

CHAPTER 16

INTRODUCTION TO EZEKIEL 16

In this chapter the Jewish nation is represented under the simile of a female infant, whose birth, breeding, marriage, grandeur, and conduct, are described, in order to show the wickedness and ingratitude of, his people; who, on account thereof, are threatened with judgments; though mercy is promised to a remnant that should repent. The prophet is directed to make known to Jerusalem her abominable sins, (²³⁶⁰Ezekiel 16:1,2); and, in order to this, is bid to take up the following parable of a female infant; whose descent, birth, and wretched condition, at the time of it, are pointed at, (²³⁶³Ezekiel 16:3-5); which are expressive of the low and forlorn estate of the Jews originally; and then follow the benefits and blessings of God bestowed upon them, both in their infant and adult state; the preserving them alive in Egypt, and their multiplication there; and afterwards the covenant made with them, when brought out from thence; and the Lord's espousal of them to himself, as his own people, having a strong affection for them, (²³⁶⁶Ezekiel 16:6-8); the large provision of good things he made for them, both in the wilderness, and especially in the land of Canaan; the riches he bestowed upon them, and the flourishing and prosperous kingdom he raised them to, which made them famous among all the nations round about them, (²³⁶⁹Ezekiel 16:9-14); and yet, after all this, such was the ingratitude of this people, as to commit spiritual whoredom, that is, idolatry, to a very great degree, (²³⁶⁵Ezekiel 16:15); which is aggravated by their converting and applying the good things which the Lord gave them to idolatrous uses, (²³⁶⁸Ezekiel 16:16-19); by sacrificing their sons and daughters to idols, which were the Lord's, (²³⁶¹Ezekiel 16:20,21); by not calling to mind the former wretched estate out of which they were brought, (²³⁶²Ezekiel 16:22); by building high places in every street and way, and there committing idolatries, (²³⁶³Ezekiel 16:23-25); by the various nations, whose examples they followed, and with whom they joined, as the Egyptians, Assyrians, and Chaldeans, (²³⁶⁵Ezekiel 16:26-29); and by the great difference between them and all other harlots, whom they exceeded, (²³⁶⁰Ezekiel 16:30-34); wherefore, on account of all this, they are threatened to be dealt with as an adulterous woman; made a spectacle of;

condemned to die, to be stripped, stoned, and burned, (²³⁶⁵Ezekiel 16:35-43); and, that the Lord might appear to be just in executing such judgments on them, they are declared to be as bad as the Hittites and Amorites their parents; and worse than their sisters Samaria and Sodom; and therefore could expect to fare no better than they; and should become proverb and a byword, and bear their sins, shame, and punishment, in the sight of their neighbours, and be despised by them, (²³⁶⁴Ezekiel 16:44-59); nevertheless, the covenant of grace made with his chosen people among them should stand firm; which being manifested to them, would be a means of bringing them to a sense of sin, shame for it, and an acknowledgment of the Lord's grace and goodness to them (²³⁶⁰Ezekiel 16:60-63).

Ver. 1. *Again the word of the Lord came unto me, saying.*] The word of prophecy from the Lord, as the Targum; the following representation was made to him under a spirit of prophecy.

Ver. 2. *Son of man, cause Jerusalem to know her abominations.*] That is, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, as the Targum; these are mentioned instead of the whole body of the people, because that Jerusalem was the metropolis of the nation, whose sins were very many and heinous: called "abominations", because abominable to God, and rendered them so to him; particularly their idolatries are meant; which, though committed by them, and so must be known to them, yet were not owned, confessed, and repented of by them, they not being convinced of the evil of them; in order to which the prophet is bid to set them before them, and show them the evil nature of them; and which he might do by writing to them, for he himself was now in Chaldea with the captives there. The Targum is,

"son of man, reprove the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and show them their abominations."

Ver. 3. *And say, thus saith the Lord God unto Jerusalem, &c.*] To the inhabitants of Jerusalem, as the Targum:

thy birth and thy nativity [is] of the land of Canaan; here the Jewish ancestors for a time dwelt and sojourned, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and so the Targum, Jarchi, Kimchi, and Ben Melech, interpret the first word, "thy habitation" or "sojourning"^{f196}: but whereas it follows, "and thy nativity", this does not solve the difficulty; which may be said to be of the land of Canaan, because their ancestors were born here; for though Abraham was a Chaldean he was called out of Chaldea into the land of

Canaan, where Isaac was born; and so was Jacob, the father of the twelve tribes; besides, the Israelites were the successors of the Canaanites in their land, and so seemed to descend from them; and it is not unusual for such to be reckoned the children of those whom they succeed; to which may be added, that they were like to the Canaanites in their manners, particularly in their idolatries; and so their children, as such, are said to be the offspring and descendants of those whose examples they follow, or whom they imitate; see the history of Susannah in the Apocrypha:

“So he put him aside, and commanded to bring the other, and said unto him, O thou seed of Chanaan, and not of Juda, beauty hath deceived thee, and lust hath perverted thine heart.” (Susannah 1:56)

thy father [was] an Amorite, and thy mother an Hittite; Abraham and Sarah, who were, properly speaking, the one the father, the other the mother, of the Jewish nation, were Chaldeans; and neither Amorites nor Hittites; yet, because they dwelt among them; are so called; and especially since before their conversion they were idolaters, as those were; besides, the Jews who descended from Judah, and from whom they have their name, very probably sprung from ancestors who might be Amorites and Hittites: since Judah married the daughter of a Canaanite, and such an one seems to be Tamar, he took for his son Er, and by whom he himself had two sons, Pharez and Zarah, from the former of which the kings of Judah lineally descended, (^{<0130>}Genesis 37:2,6,29,30 ^{<0103>}Matthew 1:3); besides, the Jews were the successors of these people, and possessed their land, and imitated them in their wicked practices, (^{<0120>}Amos 2:10 9:7); and these two, the Amorite and Hittite, of all the seven nations, are mentioned, because they were the worst, and the most wicked, (^{<0156>}Genesis 15:16 27:46). The Jews^{f197} say Terah the father of Abraham, and his ancestors, came from Canaan.

Ver. 4. *And [as for] thy nativity, in the day thou wast born, &c.*] Which refers either to the time when Abraham was called out of Ur of the Chaldeans, who had before been an idolater; or rather to the time when the children of Israel were in Egypt, and there grew and multiplied, and became a numerous body of people; who, upon their coming out of it, were brought into some form, and became a nation or body politic, which may be called the day of their birth as a people; (see ^{<0103>}Hosea 2:3);

thy navel was not cut; alluding to what is done to a newborn infant, when the midwife immediately takes care to cut the navel string, by which the

child adheres to its mother, and takes in its breath and nourishment in the womb; but now, being of no longer use that way, it is cut and tied up, for the safety both of mother and child, who otherwise would be in great danger; and this denotes the desperate condition the Israelites were in when in Egypt, where they were greatly oppressed and afflicted, and in very imminent danger of being destroyed; to which the Targum refers it:

neither wast thou washed in water to supple [thee]: which also is done, to an infant as soon as born, to cleanse it from the menstruous blood, to make the flesh sleek, and smooth, and amiable; which, as Kimchi and Ben Melech observe, is done in hot water:

thou wast not salted at all; which was done, either by sprinkling salt upon it, or using salt and water^{f198}, as a detersive of uncleanness, to prevent putrefaction, to dry up the humours, and harden the flesh, and consolidate the parts:

nor swaddled at all; to bring the several members of the body into form and shape; (see ^{<III>}Luke 2:7); and these things being of necessity to be done immediately, were, as Kimchi observes, lawful to be done even on a sabbath day, according to the traditions of the elders^{f199}.

Ver. 5. *None eye pitied thee, to do any of these unto thee, to have compassion upon thee, &c.]* Or, “one of these”^{f200}; not so much as one of them: sad must be the case of an infant, when it meets with no tender heart or kind hand from midwife, nurse, or mother, to do these things for it: this is expressive of the helpless, forlorn, and unpitied state of the Israelites in Egypt; who, when their lives were made bitter with hard bondage, had no mercy shown them by Pharaoh and his taskmasters, (^{<III>}Exodus 1:14 5:9,14,17). So the Targum,

“the eye of Pharaoh did not spare you to do one good thing for you, to give you rest from your bondage, to have mercy on you:”

but thou wast cast out in the open field; alluding to infants exposed by their unnatural parents, or unkind nurses, and left in an open field, or any desert place, to perish for want, unless some kind providence appears for them: this open field may design the land of Egypt, whither Jacob and his posterity were, being driven out of Canaan by a famine; and where, after the death of Joseph, they were exposed to the hardships and cruelties of the Egyptians; and who, commanding their male children to be slain,

doubtless occasioned the exposing of many of them, as well as Moses, to which some reference may be had; and so the Targum paraphrases it,

“and he (Pharaoh) decreed a full decree to cast your male children into the river, to destroy you when you were in Egypt:”

to the loathing of thy person, in the day that thou wast born; the Israelites were loathsome to the Egyptians, as every shepherd was an abomination to them, and such were they, (^{<0463>}Genesis 46:34); and all this may be applied to the state and condition of men by nature, even of God’s elect, whose extraction is from fallen man; descend immediately from unclean parents; are conceived in sin, and shapen in iniquity; can have no communication of grace from their parents, or others; by whom they cannot be washed from their sins, or sanctified, or clothed, or made righteous; but are in a hopeless and helpless condition; and are loathsome and abominable to God, and to themselves too, when they come to see the state they are in.

