
ISAIAH 26: 1 In that day, this song will be sung in the land of Judah: "We have a strong city. God appoints salvation for walls and bulwarks."

This chapter, like the foregoing, is a song of praise, in which thanksgivings for temporal and spiritual mercies are beautifully mingled, though the latter still predominate. Even the sublime and evangelical doctrine of the resurrection seems here to be hinted at, and made to typify the deliverance of the people of God from a state of the lowest misery; the captivity, the general dispersion, or both. This hymn too, like the preceding, is beautifully diversified by the frequent change of speakers. It opens with a chorus of the Church, celebrating the protection vouchsafed by God to his people; and the happiness of the righteous, whom he guards, contrasted with the misery of the wicked, whom he punishes, Isa 26:1-7. To this succeeds their own pious resolution of obeying, trusting, and delighting in God, Isa 26:8. Here the prophet breaks in, in his own person, eagerly catching the last words of the chorus, which were perfectly in unison with the feelings of his own soul, and which he beautifully repeats, as one musical instrument reverberates the sound of another on the same key with it. He makes likewise a suitable response to what had been said on the judgments of God, and observes their different effects on the good and the bad; improving the one, and hardening the other, Isa 26:9-11. After this, a chorus of Jews express their gratitude to God for past deliverances, make confession of their sins, and supplicate his power, which they had been long expecting, Isa 26:12-18. To this God makes a gracious reply, promising deliverance that should be as life from the dead, Isa 26:19. And the prophet, (apparently alluding to the command of Moses to the Israelites, when the destroying angel was to go through the land of Egypt), concludes with exhorting his people to patience and resignation, till God sends the deliverance he has promised, Isa 26:20, Isa 26:21.

Verse 1

We have a strong city - In opposition to the city of the enemy, which God hath destroyed, Isa 25:1-12 (note). See the note there.

Salvation - for walls and bulwarks - חומת וחל chomsoth vachel, walls and redoubts, or the walls and the ditch. חל chel properly signifies the ditch or trench without the wall; see Kimchi. The same rabbin says, This song refers to the time of salvation, i.e., the days of the Messiah.

ISAIAH 26: 2 Open the gates, that the righteous nation may enter: the one which keeps faith.

Verse 2

The righteous nation - The converted Gentiles shall have the gates opened - a full entrance into all the glories and privileges of the Gospel; being fellow heirs with the converted Jews. The Jewish peculiarity is destroyed, for the middle wall of partition is broken down.

The truth - The Gospel itself - as the fulfillment of all the ancient types, shadows, and ceremonies; and therefore termed the truth, in opposition to all those shadowy rites and ceremonies. "The law was given by Moses; but grace and Truth came by Jesus Christ; "Joh 1:17, and see the note there.

ISAIAH 26: 3 You will keep whoever's mind is steadfast in perfect peace, because he trusts in you.

Verse 3

In perfect peace - שלום שלום shalom, shalom, "peace, peace, "i.e., peace upon peace - all kinds of prosperity - happiness in this world and in the world to come.

Because he trusteth in thee "Because they have trusted in thee" - So the Chaldee, בטוח betacho. The Syriac and Vulgate read בטוח batachnu, "we have trusted." Schroeder, Gram. Hebrews p. 360, explains the present reading בטוח batuach, impersonally, confisum est.

ISAIAH 26: 4 Trust in the LORD forever; for in the LORD, the LORD, is an everlasting Rock.

Verse 4

In the Lord Jehovah "In Jehovah" - In Jah Jehovah, Heb.; but see Houbigant, and the note on Isa 12:2 (note).

Everlasting strength - צור עולמים tsur olamim, "the rock of ages; "or, according to Rab. Maimon, - the eternal Fountain, Source, or Spring. Does not this refer to the lasting streams from the rock in the desert? And that rock was Christ. ge han hoped in the Lord fro the everlastinge worldis. - Old Ms. Bible.

ISAIAH 26: 5 For he has brought down those who dwell on high, the lofty city. He lays it low. He lays it low even to the ground. He brings it even to the dust.

ISAIAH 26: 6 The foot shall tread it down; Even the feet of the poor, and the steps of the needy."

ISAIAH 26: 7 The way of the just is uprightness. You who are upright make the path of the righteous level.

ISAIAH 26: 8 Yes, in the way of your judgements, the LORD, have we waited for you. Your name and your renown are the desire of our soul.

Verse 8

Have we waited for thee "We have placed our confidence in thy name" - The Septuagint, Syriac, and Chaldee read קוינו kavinu, without the pronoun annexed.

ISAIAH 26: 9 With my soul have I desired you in the night. Yes, with my spirit within me will I seek you earnestly; for when your judgements are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness.

Verse 9

Have I desired thee - Forty-one MSS. of Dr. Kennicott's and many of De Rossi's, (nine ancient), and five editions read אוֹיְתִיךָ invithicha. It is proper to note this; because the second ' yod being omitted in the text, the Vulgate and many others have rendered it in the third person.

When thy judgments, etc. - It would be better to read, When thy judgments were in the earth, the inhabitants of the world have learned (לָמְדוּ lamedu) righteousness. Men seldom seek God in prosperity; they are apt to rest in an earthly portion: but God in mercy embitters this by adversity; then there is a general cry after himself as our chief, solid, and only permanent good.

ISAIAH 26: 10 Let favour be shown to the wicked, yet he will not learn righteousness. In the land of uprightness he will deal wrongfully, and will not see the LORD's majesty.

