

CHAPTER 24

INTRODUCTION TO EZEKIEL 24

Is this chapter the destruction of the city and temple of Jerusalem is prophesied of; the former under the parable of a boiling pot; the latter is represented by the sudden death of Ezekiel's wife. The time of this prophecy was that very day the king of Babylon began the siege of Jerusalem, (³²⁴⁰Ezekiel 24:1,2), the parable of the boiling pot, (³²⁴³Ezekiel 24:3-5), the explanation and application of it to the city of Jerusalem, (³²⁴⁶Ezekiel 24:6-14), the prophet is told of the death of his wife, and bid not to mourn on that account, which accordingly came to pass, (³²⁴⁵Ezekiel 24:15-18), upon the people's inquiring what these things meant, he informs them that hereby was signified the profanation of the temple; and that their distress should be so great, that they should not use any set forms of mourning, but pine away and die, (³²⁴⁹Ezekiel 24:19-24), and the chapter is closed with assuring the prophet, that the day these things should come to pass, a messenger should be sent him, to whom he should open his mouth, and be no more dumb, (³²⁵²Ezekiel 24:25-27).

Ver. 1. *Again, in the ninth year, &c.*] Of Jehoiachin's captivity, from which the dates of Ezekiel are, and of Zedekiah's reign, which commenced together:

in the tenth month, in the tenth day of the month; the month Tebet, which answers to part of our December, and part of January; so that it was at the latter end of December when this prophecy was given out; at which time Jerusalem was besieged by the king of Babylon, even in the winter season:

the word of the Lord came unto me, saying; as follows:

Ver. 2. *Son of man, write thee the name of the day, &c.*] That is, what day of the week it was, as well as what day of the month; as whether the first, or second, or third, &c.: for the Jews had no other names for their days, as we have:

even of this same day; according to Bishop Usher^{f373}, it was the 30th of January, and the fifth day of the week (Thursday); A.M. 3414, or 590

before Christ. Mr. Whiston^{f374} places it at 3413 A.M. or 591 before Christ. The prophet is bid to observe it punctually, and write it exactly, that there might be no mistake; to set it down in his pocket book; or it may be in some public register, that it might not only be remembered by him, but known by the people; that so when they should hear the fact afterwards related, and exactly agreeing with this prediction, they would acknowledge him to be a true prophet; since this would be a confirmation of the word of the Lord coming to him:

the king of Babylon set himself against Jerusalem this same day; or “drew nigh”^{f375}; brought up his army to it, and laid siege against it, and prepared everything to carry it on; which he very probably did in person, though he afterwards retired, and left the command of his army with his generals; and this was exactly the day before mentioned; (see ^{<1291>}2 Kings 25:1 ^{<2911>}Jeremiah 39:1 52:4). The Prophet Ezekiel was now in Chaldea, many miles from Judea, and yet had this account the very selfsame day, even from the Lord himself, who is omniscient and omnipresent.

Ver. 3. *And utter a parable to the rebellious house, &c.*] The people of the Jews so called, not so much on account of their rebellion against the king of Babylon, which caused him to come against them, as on account of their rebellion against God, and the breach of his laws; (see ^{<3111>}Ezekiel 2:3,5-8). The prophet is bid to represent to them, in a figurative and emblematic way, the miseries that were coming upon them for their wickedness, namely, under the parable of a boiling pot:

and say unto them, thus saith the Lord God; speaking in his name, and as coming from him, and clothed with his authority; that the following parable might not be thought to be a fancy and chimera of his own: “set on a pot, set it on”; set a pot on the fire, and do it quickly. This “pot” is the city of Jerusalem, which was to be brought into great distress and ruin; not a cauldron of brass, wherein the inhabitants should be as safe as if they had walls of brass about them, as they vainly boasted, (^{<2111>}Ezekiel 11:3), but a seething pot, such an one as Jeremiah saw, to which, it may be, reference is here had, (^{<2111>}Jeremiah 1:13), in which the people should be destroyed:

and also pour water into it; which, as it is some time a boiling, may denote the length of the siege of the city, which held two years; and of the troubles and miseries attending it; and of the greatness of them, which were as intolerable as boiling water. The Targum is,

“prophesy that armies shall come against this city; and also there shall be given unto it length of time to receive the siege.”

