally “stays itself.” Thus heaven or the sky is personified; implying that inanimate nature obeys Jehovah’s will; and, shocked at His people’s disobedience, withholds its goods from them (compare <sup><4122></sup>Jeremiah 2:12,13).

**11. *I called*** — what the “heaven” and “earth,” the second causes, were said to do (<sup><3010></sup>Haggai 1:10), being the *visible* instruments, Jehovah, in this verse, the invisible first cause, declares to be His doing. He “calls for” famine, etc., as instruments of His wrath (<sup><10002></sup>2 Kings 8:1 <sup><494516></sup>Psalm 105:16). The contrast is striking between the prompt obedience of these material agencies, and the slothful disobedience of living men, His people.

***drought*** — *Hebrew, Choreb*, like in sound to *Chareeb*, “waste” (Haggai 1:4,9), said of God’s house; implying the correspondence between the sin and its punishment. Ye have let My house be *waste*, and I will send on all

that is yours a *wasting drought*. This would affect not merely the “corn,” etc., but also “men” and “cattle,” who must perish in the absence of the “corn,” etc., lost by the drought.

***labor of the hands*** — all the fruits of lands, gardens, and vineyards, obtained by labor of the hands ( <sup><4833></sup>Deuteronomy 28:33 <sup><4784></sup>Psalm 78:46).

**12. *remnant of the people*** — all those who have returned from the exile (Zechariah 8:6).

***as ... God sent him*** — according to all that Jehovah had enjoined him to speak. But as it is not till <sup><3014></sup>Haggai 1:14 after Haggai’s second message (<sup><3013></sup>Haggai 1:13) that the people actually *obeyed*, MAURER translates here, “*hearkened to the voice of the Lord*,” and instead of “as,” “*because the Lord had sent him*.” However, *English Version* rightly represents their *purpose* of obedience as obedience in God’s eyes already, though not carried into effect till <sup><3014></sup>Haggai 1:14.

**13. *the Lord’s messenger*** — so the priests (Malachi 2:7) are called (compare <sup><6044></sup>Galatians 4:14 <sup><6025></sup>2 Peter 1:21).

***in the Lord’s message*** — by the Lord’s authority and commission: on the Lord’s embassy.

***I am with you*** — (<sup><4833></sup>Matthew 28:20). On the people showing the mere disposition to obey, even before they actually set to work, God passes at once from the reproving tone to that of tenderness. He hastens as it were to forget their former unfaithfulness, and to assure them, when obedient, that He *both is and will be* with them: *Hebrew*, “I with you!” God’s presence is the best of blessings, for it includes all others. This is the sure guarantee of their success no matter how many their foes might be (<sup><6833></sup>Romans 8:31). Nothing more inspirits men and rouses them from torpor, than, when relying on the promises of divine aid, they have a sure hope of a successful issue [CALVIN].

**14. *Lord stirred up the spirit of***, etc. — God gave them alacrity and perseverance in the good work, though slothful in themselves. Every good impulse and revival of religion is the direct work of God by His Spirit.

***came and did work*** — collected the wood and stones and other materials (compare Haggai 1:8) for the work. Not actually built or “laid the (secondary) foundations” of the temple, for this was not done till three months after, namely, the twenty-fourth day of the *ninth* month (<sup><3028></sup>Haggai 2:18) [GROTIUS].

**15. *four and twentieth day*** — twenty-three days after the first message of Haggai (Haggai 1:1).

# CHAPTER 2

## HAGGAI 2:1-9.

### SECOND PROPHECY.

*The people, discouraged at the inferiority of this temple to Solomon's, are encouraged nevertheless to persevere, because God is with them, and this house by its connection with Messiah's kingdom shall have a glory far above that of gold and silver.*

- 1. *seventh month*** — of the Hebrew year; in the second year of Darius reign (Haggai 1:1); not quite a month after they had begun the work (<sup><3015></sup>Haggai 1:15). This prophecy was very shortly before that of Zechariah.
- 3. *Who is left ... that saw ... first glory*** — Many elders present at the laying of the foundation of the second temple who had seen the first temple (<sup><4582></sup>Ezra 3:12,13) in all its glory, wept at the contrast presented by the rough and unpromising appearance of the former in its beginnings. From the destruction of the first temple to the second year of Darius Hystaspes, the date of Haggai's prophecy, was a space of seventy years (<sup><3812></sup>Zechariah 1:12); and to the first year of Cyrus, or the end of the captivity, fifty-two years; so that the elders might easily remember the first temple. The Jews note five points of inferiority: The absence from the second temple of
- (1) the sacred fire;
  - (2) the Shekinah;
  - (3) the ark and cherubim;
  - (4) the Urim and Thummim;
  - (5) the spirit of prophecy.

The connection of it with Messiah more than counterbalanced all these; for He is the antitype to all the five (Haggai 2:9).

***how do ye see it now?*** — God's estimate of things is very different from man's (Zechariah 8:6; compare <sup><0937></sup>1 Samuel 16:7). However low their estimate of the present temple ("it") from its outward inferiority, God holds it superior (<sup><3807></sup>Zechariah 4:10 <sup><4127></sup>1 Corinthians 1:27,28).

**4. *be strong ... for I am with you*** — The greatest *strength* is to have Jehovah with us as our strength. Not in man's "might," but in that of God's Spirit (Zechariah 4:6).

**5. *According to the word that*** — literally, "(I am with you) the word (or *thing*) which I covenanted"; that is, I am with you as I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt (<sup><1296></sup>Exodus 19:5,6 34:10,11). The *covenant* promise of God to the elect people at Sinai is an additional motive for their persevering. The *Hebrew* for to "covenant" is literally "to cut," alluding to the sacrificial victims *cut* in ratification of a covenant.

**so** — or, "and."

***my Spirit remaineth among you*** — to strengthen you for the work (<sup><3014></sup>Haggai 1:14 Zechariah 4:6). The inspiration of Haggai and Zechariah at this time was a specimen of the presence of God's *Spirit* remaining still with His people, as He had been with Moses and Israel of old (<sup><4560></sup>Ezra 5:1 <sup><2561></sup>Isaiah 63:11).

**6. *Yet once, it is a little while*** — or, "(it is) yet *a little while*." The *Hebrew* for "once" expresses the indefinite article "a" [MAURER]. Or, "it is yet *only* a little while"; literally, "one little," that is, a single brief space till a series of movements is to begin; namely, the shakings of nations soon to begin which are to end in the advent of Messiah, "the desire of all nations" [MOORE]. The *shaking of nations* implies judgments of wrath on the foes of God's people, to precede the reign of the Prince of peace (<sup><2313></sup>Isaiah 13:13). The kingdoms of the world are but the scaffolding for God's spiritual temple, to be thrown down when their purpose is accomplished. The transitoriness of all that is earthly should lead men to seek "peace" in Messiah's everlasting kingdom (Haggai 2:9 <sup><8127></sup>Hebrews 12:27,28) [MOORE]. The Jews in Haggai's times hesitated about going forward with the work, through dread of the world power, Medo-Persia, influenced by the craft of Samaria. The prophet assures them this and all other world powers are to fall before Messiah, who is to be associated with this temple; therefore they need fear naught. So <sup><8126></sup>Hebrews 12:26, which quotes this passage; the apostle compares the heavier punishment which awaits the disobedient under the New Testament with that which met such under the Old Testament. At the establishment of the Sinaitic covenant, only the earth was shaken to introduce it, but now heaven and earth and all things are to be shaken, that is, along with prodigies in the world of nature, all kingdoms that stand in the way of Messiah's kingdom, "which cannot be shaken," are to be upturned (<sup><2125></sup>Daniel 2:35,44 <sup><1214></sup>Matthew 21:44). <sup><8127></sup>Hebrews 12:27, "Yet *once more*," favors *English Version*. Paul condenses together the two verses of Haggai (Haggai 2:6,7, and <sup><3023></sup>Haggai 2:21,22), implying that it

was one and the same shaking, of which the former verses of Haggai denote the beginning, the latter the end. The shaking began introductory to the first advent; it will be finished at the second. Concerning the former, compare <sup><40B7></sup>Matthew 3:17 27:51 28:2 <sup><44D></sup>Acts 2:2 4:31; concerning the latter, <sup><1B4E></sup>Matthew 24:7 <sup><66A></sup>Revelation 16:20 18:20 20:11 [BENGE]. There is scarcely a prophecy of Messiah in the Old Testament which does not, to some extent at least, refer to His second coming [SIR ISAAC NEWTON]. <sup><88B></sup>Psalms 68:8 mentions the *heavens* dropping near the mountain (Sinai); but Haggai speaks of the whole created heavens: “Wait only *a little while*, though the promised event is not apparent yet; for soon will God change things for the better: do not stop short with these preludes and fix your eyes on the present state of the temple [CALVIN]. God shook the *heavens* by the lightnings at Sinai; the *earth*, that it should give forth waters; the *sea*, that it should be divided asunder. In Christ’s time God *shook the heaven*, when He spake from it; the *earth*, when it quaked; the *sea*, when He commanded the winds and waves [GROTIUS]. CICERO records at the time of Christ the silencing of the heathen oracles; and DIO, the fall of the idols in the Roman capitol.

**7. *shake*** — not *convert*; but cause that agitation which is to precede Messiah’s coming as the healer of the nations’ agitations. The previous shaking shall cause the yearning “*desire*” for the Prince of peace. MOORE and others translate “the beauty,” or “the desirable things (the precious gifts) of all nations shall come” (<sup><20B></sup>Isaiah 60:5,11 61:6). He brings these objections to applying “the desire of all nations” to Messiah:

(1) The *Hebrew* means the *quality*, not the *thing* desired, namely, its *desirableness* or beauty, But the abstract is often put for the concrete. So “a man of desires,” that is, *one desired* or *desirable* (<sup><20B></sup>Daniel 9:23 10:11, *Margin*; <sup><20B></sup>Daniel 10:3, *Margin*).

(2) Messiah was not desired by all nations, but “a root out of a dry ground,” having “no beauty that we should *desire* Him” (<sup><25B></sup>Isaiah 53:2). But what is implied is not that the nations definitely desired *Him*, but that He was the only one to satisfy the yearning desires which all felt unconsciously for a Savior, shown in their painful rites and bloody sacrifices. Moreover, while the Jews as a nation desired Him not (to which people <sup><25B></sup>Isaiah 53:2 refers), the Gentiles, who are plainly pointed out by “all nations,” accepted Him; and so to them He was peculiarly desirable.

(3) The verb, “shall come,” is *plural*, which requires the noun to be understood in the *plural*, whereas if Messiah be intended, the noun is *singular*. But when two nouns stand together, of which one is governed

by the other, the verb agrees sometimes *in number* with the latter, though it really has the former as its nominative, that is, the *Hebrew* “come” is made *in number* to agree with “nations,” though really agreeing with “the desire.” Besides, Messiah may be described as realizing in Himself at His coming “*the desires* (the noun expressing collectively the *plural*) of all nations”; whence the verb is *plural*. So in <sup><216></sup>Song of Solomon 5:16, “He is altogether lovely,” in the *Hebrew* the same word as here, “all *desires*,” that is, altogether desirable, or the object of desires.

(4) Haggai 2:8, “The silver is mine,” etc. accords with the translation, “the choice things of all nations” shall be brought in. But Haggai 2:8 harmonizes quite as well with *English Version* of Haggai 2:7, as the note on eighth verse will show; see on Haggai 2:8.

(5) the *Septuagint* and *Syriac* versions agree with MOORE’S translation. But *Vulgate* confirms *English Version*. So also early Jewish Rabbis before JEROME’S time. PLATO [*Alcibiades*, 2] shows the yearning of the Gentiles after a spiritual deliverer: “It is therefore necessary,” says Alcibiades on the subject of acceptable worship, “to wait until One teach us how we ought to behave towards the gods and men.” Alcibiades replies, “When shall that time arrive, and who shall that Teacher be? For most glad would I be to see such a man.” The “good tidings of great joy” were “to all people” (<sup><217></sup>Luke 2:10). The Jews, and those in the adjoining nations instructed by them, looked for *Shiloh to come unto whom the gathering of the people was to be*, from Jacob’s prophecy (<sup><190></sup>Genesis 49:10). The early patriarchs, Job (<sup><1825></sup>Job 19:25-27 33:23-26) and Abraham (<sup><1826></sup>John 8:56), *desired Him*.

***fill this house with glory*** — (Haggai 2:9). As the first temple was filled with the cloud of glory, the symbol of God (<sup><1081></sup>1 Kings 8:11 <sup><164></sup>2 Chronicles 5:14), so this second temple was filled with the “glory” of God (<sup><114></sup>John 1:14) *veiled* in the flesh (as it were in the cloud) at Christ’s first coming, when He entered it and performed miracles there (<sup><212></sup>Matthew 21:12-14); but that “glory” is to be *revealed* at His second coming, as this prophecy in its ulterior reference foretells (Malachi 3:1). The Jews before the destruction of Jerusalem all expected Messiah would appear in the second temple. Since that time they invent various forced and false interpretations of such plain Messianic prophecies.

**8. *The silver is mine*** — (<sup><1811></sup>Job 41:11 <sup><1812></sup>Psalm 50:12). Ye are disappointed at the absence of these precious metals in the adorning of this temple, as compared with the first temple: If I pleased I could adorn this temple with them, but I will adorn it with a “glory” (Haggai 2:7,9) far more

precious; namely, with the presence of My divine Son in His veiled glory first, and at His second coming with His revealed glory, accompanied with outward adornment of gold and silver, of which the golden covering within and without put on by Herod is the type. Then shall the nations bring offerings of those precious metals which ye now miss so much (<sup><238B></sup>Isaiah 2:3 60:3,6,7 <sup><560B></sup>Ezekiel 43:2,4,5 44:4). The heavenly Jerusalem shall be similarly adorned, but shall need “no temple” (<sup><6210></sup>Revelation 21:10-22). Compare <sup><4182></sup>1 Corinthians 3:12, where *gold* and *silver* represent the most precious things (Zechariah 2:5). The inward glory of New Testament redemption far exceeds the outward glory of the Old Testament dispensation. So, in the case of the individual poor believer, God, if He pleased, could bestow gold and silver, but He bestows far better treasures, the possession of which might be endangered by that of the former (<sup><318B></sup>James 2:5).

**9. *The glory of this latter house ... greater than of the former*** — namely, through the presence of Messiah, *in* (whose) *face is given the light of the knowledge of the glory of God* (<sup><400B></sup>2 Corinthians 4:6; compare <sup><300B></sup>Hebrews 1:2), and who said of Himself, “in this place is one greater than the temple” (<sup><412B></sup>Matthew 12:6), and who “sat daily teaching in it” (<sup><415B></sup>Matthew 26:55). Though Zerubbabel’s temple was taken down to the foundations when Herod rebuilt the temple, the latter was considered, in a religious point of view, as not a *third* temple, but virtually the second temple.

***in this place ... peace*** — namely, at Jerusalem, the metropolis of the kingdom of God, whose seat was the temple: where Messiah “made peace through the blood of His cross” (<sup><5011></sup>Colossians 1:20). Thus the “glory” consists in this “peace.” This peace begins by the removal of the difficulty in the way of the just God accepting the guilty (<sup><498B></sup>Psalms 85:8,10 <sup><230B></sup>Isaiah 9:6,7 53:5 <sup><303B></sup>Zechariah 6:13 <sup><415B></sup>2 Corinthians 5:18,19); then it creates peace in the sinner’s own heart (<sup><257B></sup>Isaiah 57:19 <sup><410B></sup>Acts 10:36 <sup><410B></sup>Romans 5:1 14:17 <sup><412B></sup>Ephesians 2:13-17 <sup><500B></sup>Philippians 4:7); then peace in the whole earth (<sup><315B></sup>Micah 5:5 <sup><414B></sup>Luke 2:14). First peace between God and man, then between man and God, then between man and man (<sup><210B></sup>Isaiah 2:4 <sup><308B></sup>Hosea 2:18 <sup><300B></sup>Zechariah 9:10). As “Shiloh” (<sup><490B></sup>Genesis 49:10) means *peace*, this verse confirms the view that Haggai 2:7, “the desire of all nations,” refers to Shiloh or Messiah, foretold in <sup><490B></sup>Genesis 49:10.

<sup><310B></sup>Haggai 2:10-19.

### THIRD PROPHECY.

*Sacrifices without obedience (in respect to God's command to build the temple) could not sanctify. Now that they are obedient, God will bless them, though no sign is seen of fertility as yet.*

**10. *four and twentieth day ... ninth month*** — three days more than two months from the second prophecy (Haggai 2:1); in the month Chisleu, the lunar one about the time of our December. The Jews seem to have made considerable progress in the work in the interval (<sup><3025></sup>Haggai 2:15-18).

**11. *Ask ... the priests*** — Propose this question to them on the law. The priests were the authorized expounders of the law (<sup><3001></sup>Leviticus 10:11 <sup><3590></sup>Deuteronomy 33:10 <sup><3423></sup>Ezekiel 44:23 Malachi 2:7).

**12. “Holy flesh”** (that is, the flesh of a sacrifice, <sup><2415></sup>Jeremiah 11:15), indeed, makes holy the “skirt” in which it is carried; but that “skirt” cannot impart its sanctity to any thing beyond, as “bread,” etc. (<sup><0127></sup>Leviticus 6:27). This is cited to illustrate the principle, that a sacrifice, holy, as enveloping divine things (just as the “skirt” is “holy” which envelops “holy” flesh), cannot by its inherent or *opus operatum* efficacy make holy a person whose disobedience, as that of the Jew while neglecting God's house, made him unholy.

**13.** On the other hand, a legally “unclean” person imparts his uncleanness to any thing, whereas a legally holy thing cannot confer its sanctity on an “unclean” person (<sup><0119></sup>Numbers 19:11,13,22). Legal sanctity is not so readily communicated as legal impurity. So the paths to sin are manifold: the paths to holiness one, and that one of difficult access [GROTIUS]. One drop of filth will defile a vase of water: many drops of water will not purify a vase of filth [MOORE].

**14. *Then answered Haggai*** — rather, “Then Haggai answered (in rejoinder to the priests' answer) and said” [MAURER].

***so is this people*** — heretofore not in such an obedient state of mind as to deserve to be called *My people* (<sup><3015></sup>Titus 1:15). Here he applies the two cases just stated. By the first case, “this people” is not made “holy” by their offerings “there” (namely, on the altar built in the open air, under Cyrus, <sup><3133></sup>Ezra 3:3); though the ritual sacrifice can ordinarily sanctify outwardly so far as it reaches (<sup><3013></sup>Hebrews 9:13), as the “holy flesh” sanctified the “skirt,” yet it cannot make the offerers in their persons and all their works acceptable to God, because lacking the spirit of obedience (<sup><0122></sup>1 Samuel 15:22) so long as they neglected to build the Lord's house. On the contrary, by the second case, they made “unclean” their very *offerings* by being

unclean through “dead works” (disobedience), just as the person unclean by contact with a dead body imparted his uncleanness to all that he touched (compare <sup><3094</sup>Hebrews 9:14). This all applies to them as they had been, not as they are now that they have begun to obey; the design is to guard them against falling back again. The “there” points to the altar, probably in view of the audience which the prophet addressed.

**15. *consider*** — literally, “lay it to heart.” Ponder earnestly, retracing the past “upward” (that is, backward), comparing what evils heretofore befell you before ye set about this work, with the present time when you have again commenced it, and when in consequence I now engage to “bless you.” Hence ye may perceive the evils of disobedience and the blessing of obedience.

**16. *Since those days were*** — from the time that those days of your neglect of the temple work have been.

***when one came to an heap of twenty measures*** — that is to a heap *which he had expected would be one* of twenty measures, there were but ten.

***fifty vessels out of the press*** — As the *Septuagint* translates “measure,” and *Vulgate* “a flagon,” and as we should rather expect *vat* than *press*. MAURER translates (omitting *vessels*, which is not in the original), “*purahs*,” or “wine-measures.”

**17.** Appropriated from <sup><3099</sup>Amos 4:9, whose canonicity is thus sealed by Haggai’s inspired authority; in the last clause, “*turned*,” however, has to be supplied, its omission marking by the elliptical abruptness (“yet ye not to Me!”) God’s displeasure. Compare “(*let him come*) unto Me!” Moses in excitement omitting the bracketed words (<sup><0226</sup>Exodus 32:26). “Blasting” results from excessive drought; “mildew, from excessive moisture.

**18.** Resumed from <sup><3025</sup>Haggai 2:15 after <sup><3026</sup>Haggai 2:16,17, that the blessing in <sup><3029</sup>Haggai 2:19 may stand in the more marked contrast with the curse in <sup><3026</sup>Haggai 2:16,17. Affliction will harden the heart, if not referred to God as its author [MOORE].

***even from the day that the foundation of ... temple was laid*** — The first foundation beneath the earth had been long ago laid in the second year of Cyrus, 535 B.C. (<sup><1510</sup>Ezra 3:10,11); the foundation now laid was the secondary one, which, above the earth, was laid on the previous work [TIRINUS]. Or, translate, “From this day on which the temple is being begun,” namely, on the foundations long ago laid [GROTIUS]. MAURER translates, “Consider ... from the four and twentieth day ... *to* (the time

which has elapsed) from the day on which the foundation ... was laid.” The *Hebrew* supports *English Version*.

**19. *Is the seed yet in the barn?*** — implying, It is *not*. It has been already sown this month, and there are no more signs of its bearing a good crop, much less of its being safely stored *in the barn*, than there were in the past season, when there was such a failure; yet I promise to you *from this day* (emphatically marking by the repetition the connection of the blessing with *the day* of their obedience) a *blessing* in an abundant harvest. So also the vine, etc., which heretofore have borne little or nothing, shall be *blessed* with productiveness. Thus it will be made evident that the blessing is due to Me, not to nature. We may trust God’s promise to bless us, though we see no visible sign of its fulfillment (Habakkuk 2:3).

<sup><37121></sup>Haggai 2:20-23.

#### FOURTH PROPHECY.

*God’s promise through Zerubbabel to Israel of safety in the coming commotions.*

**20. *the month*** — the ninth in the second year of Darius. The same date as Prophecy III (<sup><37021></sup>Haggai 2:10).

**21. *to Zerubbabel*** — Perhaps Zerubbabel had asked as to the convulsions foretold (Haggai 2:6,7). This is the reply: The Jews had been led to fear that these convulsions would destroy their national existence. *Zerubbabel*, therefore, as their civil leader and representative is addressed, not Joshua, their religious leader. Messiah is the antitypical Zerubbabel, their national Representative and King, with whom God the Father makes the covenant wherein they, as identified with Him, are assured of safety in God’s electing love (compare <sup><37023></sup>Haggai 2:23, “will make thee as a signet”; “I have chosen thee”).

***shake ... heavens*** — (see on Haggai 2:6,7); violent political convulsions accompanied with physical prodigies (<sup><4107></sup>Matthew 24:7,29).

**22.** All other world kingdoms are to be overthrown to make way for Christ’s universal kingdom (<sup><27044></sup>Daniel 2:44). War chariots are to give place to His reign of peace (<sup><37510></sup>Micah 5:10 <sup><38007></sup>Zechariah 9:10).

**23. *take thee*** — under My protection and to promote thee and thy people to honor (<sup><37870></sup>Psalms 78:70).

***a signet*** — (So 8:6 <sup><4224></sup>Jeremiah 22:24). A ring with a seal on it; the legal representative of the owner; generally of precious stones and gold, etc., and

much valued. Being worn on the finger, it was an object of constant regard. In all which points of view the theocratic people, and their representative, Zerubbabel the type, and Messiah his descendant the Antitype, are regarded by God. The safety of Israel to the end is guaranteed in Messiah, in whom God hath chosen them as His own (<sup><2301></sup>Isaiah 42:1 43:10 44:1 49:3). So the spiritual Israel is sealed in their covenant head by His Spirit (<sup><4012></sup>Corinthians 1:20,22 <sup><4004></sup>Ephesians 1:4,13,14). All is ascribed, not to the merits of Zerubbabel, but to God's gratuitous *choice*. Christ is the "signet" on God's hand: always in the Father's presence, ever pleasing in his sight. The signet of an Eastern monarch was the sign of *delegated authority*; so Christ (<sup><4088></sup>Matthew 28:18 <sup><4022></sup>John 5:22,23).

# THE BOOK OF ZECHARIAH

Commentary by **A. R. FAUSSETT**

## INTRODUCTION

THE name *Zechariah* means *one whom Jehovah remembers*: a common name, four others of the same name occurring in the Old Testament. Like Jeremiah and Ezekiel, he was a priest as well as a prophet, which adapts him for the sacerdotal character of some of his prophecies (<sup><31613></sup>Zechariah 6:13). He is called “the son of Berechiah the son of Iddo” (Zechariah 1:1); but simply “the son of Iddo” in <sup><45101></sup>Ezra 5:1 6:14. Probably his father died when he was young; and hence, as sometimes occurs in Jewish genealogies, he is called “the son of Iddo,” his grandfather. Iddo was one of the priests who returned to Zerubbabel and Joshua from Babylon (<sup><46214></sup>Nehemiah 12:4).

Zechariah entered early on his prophetic functions (Zechariah 2:4); only two months later than Haggai, in the second year of Darius’ reign, 520 B.C. The design of both prophets was to encourage the people and their religious and civil leaders, Joshua and Zerubbabel, in their work of rebuilding the temple, after the interruption caused by the Samaritans (see *Introduction to Haggai*). Zechariah does so especially by unfolding in detail the glorious future in connection with the present depressed appearance of the theocracy, and its visible symbol, the temple. He must have been very young in leaving Babylonia, where he was born. The Zechariah, son of Barachias, mentioned by our Lord (<sup><42355></sup>Matthew 23:35) as slain between the porch and the altar, must have been the one called the son of *Jehoiada* in <sup><44021></sup>2 Chronicles 24:21, who so perished: the same person often had two names; and our Lord, in referring to the *Hebrew Bible*, of which Second Chronicles is the last book, would naturally mention the last martyr in the *Hebrew* order of the canon, as He had instanced Abel as the first. Owing to <sup><41209></sup>Matthew 27:9 quoting <sup><38112></sup>Zechariah 11:12,13 as the words of *Jeremiah*, MEDE doubts the authenticity of the ninth through the fourteenth chapters, and ascribes them to *Jeremiah*: he thinks that these chapters were not found till after the return from the captivity, and being approved by Zechariah,

were added to his prophecies, as Agur's Proverbs were added to those of Solomon. All the oldest authorities, except two manuscripts of the old Italian or Pre-Vulgate version, read *Jeremiah* in <sup><1719></sup>Matthew 27:9. The quotation there is not to the letter copied from Zechariah, <sup><1815></sup>Jeremiah 18:1,2 32:6-12, may also have been in the mind of Matthew, and perhaps in the mind of Zechariah, whence the former mentions *Jeremiah*.

HENGSTENBERG similarly thinks that Matthew names *Jeremiah*, rather than *Zechariah*, to turn attention to the fact that Zechariah's prophecy is but a reiteration of the fearful oracle in <sup><1815></sup>Jeremiah 18:1-19:15, to be fulfilled in the destruction of the Jewish nation. Jeremiah had already, by the image of a potter's vessel, portrayed their ruin in Nebuchadnezzar's invasion; and as Zechariah virtually repeats this threat, to be inflicted again under Messiah for the nation's rejection of Him, Matthew, virtually, by mentioning *Jeremiah*, implies that the "field of blood" (<sup><1718></sup>Matthew 27:8,9), now bought by "the reward of iniquity" (<sup><1815></sup>Acts 1:18) in the valley of Hinnom, was long ago a scene of prophetic doom in which awful disaster had been symbolically predicted: that the present purchase of that field with the traitor's price renewed the prophecy and revived the curse — a curse pronounced of old by Jeremiah, and once fulfilled in the Babylonian siege — a curse reiterated by Zechariah, and again to be verified in the Roman desolation. LIGHTFOOT (referring to B. BATHRA and KIMCHI) less probably thinks the third division of Scripture, the prophets, began with Jeremiah, and that the whole body of prophets is thus quoted by the name "Jeremiah." The mention of "Ephraim" and "Israel" in these chapters as distinct from Judah, does not prove that the prophecy was written while the ten tribes existed as a separate kingdom. It rather implies that hereafter not only Judah, but the ten tribes also, shall be restored, the earnest of which was given in the numbers out of the ten tribes who returned with their brethren the Jews from captivity under Cyrus. There is nothing in these characters to imply that a king reigned in Judah at that time. The editor of the *Hebrew* canon joined these chapters to Zechariah, not to Jeremiah; the *Septuagint*, three hundred years B.C., confirms this.

The prophecy consists of four parts:

- (1) Introductory, Zechariah 1:1-6.
- (2) Symbolical, Zechariah 1:7, to the end of the sixth chapter, containing nine visions; all these were vouchsafed in one night, and are of a symbolical character.
- (3) Didactic, the seventh and eighth chapters containing an answer to a query of the Beth-elites concerning a certain feast. And
- (4) Prophetic, the ninth chapter to the end.

These six last chapters predict Alexander's expedition along the west coast of Palestine to Egypt; God's protection of the Jews, both at that time and under the Maccabees; the advent, sufferings, and reign of Messiah; the destruction of Jerusalem by Rome, and dissolution of the Jews' polity; their conversion and restoration; the overthrow of the wicked confederacy which assailed them in Canaan; and the Gentiles' joining in their holy worship [HENDERSON]. The difference in style between the former and the latter chapters is due to the difference of subject; the first six chapters being of a symbolical and peculiar character, while the poetical style of the concluding chapters is adapted admirably to the subjects treated. The titles (Zechariah 9:1 12:1) accord with the prophetic matter which follows; nor is it necessary for unity of authorship that the introductory formulas occurring in the first eight chapters should occur in the last six. The non-reference in the last six chapters to the completion of the temple and the Jews' restoration after the captivity is just what we should expect, if, as seems likely, these chapters were written long after the completion of the temple and the restoration of the Jews polity after the captivity, in circumstances different from those which engaged the prophet when he wrote the earlier chapters.

The style varies with the subject: at one time conversational, at another poetical. His symbols are enigmatical and are therefore accompanied with explanations. His prose is like that of Ezekiel — diffuse, uniform, and repetitious. The rhythm is somewhat unequal, and the parallelisms are not altogether symmetrical. Still, there is found often much of the elevation met with in the earlier prophets, and a general congruity between the style and the subjects. Graphic vividness is his peculiar merit. Chaldaeisms occur occasionally. Another special characteristic of Zechariah is his introduction of spiritual beings into his prophetic scenes.

# CHAPTER 1

## ZECHARIAH 1:1-17.

### INTRODUCTORY EXHORTATION TO REPENTANCE. THE VISION.

*The man among the myrtles: Comforting explanation by the angel, an encouragement to the Jews to build the city and temple: The four horns and four artificers.*

1. See *Introduction*.

2. God fulfilled His threats against your fathers; beware, then, lest by disregarding His voice by me, as they did in the case of former prophets, ye suffer like them. The special object Zechariah aims at is that they should awake from their selfish negligence to obey God's command to rebuild His temple (Haggai 1:4-8).

**sore displeased** — *Hebrew*, “displeased with a displeasure,” that is, vehemently, with no common displeasure, exhibited in the destruction of the Jews' city and in their captivity.

3. **saith the Lord of hosts** — a phrase frequent in Haggai and Zechariah, implying God's boundless resources and universal power, so as to inspire the Jews with confidence to work.

**Turn ye unto me ... and I will turn** — that is, *and then*, as the sure consequence, “I will turn unto you” (Malachi 3:7 <sup><3018></sup> James 4:8; compare also <sup><2482></sup> Jeremiah 3:12 <sup><2680></sup> Ezekiel 18:30 <sup><3079></sup> Micah 7:19). Though God hath brought you back from captivity, yet this state will not last long unless ye are really converted. God has heavier scourges ready, and has begun to give symptoms of displeasure [CALVIN]. (Haggai 1:6).

4. **Be ye not as your fathers** — The Jews boasted of their *fathers*; but he shows that their fathers were refractory, and that ancient example and long usage will not justify disobedience (<sup><4635></sup> 2 Chronicles 36:15,16).

**the former prophets** — those who lived before the captivity. It aggravated their guilt that, not only had they the law, but they had been often called to repent by God's *prophets*.

**5. *Your fathers ... and the prophets, do they live for ever?*** — In contrast to “My words” (Zechariah 1:6), which “endure for ever” (<sup><4025></sup>1 Peter 1:25). “Your fathers have perished, as was foretold; and their fate ought to warn you. But you may say, The prophets too are dead. I grant it, but still My words do not die: though dead, their prophetic words from Me, fulfilled against *your fathers*, are not dead with them. Beware, then, lest ye share their fate.”

**6. *statutes*** — My determined purposes to punish for sin.

***which I commanded my servants*** — namely, to announce to your fathers.

***did they not take hold*** — that is, overtake, as a foe overtakes one fleeing.

***they returned*** — *Turning* from their former self-satisfaction, they recognized their punishment as that which God’s prophets had foretold.

***thought to do*** — that is, decreed to do. Compare with this verse <sup><2877></sup>Lamentations 2:17.

***our ways*** — evil ways (<sup><4085></sup>Jeremiah 4:18 17:10 23:2).

**7.** The general plan of the nine following visions (Zechariah 1:8-6:15) is first to present the symbol; then, on a question being put, to subjoin the interpretation. Though the visions are distinct, they form one grand whole, presented in one night to the prophet’s mind, two or three months after the prophet’s first commission (Zechariah 1:1).

***Sebat*** — the eleventh month of the Jewish year, from the new moon in February to the new moon in March. The term is *Chaldee*, meaning a “shoot,” namely, the month when trees begin to shoot or bud.

**8. *by night*** — The Jews begin their day with sunset; therefore the night which preceded the twenty-fourth day of the month is meant (Zechariah 1:7).

***a man*** — Jehovah, the second person of the Trinity, manifested in *man’s* form, an earnest of the incarnation; called the “angel of Jehovah” (<sup><3017></sup>Zechariah 1:11,12), “Jehovah the angel of the covenant” (Malachi 3:1; compare <sup><0107></sup>Genesis 16:7 with <sup><3013></sup>Zechariah 1:13; <sup><0211></sup>Genesis 22:11 with <sup><3012></sup>Zechariah 1:12; <sup><0802></sup>Exodus 3:2 with Zechariah 1:4). Being at once divine and human, He must be God and man in one person.

