
ISAIAH 24: 1 Behold, the LORD makes the earth empty, makes it waste, turns it upside down, and scatters its inhabitants.

Dreadful judgments impending over the people of God, Isa 24:1-4. Particular enumeration of the horrid impieties which provoked the Divine vengeance, Isa 24:5, Isa 24:6. Great political wretchedness of the transgressors, Isa 24:7-12. The calamities shall be so great that only a small remnant shall be left in the land, as it were the gleanings of the vintage, Isa 24:13. The rest, scattered over the different countries, spread there the knowledge of God, Isa 24:14-16. Strong figures by which the great distress and long captivity of the transgressors are set forth, Isa 24:17-22. Gracious promise of a redemption from captivity; and of an extension of the kingdom of God in the latter days, attended with such glorious circumstances as totally to eclipse the light and splendor of the previous dispensation, Isa 24:23.

From the thirteenth chapter to the twenty-third inclusive, the fate of several cities and nations is denounced: of Babylon, of the Philistines, Moab, Damascus, Egypt, Tyre. After having foretold the destruction of the foreign nations, enemies of Judah, the prophet declares the judgments impending on the people of God themselves for their wickedness and apostasy, and the desolation that shall be brought on their whole country.

The twenty-fourth and the three following chapters seem to have been delivered about the same time: before the destruction of Moab by Shalmaneser; see Isa 25:10, consequently, before the destruction of Samaria; probably in the beginning of Hezekiah's reign. But concerning the particular subject of the twenty-fourth chapter interpreters are not at all agreed: some refer it to the desolation caused by the invasion of Shalmaneser; others to the invasion of Nebuchadnezzar; and others to the destruction of the city and nation by the Romans. Vitringa is singular in his opinion, who applies it to the persecution of Antiochus Epiphanes. Perhaps it may have a view to all of the three great desolations of the country, by Shalmaneser, by Nebuchadnezzar, and by the Romans; especially the last, to which some parts of it may seem more peculiarly applicable. However, the prophet chiefly employs general images; such as set forth the greatness and universality of the ruin and desolation that is to be brought upon the country by these great revolutions, involving all orders and degrees of men, changing entirely the face of things, and destroying the whole polity, both religious and civil; without entering into minute circumstances, or necessarily restraining it by particular marks to one great event, exclusive of others of the same kind. - L.

ISAIAH 24: 2 It will be as with the people, so with the priest; as with the servant, so with his master; as with the maid, so with her mistress; as with the buyer, so with the seller; as with the creditor, so with the debtor; as with the taker of interest, so with the giver of interest.

ISAIAH 24: 3 The earth will be utterly emptied and utterly laid waste; for the LORD has spoken this word.

ISAIAH 24: 4 The earth mourns and fades away. The world languishes and fades away. The lofty people of the earth languish.

The world languisheth - The world is the same with the land; that is, the kingdoms of Judah and Israel, orbis Israeliticus. See note on Isa 13:11 (note).

ISAIAH 24: 5 The earth also is polluted under its inhabitants, because they have transgressed the laws, violated the statutes, and broken the everlasting covenant.

Verse 5

The laws "The law" - תורה torah, singular: so read the Septuagint, Syriac, and Chaldee.

ISAIAH 24: 6 Therefore the curse has devoured the earth, and those who dwell therein are found guilty. Therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men left.

Verse 6

Are burned "Are destroyed" - For חרו charu, read חרבו charebu. See the Septuagint, Syriac, Chaldee and Symmachus.

ISAIAH 24: 7 The new wine mourns. The vine languishes. All the merry-hearted sigh.

ISAIAH 24: 8 The mirth of tambourines ceases. The sound of those who rejoice ends. The joy of the harp ceases.

Verse 8

The mirth, etc. - שאון sheon, the noise. גאון geon, the pride, is the reading of three of De Rossi's MSS., with the Septuagint and Arabic.

ISAIAH 24: 9 They will not drink wine with a song. Strong drink will be bitter to those who drink it.

Verse 9

Strong drink "Palm wine" - This is the proper meaning of the word שכר shechar, σκαρα. See note on Isa 5:11. All enjoyment shall cease: the sweetest wine shall become bitter to their taste.

ISAIAH 24: 10 The confused city is broken down. Every house is shut up, that no man may come in.

ISAIAH 24: 11 There is a crying in the streets because of the wine. All joy is darkened. The mirth of the land is gone.

Verse 11

All joy is darkened "All gladness is passed away" - For ערבה arebah, darkened, read עברה aberah, passed away, transposing a letter. Houbigant, Secker. Five of Dr. Kennicott's and five of De Rossi's MSS., several ancients add כל col, all, after משוש mesos: the Septuagint adds the same word before it.