Ver. 6. *And when I passed by thee*, &c.] Alluding to a traveller passing by where an infant lies, exposed, and looks upon it, and takes it up; or it may be to Pharaoh’s daughter walking by the river side, when she spied the ark in which Moses was, and ordered it to be taken up, and so saved his life:

and saw thee in thine own blood; keeping up the simile of a newborn infant, that has nothing done to it, but is all over covered with menstruous blood; denoting the wretched and miserable estate the Jews were in when in Egypt; when they were not only loathsome and abominable to the Egyptians, and ill used and unpitied by them; but were in danger of being utterly destroyed, and ready to expire. The word rendered “polluted” signifies “trodden underfoot”^{<f201>}; like mire in the streets; and so denotes both pollution and distress; so the Israelites were trodden under foot by the Egyptians, when they made them to serve with rigour, in mortar, and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field; and so the Targum paraphrases it,

“for it was manifest before me that you were afflicted in your bondage;”

as they then sighed and cried because of their bondage, the Lord looked upon them with an eye of pity and compassion, and delivered them, (^{<0014>}Exodus 1:14 2:23-25 3:7,8);

I said unto thee, [when thou wast] in thy blood, live: yea, I said unto thee, [when thou wast] in thy blood, live; the Lord preserved them and saved them alive, when they were near to ruin, and delivered them by the hands of Moses, which was as life from the dead; and this he did of his own sovereign good will and pleasure, and not for any worth or merit, in them, any goodness or righteousness of theirs; for this he did when they were in their blood, pollution, and guilt; and which, that it might be observed, is repeated. The word for “blood”, which is thrice mentioned, is in the plural number, “bloods”; and denotes not the blood of circumcision, and the blood of the passover; for, or by which, the Lord had mercy upon them, and redeemed them, as the Targum and Jarchi interpret it; but the abundance of it, as upon a newborn infant; and the great pollution and distress in which the Israelites were, through the many murders committed on them by their enemies. The whole is an emblem of the state and condition the elect of God are in, when they are quickened by him; who are by their first birth unclean; under the pollution, power, and guilt of sin; wallowing and weltering in it; deserving of the wrath of God, and liable to punishment for it; trodden under foot, quite neglected and despised in all appearance; and are both hopeless and helpless: when the Lord “passes” by them, not by chance, but on purpose, knowing where they are; and this he often does by the ministry of the word, under which they are providentially cast; and where he “sees” them, and looks upon them, not merely with his eye of omniscience, much less with an eye of scorn, contempt, and abhorrence; but with an eye of pity and compassion, and even of complacency and delight in their persons, though not in their sins: and when he speaks life into them, a principle of spiritual life; or quickens them by his word, so that they live a life of faith and holiness, which issues in everlasting life: this flows from divine love, and is the effect of divine power; it is of pure rich grace, and not of man’s merit; as his case, being in his blood, and dead in sins, show; (see ~~1000~~ Ephesians 2:4,5).

Ver. 7. *I have caused thee to multiply as the bud of the field, &c.]* Or, “made thee millions”^{f202}; like the spires of grass in the field. This refers to the multiplication of the children of Israel in Egypt, especially after the death of Joseph, and even while they were sorely afflicted, and likewise in later times. Jacob went down to Egypt with seventy five persons only, but when his posterity returned from thence, they were above six hundred thousand that were able to go forth to war, (~~0457~~Genesis 46:27 ~~0046~~Numbers 1:46); (see ~~1000~~Exodus 1:7,12);

and thou hast increased and waxed great; and became large families, kindreds, and tribes, as the Targum interprets it; as a child grows up, and becomes adult:

and thou art come to excellent ornaments; or, “ornament of ornaments”^{f203}; as a young woman, when she is grown up, comes to wear better and finer clothes than in infancy; perhaps there is an allusion to the jewels the Israelites brought out of Egypt with them: this may be applied to the laws, statutes, and ordinances given them, which were an “ornament of grace” unto them, (²⁰⁰⁹Proverbs 1:9);

[thy] breasts are fashioned; swelled and stood out; were come to a proper size and shape, as in persons grown and marriageable; (see ²⁰⁸⁰Song of Solomon 8:10);

and thine hair is grown; an euphemism, expressive of puberty, which in females was at twelve years of age:

whereas thou [wast] naked and bare; in a state of infancy. Jarchi and Kimchi interpret this of the Israelites being without the commandments. The whole of what is here said, may be applied to quickened and converted persons, who grow in grace, and increase in spiritual knowledge; and are adorned with the ornaments of grace and good works; and attend to the word and ordinances, which are the church’s breasts; who, while in their nature state, were naked and destitute of righteousness and grace.

Ver. 8. *Now when I passed by thee, and looked upon thee*, &c.] Which the Targum refers to the Lord’s appearance to Moses in the bush; (see Gill on ²³⁰⁶Ezekiel 16:6”);

behold, thy time [was] the time of love; which the Targum explains of the time of redemption of the people of Israel out of Egypt, which was an instance of the great love of God unto that people; and which time was fixed by him; and when it was come, at the exact and precise time, the redemption was wrought; (see ⁰¹⁵³Genesis 15:13,14 ⁰²²⁰Exodus 12:40,41); and so there is a set time for the calling and conversion of God’s elect, who are therefore said to be called according to purpose; and, when that time comes, all means are made to concur to bring it about: and this is a time of love; for though the love of God to his people is before all time, yet it is manifested in time; and there are particular times in which it is expressed unto them; and the time of conversion is one of them; and indeed it is the first time that there is a manifestation and application of the love of God

made to the souls of his people: and this is a “time of loves”^{f204}; as it is in the original text; denoting the large abundance of it which is now shown forth; and the various acts of it now done; as bringing of them out of a most miserable condition, out of a horrible pit; plucking them as brands out of the burning; quickening them when dead in sin; speaking comfortably to them, and applying pardoning grace and mercy to their souls: and it may include both the love of God to his people, and their love to him; for now is the love of their espousals, and the kindness of their youth, (^{<3411>}Jeremiah 2:2); the grace of love is now implanted, to God and Christ, to his people, word, worship, and ordinances, which before had no place in them:

and I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness; the Lord espoused the people of Israel to himself in the wilderness, after he had brought them out of Egypt, and took them under the wings of his protection; both which this phrase may be expressive of; (see ^{<8811>}Ruth 3:9). Some understand this of his giving them the spoils of the Egyptians, and also the law: it may very well be applied to the righteousness of Christ, which is often compared to a garment, for which the skirt, a part, is put; and this is put on as a garment, and answers all the purposes of one; and particularly covers the nakedness of men, which their own righteousness will not do; this the Lord spreads over his people, and covers them with; and being clothed with this, they shall not be found naked:

yea, I swear unto thee; to his love expressed to his people, and to his covenant he entered into with them, neither of which shall ever be removed; and this makes to their abundant comfort; (see ^{<8811>}Psalm 89:3,35) (^{<2541>}Isaiah 54:9,10 ^{<8613>}Hebrews 6:13-18);

and entered into covenant with thee, saith the Lord God; as he did with the people of Israel at Horeb, and which was a sort of a marriage contract with them; (see ^{<6311>}Deuteronomy 29:1 ^{<2613>}Jeremiah 31:32); the covenant of grace was made from everlasting with Christ, and the elect in him; but is made manifest at conversion, when the Lord makes himself known unto them as their covenant God; leads them to Christ the Mediator of it; sends his Spirit down into their hearts, to make them partakers of the grace of it; and shows them their interest in the blessings and promises of it; all which may be meant by the phrase here used:

and thou becamest mine; as Israel did at the time before mentioned, became the Lord’s peculiar people, and were avouched as such by him, (^{<1215>}Exodus 19:5); so, in conversion, those who before were secretly the

Lord's by electing and redeeming grace, become openly his by calling and sanctifying grace.

Ver. 9. *Then washed I thee with water, &c.*] Brought the Israelites out of the mean, abject, servile, and sordid state in which they were, when among the mortar, bricks, and pots, into a state of liberty; so the Targum,

“and I redeemed you from the servitude of the Egyptians; and I removed the strength of dominion from you, and brought you into liberty;”

perhaps some reference may be had to the ceremonial ablutions enjoined them; they were washed before the covenant was made with them at Mount Sinai, just referred to; their priests, sacrifices, vessels, and all unclean persons, were to be washed, and purifications were prescribed them:

yea, I thoroughly washed away thy blood from thee: as with an inundation overflowing; so the word^{f205} signifies; very fitly is this mentioned, since in (^{340B}Ezekiel 16:6); they are said to be “polluted in their blood”, and now washed from it: all men are defiled with sin, originally, naturally, internally, and universally; nor can they cleanse themselves by anything they can do, God only can; and this he promises to do; and this he does, not with water baptism, which does not take away sin, original or actual; nor with the washing of regeneration, or by regenerating grace; though that is sometimes compared to water; which, among other things, is of a cleansing nature; and of which men are born again, and by it sanctified; and which is done by the Spirit, who is a spirit of judgment and burning, by whom the faith of the daughter of Zion is washed away; and because this is done by the word and ordinances as means, hence these are called waters; (see ^{345B}Ezekiel 36:25 ^{344B}Isaiah 44:3 4:4 55:1); yet hereby men are not “thoroughly” washed; though a clean heart is created in them, a new man is formed in righteousness and true holiness; yet the filthiness of the old man remains, which appears in thoughts, words, and actions; but the thorough washing is by the blood of Christ; that is the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness; with this men are washed by Christ from their sins; this has a purgative and cleansing nature; and it cleanses from all sin, and justifies from everyone; so that hereby a man thoroughly washed is clear of all sin, none to be found or seen in him; he is without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; and has solid peace in his soul; his heart being sprinkled with this blood from an evil conscience, and, being purged, has no more conscience

of sin; so that this is expressive of the fulness of justifying and pardoning grace:

and I anointed thee with oil; alluding to the anointing oil, with which the priests, tabernacle, and vessels, were anointed; or to the land of Canaan, a land of oil olive, into which the Israelites were brought; or to the custom of washing and anointing women before marriage; (see ^{<RUB>}Ruth 3:3 ^{<TDD>}Esther 2:10); and to the use of oil in baths, which was frequent: this may spiritually design the grace of the Spirit, which, like the oil on Aaron's head, is exceeding "precious", as are faith, hope, and love; and, like the "pure" oil for the candlestick, productive of purity of heart, lip, and life; of a delightful smell, as are the church's ointments she has from Christ, (^{<DIB>}Song of Solomon 1:3 4:10); and very cheering and refreshing, and therefore called oil of gladness, (^{<RFB>}Psalm 45:7) (^{<RIB>}Isaiah 61:3); and ornamental and beautifying, as all grace is; and oil will not mix with another liquor, as grace will not with sin and corruption, and is of an abiding nature: now it is God that anoints with this; this oil comes from the God of all grace; is fro, in Christ the Holy One, and out of his fulness; from him the head it descends to all his members, and is applied by the blessed Spirit; (see ^{<DIB>}2 Corinthians 1:21).

