

CHAPTER 36

INTRODUCTION TO EZEKIEL 36

This chapter is a prophecy concerning the desolations of the land of Israel, and the causes of them; of the return of the people to it, and the fruitfulness of it; and of spiritual blessings bestowed upon them in the latter day. And first, for the comfort of the people of Israel, it is observed that their enemies that insulted them will suffer the vengeance of God's wrath, particularly the Edomites, (²³⁰¹Ezekiel 36:1-7), that the land of Israel should again become fruitful, its cities rebuilt, men and beasts be multiplied upon it, and be no more liable to destruction, nor bear any more the reproach of the Heathen, (²³⁰⁸Ezekiel 36:8-15), the causes of its desolation and destruction, the sins of its inhabitants, especially bloodshed, idolatry, and profanation of the name of God, (²³⁰⁶Ezekiel 36:16-20), nevertheless the Lord promises to have mercy on them, and return them to their own land, not for their sakes, but for his own name's sake, (²³⁰²Ezekiel 36:21-24), then follow promises of spiritual blessings to them: as purification from all sin by the blood of Christ; regeneration by his Spirit and grace; and evangelical obedience as the fruit of that, (²³⁰⁵Ezekiel 36:25-27), and others of a mixed kind, respecting partly temporal and partly spiritual blessings, (²³⁰³Ezekiel 36:28-36), for all which it is expected of the Lord that he should be prayed unto for them; particularly their inhabitation in their own land, and the multiplication of them in it, with which the chapter concludes, (²³⁰⁷Ezekiel 36:37,38).

Ver. 1. *Also, thou son of man, prophesy unto the mountains of Israel, &c.]* The land of Judah, which was very mountainous, at least one part of it, called the hill country, (²⁴¹⁹Luke 1:39,65) and now the country being cleared of men through the captivity, and other desolating judgments, there were none but bare mountains to speak unto: or, "prophesy concerning the mountains of Israel"^{f600}; the inhabitants of them, or those that should be restored to them, concerning their future happiness and comfort: some render it, "against the mountains of Israel"^{f601}; but the later prophecies of them are in their favour, and not against them:

and say, ye mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Lord; concerning the destruction of their enemies, and concerning the temporal blessings that should be bestowed on them.

Ver. 2. *Thus saith the Lord God*, &c.] By the mouth of the prophet, who was bid to prophesy:

because the enemy had said against you, aha: rejoicing at the calamity of God's people, particularly the Edomites or Idumeans, as in the preceding chapter; and who are chiefly meant; and also the Ammonites and Tyrians, (^{327B}Ezekiel 25:3 26:2):

even the ancient high places are ours in possession; or, “the high places of the world shall be unto us for a possession”^{f602}; the land of Israel, according to Kimchi and others, was the highest part of the world, Jerusalem the highest part of that land, and the temple was built on the highest part of the city; and all these the Edomites claimed as their own, the land, city, and temple, and thought themselves sure of the same, as if they had them in actual possession; even the hilly part of the country, which had been so from the creation, and where stood many of the fortified and frontier towns and cities; which as strong as they were, or had been, they fancied would easily fall into their hands, now such desolations were made in the land.

Ver. 3. *Therefore prophesy and say, thus saith the Lord God*, &c.] Who heard all the enemy said, and knew all their designs and purposes, their schemes and devices:

because they have made you desolate; ravaged their country, destroyed their cities, burnt their temple, and carried them captive, and left the land without men or cattle:

and swallowed you up on every side; all their neighbours, being their enemies, were like ravenous beasts of prey, gaping upon them with their mouths; and, observing the low condition into which they were brought by the king of Babylon, helped forward the destruction; and everyone shared in the spoil and plunder nearest to them they could conveniently come at:

that ye might be a possession to the residue of the Heathen; either to those that were left in the land by the king of Babylon, or to the rest of the Heathen nations round about them:

ye are taken up in the lips of talkers, and are an infamy of the people; reproached, defamed, and made a proverb and byword, by every foul mouthed prating fellow.

