
ISAIAH 25: 1 The LORD, you are my God. I will exalt you! I will praise your name, for you have done wonderful things, things planned long ago, in complete faithfulness and truth.

The short glance which the prophet gave at the promised restoration of the people of God and the Messiah's kingdom, in the close of the preceding chapter, makes him break out into a rapturous song of praise in this, where although he alludes to temporal mercies, such as the destruction of the cities which had been at war with Zion, the ruin of Moab, and other signal interpositions of Divine Providence in behalf of the Jews; yet he is evidently impressed with a more lively sense of future and much higher blessings under the Gospel dispensation, in the plenitude of its revelation, of which the temporal deliverances vouchsafed at various times to the primitive kingdoms of Israel and Judah were the prototypes, Isa 25:1-5. These blessings are described under the figure of a feast made for all nations, Isa 25:6; the removing of a veil from their faces, Isa 25:7; the total extinction of the empire of death by the resurrection from the dead, the exclusion of all sorrow, and the final overthrow of all the enemies of the people of God, Isa 25:8-12.

It does not appear to me that this chapter has any close and particular connection with the chapter immediately preceding, taken separately, and by itself. The subject of that was the desolation of the land of Israel and Judah, by the just judgment of God, for the wickedness and disobedience of the people: which, taken by itself, seems not with any propriety to introduce a hymn of thanksgiving to God for his mercies to his people in delivering them from their enemies. But taking the whole course of prophecies, from the thirteenth to the twenty-fourth chapter inclusive, in which the prophet foretells the destruction of several cities and nations, enemies to the Jews, and of the land of Judah itself, yet with intimations of a remnant to be saved, and a restoration to be at length effected by a glorious establishment of the kingdom of God: with a view to this extensive scene of God's providence in all its parts, and in all its consequences, the prophet may well be supposed to break out into this song of praise; in which his mind seems to be more possessed with the prospect of future mercies than with the recollection of the past. - L.

Verse 1

Thy counsels of old are faithfulness and truth - That is, All thy past declarations by the prophets shall be fulfilled in their proper time.

ISAIAH 25: 2 For you have made a city into a heap, a fortified city into a ruin, a palace of strangers to be no city. It will never be built.

Verse 2

A city "The city" - Nineveh, Babylon, Ar, Moab, or any other strong fortress possessed by the enemies of the people of God.

For the first מעיר meir, of a city, the Syriac and Vulgate read העיר hair, the city; the Septuagint and Chaldee read ערים arim, cities, in the plural, transposing the letters. After the second מעיר meir, a MS. adds לגל lagol, for a heap.

A palace of strangers "The palace of the proud ones" - For זרים zarim, strangers, MS. Bodl. and another read זדים zedim, the proud: so likewise the Septuagint; for they render it ασεβων here, and in Isa 25:5, as they do in some other places: see Deu 18:20, Deu 18:22. Another MS. reads צרים tsarim, adversaries; which also makes a good sense. But זרים zarim, strangers, and זדים zedim, the proud, are often confounded by the great similitude of the letters ד dalet and ר resh. See Mal 3:15; Mal 4:1; Psa 19:14, in the Septuagint; and Psa 54:5, where the Chaldee reads זדים zedim, compared with Psa 86:16.

ISAIAH 25: 3 Therefore a strong people will glorify you. A city of awesome nations will fear you.

ISAIAH 25: 4 For you have been a stronghold to the poor, a stronghold to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm, a shade from the heat, when the blast of the dreaded ones is like a storm against the wall.

Verse 4

As a storm against the wall "Like a winter-storm" - For קיר kir, read קור kor: or, as עיר ir from ערר arar, so קיר kir from קרר karar. - Capellus.

ISAIAH 25: 5 As the heat in a dry place will you bring down the noise of strangers; as the heat by the shade of a cloud, the song of the dreaded ones will be brought low.

Verse 5

Of strangers "Of the proud" - The same mistake here as in Isa 25:2 (note): see the note there. Here זדים zedim, the proud, is parallel to עריצים aritsim, the formidable: as in Psa 54:5, and Psa 86:14.

The heat with the shadow of a cloud "As the heat by a thick cloud" - For חרב choreb, the Syriac, Chaldee, Vulgate, and two MSS. read כחרב kechoreb, which is a repetition of the beginning of the foregoing parallel line; and the verse taken out of the parallel form, and more fully expressed, would run thus: "As a thick cloud interposing tempers the heat of the sun on the burnt soil; so shalt thou, by the interposition of thy power, bring low and abate the tumult of the proud, and the triumph of the formidable."

ISAIAH 25: 6 In this mountain, the LORD of Armies will make all peoples a feast of fat things, a feast of choice wines, of fat things full of marrow, of well refined choice wines.

Verse 6

In this mountain - Zion, at Jerusalem. In his Church.