Ver. 10. *I clothed thee also, with broidered work*, &c.] Or, "with needle work"^{f206}; with garments of divers colours, like Joseph's coat; perhaps it may refer to the rich raiment borrowed of the Egyptians, when they came out from thence. So the Targum,

"and I clothed you with various garments, the desirable things of your enemies;"

and which, with their other clothes, waxed not old all the while they were in the wilderness; (see ^{<DIB>}Exodus 12:35 ^{<RIB>}Deuteronomy 8:4); this may be expressive, either of the various graces of the Spirit of God, with which the saints are clothed and adorned; and, when exercised by them, are said to be put on as a garment, (^{<DIB>}Colossians 3:12); or rather of the righteousness of Christ, called "raiment of needle work", (^{<RIB>}Psalm 45:14);

and shod thee with badgers' skin; the same the covering of the tabernacle was made of, (^{<DIB>}Exodus 26:14); and though the word here used may not design the creature we so call, yet may intend one whose skin was fit for shoe leather, and was very beautiful, and perhaps durable; reference may be had to the shoes of the Israelites in the wilderness, which waxed not old,

(^{f207}Deuteronomy 29:5). Some think only the hyacinth or purple colour is here meant; and so the Septuagint version renders the word; agreeably to which Bochart^{f207} gives this version of the words, "I shod thee with the purple"; that is, with shoes of a purple colour; and it is very probable that of this colour were the shoes wore by the Jewish women of the first rank; since, as the same writer has not only shown from Procopius that great personages in other nations used to wear such, as the Persian and Roman emperors; who, in their own countries only, might wear them; but this was the custom of neighbouring provinces, particularly the Tyrian women, as Virgil^{f208} plainly suggests. Bynaeus^{f209} is of opinion that they were of a red or scarlet colour; and that the words should be rendered, "I shod thee with scarlet"; that is, with scarlet coloured shoes; which he observes have been in great esteem and use among persons of figure and quality; and, be they of what colour they will, they were, no doubt, made of skins of value, fine, soft, and pliable; as the Targum paraphrases it,

"I put precious shoes (or shoes of value) upon your feet:"

and therefore cannot be well thought to be made of badgers' skins, of which it was never known that shoes were made; with those indeed quivers and shields have been covered, and of those the harness of horses and collars of dogs have been made; but not men's shoes, and much less the shoes of delicate women. This may denote the agreeable walk of the saints, having their feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace; or a conversation agreeable to the Gospel of Christ; which is very beautiful, and in which they are enabled to continue by the power and grace of God; (see ^{<2152>}Luke 15:22 ^{<4065>}Ephesians 6:15 ^{<2170>}Song of Solomon 7:1);

and I girded thee about with fine linen; as the high priest was with the linen girdle of the ephod, (^{<1238>}Exodus 28:8). So the Targum,

"and I separated from you the priests, that they might minister before me with linen mitres, and the high priest in garments of divers colours;"

all the saints are made priests to God, and art girt about with the girdle of love, which constrains them to fear and serve the Lord with all readiness and cheerfulness: and with the girdle of truth, which they cause to cleave and keep close unto them; (see ^{<4064>}Ephesians 6:14 ^{<2135>}Luke 12:35);

and I covered thee with silk. The Targum interprets this of the clothing of the high priest; but, if respect is had to that, silk cannot be intended; for, as

the Jews themselves say^{f210}, the priests were not clothed for service, in the house of the sanctuary, but with wool and linen; and indeed, though the Jewish commentators in general, as Jarchi, Aben Ezra, and Kimchi, and others^{f211}, as well as our version, take the word here used to signify silk; yet, as Braunius^{f212} observes, it does not appear that this was known among the Jews in the times of Ezekiel, nor even before the times of Christ; nor was it known among the Romans before the times of Augustus. The word seems to be derived from an Arabic word^{f213}, which signifies to colour or paint clothes; and may be rendered painted or coloured cloth, or garments; and so the Targum renders it died or coloured garments; and so Aquila translates it by *αψψιϋον*, a “flowered garment”, either painted or wrought with flowers; and so Jerom, and the Vulgate Latin, by “polymitium”, a garment of divers colours; and may signify; as before, the rich apparel of the Jews, and the plenty of good things enjoyed by them; (see ~~<169>~~ Luke 16:19); and, in a mystical sense, the beautiful clothing of the church, with the robe of Christ’s righteousness, and the graces of the Spirit.

Ver. 11. *And I decked thee also with ornaments*, &c.] The Targum interprets this of the ornament of the words of the law; (see ~~<108>~~ Proverbs 1:8,9); but may be as well understood of good works done in obedience to them, from a right principle, and to right ends; which adorn professors of religion, their profession, and the doctrines of Christ, which they profess, (~~<110>~~ 1 Timothy 2:9,10 ~~<120>~~ Titus 2:10); or rather the graces of the Spirit, which are all of them very ornamental to the saints, as faith, hope, love, humility, &c. and are in the sight of God of great price, (~~<108>~~ 1 Peter 3:3,4);

and I put bracelets upon thine hands; which the Targum also explains of the law, written on two tables of stone, and given by the hands of Moses; the words of which, as Jarchi says, were put one against another, five against five; “hands” being the instruments of action may denote good works, which the Lord enables his people to perform; and which appear beautiful, as hands with bracelets on them, when they spring from love, are done in faith, and with a view to the glory of God:

and a chain on thy neck; this the Targum understands of sanctification, paraphrasing it,

“and with the holiness of my great name I sanctified you;”

and may be applied to the graces of the Spirit, which are as a chain, whose links are inseparably joined together; for, where one grace is, there are all the rest, faith, hope, charity, &c. (see ^{<2010>}Song of Solomon 1:10 4:9); or else to the blessings of grace, which also are linked together, and cannot be parted; where the one is, the other are likewise, (^{<4003>}Ephesians 1:3) (^{<480>}Romans 8:30,32); and both graces and blessings make the saint very beautiful.

Ver. 12. *And I put a jewel on thy forehead,* &c.] The same with the nose jewel, which was hung upon the forehead, and reached down to the nose and mouth; and, however disagreeable it may seem to us, was reckoned very ornamental in the eastern countries, (^{<2382>}Isaiah 3:21 ^{<0242>}Genesis 24:22,47); and where now, as in Persia, as well as in all the Levant, the women put rings through their noses, which they pierce with needles, as Monsieur Thevenot^{f214} relates; so Dr. Shaw^{f215} says that nose jewels are used still by the Levant Arabs. The Targum applies it to the ark, thus,

“and I put the ark of my covenant among you;”

but may be better applied a public profession of religion, which every good man ought to make, and take up from principles of grace received; this is bearing the name of Christ and the name of his Father in their foreheads; which is very ornamental to the believer, and well pleasing to Christ, (^{<600>}Romans 10:9,10 ^{<640>}Revelation 14:1 ^{<0032>}Matthew 10:32);

and earrings in thine ears. The Targum is,

“and the clouds of my glory overshadowed you;”

but it may be better interpreted of the spiritual ears God gives his people in conversion; by which they hear his word, so as to understand it; hear the voice of Christ, so as to distinguish it from the voice of a stranger; and hear his Gospel, so as to believe and receive it, approve of it, and love it, and act in conformity to it:

and a beautiful crown upon thine head. The Targum paraphrases it thus,

“and an angel, sent from before me, led at the head of you:”

referring to (^{<0230>}Exodus 23:20); with which Jarchi compares (^{<3023>}Micah 2:13) but may be better illustrated by the beautiful crown of twelve stars, the doctrine of the twelve apostles of Christ, said to be upon the head of the church; and is upon the head of every believer that holds the mystery of

the faith in pure conscience; that holds fast the faithful word, and will not let it go, that so no man may take away his crown, (^{<617>}Revelation 12:1 3:11).

Ver. 13. *Thus wast thou decked with gold and silver, &c.*] The Targum interprets it of the tabernacle adorned with gold and silver, and linen curtains, of various dies and colours; but it refers to the ornaments, bracelets, chain, earrings, and crown before, mentioned; (see ^{<989>}Psalm 45:9,13);

and thy raiment [was of] fine linen, and silk, and broidered work; (see Gill on “^{<260>}Ezekiel 16:10”); with this compare (^{<698>}Revelation 19:8);

thou didst eat fine flour, and honey, and oil; which did not a little contribute to her beauty and comeliness; (see ^{<2015>}Daniel 1:15); this the Targum explains of the manna with which the Lord fed the Israelites in the wilderness, and was good, like fine flour, and honey, and oil; and had, as Jarchi says, the taste of them all: but may be better applied to spiritual provisions believers are fed with; to the Gospel, and the doctrines of it, which are as nourishing and strengthening as bread of fine flour; as sweet as honey to the taste; and which make fat and plump, and cause the face to shine as oil:

and thou wast exceeding beautiful, and thou didst prosper into a kingdom; the Targum is,

“and ye became rich, and were greatly strengthened, and prospered, and ruled over all kingdoms;”

and had its accomplishment, as Kimchi observes, when the time of the kingdom of the house of David came: land is true of all believers, who are a kingdom of priests, a royal priesthood, kings and priests unto God; have a kingdom of grace; now, which can never be moved, and lies in righteousness, peace, and joy, in the Holy Ghost; and are heirs of a kingdom of glory hereafter.

Ver. 14. *And thy renown went forth among the Heathen for thy beauty, &c.*] Which consisted of the above things: with this compare (^{<804>}Deuteronomy 6:4) (^{<982>}Psalm 48:2 ^{<2015>}Lamentations 2:15); the church’s beauty lies in the righteousness of Christ imputed, to her; in the holiness of Christ reckoned unto her; in the blood of Christ being upon her, by which she is washed and cleansed, justified and pardoned; and in the

graces of the Spirit of Christ implanted in her; and in the salvation of Christ she is interested in; and in the presence of Christ, which is the beauty of the Lord upon her; and in being in Gospel order, and having Gospel ordinances; (see ^{<951>}Psalm 45:11,13 149:4 90:17 ^{<2001>}Song of Solomon 6:4,10);

for it [was] perfect through my comeliness, which I had put upon thee, saith the Lord God; all the outward happiness and prosperity of the Israelites in the days of David and Solomon, or at other times, was not, as Kimchi observes, of themselves, but of the Lord: and so the comeliness of the saints and people of God is not of themselves; they are by nature black and deformed; they are defiled with original and actual sin; they are as an unclean, thing; they are corrupt, abominable, and loathsome; and as they have not their comeliness by nature, so not by art; as it is not native to them, it is not acquired by them; they do not obtain it by their humiliation, repentance, and services; these cannot remove their natural blackness and uncomeliness, or wash away their sins, and render them beautiful in the sight of God, (^{<2433>}Jeremiah 13:23) (^{<2422>}Jeremiah 2:22 ^{<8000>}Job 9:30,31); but they have their comeliness from another, from Christ, who is altogether lovely; and from his righteousness, which is put on them; and so they are in him, and, through that, perfectly comely, a perfection of beauty, all fair, and without spot, even the fairest in the whole creation, complete in Christ, and perfect in him, (^{<9512>}Psalm 50:2 ^{<2005>}Song of Solomon 1:5,8 4:7).