Ver. 4. *Gather the pieces thereof into it*, &c.] fire being made, and the pot set on, and water poured into it, the next thing is, to put in the pieces that are to be boiled; and these are to be gathered; meaning the people of the land, that were to be gathered from the several parts of it, for their security, as they thought; but the event proved it was for their ruin: even

every good piece, the thigh and the shoulder; the princes and gentry, the great and the mighty, the rich and wealthy of the people; who, upon the invasion, got together in Jerusalem, to secure their persons and substance:

fill it with the choice bones; or with those pieces that have the choice bones, that are full of marrow; the strongest among the people; the soldiers, or such as were fit for war; the best of their militia, brought hither to defend the city; but, in fact, to be slain, as they were. The Targum is,

“gather the princes thereof into the midst of her, every terrible man and warrior; fill her with the army of the people.”

Ver. 5. *Take the choice of the flock*, &c.] King, princes, nobles, magistrates, priests and rulers of the people:

and burn also the bones under it: or, “put a pile of bones under it”^{f376}; the bones of them that are slain in it; denoting the great slaughter of them; or the bones of the innocent that had been murdered in it; which were the cause of these judgments coming upon them; and caused the wrath of God to burn the more hotly against them; or the bones of the wicked:

and make it boil well; the pot; that the water may be very hot and boiling; denoting the severity of the judgments of God in the city, to the destruction of many by sword, famine, and pestilence:

and let them seethe the bones of it therein; that the strongest among them may be weakened and destroyed by the length and severity of the siege, and the judgments attending it. The Targum is,

“bring near the kings of the people, and even join auxiliaries with them; hasten the time of it yea, let her slain be cast in the midst of her.”

Ver. 6. *Wherefore thus saith the Lord God, woe to the bloody city, &c.*]

Here the parable begins to be explained; and shows that by the pot is meant the city of Jerusalem, called the bloody city, because of the blood of the prophets, and of righteous persons, and of innocent babes, that was shed in it; and which was the cause of the judgments of God coming upon her, which would issue in her destruction, and therefore “woe unto her”; (see ~~4157~~ Matthew 23:37):

to the pot whose scum is therein, and whose scum is not gone out of it; when a pot boils, a scum arises, and appears upon the top of the water, which the cook usually takes off: this denotes the filthiness and wickedness of the people of the Jews, which would work up and be seen by the judgments of God upon them; yet should not be removed, but continue on them, unrepented of, and unpardoned. It signifies that they would remain hardened in their sins; and that the judgments of God would have no effect upon them to bring them to repentance; and that God would have no mercy on them, or pardon their sins:

bring it out piece by piece: the people that were in Jerusalem, of every class and rank, of every age and sex; suggesting that they should not be all destroyed at once, but some at one time, and some at another; some in one way, and some in another; some by famine, others by the pestilence, and others by the sword; some by sallying out upon the enemy; others by endeavouring to make their escape privately, and fall into their hands:

let no lot fall upon it; to save some, and destroy others, as is often done in war; signifying that all were destined to destruction, some way or another; and none should be spared; they that escaped the pestilence should die by famine; and they that escaped them both should die by the sword; and they that escaped all three should be carried into captivity. The Targum is,

“captivity upon captivity shall go out with her, because repentance was not in her.”