***riding*** — implying swiftness in executing God’s will in His providence; hastening to help His people.

**red horse** — the color that represents *bloodshed*: implying vengeance to be inflicted on the foes of Israel (compare <sup><1218></sup>2 Kings 3:22 <sup><2611></sup>Isaiah 63:1,2 <sup><6101></sup>Revelation 6:4); also *fiery zeal*.

**among the myrtle trees** — symbol of the Jewish Church: not a stately cedar, but a lowly, though fragrant, myrtle. It was its depressed state that caused the Jews to despond; this vision is designed to cheer them with better hopes. The uncreated angel of Jehovah's presence *standing* (as His abiding place, <sup><19214></sup>Psalm 132:14) *among* them, is a guarantee for her safety, lowly though she now be.

**in the bottom** — in a low place or bottom of a river; alluding to Babylon near the rivers Euphrates and Tigris, the scene of Judah's captivity. The myrtle delights in low places and the banks of waters [PEMBELLUS]. MAURER translates, from a different root, "in a *shady* place."

**red horses** — that is, *horsemen* mounted on *red horses*; <sup><3011></sup>Zechariah 1:10,11, confirm this view.

**speckled ... white** — The "white" implies triumph and victory for Judah; "speckled" (from a root "to intertwine"), a combination of the two colors *white* and *red* (bay [MOORE]), implies a state of things mixed, partly prosperous, partly otherwise [HENDERSON]; or, the connection of the wrath (answering to the "red") about to fall on the Jews' foes, and triumph (answering to the "white") to the Jews themselves in God's arrangements for His people [MOORE]. Some angels ("the red horses") exercised offices of vengeance; others ("the white"), those of joy; others ("the speckled"), those of a mixed character (compare Zechariah 6:2,3). God has ministers of every kind for promoting the interests of His Church.

**9. the angel that talked with me** — not the "man upon the red horse," as is evident from <sup><3011></sup>Zechariah 1:10, where he (the Divine Angel) is distinguished from the "angel that talked with me" (the phrase used of him, <sup><3013></sup>Zechariah 1:13,14 Zechariah 2:3 4:1,4,5 5:5,10 6:4), that is, the interpreting angel. The *Hebrew* for "with me," or, "in me" (<sup><04218></sup>Numbers 12:8), implies *internal, intimate* communication [JEROME].

**show thee** — reveal to thy mental vision.

**10. answered** — The "angel of the covenant" here gives the reply instead of the interpreting angel, to imply that all communications through the interpreting angel come from Him as their source.

**Lord hath sent to walk to and fro through the earth** — If "Satan walks to and fro in the earth" (implying *restless activity*) on errands of mischief to God's people (<sup><1807></sup>Job 1:7), the Lord *sends* other angels to "walk to and fro"

with unceasing activity everywhere to counterwork Satan's designs, and to defend His people (<sup><1907></sup>Psalm 34:7 91:11 103:20,21 <sup><3014></sup>Hebrews 1:14).

**11.** The attendant angels report to the Lord of angels, "the earth ... is at rest." The flourishing state of the heathen "earth," while Judah was desolate and its temple not yet restored, is the powerful plea in the Divine Angel's intercession with God the Father in <sup><3012></sup>Zechariah 1:12. When Judah was depressed to the lowest point, and the heathen elated to the highest, it was time for Jehovah to work for His people.

*sitteth still* — dwells surely.

**12.** Not only does Messiah *stand among* His people (the "myrtles," Zechariah 1:8), but intercedes for them with the Father ("Lord," or "Jehovah of hosts") effectively (<sup><3013></sup>Zechariah 1:13 <sup><3025></sup>Hebrews 7:25). Compare <sup><1923></sup>Psalm 102:13-20 <sup><2306></sup>Isaiah 62:6,7, as to Judah's restoration in answer to prayer.

*answered and said* — said *in continuation* of the discourse: *proceeded to say*.

*how long* — Messiah's people pray similarly to their Head. <sup><6160></sup>Revelation 6:10, "How long," etc. Heretofore it was vain to pray, but now that the divinely appointed "threescore and ten years" (<sup><2511></sup>Jeremiah 25:11 29:10) are elapsed, it is time to pray to Thee for the fulfillment of Thy promise, seeing that Thy grace is not yet fully manifested, nor Thy promise fulfilled. God's promises are not to make us slothful, but to quicken our prayers. HENDERSON, dating the seventy years from the destruction of Jerusalem (588 B.C.), supposes two years of the seventy had yet to run (520 B.C.).

**13. *the Lord*** — JEHOVAH, called "the angel of the Lord (Jehovah)" (<sup><3012></sup>Zechariah 1:12).

*good words and comfortable words* — literally, "words, consolations." The subject of these consolatory words is stated in <sup><3014></sup>Zechariah 1:14, etc.; the promise of full re-establishment, <sup><2910></sup>Jeremiah 29:10,11 (compare <sup><2518></sup>Isaiah 57:18 <sup><3018></sup>Hosea 11:8).

**14. *Cry*** — Proclaim so as to be heard clearly by all (<sup><2306></sup>Isaiah 40:6 58:1).

*I am jealous for Jerusalem* — As a husband jealous for his wife, wronged by others, so Jehovah is for Judah, who has been injured wantonly by the heathen (Zechariah 8:2 <sup><0251></sup>Numbers 25:11,13 <sup><1190></sup>1 Kings 19:10 <sup><018></sup>Joel 2:18).

**15. *very sore displeased with the heathen*** — in contrast with “I was *but a little* displeased” with My people. God’s displeasure with His people is temporary and for their chastening; with the heathen oppressors, it is final and fatal (<sup>2301F</sup>Jeremiah 30:11). God’s instruments for chastising His people, when He has done with them, He casts into the fire.

***are at ease*** — carnally secure. A stronger phrase than “is at rest” (<sup>3015F</sup>Zechariah 1:11). They are “at ease,” but as I am “sore displeased” with them, their ease is accursed. Judah is in “affliction,” but as I love her and am jealous for her, she has every reason to be encouraged in prosecuting the temple work.

***helped forward the affliction*** — afflicted My people more than I desired. The heathen sought the utter extinction of Judah to gratify their own ambition and revenge (<sup>2340F</sup>Isaiah 47:6 <sup>2328F</sup>Ezekiel 25:3,6 <sup>3010F</sup>Obadiah 1:10-17).

**16. *I am returned*** — whereas in anger I had before withdrawn from her (<sup>2315F</sup>Hosea 5:15).

***with mercies*** — not merely of one kind, nor once only, but repeated mercies.

***my house shall be built*** — which at this time (the second year of Darius, Zechariah 1:1) had only its foundations laid (<sup>3028F</sup>Haggai 2:18). It was not completed till the sixth year of Darius (<sup>4515F</sup>Ezra 6:15).

***line*** — (<sup>3885F</sup>Job 38:5). The measuring-line for building, not hastily, but with measured regularity. Not only the temple, but *Jerusalem* also was to be rebuilt (<sup>3018F</sup>Nehemiah 2:3, etc.; compare Zechariah 2:1,2). Also, as to the future temple and city, <sup>2340F</sup>Ezekiel 41:3 42:1-44:31 45:6.

**17. *yet*** — though heretofore lying in abject prostration.

***My cities*** — not only Jerusalem, but the subordinate *cities* of Judah. God claims them all as peculiarly *His*, and therefore will restore them.

***through prosperity ... spread abroad*** — or *overflow*; metaphor from an overflowing vessel or fountain (compare <sup>3056F</sup>Proverbs 5:16) [PEMBELLUS]. Abundance of fruits of the earth, corn and wine, and a large increase of citizens, are meant; also spiritual prosperity.

***comfort Zion*** — (<sup>2301F</sup>Isaiah 40:1,2 51:3).

***choose*** — (<sup>3022F</sup>Zechariah 2:12 3:2 <sup>2340F</sup>Isaiah 14:1). Here meaning, “*show by acts of loving-kindness* that He has chosen.” His immutable *choice* from everlasting is the fountain whence flow all such particular acts of love.

## ZEPHARIAH 1:18-21.

### SECOND VISION.

*The power of the Jews foes shall be dissipated.*

**18. *four horns*** — To a pastoral people like the Jews the *horns* of the strongest in the herd naturally suggested a symbol of *power* and *pride* of conscious strength: hence *the ruling powers of the world* (<sup>667B</sup>Revelation 17:3,12). The number *four* in Zechariah's time referred to the four cardinal points of the horizon. Wherever God's people turned, there were foes to encounter (<sup>404B</sup>Nehemiah 4:7); the Assyrian, Chaldean, and Samaritan on the north; Egypt and Arabia on the south; Philistia on the west; Ammon and Moab on the east. But the Spirit in the prophet looked farther; namely, to the *four* world powers, the only ones which were, or are, to rise till the kingdom of Messiah, the fifth, overthrows and absorbs all others in its universal dominion. Babylon and Medo-Persia alone had as yet risen, but soon Graeco-Macedonia was to succeed (as <sup>306B</sup>Zechariah 9:13 foretells), and Rome the fourth and last, was to follow (<sup>270B</sup>Daniel 2:1-49 7:1-28). The fact that the repairing of the evils caused to Judah and Israel by *all four* kingdoms is spoken of here, proves that the exhaustive fulfillment is yet future, and only the earnest of it given in the overthrow of the two world powers which up to Zechariah's time had "scattered" Judah (<sup>260B</sup>Jeremiah 51:2 <sup>415B</sup>Ezekiel 5:10,12). That only two of the four had as yet risen, is an argument having no weight with us, as we believe God's Spirit in the prophets regards the future as present; we therefore are not to be led by Rationalists who on such grounds deny the reference here and in Zechariah 6:1 to the four world kingdoms.

**19. *Judah, Israel*** — Though some of the ten tribes of *Israel* returned with *Judah* from Babylon, the full return of the former, as of the latter, is here foretold and must be yet future.

**20. *four carpenters*** — or "artificers." The several instrumentalities employed, or to be employed, in crushing the "Gentile" powers which "scattered" Judah, are hereby referred to. For every one of the *four horns* there was a cleaving "artificer" to beat it down. For every enemy of God's people, God has provided a counteracting power adequate to destroy it.

**21. *These are the horns*** — rather, *Those*, namely, the horns being distinguished from the "carpenters," or destroying workmen ("skillful to destroy," <sup>421B</sup>Exodus 21:31), intended in the "these" of the question.

**no man ... lift up his head** — so depressed were they with a heavy weight of evils (<sup><8005></sup>Job 10:15).

**to fray** — *to strike terror into them* (<sup><3009></sup>Ezekiel 30:9).

**lifted up ... horn** — in the haughtiness of conscious strength (<sup><1970></sup>Psalms 75:4,5) tyrannizing over Judah (<sup><3321></sup>Ezekiel 34:21).

# CHAPTER 2

## ZECHARIAH 2:1-13.

### THIRD VISION.

*The man with the measuring-line.*

The city shall be fully restored and enlarged (Zechariah 2:2-5). Recall of the exiles (Zechariah 2:6,7). Jehovah will protect His people and make their foes a spoil unto them (Zechariah 2:8,9). The nations shall be converted to Jehovah, as the result of His dwelling manifestly amidst His people (<sup><30D></sup>Zechariah 2:10-13).

**1. *man with a measuring-line*** — the same image to represent the same future fact as in <sup><30B></sup>Ezekiel 40:3 41,42. The “man” is Messiah (see on Zechariah 1:8), who, by measuring Jerusalem, is denoted as the Author of its coming restoration. Thus the Jews are encouraged in Zechariah’s time to proceed with the building. Still more so shall they be hereby encouraged in the future restoration.

**2. *To measure Jerusalem*** — (Compare <sup><61E></sup>Revelation 11:1 21:15,16).

*to see what is the breadth ... what is the length* — rather, “what is to be the due breadth and length.”

**3. *angel that talked with me ... another angel*** — The interpreting angel is met by another angel sent by the measuring Divine Angel to “run” to Zechariah (Zechariah 2:4). Those who perform God’s will must not merely creep, nor walk, but *run* with alacrity.

*went forth* — namely, from me (Zechariah).

*went out* — from the measuring angel.

**4. *this young man*** — So Zechariah is called as being still a *youth* when prophetically inspired [GROTIVS]. Or, he is so called in respect to his *ministry* or *service* (compare <sup><41Z></sup>Numbers 11:27 <sup><60E></sup>Joshua 1:1) [VATABLUS]. Naturally the “angel that talked with” Zechariah is desired to “speak to” him the further communications to be made from the Divine Being.

**towns without walls for the multitude ... Cattle** — So many shall be its inhabitants that all could not be contained within the walls, but shall spread out in the open country around (<sup>4799</sup>Esther 9:19); and so secure shall they be as not to need to shelter themselves and their cattle behind walls. So hereafter Judea is to be “the land of unwalled villages” (<sup>4581</sup>Ezekiel 38:11). Spiritually, now the Church has extended herself beyond the walls (<sup>4124</sup>Ephesians 2:14,15) of Mosaic ordinances and has spread from cities to country villages, whose inhabitants gave their Latin name (*pagani*) to *pagans*, as being the last in parting with heathenism.

**5. I ... wall of fire round** — Compare Zechariah 2:4. Yet as a city needs some wall, I JEHOVAH will act as one of fire which none durst approach (Zechariah 9:8 <sup>2301</sup>Isaiah 26:1).

**glory in the midst** — not only a defense from foes outside, but a *glory* within (<sup>2609</sup>Isaiah 60:19 <sup>6223</sup>Revelation 21:23). The same combination of “glory and defense” is found in <sup>2105</sup>Isaiah 4:5, alluding to the pillar of cloud and fire which defended and enlightened Israel in the desert. Compare Elisha in Dothan (<sup>4167</sup>2 Kings 6:17). As God is to be her “glory,” so she shall be His “glory” (<sup>2518</sup>Isaiah 62:3).

**6. flee from the land of the north** — that is, from Babylon: a type of the various Gentile lands, from which the Jews are to be recalled hereafter; hence “the four winds of heaven” are specified, implying that they are to return from all quarters (<sup>1536</sup>Deuteronomy 28:64 <sup>2165</sup>Jeremiah 16:15 <sup>3171</sup>Ezekiel 17:21). The reason why they should flee from Babylon is: (1) because of the blessings promised to God’s people in their own land; (2) because of the evils about to fall on their foe (Zechariah 2:7-9). Babylon was soon to fall before Darius, and its inhabitants to endure fearful calamities (<sup>2381</sup>Isaiah 48:20 <sup>2618</sup>Jeremiah 50:8 51:6,45). Many of the Jews in Zechariah’s time had not yet returned to Judea. Their tardiness was owing to

- (1) unbelief;
- (2) their land had long lain waste, and was surrounded with bitter foes;
- (3) they regarded suspiciously the liberty of return given by Cyrus and Darius, as if these monarchs designed suddenly to crush them;
- (4) their long stay in Babylon had obliterated the remembrance of their own land;
- (5) the wealth and security there contrasted with Judea, where their temple and city were in ruins.

All this betrayed foul ingratitude and disregard of God's extraordinary favor, which is infinitely to be preferred to all the wealth of the world [CALVIN and PEMBELLUS].

*for I have spread you abroad* — The reasoning is: I who scattered you from your land to all quarters, can also gather you again to it.

**7. O Zion ... daughter of Babylon** — Thou whose only sure dwelling is “Zion,” inseparably connected with the temple, art altogether out of thy place in “dwelling with the daughter of Babylon” (that is, Babylon and her people, <sup><3078></sup>Psalm 137:8 <sup><3087></sup>Isaiah 1:8).

*After the glory* — After restoring the “glory” (Zechariah 2:5 <sup><3005></sup>Isaiah 4:5 <sup><3004></sup>Romans 9:4) of Jehovah's presence to Jerusalem, He (God the Father) hath commissioned ME (God the Son, <sup><2886></sup>Isaiah 48:16, the Divine Angel: God thus being at once the Sender and the Sent) to visit in wrath “the nations which spoiled you.” Messiah's twofold office from the Father is:

(1) to glorify His Church;

(2) to punish its foes

(<sup><5002></sup>2 Thessalonians 1:7-10). Both offices manifest His *glory* (<sup><3160></sup>Proverbs 16:4).

*toucheth ... the apple of his eye* — namely, of Jehovah's eye (<sup><3200></sup>Deuteronomy 32:10 <sup><3178></sup>Psalm 17:8 <sup><3102></sup>Proverbs 7:2). The pupil, or aperture, through which rays pass to the retina, is the tenderest part of the eye; the member which we most sedulously guard from hurt as being the dearest of our members; the one which feels most acutely the slightest injury, and the loss of which is irreparable.

**9. shake ... hand** — A mere wave of God's hand can prostrate all foes (compare <sup><3013></sup>Ruth 1:13 <sup><3322></sup>Job 31:21 <sup><23115></sup>Isaiah 11:15 19:16 <sup><4131></sup>Acts 13:11).

*a spoil to their servants* — to the Jews whom they had once as their slaves (compare <sup><2342></sup>Isaiah 14:2). As the Jews' state between the return from Babylon and Christ's coming was checkered with much adversity, this prophecy can only have its fulfillment under Christ.

*sent me* — (<sup><2886></sup>Isaiah 48:16 61:1 <sup><3083></sup>John 10:36).

**10. I will dwell in ... midst of thee** — primarily at Messiah's first advent (<sup><3407></sup>Psalm 40:7 <sup><3014></sup>John 1:14 <sup><5019></sup>Colossians 2:9 <sup><5186></sup>1 Timothy 3:16); more fully at His second advent (<sup><2300></sup>Isaiah 40:10). So Zechariah 9:9, where see on Zechariah 9:9 (<sup><23216></sup>Isaiah 12:6 <sup><3527></sup>Ezekiel 37:27 <sup><3084></sup>Zephaniah 3:14). Meanwhile God dwells spiritually in His people (<sup><4063></sup>2 Corinthians 6:16).

**11. *many nations ... joined to the Lord in that day*** — The result of the Jews' exile in Babylon was that, at their subsequent return, through the diffusion of knowledge of their religion, many Gentiles became proselytes, worshipping in the court of the Gentiles (<sup>4108</sup>1 Kings 8:41). Cyrus, Darius, Alexander, Ptolemy Philadelphus, Augustus, and Tiberius, paid respect to the temple by sending offerings [GROTIVS]. But all this is but a shadow of the future conversion of the Gentiles which shall result from Jehovah dwelling in Jerusalem (<sup>3942</sup>Psalm 102:15,16 <sup>3190</sup>Philippians 2:10,11).

***sent me unto thee*** — “unto thee” is here added to the same formula (Zechariah 2:9). Zion first shall “know (generally) that Jehovah of hosts hath sent” Messiah, by the judgments inflicted by Him on her foes. Subsequently, she shall know experimentally the particular *sending* of Messiah *unto her*. Jehovah here says, “I will dwell,” and then that JEHOVAH of hosts sent Him; therefore Jehovah the Sender and Jehovah the Sent must be One.

**12. *Judah his portion in the holy land*** — Lest the joining of the Gentile “nations to Jehovah” (<sup>3015</sup>Zechariah 2:11) should lead the Jews to fear that their peculiar relation to Him (<sup>4040</sup>Deuteronomy 4:20 9:29 32:9) as “His inheritance” should cease, this verse is added to assure them of His making them so hereafter “again.”

***choose Jerusalem again*** — The course of God's grace was interrupted for a time, but His covenant was not set aside (<sup>4518</sup>Romans 11:28,29); the election was once for all, and therefore shall hold good for ever.

**13. *Be silent, O all flesh*** — (<sup>3520</sup>Habakkuk 2:20). “Let all in silent awe and reverence await the Lord's coming interposition in behalf of His people!” The address is both to the Gentile foes, who prided themselves on their power as if irresistible, and to the unbelieving Jews, who distrusted God's promises as incredible. Three reasons why they must be silent are implied:

- (1) they are but “flesh,” weak and ignorant;
- (2) He is JEHOVAH, all-wise and all-powerful;
- (3) He is already “raised up out of His place,” and who can stand before Him? [<sup>3968</sup>Psalm 76:8,9].

***he is raised up out of his holy habitation*** — that is, out of heaven (<sup>4035</sup>Deuteronomy 26:15 <sup>4402</sup>2 Chronicles 30:27 <sup>2865</sup>Isaiah 63:15), to judge and avenge His people (<sup>2301</sup>Isaiah 26:21); or, “out of His holy” temple, contemptible and incomplete as it looked then when Zechariah urged them to rebuild it [CALVIN]. But the call to all to “be silent” is rather when God has come forth from heaven where so long He has dwelt unseen, and is

about to inflict vengeance on the foe, *before* taking up His dwelling in Zion and the temple. However, ~~Psalm~~ Psalm 50:1,2 (“Out of Zion”), ~~Psalm~~ Psalm 50:3 (compare Habakkuk 2:3), ~~Psalm~~ Psalm 50:4, favors CALVIN’S view. God is now “silent” while the Gentile foe speaks arrogance against His people; but “our God shall come and *no longer keep silence*”; then in turn must all flesh “be silent” before Him.

# CHAPTER 3

## ZECHARIAH 3:1-10.

### FOURTH VISION.

*Joshua the high priest before the angel of Jehovah; accused by Satan, but justified by Jehovah through Messiah the coming Branch.*

1. Joshua as high priest (Haggai 1:1) represents “Jerusalem” (Zechariah 3:2), or the elect people, put on its trial, and “plucked” narrowly “out of the fire.” His attitude, “standing before the Lord,” is that of a high priest ministering before the altar erected previously to the building of the temple (<sup><Ezra></sup>Ezra 3:2,3,6 <sup><Psalm></sup>Psalm 135:2). Yet, in this position, by reason of his own and his people’s sins, he is represented as on his and their trial (<sup><Numbers></sup>Numbers 35:12).

**he showed me** — “He” is *the interpreting angel*. Jerusalem’s (Joshua’s) “filthy garments” (Zechariah 3:3) are its sins which had hitherto brought down God’s judgments. The “change of raiment” implies its restoration to God’s favor. Satan suggested to the Jews that so consciously polluted a priesthood and people could offer no acceptable sacrifice to God, and therefore they might as well desist from the building of the temple. Zechariah encourages them by showing that their demerit does not disqualify them for the work, as they are accepted in the righteousness of another, their great High Priest, the Branch (Zechariah 3:8), a scion of their own royal line of David (<sup><Isaiah></sup>Isaiah 11:1). The full accomplishment of Israel’s justification and of Satan the accuser’s being “rebuked” finally, is yet future (<sup><Revelation></sup>Revelation 12:10). Compare <sup><Revelation></sup>Revelation 11:8, wherein “Jerusalem,” as here, is shown to be meant primarily, though including the whole Church in general (compare <sup><Job></sup>Job 1:9).

**Satan** — the *Hebrew* term meaning “adversary” in a law court: as *devil* is the *Greek* term, meaning *accuser*. Messiah, on the other hand, is “advocate” for His people in the court of heaven’s justice (<sup><1 John></sup>1 John 2:1).

**standing at his right hand** — the usual position of a *prosecutor* or *accuser* in court, as the left hand was the position of the defendant (<sup><Psalm></sup>Psalm 109:6). The “angel of the Lord” took the same position just before another high priest was about to beget the forerunner of Messiah (<sup><Luke></sup>Luke 1:11), who supplants Satan from his place as accuser. Some hence explain <sup><Jude></sup>Jude

1:9 as referring to this passage: “the body of Moses” being thus *the Jewish Church*, for which Satan contended as his by reason of its sins; just as the “body of Christ” is *the Christian Church*. However, <sup><610></sup>Jude 1:9 plainly speaks of the literal body of Moses, the resurrection of which at the transfiguration Satan seems to have opposed on the ground of Moses’ error at Meribah; the same divine rebuke, “the Lord rebuke thee,” checked Satan in contending for judgment against Moses’ body, as checked him when demanding judgment against the Jewish Church, to which Moses’ body corresponds.

**2. *the Lord*** — JEHOVAH, hereby identified with the “angel of the Lord (Jehovah)” (Zechariah 3:1).

***rebuke thee*** — twice repeated to express the certainty of Satan’s accusations and machinations against Jerusalem being frustrated. Instead of lengthened argument, Jehovah *silences* Satan by the one plea, namely, God’s *choice*.

***chosen Jerusalem*** — (<sup><610></sup>Romans 9:16 11:5). The conclusive answer. If the issue rested on Jerusalem’s merit or demerit, condemnation must be the award; but Jehovah’s “choice” (<sup><610></sup>John 15:16) rebuts Satan’s charge against Jerusalem (<sup><301></sup>Zechariah 1:17 2:12 <sup><610></sup>Romans 8:33,34,37), represented by Joshua (compare in the great atonement, <sup><610></sup>Leviticus 16:6-20, etc.), not that she may continue in sin, but be freed from it (Zechariah 3:7).

***brand plucked out of ... fire*** — (<sup><301></sup>Amos 4:11 <sup><610></sup>1 Peter 4:18 <sup><610></sup>Jude 1:23). Herein God implies that His acquittal of Jerusalem is not that He does not recognize her sin (Zechariah 3:3,4,9), but that having punished her people for it with a seventy years’ captivity, He on the ground of His *electing* love has delivered her from the fiery ordeal; and when once He has begun a deliverance, as in this case, He will perfect it (<sup><610></sup>Psalm 89:30-35 <sup><301></sup>Philippians 1:6).

**3. *filthy garments*** — symbol of sin (<sup><301></sup>Proverbs 30:12; <sup><301></sup>Isaiah 4:4 64:6); proving that it is not on the ground of His people’s righteousness that He accepts them. Here primarily the “filthy garments” represent the abject state temporally of the priesthood and people at the return from Babylon. Yet he “stood before the angel.” Abject as he was, he was *before Jehovah’s eye*, who graciously accepts His people’s services, though mixed with sin and infirmity.

**4. *those that stood before him*** — the ministering angels (compare the phrase in <sup><100></sup>1 Kings 10:8 <sup><301></sup>Daniel 1:5).

**Take away the filthy garments** — In Zechariah 3:9 it is “remove the iniquity of *that land*”; therefore Joshua represents the land.

**from him** — literally, “from upon him”; pressing upon him as an overwhelming burden.

**change of raiment** — festal robes of the high priest, most costly and gorgeous; symbol of Messiah’s imputed righteousness (<sup><4021></sup>Matthew 22:11). The restoration of the glory of the priesthood is implied: first, partially, at the completion of the second temple; fully realized in the great High Priest *Jesus*, whose name is identical with *Joshua* (<sup><3048></sup>Hebrews 4:8), the Representative of Israel, the “kingdom of priests” (<sup><1296></sup>Exodus 19:6); once clad in the filthy garments of our vileness, but being the chosen of the Father (<sup><301></sup>Isaiah 42:1 44:1 49:1-3), He hath by death ceased from sin, and in garments of glory entered the heavenly holy place as our High Priest (<sup><3008></sup>Hebrews 8:1 9:24). Then, as the consequence (<sup><4118></sup>1 Peter 2:5), realized in the Church generally (<sup><4052></sup>Luke 15:22 <sup><6998></sup>Revelation 19:8), and in Israel in particular (<sup><2310></sup>Isaiah 61:10; compare <sup><2316></sup>Isaiah 3:6 66:21).

**5. And I said** — Here the prophet, rejoicing at the change of raiment so far made, interposes to ask for the crowning assurance that the priesthood would be fully restored, namely, the putting *the miter* or priestly turban on Joshua: its *fair* color symbolizing the official purity of the order restored. He does not command, but prays; not “Set,” but “Let them set.” *Vulgate* and *Syriac* version read it, “*He then said,*” which is the easier reading; but the very difficulty of the present *Hebrew* reading makes it less likely to come from a modern corrector of the text.

**angel of ... Lord stood by** — the Divine Angel had been sitting (the posture of a judge, <sup><2019></sup>Daniel 7:9); now He “stands” to see that Zechariah’s prayer be executed, and then to give the charge (Zechariah 3:6,7).

**6. protested** — proceeded *solemnly to declare*. A forensic term for an affirmation on oath (<sup><3017></sup>Hebrews 6:17,18). God thus solemnly states the end for which the priesthood is restored to the people, His own glory in their obedience and pure worship, and their consequent promotion to heavenly honor.

**7. God’s choice** of Jerusalem (Zechariah 3:2) was unto its sanctification (<sup><4516></sup>John 15:16 <sup><4039></sup>Romans 8:29); hence the charge here which connects the promised blessing with obedience.

**my charge** — the ordinances, ritual and moral (<sup><4038></sup>Numbers 3:28,31,32,38 <sup><4007></sup>Joshua 1:7-9 <sup><4118></sup>1 Kings 2:3 <sup><3440></sup>Ezekiel 44:16).

**judge my house** — Thou shalt long preside over the temple ceremonial as high priest (<sup>6300</sup>Leviticus 10:10 <sup>3423</sup>Ezekiel 44:23 Malachi 2:7) [GROTIUS]. Or, rule over My house, that is, My people [MAURER] (<sup>4127</sup>Numbers 12:7 <sup>3801</sup>Hosea 8:1). We know from <sup>6579</sup>Deuteronomy 17:9 that the priest judged cases. He was not only to obey the Mosaic institute himself, but to see that it was obeyed by others. God's people are similarly to exercise judgment hereafter, as the reward of their present faithfulness (<sup>2078</sup>Daniel 7:18,22 <sup>2977</sup>Luke 19:17 <sup>4012</sup>1 Corinthians 6:2); by virtue of their royal priesthood (<sup>6009</sup>Revelation 1:6).

**keep my courts** — guard My house from profanation.

**places to walk** — free ingress and egress (<sup>4986</sup>1 Samuel 18:16 <sup>1187</sup>1 Kings 3:7 15:17), so that thou mayest go through these ministering angels who stand by Jehovah (<sup>3844</sup>Zechariah 4:14 6:5 <sup>1229</sup>1 Kings 22:19) into His presence, discharging thy priestly function. In <sup>3604</sup>Ezekiel 42:4 the same *Hebrew* word is used of a *walk* before the priests' chambers in the future temple. Zechariah probably refers here to such a *walk* or *way*; Thou shalt not merely walk among priests like thyself, as in the old temple *walks*, but among the very angels as thine associates. HENGSTENBERG translates, "I will give thee *guides* (from) among these," etc. But there is no "from" in the *Hebrew*; *English Version* is therefore better. Priests are called *angels* or "messengers" (Malachi 2:7); they are therefore thought worthy to be associated with heavenly angels. So these latter are present at the assemblies of true Christian worshippers (<sup>6110</sup>1 Corinthians 11:10; compare <sup>2186</sup>Ecclesiastes 5:6 <sup>4180</sup>Ephesians 3:10 <sup>6219</sup>Revelation 22:9).

**8. Hear** — On account of the magnitude of what He is about to say, He at once demands solemn attention.

**thy fellows that sit before thee** — thy subordinate colleagues in the priesthood; not that they were actually then *sitting before him*; but their usual posture in consultations was on chairs or benches before him, while he sat on an elevated seat as their president.

**they are** — From speaking to Joshua He passes to speaking *of him and them*, in the third person, to the attendant angels (compare Zechariah 3:9).

**men wondered at** — *Hebrew*, "men of wonder," that is, having a typical character (<sup>2888</sup>Isaiah 8:18 20:3 <sup>3621</sup>Ezekiel 12:11 24:24). Joshua the high priest typifies Messiah, as Joshua's "fellows" typify believers whom Messiah admits to share His Priesthood (<sup>4105</sup>1 Peter 2:5 <sup>650</sup>Revelation 5:10). This, its typical character, then, is a pledge to assure the desponding Jews that the priesthood shall be preserved till the great Antitype comes. There may be also an indirect reproof of the unbelief of the multitude who

“wonder” at God’s servants and even at God’s Son incredulously (◊<sup>3707</sup>Psalm 71:7 ◊<sup>2388</sup>Isaiah 8:18 53:1, etc.).

**behold** — marking the greatness of what follows.

**my servant** — the characteristic title of Messiah (◊<sup>3301</sup>Isaiah 42:1 49:3 50:10 52:13 53:11 ◊<sup>3323</sup>Ezekiel 34:23,24).

**the Branch** — Messiah, a tender branch from the almost extinct royal line of David (◊<sup>3012</sup>Zechariah 6:12 ◊<sup>2012</sup>Isaiah 4:2 11:1 ◊<sup>2315</sup>Jeremiah 23:5 33:15). ◊<sup>4018</sup>Luke 1:78, where for “day spring,” “branch” may be substituted (Malachi 4:2, however, favors *English Version*). The reference cannot be to Zerubbabel (as GROTIUS thinks), for *he* was then in the full discharge of his office, whereas “the Branch” here is regarded as future.

**9. For** — expressing the ground for encouragement to the Jews in building the temple: I (Jehovah) have laid the (foundation) stone as the chief architect, before (in the presence of) Joshua, by “the hand of Zerubbabel” (◊<sup>3042</sup>Zechariah 4:10 ◊<sup>4318</sup>Ezra 3:8-13), so that your labor in building shall not be vain. Antotypically, the (foundation) stone alluded to is Christ, before called “the Branch.” Lest any should think from that term that His kingdom is weak, He now calls it “the stone,” because of its solidity and strength whereby it is to be the foundation of the Church, and shall crush all the world kingdoms (◊<sup>4482</sup>Psalm 118:22; compare ◊<sup>2386</sup>Isaiah 28:16 ◊<sup>2785</sup>Daniel 2:45 ◊<sup>4142</sup>Matthew 21:42 ◊<sup>4611</sup>1 Corinthians 3:11 ◊<sup>4016</sup>1 Peter 2:6,7). The angel pointing to the chief stone lying before Him, intimates that a deeper mystery than the material temple is symbolized. MOORE thinks the “stone” is *the Jewish Church*, which Jehovah engages watchfully to guard. *The temple*, rather, is that symbolically. But the antitype of the foundation-stone is Messiah.