Ver. 15. *But thou didst trust in thine own beauty, &c.]* As the Jews did in external gifts bestowed upon them; in their outward prosperity and grandeur; in their riches, wealth, and wisdom; and in the extent of their dominions, as in the days of David and Solomon; and in such things men are apt to; put their trust and confidence, and to be elated with, and grow proud and haughty, as a woman because of her beauty: so some professors of religion trust in a form and profession of it; in speculative knowledge, and in outward duties and services; being unconcerned for inward purity and holiness; and not trusting in the righteousness of Christ, the real beauty of saints:

and playedst the harlot because of thy renown; or “name”^{f216}; which the Jews got among the nations round about them, for their wisdom, riches, and power; which was a snare unto them, as a woman’s beauty is to her; and they were admired and courted, and complimented by their neighbours, and so drawn into idolatrous practices, as women into fornication and

adultery by the admirers of them: idolatry, which is here meant, is frequently signified by playing the harlot, or by fornication and adultery: or “thou playedst the harlot in thy name”^{f217}; alluding to the custom of harlots, notorious infamous ones, who used to set their names over the apartments, to direct men unto them; and so it may denote how famous and notorious the Jews were for their idolatries, and how impudent in them. Jarchi interprets this of the calf of the wilderness, and other idolatries which the tribe of Daniel committed there; but it rather respects the idolatries committed from the times of Solomon to the captivity, which were many, and often repeated; and though sometimes a stop was put to them by pious princes, yet broke out again: so trusting in a man’s own righteousness, or in any outward thing, is idolatry; and also false worship and superstitious observances:

and pouredst out thy fornication on everyone that passed by: which expresses the multitude of their idolatries; the measure of them, which ran over; the fondness they had for every idol of their neighbours; like a common strumpet, that prostitutes herself to everyone, not only to the men of her own place and city, but to all strangers and travellers; so the Jews, not content with the idols they had, embraced all that offered or their neighbours could furnish them with:

his it was; or “to him it was”; her desire, her lust, her fornication; everyone that passed by, that would might enjoy her; so the Jews were ready to fall in with every idol and every idolatrous practice. The Targum renders this clause,

“and it is not right for thee to do so;”

to commit and multiply idolatry.

Ver. 16. *And of thy garments thou didst take*, &c.] Which were made of fine linen, silk, and brodered work; which God had given them, and they were richly clad with:

and deckedst thy high places with divers colours; that is, with garments of divers colours; either they erected tents on their high places, made with these; or they covered their altars with them, which were on their high places for the ornament of them, as harlots deck their beds to allure their lovers; (see ^{<1076>}Proverbs 7:16,17); or “thou hast made for thyself high places spotted”^{f218}; so the word is rendered in (^{<1082>}Genesis 30:32,33,35); alluding to garments spotted with the flesh by adulterers. The Targum is,

“thou hast made for thyself high places covered with idols”: and so the Septuagint version renders it, “idols sewed together”. The word, in the Talmudic language^{f219}, has the signification of sewing. These idols were decked as children’s babies are; and so the Syriac version, “thou hast made for thyself babies”; images like babies, richly dressed with their garments above described, such as the papists now have;

and playedst the harlot thereon; committed idolatry on the high places; or “with them”^{f220}; that is, with the images and idols decked with their garments, which were set on those high places:

[the like things] shall not come, neither shall it be [so]; the like idolatries shall set be committed any more; and after the Babylonish captivity worshipping of idols was not practised by the Jews; nor is it to this day: or such “things have not come yet”, and there “shall not be” the like^{f221}; the sense is, there never were such idolatries committed by this people before; and there hover shall be, or will be, the like afterwards. Kimchi’s note is,

“the high places shall not come as these; as if it was said these shall not be in futurity; and there shall not be a man or a people that shall make like these for multitudes;”

so Ben Melech; and *twmb*, “high places”, does agree with *twab*, “come”. The Targum joins this with the preceding clause,

““and playedst the harlot” with them, as is not right and fit”

Ver. 17. *Thou hast also taken thy fair jewels of my gold, and of my silver, which I had given thee, &c.*] Or “thy glorious vessels of gold and silver”^{f222}; meaning either the vessels of gold and silver in the temple, as Jerom thinks, which they converted to idolatrous uses; or rather their own household vessels of gold and silver which God had given them, as the bounties of his providence, and he had still a right unto, and which they made use of to the dishonour of his name; which argued great ingratitude in them:

and madest to thyself images of men; images in the shape of men; some were in the shape of women, others in the shape of men; here only male images are mentioned, because the idolatrous Jews are represented by an adulterous woman committing adultery, with men; and these were made by themselves, of their jewels of gold and silver; or of their golden and silver vessels, which they had to eat and drink out of; these, they melted down

and made idols of them in the form of men, just as the molten calf was made of the earrings of the women, (^{<123B>}Exodus 32:3,4); to which some refer this passage: and as it was a piece of egregious folly in themselves to part with their jewels and plate for such purposes, and of great ingratitude to God, their benefactor, so of the grossest stupidity and ignorance to worship images so made; which was equally as stupid, or more so, than if a woman should embrace the image of a man, instead of a man himself, as it follows:

and didst commit whoredom with them: the images: that is, idolatry, which is spiritual adultery.

Ver. 18. *And tookest thy broidered garments, and coveredst them, &c.*] The images of men, the idols they worshipped; (see ^{<240B>}Jeremiah 10:4); so the Papists at this day cover their idols, the images of the Virgin Mary, and other saints, with rich apparel, to draw the attention, admiration, and reverence of the people to them:

and thou hast set mine oil and mine incense before them; the oil which the Lord gave them for food, the land of Canaan being a land of oil olive; or which was to light the lamps in the temple with; or was used in sacrifice to the Lord, particularly in the meat offerings; and the incense, which was offered unto him on the altar of incense; these were set upon the altars of idols, and before them, the male images before mentioned; (see ^{<XIB>}Hosea 2:8).

Ver. 19. *My meat also which I gave thee, &c.*] Or “my bread”^{f223}; a general name for all eatables. The Targum renders it,

“my good things.”

The Jews apply it to the manna, which, they say, descended the same day the molten calf was made, and they set it before it. This interpretation Jarchi and Kimchi make mention of; it includes what follows:

fine flour, and oil, and honey, [wherewith] I fed thee; for the land of Canaan was a land of wheat, of which fine flour was made; and of olives, from whence was the best oil; and a land flowing with milk and honey; and which was given by the Lord, and so he might be said to feed them with them: and instead of glorifying him, and being thankful for them, and using them in the manner they ought,

thou hast even set it before them for a sweet savour; that is, they made a meat offering of their fine flour, oil, and honey, and set it before their idols; to gain their favour and good will; to appease them, and render them propitious; supposing it would be acceptable unto them; all these things were used in meat offerings and sacrifices unto the Lord, excepting honey, and that was forbid; but was in use among the Gentiles; (see ^{<RMT>}Leviticus 2:1,11);

and [thus] it was, saith the Lord God; all this idolatry, ingratitude, and folly, have been committed; it is most notorious, there is no denying it; I, who am the Lord God omniscient, affirm it. The Targum puts it by way of question, and even of astonishment and admiration,

“are not all these things done, saith the Lord God!”

Ver. 20. *Moreover thou hast taken thy sons and thy daughters, &c.*] Their own flesh and blood; which were more than to take their clothes, and cover their idols with them, and their food, and set it before them to part with them was much, but to part with these, and that in such a shocking manner as after mentioned, was so irrational and unnatural, as well as impious and wicked, as is not to be paralleled; and what increased their wickedness was, that these were not only their own, but the Lord’s:

whom thou hast borne unto me; for, though they were born of them, they were born unto the Lord, the Creator of them, the Father of their spirits, and God of their lives, and who had the sole right to dispose of them; nor was it in the power of their parents to take away their life at pleasure; for the Lord only has the sovereign power of life and death:

and these hast thou sacrificed unto them: the male images before mentioned; one of which was Molech, who is here particularly designed:

to be devoured; in the arms of that image; or to be consumed by fire, in which they were burnt, when sacrificed unto it. The Targum is,

“for oblation and worship;”

[is this] of thy whoredoms a small matter; which was so dreadfully heinous and inhuman, yet by some reckoned a small matter; this was not the least of their idolatries, but, of all, the most shocking, and the most aggravated: or the sense is, is it a small thing that thou shouldst play the harlot, or worship idols? is it not enough for thee to do so, but thou must sacrifice

thy children also to them? and which are not only thine, but mine, as follows:

Ver. 21. *That thou hast slain my children, &c.*] By creation, as all born into the world are; and by national adoption, as all the Jewish children were; and particularly the firstborn were eminently his, and which are here designed, as Jarchi interprets it; for they were the children that were slain and sacrificed to Molech; (see ^{231B}Ezekiel 20:26);

and delivered, them to cause them to pass through [the fire] for them? for the sake of idols, for the worship of them; this they did before they were slain; they first caused them to pass through between two fires, and so dedicated them to the idol, and then slew them; or slew them by burning them in the fire, or by putting them into the arms of the “idol”, made burning hot.

Ver. 22. *And in all thine abominations and thy whoredoms, &c.*] Or idolatries, which were abominable to God, and were many; of which that just mentioned was not one of the least:

thou hast not remembered the days of thy youth; the destitute and forlorn condition then in, and what favours were then bestowed:

when thou wast naked and bare, [and] wast polluted in thy blood; (see Gill on “^{231B}Ezekiel 16:6-7”); which is mentioned to upbraid the Jews with their ingratitude; they forgetting the miserable condition they were in in Egypt, and what great things the Lord had done for them in bringing them out from thence, and the obligations they were laid under to him: and yet, after all this, to commit such abominable iniquities, and in the midst of them all never once call to mind what they had received from him; which might have been a check to their idolatries, but so it was not.

Ver. 23. *And it came to pass after all thy wickedness, &c.*] This refers either to what goes before, so Kimchi; and the sense is, it shall be again as it was at first, after and because of all the above wickedness committed, thou shalt be left naked and bare, and destitute of all that is good: or rather to what follows in the next clause; and the meaning is, to all this wickedness before mentioned, which was so great that it might be thought nothing more could be added to it; and yet the following things were, as building an eminent place, and high places, in all streets and heads of ways:

woe, woe unto thee, saith the Lord of hosts; which is repeated, to show the indignation of the Lord against all this wickedness; to arouse their attention to their sin and punishment, and to show the certainty of it; and it may be it denotes both their misery in this world, and in that to come. The Targum of the whole is,

“what shall be in thine end for all thy wickedness? the prophet said unto her, woe unto thee, because thou hast sinned; woe unto thee, because thou art not converted, saith the Lord God.”

