
ISAIAH 11: 1 A shoot will come out of the stock of Jesse, and a branch out of his roots will bear fruit.

The Messiah represented as a slender twig shooting up from the root of an old withered stem, which tender plant, so extremely weak in its first appearance, should nevertheless become fruitful and mighty, Isa 11:1-4. Great equity of the Messiah's government, Isa 11:5. Beautiful assemblages of images by which the great peace and happiness of his kingdom are set forth, Isa 11:6-8. The extent of his dominion shall be ultimately that of the whole habitable globe, Isa 11:9. The prophet, borrowing his imagery from the exodus from Egypt, predicts, with great majesty of language, the future restoration of the outcasts of Israel and the dispersed of Judah, (viz., the whole of the twelve tribes of Israel), from their several dispersions, and also that blessed period when both Jews and Gentiles shall assemble under the banner of Jesus, and zealously unite in extending the limits of his kingdom, Isa 11:10-16.

The prophet had described the destruction of the Assyrian army under the image of a mighty forest, consisting of flourishing trees growing thick together, and of a great height; of Lebanon itself crowned with lofty cedars, but cut down and laid level with the ground by the axe wielded by the hand of some powerful and illustrious agent. In opposition to this image he represents the great Person who makes the subject of this chapter as a slender twig shooting out from the trunk of an old tree, cut down, lopped to the very root, and decayed; which tender plant, so weak in appearance, should nevertheless become fruitful and prosper. This contrast shows plainly the connection between this and the preceding chapter, which is moreover expressed by the connecting particle; and we have here a remarkable instance of that method so common with the prophets, and particularly with Isaiah, of taking occasion, from the mention of some great temporal deliverance, to launch out into the display of the spiritual deliverance of God's people by the Messiah; for that this prophecy relates to the Messiah we have the express authority of St. Paul, Rom 15:12. 'He joins this paragraph, with respect to the days of the Messiah, with the fidelity that was in the days of Hezekiah.' - Kimchi, in Isa 11:1. Thus in the latter part of Isaiah's prophecies the subject of the great redemption, and of the glories of the Messiah's kingdom, arises out of the restoration of Judah by the deliverance from the captivity of Babylon, and is all along connected and intermixed with it.

ISAIAH 11: 2 The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him: the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD.

ISAIAH 11: 3 His delight will be in the fear of the LORD. He will not judge by the sight of his eyes, neither decide by the hearing of his ears;

ISAIAH 11: 4 but with righteousness he will judge the poor, and decide with equity for the humble of the earth. He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth; and with the breath of his lips he will kill the wicked.

Verse 4

With the rod of his mouth "By the blast of his mouth" - For בשבט beshebet, by the rod, Houbigant reads בשבת beshebeth, by the blast of his mouth, from נשב nashab, to blow. The conjecture is ingenious and probable; and seems to be confirmed by the Septuagint and Chaldee, who render it by

the word of his mouth, which answers much better to the correction than to the present reading. Add to this, that the blast of his mouth is perfectly parallel to the breath of his lips in the next line.

ISAIAH 11: 5 Righteousness will be the belt of his waist, and faithfulness the belt of his waist.

Verse 5

The girdle "The cincture" - All the ancient Versions, except that of Symmachus, have two different words for girdle in the two hemistichs. It is not probable that Isaiah would have repeated אָזֶר *azer*, when a synonymous word so obvious as חָגוֹר *chagor* occurred. The tautology seems to have arisen from the mistake of some transcriber. The meaning of this verse is, that a zeal for justice and truth shall make him active and strong in executing the great work which he shall undertake. See note on Isa 5:27.

ISAIAH 11: 6 The wolf will live with the lamb, and the leopard will lie down with the young goat; The calf, the young lion, and the fattened calf together; and a little child will lead them.

Verse 6

The wolf also shall, etc. "Then shall the wolf," etc. - The idea of the renewal of the golden age, as it is called, is much the same in the Oriental writers with that of the Greeks and Romans: - the wild beasts grow tame; serpents and poisonous herbs become harmless; all is peace and harmony, plenty and happiness: -

Occidet et serpens, et fallax herba veneni Occidet.