Shall the Lord of hosts make unto all people a feast - Salvation by Jesus Christ. A feast is a proper and usual expression of joy in consequence of victory, or any other great success. The feast here spoken of is to be celebrated on Mount Sion; and all people, without distinction, are to be invited to

it. This can be no other than the celebration of the establishment of Christ's kingdom, which is frequently represented in the Gospel under the image of a feast; "where many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down at table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven;" Mat 8:11. See also Luk 14:16; Luk 24:29, Luk 24:30. This sense is fully confirmed by the concomitants of this feast expressed in the next verse, the removing of the veil from the face of the nations, and the abolition of death: the first of which is obviously and clearly explained of the preaching of the Gospel; and the second must mean the blessing of immortality procured for us by Christ, "who hath abolished death, and through death hath destroyed him that had the power of death."

Of wines on the lees "Of old wines" - Hebrews lees; that is, of wines kept long on the lees. The word used to express the lees in the original signifies the preservers; because they preserve the strength and flavor of the wine. "All recent wines, after the fermentation has ceased, ought to be kept on their lees for a certain time, which greatly contributes to increase their strength and flavor. Whenever this first fermentation has been deficient, they will retain a more rich and sweet taste than is natural to them in a recent true vinous state; and unless farther fermentation is promoted by their lying longer on their own lees, they will never attain their genuine strength and flavor, but run into repeated and ineffectual fermentations, and soon degenerate into a liquor of an acetous kind. All wines of a light and austere kind, by a fermentation too great, or too long continued, certainly degenerate into a weak sort of vinegar; while the stronger not only require, but will safely bear a stronger and often-repeated fermentation; and are more apt to degenerate from a defect than excess of fermentation into a vapid, rosy, and at length into a putrescent state." Sir Edward Barry, *Observations on the Wines of the Ancients*, p. 9, 10.

Thevenot observes particularly of the Shiras wine, that, after it is refined from the lees, it is apt to grow sour. "Il a beaucoup de lie; c'est pourquoi il donne puissemment dans la teste; et pour le rendre plus traitable on le passe par un chausse d'hypocras; apres quoi il est fort clair, et moins fumeux. Ils mettent ce vin dans des grandes jarres de terres qui tiennent dix ou douze jusqu'a quatorze carabas: mais quand l'on a entame une jarre, il faut la vuidier au plutost, et mettre le vin qu'on en tire dans des bouteilles ou carabas; car si l'on y manque en le laissant quelque tems apres que la jarre est entamee il se gate et s'aigrit." *Voyages*, Tom. 2 p. 245. "It has much sediment, and therefore is intoxicating. In order to make it more mellow, they strain it through a hypocrates' sleeve, after which it is very clear and less heady. They lay up this wine in great earthen jars, which hold from ten to fourteen carabas: but when a jar is unstopped, it is necessary to empty it immediately, and put the wine into bottles, or carabas; for if it be left thus in the jar, it will spoil and become acid."

The caraba, or girba, is a goat's skin drawn off from the animal, having no apertures but those occasioned by the tail, the feet, and the neck. One opening is left, to pour in and draw off the liquor. This skin goes through a sort of tanning process, and is often beautifully ornamented, as is the case with one of these girbas now lying before me.

This clearly explains the very elegant comparison, or rather allegory, of Jeremiah, Jer 48:11; where the reader will find a remarkable example of the mixture of the proper with the allegorical, not uncommon with the Hebrew poets: - "Moab hath been at ease from his youth,

And he hath settled upon his lees;

Nor hath he been drawn off from vessel to vessel,

Neither hath he gone into captivity:

Wherefore his taste remaineth in him,

And his flavor is not changed."

Sir John Chardin's MS. note on this place of Jeremiah is as follows: "On change ainsi le vin de coupe en coupe en Orient; et quand on en entame une, il faut la vuider en petites coupes ou bouteilles, sans quoy il s'aigrit." "They change the wine from vessel to vessel in the east; and when they unstop a large one, it is necessary to empty it into small vessels, as otherwise it will grow sour."

ISAIAH 25: 7 He will destroy in this mountain the surface of the covering that covers all peoples, and the veil that is spread over all nations.

Verse 7

The face of the covering cast over all people "The covering that covered the face of all the peoples" - MS. Bodl. reads על פני כל al peney chol. The word פני peney, face, has been removed from its right place into the line above, where it makes no sense; as Houbigant conjectured. "The face of the covering," etc. He will unveil all the Mosaic ritual, and show by his apostles that it referred to, and was accomplished in, the sacrificial offering of Jesus Christ.

ISAIAH 25: 8 He has swallowed up death forever! The Lord GOD will wipe away tears from off all faces. He will take the reproach of his people away from off all the earth, for the LORD has spoken it.