Ver. 24. [*That*] *thou hast also built unto thee an eminent place*, &c.] Or a “brothel”^{f224}; and so the Septuagint version, “a whoring house”; not content to commit idolatry privately, they built a public place for idolatrous worship. The Targum renders it, “altar”, The word has the signification of a pit or ditch; with which compare (³¹²¹⁴Proverbs 22:14 23:27);

and hast made thee an high place in every street; of Jerusalem, and other cities; it was usual to erect high places in streets, where altars were built, and idols set up to be worshipped: it denotes the public manner in which they committed idolatry, and the multitude of their idols; which shows their impudence and hardness of heart.

Ver. 25. *Thou hast built thy high place at every head of the way*, &c.] Where two or more ways, or two or more streets, met; and so was most conspicuous, and was seen from different parts; which shows the same as before:

and hast made thy beauty to be abhorred; by the Lord himself, Who otherwise greatly desires and delights in the beauty of his people, when they worship him, (³⁹⁵¹¹Psalms 45:11); and by all good men, and such as fear the Lord, who cannot but abhor such idolatrous practices, and those that are guilty of them; and even by the Heathens themselves, to whom the Jews became mean and despicable, when they fell into idolatry, and under the displeasure of God, whom they forsook; as a common strumpet becomes, in process of time, loathsome to her quondam lovers:

and hast opened thy feet to everyone that passed by; an euphemism, signifying the exposing to view the privities or secret parts, in order to allure to impure embraces; and the meaning is, that the Jews were ready to receive any idol, and give into any idolatrous worship that offered to them, and even courted and solicited the Gentiles to join with them in all idolatrous practices:

and multiplied thy whoredoms; or idolatries; the number of their idols being answerable to their cities, and even were as many as the streets and heads of ways in them.

Ver. 26. *Thou hast also committed fornication with the Egyptians, &c.*] By entering into leagues and alliances with them, and seeking to them for help and assistance against their enemies; from whose bondage they had formerly been delivered, and whose society they were cautioned against; and yet they forsook the Lord, and joined themselves to them by solemn covenant; and not only so, but fell into the worship of their idols, who were a people of all others the most superstitious, and given to idolatry; and many of their idolatrous rites and ceremonies were received and retained by the Jews, as the worshipping of Tammuz, and other idols:

thy neighbours, great of flesh: being their neighbours, and full of power and strength to assist them, they courted their friendship and alliance; and their idolatries being many and monstrous, were the more courted by them: the allusion is to women of shameless impudence and insatiable lust, who covet men, whose flesh is as the flesh of asses, and their issue as horses, (³²³⁰Ezekiel 23:20); flesh here signifies the privy parts of men; so Ben Melech;

and hast increased thy whoredoms, to provoke my anger; multiplied their idolatries, which they learned of the Egyptians, a people much given thereunto; and which were abominable and highly provoking to God, (⁴⁰⁴⁸1 Peter 4:3). The Targum is,

“thou hast increased thine idols.”

Ver. 27. *Behold, therefore I have stretched out my hand over thee, &c.*] His chastising and correcting hand, to show his resentment at their sins, and bring them to a sense of them, and repentance for them:

and have diminished thine ordinary [food]; their stated allowances, the common mercies and blessings of life they had been indulged with, but now were lessened; and particularly a famine was brought upon them, as well as they were deprived of other favours for their sins; God dealing with them as husbands with their wanton wives, who keep them to stricter allowance, and closer confinement, in order to check and tame them:

and delivered thee unto the will of them that hate thee, the daughters of the Philistines; which perhaps may refer to the times of Ahaz, when the

Philistines invaded the cities of the low country, and of the south of Judah, and took many of their cities, and brought Judah low, (^{<438>}2 Chronicles 28:18,19);

which are ashamed of thy lewd way: of their inconstancy in changing their religion, relinquishing the worship of the true God, and embracing that of others, when they abode by their ancient religion and worship, (^{<310>}Jeremiah 2:10,11). The Targum is,

“to whom if I had sent my prophets, they would have been ashamed;”

(see ^{<412>}Matthew 11:21,23).

Ver. 28. *Thou hast played the whore also with the Assyrians, &c.*] By entering into alliances with them, and worshipping their idols; which was done in the times of Ahaz, who sent to Tiglathpileser king of Assyria for help, and to Damascus for the fashion of the altar there, and built one according to it, (^{<170>}2 Kings 7:10, 11);

because thou wast unsatiable; not content with the alliance and idolatries of the Egyptians:

yea, thou hast played the harlot with them; with the Assyrians:

and yet couldst not be satisfied; with their idols, and the worship of them, but sought out for new gods, and new modes of worship; like a lewd woman, who having prostituted herself to one, and to another, yet remains insatiable, and seeks out for other lovers.

Ver. 29. *Thou hast moreover multiplied thy fornication in the land of Canaan, &c.*] Or, “with the land of Canaan”^{f225}; with the inhabitants of it, doing the same evils, committing the same idolatries, as the old inhabitants of Canaan did; and so the Targum,

“and thou hast multiplied thine idols, that thou mightest be joined to the people of Canaan:”

or, “to the land of Canaan”^{f226}; like to the land of Canaan; according to the abominations of the Canaanites, doing as they did. Jarchi takes the word Canaan to signify a “merchant”, as it does in (^{<310>}Hosea 12:7); and the land of Canaan to be the same with the land of Chaldea, called a land of traffic, and Babylon the city of merchants, (^{<370>}Ezekiel 17:4); since it follows,

unto Chaldea: but the sense is, that the Jews were not content with the idolatries in the land of Canaan, but sent even to Chaldea, a remote country, to fetch new idols from thence; (see ^{צבא}Ezekiel 23:14-16). The Targum is,

“to walk in the laws of the Chaldeans;”

their religious ones, their rites and ceremonies respecting idolatrous worship:

and yet thou wast not satisfied herewith; but still wanted other idols and modes of worship; not being content with the gods of the Egyptians, nor of the Assyrians, nor of the Canaanites, nor of the Chaldeans.

Ver. 30. *How weak is thine heart, saith the Lord God, &c.*] Through sin; and being destitute of the grace of God, and so unable to resist any temptation, or oppose any corruption or lust, but carried away with everyone that offers; indulging every lust, and yet not satisfied; weak as water, unstable, fickle, and inconstant, seeking after new gods, and new kinds of worship. The Targum is,

“how strong is the wickedness of thy heart!”

the stronger the wickedness of the heart, the weaker, the heart is:

seeing thou doest all these [things]; all the idolatries before mentioned; which was an argument not of her strength, but weakness, and yet of boldness, impudence, and resolution, to have her will:

the work of an imperious whorish woman; a whore, as she is impudent, is imperious, is one that rules and governs. The Targum is, who rules over herself; does what she pleases, will have her will and way, and cannot bear any contradiction; and who rules over others, such as are her gallants, obliging them to do as she commands. Jarchi’s note is,

“over whom her imagination (or corruption) rules.”

Ver. 31. *In that thou buildest thine eminent place in the head of every way, &c.*] Or brothel house, as before; (see Gill on “^{צבא}Ezekiel 16:24”); which showed her to be a whore, and an imperious one:

and makest thine high place in every street; (see Gill on “^{צבא}Ezekiel 16:24”);

and hast not been as an harlot: a common one, or as a harlot usually is:

in that thou scornest hire; which they do not; for it is for hire they prostitute themselves; and have their names, both in our language, and in the Latin tongue, from, thence.

Ver. 32. [*But as*] *a wife that committeth adultery*, &c.] Who has a husband, and is provided for with all the necessaries of life, with food and clothing; and so has no need to prostitute herself for a livelihood, as common strumpets do; but does it purely for the satiating of her lust: and such were the people of the Jews, they were married to the Lord, who took care of them, and provided everything for them, and acted the part of a husband to them; so that it was the weakness of their hearts, and the strength of their corruptions, which led them to depart from him, and commit idolatry; which in them was adultery, while the sin of the Gentiles was as simple fornication:

[*which*] *taketh strangers instead of her husband*; that takes other men into her bed instead of her husband, not for the sake of gain, but lust; and this was the case of the Jews, who were a wicked people, an idolatrous generation; who took strange gods to worship instead of the true God, who had been a husband to them, (²⁸¹³²Jeremiah 31:32).

Ver. 33. *They give gifts to all whores*, &c.] Gifts are usually given to whores, by those who commit whoredom with them; it is for the sake of these they prostitute their bodies, nor will they do this without gain; (see ¹²⁸¹⁶Genesis 38:16,17);

but thou givest thy gifts to all thy lovers; the Jews gave the Egyptians and Assyrians money, to gain their friendship, and procure alliances with them; (see ¹²⁶⁸2 Kings 16:8 ²³¹⁶Isaiah 30:6,7); and were at great expenses with their idols, and in support of their idolatrous worship:

and hirest them, that they may come unto thee on every side for thy whoredom; they courted the nations all around them for their favour and friendship, and bribed them into it, as the word ^{f227} signifies.

Ver. 34. *And the contrary is in thee from [other] women in thy whoredoms*, &c.] Of which an instance is given before, and another is added, with the repetition of the former:

whereas none followeth thee to commit whoredoms; the Jews followed the examples, customs, and practices of the Gentiles, in worshipping of their idols; but the Gentiles did not follow the Jews, they kept to their own gods, and did not worship the God of Israel; which with respect to their own gods would have been fornication; and whereas it is usual for men to follow after whorish women, and solicit them by gifts and presents, or promises, and not for them to follow the men, court and solicit them; on the other hand, the Jews, who are compared to a whorish woman, followed after their lovers, and not their lovers after them: or, “after thee there was not”, or “shall not be fornication”^{f228}; like to thine; it being such as never had been, nor never would be the like again:

and in that thou givest a reward, and no reward is given unto thee, therefore thou art contrary; to all other lewd women, who take, but give no reward.