Ver. 7. *For her blood is in the midst of her, &c.*] The blood of innocent persons shed in the midst of her, openly and publicly, cried for vengeance:

she set it upon the top of a rock; where it could not soak in, as when spilled upon soft earth: this denotes her openness and impudence in shedding blood, as not being ashamed of it, or afraid of punishment for it, but as rather glorying in it; perhaps there may be some allusion to the tops

of hills and mountains, where idolatry was committed, attended with shedding human blood:

she poured it not upon the ground, to cover it with dust; she did not take any methods to hide her sin; having no sense of the heinousness of it, nor any consciousness of guilt, or any remorse or repentance; respect is had to a law which obliged to cover blood shed with dust, (⁽¹⁸¹⁷¹³⁾Leviticus 17:13). The Targum of the whole is,

“because innocent blood which is shed in the midst of her; with pride and with a high arm she shed it; she shed it not through ignorance, that she might repent of it.”

Ver. 8. *That it might cause fury to come up to take vengeance, &c.*] Into the heart and mind of God, into his face, speaking after the manner of men; observing such gross and open wickedness, he determined within himself to show his resentment, manifest his wrath and displeasure, and take vengeance on such capital and impudent offenders:

I have set her blood upon the top of a rock, that it might not be covered; by way of just retaliation; that as her sin was publicly committed, and no repentance shown for it, so her punishment should be open and manifest to all the world, and no forgiveness should be granted her. The Targum is,

“I have revealed their sins, because they have shed innocent blood openly, that it might not be forgiven.”

Ver. 9. *Therefore thus saith the Lord God, woe to the bloody city, &c.*] (see Gill on “⁽²⁶¹⁰⁶⁾Ezekiel 24:6”):

I will even make the pile for fire great; a large pile of wood, a great quantity of fuel to maintain the fire, and keep the pot boiling; meaning the vast army of the Chaldeans, which the Lord would bring against Jerusalem, which should closely besiege it, and vigorously attack it, until it had executed the fury of the wrath of God, comparable to fire, and of his judgments upon it. The Targum is,

“even I will multiply her destruction.”

Ver. 10. *Heap on wood, kindle the fire, &c.*] This is said either to the prophet, to do this in an emblematic way; or to the Chaldean army, to prepare for the siege, encompass the city, begin their attacks, and throw in their stones out of their slings and engines, and arrows from their bows:

consume the flesh; not entirely, since it is afterwards to be spiced; but thoroughly boil it; denoting the severe sufferings the inhabitants should undergo before their utter ruin:

spice it well; pepper them off; batter their walls, beat down their houses, distress them by all manner of ways and means; signifying that this would be grateful to the Lord, as his justice would be glorified in the destruction of this people; and as the plunder of them would be like a spiced and sweet morsel to the enemy; whose appetites would hereby be sharpened and become keen, and to whom the sacking and plundering the city would be as agreeable as well seasoned meat to a hungry man:

and let the bones be burnt; either under it, or rather in it; even the strongest and most powerful among the people destroyed, who should hold out the longest in the siege. The Targum of the whole is,

“multiply kings; gather an army; order the auxiliaries, and prepare against her warriors, and let her mighty ones be confounded.”

Ver. 11. *Then set it empty upon the coals thereof, &c.*] The city, when emptied of its inhabitants and substance, like a pot that is boiled over, and all in it boiled away, or taken out; burn it with fire, as the city of Jerusalem when taken and plundered was:

that the brass of it may be hot, and burn; as brass will when set on coals: or, “the bottom of it”³⁷⁷; so Ben Melech observes, from the Misnah, that the lower part or bottom of a pot, cauldron, or furnace, is called the brass of it; and so the sense is, make the fire burn so fierce as to burn the bottom of the pot; or the canker and rust of it, which the following words explain:

and that the filthiness of it may be molten in it, that the scum of it may be consumed; the abominable wickedness of this people; since they were not reformed and brought to repentance for it by the admonitions and instructions given them, and by the chastisements and corrections laid upon them, they with their sins should be consumed in this terrible manner. The Targum is,

“I will leave the land desolate, that they may become desolate; and that the gates of her city may be consumed; and that those that work uncleanness in the midst of her may melt away, and her sins be consumed.”