ISAIAH 26: 11 The LORD, your hand is lifted up, yet they don't see; but they will see your zeal for the people, and be disappointed. Yes, fire will consume your adversaries.

ISAIAH 26: 12 The LORD, you will ordain peace for us, for you have also worked all our works for us.

ISAIAH 26: 13 The LORD our God, other lords besides you have had dominion over us, but by you only will we make mention of your name.

ISAIAH 26: 14 The dead shall not live. The departed spirits shall not rise. Therefore you have visited and destroyed them, and caused all memory of them to perish.

ISAIAH 26: 15 You have increased the nation, O LORD. You have increased the nation! You are glorified! You have enlarged all the borders of the land.

ISAIAH 26: 16 LORD, in trouble they have visited you. They poured out a prayer when your chastening was on them.

Verse 16

Lord, in trouble have they visited thee "O Jehovah, in affliction we have sought thee" - So the Septuagint and two MSS. have פִּקְדוֹנֶךָ pekadnucha, in the first person plural. And so perhaps it should be צָקְנוּ tsaknu, in the first person; but how the Septuagint read this word is not clear; and this last member of the verse is extremely obscure.

For לָמוּ lamo, "on them," the Septuagint read לָנוּ lanu, "on us," in the first person likewise; a frequent mistake; see note on Isa 10:29.

ISAIAH 26: 17 Like as a woman with child, who draws near the time of her delivery, is in pain and cries out in her pangs; so we have been before you, LORD.

ISAIAH 26: 18 We have been with child. We have been in pain. We gave birth, it seems, only to wind. We have not worked any deliverance in the earth; neither have the inhabitants of the world fallen.

Verse 18

We have - brought forth wind - The learned Professor Michaelis explains this image in the following manner: "Rariorem morbum describi, empneumatosin, aut ventosam molam, dictum; quo quae laborant diu et sibi et peritis medicis gravidae videntur, tandemque post omnes verae graviditatis molestias et labored ventum ex utero emittunt: quem morbum passim describunt medici.

"Syntagma Comment., vol. ii., p. 165. The empneumatosin, or windy inflation of the womb, is a disorder to which females are liable. Some have had this in such wise, for a long time together, that they have appeared to themselves, and even to very skillful medical men, to be pregnant; and after having endured much pain, and even the throes of apparent childbearing, they have been eased and restored to health by the emission of a great quantity of wind from the uterus. This disorder is well known to medical men. "The Syriac translator seems to have understood it in this manner: Enixi sumus, ut illae quae ventos pariunt. "We have brought forth as they who bring forth wind."

In the earth "In the land" - בארץ bearets; so a MS., the Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate.

ISAIAH 26: 19 Your dead shall live. My dead bodies shall arise. Awake and sing, you who dwell in the dust; for your dew is like the dew of herbs, and the earth will cast out the departed spirits.

Verse 19

My dead body "My deceased" - All the ancient Versions render it in the plural; they read נבלותי niblothai, my dead bodies. The Syriac and Chaldee read נבלותיהם niblotheyhem, their dead bodies. No MS. yet found confirms this reading.

The dew of herbs "The dew of the dawn" - Lucis, according to the Vulgate; so also the Syriac and Chaldee.

The deliverance of the people of God from a state of the lowest depression is explained by images plainly taken from the resurrection of the dead. In the same manner the Prophet Ezekiel represents the restoration of the Jewish nation from a state of utter dissolution by the restoring of the dry bones to life, exhibited to him in a vision, chap. 37, which is directly thus applied and explained, Eze 37:11-13. And this deliverance is expressed with a manifest opposition to what is here said above, Eze 37:14, of the great lords and tyrants, under whom they had groaned: - "They are dead, they shall not live;

They are deceased tyrants, they shall not rise:" that they should be destroyed utterly, and should never be restored to their former power and glory. It appears from hence, that the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead was at that time a popular and common doctrine; for an image which is assumed in order to express or represent any thing in the way of allegory or metaphor, whether poetical or prophetic, must be an image commonly known and understood; otherwise it will not answer the purpose for which it is assumed. - L.

Kimchi refers these words to the days of the Messiah, and says, "Then many of the saints shall rise from the dead. "And quotes Dan 12:2. Do not these words speak of the resurrection of our blessed Lord; and of that resurrection of the bodies of men, which shall be the consequence of his body being raised from the dead?

Thy dead men shall live, - with my dead body shall they arise - This seems very express.

ISAIAH 26: 20 Come, my people, enter into your rooms, and shut your doors behind you. Hide yourself for a little moment, until the indignation is past.

Verse 20

Comes my people, enter thou into thy chambers - An exhortation to patience and resignation under oppression, with a confident expectation of deliverance by the power of God manifestly to be exerted in the destruction of the oppressor. It seems to be an allusion to the command of Moses to the Israelites, when the destroying angel was to go through the land of Egypt, "not to go out at the door of their houses until the morning;" Exo 12:22. And before the passage of the Red Sea: "Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of Jehovah. Jehovah shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace," Exo 14:13, Exo 14:14.

ISAIAH 26: 21 For, behold, the LORD comes out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity. The earth also will disclose her blood, and will no longer cover her slain.

Verse 21

The earth also shall disclose her blood - Crimes of cruelty and oppression, which have passed away from the eyes of men, God will bring into judgment, and exact punishment for them. O what a reckoning will the kingdoms of the earth have with God, for the torrents of blood which they have shed for the gratification of the lust of power and ambition! Who shall live when he doeth this?