Ver. 35. *Wherefore, O harlot, hear the word of the Lord.*] The sentence about to be pronounced; adjudging to be slain with the sword, to be stoned and burned; the crime for which is to be read in the name of harlot, justly given to an apostate people; as it often is to the church of Rome in the book of the Revelation. The Targum is,

“whose works are as an harlots; O congregation of Israel, receive the words of the Lord;”

which follow:

Ver. 36. *Thus saith the Lord God, because thy filthiness was poured out, &c.*] Or, “thy brass”^{f229}. The word is used by the Rabbins^{f230} for the bottom of a thing; and is here accordingly, by Kimchi and Ben Melech, interpreted of a woman’s lower part; the same with her nakedness next mentioned; and from whence, by reason of her inordinate lust, and the frequent exercise of it, and that with many different persons, a gonorrhoea, as Jarchi explains it, or a filthy flux flowed, and was poured out on her lovers; from whence the filthy disease, the “lues venerea”:

and thy nakedness discovered through thy whoredoms with thy lovers; which she discovered or exposed to view herself, in order to entice her lovers to lie with her, and for the sake thereof; (see ²¹⁶⁵Ezekiel 16:25);

and with all the idols of thine abominations; or abominable idols, which were so in themselves, were abominable to God, and made the worshippers

of them so likewise; these are distinguished from her lovers, the Egyptians and Assyrians, her confederates, and by means of whose alliance she fell into idolatry:

and by the blood of thy children, which thou didst give unto them; the idols, to whom they were dedicated and sacrificed; and for whose sake, and for the worship of them, they were caused to pass through the fire, and were burnt in it; and by such shocking murders, as well as idolatrous practices, the depravity of their nature, the wickedness of their hearts, their hypocrisy, treachery, and infidelity, were discovered and made known.

Ver. 37. *Behold, therefore I will gather all thy lovers, with whom thou hast taken pleasure, &c.]* Or, “with whom thou hast mixed”^{f231}; in unlawful embraces, joined in sinful alliances, or in idolatrous practices:

and all [them] that thou hast loved; the Egyptians and Assyrians, whose friendship and idolatrous customs they were fond of:

with all [them] that thou hast hated; as the Philistines, Moabites, and Ammonites:

I will even gather them round about against thee; as they were in the Chaldean army, which consisted of many nations:

and will discover thy nakedness unto them, that they may see all thy nakedness; as a just retaliation for discovering it herself, as in (²⁶⁶⁶Ezekiel 16:36); than which nothing can be more disagreeable to the sex. The Milesian virgins were restrained from suicide by a law, which ordered that such should be drawn naked through the market place. This is to be understood of the spoiling of the city and temple.

Ver. 38. *And I will judge thee as women that break wedlock, &c.]* The marriage covenant, defile the marriage bed, and were adulteresses, who by the law of Moses were to be punished with death, (⁶²⁰⁰Leviticus 20:10 ⁶²²²Deuteronomy 22:22);

and shed blood are judged; who also were punished with death according to the original law in (⁰⁰⁰⁶Genesis 9:6); the Jews were not only guilty of spiritual adultery, that is, idolatry; but also of murder, by sacrificing their infants to idols; and murder often follows upon adultery, as Kimchi observes; and, these people were guilty of shedding innocent blood on other accounts; but the first mentioned is chiefly designed here:

and I will give thee blood in fury and jealousy; by way of retaliation; blood being shed, blood is given, and that in wrath and vengeance; the allusion is to a jealous and abused husband, that avenges himself of the person that has injured him; (see ⁶⁶⁶Revelation 16:6).

Ver. 39. *And I also will give thee into their hand*, &c.] Into the hand of their lovers and enemies that should be gathered against them, the Assyrians and Chaldeans, with others that joined them, as in (²⁶⁶⁷Ezekiel 16:37);

and they shall throw down thine eminent place, and shall break down thine high places; the city of Jerusalem, the temple, and altars; and not only these, but even the high places and altars which were set up for idolatrous uses; all should be destroyed by the Chaldean army. The Targum is,

“and they shall destroy thy walls, and thy high places shall be destroyed:”

they shall strip thee also of thy clothes; as persons commonly are when taken captives:

and shall take thy fair jewels; or, “the vessels of thy glory”^{f232}; the vessels of the sanctuary of gold and silver, and their own household furniture, with all their riches and substance:

and leave thee naked and bare; as at first when in Egypt; (see ²⁶⁶⁷Ezekiel 16:7).

Ver. 40. *They shall also bring up a company against thee*, &c.] An army, so the Targum; the Chaldean army:

and they shall stone thee with stones: cast out of their engines and slings, by which they battered the walls, as well as killed the inhabitants; and so the Targum renders it, with sling stones; the allusion is to the stoning of adulterous persons, (¹⁷²⁴Deuteronomy 22:24 ⁶⁰⁸John 8:5);

and thrust thee through with their swords; such as attempted to escape out of the city, or fell into the hands of the enemy when it was taken, were slain with the sword.

Ver. 41. *And they shall burn thine houses with fire*, &c.] As the houses in Jerusalem were by Nebuchadnezzar’s army, even the temple, the house of

the Lord, and the king's house, and the houses of great men, even all the houses in the city, (²⁵²³Jeremiah 52:13); and as was commanded to be done to idolatrous cities, (⁴⁵³⁶Deuteronomy 13:16); and this also may be said in allusion to the burning of adulterous persons, (⁰¹³²⁴Genesis 38:24);

and execute judgments upon thee in the sight of many women; or provinces, as the Targum; meaning the Philistines, Moabites, Ammonites, and Edomites, who would rejoice in their ruin; the judgments design those before mentioned:

and I will cause thee to cease from playing the harlot, and thou also shalt give no hire any more; their idols, high places, and altars, being demolished, and they plundered of their substance; and after the Babylonish captivity the Jews never returned to idolatry any more.

Ver. 42. *So will I make my fury towards thee to rest, &c.]* When the Jews should cease from their idolatries, and no more worship the gods of the nations, then the fury of the Lord, and the effects of it, should cease: God no longer contends with a people than while they are sinning; when a reformation is brought about, by afflictions or judgments, his end is answered, and he puts a stop to the spread of his wrath and fury; or if is made to rest, because there is nothing left for it to work upon, a total consumption of people and substance being made by it: or it may be rendered, "I will make my fury to rest upon thee"^{f233}; and the sense be, that his wrath should abide upon them, and not remove until an utter end was made of them; though the first sense seems best to agree with what goes before, and follows after:

and my jealousy shall depart from thee; as it does from a man when he has utterly rejected his wife because of whoredom, and is divorced from her; and his burning jealousy has satisfied itself, and there is no other way to operate and show itself in; or when a woman returns to her husband and gives him satisfaction, keeps close unto him, and lives chastely with him, having relinquished her former lewd ways and practices:

and I will be quiet, and will be no more angry: the effects of his anger cease, his judgments averted, and he at peace with them, and they with him; for he retains not his anger for ever: though some understand this of his being quiet and at ease in the destruction of the Jews; there being no more to wreak his vengeance upon.

Ver. 43. *Because thou hast not remembered the days of thy youth, &c.]*

The low estate they were once in, and the great favours bestowed upon them, which laid them under great obligation to serve the Lord, and him only; but these they forgot, which highly provoked him, and caused him to do the things he did; (see ^{f232}Ezekiel 16:22):

and hast fretted me in all these [things]; irritated, provoked him, moved him to wrath and anger, stirred up in his breast a tumult, speaking after the manner of men; this they did by their ingratitude, idolatry, and other sins:

behold, therefore, I also will recompense thy way upon [thine] head, saith the Lord God; retaliate their evils, punish them according as their sins deserved, and in a way which they led unto:

and thou shall not commit this lewdness above all thine abominations; or add to all thine abominable idolatries this shocking piece of wickedness, the sacrificing of their children to their idols: or rather the words may be rendered, “for thou hast not taken this thought” (or counsel) “upon” or “concerning all thine abominations”^{f234}; to repent of them and turn from them So the Targum,

“and thou hast not taken counsel to thyself, to turn from all thine abominations.”

Or, as Jarchi,

“thou hast not taken counsel to put the, heart upon thine abominations to turn from them;”

and he observes, that the word here used always signifies counsels either good or evil. There is a double reading of this clause; we follow the “Keri”, or marginal reading; but the “Cetib”, or textual writing or reading, is, “and I have not done according to this lewdness above all thine abominations”; and so expresses the mercy and long suffering of God^{f235}.

Ver. 44. *Behold, everyone that useth proverbs, &c.]* That affects a proverbial way of sneaking that is witty and facetious, and has a talent at satirizing and scoffing, as some have had; such were Lucian and others:

shall use [this] proverb against thee; signifying that the sins of the Jews should be well known and exposed, and they should become the subject of the gibes and jeers of men:

saying, as [is] the mother, [so is] her daughter; an ancient and common proverb, used to express a likeness and agreement between persons their nature and disposition, in their behaviour, conduct, and conversation. So the Targum,

“as are the works of the mother, so those of the daughter;”

the mother is the land of Canaan, and the daughter the congregation of Israel, as Kimchi. The Jews were the successors of the old Canaanites, and they imitated them in their practices; and, because both of their succession and imitation, they are called the daughter of them; a bad daughter of a bad mother.

Ver. 45. *Thou [art] thy mother’s daughter*, &c.] Exactly like her; they that have known the one must know the other. The Targum is,

“wherefore art thou become the daughter of the land of Canaan, to do according to the works of the people?”

that loatheth her husband and her children; a true character of an adulteress; and which agrees both with the mother the Canaanites, and with the daughter the Jews; who both despised, rejected, and forsook God their husband, Creator, and lawgiver, and sacrificed their children to idols; (see ~~עזקל~~ Ezekiel 16:20,21 ~~לויקוס~~ Leviticus 18:21,24);

and thou [art] the sister of thy sisters; the true genuine sister of them, Samaria and Sodom after mentioned; being not only allied to them in blood, more nearly to the one more remotely to the other, but exceedingly alike in manners, religion, and worship:

which loatheth their husbands and their children; as before:

your mother [was] an Hittite, and your father an Amorite; these the Israelites succeeded in their land, and followed their customs; (see Gill on ~~עזקל~~ Ezekiel 16:3”). The Targum is,

“was not your mother Sarah among the Hittites? and she did not do according to their works; and your father Abraham was among the Amorites, and he walked not in their counsels.”