ISAIAH 24: 12 The city is left in desolation, and the gate is struck with destruction.

ISAIAH 24: 13 For it will be so in the midst of the earth among the peoples, as the shaking of an olive tree, as the gleanings when the vintage is done.

ISAIAH 24: 14 These shall lift up their voice. They will shout for the majesty of the LORD. They cry aloud from the sea.

Verse 14

They shall lift up their voice "But these shall lift up their voice" - That is, they that escaped out of these calamities. The great distresses brought upon Israel and Judah drove the people away, and dispersed them all over the neighboring countries: they fled to Egypt, to Asia Minor, to the islands and the coasts of Greece. They were to be found in great numbers in most of the principal cities of these countries. Alexandria was in a great measure peopled by them. They had synagogues for their worship in many places, and were greatly instrumental in propagating the knowledge of the true God among these heathen nations, and preparing them for the reception of Christianity. This it what the prophet seems to mean by the celebration of the name of Jehovah in the waters, in the distant coasts, and in the uttermost parts of the land. מים mayim, the waters; ὕδωρ, Sept.; ὕδατα, Theod.; not מים miyam from the sea.

ISAIAH 24: 15 Therefore glorify the LORD in the east, even the name of the LORD, the God of Israel, in the islands of the sea!

Verse 15

In the isles of the sea "In the distant coasts of the sea" - For בארים beurim, in the valleys, I suppose we ought to read באיים beiyim, in the isles, which is in a great degree justified by the repetition of the word in the next member of the sentence, with the addition of הים haiyam, the sea, to vary the phrase, exactly in the manner of the prophet. איים iyim is a word chiefly applied to any distant countries, especially those lying on the Mediterranean Sea. Others conjecture ביורים biorim, בהרים beharim, בעמים beummim, בעמים beammim, בחורים bechorim, באורים beurim, a באר bar, illustrate - Le Clerc. Twenty-three MSS. of Kennicott's, many of De Rossi's, and some of my own, read באורים beorim, in the valleys. The Septuagint do not acknowledge the reading of the text, expressing here only the word איים iyim, εν ταις νησοις, in the islands, and that not repeated. But MSS. Pachom. and 1. D. 2 supply in this place the defect in the other copies of the Septuagint thus, Δια τουτο η δοξα Κυριου εσται εν ταις νησοις τ ης θαλασσης· εν ταις νησοις το ονομα του Κυριου Θεου Ισραηλ

ενδοξον εσται· "Therefore the glory of the Lord shall be in the isles of the sea: in the islands shall the name of the Lord God of Israel be glorified."

Kimchi says, that by באורים beurim, in the valleys is meant the cities, because they were generally built in valleys. The Vulgate has in doctrinis, and so my old MS., in techingis. Coverdale translates, Praise the name of the Lord God of Israel in the valleys and in the floodis. It should not be revered in the fires; none of the ancient Versions understood it thus. According to which the Septuagint had in their Hebrew copy באיים beiyim, repeated afterwards, not בארים beurim.

ISAIAH 24: 16 From the uttermost part of the earth have we heard songs. Glory to the righteous! But I said, "I pine away! I pine away! woe is me!" The treacherous have dealt treacherously. Yes, the treacherous have dealt very treacherously.

Verse 16

But I said - The prophet speaks in the person of the inhabitants of the land still remaining there, who should be pursued by Divine vengeance, and suffer repeated distresses from the inroads and depredations of their powerful enemies. Agreeably to what he said before in a general denunciation of these calamities: - "Though there be a tenth part remaining in it;

Even this shall undergo a repeated destruction." Isa 6:13 (note). See the note there. - L.

My leanness, my leanness - Or, my secret; so the Vulgate, Montanus, and my old MS; רזן razan has this meaning in Chaldee; but in Hebrew it signifies to make lean, to waste. This sentence in the Hebrew has a strange connection of uncouth sounds: ואמר רזי לי רזי לי אוי לי בוגדים בגדו ובגד בגדים ואמר רזי לי רזי לי אוי לי בוגדים בגדו ובגד בגדים. This may be equalled by the translation in my Old MS. Bible: And I seide, my priveye thinge to me: my priveye thinge to me: woo to me: The lawe brekyngge thei breken: and in lawe brekyngge of the overdon thingis, they breken the lawe.

The treacherous dealers have dealt treacherously "The plunderers plunder" - See note on Isa 21:2.

ISAIAH 24: 17 Fear, the pit, and the snare, are on you who inhabitant the earth.