Verse 8

He will swallow up death - He, by the grace of God, will taste death for every man. Heb 2:9. Probably, swallow up death, and taste death, in both these verses, refer to the same thing: Jesus dying instead of a guilty world. These forms of speech may refer to the punishment of certain criminals; they were obliged to drink a cup of poison. That cup which every criminal in the world must have drunk, Jesus Christ drank for them; and thus he swallowed up death: but as he rose again from the dead, complete victory was gained.

From these three verses we learn: -

I. That the Gospel is a plenteous provision: "I will make a feast for all people."

II. That it is a source of light and salvation: "I will destroy the veil. I will abolish death. and bring life and immortality to light."

III. That it is a source of comfort and happiness: "I will wipe away all tears from off all faces."

As in the Arabic countries a covering was put over the face of him who was condemned to suffer death, it is probable that the words in Isa 25:7 may refer to this. The whole world was condemned to death, and about to be led out to execution, when the gracious Lord interposed, and, by a glorious sacrifice, procured a general pardon.

ISAIAH 25: 9 It shall be said in that day, "Behold, this is our God! We have waited for him, and he will save us! This is the LORD! We have waited for him. We will be glad and rejoice in his salvation!"

Verse 9

It shall be said "Shall they say" - So the Septuagint and Vulgate, in the plural number. They read *ואמר* veameru, the Syriac reads *ואמרת* veamarta, thou shalt say. They shall say, i.e., the Jews and the Gentiles - Lo, this [Jesus Christ] is our God: we have waited for him, according to the predictions of the prophets. We have expected him, and we have not been disappointed; therefore will we be glad, and rejoice in his salvation.

ISAIAH 25: 10 For in this mountain the hand of the LORD will rest.

Moab will be trodden down in his place, even like straw is trodden down in the water of the dunghill.

Verse 10

Shall the hand of the Lord rest "The hand of Jehovah shall give rest" - Hebrews *תנוח* tenuach, quiescet. Annon *תניח* taniach, quietem dabit, shall rest; shall give rest, ut Graeci, *αναπαυσιν δωσει*, et Copt.? - Mr. Woide. That is, "shall give peace and quiet to Sion, by destroying the enemy; "as it follows."

As straw is trodden down "As the straw is threshed" - Hoc junta ritum loquitur Palastinae et multarum Orientis provinciarum, quae ob pratorum et foeni penuriam paleas preparant esui animantium. Sunt autem carpenta ferrata rotis per medium in serrarum modum se volventibus, quae stipulam conterunt; et comminuunt in paleas. Quomodo igitur plaustis ferratis paleae conteruntur, sic conteretur Moab sub eo; sive sub Dei potentia, sive in semetipso, ut nihil in eo integri remaneat. "This is spoken in reference to the mode of threshing in Palestine, and various other Asiatic provinces. Because of the scarcity of meadow land and hay they make chopped straw for the cattle. They have large wheels studded over with iron teeth or nails, by which, on the out-of-door threshing-floors, they pound and reduce the straw into chaff. As, therefore, the straw is reduced to chaff by bringing the iron-shod wheel over it; so shall Moab be bruised by the power of God, that nothing whole shall remain." - Hieron. in loc. See the note on Isa 28:27 (note).

For the dunghill "Under the wheels of the car" - For *מדמנה* madmenah, the Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate read *מרכבה* mercabah, which I have followed. See Jos 15:31, compared with Jos 19:5, where there is a mistake very nearly the same. The *keri*, *במי* bemi, is confirmed by twenty-eight MSS., seven ancient, and three editions.

ISAIAH 25: 11 He will spread out his hands in its midst, like one who swims spreads out hands to swim, but his pride will be humbled together with the craft of his hands.

Verse 11

As he that swimmeth spreadeth forth his hands to swim "As he that sinketh stretcheth out his hands to swim" - There is great obscurity in this place: some understand God as the agent; others, Moab. I have chosen the latter sense, as I cannot conceive that the stretching out of the hands of a swimmer in swimming can be any illustration of the action of God stretching out his hands over Moab to destroy it. I take השחה hashshocheh, altering the point on the ש sin. on the authority of the Septuagint, to be the participle of שחה shachah, the same with שוח shuach, and שחח shachach, to bow down, to be depressed; and that the prophet designed a paronomasia here, a figure which he frequently uses between the similar words שחה shachah, and שחות shechoth. As תחתיו tachtaiv, in his place, or on the spot, as we say in the preceding verse, gives us an idea of the sudden and complete destruction of Moab; so בקרבו bekirbo, in the midst of him, means that this destruction shall be open, and exposed to the view of all: the neighboring nations shall plainly see him struggling against it, as a man in the midst of the deep waters exerts all his efforts by swimming, to save himself from drowning. - L.

ISAIAH 25: 12 He has brought the high fortress of your walls down, laid low, and brought to the ground, even to the dust.