Vega. Eclog. 4:24. "The serpent's brood shall die. The sacred ground

Shall weeds and noxious plants refuse to bear." - *Nec magnos metuent armenta leones.*

Virg. Eclog. 4:22. "Nor shall the flocks fear the great lions."

Non lupus insidias explorat ovilia circum,

Nec gregibus nocturnus obambulat: acrior illum

Cura domat: timidae damae cervique fugaces

Nunc interque canes, et circum tecta vagantur.

Virg. Georg. 3:537. "The nightly wolf that round the enclosure prowled,

To leap the fence, now plots not on the fold:

Tamed with a sharper pain, the fearful doe

And flying stag amidst the greyhounds go;

And round the dwellings roam, of man, their former foe."

Dryden.

Nec vespertinus circumgemit ursus ovile,

Nec intumescit alta viperis humus.

Hor. Epod. 16:51. "Nor evening bears the sheepfold growl around,

Nor mining vipers heave the tainted ground."

Dryden. Εσται δη τουτ' αμαρ, όπηνικα νεβρον εν ευνα Καρχαροδων δινεσθαι ιδων λυκος ουκ εθελησει.

Theoc. Idyl. 24:84.

There shall be a time when the ravenous wolf shall see the kid lying at ease, and shall feel no desire to do it an injury.

I have laid before the reader these common passages from the most elegant of the ancient poets, that he may see how greatly the prophet on the same subject has the advantage upon the comparison; how much the former fall short of that beauty and elegance, and variety of imagery, with which Isaiah has set forth the very same ideas. The wolf and the leopard not only forbear to destroy the lamb and the kid, but even take their abode and lie down together with them. The calf, and the young lion, and the fatling, not only come together, but are led quietly in the same band, and that by a little child. The heifer and the she-bear not only feed together, but even lodge their young ones, for whom they used to be most jealously fearful, in the same place. All the serpent kind is so perfectly harmless, that the sucking infant and the newly weaned child puts his hand on the basilisk's den, and plays upon the hole of the aspic. The lion not only abstains from preying on the weaker animals, but becomes tame and domestic, and feeds on straw like the ox. These are all beautiful circumstances, not one of which has been touched upon by the ancient poets. The Arabian and Persian poets elegantly apply the same ideas to show the effects of justice impartially administered, and firmly supported, by a great and good king: - "Mahmoud the powerful king, the ruler of the world,

To whose tank the wolf and the lamb come, together to drink."

Ferdusi. "Through the influence of righteousness, the hungry wolf

Becomes mild, though in the presence of the white kid."

Ibn Onein. Jones, Poes. Asiat. Comment., p. 380.

The application is extremely ingenious and beautiful: but the exquisite imagery of Isaiah is not equalled.

ISAIAH 11: 7 The cow and the bear will graze. Their young ones will lie down together. The lion will eat straw like the ox.

Verse 7

In this verse a word is omitted in the text, יחדו' yachdav, together; which ought to be repeated in the second hemistich, being quite necessary to the sense. It is accordingly twice expressed by the Septuagint and Syriac.

ISAIAH 11: 8 The nursing child will play near a cobra's hole, and the weaned child will put his hand on the viper's den.

Verse 8

The cockatrice' den - This is supposed, both by the Targum and by Kimchi, to mean the pupil of this serpent's eye. "When," says Kimchi, "he is in the mouth of his den, in an obscure place, then his eyes sparkle exceedingly: the child, seeing this, and supposing it to be a piece of crystal, or precious stone, puts forth his hand to take it. What would be very dangerous at another time, shall be safe in the days of the Messiah; for the serpent will not hurt the child."

ISAIAH 11: 9 They will not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.

ISAIAH 11: 10 It will happen in that day that the nations will seek the root of Jesse, who stands as a banner of the peoples; and his resting place will be glorious.