**upon one stone shall be seven eyes** — namely, the watchful “eyes” of Jehovah’s care ever fixed “upon” it (◊<sup>3042</sup>Zechariah 4:10) [MAURER]. The eye is the symbol of *Providence*: “seven,” of *perfection* (◊<sup>4616</sup>Revelation 5:6; compare ◊<sup>4449</sup>2 Chronicles 16:9 ◊<sup>4318</sup>Psalm 32:8). Antotypically, “the seven eyes upon the stone” are the eyes of all angels (◊<sup>3016</sup>1 Timothy 3:16), and of all saints (◊<sup>4614</sup>John 3:14,15 12:32), and of the patriarchs and prophets (◊<sup>4616</sup>John 8:56 ◊<sup>4011</sup>1 Peter 1:10,11), fixed on Christ; above all, the eyes of the Father ever rest with delight on Him. CALVIN (perhaps better) considers *the seven eyes* to be *carved on the stone*, that is, not the eyes of the Father and of angels and saints ever *fixed* on Him, but His *own* sevenfold (perfect) fullness of grace, and of gifts of the Spirit (◊<sup>2312</sup>Isaiah 11:2,3 ◊<sup>4616</sup>John 1:16 3:34 ◊<sup>3019</sup>Colossians 1:19 2:9), and *His* watchful providence now for the Jews in building the temple, and always for His Church, His spiritual temple. Thus the “stone” is not as other stones senseless, but *living* and full

of eyes of perfect intelligence (<sup><4004></sup>1 Peter 2:4, “a *living stone*”), who not only attracts the eyes (<sup><4123></sup>John 12:32) of His people, but emits illumination so as to direct them to Him.

**engrave ... graying** — implying Messiah’s exceeding beauty and preciousness; alluding to the polished stones of the temple: Christ excelled them, as much as God who “prepared His body” (<sup><5005></sup>Hebrews 10:5; compare <sup><4121></sup>John 2:21) is superior to all human builders.

**remove ... iniquity of that land in one day** — that is, the iniquity and its consequences, namely the punishment to which the Jews heretofore had been subjected (Haggai 1:6,9-11). The remission of sin is the fountain of every other blessing. The “one day” of its *removal* is primarily the day of national atonement celebrated after the completion of the temple (<sup><4127></sup>Leviticus 23:27) on the tenth day of the seventh month. Antotypically, the atonement by Messiah for all men, *once for all* (“one day”) offered, needing no repetition like the Mosaic sacrifices (<sup><5000></sup>Hebrews 10:10,12,14).

**10. under ... vine ... fig tree** — emblem of tranquil prosperity (<sup><1025></sup>1 Kings 4:25). Type of spiritual *peace* with God through Christ (<sup><4111></sup>Romans 5:1); and of millennial blessedness (<sup><3004></sup>Micah 4:4).

# CHAPTER 4

## ZECHARIAH 4:1-14.

### FIFTH VISION.

*The golden candlestick and the two olive trees. The temple shall be completed by the aid of God's Spirit.*

**1. *waked me*** — The prophet was lying in a state of ecstatic slumber with astonishment at the previous vision. “Came again, and waked me,” does not imply that the angel had departed and now returned, but is an idiom for “waked me again.”

**2. *candlestick*** — symbolizing the Jewish theocracy; and ultimately, the Church of which the Jewish portion is to be the head: the *light-bearer* (so the original is of “lights,” <sup><4154></sup>Matthew 5:14,16 <sup><5145></sup>Philippians 2:15) to the world.

***all ... gold*** — all pure in doctrine and practice, precious and indestructible; such is the true ideal of the Church; such she shall be (<sup><9513></sup>Psalm 45:13).

***bowl upon the top*** — In the candlestick of the tabernacle the *plural* is used, *bowls* (<sup><1231></sup>Exodus 25:1-31:18). The *Hebrew* implies that it was the *fountain* of supply of oil to the lamps. Christ at the head (“on the top”) of the Church is the true fountain, *of whose fullness of the Spirit all we receive grace* (<sup><8116></sup>John 1:16).

***his seven lamps*** — united in one stem; so in <sup><1253></sup>Exodus 25:32. But in <sup><6112></sup>Revelation 1:12 the seven candlesticks are separate. The Gentile churches will not realize their unity till the Jewish Church as the stem unites all the lamps in one candlestick (<sup><5116></sup>Romans 11:16-24). The “seven lamps,” in <sup><6145></sup>Revelation 4:5, are the “seven Spirits of God.”

***seven pipes*** — feeding tubes, seven apiece from the “bowl” to each lamp (see *Margin*) [MAURER and CALVIN]; literally, “seven and seven”: forty-nine in all. The greater the number of oil-feeding pipes, the brighter the light of the lamps. The explanation in Zechariah 4:6 is, that man’s power by itself can neither retard nor advance God’s work, that the real motive-power is God’s *Spirit*. The seven times seven imply the manifold modes by which

the Spirit's grace is imparted to the Church in her manifold work of enlightening the world.

**3. *two olive trees*** — supplying oil to the bowl. The Holy Ghost, who fills with His fullness Messiah (the *anointed*: the “bowl”), from whom flow supplies of grace to the Church.

***by it*** — literally, “upon it,” that is, growing so as somewhat to overtop it. For the explanation of the “two” see <sup><30412></sup>Zechariah 4:12,14.

**4.** The prophet is instructed in the truths meant, that we may read them with the greater reverence and attention [CALVIN].

**5. *Knowest thou not***, etc. — Not a reproof of his ignorance, but a stimulus to reflection on the mystery.

***No, my lord*** — ingenious confession of ignorance; as a little child he casts himself for instruction at the feet of the Lord.

**6. *Not by might ... but by my Spirit*** — As the lamps burned continually, supplied with oil from a source (the living olive trees) which man did not make, so Zerubbabel need not be disheartened because of his weakness; for as the work is one to be effected by the living Spirit (compare Haggai 2:5) of God, man's weakness is no obstacle, for God's might will perfect strength out of weakness (<sup><3007></sup>Hosea 1:7 <sup><4720></sup>2 Corinthians 12:10 <sup><38134></sup>Hebrews 11:34). “Might and power” express human strength of every description, physical, mental, moral. Or, “might” is the strength of *many* (an “army”); “power,” that of *one man* [PEMBELLUS] God can save, “whether with many, or with them that have no power” (<sup><4441></sup>2 Chronicles 14:11; compare <sup><6946></sup>1 Samuel 14:6). So in the conversion of sinners (<sup><4686></sup>1 Corinthians 3:6 <sup><4704></sup>2 Corinthians 10:4). “Zerubbabel” is addressed as the chief civil authority in directing the work.

**7.** All *mountain-like* obstacles (<sup><2304></sup>Isaiah 40:4 49:11) in *Zerubbabel's* way shall be removed, so that the crowning top-stone shall be put on, and the completion of the work be acknowledged as wholly of “grace.” Antotypically, the antichristian last foe of Israel, the obstacle preventing her establishment in Palestine, about to be crushed before Messiah, is probably meant (<sup><26125></sup>Jeremiah 51:25 <sup><27134></sup>Daniel 2:34,44 <sup><4744></sup>Matthew 21:44).

***bring forth the headstone*** — Primarily, bring it forth from the place where it was chiselled and give it to the workmen to put on the top of the building. It was customary for chief magistrates to lay the foundation, and also the crowning top-stone (compare <sup><43801></sup>Ezra 3:10). Antotypically, the reference is to the time when the full number of the spiritual Church shall be completed,

and also when “all Israel shall be saved” (compare <sup><B12></sup>Romans 11:26 <sup><S14></sup>Hebrews 11:40 12:22,23 <sup><M10></sup>Revelation 7:4-9).

**Grace, grace** — The repetition expresses, *Grace* from first to last (<sup><S17></sup>Isaiah 26:3, *Margin*). Thus the Jews are urged to pray perseveringly and earnestly that the same grace which completed it may always preserve it.

“Shoutings” of acclamation accompanied the foundation of the literal temple (<sup><S11></sup>Ezra 3:11,13). So shoutings of “Hosanna” greeted the Savior in entering Jerusalem (<sup><M19></sup>Matthew 21:9), when about to complete the purchase of salvation by His death: His Body being the second temple, or place of God’s inhabitation (<sup><M21></sup>John 2:20,21). So when the full number of the saints and of Israel is complete, and God shall say, “It is done,” then again shall “a great voice of much people in heaven” attribute all to the “grace” of God, saying, “Alleluia! Salvation, and glory, and honor, and power, unto the Lord our God” (<sup><M16></sup>Revelation 19:1,6). <sup><S22></sup>Psalms 118:22 regards Him as “the headstone of the corner,” that is, the *foundation*-stone. Compare the angels acclamations at His birth, <sup><M14></sup>Luke 2:14. Here it is the *top-stone*. Messiah is not only the “Author,” but also the Finisher (<sup><S12></sup>Hebrews 12:2). “Grace” is ascribed “unto it,” that is the stone, Messiah. Hence the benediction begins, “The *grace* of the Lord Jesus Christ” (<sup><M13></sup>2 Corinthians 13:14).

**9. Zerubbabel ... shall ... finish it** — (<sup><S15></sup>Ezra 6:15) in the sixth year of Darius’ reign.

**Lord ... sent me unto you** — (Zechariah 2:9). The Divine Angel announces that in what He has just spoken, He has been commissioned by God the Father.

**10. who ... despised ... small things** — He reproves their ungrateful unbelief, which they felt because of the humble beginning, compared with the greatness of the undertaking; and encourages them with the assurance that their progress in the work, though small, was an earnest of great and final success, because Jehovah’s eye is upon Zerubbabel and the work, to support Him with His favor. Contrast, “great is *the day* of Jezreel” (<sup><S11></sup>Hosea 1:11) with “the day of *small things*” here.

**they shall rejoice ... with those seven; they are the eyes of the Lord** — rather, “they, *even* those seven eyes of the Lord (compare Zechariah 3:9), which ... shall rejoice and see (that is, rejoicingly see) the plummet (literally, the ‘stone of tin’) in the hand of Zerubbabel” [MOORE]; the plummet in his hand indicating that the work is going forward to its completion. The *Hebrew* punctuation, however, favors *English Version*, of which the sense is, They who incredulously “despised” such “small” beginnings of the work as are made now, shall rejoicingly see its going on to completion

under Zerubbabel, “with (*the aid of*) those seven,” namely, the “seven eyes upon one stone” (Zechariah 3:9): which are explained, “They are the eyes of the Lord which,” etc. [PEMBELLUS]. So differently do men and Jehovah regard the “small” beginnings of God’s work (<3882>Ezra 3:12 Haggai 2:3). Men “despised” the work in its early stage: God rejoicingly regards it, and shall continue to do so.

*run to and fro*, etc. — Nothing in the whole earth escapes the eye of Jehovah, so that He can ward off all danger from His people, come from what quarter it may, in prosecuting His work (<3882>Proverbs 15:3 <469>1 Corinthians 16:9).

**11, 12.** Zechariah three times (Zechariah 4:4,11,12) asks as to the two olives before he gets an answer; the question becomes more minute each time. What he at first calls “two olive trees,” he afterwards calls “branches,” as on closer looking he observes that the “branches” of the trees are the channels through which a continual flow of oil dropped into the bowl of the lamps (Zechariah 4:2), and that this is the purpose for which the two olive trees stand beside the candlestick. Primarily, the “two” refer to Joshua and Zerubbabel. God, says AUBERLEN, at each of the transition periods of the world’s history has sent great men to guide the Church. So the two witnesses shall appear before the destruction of Antichrist. Antotypically, “the two anointed ones” (<3044>Zechariah 4:14) are the twofold supports of the Church, the civil power (answering to Zerubbabel) and the ecclesiastical (answering to Joshua, the high priest), which in the restored Jewish polity and temple shall “stand by,” that is, minister to “the Lord of the whole earth,” as He shall be called in the day that He sets up His throne in Jerusalem (Zechariah 14:9 <2704>Daniel 2:44 <6115>Revelation 11:15). Compare the description of the offices of the “priests” and the “prince” (<2323>Isaiah 49:23 <3403>Ezekiel 44:1-46:24). As in <6113>Revelation 11:3,4, the “two witnesses” are identified with the two olive trees and the two candlesticks. WORDSWORTH explains them to mean the Law and the Gospel: the two Testaments that *witness* in the Church for the truth of God. But this is at variance with the sense here, which requires Joshua and Zerubbabel to be primarily meant. So Moses (the prophet and lawgiver) and Aaron (the high priest) ministered to the Lord among the covenant-people at the exodus; Ezekiel (the priest) and Daniel (a ruler) in the Babylonian captivity; so it shall be in restored Israel. Some think Elijah will appear again (compare the transfiguration, <4173>Matthew 17:3,11, with Malachi 4:4,5 <4021>John 1:21) with Moses. <6116>Revelation 11:6, which mentions the very miracles performed by Elijah and Moses (shutting heaven so as not to rain, and turning water into blood), favors this (compare <4179>Exodus 7:19 <4170>1 Kings 17:1 <4025>Luke 4:25 <3156>James 5:16,17). The period is the same, “three years and six months”;

the scene also is in Israel (<sup><610></sup>Revelation 11:8), “where our Lord was crucified.” It is supposed that for the first three and a half years of the hebdomad (<sup><200></sup>Daniel 9:20-27), God will be worshipped in the temple; in the latter three and a half years, Antichrist will break the covenant (<sup><200></sup>Daniel 9:27), and set himself up in the temple to be worshipped as God (<sup><500></sup>2 Thessalonians 2:4). The witnesses prophesy the former three and a half years, while corruptions prevail and faith is rare (<sup><200></sup>Luke 18:8); then they are slain and remain dead three and a half years. Probably, besides individual witnesses and literal years, there is a fulfillment in long periods and general witnesses, such as the Church and the Word, the civil and religious powers so far as they have witnessed for God. So “the beast” in Revelation answers to the civil power of the apostasy; “the false prophet” to the spiritual power. Man needs the *priest* to atone for guilt, and the *prophesying* to teach holiness with kingly authority. These two typically united in Melchisedek were divided between two till they meet in Messiah, the Antitype. <sup><300></sup>Zechariah 6:11-13 accords with this. The Holy Spirit in this His twofold power of applying to man the grace of the *atonement*, and that of *sanctification*, must in one point of view be meant by the two olive trees which supply the bowl at the top of the candlestick (that is, Messiah at the head of the Church); for it is He who filled Jesus with all the fullness of His unction (<sup><600></sup>John 3:34). But this does not exclude the primary application to *Joshua and Zerubbabel*, “anointed” (<sup><300></sup>Zechariah 4:14) with grace to minister to the Jewish Church: and so applicable to the twofold supports of the Church which are anointed with the Spirit, the *prince* and the *priest*, or *minister*.

**12. *through*** — literally, “by the hand of,” that is, by the agency of.

***branches*** — literally, “ears”; so the olive branches are called, because as ears are full of grain, so the olive branches are full of olives.

***golden oil*** — literally, “gold,” that is, gold-like liquor.

***out of themselves*** — Ordinances and ministers are channels of grace, not the grace itself. The supply comes not from a dead reservoir of oil, but through living olive trees (<sup><600></sup>Psalms 52:8 <sup><600></sup>Romans 12:1) fed by God.

**13. *Knowest thou not*** — God would awaken His people to zeal in learning His truth.

**14. *anointed ones*** — literally, “sons of oil” (<sup><200></sup>Isaiah 5:1, *Margin*). Joshua the high priest, and Zerubbabel the civil ruler, must first be anointed with grace themselves, so as to be the instruments of furnishing it to others (compare <sup><100></sup>1 John 2:20,27).

# CHAPTER 5

## ZECHARIAH 5:1-4.

### SIXTH VISION. THE FLYING ROLL.

*The fraudulent and perjuring transgressors of the law shall be extirpated from Judea.*

**1. flying roll** — of papyrus, or dressed skins, used for writing on when paper was not known. It was inscribed with the words of the curse (<sup><4675></sup>Deuteronomy 27:15-26 28:15-68). Being written implied that its contents were beyond all escape or repeal (<sup><3109></sup>Ezekiel 2:9). Its “flying” shows that its curses were ready swiftly to visit the transgressors. It was unrolled, or else its dimensions could not have been seen (Zechariah 5:2). Being open to all, none could say in excuse he knew not the law and the curses of disobedience. As the previous visions intimated God’s favor in restoring the Jewish state, so this vision announces judgment, intimating that God, notwithstanding His favor, did not approve of their sins. Being written on both sides, “on this and on that side” (Zechariah 5:3), VATABLUS connects it with the two tables of the law (<sup><4205></sup>Exodus 32:15), and implies its comprehensiveness. One side denounced “him that sweareth falsely (Zechariah 5:4) by God’s name,” according to the third commandment of *the first table*, duty to God; the other side denounced *theft*, according to the eighth commandment, which is in *the second table*, duty to one’s neighbor.

**2. length ... twenty cubits ... breadth ... ten cubits** — thirty feet by fifteen, the dimensions of the temple porch (<sup><1063></sup>1 Kings 6:3), where the law was usually read, showing that it was divinely authoritative in the theocracy. Its large size implies the great number of the curses contained. The *Hebrew* for “roll” or “volume” is used of the law (<sup><3407></sup>Psalms 40:7).

**3. curse ... earth** — (Malachi 4:6). The Gentiles are amenable to the curse of the law, as they have its substance, so far as they have not seared and corrupted conscience, written on their hearts (<sup><3515></sup>Romans 2:15).

**cut off** — literally, “cleared away.”

**as on this side ... as on that side** — both sides of the *roll* [VATABLUS]. From this place ... from this place (repeated twice, as “the house” is repeated in Zechariah 5:4) [MAURER]; so “hence” is used, <sup><0377></sup>Genesis 37:17

(or, “on this and on that side,” that is, *on every side*) [HENDERSON]. None can escape, sin where he may: for God from one side to the other shall call all without exception to judgment [CALVIN]. God will not spare even “this place,” Jerusalem, when it sins [PEMBELLUS]. *English Version* seems to take VATABLUS’ view.

***according to it*** — according as it is written.

4. The “theft” immediately meant is similar sacrilege to that complained of in <sup><1630></sup>Nehemiah 13:10 Malachi 3:8. They robbed God by neglecting to give Him His due in building His house, while they built their own houses, forswearing their obligations to Him; therefore, the “houses” they build shall be “consumed” with God’s “curse.” Probably literal theft and perjury accompanied their virtual theft and perjury as to the temple of God (Malachi 3:5). Stealing and perjury go together; for the covetous and fraudulent perjure themselves by God’s name without scruple (see <sup><1800></sup>Proverbs 30:9).

***enter ... the house*** — In vain they guard and shut themselves up who incur the curse; it will inevitably enter even when they think themselves most secure.

***consume ... timber ... stones*** — not leaving a vestige of it. So the “stones” and “timber” of the house of a leper (type of the sinner) were to be utterly removed (<sup><1845></sup>Leviticus 14:15; compare <sup><1888></sup>1 Kings 18:38).

## ZECHARIAH 5:5-11.

### SEVENTH VISION. THE WOMAN IN THE EPDAH.

*Wickedness and idolatry removed from the Holy Land to Babylon,  
there to mingle with their kindred elements.*

The “ephah” is the Hebrew dry measure containing about thirty-seven quarts. Alluding to the previous vision as to theft and perjury: the ephah which, by falsification of the measure, they made the instrument of defrauding, shall be made the instrument of their punishment [GROTIUS]. Compare “this is their resemblance” (Zechariah 5:6), that is, this is a representation of what the Jews have done, and what they shall suffer. Their total dispersion (“the land of Shinar” being the emblem of the various Gentile lands of their present dispersion) is herein fortetold, when the *measure* (to which the ephah alludes) of their sins should be full. The former vision denounces judgment on individuals; this one, on the whole state: but enigmatically, not to discourage their present building

[PEMBELLUS]. Rather, the vision is consolatory after the preceding one [CALVIN]. Idolatry and its kindred sins, covetousness and fraud (denounced in the vision of the roll), shall be removed far out of the Holy Land to their own congenial soil, never to return (so Zechariah 3:9 <sup><270></sup> Isaiah 27:9 52:1 60:21 <sup><280></sup> Jeremiah 50:20 <sup><285></sup> Zephaniah 3:13). For more than two thousand years, ever since the Babylonian exile, the Jews have been free from *idolatry*; but the full accomplishment of the prophecy is yet future, when *all* sin shall be purged from Israel on their return to Palestine, and conversion to Christ.

**5. *went forth*** — The interpreting angel had withdrawn after the vision of the roll to receive a fresh revelation from the Divine Angel to communicate to the prophet.

**6. *This is their resemblance*** — literally, “eye” (compare <sup><290></sup>Ezekiel 1:4,5,16). HENGSTENBERG translates, “Their (the people’s) eye” was all directed to evil. But *English Version* is better. “This is the appearance (that is, an image) of the Jews in all *the land*” (not as *English Version*, “in all *the earth*”), that is, of the wicked Jews.

***This*** — Here used of what was *within* the ephah, not the ephah itself.

**7. *lifted up*** — The cover is lifted off the ephah to let the prophet see the female personification of “wickedness” within, about to be removed from Judea. The cover being “of lead,” implies that the “woman” cannot escape from the ponderous load which presses her down.

***talent*** — literally, “a round piece”: hence a talent, a weight of one hundred twenty-five pounds troy.

***woman*** — for comparison of “wickedness” to a *woman*, <sup><300></sup>Proverbs 2:16 5:3,4. In personifying abstract terms, the feminine is used, as the idea of giving birth to life is associated with woman.

**8. *wickedness*** — literally, “*the* wickedness”: implying wickedness in its peculiar development. Compare “*the* man of sin,” <sup><310></sup>2 Thessalonians 2:3.

***cast it*** — that is, her, Wickedness, who had moved more freely while the heavy lid was partially lifted off.

***weight*** — literally, “stone,” that is, round mass.

**9.** The agents to carry away the “woman,” are, consistently with the image, “women.” God makes the wicked themselves the agents of punishing and removing wickedness. “Two” are employed, as one is not enough to carry such a load [MAURER]. Or, the Assyrians and Babylonians, who carried

away idolatry in the persons, respectively, of Israel and Judah [HENDERSON]. As two “anointed ones” (<sup><3044></sup>Zechariah 4:14) stand by the Lord as His ministers, so *two* winged women execute His purpose here in removing the embodiment of “wickedness”: answering to the “mystery of iniquity” (the *Septuagint* here in Zechariah uses the same words as Paul and “the man of sin,” whom the Lord shall destroy with the spirit of His mouth and the brightness of His coming, <sup><3002></sup>2 Thessalonians 2:3,7,8). Their “wings” express velocity. The “stork” has long and wide wings, for which reason it is specified; also it is a migratory bird. The “wind” helps the rapid motion of the wings. The being “lifted up between heaven and earth” implies open execution of the judgment before the eyes of all. As the “woman” here is removed to Babylon as her own dwelling, so the woman in the Apocalypse of St. John is Babylon (<sup><6078></sup>Revelation 17:3-5).

**11. *To build ... house in ... Shinar*** — Babylonia (<sup><0100></sup>Genesis 10:10), the capital of the God-opposed world kingdoms, and so representing in general the seat of irreligion. As the “building of houses” in Babylon (<sup><3025></sup>Jeremiah 29:5,28) by the Jews themselves expressed their long exile there, so the building of an house for “wickedness” there implies its permanent stay.

***set ... upon her own base*** — fixed there as in its proper place. “Wickedness” being cast out of Judah, shall for ever dwell with the antichristian apostates (of whom Babylon is the type), who shall reap the fruit of it, which they deserve.

# CHAPTER 6

## ZECHARIAH 6:1-8.

### EIGHTH VISION. THE FOUR CHARIOTS.

**1. *four chariots*** — symbolizing the various dispensations of Providence towards the Gentile nations which had been more or less brought into contact with Judea; especially in punishing Babylon. Compare Zechariah 6:8 (“the north country,” that is, Babylon); <sup><3015></sup>Zechariah 1:15 2:6. The number “four” is specified not merely in reference to the four quarters of the horizon (implying *universal* judgments), but in allusion to the *four* world kingdoms of Daniel.

***from between two mountains*** — the valley of Jehoshaphat, between Moriah and Mount Olivet [MOORE]; or the valley between Zion and Moriah, where the Lord is (<sup><3015></sup>Zechariah 2:10), and whence He sends forth His ministers of judgment on the heathen [MAURER]. The temple on Mount Moriah is the symbol of the theocracy; hence the nearest spot accessible to chariots in the valley below is the most suitable for a vision affecting Judah in relation to the Gentile world powers. The chariot is the symbol of war, and so of judgments.

***of brass*** — the metal among the ancients representing hard solidity; so the immovable and resistless firmness of God’s people (compare <sup><3015></sup>Jeremiah 1:18). CALVIN explains the “two mountains” thus: The secret purpose of God from eternity does not come forth to view before the execution, but is hidden and kept back irresistibly till the fit time, as it were *between* lofty mountains; the *chariots* are the various changes wrought in nations, which, as swift heralds, announce to us what before we knew not. The “two” may thus correspond to the number of the “olive trees” (Zechariah 4:3); the *allusion* to the “two mountains” near the temple is not necessarily excluded in this view. HENDERSON explains them to be the Medo-Persian kingdom, represented by the “two horns” (<sup><2015></sup>Daniel 8:3,4), now employed to execute God’s purpose in punishing the nations; but the prophecy reaches far beyond those times.

**2. *red*** — implying carnage.

***black*** — representing sorrow; also famine (<sup><4015></sup>Revelation 6:5,6; compare Zechariah 1:8).

3. *white* — implying joy and victory [CALVIN].

*grizzled* — piebald. Implying a *mixed* dispensation, partly prosperity, partly adversity. All four dispensations, though various in character to the Gentile nation, portended alike good to God's people.

*bay* — rather, "strong" or "fleet"; so *Vulgate* [GESENIUS]. The horses have this epithet, whose part it was to "walk to and fro through the earth" (Zechariah 6:7). However, the *Septuagint* and *Chaldee* agree with *English Version* in referring the *Hebrew* to *color*, not strength.

4. The prophet humbly and teachably seeks instruction from God, and therefore seeks not in vain.

5. *four spirits of the heavens* — heavenly spirits who "stand before Jehovah" to receive God's commands (<sup><3044></sup>Zechariah 4:14 <sup><1229></sup>1 Kings 22:19 <sup><801></sup>Job 2:1 <sup><0119></sup>Luke 1:19) in heaven (of which Zion is the counterpart on earth, see on Zechariah 6:1), and proceed with chariot speed (<sup><1187></sup>2 Kings 6:17 <sup><0817></sup>Psalms 68:17) to execute them on earth in its four various quarters (<sup><1940></sup>Psalms 104:4 <sup><3007></sup>Hebrews 1:7,14) [PEMBELLUS]. Or, the secret impulses of God which emanate from His counsel and providence; the prophet implies that all the revolutions in the world are from the Spirit of God and are as it were, His messengers or spirits [CALVIN].

6. *north country* — Babylon (see on <sup><2014></sup>Jeremiah 1:14). The north is the quarter specified in particular whence Judah and Israel are hereafter to return to their own land (Zechariah 2:6 <sup><2183></sup>Jeremiah 3:18). "The black horses" go to Babylon, primarily to represent the awful desolation with which Darius visited it in the fifth year of his reign (two years after this prophecy) for revolting [HENDERSON]. The "white" go after the "black" horses to the same country; *two* sets being sent to it because of its greater cruelty and guilt in respect to Judea. The white represent Darius triumphant subjugation of it [MOORE]. Rather, I think, the white are sent to victoriously subdue Medo-Persia, the second world kingdom, lying in the same quarter as Babylon, namely, north.

*grizzled ... toward the south* — that is, to Egypt, the other great foe of God's people. It, being a part of the Graeco-Macedonian kingdom, stands for the whole of it, the third world kingdom.

7. *bay* — rather, the "fleet" (or "strong"). As the "red" are not otherwise mentioned, the epithet "fleet" (as the *Hebrew* for "bay" ought to be translated) in Zechariah 6:3 seems to apply to all four, and here especially to the "red." Their office is to complete hereafter the work already in part executed by the previous three who have stilled Babylon, Medo-Persia, and

Graeco-Macedonia; namely, to punish finally the last great foe of Israel, the final form assumed by the fourth world kingdom, Rome, which is to continue down to the second advent of Christ. Hence they “walk to and fro through the earth,” counterworking Satan’s “going to and fro in the earth” (<sup><3000></sup>Job 1:7 <sup><3002></sup>Thessalonians 2:8,9 <sup><5001></sup>1 Timothy 4:1), in connection with the last awful development of the fourth world kingdom. Their “fleetness” is needed to counteract his restless activity; their red color implies the final great carnage (<sup><3501></sup>Ezekiel 39:1-29 <sup><6607></sup>Revelation 19:17,18,21).

**8. north ... quieted ... my spirit** — that is, caused My *anger* to rest (<sup><0003></sup>Judges 8:3, *Margin*; <sup><2104></sup>Ecclesiastes 10:4 <sup><3163></sup>Ezekiel 5:13 16:42). Babylon alone of the four great world kingdoms had in Zechariah’s time been finally punished; therefore, in its case alone does God now say His anger is satisfied; the others had as yet to expiate their sin; the fourth has still to do so.

## ZECHARIAH 6:9-15.

### NINTH VISION. THE CROWNING OF JOSHUA.

The double crown is placed on Joshua’s head, symbolizing that the true priesthood and the kingdom shall be conferred on the one Messiah. Compare <sup><3001></sup>Hebrews 6:20 7:1-21, on Melchisedek, who similarly combined the kingdom and priesthood as type of Messiah.

**10. Take of them of the captivity** — Take *silver and gold* (<sup><3001></sup>Zechariah 6:11) *from* them. The three named came from Babylon (where some of the exiled Jews still were left) to present gifts of silver and gold towards the building of the temple. But in <sup><3001></sup>Zechariah 6:11,14, “crowns” are directed to be made of them, then to be set on Joshua’s head, and to be deposited in the temple as a memorial of the donors, until Messiah shall appear.

**Heldai** — meaning “robust.” Called *Helem* below.

**Tobijah** — that is, “the goodness of God.”

**Jedaiah** — that is, “God knows.”

**which are come from Babylon** — This clause in the *Hebrew* comes after “Josiah son of Zephaniah.” Therefore, MOORE thinks Josiah as well as the three “came from Babylon.” But as he has a “house” at Jerusalem, he is plainly a resident, not a visitor. Therefore *English Version* is right; or MAURER, “Josiah son of Zephaniah, to *whom* they are come (as guests) from Babylon.”

*the same day* — No time was to be lost to mark the significance of their coming from afar to offer gifts to the temple, typifying, in the double crown made of their gifts and set on Joshua's head, the gathering in of Israel's outcasts to Messiah hereafter, who shall then be recognized as the true king and priest.

**11.** The high priest wore a crown above the miter (Zechariah 3:5 <sup><889></sup>Leviticus 8:9). Messiah shall wear many *crowns*, one surmounting the other (<sup><692></sup>Revelation 19:12). It was a thing before unknown in the Levitical priesthood that the same person should wear at once the crown of a king and that of a high priest (<sup><340></sup>Psalms 110:4 <sup><560></sup>Hebrews 5:10). Messiah shall be revealed fully in this twofold dignity when He shall "restore the kingdom to Israel" (<sup><406></sup>Acts 1:6).

**12.** *Behold, the man* — namely, shall arise. Pilate unconsciously spake God's will concerning Him, "*Behold the man*" (<sup><695></sup>John 19:5). The sense here is, "Behold in Joshua a remarkable shadowing forth of Messiah." It is not for his own sake that the crown is placed on him, but as type of Messiah about to be at once king and priest. Joshua could not personally be crowned king, not being of the royal line of David, but only in his *representative* character.

*Branch* — (See on Zechariah 3:8; <sup><202></sup>Isaiah 4:2 <sup><235></sup>Jeremiah 23:5 33:15).

*he shall grow up out of his place* — retaining the image of a "Branch"; "He shall sprout up from His place," that is, the place peculiar to Him: not merely from Beth-lehem or Nazareth, but by His own power, without man's aid, in His miraculous conception [HENDERSON]; a sense brought out in the original, "from under Himself," or "from (of) Himself" [CALVIN]. MOORE makes it refer to His growing lowly *in His place* of obscurity, "as a tender plant and a root out of a dry ground" (<sup><2512></sup>Isaiah 53:2), for thirty years unknown except as the son of a carpenter. MAURER translates, "Under Him there shall be growth (in the Church)." *English Version* accords better with the *Hebrew* (compare <sup><102></sup>Exodus 10:23). The idea in a Branch is that Christ's glory is growing, not yet fully manifested as a full-grown tree. Therefore men reject Him now.

*build the temple* — The promise of the future true building of the spiritual temple by Messiah (<sup><1068></sup>Matthew 16:18 <sup><4171></sup>1 Corinthians 3:17 <sup><176></sup>2 Corinthians 6:16 <sup><4221></sup>Ephesians 2:20-22 <sup><308></sup>Hebrews 3:3) is an earnest to assure the Jews, that the material temple will be built by Joshua and Zerubbabel, in spite of all seeming obstacles. It also raises their thoughts beyond the material to the spiritual temple, and also to the future glorious temple, to be reared in Israel under Messiah's superintendence (<sup><2401></sup>Ezekiel

40:1-43:27). The repetition of the same clause (<sup><3063></sup>Zechariah 6:13) gives emphasis to the statement as to Messiah's work.

**13. bear the glory** — that is, wear the insignia of the kingly glory, “the crowns” (<sup><4206></sup>Psalm 21:5 102:16 <sup><2923></sup>Isaiah 52:13). *He himself* shall bear the glory, not thou, Joshua, though thou dost bear the crowns. The Church's dignity is in her head alone, Christ. So Eliakim, type of Messiah, was to have “all the glory of his father's house hung upon him” (<sup><2024></sup>Isaiah 22:24).

*sit* — implying security and permanence.

**priest ... throne** — (<sup><0148></sup>Genesis 14:18 <sup><4804></sup>Psalm 110:4 <sup><3816></sup>Hebrews 5:6,10 6:20 7).