Ver. 12. *She hath wearied herself with lies, &c.*] With serving idols, which were lying vanities; by trusting to the alliances of neighbouring nations, which deceived her; or by committing sin, in which there was no satisfaction; or it may be understood of wearying of God with their sins, and particularly with her lying promises of repentance and reformation:

and her great scum went not forth out of her; notwithstanding her promises; or notwithstanding the admonitions given, and the chastisements inflicted on her, yet she continued hardened in her sins, impenitent and unreformed:

her scum shall be in the fire; like a pot that boils over, its scum falls into the fire, and is consumed there; and in no other way, but by the fire of divine judgments, or the burning of the city, could the wickedness thereof be consumed. The Targum is,

“and they shall not go out of her that work iniquity; in the fire shall she be burnt, because of the multitude of her sins.”

Ver. 13. *In thy filthiness is lewdness, &c.*] Consummate wickedness joined with impudence, and an obstinate persisting in it; though her sins were so abominable and filthy, yet she was not ashamed of them, nor could be reclaimed from them; but, like a lewd woman, or an old harlot, was bold and impudent:

because I have purged thee, and thou wast not purged; made use of means for the purgation of them, by his prophets, and by exhortations and instructions given by them, and by various corrections and chastisements; but all in vain, and to no purpose, they were all without effect:

thou shall not be purged from thy filthiness any more till I have caused my fury to rest upon thee; there was no other way left to purge her from her sins, but by the fire of his wrath, and the fury of his anger, in her utter destruction.

Ver. 14. *I the Lord have spoken it; it shall come to pass, &c.*] What God has said shall be accomplished; his word shall not return void and empty, or be without effect:

and I will do it; being God omnipotent and unchangeable:

I will not go back; from his word, or the thing threatened and denounced; nothing should prevail upon him to act such a part:

neither will I spare; show any mercy or compassion, or abate of the punishment due:

neither will I repent; or change the course and method of Providence; but abide by the decree gone forth, and the sentence pronounced, and thoroughly execute it; a heap of words ascertaining the truth of what is predicted:

according to thy ways and according to thy doings shall they judge thee, saith the Lord God; that is, the Chaldeans shall judge and condemn thee, and execute my judgments on thee in a just and righteous manner, as thy evil ways and works deserve.

Ver. 15. *Also the word of the Lord came unto me, saying.*] Next follows the other sign, by which the Lord shows the destruction of the temple.

Ver. 16. *Son of man, behold, &c.*] This is said to raise the attention of the prophet, something strange and unusual, interesting and affecting, being about to be delivered:

I take away from thee the desire of thine eyes with a stroke; meaning his wife; who very probably was of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look to; however, of an amiable disposition, and in her conjugal relation very agreeable to the prophet; and, no doubt, a truly religious woman, and upon all account's desirable to him. This lovely object of his affection the Lord, who is the sovereign disposer of all persons, signifies he would take away from him by death unto himself; that is, suddenly and at once; and so the Syriac and Arabic versions render it, "with a sudden stroke"; as sometimes persons are struck with death at once with an apoplexy or palsy. The Targum renders it, with the pestilence; it was what the Jews call death by the hand of heaven, by the immediate hand of God; and, it may be, without any intervening disease; or, however, without any train of disorders which lead on to death:

yet neither shalt thou mourn nor weep; on account of the dead; neither privately nor publicly, inwardly or outwardly, though so near and dear a relation; and though it would seem strange, and be charged with want of natural affection, and with a brutish insensibility:

neither shall thy tears run down; his cheeks, by which vent would be given to his grief, and his mind somewhat eased; but all care was to be taken to prevent any gushing of them out of his eyes, and especially that they did

not run down in any quantity on his cheeks, and to be seen; though they might seem to be but a proper tribute to the dead.