Ver. 46. *And thine elder sister [is] Samaria*, &c.] The metropolis of the ten tribes; “sister” to the Jews, because of the same descent, having one and the same father; the “elder” or “greater”^{f236}, because more in number

and power; the kingdom of Israel consisted of ten tribes, and the kingdom of Judah but of two; and the ten tribes also were the first in the apostasy from the true worship of God:

she and her daughters that dwell at thy left hand; as Samaria the sister was the metropolis of the ten tribes, her daughters are the other cities and towns belonging thereunto; and so the Targum renders it, she and her villages; these were situated to the north of the land of Israel, as Judah was to the south, which with the Jews were left and right; as a man standing with his face to the east has the north on his left and the south on his right side:

and thy younger sister, that dwelleth at thy right hand, [is] Sodom and her daughters; where Lot the kinsman of Abraham lived, and from whom sprung the Ammonites and Moabites. Sodom was a lesser kingdom than that of Judah, and which lay to the south; that is, to the right of it; even that and the other cities, which perished with it, called her daughters, as Admah, Zeboim, &c.

Ver. 47. *Yet hast thou not walked after their ways*, &c.] But in ways more evil; were not content to keep pace with them, and do as they did; but outwent them, outstripped them in wickedness:

nor done after their abominations; but committed greater abominations than they did; sins of a more heinous nature, and attended with more aggravated circumstances; having more power and wealth, more Wisdom and understanding; the means of grace, the word and ordinances of God:

but, as [if that were] a very little [thing]; to commit the sins that Samaria and Sodom did: or, “it was loathing [to thee] as a little thing”^{f237}; they despised and loathed their sins as too mean and little, and not flagitious and enormous, or bold and daring enough to be committed; and looked upon them, with contempt, as sneaking sinners, that had no soul nor spirit in them, or taste for sinful pleasures, in comparison of them: or the sense is, it would have been a little thing, comparatively speaking, had they only walked after the ways and abominations of Samaria and Sodom, and stopped there; but they had greatly exceeded them; and so the Targum,

“if thou hadst walked in their ways, and done according to their abominations, thy sin had been small.”

Kimchi interprets it of a small time that the Jews continued in the ways and worship of God, after the captivity of the ten tribes, which were carried away in the sixth year of Hezekiah; so that there were but three and twenty years left of his reign, when his son Manasseh succeeded him, and was more wicked than all before him; and these three and twenty years are the little time here spoken of and within a very little time, and

thou wast corrupted more than they in all their ways; this explains what is meant by not walking after their ways and abominations; they were greater sinners than they; more corrupt in their principles and practices; more hardened in them, and more difficult to be reclaimed from them; (see ^{<0123>}Matthew 11:23,24).

Ver. 48. [*As I live, saith the Lord God, &c.*] This is an oath, which the Lord God swore; who, because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself, by his life; and this he did to confirm what he had and was about to say, that the sins of Judah were greater than those of Samaria and Sodom; which might not be easily believed, but it was as true as he was the living God:

Sodom thy sister hath, or done, she nor her daughters, as thou hast done, thou and thy daughters; that is, the inhabitants of Sodom, and of the villages adjacent, as the Targum, had not committed such gross iniquities as the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and of the towns and villages about it, and of other cities of Judah.

Ver. 49. *Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, &c.*] Namely, the first after mentioned, the source and spring of the rest; the causes and means of which are declared; and the same, as is suggested, was the sin of Jerusalem: namely,

pride; which was the sin of the devils, and the cause of their ruin; the sin of our first parents, by which they fell, and destroyed themselves, and their posterity; and is the prevailing, governing, sin of human nature: it has been the ruin of kingdoms and states, of cities and particular persons; a sin hateful to God, and destructive to man:

fulness of bread; the land of Sodom was very fruitful before it was destroyed; it was like the garden of the Lord, (^{<0130>}Genesis 13:10); it brought forth plentifully, so that there was great fulness of provision, of all sorts of food, which is meant by bread: this, considered in itself, was not sinful, but a blessing; it was the Lord's mercy and goodness to them that

they had such plenty; but it was their sin that they abused it; luxury and intemperance, eating and drinking to excess, are here meant; which led on to that sin, and kindled the flames of it, and were the fuel to it, which has its name from them; and, besides, this fulness of good things enjoyed by them was the source of their pride, and served to increase that, as before mentioned:

and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters; or, “peace of rest”^{f238}; prosperity and ease, security and quietness, at leisure, and without labour; two words are used to express the same thing, and to denote, as Kimchi observes, the abundance of it: sloth and idleness, as they often arise from the goodness and fruitfulness of a country, said fulness of provision, so they are the cause of much sin and wickedness; for, if persons are not employed in some business or another, either of the head or hand, they will be doing evil:

neither did she strengthen the hands of the poor and needy; though she had such abundance of food to supply them with, and so much leisure to attend to their distress; but her pride would not suffer her to do it; and she was too idle and slothful to regard such service; perhaps more is intended than is expressed; that she weakened the hands of the poor and needy, and cruelly oppressed them; which is often done by proud men, in great affluence and at leisure, which they abuse to bad purposes.

Ver. 50. *And they were haughty*, &c.] Sodom and her daughters, the inhabitants of that place, and the cities adjacent; they lifted up themselves above God and man; they were above regarding the poor and needy; and were elated and swelled with their plenty and prosperity, and behaved very insolently, both to fellow citizens and strangers; (see ^{<01894>}Genesis 19:4,5,9);

and committed abomination before me; perhaps referring to that sin, which has its name from them; a sin abominable to God, and scandalous to human nature; and which they committed openly and publicly, neither fearing God, nor regarding men; and are said to be sinners before the Lord, (^{<01813>}Genesis 13:13);

therefore I took them away as I saw [good]; both as to time and manner, as he in his sovereignty thought most fit and proper, by raining fire and brimstone on them, and setting them forth as an example of the vengeance of eternal fire: or, “when I saw”^{f239}; their sin and wickedness, as soon as he saw it; (see ^{<01820>}Genesis 18:20,21). The Vulgate Latin and Arabic versions

render it, “as thou sawest”, or “hast seen”; appealing to the Jews themselves, who were very well acquainted with the fact; for the destruction of Sodom was notorious and flagrant.

Ver. 51. *Neither hath Samaria committed half of thy sins, &c.*] The sins of Samaria, or the ten tribes, of which Samaria was the metropolis, were the worshipping of the calves at Daniel and Bethel; but the gods of Judah were according to the number of their cities, and they even set up their idols in the temple of Jerusalem, (²⁴²⁸Jeremiah 2:28 7:30) (²⁴⁸⁵Ezekiel 8:5,10,14,16); and, besides, their sins were aggravated by the benefits privileges they enjoyed; having the temple, the place of worship, among them; the priests of the Lord to officiate for them; the prophets to instruct and teach them; and many good kings to rule over them, who encouraged them in the pure worship of God, and set them examples; as also by their not taking warning at the captivity of the ten tribes, which were some years before; so that they were guilty of great ingratitude and obduracy:

but thou hast multiplied thine abominations more than they; than Samaria and her daughters, or the ten tribes; or than Sodom and Samaria, since both are intended in the next clause:

and hast justified thy sisters in all thine abominations which thou hast done; justified them in what they did; countenanced them in their wickedness, by doing the same abominations, and more, and much greater; saying, in effect, that they did right in what they did; and, by exceeding them in sin, made them to appear righteous in comparison of them; and gave them an opportunity of saying, in excuse for themselves, that the men of Judah had been guilty of more and greater sins than they, and yet had not been punished as they had been.

Ver. 52. *Thou also which hast judged thy sisters, &c.*] Sodom and Samaria, by censuring and condemning them for their sins; (see ²⁴⁸⁸2 Chronicles 13:8-10); in which sense Jarchi and Kimchi interpret the word; or by defending and patronizing them, acquitting and absolving them, by committing the same sins, and more heinous ones:

bear thine own shame for thy sins that thou hast committed more abominable than they; look upon thy sins, and blush at them; confess them with shame and confusion of face; take shame to thyself for them, in that thou hast censured and condemned these sins in others thou hast been guilty of thyself; and the rather, since thy sins are greater, and attended

with more aggravating circumstances, than those thou hast blamed in others; or this is a prophecy of their punishment for their sins, when they should be carried captive, and be put to shame before their neighbours: or, “thou shalt bear”^{f240}; shame is the fruit of sin, sooner or later:

they are more righteous than thou; in comparison of her; though neither of them were righteous in the sight of God, yet comparatively one was more righteous than another, having committed fewer sins, and lesser abominations:

yea, be thou confounded also, and bear thy shame, in that thou hast justified thy sisters; this is repeated in stronger expressions, and with the reasons of it, to show the great confusion they should be brought unto, and the certainty of it, the more to strike and affect their minds with it.

Ver. 53. *When I shall bring again their captivity, &c.*] The captivity of Sodom and Samaria, as after mentioned:

the captivity of Sodom and her daughters, and the captivity of Samaria and her daughters; which some understand as what never will be, as it never yet has been: Sodom remains to this day a dead sea, and the ten tribes are not returned:

then [will I bring again] the captivity of thy captives in the midst of them; that is, it shall never be brought again, according to the above sense; but rather this is to be understood of the calling of the Gentiles, comparable to Sodom for their wickedness, as the great city of Rome is, (^{f6108} Revelation 11:8); and of the calling of God’s elect among the ten tribes, scattered up and down among the Gentiles, by the preaching of the apostles; and when the fulness of the Gentiles is brought in then will follow the conversion of the Jews, and all Israel will be sawed, (^{f5125} Romans 11:25,26); for it is certain those sisters, Sodom and Samaria, were to be restored, and received into the church, and given to her for daughters, (²³⁶⁶ Ezekiel 16:61); thus the conversion, of the Gentiles is signified by bringing again the captivity of Moab and Ammon, in (²⁴⁸⁷ Jeremiah 48:47 49:6).

Ver. 54. *That thou mayest bear thine own shame, &c.*] So long as the captivity remains; even until Sodom and Samaria, the Gentiles, and the ten tribes, are called and converted:

and mayest be confounded in all that thou hast done; or, “for all that thou hast done”^{f241}; for and because of all the abominable sins they had been guilty of:

in that thou art a comfort to them; to Sodom and Samaria; countenancing them in their sins; justifying their iniquities, and strengthening their hands in their wickedness, by doing the same, and greater abominations; or in partaking of the same punishment with them, captivity; this being a kind of solace to them, that they were not punished alone; so Jarchi.