**counsel of peace ... between ... both** — Joshua and Zerubbabel, the religious and civil authorities co-operating in the temple, typify the *peace*, or harmonious union, *between both* the kingly and priestly offices. The kingly majesty shall not depress the priestly dignity, nor the priestly dignity the kingly majesty [JEROME]. The peace of the Church, formerly sought for in the mutual “counsels” of the kings and the priests, who had been always distinct, shall be perfectly ensured by the concurrence of the two offices in the one Messiah, who by His mediatorial priesthood purchases it, and by His kingly rule maintains it. VITRINGA takes “*His throne*” to be Jehovah the Father's. Thus it will be, “there shall be ... peace between the Branch and Jehovah” [LUDOVICUS DE DIEU]. The other view is better, namely, “*Messiah's throne.*” As Priest He expiates sin; as King, extirpates it. “*Counsel of peace,*” implies that it is the plan of infinite “wisdom,” whence Messiah is called “Counsellor” (<sup><2909></sup>Isaiah 9:6 <sup><4008></sup>Ephesians 1:8,11 <sup><3677></sup>Hebrews 6:17). Peace between the kingly and priestly attributes of Messiah implies the harmonizing of the conflicting claims of God's justice as a King, and His love as a Father and Priest. Hence is produced peace to man (<sup><4024></sup>Luke 2:14 <sup><4406></sup>Acts 10:36 <sup><4023></sup>Ephesians 2:13-17). It is only by being pardoned through His atonement and ruled by His laws, that we can find “peace.” The royal “throne” was always connected with the “temple,” as is the case in the Apocalypse (<sup><4075></sup>Revelation 7:15), because Christ is to be a king on His throne and a priest, and because the people, whose “king” the Lord is, cannot approach Him except by a priestly mediation [ROOS]. Jesus shall come to effect, by His presence (<sup><2104></sup>Isaiah 11:4 <sup><2077></sup>Daniel 7:17), that which in vain is looked for, in His absence, by other means. He shall exercise His power mediatorially as priest on His throne (<sup><3063></sup>Zechariah 6:13); therefore His reign is for a limited period, which it could not be if it were the final and everlasting state of glory. But being for a special purpose, to reconcile all things in this world, now disordered by sin, and so present it to God the Father that He may again for the first time since the fall come

into direct connection with His creatures; therefore it is limited, forming the dispensation in the fullness of times (<sup><4010></sup>Ephesians 1:10), when God shall gather in one all things in Christ, the final end of which shall be, “God all in all” (<sup><4153></sup>1 Corinthians 15:24-28).

**14. *the crowns shall be to Helem ... a memorial*** — deposited in the temple, to the honor of the donors; a memorial, too, of the coronation of Joshua, to remind all of Messiah, the promised antitypical king-priest, soon to come. Helem, the same as Heldai above. So Hen (that is, “favor”) is another name for Josiah (that is, “God founds”) above. The same person often had two names.

**15. *they ... far off shall ... build*** — The reason why the crowns were made of gold received from afar, namely, from the Jews of Babylon, was to typify the conversion of the Gentiles to Messiah, King of Israel. This, too, was included in the “peace” spoken of in <sup><3163></sup>Zechariah 6:13 (<sup><4029></sup>Acts 2:39 <sup><4002></sup>Ephesians 2:12-17). Primarily, however, the return of the dispersed Israelites “from afar” (<sup><3109></sup>Isaiah 60:9) to the king of the Jews at Jerusalem is intended, to be followed, secondly, by the conversion of the Gentiles from “far off” (<sup><3021></sup>Zechariah 2:11 8:2-2,23 <sup><3100></sup>Isaiah 60:10 57:19).

***build in the temple*** — Christ “builds the temple” (<sup><3025></sup>Zechariah 6:12,13 <sup><3003></sup>Hebrews 3:3,4): His people “build *in* the temple.” Compare <sup><3001></sup>Hebrews 3:2, “Moses in His house.”

***ye shall know***, etc. — when the event corresponds to the prediction (Zechariah 2:9 4:9).

***this shall come to pass, if ye ... obey***, etc. — To the Jews of Zechariah’s day a stimulus is given to *diligent* prosecution of the temple building, the work which it was meanwhile their duty to fulfill, relying on the hope of the Messiah afterwards to glorify it. The completion of the temple shall “come to pass,” if ye diligently on your part “obey the Lord.” It is not meant that their unbelief could set aside God’s gracious purpose as to Messiah’s coming. But there is, secondarily, meant, that Messiah’s glory as priest-king of Israel shall not be manifested to the Jews till they turn to Him with obedient penitence. They meanwhile are cast away “branches” until they be grafted in again on the Branch and their own olive tree (Zechariah 3:8 12:10-12 <sup><4239></sup>Matthew 23:39 <sup><5116></sup>Romans 11:16-24).

# CHAPTER 7

## ZECHARIAH 7:1-14.

### II. DIDACTIC PART, SEVENTH AND EIGHTH CHAPTERS. OBEDIENCE, RATHER THAN FASTING, ENJOINED: ITS REWARD.

1. *fourth year of ... Darius* — two years after the previous prophecies (Zechariah 1:1, etc.).

*Chisleu* — meaning “torpidity,” the state in which nature is in November, answering to this month.

2. *they ... sent unto ... house of God* — *The Jews* of the country sent to the house of God or congregation at Jerusalem. The altar was long since reared (<sup><4578B></sup>Ezra 3:3), though the temple was not completed till two years afterwards (<sup><4578C></sup>Ezra 6:15). The priests’ duty was to give decision on points of the law (<sup><4570B></sup>Deuteronomy 17:9 <sup><4009B></sup>Matthew 2:4). *Beth-el* is here used instead of *Beth-Jehovah*, because the religious authorities, rather than the house itself (designated “Beth-Jehovah” in Zechariah 7:3), are intended. The old Beth-el had long ceased to be the seat of idol-worship, so that the name had lost its opprobrious meaning. “The house of the Lord” is used for the congregation of worshippers headed by their priests (Zechariah 3:7 <sup><3808B></sup>Hosea 8:1). MAURER makes the “house of God” nominative to “sent.” HENDERSON makes “Beth-el” so.

*Sherazer* — an Assyrian name meaning, “Prefect of the treasury.”

*Regemmelech* — meaning, “The king’s official.” These names perhaps intimate the semi-heathen character of the inquirers, which may also be implied in the name “Beth-el” (*Hebrew* for “house of God”), so notorious once for its calf-worship. They sent to *Jehovah’s house* as their forefathers sent to old *Beth-el*, not in the spirit of true obedience.

*pray before the Lord* — literally, “to entreat the face of,” that is, to offer sacrifices, the accompaniment of prayers, to conciliate His favor (<sup><0932></sup>1 Samuel 13:12).

3. *Should I weep in the fifth month* — “I” represents here the people of God (compare <sup><3821></sup>Zechariah 8:21). This rather favors MAURER’S view,

taking “the house of God,” *the congregation*, as nominative to “sent.” Their hypocrisy appeared because they showed more concern about a ceremony of human institution (not improper in itself) than about moral obedience. If, too, they had trusted God’s promise as to the restoration of Church and State, the fast would have now given place to joy, for which there was more cause than for grief [PEMBELLUS].

**to the prophets** — Haggai and Zechariah especially. *The tenth day of the fifth month* was kept a fast, being the anniversary of the destruction of Jerusalem (<sup>2612</sup>Jeremiah 52:12-14). They ask, Should the fast *be continued*, now that the temple and city are being restored?

**separating myself** — sanctifying myself by separation, not only from food, but from all defilements (compare <sup>3216</sup>Joel 2:16) as was usual in a solemn fast.

**5. Speak unto all** — The question had been asked in the name of the people in general by Sherezer and Regemmelech. The self-imposed fast they were tired of, not having observed it in the spirit of true religion.

**seventh month** — This fast was in memory of the murder of Gedaliah and those with him at Mizpah, issuing in the dispersion of the Jews (<sup>1259</sup>2 Kings 25:25,26 <sup>2400</sup>Jeremiah 41:1-3).

**did ye ... fast unto me?** — No; it was to gratify yourselves in hypocritical will-worship. If it had been “unto Me,” ye would have “separated yourselves” not only from food, but from your sins (<sup>2808</sup>Isaiah 58:3-7). They falsely made the fast an end intrinsically meritorious in itself, not a means towards God’s glory in their sanctification. The true principle of piety, *reference to God*, was wanting: hence the emphatic repetition of “unto Me.” Before settling questions as to the outward forms of piety (however proper, as in this case), the great question was as to piety itself; that being once settled, all their outward observances become sanctified, being “unto the Lord” (<sup>646</sup>Romans 14:6).

**6. did not ye eat for yourselves?** — literally, “Is it not ye who eat?” that is, it is not unto Me and My glory. It tends no more to My glory, your feasting than your fasting.

**7. Should ye not hear the words** — rather, “Should ye not *do* the words,” as their question naturally was as to what they should do (Zechariah 7:3); “hearing” is not mentioned till <sup>3072</sup>Zechariah 7:12. The sense is, It is not fasts that Jehovah requires of you, but that ye should keep His precepts given to you at the time when Jerusalem was in its integrity. Had ye done so then, ye would have had no occasion to institute fasts to commemorate

its destruction, for it would never have been destroyed (Zechariah 7:9-14) [MAURER]. Or, as the *Margin*, “*Are not these* the words” of the older prophets (<sup><2888></sup>Isaiah 58:3 <sup><2442></sup>Jeremiah 14:12) which threatened a curse for disobedience, which the event has so awfully confirmed. If ye follow them in sin, ye must follow them in suffering. *English Version* is good sense: Ye inquire anxiously about the fasts, whereas ye ought to be anxious about *hearing* the lesson taught by the former prophets and verified in the nation’s punishment; penitence and obedience are required rather than fasts.

***the plain*** — southwest of Jerusalem. They then inhabited securely the region most unguarded.

**9. *speakech*** — implying that these precepts addressed to their ancestors were the requirements of Jehovah not merely then, but *now*. We must not only not hurt, but we must help our fellow men. God is pleased with such loving obedience, rather than with empty ceremonies.

**10. *imagine evil*** — that is, devise evil. The *Septuagint* takes it, Harbor not the desire of revenge (<sup><6918></sup>Leviticus 19:18). “Devise evil against one another” is simpler (<sup><3904></sup>Psalms 36:4 <sup><3108></sup>Micah 2:1).

**11. *pulled away the shoulder*** — literally, “presented a refractory shoulder”; an image from beasts refusing to bear the yoke (<sup><1639></sup>Nehemiah 9:29, *Margin*).

***stopped ... ears*** — (<sup><2160></sup>Isaiah 6:10 <sup><2026></sup>Jeremiah 7:26 <sup><4057></sup>Acts 7:57).

**12. *hearts ... adamant*** — (<sup><3189></sup>Ezekiel 3:9 11:19).

***Lord ... sent in Spirit by ... prophets*** — that is, sent by the former prophets *inspired with His Spirit*.

***therefore ... great wrath*** — (<sup><4836></sup>2 Chronicles 36:16). As they pushed from them the yoke of obedience, God laid on them the yoke of oppression. As they made their heart hard as adamant, God brake their hard hearts with judgments. Hard hearts must expect hard treatment. The harder the stone, the harder the blow of the hammer to break it.

**13. *he cried*** — by His prophets.

***they cried*** — in their calamities.

***I ... not hear*** — retribution in kind (<sup><2024></sup>Proverbs 1:24-26 <sup><2015></sup>Isaiah 1:15 <sup><3189></sup>Micah 3:4).

**14. *whirlwind*** — of wrath (Na 1:3).

***nations whom they knew not*** — foreign and barbarous.

*desolate after them* — after their expulsion and exile. It was ordered remarkably by God's providence, that no occupants took possession of it, but that during the Jews' absence it was reserved for them against their return after seventy years.

*they laid ... desolate* — The Jews did so by their sins. The blame of their destruction lay with themselves, rather than with the Babylonians (<sup>4821</sup>2 Chronicles 36:21).

*pleasant land* — Canaan. Literally, "the land of desire" (<sup>4821</sup>Jeremiah 3:19).

# CHAPTER 8

## ZECHARIAH 8:1-23.

### CONTINUATION OF THE SUBJECT IN THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

*After urging them to obedience by the fate of their fathers, he urges them to it by promises of coming prosperity.*

**2. *jealous for Zion*** — (<sup><3014></sup>Zechariah 1:14).

*with great fury* — against her oppressors.

**3. *I am returned*** — that is, I am determined to return. My decree to that effect is gone forth.

***Jerusalem ... city of truth*** — that is, faithful to her God, who is the God of truth (<sup><2012></sup>Isaiah 1:21,26 <sup><4073></sup>John 17:17). Never yet fully fulfilled, therefore still to be so.

***the mountain of the Lord*** — (<sup><2002></sup>Isaiah 2:2,3).

***holy mountain*** — (<sup><2612></sup>Jeremiah 31:23).

**4.** So tranquil and prosperous shall the nation be that wars shall no longer prematurely cut off the people: men and women shall reach advanced ages. The promise of long life was esteemed one of the greatest blessings in the Jewish theocracy with its temporal rewards of obedience (<sup><0202></sup>Exodus 20:12 <sup><6040></sup>Deuteronomy 4:40). Hence this is a leading feature in millennial blessedness (<sup><2651></sup>Isaiah 65:20,22).

***for very age*** — literally, “for multitude of days.”

**5. *boys and girls playing*** — implying security and a numerous progeny, accounted a leading blessing among the Jews. Contrast <sup><2611></sup>Jeremiah 6:11 9:21.

**6.** However impossible these things just promised by Me seem to you, they are not so with God. The “remnant” that had returned from the captivity, beholding the city desolate and the walls and houses in ruins, could hardly believe what God promised. The expression “remnant” glances at their ingratitude in rating so low God’s power, though they had experienced it so

“marvellously” displayed in their restoration. A great source of unbelief is, men “limit” God’s power by their own (<sup><3789></sup>Psalm 78:19,20,41).

**these days** — “of small things” (<sup><3811></sup>Zechariah 4:10), when such great things promised seemed incredible. MAURER, after JEROME, translates, “in *those* days”; that is, if the thing which I promised to do in *those* days, seems “marvellous,” etc.

**7. save my people from ... east ... west** — that is, from every region (compare <sup><4811></sup>Psalm 50:1; the “West” is literally, “the going down of the sun”) to which they are scattered; they are now found especially in countries west of Jerusalem. The dispersion under Nebuchadnezzar was only to the east, namely, to Babylonia. The restoration, including a spiritual return to God (Zechariah 8:8), here foretold, must therefore be still future (<sup><281111></sup>Isaiah 11:11,12 43:5,6 <sup><45721></sup>Ezekiel 37:21 <sup><31944></sup>Amos 9:14,15; also Zechariah 13:9 <sup><3822></sup>Jeremiah 30:22 31:1,33).

**8. in truth** — in good faith, both on their side and Mine: God being faithful to His everlasting covenant and enabling them by His Spirit to be faithful to Him.

**9-13.** All adversities formerly attended them when neglecting to build the temple: but now God promises all blessings, as an encouragement to energy in the work.

**hands ... strong** — be of courageous mind (<sup><40621></sup>2 Samuel 16:21), not merely in building, but in general, as having such bright prospects (<sup><38135></sup>Zechariah 8:13, etc.).

**these days** — the time that had elapsed between the prophet’s having spoken “these words” and the time (<sup><38185></sup>Zechariah 8:10; compare <sup><37215></sup>Haggai 2:15-19) when they set about in earnest restoring the temple.

**the prophets** — Haggai and Zechariah himself (<sup><45111></sup>Ezra 5:1,2). The same prophets who promised prosperity at the foundation of the temple, now promised still greater blessings hereafter.

**10. before these days** — before the time in which ye again proceeded with the building of the temple (Zechariah 8:9), namely, at the time that the temple lay neglected.

**no hire for man ... beast** — that is, no produce of the field to repay the labor of man and beast on it (Haggai 1:6,9,10 2:16).

**neither ... peace to him that went out or came in** — (<sup><445F2</sup>2 Chronicles 15:5). No one could in safety do his business at home or abroad, in the city or in the country, whether going or returning.

**because of the affliction** — so *sorely pressed* were they by the foe outside. MAURER translates, “Because of *the foe*” (<sup><450F</sup>Ezra 4:1).

**every one against ... neighbor** — There was internal discord, as well as foes from without.

11. “But now that the temple has been built, I will not do as I had formerly done to those who returned from Babylon” [JEROME]. Henceforth I will bless you.

12. **seed ... prosperous** — that is, shall not fail to yield abundantly (<sup><312F</sup>Hosea 2:21,22 <sup><312F</sup>Haggai 2:19). Contrast with this verse Haggai 1:6,9-11 2:16.

**dew** — especially beneficial in hot countries where rain is rare.

13. **a curse** — As the heathen have made you another name for “a curse,” wishing to their foes as bad a lot as yours (<sup><244F</sup>Jeremiah 24:9 29:18); so your name shall be a formula of blessing, so that men shall say to their friend, May thy lot be as happy as that of Judah (<sup><448F</sup>Genesis 48:20). Including also the idea of the Jews being a source of blessing to the Gentile nations (<sup><310F</sup>Micah 5:7 <sup><310F</sup>Zephaniah 3:20). The distinct mention of “Judah” and “Israel” proves that the prophecy has not yet had its full accomplishment, as *Israel* (the ten tribes) has never yet been restored, though *individuals* of Israel returned with Judah.

14. **I thought** — I determined.

**you** — that is, your fathers, with whom ye are one; the Jewish Church of all ages being regarded as an organic whole (compare Haggai 2:5 <sup><423F</sup>Matthew 23:31,32).

**repented not** — I changed not My purpose, because they changed not their mind (<sup><446F</sup>2 Chronicles 36:16). With the froward God shows Himself froward (<sup><392F</sup>Psalms 18:26). If the threatened punishment has been so unchangeably inflicted, much more will God surely give the promised blessing, which is so much more consonant to His nature (<sup><262F</sup>Jeremiah 31:28).

16, 17. The promised blessings are connected with obedience. God’s covenanted grace will lead those truly blessed by it to holiness, not licentiousness.

**truth to ... neighbor** — not that the truth should not be spoken to foreigners too; but He makes it an aggravation of their sin, that they spared not even their brethren. Besides, and above all outward ordinances (Zechariah 7:3), God requires truth and justice.

**judgment of ... peace** — Equitable decisions tend to allay feuds and produce peace.

**gates** — the place where courts of judicature in the East were held.

**17. all these ... I hate** — therefore ye too ought to hate them. Religion consists in conformity to God's nature, that we should love what God loves and hate what God hates.

**18, 19.** The prophet answers the query (Zechariah 7:3) as to the fast in the fifth month, by a reply applying to all their fasts: these are to be turned into days of rejoicing. So Jesus replied to His disciples when similarly consulting Him as to why fasting was not imposed by Him, as it was by John the Baptist. When the Sun of righteousness shines, tears are dried up (<sup>4185</sup>Matthew 9:15). So hereafter (<sup>2350</sup>Isaiah 35:10).

**19. fast of ... fourth month** — On the fourth month of the eleventh year of Zedekiah's reign, on the ninth day, Jerusalem was taken (<sup>289E</sup>Jeremiah 39:2 52:6,7). It was therefore made a fast day.

**fifth ... seventh** — (See on Zechariah 7:3; Zechariah 7:5).

**tenth** — On the tenth month and tenth day, in the ninth year of Zedekiah, the siege began (<sup>289E</sup>Jeremiah 52:4).

**therefore love the truth** — or, "only love." *English Version* is better. God's blessing covenanted to Israel is not made to depend on Israel's goodness: but Israel's goodness should follow as the consequence of God's gracious promises (<sup>388E</sup>Zechariah 8:16,17 Zechariah 7:9,10). God will bless, but not those who harden themselves in sin.

**20.** (<sup>289E</sup>Isaiah 2:3 <sup>304E</sup>Micah 4:2).

**Thus saith the Lord of hosts** — a preface needed to assure the Jews, now disheartened by the perils surrounding them, and by the humble aspect of the temple. "Unlikely as what follows may seem to you, *Jehovah of hosts*, boundless in resources, *saith* it, therefore it shall be so." Just before Christ's coming, a feeling grew up among the heathen of the unsatisfactoriness of their systems of religion and philosophy; this disposed them favorably towards the religion of the Jew, so that proselytes embraced the worship of Jehovah from various parts of Asia; these again were

predisposed to embrace Christianity when it was preached to them (<sup><401></sup>Acts 2:9-12,41). But the full accomplishment of the conversion of the Gentiles foretold here is reserved till “Jerusalem” (<sup><382></sup>Zechariah 8:22) becomes the center of Christianized Jewry (<sup><611></sup>Romans 11:12,15).

**21. *Let us ... I*** — manifesting zeal and love: converted themselves, they seek the conversion of others (So 1:4). To exhortation in *general* (“Let us go”), they add *individual* example (“I will go”). Or, the change from *plural* to *singular* implies that the *general* consent in religious earnestness leads *each individual* to decide for God.

***go speedily*** — literally, “go, going”; implying intense earnestness.

***pray*** — *Hebrew*, “entreat the face” (Zechariah 7:2); entreat His favor and grace.

**22. *many ... strong nations ... in Jerusalem*** — In contrast to the few and weak Jews now building the temple and city, then such shall be their influence that *many and strong nations* shall come to worship Jehovah their God in Jerusalem (<sup><240></sup>Isaiah 60:3 66:23).

**23. *ten*** — a definite number for an indefinite. So in (<sup><822></sup>Leviticus 22:26 <sup><412></sup>Numbers 14:22).

***of all languages of the nations*** — that is, of nations of all languages (compare <sup><263></sup>Isaiah 66:18 <sup><610></sup>Revelation 7:9).

***take hold of the skirt*** — a gesture of suppliant entreaty as to a superior. Compare <sup><288></sup>Isaiah 3:6 4:1, on a different occasion. The Gentiles shall eagerly seek to share the religious privileges of the Jew. The skirt with a fringe and blue ribbon upon it (<sup><453></sup>Numbers 15:38 <sup><621></sup>Deuteronomy 22:12) was a distinguishing badge of a Jew.

***God is with you*** — the effect produced on unbelievers in entering the assemblies of the Church (<sup><425></sup>1 Corinthians 14:25). But primarily, that produced on the nations in witnessing the deliverance of the Jews by Cyrus. Finally, that to be produced on the nations by the future grand interposition of Messiah in behalf of His people.

# CHAPTER 9

## ZECHARIAH 9:1-17.

### NINTH TO FOURTEENTH CHAPTERS ARE PROPHETICAL.

Written long after the previous portions of the book, whence arise the various features which have been made grounds for attacking their authenticity, notwithstanding the testimony of the *Septuagint* and of the compilers of the Jewish canon in their favor. See *Introduction*.

ALEXANDER'S CONQUESTS IN SYRIA (Zechariah 9:1-8). GOD'S PEOPLE SAFE BECAUSE HER COMETH LOWLY, BUT A SAVIOUR (Zechariah 9:9-10). THE MACCABEAN DELIVERANCE A TYPE THEREOF (<sup><3015</sup>Zechariah 9:11-17).

**1. in ... *Hadrach*** — rather, *concerning* or *against* Hadrach (compare <sup><2213</sup>Isaiah 21:13). “Burden” means a *prophecy* BURDENED *with wrath against the guilty*. MAURER, not so well, explains it, *What is taken up and uttered, the utterance, a solemn declaration*.

***Hadrach*** — a part of Syria, near Damascus. As the name is not mentioned in ancient histories, it probably was the less-used name of a region having two names (“Hadrach” and “Bikathaven,” Amos 1:5, *Margin*); hence it passed into oblivion. An ancient Rabbi Jose is, however, stated to have expressly mentioned it. Ant Arab, Jos. Abassi, in 1768 also declared to MICHAELIS that there was then a town of that name, and that it was capital of the region Hadrach. The name means “enclosed” in Syrian, that is, the west interior part of Syria, *enclosed* by hills, the Coelo-Syria of STRABO [MAURER]. JEROME considers Hadrach to be the metropolis of Coelo-Syria, as Damascus was of the region about that city. HENGSTENBERG regards Hadrach as a symbolical name of Persia, which Zechariah avoids designating by its proper name so as not to offend the government under which he lived. But the context seems to refer to the Syrian region. GESENIUS thinks that the name is that of a Syrian king, which might more easily pass into oblivion than that of a region. Compare the similar “land of Sihon,” <sup><4022</sup>Nehemiah 9:22.

***Damascus ... rest thereof*** — that is, the place on which the “burden” of the Lord’s wrath shall rest. It shall permanently settle on it until Syria is utterly prostrate. Fulfilled under Alexander the Great, who overcame Syria [CURTIUS, Books 3 and 4].

**eyes of man, as of all ... Israel ... toward the Lord** — The eyes of men in general, and of all Israel in particular, through consternation at the victorious progress of Alexander, shall be directed to Jehovah. The Jews, when threatened by him because of Jaddua the high priest's refusal to swear fealty to him, prayed earnestly to the Lord, and so were delivered (<sup>1412</sup>2 Chronicles 20:12 <sup>1413</sup>Psalm 23:2). Typical of the effect of God's judgments hereafter on all men, and especially on the Jews in turning them to Him. MAURER, PEMBELLUS and others, less probably translate, "The eyes of the Lord are upon man, as they are upon all Israel," namely, to punish the ungodly and to protect His people. He, who has chastised His people, will not fail to punish men for their sins severely. The "all," I think, implies that whereas men's attention generally (whence "man" is the expression) was directed to Jehovah's judgments, *all* Israel especially looks to Him.

**2. Hamath** — a Syrian kingdom with a capital of the same name, north of Damascus.

**shall border thereby** — shall be joined to Damascus in treatment, as it is in position; shall share in the burden of wrath of which Damascus is the resting-place. MAURER understands "which"; "Hamath, which borders on Damascus, also *shall be the resting-place of Jehovah's wrath*" (the latter words being supplied from Zechariah 9:1). Riblah, the scene of the Jews' sufferings from their foe, was there: it therefore shall suffer (<sup>1233</sup>2 Kings 23:33 25:6,7,20,21).

**Tyrus ... Zidon** — lying in the conqueror's way on his march along the Mediterranean to Egypt (compare <sup>2341</sup>Isaiah 23:1-18). Zidon, the older city, surrendered, and Abdolonymus was made its viceroy.

**very wise** — in her own eyes. Referring to Tyre: Zechariah 9:3 shows wherein her *wisdom* consisted, namely, *in building a stronghold, and heaping up gold and silver* (<sup>2365</sup>Ezekiel 38:3,5,12,17). On Alexander's expressing his wish to sacrifice in Hercules' temple in New Tyre on the island, she showed her wisdom in sending a golden crown, and replying that the true and ancient temple of Hercules was at Old Tyre on the mainland. With all her wisdom she cannot avert her doom.

**3.** The heathen historian, DIODORUS SICULUS [17.40], confirms this. "Tyre had the greatest confidence owing to her insular position and fortifications, and the abundant stores she had prepared." New Tyre was on an island seven hundred paces from the shore. As Isaiah's and Ezekiel's (<sup>2571</sup>Ezekiel 27:1-36) prophecies were directed against Old Tyre on the mainland and were fulfilled by Nebuchadnezzar, so Zechariah's are against New Tyre, which was made seemingly impregnable by a double wall one hundred fifty feet high, as well as the sea on all sides.

4. (<sup>3304</sup>Ezekiel 26:4,12 27:27).

**cast her out** — *Hebrew*, “dispossess her,” that is, will cast her inhabitants into exile [GROTIUS]. Alexander, though without a navy, by incredible labor constructed a mole of the ruins of Old Tyre (fulfilling <sup>3304</sup>Ezekiel 26:4-12, etc., by “scraping her dust from her,” and “laying her stones, timber, and dust in the midst of the water”), from the shore to the island, and, after a seven months’ siege, took the city by storm, slew with the sword about eight thousand, enslaved thirteen thousand, crucified two thousand, and set the city on “fire,” as here foretold [CURTIUS, Book 4].

**smite her power in the sea** — situated though she be *in the sea*, and so seeming impregnable (compare <sup>3305</sup>Ezekiel 28:2, “I sit in the seat of God, *in the midst of the sea*”). “Her power” includes not only her fortifications, but her fleet, all of which Alexander sank *in the sea* before her very walls [CURTIUS, Book 4]. <sup>3307</sup>Ezekiel 26:17 corresponds, “How art thou destroyed which wast strong in the sea!”

5. **Ashkelon**, etc. — Gath alone is omitted, perhaps as being somewhat inland, and so out of the route of the advancing conqueror.

**Ekron ... expectation ... ashamed** — Ekron, the farthest north of the Philistine cities, had *expected* Tyre would withstand Alexander, and so check his progress southward through Philistia to Egypt. This hope being confounded (“put to *shame*”), Ekron shall “fear.”

**king shall perish from Gaza** — Its government shall be overthrown. In literal fulfillment of this prophecy, after a two month’s siege, Gaza was taken by Alexander, ten thousand of its inhabitants slain, and the rest sold as slaves. Betis the satrap, or petty “king,” was bound to a chariot by thongs thrust through the soles of his feet, and dragged round the city.

6. **bastard** — not the rightful heir; vile and low men, such as are bastards (<sup>4232</sup>Deuteronomy 23:2) [GROTIUS]. *An alien*; so the *Septuagint*; implying the desolation of the region wherein men shall not settle, but sojourn in only as aliens passing through [CALVIN].

7. **take ... his blood out of ... mouth** — *Blood* was forbidden as food (<sup>0094</sup>Genesis 9:4 <sup>0025</sup>Leviticus 7:26).

**abominations** — things sacrificed to idols and then partaken of by the worshippers (<sup>0209</sup>Numbers 25:2 <sup>4153</sup>Acts 15:29). The sense is, “I will cause the Philistines to cease from the worship of idols.”

**even he shall be for our God** — “even he,” like Hamath, Damascus, Tyre, etc., which, these words imply, shall also be converted to God (<sup>2508</sup>Isaiah

56:3, “son of the stranger joined himself to the Lord”) [ROSENMULLER]. The “even,” however, may mean, *Besides the Hebrews*, “even” the Philistine shall worship Jehovah (so <sup><1808></sup>Isaiah 56:8) [MAURER].

***he shall be as a governor in Judah*** — On the conversion of the Philistine prince, he shall have the same dignity “in Judah as a governor”; there shall be no distinction [HENDERSON]. The Philistine princes with their respective states shall equally *belong to the Jews’ communion, as if they were among the “governors” of states “in Judah”* [MAURER].

***Ekron as a Jebusite*** — The Jebusites, the original inhabitants of Jerusalem, who, when subjugated by David, were incorporated with the Jews (<sup><1806></sup>2 Samuel 24:16, etc.), and enjoyed their privileges: but in a subordinate position *civilly* (<sup><1803></sup>1 Kings 9:20,21). The Jebusites’ condition under Solomon being that of bond-servants and tributaries, CALVIN explains the verse differently: “I will rescue the Jew *from the teeth* of the Philistine foe (image from wild beasts rending their prey with their *teeth*), who would have devoured him, as he would devour *blood* or flesh of his *abominable* sacrifices to idols: and *even he*, the seemingly ignoble remnant of the Jews, shall be sacred to *our* God (consecrated by His favor); and though so long bereft of dignity, I will make them to be *as governors* ruling others, and Ekron shall be a tributary bond-servant as the Jebusite? Thus the antithesis is between the Jew *that remaineth* (the elect remnant) and the Ekronite.

***8. encamp about*** — (<sup><1807></sup>Psalms 34:7).

***mine house*** — namely, the Jewish people (Zechariah 3:7 <sup><1808></sup>Hosea 8:1) [MAURER]. Or, *the temple*: reassuring the Jews engaged in building, who might otherwise fear their work would be undone by the conqueror [MOORE]. The Jews were, in agreement with this prophecy, uninjured by Alexander, though he punished the Samaritans. Typical of their final deliverance from every foe.

***passeth by ... returneth*** — Alexander, when advancing against Jerusalem, was arrested by a dream, so that neither in “passing by” to Egypt, nor in “returning,” did he injure the Jews, but conferred on them great privileges.

***no oppressor ... pass through ... any more*** — The prophet passes from the immediate future to the final deliverance to come (<sup><1808></sup>Isaiah 60:18 <sup><1809></sup>Ezekiel 28:24).

***seen with mine eyes*** — namely, how Jerusalem has been oppressed by her foes [ROSENMULLER] (<sup><1807></sup>Exodus 3:7 2:25). God is said *now* to have *seen*, because He now begins to bring the foe to judgment, and manifests to the world His sense of His people’s wrongs.

9. From the coming of the Grecian conqueror, Zechariah makes a sudden transition, by the prophetic law of suggestion, to the coming of King Messiah, a very different character.

**daughter of Zion** — The theocratic people is called to “rejoice” at the coming of her King (<sup>4921</sup>Psalm 2:11).

**unto thee** — He comes not for His own gain or pleasure, as earthly kings come, but for the sake of His Church: especially for the Jews’ sake, at His second coming (<sup>45126</sup>Romans 11:26).

**he is just** — *righteous*: an attribute constantly given to Messiah (<sup>23421</sup>Isaiah 45:21 53:11 <sup>23216</sup>Jeremiah 23:5,6) in connection with *salvation*. He does not merely pardon by conniving at sin, but He *justifies* by becoming the Lord our righteousness fulfiller, so that not merely mercy, but justice, requires the justification of the sinner who by faith becomes one with Christ. God’s justice is not set aside by the sinner’s salvation, but is magnified and made honorable by it (<sup>23016</sup>Isaiah 42:1,21). His future *reign* “in righteousness,” also, is especially referred to (<sup>23301</sup>Isaiah 32:1).

**having salvation** — not passively, as some interpret it, “saved,” which the context, referring to a “king” coming to reign, forbids; also the old versions, the *Septuagint*, *Syriac*, and *Vulgate*, give *Savior*. The *Hebrew* is reflexive in sense, “showing Himself a Savior; ... having salvation in Himself” for us. Endowed with a salvation which He bestows as a king. Compare *Margin*, “saving Himself.” Compare <sup>40121</sup>Matthew 1:21, in the *Greek*, “Himself shall save His people”; that is, not by any other, but by Himself shall He save [PEARSON *On the Creed*]. His “having salvation” for others manifested that He had in Himself that righteousness which was indispensable for the justification of the unrighteous (<sup>40130</sup>1 Corinthians 1:30 <sup>40121</sup>2 Corinthians 5:21 <sup>40101</sup>1 John 2:1). This contrasts beautifully with the haughty Grecian conqueror who came to destroy, whereas Messiah came to save. Still, Messiah shall come to take “just” vengeance on His foes, previous to His reign of peace (<sup>40001</sup>Matthew 4:1,2).

**lowly** — mild, gentle: corresponding to His “riding on an ass” (not a despised animal, as with us; nor a badge of humiliation, for princes in the East rode on asses, as well as low persons, <sup>40150</sup>Judges 5:10), that is, coming as “Prince of *peace*” (<sup>33007</sup>Zechariah 9:10 <sup>23007</sup>Isaiah 9:6); the “horse,” on the contrary is the emblem of *war*, and shall therefore be “cut off.” Perhaps the *Hebrew* includes both the “lowliness” of His *outward* state (which applies to His first coming) and His “meekness of *disposition*,” as <sup>40105</sup>Matthew 21:5 quotes it (compare <sup>40129</sup>Matthew 11:29), which applies to both His comings. Both adapt Him for loving sympathy with us men; and at the

same time are the ground of His coming manifested exaltation (<sup><4327></sup>John 5:27 <sup><4317></sup>Philippians 2:7-9).