Verse 10

A root of Jesse, which shall stand etc. "The root of Jesse, which standeth," etc. - St. John hath taken this expression from Isaiah, Rev 5:5, and Rev 22:16, where Christ hath twice applied it to himself. Seven MSS. have עומד omed, standing, the present participle. Radix Isaei dicitur jam stare, et aliquantum stesisse, in signum populorum. - Vitranga. "The root of Jesse is said to stand, and for some time to have stood, for an ensign to the people." Which rightly explains either of the two readings. Psa 110:1-7 (note) is a good comment on this verse.

ISAIAH 11: 11 It will happen in that day that the Lord will set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant that is left of his people from Assyria, from Egypt, from Pathros, from Cush, from Elam, from Shinar, from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea.

Verse 11

And it shall come to pass in that day - This part of the chapter contains a prophecy which certainly remains yet to be accomplished.

The Lord "Jehovah" - For אדני Adonai, thirty-three MSS. of Kennicott's, and many of De Rossi's, and two editions, read יהוה Yehovah.

The islands of the sea - The Roman and Turkish empires, say Kimchi.

ISAIAH 11: 12 He will set up a banner for the nations, and will assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.

ISAIAH 11: 13 The envy also of Ephraim will depart, and those who persecute Judah will be cut off. Ephraim won't envy Judah, and Judah won't persecute Ephraim.

Verse 13

The adversaries of Judah "And the enmity of Judah" - צררים tsorerim, *Postulat pars posterior versus, ut intelligantur inimicitiae Judae in Ephraimum: et potest (צררים tsorerim) inimicitiam notare, ut (נחומים nichumim) poenitentiam, Hos 11:8. - Secker.*

ISAIAH 11: 14 They will fly down on the shoulders of the Philistines on the west. Together they will plunder the children of the east. They will extend their power over Edom and Moab, and the children of Ammon will obey them.

ISAIAH 11: 15 The LORD will utterly destroy the tongue of the Egyptian sea; and with his scorching wind he will wave his hand over the River, and will split it into seven streams, and cause men to march over in sandals.

Verse 15

The Lord - shall smite it in the seven streams "Smite with a drought" - The Chaldee reads החרב hecherib; and so perhaps the Septuagint, who have ἐρημωσαι, the word by which they commonly render it. Vulg. desolabit; "shall desolate." The Septuagint, Vulgate, and Chaldee read הדריכה hidrichahu, "shall make it passable," adding the pronoun, which is necessary: but this reading is not confirmed by any MS.

Here is a plain allusion to the passage of the Red Sea. And the Lord's shaking his hand over the river with his vehement wind, refers to a particular circumstance of the same miracle: for "he caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea dry land," Exo 14:21. The tongue; a very apposite and descriptive expression for a bay such as that of the Red Sea. It is used in the same sense, Jos 15:2, Jos 15:5; Jos 18:19. The Latins gave the same name to a narrow strip of land running into the sea: *tenuem producit in aequora linguam.* Lucan. 2:613. He shall smite the river to its seven streams. This has been supposed to refer to the Nile, because it falls into the Mediterranean Sea by seven mouths: but R. Kimchi understands it of the Euphrates, which is the opinion of some good judges. See the Targum. See below.

Herodotus, lib. i, 189, tells a story of his Cyrus, (a very different character from that of the Cyrus of the Scriptures and Xenophon), which may somewhat illustrate this passage, in which it is said that God would inflict a kind of punishment and judgment on the Euphrates, and render it fordable by dividing it into seven streams. "Cyrus, being impeded in his march to Babylon by the Gyndes, a deep and rapid river which falls into the Tigris, and having lost one of his sacred white horses that attempted to pass it, was so enraged against the river that he threatened to reduce it, and make it so shallow that it should be easily fordable even by women, who should not be up to their knees in

passing it. Accordingly he set his whole army to work, and cutting three hundred and sixty trenches, from both sides of the river, turned the waters into them, and drained them off."

ISAIAH 11: 16 There will be a highway for the remnant that is left of his people from Assyria, like there was for Israel in the day that he came up out of the land of Egypt.