Ver. 55. *When thy sisters, Sodom, and her daughters, shall return to their former estate, &c.*] The Jews, as Jerom says, are of opinion, that in the days of their vainly expected Messiah Sodom will be restored to its ancient state, and be as the garden of God, and as the land of Egypt; and Jarchi interprets the bringing again the captivity of Sodom, in (²³⁶⁵Ezekiel 16:53); by the Lord’s healing the land of brimstone and salt, and placing inhabitants in it; and it is asserted by the Jews^{f242} that Sodom and Gomorrah shall be rebuilt in future times, in the times of the Messiah, according to the sense of this passage: but this is not to be understood in a literal sense, of the rebuilding of Sodom and cities adjacent, and of restoring them to their former fruitfulness and fertility, and of the inhabitants to their former prosperity, and much less to their former state of wickedness; but spiritually, of the conversion of Gentile sinners to their ancient and happy estate in Christ:

and Samaria and her daughters shall return to their former estate; to the knowledge of the Messiah, and the pure worship of God:

then thou and thy daughters shall return to your former estate; the conversion of Judah, and of Israel or the ten tribes, here meant by Samaria, is frequently prophesied of, as what will be at the same time, (²²⁷⁶Jeremiah 23:6 50:4 ²⁸⁵¹Hosea 5:11).

Ver. 56. *For thy sister Sodom was not mentioned by thy mouth, &c.*] Or, “was not for a hearing”, or “a report, in thy mouth”^{f243}; the destruction of Sodom, though it was such an awful judgment of God, so flagrant and notorious, was visible and just at hand; yet it was not taken notice of, nor talked of; it was not the subject of conversation among friends; it was not reported from father to son, or heard of the one by the other; it was not regarded, nor was warning taken by it, which might have been, had it been more frequently mentioned; but they did not care, or neglected to speak of

it; though it was “an ensample to those that should after live ungodly”, (^{<6185>}2 Peter 2:6); yet it was not for instruction to them, as the Targum paraphrases it; they learned nothing by it; or Sodom was so infamous for sin and punishment, that they scorned to make mention of its name; and yet they were as great Or greater sinners, and deserving of sorer punishment:

in the day of thy pride; or “prides”, or “excellencies”^{f244}; in the time of their prosperity, in the days of David and Solomon, and other kings of Judah. Prosperity is apt to make men proud, and to lift them above themselves; and to forget what they have been, and what they may be; and to neglect observing the judgments of God on others, and to take warning by them.

Ver. 57. *Before thy wickedness was discovered, &c.*] By the punishment of it, by the judgments of God brought upon them; then they were humbled, who before were proud and haughty; and might speak and think of the vengeance of God on Sodom, which before they made no mention of. It is a sad thing only to know sin, and to have it discovered only by the punishment of it:

as at the time of [thy] reproach of the daughters of Syria, and all [that are] round about her, the daughters of the Philistines; this seems to refer to the times of Ahaz, when the Syrians smote the men of Judah; and carried many of them captive; and the Philistines invaded the cities of the low country, and southern parts of Judah, and took many of them, (^{<4815>}2 Chronicles 28:5,18); at which time the wickedness of the Jews was discovered; and it was a plain case they had sinned against the Lord, by his suffering their enemies to come upon them, and prevail over them; which was to their reproach. The Syrians reproached them, and so did the Philistines:

which despise thee round about; they spoiled and plundered them on all sides; and treated them with scorn and contempt, who before were formidable and terrible to them: thus it is with a people when they are left of God, they are despised by men.

Ver. 58. *Thou hast borne thy lewdness and thine abominations, &c.*] Openly and publicly; their abominable iniquities were written as it were upon their foreheads, and were to be seen of all men; their sin was to be read in their punishment, which is meant by bearing their lewdness and abominations; namely, the punishment due unto them:

saith the Lord; who always speaks what is just and true; this is added to denote the truth of what had been, and the certainty of what would be, as follows:

Ver. 59. *For thus saith the Lord God*, &c.] And what he says may be depended upon as truth, and what will certainly come to pass:

I will even deal with thee as thou hast done; reward them according to their works; or execute the law of retaliation upon them; and reject them, as they had rejected him; and cast them off from being his people, since they had forsook him as their God; they being the aggressors and transgressors of the covenant, he was under no obligation by virtue of that to bless and protect them:

which hath despised the oath by breaking the covenant; the covenant at Mount Sinai; or which was made in the plains of Moab, which had an oath annexed to it, (^{459D}Deuteronomy 29:12); but by breaking the covenant, which they did by their many abominations, they despised the oath by which they were sworn to keep it; and therefore it was but just with God to do with them as they had done with him and his covenant. The words are by some rendered, “I might even deal with thee as thou hast done”^{f245}, &c. I should be justified in so doing, and you could not justly complain of me; but I will not, as follows:

Ver. 60. *Nevertheless I will remember my covenant with thee in the days of thy youth*, &c.] The covenant made with them at Sinai, quickly after they came out of Egypt, when they were, both as a body politic and ecclesiastical, in their infant state; for, as Kimchi says, all the while they were in Egypt, and until they, came into the land of Canaan, were called the days of their youth; and to this covenant, which had the nature of a matrimonial contract, the prophet refers when he speaks of the “love” of their “espousals”, and the “kindness” of their “youth”, (^{411D}Jeremiah 2:2); this covenant the Lord remembered, and made good his part, though they neglected theirs; and it was particularly remembered when Christ was made under this law, and became the fulfilling end of it to his people; yielding perfect obedience to it, and bearing the penalty of it in their room and stead; for here begins a declaration of the grace and mercy of God to the remnant, according to the election of grace, which were among this degenerate people, and whom the Lord had a special regard unto:

and I will establish unto thee an everlasting covenant; the covenant of grace, made with the Messiah and his spiritual seed; which is confirmed of God in Christ; ordered in all things and sure; whose promises are yea and amen in Christ; and the blessings of it, the sure mercies of David; a covenant that shall never be broken, made void, or removed; but will continue for ever. This is the new covenant, or the covenant of grace, as exhibited and administered under the New Testament; (see ^{<3088>}Hebrews 8:8-13).

Ver. 61. *Then thou shalt remember thy ways, and be ashamed, &c.*] When covenant grace is manifested and applied, it brings persons to a sense of their sins, and to an ingenuous acknowledgment of them, with shame and blushing; they remember their evil ways in which they have walked, and blush at the thoughts of what they have been guilty of; and how they have sinned against a God of love, grace, and mercy; and what vile ungrateful creatures they have been:

when thou shalt receive thy sisters, thine elder and thy younger; Samaria and Sodom, (^{<2365>}Ezekiel 16:46); the ten tribes, or Benjamin and Simeon, whose part was in Judah, as Ben Melech; rather the Gentiles, even of all nations, ancient and modern, great and small, where the Gospel should come, and such of them as are called and converted by it; these, according to this prophecy, should be received into the communion of the church, to partipate of all the privileges and ordinances of it, under the Gospel dispensation. The passage respects the calling of the Gentiles, and the incorporating of them into the Gospel church state. The Syriac version renders it, “when I shall receive thy sisters”, &c. which the Targum interprets of greater and lesser provinces:

and I will give them unto thee for daughters; to be nursed up by the church, through the ministry of the word and ordinances, where they have a place, and a name better than that of sons and daughters; become members of the church, and so daughters of Jerusalem, the mother of us all, (^{<3085>}Galatians 4:26); to the laws, rules, and ordinances of which they submit, and yield an obedience, as daughters to their mother. The Targum is,

“I will deliver them unto thee for obedience.”

The Septuagint renders it, “for edification”; to be built up on their, most holy faith:

but not by thy covenant: made with the Israelites at Sinai, which genders to bondage, and under which the Jewish church with her children were in bondage, (^{<4024>}Galatians 4:24,25); but by virtue of the covenant of grace made with Christ; one article of which is, “[I] will be [their] father, and [they] shall be my sons and daughters”, (^{<4028>}2 Corinthians 6:18); or not on condition of observing the rites and ceremonies of the law, under which the former covenant was administered, the Gentiles being freed from that, the ceremonial law being abrogated by Christ; or, not because thou hast kept the covenant made with thee, therefore I give thee those (for that thou hast broken), but of my own mere grace and favour, so Jarchi: or I will give daughters to thee, which are not of thy covenant, of thy law, so Kimchi; who are not of the same religion, meaning the Gentiles; and so the phrase is the same with that in (^{<4016>}John 10:16); “which are not of this fold”. There is an ancient exposition of the Jews, mentioned by Jarchi, Kimchi, and Abarbinel, which renders it, “but not of that patrimony”; and explains it of the inheritance which God gave to Abraham between the pieces; as if the persons intended by those who are given for daughters did not belong thereunto.

Ver. 62. *And I will establish my covenant with thee, &c.*] (See Gill on ^{<2360>}Ezekiel 16:60”); and which is repeated for the comfort of the Lord’s people, being ashamed upon the remembrance of their evil ways; and to show the certainty of it, as well as because it is a matter of the greatest importance:

and thou shalt know that I [am] the Lord; a covenant keeping God; true and faithful to my promises, and able to make them good: this is a principal blessing of the covenant of grace, to know the Lord, (^{<2633>}Jeremiah 31:34).

Ver. 63. *That thou mayest remember, and be confounded, &c.*] The more souls are led into the covenant of grace, and the more they know of God in Christ, and of him as their covenant God and Father, the more they remember of their former evil ways, and reflect upon them with shame and confusion:

and never open thy mouth any more; against God, and the dispensations of his providence; against his Gospel, truths, and ordinances; against his people, the followers of Christ, and particularly the Gentiles; seeing they will now see themselves as bad and worse than ever they were; for this may have a special regard to the conversion of the Jews in the latter day, when they shall look on him whom they have pierced, and mourn, (^{<3820>}Zechariah

12:10); and remember the evil ways of their ancestors, and their own stubbornness and infidelity, and be ashamed thereof; and say not one word by way of complaint of the judgments of God that have been upon them as a nation so long:

because of thy shame; because they will now be ashamed of their opposition to Christ and his Gospel; of their rejection and treatment of him; and of the evil things they have been guilty of:

when I am pacified toward thee for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord God; God may be said to be pacified, or propitious, when he is at peace with men, his anger is turned away, his law and justice are satisfied, reconciliation and atonement are made for sin, and he signifies that for Christ's sake; and especially when his pardoning love and grace is manifested and applied: and this pacification is made, not by men themselves, by their obedience, or repentance, or faith; but by the blood and sacrifice of Christ; which, when made known to the conscience; or when this atonement, propitiation, and pacification is received by faith; or there is a comfortable sense of pardon, through the blood of Christ, for all sins and transgressions that have been committed in heart and life; it has such an effect, as to cause men to remember and call to mind their former evil ways, and to fill them with shame for them, and to put them to silence, so as never more to open their mouths to excuse their sins; or commend themselves and their own righteousness; or to murmur against God, or censure others. This is the nature of pardoning grace and mercy.