**colt** — untamed, “whereon yet never man sat” (<sup><4291></sup>Luke 19:30). The symbol of a triumphant conqueror and judge (<sup><4780></sup>Judges 5:10 10:4 12:14).

**foal of an ass** — literally, “asses”: in *Hebrew* idiom, the indefinite plural for singular (so <sup><4084></sup>Genesis 8:4, “mountains of Ararat,” for one of the mountains). The dam accompanied the colt (<sup><4212></sup>Matthew 21:2). The entry of Jesus into Jerusalem at His first coming is a pledge of the full accomplishment of this prophecy at His second coming. It shall be “the day of the Lord” (<sup><4382></sup>Psalms 118:24), as that first Palm *Sunday* was. The Jews shall then *universally* (<sup><4385></sup>Psalms 118:26) say, what *some* of them said then, “Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord” (compare <sup><4210></sup>Matthew 21:9, with <sup><4239></sup>Matthew 23:39); also “Hosanna,” or “Save now, I beseech thee.” “Palms,” the emblem of triumph, shall then also be in the hands of His people (compare <sup><4323></sup>John 12:13, with <sup><4609></sup>Revelation 7:9,10). Then also, as on His former entry, shall be the feast of tabernacles (at which they used to draw water from Siloam, quoting <sup><2123></sup>Isaiah 12:3). Compare <sup><4315></sup>Psalms 118:15, with <sup><3846></sup>Zerchariah 14:16.

10. (<sup><2104></sup>Isaiah 2:4 <sup><2128></sup>Hosea 2:18 <sup><3500></sup>Micah 5:10).

**Ephraim ... Jerusalem** — the ten tribes, and Judah and Benjamin; both alike to be restored hereafter.

**speak peace** — command it authoritatively.

**dominion ... from sea ... river ... ends of ... earth** — fulfilling <sup><4158></sup>Genesis 15:18 <sup><4233></sup>Exodus 23:31; and <sup><4718></sup>Psalms 72:8. “Sea ... sea,” are the Red Sea and Mediterranean. The “river” is the Euphrates. Jerusalem and the Holy Land, extended to the limits promised to Abraham, are to be the center of His future dominion; whence it will extend to the remotest parts of the earth.

11. **As for thee also** — that is, the daughter of Zion,” or “Jerusalem” (Zerchariah 9:9):the theocracy. The “thee also,” in contradistinction to *Messiah* spoken of in <sup><3900></sup>Zerchariah 9:10, implies that besides *cutting off the battle-bow* and extending MESSIAH’S “dominion to the ends of the earth,” God would *also* deliver for her *her* exiled people from their foreign captivity.

**by the blood of thy covenant** — that is, according to the covenant vouchsafed to thee on Sinai, and ratified by the blood of sacrifices (<sup><4248></sup>Exodus 24:8 <sup><3908></sup>Hebrews 9:18-20).

***pit wherein ... no water*** — Dungeons were often pits without water, miry at the bottom, such as Jeremiah sank in when confined (<sup>413724</sup>Genesis 37:24 <sup>24816</sup>Jeremiah 38:6). An image of the misery of the Jewish exiles in Egypt, Greece, etc., under the successors of Alexander, especially under Antiochus Epiphanes, who robbed and profaned the temple, slew thousands, and enslaved more. God delivered them by the Maccabees. A type of the future deliverance from their last great persecutor hereafter (<sup>25114</sup>Isaiah 51:14 60:1).

**12. *stronghold*** — in contrast to the “pit” (<sup>30911</sup>Zechariah 9:11); literally, “a place *cut off* from access.” MAURER thinks, “*a height*” (<sup>49833</sup>Psalms 18:33). An image for the *security* which the returning Jews shall have in Messiah (Zechariah 9:8) *encamped about* His people (<sup>49401</sup>Psalms 46:1,5; compare <sup>23497</sup>Isaiah 49:9 <sup>21830</sup>Proverbs 18:10).

***prisoners of hope*** — that is, who in spite of afflictions (<sup>48315</sup>Job 13:15 <sup>49405</sup>Psalms 42:5,11) maintain hope in the covenant-keeping God; in contrast to unbelievers, who say, “There is no hope” (<sup>24123</sup>Jeremiah 2:25 18:12). Especially those *Jews* who believe God’s word to Israel (<sup>28117</sup>Jeremiah 31:17), “there is hope in the end, that thy children shall come again to their own border,” and do not say, as in <sup>25711</sup>Ezekiel 37:11, “Our hope is lost.” Primarily, the Jews of Zechariah’s time are encouraged not to be dispirited in building by their trials; secondarily, the Jews before the coming restoration are encouraged to look to Messiah for deliverance from their last oppressors.

***even to-day*** — when your circumstances seem so unpromising; in contrast with the “day of the Lord,” when Zion’s King shall come to her deliverance (Zechariah 9:9).

***I will render double*** — Great as has been thy adversity, thy prosperity shall be *doubly* greater (<sup>22307</sup>Isaiah 61:7).

**13. *bent Judah*** — made Judah as it were My bow, and “filled” it “with Ephraim,” as My arrow, wherewith to overcome the successor of the Grecian Alexander, Antiochus Epiphanes (compare *Notes*, see on <sup>27819</sup>Daniel 8:9; <sup>27113</sup>Daniel 11:32; I Maccabees 1:62 2:41-43), the oppressor of Judah. Having spoken (Zechariah 9:1-8) of Alexander’s victories, after the parenthesis (Zechariah 9:9,10) as to Messiah the infinitely greater King coming, he passes to the victories which God would enable Judah to gain over Alexander’s successor, after his temporary oppression of them.

***O Zion ... O Greece*** — God on one hand addresses Zion, on the other Greece, showing that He rules all people.

**14.** Another image: “Jehovah shall be seen (conspicuously manifesting His power) over them” (that is, in behalf of the Jews and against their foes), as formerly He appeared in a cloud over the Israelites against the Egyptians (<sup><1249></sup>Exodus 14:19,24).

**his arrow ... as ... lightning** — flashing forth instantaneous destruction to the foe (<sup><1314></sup>Psalms 18:14).

**blow ... trumpet** — to summon and incite His people to battle for the destruction of their foe.

**go with whirlwinds of the south** — that is, go forth in the most furious storm, such as is one from the south (<sup><2201></sup>Isaiah 21:1). Alluding, perhaps, to Jehovah’s ancient miracles at Sinai coming “from Teman” (“the south,” in the *Margin*).

**15. devour** — the flesh of their foes.

**drink** — the blood of their foes; that is, utterly destroy them. Image (as <sup><2440></sup>Jeremiah 46:10) from a sacrifice, wherein part of the flesh was eaten, and the blood poured in libation (compare <sup><2301></sup>Isaiah 63:1, etc.).

**subdue with sling-stones** — or, “tread under foot the sling-stones” hurled by the foe at them; that is, will contemptuously trample on the hostile missiles which shall fall harmless under their feet (compare <sup><38123></sup>Job 41:28). Probably, too, it is implied that *their foes* are as impotent as the common *stones* used in *slinging* when they have fallen under foot: in contrast to the people of God (<sup><3016></sup>Zechariah 9:16), “the (precious) stones of a crown” (compare <sup><1029></sup>1 Samuel 25:29) [MAURER]. *English Version* is good sense: The Jews shall subdue the foe *at the first onset*, with the mere *slingers* who stood in front of the line of battle and began the engagement. Though armed with but sling-stones, like David against Goliath, they shall subdue the foe (<sup><12163></sup>Judges 20:16 <sup><13121></sup>1 Chronicles 12:2) [GROTIUS].

**noise** — the battle shout.

**through wine** — (Zechariah 10:7). The Spirit of God fills them with triumph (<sup><4158></sup>Ephesians 5:18).

**filled** — with blood.

**like bowls** — the bowls used to receive the blood of the sacrifices.

**as ... corners** — or “horns” of the altar, which used to be sprinkled with blood from the bowls (<sup><12312></sup>Exodus 29:12 <sup><13483></sup>Leviticus 4:18).

**16. *save them ... as the flock of his people*** — as the flock of His people ought to be saved (<sup><49720</sup>Psalm 77:20). Here the image of *war* and *bloodshed* (<sup><3085</sup>Zechariah 9:15) is exchanged for the *shepherd* and *flock*, as God will give not only victory, but afterwards safe and lasting peace. In contrast to the worthless *sling-stones* trodden under foot stand the (gems) “stones of the crown” (<sup><2618</sup>Isaiah 62:3 <sup><3087</sup>Malachi 3:17), lifted up as an ensign,” that all may flock to the Jewish Church (<sup><2010</sup>Isaiah 11:10,12 62:10).

**17. *his goodness ... his beauty*** — the goodness and beauty which Jehovah-Messiah bestows on His people. Not as MAURER thinks, the goodness, etc., of *His land* or *His people* (<sup><4819</sup>Psalm 31:19 <sup><3012</sup>Jeremiah 31:12).

***make ... cheerful*** — literally, “make it grow.”

***new wine the maids*** — supply, “shall make ... to grow.” *Corn* and *wine* abundant indicate peace and plenty. The new wine gladdening the maids is peculiar to this passage. It confutes those who interdict the use of wine as food. The Jews, heretofore straitened in provisions through pressure of the foe, shall now have abundance to cheer, not merely the old, but even the youths and maidens [CALVIN].

# CHAPTER 10

## ZECHARIAH 10:1-12.

### PRAYER AND PROMISE.

Call to prayer to Jehovah, as contrasted with the idol-worship which had brought judgments on the princes and people. Blessings promised in answer to prayer:

- (1) rulers of themselves;
- (2) conquest of their enemies;
- (3) restoration and establishment of both Israel and Judah in their own land in lasting peace and piety.

**1. Ask ... rain** — on which the abundance of “corn” promised by the Lord (<sup><3017></sup>Zechariah 9:17) depends. Jehovah alone can give it, and will give it on being asked (<sup><2013></sup>Jeremiah 10:13 14:22).

**rain in ... time of ... latter rain** — that is, the latter rain in its due time, namely, in spring, about February or March (<sup><3223></sup>Job 29:23 <sup><3023></sup>Joel 2:23). The latter rain ripened the grain, as the former rain in October tended to fructify the seed. Including *all* temporal blessings; these again being types of spiritual ones. Though God has begun to bless us, we are not to relax our prayers. The former rain of conversion may have been given, but we must also ask for the latter rain of ripened sanctification. Though at Pentecost there was a former rain on the Jewish Church, a latter rain is still to be looked for, when the full harvest of the nation’s conversion shall be gathered in to God. The spirit of prayer in the Church is an index at once of her piety, and of the spiritual blessings she may expect from God. When the Church is full of prayer, God pours out a full blessing.

**bright clouds** — rather, “lightnings,” the precursors of rain [MAURER].

**showers of rain** — literally, “rain of heavy rain.” In <sup><3506></sup>Job 37:6 the same words occur in inverted order [HENDERSON].

**grass** — a general term, including both *corn* for men and *grass* for cattle.

**2. idols** — literally, “the teraphim,” the household gods, consulted in divination (see on <sup><2014></sup>Hosea 3:4). Derived by GESENIUS from an *Arabic*

root, “comfort,” indicating them as the givers of comfort. Or an Ethiopian root, “relics.” Herein Zechariah shows that the Jews by their own idolatry had stayed the grace of God heretofore, which otherwise would have given them all those blessings, temporal and spiritual, which they are now (Zechariah 10:1) urged to “ask” for.

***diviners*** — who gave responses to consulters of the teraphim: opposed to Jehovah and His true prophets.

***seen a lie*** — pretending to see what they saw not in giving responses.

***comfort in vain*** — literally, “give *vapor* for comfort”; that is, give comforting promises to consulters which are sure to come to naught (<sup><3830></sup>Job 13:4 16:2 21:34).

***therefore they went their way*** — that is, Israel and Judah were led away captive.

***as a flock ... no shepherd*** — As sheep wander and are a prey to every injury when without a shepherd, so the Jews had been while they were without Jehovah, the true shepherd; for the false prophets whom they trusted were no shepherds (<sup><3845></sup>Ezekiel 34:5). So now they are scattered, while they know not Messiah their shepherd; typified in the state of the disciples, when they had forsaken Jesus and fled (<sup><4066></sup>Matthew 26:56; compare Zechariah 13:7).

**3. *against the shepherds*** — the civil rulers of Israel and Judah who abetted idolatry.

***punished*** — literally, “visited upon.” The same word “visited,” without the *upon*, is presently after used in a good sense to heighten the contrast.

***goats*** — he-goats. As “shepherds” described what they *ought* to have been, so “he-goats” describes what they *were*, the emblem of headstrong wantonness and offensive lust (<sup><2349></sup>Isaiah 14:9, *Margin*; <sup><2647></sup>Ezekiel 34:17 <sup><2785></sup>Daniel 8:5 <sup><2533></sup>Matthew 25:33). The he-goats head the flock. They who are first in crime will be first in punishment.

***visited*** — in mercy (<sup><4068></sup>Luke 1:68).

***as his goodly horse*** — In <sup><3905></sup>Zechariah 9:13 they were represented under the image of *bows and arrows*, here under that of their commander-in-chief, Jehovah’s *battle horse* (So 1:9). God can make His people, timid though they be as sheep, courageous as the charger. The general rode on the most beautiful and richly caparisoned, and had his horse tended with the greatest care. Jehovah might cast off the Jews for their vileness, but He

regards His election or adoption of them: whence He calls them here “*His flock*,” and therefore saves them.

**4. *Out of him*** — *Judah* is to be no more subject to foreigners, but *from itself* shall come its rulers.

***the corner*** — stone, Messiah (<sup>23816</sup>Isaiah 28:16). “Corners” simply express *governors* (<sup>09483</sup>1 Samuel 14:38, *Margin*; <sup>23913</sup>Isaiah 19:13, *Margin*). The Maccabees, *Judah’s* governors and deliverers from Antiochus the oppressor, are primarily meant; but Messiah is the Antitype. Messiah supports and binds together the Church, Jews and Gentiles.

***the nail*** — (<sup>00023</sup>Judges 4:21 <sup>20223</sup>Isaiah 22:23). The large peg inside an Oriental tent, on which is hung most of its valuable furniture. On Messiah hang all the glory and hope of His people.

***bow*** — (<sup>30035</sup>Zechariah 9:13). *Judah* shall not need foreign soldiery. Messiah shall be her battle-bow (<sup>09616</sup>Psalms 45:4,5 <sup>61012</sup>Revelation 6:2).

***every oppressor*** — rather, in a good sense, *ruler*, as the kindred Ethiopic term means. So “*exactor*,” in <sup>23017</sup>Isaiah 60:17, namely, one who exacts the tribute from the nations made tributary to *Judah* [LUDOVICUS DE DIEU].

**5. *riders on horses*** — namely, the enemy’s horsemen. Though the Jews were forbidden by the law to multiply horses in battle (<sup>65716</sup>Deuteronomy 17:16), they are made *Jehovah’s* war horse (Zechariah 10:3 <sup>44017</sup>Psalms 20:7), and so tread down on foot the foe with all his cavalry (<sup>38044</sup>Ezekiel 38:4 <sup>27140</sup>Daniel 11:40). Cavalry was the chief strength of the Syro-Grecian army (I Maccabees 3:39).

**6. *Judah ... Joseph*** — that is, the ten tribes. The distinct mention of both *Judah* and *Israel* shows that there is yet a more complete restoration than that from *Babylon*, when *Judah* alone and a few *Israelites* from the other tribes returned. The Maccabean deliverance is here connected with it, just as the painter groups on the same canvas objects in the foreground and hills far distant; or as the comparatively near planet and the remote fixed star are seen together in the same firmament. Prophecy ever hastens to the glorious final consummation under Messiah.

***bring them again to place them*** — namely, securely in their own land. The *Hebrew* verb is compounded of two, “I will bring again,” and “I will place them” (<sup>63237</sup>Jeremiah 32:37) MAURER, from a different form, translates, “I will make them to dwell.”

**7. *like a mighty man*** — in the battle with the foe (Zechariah 10:3,5).

**rejoice** — at their victory over the foe.

**children shall see it** — who are not yet of age to serve. To teach patient waiting for God's promises. If ye do not at present see the fulfillment, your *children* shall, and their joy shall be complete.

**rejoice in the Lord** — the Giver of such a glorious victory.

**8. hiss for them** — Keepers of bees by a whistle call them together. So Jehovah by the mere word of His call shall gather back to Palestine His scattered people (<sup><300F></sup>Zechariah 10:10 <sup><315B></sup>Isaiah 5:26 <sup><351I></sup>Ezekiel 36:11). The multitudes mentioned by JOSEPHUS [*Wars of the Jews*, 3:2], as peopling Galilee two hundred years after this time, were a pledge of the future more perfect fulfillment of the prophecy.

**for I have redeemed them** — namely, in My covenant purpose “redeemed” both temporally and spiritually.

**as they have increased** — in former times.

**9. sow them among ... people** — Their dispersion was with a special design. Like seed sown far and wide, they shall, when quickened themselves, be the fittest instruments for quickening others (compare <sup><318F></sup>Micah 5:7). The slight hold they have on every soil where they now live, as also the commercial and therefore cosmopolitan character of their pursuits, making a change of residence easy to them, fit them peculiarly for missionary work [MOORE]. The wide dispersion of the Jews just before Christ's coming prepared the way similarly for the apostles' preaching in the various Jewish synagogues throughout the world; everywhere some of the Old Testament seed previously sown was ready to germinate when the New Testament light and heat were brought to bear on it by Gospel preachers. Thus the way was opened for entrance among the Gentiles. “*Will sow*” is the *Hebrew* future, said of that which has been done, is being done, and may be done afterwards [MAURER], (compare <sup><312B></sup>Hosea 2:23).

**shall remember me in far countries** — (<sup><318F></sup>Deuteronomy 30:1 <sup><346S></sup>2 Chronicles 6:37). Implying the Jews return to a right mind in “all the nations” where they are scattered simultaneously. Compare <sup><315T></sup>Luke 15:17,18, with <sup><322F></sup>Psalms 22:27, “All the ends of the world *remembering* and turning unto the Lord,” preceded by the “seed of Jacob ... Israel ... fearing and glorifying Him”; also <sup><342B></sup>Psalms 102:13-15.

**live** — in political and spiritual life.

**10. Egypt ... Assyria** — the former the first, the latter among the last of Israel's oppressors (or *representing the four great world kingdoms*, of

which it was the first): types of the present *universal* dispersion, Egypt being south, Assyria north, opposite ends of the compass. MAURER conjectures that many Israelites fled to “Egypt” on the invasion of Tiglath-pileser. But <sup><23111></sup>Isaiah 11:11 and this passage rather accord with the view of the *future* restoration.

**Gilead ... Lebanon** — The whole of the Holy Land is described by two of its boundaries, the eastern (“Gilead” beyond Jordan) and the northern (“Lebanon”).

**place shall not be found for them** — that is, there shall not be room enough for them through their numbers (<sup><23411></sup>Isaiah 49:20 54:3).

**11. pass ... sea with affliction** — Personifying the “sea”; He shall afflict the sea, that is, cause it to cease to be an obstacle to Israel’s return to Palestine (<sup><23115></sup>Isaiah 11:15,16). *Vulgate* translates, “The strait of the sea.” MAURER, “He shall *cleave and smite*.” *English Version* is best (<sup><39413></sup>Psalms 114:3). As Jehovah smote the Red Sea to make a passage for His people (<sup><12446></sup>Exodus 14:16,21), so hereafter shall He make a way through every obstacle which opposes Israel’s restoration.

**the river** — the Nile (<sup><3018></sup>Amos 8:8 9:5), or the Euphrates. Thus the Red Sea and the Euphrates in the former part of the verse answer to “Assyria” and “Egypt” in the latter.

**scepter of Egypt ... depart** — (<sup><2513></sup>Ezekiel 30:13).

**12. I ... strengthen them in ... Lord** — (<sup><3017></sup>Hosea 1:7). I, the Father, will strengthen them in the name, that is, the manifested power, of the Lord, Messiah, the Son of God.

**walk ... in his name** — that is, live everywhere and continually under His protection, and according to His will (<sup><10152></sup>Genesis 5:22 <sup><3111></sup>Psalms 20:1,7 <sup><3105></sup>Micah 4:5).

# CHAPTER 11

## ZECHARIAH 11:1-17.

### DESTRUCTION OF THE SECOND TEMPLE AND JEWISH POLITY FOR THE REJECTION OF MESSIAH.

**1. *Open thy doors, O Lebanon*** — that is, the temple so called, as being constructed of cedars of Lebanon, or as being lofty and conspicuous like that mountain (compare <sup><377B></sup>Ezekiel 17:3 <sup><377B></sup>Habakkuk 2:17). Forty years before the destruction of the temple, the tract called “Massecheth Joma” states, its doors of their own accord opened, and Rabbi Johanan in alarm said, I know that thy desolation is impending according to Zechariah’s prophecy. CALVIN supposes Lebanon to refer to *Judea*, described by its north boundary: “Lebanon,” the route by which the Romans, according to JOSEPHUS, gradually advanced towards Jerusalem. MOORE, from HENGSTENBERG, refers the passage to the civil war which caused the calling in of the Romans, who, like a storm sweeping through the land from Lebanon, deprived Judea of its independence. Thus the passage forms a fit introduction to the prediction as to Messiah born when Judea became a Roman province. But the weight of authority is for the former view.

**2. *fir tree ... cedar*** — if even the *cedars* (the highest in the state) are not spared, how much less *the fir trees* (the lowest)!

***forest of ... vintage*** — As the vines are stripped of their grapes in the vintage (compare <sup><298B></sup>Joel 3:13), so the forest of Lebanon “is come down,” stripped of all its beauty. Rather, “*the fortified*” or “*inaccessible forest*” [MAURER]; that is, Jerusalem dense with houses as a thick forest is with trees, and “fortified” with a wall around. Compare <sup><382B></sup>Micah 3:12, where its desolate state is described as a forest.

**3. *shepherds*** — the Jewish rulers.

***their glory*** — *their* wealth and magnificence; or that of *the temple*, “their glory” (<sup><413B></sup>Mark 13:1 <sup><216B></sup>Luke 21:5).

***young lions*** — the princes, so described on account of their cruel rapacity.

***pride of Jordan*** — its thickly wooded banks, the lair of “lions” (<sup><312B></sup>Jeremiah 12:5 49:19). Image for Judea “spoiled” of the magnificence of

its rulers (“the young lions”). The valley of the Jordan forms a deeper gash than any on the earth. The land at Lake Merom is on a level with the Mediterranean Sea; at the Sea of Tiberias it falls six hundred fifty feet below that level, and to double that depression at the Dead Sea, that is, in all, 1950 feet below the Mediterranean; in twenty miles’ interval there is a fall of from three thousand to four thousand feet.

4. The prophet here proceeds to show the cause of the destruction just foretold, namely, the rejection of Messiah.

**flock of ... slaughter** — (<sup>2942</sup>Psalm 44:22). God’s people doomed to slaughter by the Romans. Zechariah here represents typically Messiah, and performs in vision the actions enjoined: hence the language is in part appropriate to him, but mainly to the Antitype, Messiah. A million and a half perished in the Jewish war, and one million one hundred thousand at the fall of Jerusalem. “Feed” implies that the Jews could not plead ignorance of God’s will to execute their sin. Zechariah and the other prophets had by God’s appointment “fed” them (<sup>2883</sup>Acts 20:28) with the word of God, teaching and warning them to escape from coming wrath by repentance: the type of Messiah, the chief Shepherd, who receives the commission of the Father, with whom He is one (Zechariah 11:4); and Himself says (Zechariah 11:7), “I will feed the flock of slaughter.” Zechariah did not live to “feed” literally the “flock of slaughter”; Messiah alone “fed” those who, because of their rejection of Him, were condemned to slaughter. Jehovah-Messiah is the speaker. It is He who threatens to inflict the punishments (Zechariah 11:6,8). The typical breaking of the staff, performed in vision by Zechariah (<sup>2811</sup>Zechariah 11:10), is fulfilled in His breaking the covenant with Judah. It is He who was sold for thirty pieces of silver (<sup>2812</sup>Zechariah 11:12,13).

5. **possessors** — The *buyers* [MAURER], their Roman oppressors, contrasted with “they that sell men.” The instruments of God’s righteous judgment, and therefore “not holding themselves guilty” (<sup>2810</sup>Jeremiah 50:7). It is meant that they *might* use this plea, not that they actually used it. Judah’s adversaries felt no compunction in destroying them; and God in righteous wrath against Judah allowed it.

**they that sell them** — (Compare <sup>2812</sup>Zechariah 11:12). The rulers of Judah, who by their avaricious rapacity and selfishness (<sup>2814</sup>John 11:48,50) virtually sold their country to Rome. Their covetousness brought on Judea God’s visitation by Rome. The climax of this was the sale of the innocent Messiah for thirty pieces of silver. They thought that Jesus was thus sold and their selfish interest secured by the delivery of Him to the Romans for

crucifixion; but it was themselves and their country that they thus sold to the Roman possessors.”

***I am rich*** — by selling the sheep (<sup>4829</sup>Deuteronomy 29:19 <sup>4818</sup>Hosea 12:8). In short-sighted selfishness they thought they had gained their object, covetous self-aggrandizement (<sup>4264</sup>Luke 16:14), and hypocritically “thanked” God for their wicked gain (compare <sup>4281</sup>Luke 18:11).

***say ... pity*** — In *Hebrew* it is *singular*: that is, *each* of those that sell them *saieth*: Not *one* of their own shepherds *pitieth* them. An emphatical mode of expression by which each individual is represented as doing, or not doing, the action of the verb [HENDERSON]. HENGSTENBERG refers the *singular* verbs to JEHOVAH, the true actor; the wicked shepherds being His unconscious instruments. Compare Zechariah 11:6, For *I* will no more pity, with the *Hebrew* “*pitieth not*” here.

6. Jehovah, in vengeance for their rejection of Messiah, gave them over to intestine feuds and Roman rule. The Zealots and other factious Jews expelled and slew one another by turns at the last invasion by Rome.

***his king*** — Vespasian or Titus: they themselves (<sup>4695</sup>John 19:15) had said, unconsciously realizing Zechariah’s words, identifying Rome’s king with Judah’s (“his”) king, “We have no king but Caesar.” God took them at their word, and gave them the Roman king, who “smote (literally, ‘dashed in pieces’) their land,” breaking up their polity, when they rejected their true King who would have saved them.

7. ***And*** — rather, “*Accordingly*”: implying the motive cause which led Messiah to assume the office, namely, the will of the Father (Zechariah 11:4,5), who pitied the sheep without any true shepherd.

***I will feed*** — “I fed” [CALVIN], which comes to the same thing, as the past tense must in Zechariah’s time have referred to the event of Messiah’s advent then future: the prophets often speaking of the future in vision as already present. It was not My fault, Jehovah implies, that these sheep were not fed; the fault rests solely with you, because ye rejected the grace of God [CALVIN].

***even you, O poor of the flock*** — rather, “in order that (I might feed, that is, save) the poor (humble; compare <sup>4811</sup>Zechariah 11:11 <sup>4822</sup>Zephaniah 3:12 <sup>4108</sup>Matthew 5:3) of the flock”; literally, not *you*, but, “*therefore* (I will feed)” [MOORE]. See *Margin*, “*Verily* the poor.” It is for the sake of the believing remnant that Messiah took charge of the flock, though He would have saved all, if they would have come to Him. They would not come; therefore, *as a nation*, they are “the flock of (that is, doomed to) slaughter.”

**I took ... two staves** — that is, shepherds' staves or rods (<sup><42704></sup>Psalm 23:4). Symbolizing His assumption of the pastor's office.

**Beauty** — The Jews' peculiar *excellency* above other nations (<sup><48407></sup>Deuteronomy 4:7), God's special manifestation to them (<sup><44779></sup>Psalm 147:19,20), the glory of the temple ("the *beauty* of holiness," <sup><42407></sup>Psalm 29:2; compare <sup><42704></sup>Psalm 27:4 90:17 <sup><44221></sup>2 Chronicles 20:21), the "pleasantness" of their land (<sup><04495></sup>Genesis 49:15 <sup><27889></sup>Daniel 8:9 11:16), "the glorious land."

**Bands** — implying the *bond* of "brotherhood" between Judah and Israel. "Bands," in <sup><48463></sup>Psalm 119:61, *Margin*, is used for confederate *companies*: The Easterns in making a confederacy often tie a cord or band as a symbol of it, and untie it when they dissolve the confederacy [LUDOVICUS DE DIEU]. Messiah would have joined Judah and Israel in the *bonds* of a common faith and common laws (<sup><38114></sup>Zechariah 11:14), but they would not; therefore in just retribution He broke "His covenant which He had made with all the people." Alexander, Antiochus Epiphanes, and Pompey were all kept from marring utterly the distinctive "beauty" and "brotherhood" of Judah and Israel, which subsisted more or less so long as the temple stood. But when Jehovah brake the staves, not even Titus could save the temple from his own Roman soldiery, nor was Julian able to restore it.

**8. Three shepherds ... I cut off** — literally, "to cause to disappear," to destroy so as not to leave a vestige of them. The three shepherds whom Messiah removes are John, Simon, and Eleazar, three leaders of factions in the Jewish war [DRUSIUS]. Or, as Messiah, the Antitype, was at once *prophet, priest, and king*, so He by the destruction of the Jewish polity destroyed these *three* orders for the unbelief of both the rulers and people [MOORE]. If they had accepted Messiah, they would have had all three combined in Him, and would have been themselves spiritually prophets, priests, and kings to God. Refusing Him, they lost all three, in every sense.

**one month** — a brief and fixed space of time (<sup><28877></sup>Hosea 5:7). Probably alluding to the last period of the siege of Jerusalem, when all authority within the city was at an end [HENDERSON].

**loathed them** — literally, "was straitened" as to them; instead of being *enlarged* towards them in love (<sup><40012></sup>2 Corinthians 6:11,12). The same *Hebrew* as in <sup><02104></sup>Numbers 21:4, *Margin*. No room was left by them for the grace of God, as His favors were rejected [CALVIN]. The mutual distaste that existed between the holy Messiah and the guilty Jews is implied.

**9. Then said I** — at last when all means of saving the nation had been used in vain (<sup><48824></sup>John 8:24).

***I will not*** — that is, *no more* feed you. The last rejection of the Jews is foretold, of which the former under Nebuchadnezzar, similarly described, was the type (<sup><245E></sup>Jeremiah 15:1-3 34:17 43:11 <sup><31E2></sup>Ezekiel 6:12). Perish those who are doomed to perish, since they reject Him who would have saved them! Let them rush on to their own ruin, since they will have it so.

***eat ... flesh of another*** — Let them madly perish by mutual discords. JOSEPHUS attests the fulfillment of this prophecy of *threefold calamity*: pestilence and famine (“dieth ... die”), war (“cut off ... cut off”), intestine discord (“eat ... one ... another”).

**10. *covenant which I made with all the people*** — The covenant made with the *whole nation* is to hold good no more except to the elect remnant. This is the force of the clause, not as MAURER, and others translate. The covenant which I made with all the *nations* (not to hurt My elect people, <sup><32E8></sup>Hosea 2:18). But the *Hebrew* is the term for *the elect people* (*Ammim*), not that for *the Gentile nations* (*Goim*). The *Hebrew plural* expresses the great numbers of the Israelite people formerly (<sup><100E></sup>1 Kings 4:20). The article is, in the *Hebrew*, all *the* or *those* peoples. His cutting asunder the staff “Beauty,” implies the setting aside of the outward symbols of the Jews distinguishing excellency above the Gentiles (see on Zechariah 11:7) as God’s own people.

**11. *poor ... knew*** — The humble, godly remnant knew by the event the truth of the prediction and of Messiah’s mission. He had, thirty-seven years before the fall of Jerusalem, forewarned His disciples when they should see the city compassed with armies, to “flee unto the mountains.” Accordingly, Cestius Gallus, when advancing on Jerusalem, unaccountably withdrew for a brief space, giving Christians the opportunity of obeying Christ’s words by fleeing to Pella.

***waited upon me*** — looked to the hand of God in all these calamities, not blindly shutting their eyes to the true cause of the visitation, as most of the nation still do, instead of referring it to their own rejection of Messiah. <sup><230E></sup>Isaiah 30:18-21 refers similarly to the Lord’s return in mercy to the remnant that “wait for Him” and “cry” to Him (<sup><31E2></sup>Zephaniah 3:12,13).

**12. *I said*** — The prophet here represents the person of Jehovah-Messiah.

***If ye think good*** — literally, “If it be good in your eyes.” Glancing at their self-sufficient pride in not *deigning* to give Him that return which His great love in coming down to them from heaven merited, namely, their love and obedience. “My price”; my reward for pastoral care, both during the whole of Israel’s history from the Exodus, and especially the three and a half

years of Messiah's ministry. He speaks as their "servant," which He was to them in order to fulfill the Father's will (<sup><5107></sup>Philippians 2:7).

**if not, forbear** — They withheld that which He sought as His only reward, their love; yet He will not force them, but leave His cause with God (<sup><2306></sup>Isaiah 49:4,5). Compare the type Jacob cheated of his wages by Laban, but leaving his cause in the hands of God (<sup><0344></sup>Genesis 31:41,42).

**So ... thirty pieces of silver** — *thirty shekels*. They not only refused Him His due, but added insult to injury by giving for Him the price of a gored bond-servant (<sup><0213></sup>Exodus 21:32 <sup><4185></sup>Matthew 26:15). A freeman was rated at twice that sum.