Verse 17

Fear, and the pit "The terror, the pit" - If they escape one calamity, another shall overtake them. "As if a man should flee from a lion, and a bear should overtake him:

Or should betake himself to his house, and lean his hand on the wall,

And a serpent should bite him." Amo 5:19. "For," as our Savior expressed it in a like parabolical manner, "wheresoever the carcass is there shall the eagles be gathered together," Mat 24:28. The images are taken from the different methods of hunting and taking wild beasts, which were anciently in use. The terror was a line strung with feathers of all colors which fluttering in the air scared and frightened the beasts into the toils, or into the pit which was prepared for them. Nec est mirum, cum maximos ferarum greges linea pennis distincta contineat, et in insidias agat, ab ipso

effectu dicta formido. Seneca de Ira, 2:12. The pit or pitfall, fovea; digged deep in the ground, and covered over with green boughs, turf, etc., in order to deceive them, that they might fall into it unawares. The snare, or toils, indago; a series of nets, inclosing at first a great space of ground, in which the wild beasts were known to be; and then drawn in by degrees into a narrower compass, till they were at last closely shut up, and entangled in them. - L.

For מכול mikkol, a MS. reads מפני mippeney, as it is in Jer 48:44, and so the Vulgate and Chaldee. But perhaps it is only, like the latter, a Hebraism, and means no more than the simple preposition מ mem. See Psa 102:6. For it does not appear that the terror was intended to scare the wild beasts by its noise. The paronomasia is very remarkable; פחד pachad, פחת pachath, פך pach: and that it was a common proverbial form, appears from Jeremiah's repeating it in the same words, Jer 48:43, Jer 48:44.

ISAIAH 24: 18 It will happen that he who flees from the noise of the fear will fall into the pit; and he who comes up out of the midst of the pit will be taken in the snare; for the windows on high are opened, and the foundations of the earth tremble.

Verse 18

Out of the midst of the pit "From the pit" - For מתוך mittoch, from the midst of, a MS. reads מן min, from, as it is in Jer 48:44; and so likewise the Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate.

ISAIAH 24: 19 The earth is utterly broken. The earth is torn apart. The earth is shaken violently.

Verse 19

The earth "The land" - הארץ haarets, forte delendum ה he, ut ex praecedente ortum. Vid. seqq. - Secker. "Probably the ה he, in הארץ haarets, should be blotted out, as having arisen from the preceding."

ISAIAH 24: 20 The earth will stagger like a drunken man, and will sway back and forth like a hammock. Its disobedience will be heavy on it, and it will fall and not rise again.

Verse 20

Like a cottage "Like a lodge for a night" - See note on Isa 1:8.

ISAIAH 24: 21 It shall happen in that day that the LORD will punish the army of the high ones on high, and the kings of the earth on the earth.

Verse 21

On high - upon the earth - That is, the ecclesiastical and civil polity of the Jews, which shall be destroyed. The nation shall continue in a state of depression and dereliction for a long time. The image seems to be taken from the practice of the great monarchs of that time; who, when they had thrown their wretched captives into a dungeon, never gave themselves the trouble of inquiring about them; but let them lie a long time in that miserable condition, wholly destitute of relief, and disregarded. God shall at length revisit and restore his people in the last age: and then the kingdom of God shall be established in such perfection, as wholly to obscure and eclipse the glory of the temporary, typical, preparative kingdom now subsisting.

ISAIAH 24: 22 They shall be gathered together, as prisoners are gathered in the pit, and shall be shut up in the prison; and after many days shall they be visited.

ISAIAH 24: 23 Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed; for the LORD of Armies will reign on Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem; and before his elders will be glory.

Verse 23

Before his ancients gloriously - In the sigt of their olde men he schal ben glorified. Old MS. Bible. "The figurative language of the prophets is taken from the analogy between the world natural and an empire or kingdom considered as a world politic. Accordingly the whole world natural, consisting of heaven and earth, signifies the whole world politic, consisting of thrones and people; or so much of it as is considered in prophecy: and the things in that world signify the analogous things in this. For the heavens and the things thereto signify thrones and dignities, and those who enjoy them; and the earth with the things thereon, the inferior people; and the lowest parts of the earth, called hades or hell, the lowest or most miserable part of them. Great earthquakes, and the shaking of heaven and earth, are put for the shaking of kingdoms, so as to distract and overthrow them; the creating a new heaven and earth, and the passing away of an old one, or the beginning and end of a world, for the rise and ruin of a body politic signified thereby. The sun, for the whole species and race of kings, in the kingdoms of the world politic; the moon, for the body of the common people, considered as the king's wife; the stars, for subordinate princes and great men; or for bishops and rulers of the people of God, when the sun is Christ: setting of the sun, moon, and stars. darkening the sun, Turning the moon into blood and falling of the stars, for the ceasing of a kingdom." Sir 1. Newton's Observations on the Prophecies, Part I., chap. 2.

These observations are of great consequence and use, in explaining the phraseology of the prophets.