Ver. 17. *Forbear to cry*, &c.] Groan or howl, or make any doleful noise: or, “be silent”^{f378}: which the Talmudists^{f379} interpret of not greeting any person:

make no mourning for the dead; use none of those rites and ceremonies commonly observed for deceased relations and friends, particularly and especially for a wife; who is one of the seven persons for whom mourning is to be made, according to the Jewish canons^{f380}; and which the ties of nature, nearness of relation, and especially mutual and cordial affection, where that has taken place, require; and though a wife is not expressly mentioned among those, for whom a priest might defile himself by attending their funerals, yet must be included among those akin to him, if not solely designed, as Jarchi thinks; whose note on (~~<R2K2>~~Leviticus 21:2), is, there are none his kin but his wife; so that Ezekiel, though a priest, was not exempted from the observation of funeral rites, but obliged to them, had he not been forbid by a special order from the Lord: the particulars of which follow:

bind the tire of thine head upon thee; cap or turban, wore on the head, as a covering of it, and ornament to it, as the word used signifies; and the priests’ bonnets were for glory and beauty, (~~<Q280>~~Exodus 28:40), and such was the tire about the prophet’s head, since he was a priest; and which, in time of mourning, was taken off, and it was customary for mourners to be bare headed; and though the high priest might not uncover his head and rend his clothes for the dead, (~~<Q210>~~Leviticus 21:10), yet other priests might, unless they had a particular and special prohibition, as Ezekiel here; (see ~~<B106>~~Leviticus 10:6) and yet it seems, by some instances, particularly that of David’s mourning for Absalom, that the head was covered at such a time, (~~<Q195>~~2 Samuel 19:5) and Kimchi on the place expressly says, that it was the way and custom of mourners to cover themselves; and certain it is, that in later times, however, it has been the usage of the Jews to cover their heads in mourning; for this is one of the things expressly forbid in the Jewish canons, as Maimonides^{f381} says, to be used in mourning for the dead, namely, making bare the head; and covering the head is what mourners are obliged to^{f382}; this Gejerus^{f383} reconciles, by observing, that at the first of the mourning they used to take off of their heads what they wore for the sake of ornament, such as the tire, or bonnet here; but after a while

covered themselves with veils when they went abroad, or others came to them. Jarchi interprets this of the “tephillim”, or phylacteries the Jews wore about their heads; and so the Talmud^{f384}; and the Targum is,

“let thy “totaphot” or frontlets be upon thee;”

of which interpretation Jerom makes mention; but these things do not appear to be in use in Ezekiel’s time:

and put on thy shoes upon thy feet: which used to be taken off, and persons walked barefoot in times of mourning, (^{150}2 Samuel 15:30), and this custom continues with the Jews to this day; and which they say is confirmed by this passage. One of their canons^{f385} runs thus,

“they do not rend garments, nor pluck off the shoe for any, until he is dead;”

which supposes they do, and should do, when he is dead: and this is one of the things, their writers^{f386} say, is forbidden a mourner for the dead, namely, to put on his shoes; and they ask, from whence it appears that a mourner is forbid to put on his shoes? the answer is, from what is said to Ezekiel, “put on thy shoes upon thy feet”: which shows that in common it was not right nor usual to do it; and it is their custom now for mourners, when they return from the grave, to sit seven days on the ground with their feet naked^{f387}:

and cover not thy lips; as the leper did in the time of his separation and distress, who put a covering upon his upper lip, (^{135}Leviticus 13:45) and as mourners did, who put a veil upon their faces:

and eat not the bread of men: of other men; or “of mourners”^{f388}, as the Targum; such as used to be sent to mourners by their friends, in order to refresh and revive their spirits; and who, they supposed, through their great grief, were not careful to provide food for themselves; and this they did to comfort them, and let them know that, though they had lost a relation, there were others left, who had a cordial respect for them, and heartily sympathized with them: and, according to the traditions of the Jews^{f389}, a mourner might not eat of his own bread; but was obliged to eat the bread of others, at least his first meal, and on the first day of his mourning; though he might on the second, and on the following days; and this they endeavour to establish from this place of Scripture. What their friends used to send them at such a time were usually hard eggs and wine. Eggs,