**13. Cast it unto the potter** — proverbial: Throw it to the temple potter, the most suitable person to whom to cast the despicable sum, plying his trade as he did in the polluted valley (<sup><2230></sup>2 Kings 23:10) of Hinnom, because it furnished him with the most suitable clay. This same valley, and the potter's shop, were made the scene of symbolic actions by Jeremiah (<sup><2406></sup>Jeremiah 18:1-19:15) when prophesying of this very period of Jewish history. Zechariah connects his prophecy here with the older one of Jeremiah: showing the further application of the same divine threat against his unfaithful people in their destruction under Rome, as before in that under Nebuchadnezzar. Hence <sup><4176></sup>Matthew 27:9, in *English Version*, and in the oldest authorities, quotes Zechariah's words as *Jeremiah's*, the latter being the original author from whom Zechariah derived the groundwork of the prophecy. Compare the parallel case of <sup><4102></sup>Mark 1:2,3 in the oldest manuscripts (though not in *English Version*), quoting Malachi's words as those of "Isaiah," the original source of the prophecy. Compare my *Introduction* to Zechariah. The "potter" is significant of God's absolute power over the clay framed by His own hands (<sup><2659></sup>Isaiah 45:9 <sup><3806></sup>Jeremiah 18:6 <sup><6121></sup>Romans 9:20,21).

**in the house of the Lord** — The thirty pieces are thrown down *in the temple*, as the house of Jehovah, the fit place for the money of Jehovah-Messiah being deposited, in the treasury, and the very place accordingly where Judas "cast them down." The thirty pieces were cast "to the potter," because it was to him they were "appointed by the Lord" ultimately to go, as a worthless price (compare <sup><4176></sup>Matthew 27:6,7,10). For "I took," "I threw," here Matthew has "*they* took," "*they* gave them"; because their (the Jews' and Judas') act was all *His* "*appointment*" (which Matthew also expresses), and therefore is here attributed to Him (compare <sup><4123></sup>Acts 2:23 4:28). It is curious that some old translators translate, for "to the potter," "*to the treasury*" (so MAURER), agreeing with <sup><4176></sup>Matthew 27:6. But *English Version* agrees better with *Hebrew* and <sup><4176></sup>Matthew 27:10.

**14.** The breaking of the bond of union between Judah and Israel's ten tribes under Rehoboam is here the image used to represent the *fratricidal discord of factions* which raged within Jerusalem on the eve of its fall, while the Romans were thundering at its gates without. See JOSEPHUS [*Wars of the Jews*]. Also the continued *severance of the tribes* till their coming reunion (◊<sup>5115</sup>Romans 11:15).

**15. yet** — “take *again*”; as in Zechariah 11:7 previously he had taken other implements.

***instruments*** — the accoutrements, namely, the shepherd's crook and staff, wallet, etc. Assume the character of a bad (“foolish” in Scripture is synonymous with *wicked*, ◊<sup>5101</sup>Psalms 14:1) shepherd, as before thou assumedst that of a good shepherd. Since the Jews would not have Messiah, “the Good Shepherd” (◊<sup>3001</sup>John 10:11), they were given up to Rome, heathen and papal, both alike their persecutor, especially the latter, and shall be again to Antichrist, the “man of sin,” the instrument of judgment by Christ's permission. Antichrist will first make a covenant with them as their ruler, but then will break it, and they shall feel the iron yoke of his tyranny as the false Messiah, because they rejected the light yoke of the true Messiah (◊<sup>27135</sup>Daniel 11:35-38 12:1 9:27 ◊<sup>5112</sup>2 Thessalonians 2:3-12). But at last he is to perish utterly (◊<sup>3117</sup>Zechariah 11:17), and the elect remnant of Judah and Israel is to be saved gloriously.

**16. in the land** — Antichrist will probably be a Jew, or at least one in Judea.

***not visit ... neither ... seek ... heal ... broken, nor feed ... but ... eat ... flesh ... tear*** — Compare similar language as to the unfaithful shepherds of Israel in ◊<sup>5301</sup>Ezekiel 34:2-4. This implies, they shall be paid in kind. Such a shepherd in the worst type shall “tear” them for a limited time.

***those ... cut off*** — “those perishing” [*Septuagint*], that is, those sick unto death, as if already cut off.

***the young*** — The *Hebrew* is always used of human youths, who are really referred to under the image of the young of the flock. Ancient expositors [*Chaldee Version*, JEROME, etc.] translate, “*the straying*,” “*the dispersed*”; so GESENIUS.

***broken*** — the wounded.

***standeth still*** — with faintness lagging behind.

**tear ... claws** — expressing cruel voracity; tearing off the very hoofs (compare <sup><2005></sup>Exodus 10:26), giving them excruciating pain, and disabling them from going in quest of pasture.

**17. the idol** — The *Hebrew* expresses both *vanity* and *an idol*. Compare <sup><2343></sup>Isaiah 14:13 <sup><2713></sup>Daniel 11:36 <sup><3104></sup>2 Thessalonians 2:4 <sup><6636></sup>Revelation 13:5,6, as to the idolatrous and blasphemous claims of Antichrist. The “idol shepherd *that leaveth the flock*” cannot apply to Rome, but to some ruler among the Jews themselves, at first cajoling, then “leaving” them, nay, destroying them (<sup><2702></sup>Daniel 9:27 11:30-38). God’s sword shall descend on his “arm,” the instrument of his tyranny towards the sheep (<sup><5108></sup>2 Thessalonians 2:8); and on his “right eye,” wherewith he ought to have watched the sheep (<sup><6002></sup>John 10:12,13). However, Antichrist shall *destroy*, rather than “leave the flock.” Perhaps, therefore, the reference is to the shepherds who *left the flock* to Antichrist’s rapacity, and who, in just retribution, shall feel his “sword” on their “arm,” which ought to have protected the flock but did not, and on their “eye,” which had failed duly to watch the sheep from hurt. The blinding of “the *right eye*” has attached to it the notion of ignominy (<sup><0910></sup>1 Samuel 11:2).

# CHAPTER 12

## ZECHARIAH 12:1-14.

### JERUSALEM THE INSTRUMENT OF JUDGMENT ON HER FOES HEREAFTER; HER REPENTANCE AND RESTORATION.

1. **burden** — “weighty prophecy”; fraught with destruction to Israel’s foes; the expression may also refer to the distresses of Israel *implied* as about to precede the deliverance.

**for Israel** — *concerning* Israel [MAURER].

**stretcheth forth** — present; *now*, not merely “*hath* stretched forth,” as if God only created and then left the universe to itself (<sup><4157></sup>John 5:17). To remove all doubts of unbelief as to the possibility of Israel’s deliverance, God prefaces the prediction by reminding us of His creative and sustaining power. Compare a similar preface in <sup><2415></sup>Isaiah 42:5 43:1 65:17,18.

**formeth ... spirit of man** — (<sup><0452></sup>Numbers 16:22 <sup><5819></sup>Hebrews 12:9).

2. **cup of trembling** — a cup causing those who drink it to *reel* (from a *Hebrew* root “to reel”). Jerusalem, who drank the “cup of trembling” herself, shall be so to her foes (<sup><2517></sup>Isaiah 51:17,22 <sup><2413></sup>Jeremiah 13:13). CALVIN with the *Septuagint* translates, “*threshold* of destruction,” on which they shall stumble and be crushed when they attempt to cross it. *English Version* is better.

**both against Judah** — The *Hebrew* order of words is literally, “And also against Judah shall he (the foe) be in the siege against Jerusalem”; implying virtually that Judah, as it shares the invasion along with Jerusalem, so it shall, like the metropolis, prove a cup of trembling to the invaders. MAURER with JEROME translates, “Also upon Judah shall be (the cup of trembling); that is, some Jews forced by the foe shall join in the assault on Jerusalem, and shall share the overthrow with the besiegers. But Zechariah 12:6,7 show that Judah escapes and proves the scourge of the foe.

3. (Compare Zechariah 14:4,6-9,13). JEROME states it was a custom in Palestine to test the strength of youths by their lifting up a massive stone; the phrase, “burden themselves with it,” refers to this custom. Compare

<sup><1244</sup>Matthew 21:44: The Jews “fell” on the rock of offense, Messiah, and were “broken”; but the rock shall fall on Antichrist, who “burdens himself with it” by his assault on the restored Jews, and “grind him to powder.”

**all ... people of ... earth** — The Antichristian confederacy against the Jews shall be almost universal.

**4. I will smite ... horse** — The arm of attack especially formidable to Judah, who was unprovided with cavalry. So in the overthrow of Pharaoh (<sup><1519</sup>Exodus 15:19,21).

**open mine eyes upon ... Judah** — to watch over Judah’s safety. Heretofore Jehovah seemed to have shut His eyes, as having no regard for her.

**blindness** — so as to rush headlong on to their own ruin (compare <sup><3425</sup>Zechariah 14:12,13).

**5. shall say** — when they see the foe divinely smitten with “madness.”

**Judah ... Jerusalem** — here distinguished as the country and the metropolis. Judah recognizes her “strength” to be “Jerusalem and its inhabitants” as the instrument, and “Jehovah of hosts their God” (dwelling especially there) as the author of all power (<sup><2186</sup>Joel 3:16). My strength is the inhabitants of Jerusalem, who have the Lord their God as their help. The repulse of the foe by the metropolis shall assure the Jews of the country that the same divine aid shall save them.

**6.** On “governors of Judah,” see on Zechariah 9:7.

**hearth** — or pan.

**torch ... in a sheaf** — Though small, it shall consume the many foes around. One prophet supplements the other. Thus <sup><2301</sup>Isaiah 29:1-24 <sup><2301</sup>Joel 3:1-21 Zechariah 12:1-14:21, describe more Antichrist’s *army* than himself. Daniel represents him as a horn growing out of the fourth beast or fourth kingdom; St. John, as a separate beast having an individual existence. Daniel dwells on his worldly conquests as a king; St. John, more on his spiritual tyranny, whence he adds a second beast, the false prophet coming in a semblance of spirituality. What is briefly described by one is more fully prophesied by the other [ROOS].

**7.** Judah is to be “first saved,” because of her meek acknowledgment of dependence on Jerusalem, subordinate to Jehovah’s aid.

**tents** — shifting and insecure, as contrasted with the solid fortifications of Judah. But God chooses the weak to confound the mighty, that all human glorying may be set aside.

**8.** Jerusalem, however, also shall be specially strengthened against the foe.

**feeble ... shall be as David** — to the Jew, the highest type of strength and glory on earth (<sup>1078</sup>2 Samuel 17:8 18:3 <sup>2910</sup>Joel 3:10).

**angel of the Lord before them** — the divine angel that went “before them” through the desert, the highest type of strength and glory in heaven (<sup>1231</sup>Exodus 23:20 32:34). “The house of David” is the “prince,” and his family sprung from David (<sup>3561</sup>Ezekiel 45:7,9). David’s house was then in a comparatively weak state.

**9. I will seek to destroy** — I will set Myself with determined earnestness to destroy (<sup>3102</sup>Haggai 2:22).

**10.** Future conversion of the Jews is to flow from an extraordinary outpouring of the Holy Spirit (<sup>2609</sup>Jeremiah 31:9,31-34 <sup>3529</sup>Ezekiel 39:29).

**spirit of grace ... supplications** — “spirit” is here not the spirit produced, but THE HOLY SPIRIT *producing* a “gracious” disposition, and inclination for “supplications.” CALVIN explains “spirit of grace” as *the grace of God* itself (whereby He “pours” out His bowels of mercy), “conjoined with the sense of it in man’s heart.” The “spirit of supplications” is the mercury whose rise or fall is an unerring test of the state of the Church [MOORE]. In *Hebrew*, “grace” and “supplications” are kindred terms; translate, therefore, “gracious supplications.” The *plural* implies suppliant prayers “without ceasing.” Herein not merely external help against the foe, as before, but internal grace is promised subsequently.

**look upon me** — with profoundly earnest regard, as the Messiah whom they so long denied.

**pierced** — implying Messiah’s humanity: as “I will pour ... spirit” implies His divinity.

**look ... mourn** — True repentance arises from the sight by faith of the crucified Savior. It is the tear that drops from the eye of faith looking on Him. Terror only produces remorse. The true penitent weeps over his sins in love to Him who in love has suffered for them.

**me ... him** — The change of person is due to Jehovah-Messiah speaking *in His own person* first, then the prophet speaking *of Him*. The Jews, to avoid the conclusion that He whom they have “pierced” is Jehovah-Messiah,

who says, "I will pour out ... spirit," altered "me" into "him," and represent the "pierced" one to be Messiah Ben (son of) Joseph, who was to suffer in the battle with Cog, before Messiah Ben David should come to reign. But *Hebrew, Chaldee, Syriac, and Arabic* oppose this; and the ancient Jews interpreted it of Messiah. <sup><4926></sup>Psalm 22:16 also refers to His being "pierced." So <sup><6957></sup>John 19:37 <sup><6107></sup>Revelation 1:7. The actual piercing of His side was the culminating point of all their insulting treatment of Him. The act of the Roman soldier who pierced Him was their act (<sup><4275></sup>Matthew 27:25), and is so accounted here in Zechariah. The *Hebrew* word is always used of a literal piercing (so Zechariah 13:3); not of a metaphorical *piercing*, "insulted," as MAURER and other Rationalists (from the *Septuagint*) represent.

***as one mourneth for ... son*** — (<sup><2026></sup>Jeremiah 6:26 <sup><3180></sup>Amos 8:10). A proverbial phrase peculiarly forcible among the Jews, who felt childlessness as a curse and dishonor. Applied with peculiar propriety to mourning for Messiah, "the *first-born* among many brethren" (<sup><6189></sup>Romans 8:29).

**11.** As in <sup><3820></sup>Zechariah 12:10 the bitterness of their mourning is illustrated by a private case of mourning, so in this verse by a public one, the greatest recorded in Jewish history, that for the violent death in battle with Pharaoh-necho of the good King Josiah, whose reign had been the only gleam of brightness for the period from Hezekiah to the downfall of the state; lamentations were written by Jeremiah for the occasion (<sup><1239></sup>2 Kings 23:29,30 <sup><4852></sup>2 Chronicles 35:22-27).

***Hadad-rimmon*** — a place or city in the great plain of Esdraelon, the battlefield of many a conflict, near Megiddo; called so from the Syrian idol Rimmon. the Syrians [MACROB, *Saturnalia*, 1.23]. *Hadad* also was the name of the sun, a chief god of universal and an individual mourning at once.

**12-14. *David ... Nathan*** — representing the highest and lowest of the royal order. Nathan, not the prophet, but a younger son of David (<sup><4164></sup>2 Samuel 5:14 <sup><4188></sup>Luke 3:31).

***apart*** — Retirement and seclusion are needful for deep personal religion.

***wives apart*** — Jewish females worship separately from the males (<sup><4250></sup>Exodus 15:1,20).

**13. *Levi ... Shimei*** — the highest and lowest of the priestly order (<sup><4258></sup>Numbers 3:18,21). Their example and that of the royal order would of course influence the rest.

14. ***All ... that remain*** — after the fiery ordeal, in which two-thirds fall (Zechariah 13:8,9).

# CHAPTER 13

## ZECHARIAH 13:1-9.

### CLEANSING OF THE JEWS FROM SIN; ABOLITION OF IDOLATRY; THE SHEPHERD SMITTEN; THE PEOPLE OF THE LAND CUT OFF, EXCEPT A THIRD PART REFINED BY TRIALS.

1. Connected with the close of the twelfth chapter. The mourning penitents are here comforted.

*fountain opened* — It has been long opened, but then first it shall be so “to the house of David,” etc. (representing all Israel) after their long and weary wanderings. Like Hagar in the wilderness they remain ignorant of the refreshment near them, until God “opens their eyes” (<sup>4021B</sup>Genesis 21:19) [MOORE]. It is not the fountain, but their eyes that need to be opened. It shall be a “fountain” ever flowing; not a laver needing constantly to be replenished with water, such as stood between the tabernacle and altar (<sup>4028B</sup>Exodus 30:18).

*for sin ... uncleanness* — that is, judicial guilt and moral impurity. Thus justification and sanctification are implied in this verse as both flowing from the blood of Christ, not from ceremonial sacrifices (<sup>4033B</sup>1 Corinthians 1:30 <sup>4033B</sup>Hebrews 9:13,14 <sup>4033B</sup>1 John 1:7; compare <sup>4033B</sup>Ezekiel 36:25). *Sin* in Hebrew is literally a *missing the mark* or way.

2. Consequences of pardon; not indolence, but the extirpation of sin.

*names of ... idols* — Their very names were not to be mentioned; thus the Jews, instead of Mephibaal, said Mephibosheth (*Bosheth* meaning a contemptible thing) (<sup>4023B</sup>Exodus 23:13 <sup>4023B</sup>Deuteronomy 12:3 <sup>4023B</sup>Psalms 16:4).

*out of the land* — Judea’s two great sins, idolatry and false prophecy, have long since ceased. But these are types of all sin (for example, covetousness, <sup>4023B</sup>Ephesians 5:5, a besetting sin of the Jews now). Idolatry, combined with the “spirit” of “Satan,” is again to be incarnated in “the man of sin,” who is to arise in Judea (<sup>4023B</sup>2 Thessalonians 2:3-12), and is to be “consumed with the Spirit of the Lord’s mouth.” Compare as to Antichrist’s papal precursor, “seducing spirits ... doctrines of devils,” etc., <sup>4023B</sup>1 Timothy 4:1-3 <sup>4023B</sup>2 Peter 2:1.

**the unclean spirit** — Hebrew, *spirit of uncleanness* (compare Revelation 16:13); opposed to “the Spirit of holiness” (Romans 1:4), “spirit of error” (1 John 4:6). One assuming to be divinely inspired, but in league with Satan.

3. The form of phraseology here is drawn from Deuteronomy 13:6-10 18:20. The substantial truth expressed is that false prophecy shall be utterly abolished. If it were possible for it again to start up, the very parents of the false prophet would not let parental affection interfere, but would be the first to thrust him through. Love to Christ must be paramount to the tenderest of natural ties (Matthew 10:37). Much as the godly love their children, they love God and His honor more.

4. **prophets ... ashamed** — of the false prophecies which they have uttered in times past, and which the event has confuted.

**rough garment** — sackcloth. The badge of a prophet (2 Kings 1:8 Isaiah 20:2), to mark their frugality alike in food and attire (Matthew 3:4); also, to be consonant to the mournful warnings which they delivered. It is not the dress that is here condemned, but the purpose for which it was worn, namely, to conceal wolves under sheep’s clothing [CALVIN]. The monkish hair-shirt of Popery, worn to inspire the multitude with the impression of superior sanctity, shall be then cast aside.

5, 6. The detection of one of the false prophets dramatically represented. He is seized by some zealous vindicator of the law, and in fear cries out, “I am no prophet.”

**man** — that is, one.

**taught me to keep cattle** — As “keeping cattle” is not the same as to be “an husbandman,” translate rather, “Has used (or ‘appropriated’) me as a servant,” namely, *in husbandry* [MAURER]. However, husbandry and keeping cattle might be regarded as jointly the occupation of the person questioned: then Amos 7:14, “herdman,” will accord with *English Version*. A Hebrew kindred word means “cattle.” Both occupations, the respondent replies, are inconsistent with my being a “prophet.”

6. **wounds in thine hand** — The interrogator still suspects him: “If so, if you have never pretended to be a prophet, whence come those wounds?” The Hebrew is literally, “*between* thine hands.” The hands were naturally held up to ward off the blows, and so were “thrust through” (Zechariah 13:3) “between” the bones of the hand. *Stoning* was the usual punishment; “thrusting through” was also a fit retribution on one who tried to “thrust Israel away” from the Lord (Deuteronomy 13:10); and perfects the type

of Messiah, condemned as a false prophet, and pierced with “wounds *between* His hands.” Thus the transition to the direct prophecy of Him (Zechariah 13:7) is natural, which it would not be if He were not indirectly and in type alluded to.

**wounded in ... house of my friends** — an implied admission that he had pretended to prophecy, and that his friends had wounded him for it in zeal for God (Zechariah 13:3). The Holy Spirit in Zechariah alludes indirectly to Messiah, the Antitype, wounded by those whom He came to befriend, who ought to have been His “friends,” who were His kinsmen (compare Zechariah 13:3, as to the false prophet’s friends, with <sup><402></sup>Mark 3:21, “His friends,” *Margin*, “kinsmen”; <sup><405></sup>John 7:5; “His own,” <sup><401></sup>John 1:11; *the Jews*, “of whom as concerning the flesh He came,” <sup><405></sup>Romans 9:5), but who wounded Him by the agency of the Romans (<sup><320></sup>Zechariah 12:10).

7. Expounded by Christ as referring to Himself (<sup><45></sup>Matthew 26:31,32). Thus it is a resumption of the prophecy of His betrayal (Zechariah 11:4,10,13,14), and the subsequent punishment of the Jews. It explains the mystery why He, who came to be a blessing, was cut off while bestowing the blessing. God regards sin in such a fearful light that He spared not His own co-equal Son in the one Godhead, when that Son bore the sinner’s guilt.

**Awake** — Compare a similar address to the sword of justice personified (<sup><246></sup>Jeremiah 46:6,7). For “smite” (imperative), <sup><45></sup>Matthew 26:31 has “I will smite.” The act of the sword, it is thus implied, is GOD’s act. So the prophecy in <sup><208></sup>Isaiah 6:9, “Hear ye,” is imperative; the fulfillment as declared by Jesus is future (<sup><454></sup>Matthew 13:14), “ye shall hear.”

**sword** — the symbol of judicial power, the highest exercise of which is to take away the life of the condemned (<sup><197></sup>Psalm 17:13 <sup><530></sup>Romans 13:4). Not merely a show, or expression, of justice (as Socinians think) is distinctly implied here, but an actual execution of it on Messiah the shepherd, the substitute for the sheep, by God as judge. Yet God in this shows His love as gloriously as His justice. For God calls Messiah “My shepherd,” that is, provided (<sup><618></sup>Revelation 13:8) for sinners by My love to them, and ever the object of My love, though judicially smitten (<sup><250></sup>Isaiah 53:4) for their sins (<sup><241></sup>Isaiah 42:1 59:16).

**man that is my fellow** — literally, “the man of my union.” The *Hebrew* for “man” is “a mighty man,” one peculiarly man in his noblest ideal. “My fellow,” that is, “my associate.” “My equal” ([DE WETTE]; a remarkable admission from a Rationalist). “My nearest kinsman” [HENGSTENBERG], (<sup><600></sup>John 10:30 14:10,11 <sup><300></sup>Philippians 2:6).

**sheep shall be scattered** — The scattering of Christ’s disciples on His apprehension was the partial fulfillment (<sup><4038></sup>Matthew 26:31), a pledge of the dispersion of the Jewish nation (once the Lord’s *sheep*, <sup><19408></sup>Psalms 100:3) consequent on their crucifixion of Him. The Jews, though “scattered,” are still the Lord’s “sheep,” awaiting their being “gathered” by Him (<sup><24089></sup>Isaiah 40:9,11).

**I will turn ... hand upon ... little ones** — that is, I will interpose in favor of (compare the phrase in a good sense, <sup><2025></sup>Isaiah 1:25) “the little ones,” namely, the humble followers of Christ from the Jewish Church, despised by the world: “the poor of the flock” (Zechariah 11:7,11); comforted after His crucifixion at the resurrection (<sup><4007></sup>John 20:17-20); saved again by a special interposition from the destruction of Jerusalem, having retired to Pella when Cestius Gallus so unaccountably withdrew from Jerusalem. Ever since there has been a Jewish “remnant” of “the little ones ... according to the election of grace.” The hand of Jehovah was laid in wrath on the Shepherd that His *hand might be turned* in grace upon the little ones.

**8, 9.** Two-thirds of the Jewish nation were to perish in the Roman wars, and a third to survive. Probably from the context (Zechariah 14:2-9), which has never yet been fulfilled, the destruction of the two-thirds (literally, “the proportion of two,” or “portion of two”) and the saving of the remnant, the one-third, are still future, and to be fulfilled under Antichrist.

**9. through ... fire** — of trial (<sup><1960></sup>Psalms 66:10 <sup><3041></sup>Amos 4:11 <sup><4815></sup>1 Corinthians 3:15 <sup><1006></sup>1 Peter 1:6,7). It hence appears that the Jews’ conversion is not to precede, but to follow, their external deliverance by the special interposition of Jehovah; which latter shall be the main cause of their conversion, combined with a preparatory inward shedding abroad in their hearts of the Holy Spirit (<sup><3020></sup>Zechariah 12:10-14); and here, “they shall call on My name,” in their trouble, which brings Jehovah to their help (<sup><1815></sup>Psalms 50:15).

**my people** — (<sup><2808></sup>Jeremiah 30:18-22 <sup><3419></sup>Ezekiel 11:19,20 <sup><3023></sup>Hosea 2:23).

# CHAPTER 14

## ZECHARIAH 14:1-21.

### LAST STRUGGLE WITH THE HOSTILE WORLD POWERS: MESSIAH-JEHOVAH SAVES JERUSALEM AND DESTROYS THE FOE, OF WHOM THE REMNANT TURNS TO THE LORD REIGNING AT JERUSALEM.

1. *day of the Lord* — in which He shall vindicate His justice by punishing the wicked and then saving His elect people (<sup><sup>21ES></sup>Joel 2:31 3:14 Malachi 4:1,5).

*thy spoil ... divided in the midst of thee* — by the foe; secure of victory, they shall not divide the spoil taken from thee in their camp outside, but “in the midst” of the city itself.

2. *gather all nations*, etc. — The prophecy seems literal (compare <sup><sup>21RD></sup>Joel 3:2). If Antichrist be the leader of the nations, it seems inconsistent with the statement that he will at this time be sitting in the temple as God at Jerusalem (<sup><sup>31D4></sup>2 Thessalonians 2:4); thus Antichrist outside would be made to besiege Antichrist within the city. But difficulties do not set aside revelations: the event will clear up seeming difficulties. Compare the complicated movements, <sup><sup>21HE></sup>Daniel 11:1-45.

*half ... the residue* — In Zechariah 13:8,9, it is “two-thirds” that perish, and “the third” escapes. There, however, it is “in *all the land*”; here it is “half of the city.” Two-thirds of the “*whole people*” perish, one-third survives. One-half of the *citizens* are led captive, the residue are not cut off. Perhaps, too, we ought to translate, “a (not ‘the’) residue.”

3. *Then* — In Jerusalem’s extremity.

*as ... in ... day of battle* — as when Jehovah fought for Israel against the Egyptians at the Red Sea (<sup><sup>0244></sup>Exodus 14:14 15:3). As He then made a way through the divided sea, so will He now divide in two “the Mount of Olives” (Zechariah 14:4).

4. The object of the cleaving of the mount in two by a fissure or valley (a prolongation of the valley of Jehoshaphat, and extending from Jerusalem on the west towards Jordan, eastward) is to open a way of escape to the

besieged (compare <sup><2182></sup> Joel 3:12,14). Half the divided mount is thereby forced northward, half southward; the valley running between. The place of His departure at His ascension shall be the place of His return: and the “manner” of His return also shall be similar (<sup><4011></sup> Acts 1:11). He shall probably “come from the east” (<sup><4247></sup> Matthew 24:27). He so made His triumphal entry into the city from the Mount of Olives from the east (<sup><4200></sup> Matthew 21:1-10). This was the scene of His agony: so it shall be the scene of His glory. Compare <sup><24123></sup> Ezekiel 11:23, with <sup><2682></sup> Ezekiel 43:2, “from the way of the east.

**5. *ye shall flee to the valley*** — rather “*through* the valley,” as in <sup><40232></sup> Samuel 2:29. The valley made by the cleaving asunder of the Mount of Olives (Zechariah 14:4) is designed to be their way of escape, not their place of refuge [MAURER]. JEROME is on the side of *English Version*. If it be translated so, it will mean, Ye shall flee “to” the valley, not to hide there, but as the passage through which an escape may be effected. The same divinely sent earthquake which swallows up the foe, opens out a way of escape to God’s people. The earthquake in Uzziah’s days is mentioned (<sup><3100></sup> Amos 1:1) as a recognized epoch in Jewish history. Compare also <sup><2303></sup> Isaiah 6:1: perhaps the same year that Jehovah held His heavenly court and gave commission to Isaiah for the Jews, an earthquake in the physical world, as often happens (<sup><4247></sup> Matthew 24:7), marked momentous movements in the unseen spiritual world.

***of the mountains*** — rather, “of *My* mountains,” namely, Zion and Moriah, peculiarly sacred to Jehovah [MOORE]. Or, the mountains formed by *My* cleaving Olivet into two [MAURER].

***Azal*** — the name of a place *near* a gate east of the city. The *Hebrew* means “adjoining” [HENDERSON]. Others give the meaning, “departed,” “ceased.” The valley reaches up to the city gates, so as to enable the fleeing citizens to betake themselves immediately to it on leaving the city.

***Lord my God ... with thee*** — The mention of the “Lord my God” leads the prophet to pass suddenly to a direct address to Jehovah. It is as if “lifting up his head” (<sup><2128></sup> Luke 21:28), he suddenly sees in vision the Lord coming, and joyfully exclaims, “All the saints with Thee!” So <sup><2359></sup> Isaiah 25:9.

***saints*** — *holy angels* escorting the returning King (<sup><4281></sup> Matthew 24:30,31 <sup><6114></sup> Jude 1:14); and redeemed men (<sup><46523></sup> 1 Corinthians 15:23 <sup><5183></sup> 1 Thessalonians 3:13 4:14). Compare the similar mention of the “saints” and “angels” at His coming on Sinai (<sup><6102></sup> Deuteronomy 32:2,3 <sup><4073></sup> Acts 7:53 <sup><4819></sup> Galatians 3:19 <sup><3012></sup> Hebrews 2:2). Phillips thinks Azal is Ascalon on the Mediterranean. An earthquake beneath Messiah’s tread will divide Syria, making from Jerusalem to Azal a valley which will admit the ocean waters

from the west to the Dead Sea. The waters will rush down the valley of Arabah, the old bed of the Jordan, clear away the sand-drift of four thousand years, and cause the commerce of Petra and Tyre to center in the holy city. The Dead Sea rising above its shores will overflow by the valley of Edom, completing the straits of Azal into the Red Sea. Thus will be formed the great pool of Jerusalem (compare Zechariah 14:8 <sup><3670></sup>Ezekiel 47:1, etc. <sup><2183></sup>Joel 3:18). Euphrates will be the north boundary, and the Red Sea the south. Twenty-five miles north and twenty-five miles south of Jerusalem will form one side of the fifty miles square of the Lord's Holy Oblation (<sup><3681></sup>Ezekiel 48:1-35). There are seven spaces of fifty miles each from Jerusalem northward to the Euphrates, and five spaces of fifty miles each southward to the Red Sea. Thus there are thirteen equal distances on the breadth of the future promised land, one for the oblation and twelve for the tribes, according to <sup><3681></sup>Ezekiel 48:1-35. That the Euphrates north, Mediterranean west, the Nile and Red Sea south, are to be the future boundaries of the holy land, which will include Syria and Arabia, is favored by <sup><1118></sup>Genesis 15:8 <sup><1233></sup>Exodus 23:31 <sup><1512></sup>Deuteronomy 11:24 <sup><1004></sup>Joshua 1:4 <sup><1021></sup>1 Kings 4:21 <sup><1425></sup>2 Chronicles 9:26 <sup><2712></sup>Isaiah 27:12; all which was partially realized in Solomon's reign, shall be antitypically so hereafter. The theory, if true, will clear away many difficulties in the way of the literal interpretation of this chapter and <sup><3681></sup>Ezekiel 48:1-35.

**6. light ... not ... clear ... dark** — JEROME, *Chaldee, Syriac, and Septuagint* translate, "There shall not be light, but cold and ice"; that is, a day full of horror (<sup><318></sup>Amos 5:18). But the *Hebrew* for "clear" does not mean "cold," but "precious," "splendid" (compare <sup><1313></sup>Job 31:26). CALVIN translates, "The light shall not be clear, *but* dark" (literally, "condensation," that is, thick mist); like a dark day in which you can hardly distinguish between day and night. *English Version* accords with Zechariah 14:7: "There shall not be altogether light nor altogether darkness," but an intermediate condition in which sorrows shall be mingled with joys.

**7. one day** — a day altogether *unique*, different from all others [MAURER]. Compare "one," that is, unique (So 6:9 <sup><2410></sup>Jeremiah 30:7). Not as HENDERSON explains, "One continuous day, without night" (<sup><621></sup>Revelation 22:5 21:25); the millennial period (<sup><618></sup>Revelation 20:3-7).

**known to ... Lord** — This truth restrains man's curiosity and teaches us to wait the Lord's own time (<sup><1265></sup>Matthew 24:36).

**not day, nor night** — answering to "not ... clear nor ... dark" (Zechariah 14:6); not altogether daylight, yet not the darkness of night.

**at evening ... shall be light** — Towards the close of this twilight-like time of calamity, “light” shall spring up (<sup><4971></sup>Psalm 97:11 112:4 <sup><2316></sup>Isaiah 30:26 60:19,20).

**8. living waters** — (<sup><2508></sup>Ezekiel 47:1 <sup><2988></sup>Joel 3:18).

**former sea** — that is, the *front*, or east, which Orientalists face in taking the points of the compass; the Dead Sea.

**hinder sea** — the west or Mediterranean.

**summer ... winter** — neither dried up by heat, nor frozen by cold; ever flowing.

**9. king over all ... earth** — <sup><2545></sup>Isaiah 54:5 implies that this is to be the consequence of Israel being again recognized by God as His own people (<sup><2704></sup>Daniel 2:44 <sup><6115></sup>Revelation 11:15).

**one Lord ... name one** — Not that He is not so already, but He shall then be *recognized by all unanimously* as “One.” Now there are “gods many and lords many.” Then Jehovah alone shall be worshipped. The *manifestation* of the unity of the Godhead shall be simultaneous with that of the unity of the Church. Believers are one in spirit already, even as God is one (<sup><4008></sup>Ephesians 4:3-6). But externally there are sad divisions. Not until these disappear, shall God reveal fully His unity to the world (<sup><4872></sup>John 17:21,23). Then shall there be “a pure language, that all may call upon the name of the Lord with one consent” (Zephaniah 3:9). The Son too shall at last give up His mediatorial kingdom to the Father, when the purposes for which it was established shall have been accomplished, “that God may be all in all” (<sup><4652></sup>1 Corinthians 15:24).

**10. turned** — or, “changed round about”: literally, “to make a circuit.” The whole hilly land *round* Jerusalem, which would prevent the free passage of the living waters, shall be *changed* so as to be “as a (or *the*) plain” (<sup><2408></sup>Isaiah 40:4).

**from Geba to Rimmon** — Geba (<sup><2218></sup>2 Kings 23:8) in Benjamin, the north border of Judah. Rimmon, in Simeon (<sup><4152></sup>Joshua 15:32), the south border of Judah; not the Rimmon northeast of Michmash. “*The plain from Geba to Rimmon*” (that is, from one boundary to the other) is the Arabah or plain of the Jordan, extending from the Sea of Tiberias to the Elanitic Gulf of the Red Sea.

**it shall be lifted up** — namely, Jerusalem shall be exalted, the hills all round being lowered (<sup><3001></sup>Micah 4:1).

*inhabited in her place* — (Zechariah 12:6).

*from Benjamin's gate* — leading to the territory of Benjamin. The same as Ephraim's gate, the north boundary of the city (<sup>424</sup>2 Kings 14:13).

*the first gate* — west of the city [GROTIUS]. “The place of,” etc. implies that the gate itself was then not in existence. “The old gate” (<sup>468</sup>Nehemiah 3:6).

*the corner gate* — east of the city [GROTIUS]. Or the “corner” joining the north and west parts of the wall [VILLALPANDUS]. GROTIUS thinks “corners” refers to the *towers* there built (compare Zephaniah 3:6, *Margin*).

*tower of Hananeel* — south of the city, near the sheep gate (<sup>468</sup>Nehemiah 3:1 12:39 <sup>2613</sup>Jeremiah 31:38) [GROTIUS].

*king's wine-presses* — (So 8:11). In the interior of the city, at Zion [GROTIUS].

**11. no more utter destruction** — (<sup>284</sup>Jeremiah 31:40). Literally, “no more curse” (<sup>621</sup>Revelation 22:3; compare Malachi 4:6), for there will be no more sin. Temporal blessings and spiritual prosperity shall go together in the millennium: long life (<sup>264</sup>Isaiah 65:20-22), peace (<sup>210</sup>Isaiah 2:4), honor (<sup>284</sup>Isaiah 60:14-16), righteous government (<sup>254</sup>Isaiah 54:14 60:18). Judgment, as usual, begins at the house of God, but then falls fatally on Antichrist, whereon the Church obtains perfect liberty. The last day will end everything evil (<sup>821</sup>Romans 8:21) [AUBERLEN].

**12. Punishment on the foe, the last Antichristian confederacy** (<sup>258</sup>Isaiah 59:18 66:24 Ezekiel 38,39 <sup>697</sup>Revelation 19:17-21). A living death: the *corruption* (<sup>808</sup>Galatians 6:8) of death combined in ghastly union with the conscious sensibility of life. Sin will be felt by the sinner in all its loathsomeness, inseparably clinging to him as a festering, putrid body.

**13. tumult** — consternation (Zechariah 12:4 <sup>494</sup>1 Samuel 14:15,20).

*lay hold ... on ... hand of ... neighbor* — instinctively grasping it, as if thereby to be safer, but in vain [MENOCHIUS]. Rather, in order to assail “his neighbor” [CALVIN], (<sup>262</sup>Ezekiel 38:21). Sin is the cause of all quarrels on earth. It will cause endless quarrels in hell (<sup>585</sup>James 3:15,16).

**14. Judah ... fight at Jerusalem** — namely, against the foe: not against Jerusalem, as MAURER translates in variance with the context. As to the spoil gained from the foe, compare <sup>390</sup>Ezekiel 39:10,17.

**15.** The plague shall affect the very beasts belonging to the foe. A typical foretaste of all this befell Antiochus Epiphanes and his host at Jerusalem (I Maccabees 13:49; II Maccabees 9:5).

**16. *every one ... left*** — (<sup>2669</sup>Isaiah 66:19,23). God will conquer all the foes of the Church, Some He will destroy; others He will bring into willing subjection.

***from year to year*** — literally, “from the sufficiency of a year in a year.”

***feast of tabernacles*** — The other two great yearly feasts, passover and pentecost, are not specified, because, their antitypes having come, the types are done away with. But the feast of tabernacles will be commemorative of the Jews’ sojourn, not merely forty years in the wilderness, but for almost two thousand years of their dispersion. So it was kept on their return from the Babylonian dispersion (<sup>4884</sup>Nehemiah 8:14-17). It was the feast on which Jesus made His triumphal entry into Jerusalem (<sup>4208</sup>Matthew 21:8); a pledge of His return to His capital to reign (compare <sup>6234</sup>Leviticus 23:34,39,40,42 <sup>6009</sup>Revelation 7:9 21:3). A feast of peculiar joy (<sup>4985</sup>Psalms 118:15 <sup>3209</sup>Hosea 12:9). The feast on which Jesus gave the invitation to the living waters of salvation (“Hosanna,” *save us now*, was the cry, <sup>4209</sup>Matthew 21:9; compare <sup>4985</sup>Psalms 118:25,26) (<sup>4102</sup>John 7:2,37). To the Gentiles, too, it will be significant of perfected salvation after past wanderings in a moral wilderness, as it originally commemorated the ingathering of the harvest. The seedtime of tears shall then have issued in the harvest of joy [MOORE]. “All the nations” could not possibly in person go up to the feast, but they may do so by representatives.

**17. *no rain*** — including every calamity which usually follows in the East from want of rain, namely, scarcity of provisions, famine, pestilence, etc. Rain is the symbol also of God’s favor (<sup>3063</sup>Hosea 6:3). That there shall be unconverted men under the millennium appears from the outbreak of God and Magog at the end of it (<sup>6007</sup>Revelation 20:7-9); but they, like Satan their master, shall be restrained during the thousand years. Note, too, from this verse that the Gentiles shall come up to Jerusalem, rather than the Jews go as missionaries to the Gentiles (<sup>2307</sup>Isaiah 2:2 <sup>3307</sup>Micah 5:7). However, <sup>2669</sup>Isaiah 66:19 *may* imply the converse.

**18. *if ... Egypt go not up*** — specified as Israel’s ancient foe. If Egypt go not up, and so there be no rain on them (a judgment which Egypt would condemn, as depending on the Nile’s overflow, not on rain), there shall be the plague ...&nbsp;. Because the guilty are not affected by one judgment, let them not think to escape, for God has other judgments which shall plague them. MAURER translates, “If Egypt go not up, upon them also there

shall be none” (no rain). <sup><19A52></sup>Psalm 105:32 mentions “rain” in Egypt. But it is not their main source of fertility.

**19. *punishment*** — literally, “sin”; that is, “punishment for sin.”

**20. *shall there be upon the bells*** — namely, this inscription, “Holiness to the Lord,” the same as was on the miter of the high priest (<sup><12B36></sup>Exodus 28:36). This implies that all things, even the most common, shall be sacred to Jehovah, and not merely the things which under the law had peculiar sanctity attached to them. The “bells” were metal plates hanging from the necks of horses and camels as ornaments, which *tinkled* (as the *Hebrew* root means) by striking against each other. Bells attached to horses are found represented on the walls of Sennacherib’s palace at Koyunjik.

***pots ... like ... bowls*** — the vessels used for boiling, for receiving ashes, etc., shall be as holy as the bowls used for catching the blood of the sacrificial victims (see on <sup><31D15></sup>Zechariah 9:15; <sup><10E14></sup>1 Samuel 2:14). The priesthood of Christ will be explained more fully both by the Mosaic types and by the New Testament in that temple of which Ezekiel speaks. Then the Song of Solomon, now obscure, will be understood, for the marriage feast of the Lamb will be celebrated in heaven (<sup><6801></sup>Revelation 19:1-21), and on earth it will be a Solomonic period, peaceful, glorious, and nuptial. There will be no king but a prince; the sabbatic period of the judges will return, but not with the Old Testament, but New Testament glory (<sup><21C19></sup>Isaiah 1:26 <sup><35E11></sup>Ezekiel 45:1-25) [ROOS].

**21. *every pot*** — even in private houses, as in the temple, shall be deemed holy, so universal shall be the consecration of all things and persons to Jehovah.

***take of them*** — as readily as they would take of the pots of the temple itself, whatever number they wanted for sacrifice.

***no ... Canaanite*** — no unclean or ungodly person (<sup><28E18></sup>Isaiah 35:8 52:1 <sup><41E17></sup>Joel 3:17). Compare as to the final state subsequent to the millennium, <sup><62D2></sup>Revelation 21:27 22:15. MAURER not so well translates “merchant” here, as in <sup><18E24></sup>Proverbs 31:24. If a man would have the beginnings of heaven, it must be by absolute consecration of everything to God on earth. Let his life be a liturgy, a holy service of acted worship [MOORE].

# THE BOOK OF MALACHI

Commentary by **A. R. FAUSSETT**

## INTRODUCTION

MALACHI forms the transition link between the two dispensations, the Old and the New, “the skirt and boundary of Christianity” [TERTULLIAN], to which perhaps is due the abrupt earnestness which characterizes his prophecies. His very name is somewhat uncertain. Malachi is the name of an office, rather than a person, “My messenger,” and as such is found in Malachi 3:1. The *Septuagint* favors this view in Malachi 1:1; translate, not “by Malachi,” but “by the hand of His messenger” (compare <sup><3013></sup>Haggai 1:13). Malachi is the last inspired messenger of the Old Testament, announcing the advent of the Great Messenger of the New Testament. The *Chaldee* paraphrase identifies him with Ezra wrongly, as Ezra is never called a prophet but a scribe, and Malachi never a scribe but a prophet. Still it hence appears that Malachi was by some old authorities not regarded as a proper name. The analogy of the headings of other prophets, however, favors the common view that Malachi is a proper name. As Haggai and Zechariah, the contemporary prophets, supported Joshua and Zerubbabel in the building of the temple, so he at a subsequent period supported the priest Ezra and the governor Nehemiah. Like that ruler, he presupposes the temple to have been already built (<sup><3010></sup>Malachi 1:10 3:1-10). Both alike censure the abuses still unreformed (<sup><3035></sup>Nehemiah 13:5,15-22,23-30), the profane and mercenary character of the priests, the people’s marriages contracted with foreigners, the non-payment of the tithes, and want of sympathy towards the poor on the part of the rich (<sup><3007></sup>Nehemiah 6:7) implies that Nehemiah was supported by prophets in his work of reformation. The date thus will be about 420 B.C., or later. Both the periods after the captivity (that of Haggai and Zechariah, and that of Malachi) were marked by royal, priestly, and prophetic men at the head of God’s people. The former period was that of the building of the temple; the latter, that of the restoration of the people and rebuilding of the city. It is characteristic of the people of God that the first period after the restoration was exclusively devoted to the rebuilding of the temple; the political restoration came

secondarily. Only a colony of fifty thousand settled with Joshua and Zerubbabel in Palestine (<sup>450B</sup>Ezra 2:64). Even these became intermingled with the heathen around during the sixty years passed over by Ezra in silence (<sup>450B</sup>Ezra 9:6-15 <sup>460B</sup>Nehemiah 1:3). Hence a second restoration was needed which should mould the national life into a Jewish form, re-establishing the holy law and the holy city — a work effected by Ezra and Nehemiah, with the aid of Malachi, in a period of about half a century, ending with the deaths of Malachi and Nehemiah in the last ten years of the fifth century B.C.; that is, the “seven weeks” (<sup>470B</sup>Daniel 9:25) put in the beginning of the “seventy” by themselves, to mark the fundamental difference between them, the last period of Old Testament revelation, and the period which followed without any revelation (the sixty-two weeks), preceding the final week standing out in unrivalled dignity by itself as the time of Messiah’s appearing. The seventy weeks thus begin with the seventh year of Artaxerxes who allowed Ezra to go to Jerusalem, 457 B.C., in accordance with the commandment which then went forth from God. Ezra the priest performed the inner work of purifying the nation from heathenish elements and reintroducing the law; while Nehemiah did the outer work of rebuilding the city and restoring the national polity [AUBERLEN]. VITRINGA makes the date of Malachi’s prophecies to be about the second return of Nehemiah from Persia, not later than 424 B.C., the date of Artaxerxes’ death (<sup>480B</sup>Nehemiah 13:6). About this time Socrates was teaching the only approach to a pure morality which corrupt Athens ever knew. MOORE distinguishes six portions:

- (1) Charge against Israel for insensibility to God’s love, which so distinguished Israel above Edom (Malachi 1:1-5).
- (2) The priests are reprov’d for neglect and profanation (Malachi 1:6-2:9).
- (3) Mixed marriages, and the wrongs done to Jewish wives, are reprov’d (<sup>390B</sup>Malachi 2:10-16).
- (4) Coming of Messiah and His forerunners (<sup>390B</sup>Malachi 2:17-3:6).
- (5) Reproof for tithes withheld (Malachi 3:7-12).
- (6) Contrast between the godly and the ungodly at the present time, and in the future judgment; exhortation, therefore, to return to the law (<sup>300B</sup>Malachi 3:13-4:6).

The style is animated, but less grand, and the rhythm less marked, than in some of the older prophets.

The canonicity of the book is established by the references to it in the New Testament (<sup>40110</sup>Matthew 11:10 17:12 <sup>40102</sup>Mark 1:2 9:11,12 <sup>40117</sup>Luke 1:17 <sup>40113</sup>Romans 9:13).

# CHAPTER 1

## MALACHI 1:1-14.

### GOD'S LOVE: ISRAEL'S INGRATITUDE: THE PRIESTS' MERCENARY SPIRIT: A GENTILE SPIRITUAL PRIESTHOOD SHALL SUPERSEDE THEM.

1. *burden* — heavy sentence.

*to Israel* — represented now by the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin, with individuals of the ten tribes who had returned with the Jews from Babylon. So “Israel” is used, <sup><4570></sup>Ezra 7:10. Compare <sup><4426></sup>2 Chronicles 21:2, “Jehoshaphat king of *Israel*,” where Judah, rather than the ten tribes, is regarded as the truest representative of Israel (compare <sup><4426></sup>2 Chronicles 12:6 28:19).

*Malachi* — see *Introduction*. God sent no prophet after him till John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ, in order to enflame His people with the more ardent desire for Him, the great antitype and fulfiller of prophecy.

2. *I have loved you* — above other men; nay, even above the other descendants of Abraham and Isaac. Such gratuitous love on My part called for love on yours. But the return ye make is sin and dishonor to Me. This which is to be supplied is left unexpressed, sorrow as it were breaking off the sentence [MENOCHIUS], (<sup><4608></sup>Deuteronomy 7:8 <sup><4310></sup>Hosea 11:1).

*Wherein hast thou loved us?* — In painful contrast to the tearful tenderness of God's love stands their insolent challenge. The root of their sin was insensibility to God's *love*, and to their own wickedness. Having had prosperity taken from them, they imply they have no tokens of God's love; they look at what God had taken, not at what God had left. God's love is often least acknowledged where it is most manifested. We must not infer God does not love us because He afflicts us. Men, instead of referring their sufferings to their proper cause, their own sin, impiously accuse God of indifference to their welfare [MOORE]. Thus Malachi 1:1-4 form a fit introduction to the whole prophecy.

*Was not Esau Jacob's brother?* — and so, as far as dignity went, as much entitled to God's favor as Jacob. My adoption of Jacob, therefore, was altogether by gratuitous favor (<sup><4613></sup>Romans 9:13). So God has passed by

our elder brethren, the angels who kept not their first estate, and yet He has provided salvation for man. The perpetual rejection of the fallen angels, like the perpetual desolations of Edom, attests God's severity to the lost, and goodness to those gratuitously saved. The sovereign eternal purpose of God is the only ground on which He bestows on one favors withheld from another. There are difficulties in referring salvation to the election of God, there are greater in referring it to the election of man [MOORE]. Jehovah illustrates His condescension and patience in arguing the case with them.

**3. *hated*** — not positively, but relatively; that is, did not choose him out to be the object of gratuitous favor, as I did Jacob (compare <sup><2405></sup>Luke 14:26, with <sup><1005></sup>Matthew 10:37 <sup><1028></sup>Genesis 29:30,31 <sup><1625></sup>Deuteronomy 21:15,16).

***laid his mountains ... waste*** — that is, his territory which was generally mountainous. Israel was, it is true, punished by the Chaldeans, but Edom has been utterly destroyed; namely, either by Nebuchadnezzar [ROSENMULLER], or by the neighboring peoples, Egypt, Ammon, and Moab [JOSEPHUS, *Antiquities*, 10.9,7; MAURER], (<sup><2408></sup>Jeremiah 49:18).

***dragons*** — jackals [MOORE] (compare <sup><2343></sup>Isaiah 34:13). MAURER translates, “Abodes of the wilderness,” from an *Arabic* root “to stop,” or “to abide.” *English Version* is better.

**4. *Whereas*** — “*But if*” Edom say [MAURER]. Edom may strive as she may to recover herself, but it shall be in vain, for I doom her to perpetual desolation, whereas I restore Israel. This Jehovah states, to illustrate His gratuitous love to Israel, rather than to Edom.

***border of wickedness*** — a region given over to the curse of reprobation [CALVIN]. For a time Judea seemed as desolate as Idumea; but though the latter was once the highway of Eastern commerce, now the lonely rock-houses of Petra attest the fulfillment of the prophecy. It is still “the border of wickedness,” being the resort of the marauding tribes of the desert. Judea's restoration, though delayed, is yet certain.

***the Lord hath indignation*** — “the people of My curse” (<sup><2345></sup>Isaiah 34:5).

**5. *from the border of Israel*** — Ye, restored to your own “borders” in Israel, “from” them shall raise your voices to “magnify the Lord,” acknowledging that Jehovah has shown to you a gratuitous favor not shown to Edom, and so ought to be especially “magnified from the borders of Israel.”

**6.** Turning from the people to the priests, Jehovah asks, whereas His love to the people was so great, where was their love towards Him? If the priests, as they profess, regard Him as their Father (<sup><2760></sup>Isaiah 63:16) and

Master, let them show the reality of their profession by *love and reverential fear* (<sup><0212></sup>Exodus 20:12 <sup><0666></sup>Luke 6:46). He addresses the priests because they ought to be leaders in piety to the rest of the people, whereas they are foremost in “despising His name.”

***Wherein have we despised***, etc. — The same captious spirit of self-satisfied insensibility as prompted their question (Malachi 1:2), “Wherein hast Thou loved us?” They are blind alike to God’s love and their own guilt.

**7. *ye offer***, etc. — God’s answer to their challenge (Malachi 1:6), “Wherein have we despised?”

***polluted bread*** — namely, blemished sacrifices (Malachi 1:8,13,14 <sup><0521></sup>Deuteronomy 15:21). So “the *bread of thy God*” is used for “*sacrifices to God*” (<sup><0208></sup>Leviticus 21:8).

***polluted thee*** — that is, offered to thee “polluted bread.”

***table of the Lord*** — that is, the altar (<sup><3022></sup>Ezekiel 41:22) (not the table of showbread). Just as the sacrificial *flesh* is called “bread.”

***contemptible*** — (<sup><3012></sup>Malachi 1:12,13). Ye sanction the niggardly and blemished offerings of the people on the altar, to gain favor with them. Darius, and probably his successors, had liberally supplied them with victims for sacrifice, yet they presented none but the worst. A cheap religion, costing little, is rejected by God, and so is worth nothing. It costs more than it is worth, for it is worth nothing, and so proves really dear. God despises not the widow’s mite, but he does despise the miser’s mite [MOORE].

**8.** Your earthly ruler would feel insulted, if offered by you the offering with which ye put off God (see <sup><0222></sup>Leviticus 22:22,24).

***is it not evil?*** — MAURER translates, “There is no evil,” in your opinion, in such an offering; it is quite good enough for such a purpose.

**9. *now ... beseech God that he will be gracious*** — Ironical. Think you that God will be persuaded by such polluted gifts to be gracious to you? Far from it.

***this hath been by your means*** — literally, “hand.” These contemptible offerings are your doing, as being the priests mediating between God and the people; and think you, will God pay any regard to you (compare Malachi 1:8,10)? “Accept thy person” (“face”), Malachi 1:8, answers to “regard your persons,” in this verse.

**10. Who ... for naught** — Not one even of the least priestly functions (as shutting the doors, or kindling a fire on the altar) would ye exercise without pay, therefore ye ought to fulfill them faithfully (<sup><4093></sup>1 Corinthians 9:13). DRUSIUS and MAURER translate, “Would that there were absolutely some one of you who would shut the doors of the temple (that is, of the inner court, in which was the altar of burnt offerings), and that ye would not kindle fire on My altar in vain!” Better no sacrifices than vain ones (<sup><2011></sup>Isaiah 1:11-15). It was the duty of some of the priests to stand at the doors of the court of the altar of burnt offerings, and to have excluded blemished victims [CALVIN].

**11. For** — Since ye Jewish priests and people “despise My name” (Malachi 1:6), I shall find others who will magnify it (<sup><4109></sup>Matthew 3:9). Do not think I shall have no worshippers because I have not you; for from the east to the west My name shall be great among the Gentiles (<sup><2769></sup>Isaiah 66:19,20), those very peoples whom ye look down upon as abominable.

**pure offering** — not “the blind, the lame, and the sick,” such as ye offer (Malachi 1:8). “In every place,” implies the catholicity of the Christian Church (<sup><4092></sup>John 4:21,23 <sup><5108></sup>1 Timothy 2:8). The “incense” is figurative of prayers (<sup><3910></sup>Psalms 141:2 <sup><6008></sup>Revelation 8:3). “Sacrifice” is used metaphorically (<sup><4517></sup>Psalms 51:17 <sup><3810></sup>Hebrews 13:10,15,16 <sup><6105></sup>1 Peter 2:5,12). In this sense the reference to the Lord’s Supper, maintained by many of the fathers, may be admitted; it, like prayer, is a spiritual offering, accepted through the literal offering of the “Lamb without blemish,” once for all slain.

**12. Renewal of the charge in Malachi 1:7.**

**fruit ... meat** — the offerings of the people. The “fruit” is the *produce* of the altar, on which the priests subsisted. They did not literally say, The Lord’s table is contemptible; but their *acts* virtually said so. They did not act so as to lead the people to reverence, and to offer their best to the Lord on it. The people were poor, and put off God with the worst offerings. The priests let them do so, for fear of offending the people, and so losing all gains from them.

**13. what a weariness is it!** — Ye regard God’s service as irksome, and therefore try to get it over by presenting the most worthless offerings. Compare Micah 6:3, where God challenges His people to show wherein is the “weariness” or hardship of His service. Also <sup><2462></sup>Isaiah 43:22-24, wherein He shows that it is they who have “wearied” Him, not He who has wearied them.

**snuffed at** — despised.

**it** — the table of the Lord, and the meat on it (<sup><3012></sup>Malachi 1:12).

**torn** — namely, by beasts, which it was not lawful to eat, much less to offer (<sup><1223></sup>Exodus 22:31).

**thus ... offering** — *Hebrew, mincha; the unbloody offering* of flour, etc. Though this may have been of ordinary ingredients, yet the *sacrifices* of blemished animals accompanying it rendered it unacceptable.

**14. deceiver** — hypocrite. Not poverty, but avarice was the cause of their mean offerings.

**male** — required by law (<sup><0803></sup>Leviticus 1:3,10).

**great King** — (<sup><3982></sup>Psalms 48:2 <sup><4055></sup>Matthew 5:35).

**my name ... dreadful among ... heathen** — Even the heathen dread Me because of My judgments; what a reproach this is to you, My people, who fear Me not (Malachi 1:6)! Also it may be translated, “*shall be feared among,*” etc. agreeing with the prophecy of the call of the Gentiles (<sup><3011></sup>Malachi 1:11).

# CHAPTER 2

## MALACHI 2:1-17.

### REPROOF OF THE PRIESTS FOR VIOLATING THE COVENANT; AND THE PEOPLE ALSO FOR MIXED MARRIAGES AND UNFAITHFULNESS.

**1. *for you*** — The priests in particular are reprov'd, as their part was to have led the people aright, and reprov'd sin, whereas they encouraged and led them into sin. Ministers cannot sin or suffer alone. They drag down others with them if they fall [MOORE].

**2. *lay ... to heart*** — My commands.

***send a curse*** — rather, as *Hebrew*, “*the curse*”; namely, that denounced in <sup><BIB></sup>Deuteronomy 27:15-26 28:15-68.

***curse your blessings*** — turn the blessings you enjoy into curses (<sup><BIB></sup>Psalm 106:15).

***cursed them*** — *Hebrew*, *them severally*; that is, I have cursed each one of your blessings.

**3. *corrupt***, etc. — literally, “rebuke,” answering to the opposite prophecy of blessing (<sup><BIB></sup>Malachi 3:11), “I will *rebuke* the devourer.” To rebuke the seed is to forbid its growing.

***your*** — literally, “*for you*”; that is, to your hurt.

***dung of ... solemn feasts*** — The dung in the maw of the victims sacrificed on the feast days; the maw was the perquisite of the priests (<sup><BIB></sup>Deuteronomy 18:3), which gives peculiar point to the threat here. You shall get the dung of the maw as your perquisite, instead of the maw.

***one shall take you away with it*** — that is, ye shall be taken away with it; it shall cleave to you wherever ye go [MOORE]. Dung shall be thrown on your faces, and ye shall be taken away as dung would be, dung-begrimed as ye shall be (<sup><BIB></sup>1 Kings 14:10; compare <sup><BIB></sup>Jeremiah 16:4 22:19).

**4. *ye shall know*** — by bitter experience of consequences, that it was with this design I admonished you, in order “that My covenant with Levi might be” maintained; that is, that it was for your own good (which would be

ensured by your maintaining the Levitical command) I admonished you, that ye should return to your duty [MAURER] (compare Malachi 2:5,6). Malachi's function was that of a reformer, leading back the priests and people to the law (Malachi 4:4).

**5-9.** He describes the promises, and also the conditions of the covenant; Levi's observance of the conditions and reward (compare <sup><0511</sup>Numbers 25:11-13, Phinehas' zeal); and on the other hand the violation of the conditions, and consequent punishment of the present priests. "Life" here includes the *perpetuity* implied in <sup><0513</sup>Numbers 25:13, "*everlasting* priesthood." "Peace" is specified both here and there. MAURER thus explains it; the *Hebrew* is, literally, "My covenant was with him, *life* and *peace* (to be given him on My part), and I gave them to him: (and on his part) fear (that is, reverence), and he did fear Me," etc. The former portion of the verse expresses the *promise*, and Jehovah's fulfillment of it; the latter, the *condition*, and Levi's steadfastness to it (<sup><638</sup>Deuteronomy 33:8,9). The Jewish priests self-deceivingly claimed the privileges of the covenant, while neglecting the conditions of it, as if God were bound by it to bless them, while they were free from all the obligation which it imposed to serve Him. The covenant is said to be not merely "*of life and peace*," but "*life and peace*"; for the keeping of God's law is its own reward (<sup><9911</sup>Psalms 19:11).

**6. *law of truth was in his mouth*** — He taught the people the truths of the law in all its fullness (<sup><630</sup>Deuteronomy 33:10). The priest was the ordinary expounder of the law; the prophets were so only on special occasions.

***iniquity ... not found*** — no injustice in his judicial functions (<sup><678</sup>Deuteronomy 17:8,9 19:17).

***walked with me*** — by faith and obedience (<sup><052</sup>Genesis 5:22).

***in peace*** — namely, the "peace" which was the fruit of obeying the covenant (Malachi 2:5). Peace with God, man, and one's own conscience, is the result of "walking with God" (compare <sup><8221</sup>Job 22:21 <sup><2715</sup>Isaiah 27:5 <sup><918</sup>James 3:18).

***turn may ... from iniquity*** — both by positive precept and by tacit example "walking with God" (<sup><232</sup>Jeremiah 23:22 <sup><2718</sup>Daniel 12:3 <sup><910</sup>James 5:20).

**7.** In doing so (Malachi 2:6) he did his duty as a priest, "for," etc.

***knowledge*** — of the law, its doctrines, and positive and negative precepts (<sup><8001</sup>Leviticus 10:10,11 <sup><648</sup>Deuteronomy 24:8 <sup><488</sup>Jeremiah 18:18 <sup><3011</sup>Haggai 2:11).

*the law* — that is, its true sense.

*messenger of ... Lord* — the interpreter of His will; compare as to the prophets, <sup><3013></sup>Haggai 1:13. So ministers are called “ambassadors of Christ” (<sup><4051></sup>2 Corinthians 5:20); and the bishops of the seven churches in Revelation, “angels” or messengers (<sup><6101></sup>Revelation 2:1,8,12,18 3:1,7,14; compare <sup><4014></sup>Galatians 4:14).

**8. *out of the way*** — that is, from the covenant.

*caused many to stumble* — By scandalous example, the worse inasmuch as the people look up to you as ministers of religion (<sup><0127></sup>1 Samuel 2:17 <sup><3185></sup>Jeremiah 18:15 <sup><4816></sup>Matthew 18:6 <sup><0271></sup>Luke 17:1).

*at the law* — that is, in respect to the observances of the law.

*corrupted ... covenant* — made it of none effect, by not fulfilling its conditions, and so forfeiting its promises (<sup><3810></sup>Zechariah 11:10 <sup><1439></sup>Nehemiah 13:29).

**9.** Because ye do not keep the condition of the covenant, I will not fulfill the promise.

*partial in the law* — having respect to persons rather than to truth in the interpretation and administration of the law (<sup><0915></sup>Leviticus 19:15).

**10-16.** Reproof of those who contracted marriages with foreigners and repudiated their Jewish wives.

*Have we not all one father?* — Why, seeing we all have one common origin, “do we deal treacherously against *one another*” (“His brother” being a general expression implying that all are “brethren” and sisters as children of the same Father above, <sup><3048></sup>1 Thessalonians 4:3-6 and so including the *wives* so injured)? namely, by putting away our Jewish wives, and taking foreign women to wife (compare <sup><3014></sup>Malachi 2:14 and <sup><3121></sup>Malachi 2:11 <sup><3301></sup>Ezra 9:1-9), and so violating “the covenant” made by Jehovah with “our fathers,” by which it was ordained that we should be a people separated from the other peoples of the world (<sup><0215></sup>Exodus 19:5 <sup><0224></sup>Leviticus 20:24,26 <sup><0303></sup>Deuteronomy 7:3). To intermarry with the heathen would defeat this purpose of Jehovah, who was the common Father of the Israelites in a peculiar sense in which He was not Father of the heathen. The “one Father” is Jehovah (<sup><0315></sup>Job 31:15 <sup><4006></sup>1 Corinthians 8:6 <sup><0406></sup>Ephesians 4:6). “Created us”: not merely physical creation, but “created us” to be His peculiar and chosen people (<sup><0428></sup>Psalms 102:18 <sup><0341></sup>Isaiah 43:1 45:8 60:21 <sup><0410></sup>Ephesians 2:10), [CALVIN]. How marked the contrast between the honor

here done to the female sex, and the degradation to which Oriental women are generally subjected!

**11. *dealt treacherously*** — namely, in respect to the Jewish wives who were put away (<sup><3214></sup>Malachi 2:14; also <sup><3210></sup>Malachi 2:10,15,16).

***profaned the holiness of ... Lord*** — by ill-treating the Israelites (namely, the wives), who were set apart as a people *holy unto the Lord*: “the holy seed” (<sup><450E></sup>Ezra 9:2; compare <sup><341B></sup>Jeremiah 2:3). Or, “the holiness of the Lord” means His holy ordinance and covenant (<sup><4R0B></sup>Deuteronomy 7:3). But “which He loved,” seems to refer to *the holy people*, Israel, whom God so gratuitously loved (Malachi 1:2), without merit on their part (<sup><490E></sup>Psalms 47:4).

***married***, etc. — (<sup><450E></sup>Ezra 9:1,2 10:2 <sup><4632></sup>Nehemiah 13:23, etc.).

***daughter of a strange god*** — women worshipping idols: as the worshipper in Scripture is regarded in the relation of a child to a father (<sup><3427></sup>Jeremiah 2:27).

**12. *master and ... scholar*** — literally, “him that watcheth and him that answereth.” So “wakeneth” is used of *the teacher* or “master” (<sup><230E></sup>Isaiah 50:4); masters are *watchful* in guarding their scholars. The reference is to the priests, who ought to have taught the people piety, but who led them into evil. “Him that answereth” is the *scholar* who has to answer the questions of his teacher (<sup><4017></sup>Luke 2:47) [GROTIUS]. The Arabs have a proverb, “None calling and none answering,” that is, there being *not one alive*. So GESENIUS explains it of the Levite watches in the temple (<sup><4D0E></sup>Psalms 134:1), one *watchman* calling and another *answering*. But the scholar is rather the *people*, the pupils of the priests “in doing this,” namely, forming unions with foreign wives. “Out of the tabernacles of Jacob” proves it is not the priests alone. God will spare neither priests nor people who act so.

***him that offereth*** — His offerings will not avail to shield him from the penalty of his sin in repudiating his Jewish wife and taking a foreign one.

**13. *done again*** — “a second time”: an aggravation of your offense (<sup><4632></sup>Nehemiah 13:23-31), in that it is a relapse into the sin already checked once under Ezra (<sup><450E></sup>Ezra 9:10) [HENDERSON]. Or, “the second time” means this: Your first sin was your blemished offerings to the Lord: now “again” is added your sin towards your wives [CALVIN].

***covering ... altar ... with tears*** — shed by your unoffending wives, repudiated by you that ye might take foreign wives. CALVIN makes the

“tears” to be those of all the people on perceiving their sacrifices to be sternly rejected by God.

**14. *Wherefore?*** — Why does God reject our offerings?

***Lord ... witness between thee and ... wife*** — (so <sup><0349></sup>Genesis 31:49,50).

***of thy youth*** — The Jews still marry very young, the husband often being but thirteen years of age, the wife younger (<sup><0188></sup>Proverbs 5:18 <sup><2546></sup>Isaiah 54:6).

***wife of thy covenant*** — not merely joined to thee by the marriage covenant generally, but by *the covenant between God and Israel*, the covenant-people, whereby a sin against a wife, a daughter of Israel, is a sin against God [MOORE]. Marriage also is called “the covenant of God” (<sup><0127></sup>Proverbs 2:17), and to it the reference may be (<sup><0024></sup>Genesis 2:24 <sup><0306></sup>Matthew 19:6 <sup><0170></sup>1 Corinthians 7:10).