because round and spherical, and so a proper emblem of death, and might serve to put in mind of it, which goes round, is with one today, and with another tomorrow; and wine, to cheer their spirits, that they might forget their sorrow^{f390}. They also used to eat at such times a sort of pulse, called lentiles, to show by what sort of food they lost their birthright, or firstborn^{f391}. And such like things were used by the Romans in their funeral feasts, as beans, parsley, lettuce, lentiles, eggs, &c.^{f392}, and as the Romans had their “parentalia”, and the Greeks their *παραδειπνα*, so the Jews had also very sumptuous feasts on such occasions: not only great personages, as kings and nobles, made them; so Archelaus, made a magnificent one for the people, on the death of his father Herod^{f393}, after the custom of the country; but even the common people were very profuse and lavish in them; and which, as Josephus^{f394} observes, was the cause of great poverty among them; for so prevalent was the custom, that there was a necessity of doing it, or otherwise a man would not have been reckoned a holy man; (see ~~2447~~ Jeremiah 16:7).

Ver. 18. *So I spake unto the people in the morning, &c.*] Did the duty of his office as a prophet; exhorted and instructed the people, particularly informed them of what had been said to him by the Lord, the evening or night before, concerning the death of his wife, and how he was to behave under such a providence; which he told them of before hand, that, when it came to pass, they might have a further proof of his being a true prophet of the Lord:

and at even my wife died; suddenly, as it was said she should; this shows who is meant by the desire of his eyes, and what by the taking it away;

and I did in the morning as I was commanded; neither moaned, nor sighed, nor wept, nor shed a tear, nor used any of the common ceremonies of mourning, but dressed and ate as at other times, as he was ordered to do; this was the next morning after his wife died. So the Syriac version,

“in the morning of the other day;”

and the Arabic version,

“in the morning of the following day.”

Thus whatever the Lord commands is to be done, though ever so contrary to the customs of men, or to natural inclinations and affections.

Ver. 19. *And the people said unto me, &c.*] Either seriously, as being desirous of knowing what was meant by all this; since they had reason to believe that it was not out of want of affection in Ezekiel to his wife that he so behaved; and therefore there must be some hidden meaning in it, which they should be glad to be informed of: or in a ludicrous manner, deriding the prophet for his conduct, and despising what he meant to instruct them in hereby:

wilt thou not tell us what these things are to us, that thou doest so? for they suspected it was not on his own account, but to signify something to them, that these things were done; and laughing at him, they say, to what purpose are these things done? if you do not tell us for what reason they are done, instruct us by words, and not by actions; these were his fellow captives in Babylon.

Ver. 20. *Then I answered them, &c.*] And gave them an account of the design of the whole, and what was signified hereby:

the word of the Lord came unto me, saying; ordering him to do all he did; for he did nothing of himself, but all according to the divine will; and who also directed him to say the following things to the people, by way of explanation.

Ver. 21. *Speak unto the house of Israel, &c.*] By word of mouth, to those who were upon the spot with him in Chaldea: and by a messenger, or a letter, to them that were in Judea:

thus saith the Lord of hosts, behold, I will profane my sanctuary; the temple, built for him, and where he dwelt, and was worshipped; where duties performed and holy sacrifices offered up formerly; this he now says he would profane, that is, would bring the Chaldeans against Jerusalem, who should take it, and enter into the temple, and so profane it, and make it common, yea, utterly destroy it:

the excellency of your strength, desire of your eyes, and that which your soul pitieth; all which is said of the temple; it was the pride and glory of the Jews, what they boasted of, and put their confidence in, and reckoned their strength and security; it was as dear and as desirable to them as Ezekiel's wife was to him, the emblem of it; the destruction and desolation of which would be pitied by them, and would sensibly affect them upon hearing of it, even in prophecy:

and your sons and your daughters whom ye have left shall fall by the sword; whom they had left behind them in Judea, when they were carried captive with Jehoiakim, and to whom they hoped to return, as their false prophets had assured them; but so it should not be, for these should die by the sword of the Chaldeans, when the city of Jerusalem should be taken, and the temple profaned; and this should be the case of the sons and daughters of those who then should be carried captive, that should be left in the land; as was the case of Gedaliah, and those that were with him.