**15. MAURER and HENGSTENBERG** explain the verse thus: The Jews had defended their conduct by the precedent of Abraham, who had taken Hagar to the injury of Sarah, his lawful wife; to this Malachi says now, “No one (ever) did so in whom there was a residue of intelligence (discriminating between good and evil); and what did the one (Abraham, to whom you appeal for support) do, seeking a godly seed?” His object (namely, not to gratify passion, but to obtain the seed promised by God) makes the case wholly inapplicable to defend your position. MOORE (from FAIRBAIRN) better explains, in accordance with <sup><3020></sup>Malachi 2:10, “Did not He make (us Israelites) one? Yet He had the residue of the Spirit (that is, His isolating us from other nations was not because there was no residue of the Spirit left for the rest of the world). And wherefore (that is, *why then* did He thus isolate us as) the one (people; the *Hebrew* is ‘*the one*’)? In order that He might seek a godly seed”; that is, that He might have “a seed of God,” a nation the repository of the covenant, and the stock of the Messiah, and the witness for the one God amidst the surrounding polytheisms. Marriage with foreign women, and repudiation of the wives wedded in the Jewish covenant, utterly set aside this divine purpose. CALVIN thinks “the one” to refer to the conjugal one body formed by the original pair (<sup><0024></sup>Genesis 2:24). God might have joined many wives as one with the one husband, for He had no lack of spiritual being to impart to others besides Eve; the design of the restriction was to secure a pious offspring: but compare *Note*, see on <sup><3020></sup>Malachi 2:10. One object of the marriage relation is to raise a seed for God and for eternity.

**16. *putting away*** — that is, divorce.

*for one covereth violence with ... garment* — MAURER translates, “And (Jehovah hateth him who) covereth his garment (that is, his *wife*, in *Arabic* idiom; compare <sup><1236</sup>Genesis 20:16, ‘He is to thee *a covering* of thy eyes’; the husband was so to the wife, and the wife to the husband; also <sup><1620</sup>Deuteronomy 22:30 <sup><1839</sup>Ruth 3:9 <sup><3168</sup>Ezekiel 16:8) with injury.” The *Hebrew* favors “garment,” being accusative of the *thing covered*. Compare with *English Version*, <sup><1971</sup>Psalm 73:6, “violence covereth them as a garment.” Their “violence” is the putting away of their wives; the “garment” with which they try to cover it is the plea of Moses’ permission (<sup><1641</sup>Deuteronomy 24:1; compare <sup><1016</sup>Matthew 19:6-9).

**17. *wearied ... Lord*** — (<sup><2369</sup>Isaiah 43:24). This verse forms the transition to Malachi 3:1, etc. The Jewish skeptics of that day said virtually, God delighteth in evil-doers (inferring this from the prosperity of the surrounding heathen, while they, the Jews, were comparatively not prosperous: forgetting that their attendance to minor and external duties did not make up for their neglect of the weightier duties of the law; for example, the duty they owed their wives, just previously discussed); or (if not) Where (is the proof that He is) the God of judgment? To this the reply (Malachi 3:1) is, “The Lord whom ye seek, and whom as messenger of the covenant (that is, divine ratifier of God’s covenant with Israel) ye delight in (thinking He will restore Israel to its proper place as first of the nations), shall suddenly come,” not as a Restorer of Israel temporally, but as a consuming *Judge* against Jerusalem (<sup><3158</sup>Amos 5:18,19,20). The “suddenly” implies the unpreparedness of the Jews, who, to the last of the siege, were expecting a temporal deliverer, whereas a destructive judgment was about to destroy them. So skepticism shall be rife before Christ’s second coming. He shall suddenly and unexpectedly come then also as a consuming Judge to unbelievers (<sup><6139</sup>2 Peter 3:3,4). Then, too, they shall affect to seek His coming, while really denying it (<sup><2159</sup>Isaiah 5:19 <sup><2475</sup>Jeremiah 17:15 <sup><3122</sup>Ezekiel 12:22,27).

# CHAPTER 3

## MALACHI 3:1-18.

### MESSIAH'S COMING, PRECEDED BY HIS FORERUNNER, TO PUNISH THE GUILTY FOR VARIOUS SINS, AND TO REWARD THOSE WHO FEAR GOD.

1. **Behold** — Calling especial attention to the momentous truths which follow. Ye unbelievably ask, Where is the God of judgment (Malachi 2:7)? “Behold,” therefore, “I send,” etc. Your unbelief will not prevent My keeping My covenant, and bringing to pass in due time that which ye say will never be fulfilled.

**I will send ... he shall come** — The Father *sends* the Son: the Son *comes*. Proving the distinctness of personality between the Father and the Son.

**my messenger** — John the Baptist; as <sup><418B></sup>Matthew 3:3 11:10 <sup><410D></sup>Mark 1:2,3 <sup><417F></sup>Luke 1:76 3:4 7:26,27 <sup><4123></sup>John 1:23, prove. This passage of Malachi evidently rests on that of Isaiah his predecessor (<sup><340B></sup>Isaiah 40:3-5). Perhaps also, as HENGSTENBERG thinks, “messenger” includes *the long line of prophets* headed by *Elijah* (whence his name is put in Malachi 4:5 as a representative name), and terminating in John, the last and greatest of the prophets (<sup><4119></sup>Matthew 11:9-11). John as the representative prophet (the forerunner of Messiah the representative God-man) gathered in himself all the scattered lineaments of previous prophecy (hence Christ terms him “much more than a prophet,” <sup><4123></sup>Luke 7:26), reproducing all its awful and yet inspiring utterances: his coarse garb, like that of the old prophets, being a visible exhortation to repentance; the wilderness in which he preached symbolizing the lifeless, barren state of the Jews at that time, politically and spiritually; his topics sin, repentance, and salvation, presenting for the last time the condensed epitome of all previous teachings of God by His prophets; so that he is called pre-eminently God’s “messenger.” Hence the oldest and true reading of <sup><4102></sup>Mark 1:2 is, “as it is written in *Isaiah* the prophet”; the difficulty of which is, How can the prophecy of Malachi be referred to Isaiah? The explanation is: the passage in Malachi rests on that in <sup><340B></sup>Isaiah 40:3, and therefore the *original source* of the prophecy is referred to in order to mark this dependency and connection.

**the Lord** — *Ha-Adon* in Hebrew. The article marks that it is JEHOVAH (<sup><0237></sup>Exodus 23:17 34:23; compare <sup><0681></sup>Joshua 3:11,13). Compare <sup><2097></sup>Daniel 9:17, where the Divine Son is meant by “for THE Lord’s sake.” God the speaker makes “the Lord,” the “messenger of the covenant,” one with Himself. “I will send ... before Me,” adding, “THE LORD ... shall ... come”; so that “*the Lord*” must be one with the “Me,” that is, He must be GOD, “before” whom John was *sent*. As the divinity of the Son and His oneness with the Father are thus proved, so the distinctness of personality is proved by “I send” and He “shall come,” as distinguished from one another. He also comes to the temple as “His temple”: marking His divine lordship *over* it, as contrasted with all creatures, who are but “servants *in*” it (Haggai 2:7 <sup><388></sup>Hebrews 3:2,5,6).

**whom ye seek ... whom ye delight in** — (see on <sup><307></sup>Malachi 2:17). At His first coming they “sought” and “delighted in” the hope of a *temporal* Savior: not in what He then was. In the case of those whom Malachi in his time addresses, “whom ye seek ... delight in,” is ironical. They unbelievably asked, When will He come at last? <sup><307></sup>Malachi 2:17, “Where is the God of judgment” (<sup><2159></sup>Isaiah 5:19 <sup><3158></sup>Amos 5:18 <sup><608></sup>2 Peter 3:3,4)? In the case of the godly the desire for Messiah was sincere (<sup><0125></sup>Luke 2:25,28). He is called “Angel of God’s presence” (<sup><2308></sup>Isaiah 63:9), also Angel of Jehovah. Compare His appearances to Abraham (<sup><0181></sup>Genesis 18:1,2,17,33), to Jacob (<sup><0311></sup>Genesis 31:11 48:15,16), to Moses in the bush (<sup><0182></sup>Exodus 3:2-6); He went before Israel as the Shekinah (<sup><0149></sup>Exodus 14:19), and delivered the law at Sinai (<sup><0178></sup>Acts 7:38).

**suddenly** — This epithet marks the second coming, rather than the first; the earnest of that unexpected coming (<sup><0128></sup>Luke 12:38-46 <sup><605></sup>Revelation 16:15) to judgment was given in the judicial expulsion of the money-changing profaners from the temple by Messiah (<sup><0112></sup>Matthew 21:12,13), where also as here He calls the temple *His temple*. Also in the destruction of Jerusalem, most unexpected by the Jews, who to the last deceived themselves with the expectation that Messiah would suddenly appear as a temporal Savior. Compare the use of “suddenly” in <sup><0114></sup>Numbers 12:4-10, where He appeared in wrath.

**messenger of the covenant** — namely, of the ancient covenant with Israel (<sup><2308></sup>Isaiah 63:9) and Abraham, in which the promise to the Gentiles is ultimately included (<sup><8016></sup>Galatians 4:16,17). The gospel at the first advent began with Israel, then embraced the Gentile world: so also it shall be at the second advent. All the manifestations of God in the Old Testament, the Shekinah and human appearances, were made in the person of the Divine Son (<sup><0231></sup>Exodus 23:20,21 <sup><3112></sup>Hebrews 11:26 12:26). He was the messenger of the old covenant, as well as of the new.

2. (Malachi 4:1 <sup><4166></sup> Revelation 6:16,17). The Messiah would come, not, as they expected, to flatter the theocratic nation's prejudices, but to subject their principles to the fiery test of His heart-searching truth (<sup><4180></sup> Matthew 3:10-12), and to destroy Jerusalem and the theocracy after they had rejected Him. His mission is here regarded as a whole from the first to the second advent: the process of refining and separating the godly from the ungodly beginning during Christ's stay on earth, going on ever since, and about to continue till the final separation (<sup><4153></sup> Matthew 25:31-46). The refining process, whereby a third of the Jews is refined as silver of its dross, while two-thirds perish, is described, Zechariah 13:8,9 (compare <sup><2125></sup> Isaiah 1:25).

3. *sit* — The purifier *sits* before the crucible, fixing his eye on the metal, and taking care that the fire be not too hot, and keeping the metal in, only until he knows the dross to be completely removed by his seeing his own image reflected (<sup><4189></sup> Romans 8:29) in the glowing mass. So the Lord in the case of His elect (<sup><4320></sup> Job 23:10 <sup><4960></sup> Psalm 66:10 <sup><4178></sup> Proverbs 17:3 <sup><2480></sup> Isaiah 48:10 <sup><3820></sup> Hebrews 12:10 <sup><4003></sup> 1 Peter 1:7). He will *sit* down to the work, not perfunctorily, but with patient love and unflinching justice. The Angel of the Covenant, as in leading His people out of Egypt by the pillar of cloud and fire, has an aspect of terror to His foes, of love to His friends. The same separating process goes on in the world as in each Christian. When the godly are completely separated from the ungodly, the world will end. When the dross is taken from the gold of the Christian, he will be forever delivered from the furnace of trial. The purer the gold, the hotter the fire now; the whiter the garment, the harder the washing [MOORE].

*purify ... sons of Levi* — of the sins specified above. The very Levites, the ministers of God, then needed cleansing, so universal was the depravity.

*that they may offer ... in righteousness* — as originally (Malachi 2:6), not as latterly (Malachi 1:7-14). So believers, the spiritual priesthood (<sup><4165></sup> 1 Peter 2:5).

4. *as in the days of old* — (<sup><3111></sup> Malachi 1:11 2:5,6). The “offering” (*Mincha*, *Hebrew*) is not expiatory, but prayer, thanksgiving, and self-dedication (<sup><4611></sup> Romans 12:1 <sup><3835></sup> Hebrews 13:15 <sup><4165></sup> 1 Peter 2:5).

5. *I ... come near ... to judgment* — *I* whom ye challenged, saying, “Where is the God of judgment?” (<sup><4177></sup> Malachi 2:17). *I* whom ye think far off, and to be slow in judgment, am “near,” and will come as a “swift witness”; not only a judge, but also an *eye-witness* against sorcerers; for Mine eyes see every sin, though ye think I take no heed. Earthly judges need witnesses to enable them to decide aright: I alone need none (<sup><3911></sup> Psalm 10:11 73:11 94:7, etc.).

**sorcerers** — a sin into which the Jews were led in connection with their foreign idolatrous wives. The Jews of Christ's time also practiced sorcery (<sup><408B></sup>Acts 8:9 13:6 <sup><416I></sup>Galatians 5:20; JOSEPHUS [*Antiquities*, 20.6; *Wars of the Jews*, 2.12.23]). It shall be a characteristic of the last Antichristian confederacy, about to be consumed by the brightness of Christ's Coming (<sup><428M></sup>Matthew 24:24 <sup><509P></sup>2 Thessalonians 2:9 <sup><663R></sup>Revelation 13:13,14 16:13,14; also <sup><692I></sup>Revelation 9:21 18:23 21:8 22:15). Romanism has practiced it; an order of *exorcists* exists in that Church.

**adulterers** — (<sup><301S></sup>Malachi 2:15,16).

**fear not me** — the source of all sins.

**6. the Lord** — Jehovah: a name implying His immutable faithfulness in fulfilling His promises: the covenant name of God to the Jews (<sup><008B></sup>Exodus 6:3), called here "the sons of Jacob," in reference to God's covenant with that patriarch.

**I change not** — Ye are mistaken in inferring that, because I have not yet executed judgment on the wicked, I am changed from what I once was, namely, a God of judgment.

**therefore ye ... are not consumed** — Ye yourselves being "not consumed," as ye have long ago deserved, are a signal proof of My unchangeableness. <sup><612R></sup>Romans 11:29: compare the whole chapter, in which God's mercy in store for Israel is made wholly to flow from God's unchanging faithfulness to His own covenant of love. So here, as is implied by the phrase "sons of *Jacob*" (<sup><023G></sup>Genesis 28:13 35:12). They are spared because I am JEHOVAH, and they *sons of Jacob*; while I spare them, I will also punish them; and while I punish them, I will not wholly consume them. The unchangeableness of God is the sheet-anchor of the Church. The perseverance of the saints is guaranteed, not by their unchangeable love to God, but by His unchangeable love to them, and His eternal purpose and promise in Christ Jesus [MOORE]. He upbraids their ingratitude that they turn His very long-suffering (<sup><2182I></sup>Lamentations 3:22) into a ground for skeptical denial of His coming as a Judge at all (<sup><451I></sup>Psalms 50:1,3,4,21 <sup><2181I></sup>Ecclesiastes 8:11,12 <sup><2571I></sup>Isaiah 57:11 <sup><414I></sup>Romans 2:4-10).

**7-12.** Reproof for the non-payment of tithes and offerings, which is the cause of their national calamities, and promise of prosperity on their paying them.

**from ... days of your fathers** — Ye live as your fathers did when they brought on themselves the Babylonian captivity, and ye wish to follow in

their steps. This shows that nothing but God's unchanging long-suffering had prevented their being long ago "consumed" (Malachi 3:6).

**Return unto me** — in penitence.

**I will return unto you** — in blessings.

**Wherein**, etc. — (<sup><3816></sup>Malachi 3:16). The same insensibility to their guilt continues: they speak in the tone of injured innocence, as if God calumniated them.

**8. rob** — literally, "cover": hence, defraud. Do ye call defrauding God no sin to be "returned" from (Malachi 3:7)? Yet ye have done so to Me in respect to the tithes due to Me, namely, the tenth of all the remainder after the first-fruits were paid, which tenth was paid to the Levites for their support (<sup><6273></sup>Leviticus 27:30-33): a tenth paid by the Levites to the priests (<sup><4839></sup>Numbers 18:26-28): a second tenth paid by the people for the entertainment of the Levites, and their own families, at the tabernacle (<sup><6128></sup>Deuteronomy 12:18): another tithes every third year for the poor, etc. (<sup><6148></sup>Deuteronomy 14:28,29).

**offerings** — the first-fruits, not less than one-sixtieth part of the corn, wine, and oil (<sup><6104></sup>Deuteronomy 18:4 <sup><6130></sup>Nehemiah 13:10,12). The priests had this perquisite also, the tenth of the tithes which were the Levites perquisite. But they appropriated all the tithes, robbing the Levites of their due nine-tenths; as they did also, according to JOSEPHUS, before the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus. Thus doubly God was defrauded, the priests not discharging aright their sacrificial duties, and robbing God of the services of the Levites, who were driven away by destitution [GROTIUS].

**9. cursed** — (Malachi 2:2). As ye despoil Me, so I despoil you, as I threatened I would, if ye continued to disregard Me. In trying to defraud God we only defraud ourselves. The eagle who robbed the altar set fire to her nest from the burning coal that adhered to the stolen flesh. So men who retain God's money in their treasuries will find it a losing possession. No man ever yet lost by serving God with a whole heart, nor gained by serving Him with a half one. We may compromise with conscience for half the price, but God will not endorse the compromise; and, like Ananias and Sapphira, we shall lose not only what we thought we had purchased so cheaply, but also the price we paid for it. If we would have God "open" His treasury, we must open ours. One cause of the barrenness of the Church is the parsimony of its members [MOORE].

**10.** (<sup><1039></sup>Proverbs 3:9,10).

**storehouse** — (<sup><4811></sup>2 Chronicles 31:11, *Margin*; compare <sup><1331></sup>1 Chronicles 26:20 <sup><608></sup>Nehemiah 10:38 13:5,12).

**prove me ... herewith** — with this; by doing so. Test Me whether I will keep My promise of blessing you, on condition of your doing your part (<sup><4810></sup>2 Chronicles 31:10).

**pour ... out** — literally, “empty out”: image from a vessel completely emptied of its contents: no blessing being kept back.

**windows of heaven** — (<sup><4110></sup>2 Kings 2:7).

**that ... not ... room enough**, etc. — literally, “even to not ... sufficiency,” that is, either, as *English Version*. Or, even so as that there should be “*not merely*” “sufficiency” but *superabundance* [JEROME, MAURER]. GESENIUS not so well translates, “Even to a failure of sufficiency,” which in the case of God could never arise, and therefore means *for ever, perpetually*: so <sup><4715></sup>Psalms 72:5, “as long as the sun and moon endure”; literally, “until a failure of the sun and moon,” which is never to be; and therefore means, *for ever*.

**11. I will rebuke** — (See on Malachi 2:3). I will no longer “rebuke (*English Version*, ‘corrupt’) the seed,” but will rebuke every agency that could hurt it (<sup><3104></sup>Amos 4:9).

**12. Fulfilling the blessing** (<sup><4531></sup>Deuteronomy 33:29 <sup><3837></sup>Zechariah 8:13).

**delightful land** — (<sup><2089></sup>Daniel 8:9).

**13-18.** He notices the complaint of the Jews that it is of no profit to serve Jehovah, for that the ungodly proud are happy; and declares He will soon bring the day when it shall be known that He puts an everlasting distinction between the godly and the ungodly.

**words ... stout** — *Hebrew*, “hard”; so “the *hard* speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him” (<sup><6115></sup>Jude 1:15) [HENDERSON].

**have we spoken** — The *Hebrew* expresses at once their *assiduity* and *habit* of speaking against God [VATABLUS]. The niph'al form of the verb implies that these things were said, not directly *to* God, but *of* God, to one another (<sup><4331></sup>Ezekiel 33:20) [MOORE].

**14. what profit ... that we ... kept**, etc. — (See on <sup><3427></sup>Malachi 2:17). They here resume the same murmur against God. <sup><8214></sup>Job 21:14,15 22:17 describe a further stage of the same skeptical spirit, when the skeptic has actually ceased to keep God’s service. <sup><4731></sup>Psalms 73:1-14 describes the temptation to a like feeling in the saint when seeing the really godly suffer and the

ungodly prosper in worldly goods now. The Jews here mistake utterly the nature of God's service, converting it into a mercenary bargain; they attended to outward observances, not from love to God, but in the hope of being well paid for in outward prosperity; when this was withheld, they charged God with being unjust, forgetting alike that God requires very different motives from theirs to accompany outward observances, and that God rewards even the true worshipper not so much in this life, as in the life to come.

**his ordinance** — literally, what He requires to be kept, “His observances.”

**walked mournfully** — *in mournful garb*, sackcloth and ashes, the emblems of penitence; they forget <sup><2808></sup>Isaiah 58:3-8, where God, by showing what is true fasting, similarly rebukes those who then also said, Wherefore have we fasted and Thou seest not? etc. They mistook the outward show for real humiliation.

**15. And now** — Since we who serve Jehovah are not prosperous and “the proud” heathen flourish in prosperity, we must pronounce them the favorites of God (<sup><3017></sup>Malachi 2:17 <sup><4752></sup>Psalms 73:12).

**set up** — literally, “built up”: metaphor from architecture (<sup><1048></sup>Proverbs 24:3; compare <sup><1042></sup>Genesis 16:2, *Margin*; <sup><1038></sup>Genesis 30:3, *Margin*.)

**tempt God** — dare God to punish them, by breaking His laws (<sup><4989></sup>Psalms 95:9).

**16.** “Then,” when the ungodly utter such blasphemies against God, the godly hold mutual converse, defending God's righteous dealings against those blasphemers (<sup><3813></sup>Hebrews 3:13). The “often” of *English Version* is not in the *Hebrew*. There has been always in the darkest times a remnant that feared God (<sup><1198></sup>1 Kings 19:18 <sup><5104></sup>Romans 11:4).

**feared the Lord** — reverential and loving fear, not slavish terror. When the fire of religion burns low, true believers should draw the nearer together, to keep the holy flame alive. Coals separated soon go out.

**book of remembrance ... for them** — for their advantage, against the day when those found faithful among the faithless shall receive their final reward. The kings of Persia kept a record of those who had rendered services to the king, that they might be suitably rewarded (<sup><7068></sup>Esther 6:1,2; compare <sup><7023></sup>Esther 2:23 <sup><5045></sup>Ezra 4:15 <sup><4968></sup>Psalms 56:8 <sup><2869></sup>Isaiah 65:6 <sup><2070></sup>Daniel 7:10 <sup><6102></sup>Revelation 20:12). CALVIN makes the fearers of God to be those awakened from among the ungodly mass (before described) to true repentance; the *writing* of the book thus will imply that some were reclaimable among the blasphemers, and that the godly should be assured

that, though no hope appeared, there would be a door of penitence opened for them *before* God. But there is nothing in the context to support this view.

**17. *jewels*** — (<sup><233B></sup>Isaiah 62:3). Literally, “My peculiar treasure” (<sup><1295></sup>Exodus 19:5 <sup><1305></sup>Deuteronomy 7:6 14:2 26:18 <sup><1309></sup>Psalms 135:4 <sup><1314></sup>Titus 2:14 <sup><1319></sup>1 Peter 2:9; compare <sup><2118></sup>Ecclesiastes 2:8). CALVIN translates more in accordance with *Hebrew* idiom, “They shall be My peculiar treasure *in the day in which I will do it*” (that is, fulfill My promise of gathering My completed Church; or, “make” those things come to pass foretold in Malachi 3:5 above [GROTIUS]); so in Malachi 4:3 “do” is used absolutely, “in the day that I shall do *this*.” MAURER, not so well, translates, “in the day which I shall make,” that is, appoint as in <sup><1334></sup>Psalms 118:24.

***as ... man spareth ... son*** — (<sup><1343></sup>Psalms 103:18).

**18. *Then shall ye ... discern*** — Then shall ye see the falseness of your calumny against God’s government (<sup><3185></sup>Malachi 3:15), that the “proud” and wicked prosper. Do not judge before the time till My work is complete. It is in part to test your disposition to trust in God in spite of perplexing appearances, and in order to make your service less mercenary, that the present blended state is allowed; but at last *all* (“ye,” both godly and ungodly) shall see the eternal difference there really is “between him that serveth God and him that serveth Him not” (<sup><1381></sup>Psalms 58:11).

***return*** — Ye shall turn to a better state of mind on this point.

# CHAPTER 4

## MALACHI 4:1-6.

### GOD'S COMING JUDGMENT: TRIUMPH OF THE GODLY: RETURN TO THE LAW THE BEST PREPARATION FOR JEHOVAH'S COMING: ELIJAH'S PREPARATORY MISSION OF REFORMATION.

1. *the day cometh ... burn* — (Malachi 3:2 <sup><6002></sup> 2 Peter 3:7). Primarily is meant the judgment coming on Jerusalem; but as this will not exhaust the meaning, without supposing what is inadmissible in Scripture — exaggeration — the final and full accomplishment, of which the former was the earnest, is the day of general judgment. This principle of interpretation is not double, but *successive fulfillment*. The language is abrupt, “Behold, the day cometh! It burns like a furnace.” The abruptness imparts terrible reality to the picture, as if it suddenly burst on the prophet’s view.

*all the proud* — in opposition to the cavil above (<sup><3185></sup> Malachi 3:15), “now we call the *proud* (haughty despisers of God) happy.”

*stubble* — (<sup><3018></sup> Obadiah 1:18 <sup><4182></sup> Matthew 3:12). As Canaan, the inheritance of the Israelites, was prepared for their possession by purging out the heathen, so judgment on the apostates shall usher in the entrance of the saints upon the Lord’s inheritance, of which Canaan is the type — not heaven, but earth to its utmost bounds (<sup><4108></sup> Psalm 2:8) purged of all things that offend (<sup><4134></sup> Matthew 13:41), which are to be “gathered *out of His kingdom*,” the scene of the judgment being that also of the kingdom. The present dispensation is a spiritual kingdom, parenthetical between the Jews’ literal kingdom and its antitype, the coming literal kingdom of the Lord Jesus.

*neither root nor branch* — proverbial for *utter* destruction (<sup><3019></sup> Amos 2:9).

2. The effect of the judgment on the righteous, as contrasted with its effect on the wicked (Malachi 4:1). To the wicked it shall be as an oven that consumes the stubble (<sup><4130></sup> Matthew 6:30); to the righteous it shall be the advent of the gladdening Sun, not of condemnation, but “of righteousness”; not destroying, but “healing” (<sup><3216></sup> Jeremiah 23:6).

***you that fear my name*** — The same as those in <sup><3086></sup>Malachi 3:16, who confessed God amidst abounding blasphemy (<sup><2365></sup>Isaiah 66:5 <sup><1002></sup>Matthew 10:32). The spiritual blessings brought by Him are summed up in the two, “righteousness” (<sup><1013></sup>1 Corinthians 1:30) and spiritual “healing” (<sup><1943></sup>Psalm 103:3 <sup><2579></sup>Isaiah 57:19). Those who walk in the dark now may take comfort in the certainty that they shall walk hereafter in eternal light (<sup><2800></sup>Isaiah 50:10).

***in his wings*** — implying the *winged swiftness* with which He shall appear (compare “suddenly,” Malachi 3:1) for the relief of His people. The *beams* of the Sun are His “wings.” Compare “wings of the morning,” <sup><1939></sup>Psalm 139:9. The “Sun” gladdening the righteous is suggested by the previous “day” of terror consuming the wicked. Compare as to Christ, <sup><1294></sup>2 Samuel 23:4 <sup><1811></sup>Psalm 84:11 <sup><1078></sup>Luke 1:78 <sup><1000></sup>John 1:9 8:12 <sup><1544></sup>Ephesians 5:14; and in His second coming, <sup><1019></sup>2 Peter 1:19. The Church is the *moon* reflecting His light (<sup><1011></sup>Revelation 12:1). The righteous shall by His righteousness “shine as the Sun in the kingdom of the Father” (<sup><1038></sup>Matthew 13:43).

***ye shall go forth*** — from the straits in which you were, as it were, held captive. An earnest of this was given in the escape of the Christians to Pella before the destruction of Jerusalem.

***grow up*** — rather, “leap” as frisking calves [CALVIN]; literally, “spread,” “take a wide range.”

***as calves of the stall*** — which when set free from the stall disport with joy (<sup><4188></sup>Acts 8:8 13:52 20:24 <sup><1547></sup>Romans 14:17 <sup><1852></sup>Galatians 5:22 <sup><1004></sup>Philippians 1:4 <sup><1008></sup>1 Peter 1:8). Especially the godly shall rejoice at their final deliverance at Christ’s second coming (<sup><2310></sup>Isaiah 61:10).

**3. Solving the difficulty** (<sup><3185></sup>Malachi 3:15) that the wicked often now prosper. Their prosperity and the adversity of the godly shall soon be reversed. Yea, the righteous shall be the army attending Christ in His final destruction of the ungodly (<sup><1243></sup>2 Samuel 22:43 <sup><1944></sup>Psalm 49:14 47:3 <sup><3170></sup>Micah 7:10 Zechariah 10:5 <sup><1012></sup>1 Corinthians 6:2 <sup><1026></sup>Revelation 2:26,27 19:14,15).

***ashes*** — after having been burnt with the fire of judgment (Malachi 4:1).

**4. Remember ... law** — “The law and all the prophets” were to be in force until John (<sup><1013></sup>Matthew 11:13), no prophet intervening after Malachi; therefore they are told, “Remember the law,” for in the absence of living prophets, they were likely to forget it. The office of Christ’s forerunner was to bring them back to the law, which they had too much forgotten, and so “to make ready a people prepared for the Lord” at His coming (<sup><1017></sup>Luke

1:17). God withheld prophets for a time that men might seek after Christ with the greater desire [CALVIN]. The history of human advancement is marked by periods of rest, and again progress. So in Revelation: it is given for a time; then during its suspension men live on the memories of the past. After Malachi there was a silence of four hundred years; then a harbinger of light in the wilderness, ushering in the brightest of all the lights that had been manifested, but short-lived; then eighteen centuries during which we have been guided by the light which shone in that last manifestation. The silence has been longer than before, and will be succeeded by a more glorious and awful revelation than ever. John the Baptist was to “restore” the defaced image of “the law,” so that the original might be recognized when it appeared among men [HINDS]. Just as “Moses” and “Elias” are here connected with the Lord’s coming, so at the transfiguration they converse with Him, implying that the law and prophets which had prepared His way were now fulfilled in Him.

**statutes ... judgments** — *ceremonial* “statutes”: “judgments” in civil questions at issue. “The law” refers to *morals* and *religion*.

**5. I send you Elijah** — as a means towards your “remembering the law” (Malachi 4:4).

**the prophet** — emphatical; not “the Tishbite”; for it is in his official, not his personal capacity, that his coming is here predicted. In this sense, John the Baptist was *an* Elijah in spirit (<sup><4016></sup>Luke 1:16,17), but not *the literal* Elijah; whence when asked, “Art thou Elias?” (<sup><4002></sup>John 1:21), He answered, “I am not.” “Art thou that prophet?” “No.” This implies that John, though knowing from the angel’s announcement to his father that he was referred to by Malachi 4:5 (<sup><4017></sup>Luke 1:17), whence he wore the costume of Elijah, yet knew by inspiration that he did not exhaustively fulfill *all* that is included in this prophecy: that there is a further fulfillment (compare *Note*, see on Malachi 3:1). As Moses in Malachi 4:4 represents the law, so Elijah represents the prophets. The Jews always understood it of the literal Elijah. Their saying is, “Messiah must be anointed by Elijah.” As there is another consummating advent of Messiah Himself, so also of His forerunner Elijah; perhaps in person, as at the transfiguration (<sup><4078></sup>Matthew 17:3; compare <sup><4071></sup>Matthew 17:11). He in his appearance at the transfiguration in that body on which death had never passed is the forerunner of the saints who shall be found alive at the Lord’s second coming. <sup><6103></sup>Revelation 11:3 may refer to the same witnesses as at the transfiguration, Moses and Elijah; <sup><6106></sup>Revelation 11:6 identifies the latter (compare <sup><11703></sup>1 Kings 17:1 <sup><3167></sup>James 5:17). Even after the transfiguration Jesus (<sup><4071></sup>Matthew 17:11) speaks of Elijah’s coming “to restore all things” as still future, though He adds that Elijah (in the person of John the Baptist) is come already *in a sense*

(compare <sup><412></sup>Acts 3:21). However, the future forerunner of Messiah at His second coming may be a prophet or number of prophets clothed with Elijah's power, who, with zealous upholders of "the law" clothed in the spirit of "Moses," may be the forerunning witnesses alluded to here and in <sup><612></sup>Revelation 11:2-12. The words "before the ... *dreadful* day of the Lord," show that John cannot be exclusively meant; for he came before the day of Christ's coming in grace, not before His coming in terror, of which last the destruction of Jerusalem was the earnest (Malachi 4:1 <sup><412></sup>Joel 2:31).

**6. turn ... heart of ... fathers to ... children,** etc. — Explained by some, that John's preaching should restore harmony in families. But <sup><412></sup>Luke 1:16,17 substitutes for "the heart of the children to the fathers," "the disobedient to the wisdom of the just," implying that the reconciliation to be effected was that between the unbelieving disobedient children and the believing ancestors, Jacob, Levi, "Moses," and "Elijah" (just mentioned) (compare Malachi 1:2 2:4,6 3:3,4). The threat here is that, if this restoration were not effected, Messiah's coming would prove "a curse" to the "earth," not a blessing. It proved so to guilty Jerusalem and the "earth," that is, the *land* of Judea when it rejected Messiah at His first advent, though He brought blessings (<sup><412></sup>Genesis 12:3) to those who accepted Him (<sup><412></sup>John 1:11-13). Many were delivered from the common destruction of the nation through John's preaching (<sup><412></sup>Romans 9:29 11:5). It will prove so to the disobedient at His second advent, though He comes to be glorified in His saints (<sup><5002></sup>2 Thessalonians 1:6-10).

**curse** — *Hebrew, Cherem*, "a ban"; the fearful term applied by the Jews to the extermination of the guilty Canaanites. Under this ban Judea has long lain. Similar is the awful curse on all of Gentile churches who love not the Lord Jesus now (<sup><412></sup>1 Corinthians 16:22). For if God spare not the natural branches, the Jews, much less will He spare unbelieving professors of the Gentiles (<sup><412></sup>Romans 11:20,21). It is deeply suggestive that the last utterance from heaven for four hundred years before Messiah was the awful word "curse." Messiah's first word on the mount was "Blessed" (<sup><412></sup>Matthew 5:3). The law speaks wrath; the Gospel, blessing. Judea is now under the "curse" because it rejects Messiah; when the spirit of Elijah, or a literal Elijah, shall bring the Jewish children back to the Hope of their "fathers," blessing shall be theirs, whereas the apostate "earth" shall be "smitten with the curse" previous to the coming restoration of all things (<sup><412></sup>Zechariah 12:13,14).

May the writer of this Commentary and his readers have grace "to take heed to the sure word of prophecy as unto a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawn!" To the triune Jehovah be all glory ascribed for ever!