Ver. 22. *And ye shall do as I have done*, &c.] When his wife died, and as he was ordered by the Lord; the meaning of Which they were now inquiring:

ye shall not cover your lips; as a token of mourning; nor use any other of their country rites and ceremonies, for fear of provoking their enemies, in whose hands they shall be:

nor eat the bread of men; or “of mourners”, as the Targum; there shall be none to comfort them, or send bread to them; they shall all be alike mourners.

Ver. 23. *And your tires shall be upon your heads, and your shoes upon your feet*. &c.] As will be necessary while travelling, and when carrying captive to a foreign country, as now will be their case:

ye shall not mourn nor weep; shall not dare to do it, because of their enemies; and, moreover, so great should be their miseries and calamities, that they should be struck dumb, and quite astonished and stupefied with them; that they should not be able to vent their sorrow by an outward act of mourning:

but ye shall pine away for your iniquities; without any true sense of them, or godly sorrow for them, but in wretched hardness of heart, and black despair:

and mourn one towards another; not to God, confessing their sins, being contrite and penitent; but to one another, fretting, murmuring, and complaining at the hand of God upon them: this seems to denote the private way of mourning they should use for fear of the enemy, when they could get together by themselves, as well as their disregard to God, against whom they had sinned.

Ver. 24. *Thus Ezekiel is unto you a sign*, &c.] These are the words of the prophet concerning himself; observing that in all the above things he was a sign to the Jews of what should befall them, and what should be their case:

and according to all that he hath done shall ye do; however it might be then a matter of scorn and derision:

and when this cometh: when this prophecy comes to pass, and all these calamities come upon the city and temple:

ye shall know that I am the Lord God; omniscient, omnipotent, true, and faithful.

Ver. 25. *Also, thou son of man, shall it not be in the day*, &c.] This question is to be answered in the affirmative:

when I take from them their strength; their king and kingdom, their princes and nobles, their soldiers and men of might and war, their wealth and substance, their city and the inhabitants of it; or rather their temple, in which they placed their strong confidence: so the Targum,

“in the day when I shall take from them the house of their sanctuary;”

and which is called “the joy of their glory”; what they rejoiced and gloried in:

the desire of their eyes, and that whereupon they set their mind, their sons and their daughters; for to these may those phrases be applied; as well as to the temple; they being desirable to them, to be spared and continued, and on whom the affections of their hearts were set, and for whose welfare they were very solicitous. So some render it “the burden or care of their souls”^{f395}; though the Targum applies this, as the other to the temple, paraphrasing it,

“and the delight of their eyes shall be taken from them, and the beloved of their souls, which is better to them than their sons and their daughters.”

Ver. 26. *That he that escapeth in that day shall come unto thee*, &c.] That is, that one that should escape the hands of the Chaldeans, when the city should be taken, should directly make the best of his way to the prophet:

to cause thee to hear it with thine ears; all the particulars of the destruction of the city and temple, as it had been represented to him in vision; when he would see the exact agreement between prophecy and facts; (see ~~אזכור~~ Ezekiel 33:21).

Ver. 27. *In that day shall thy mouth be opened to him which is escaped, &c.]* And shall freely converse with him about the several facts and circumstances of taking and burning the city and temple, and of the usage of the inhabitants:

and thou shalt speak, and be no more dumb; for from this time to the taking of Jerusalem, which was about eighteen months, the prophet had nothing to say to the people of the Jews, and so was dumb with respect to them; but was employed in prophesying against other nations, as the following chapters show, unto chapter thirty three, in which we have an account of the messenger that escaped to him; but after that his mouth was opened, and he prophesied to them again:

and thou shalt be a sign unto them; as they will then own and acknowledge:

and they shall own that I am the Lord; who have foretold these things, and accomplished them.