Ver. 4. *Therefore, ye mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Lord*, &c.] As in (²⁷⁰¹Ezekiel 36:1), here repeated to raise and quicken their attention to what was about to be said to them:

thus saith the Lord God to the mountains, and to the hills, to the rivers, and to the valleys, to the desolate wastes, and to the cities that are forsaken; before only the mountains are spoken to, though the whole land was included; here the several particulars are given, which describe the whole, and which suffered in the calamity, and the inhabitants that dwelt in them or near them; who only can be supposed to hear the word of the Lord, though places are only mentioned, because of the great depopulation of them:

which became a prey and derision to the residue of the Heathen that are round about; to the Tyrians, Philistines, Edomites, Ammonites, and Moabites; who mocked the Jews, rejoicing at their destruction by the king of Babylon, and seized upon as a prey to themselves what he left: or these are the residue of the Heathens round about Judea; who remained after the judgments threatened were executed on the above nations, foretold in chapters twenty five and twenty six, (see ²⁷⁰⁶Ezekiel 36:36).

Ver. 5. *Therefore thus saith the Lord God*, &c.] Because these Heathens have acted such an unkind and cruel part to Israel:

surely in the fire of my jealousy have I spoken; in his fierce wrath and hot displeasure, resenting the ill usage of his people; hot with indignation against their enemies, having a fervent zeal for his own glory, and an affectionate concern for the good of his people. It is in the original text in the form of an oath, “if I have not spoken”, &c. ^{f603}; let me be reckoned a liar, or not God; believe me that I have spoken, and in this warm manner; and have not only foretold in prophecy, and threatened the destruction of these nations, but have resolved and determined upon it in my own mind. So the Targum,

“if I have not in the fire of my vengeance decreed in my word:”

against the residue of the Heathen, and against all Idumea; or Edom; the Edomites, even all of them, who of all the Heathen were the most

inveterate and implacable enemies of the Jews, though related to them, and are therefore particularly mentioned as the objects of the divine vengeance: the reason follows,

which have appointed my land into their possession; this land where his chosen people dwelt, and which he chose for them, and gave unto them; the land where he himself dwelt, and granted his presence; where his temple was, and he was worshipped. So the Targum,

“the land of the house of my majesty.”

Now this the Lord took ill at their hands, and resented, that they should lay out this land for themselves, and determine upon it as a possession and inheritance of theirs.

With the joy of all their heart, with despiteful minds, to cast it out for a prey; with the utmost joy they joined Nebuchadnezzar’s army when he invaded the land of Judea and besieged Jerusalem, out of pure malice and spite to the people of the Jews, in order to eject them from the possession of their land, that it might become a prey to them; (see ^{}Psalm 137:7 Obidiah 1:12-14).

Ver. 6. *Prophecy therefore concerning the land of Israel, &c.*] And the inhabitants of it, for their comfort, in this their time of distress:

and say unto the mountains, and to the hills, to the rivers, and to the valleys, thus saith the Lord God, I have spoken in my jealousy and in my fury; with great zeal for his honour, and the interest of his people; and with indignation at his and their enemies:

because ye have borne the shame of the Heathen; their calumnies and lies, their reproaches and scoffs, their injuries and abuses; all which were resented by the Lord, and therefore he determines to punish for them.

Ver. 7. *Therefore thus saith the Lord God, &c.*] This being the case, the people of God being in distress, and under shame and disgrace, and the enemy insulting them, and triumphing over them:

I have lifted up mine hand; solemnly swore; lifting up of the hand being a rite used by men when they swore, (^{}Genesis 14:22):

surely the Heathen that are about you, they shall bear their shame; the punishment of their shame; that which is justly due to them for reproaching

and putting to shame the people of God: or they shall be a laughing stock to others, and be reproached and derided themselves, and so be paid in their own coin; a just retaliation this for their treatment of the Jews.

Ver. 8. *But ye, O mountains of Israel, &c.*] Literally understood, as appears by what follows; for though they could not hear what was said, the proprietors of them could, now in captivity; and the efficacy of the word should be seen on them, producing the following effects:

ye shall shoot forth your branches; that is, the trees that grew upon them should; the vines, and the olive trees, planted on hills and mountains, as was usual, as appears from the mount of Olives, and other places:

and yield your fruit to my people of Israel; not only put forth branches, but bear fruit; and which should be given to the right owners, the people of Israel, and not to the Heathens, who had claimed the ancient mountains for their possession:

for they are at hand to come; the Israelites; either by repentance, as Kimchi; or by a return from the Babylonish captivity, which was about forty or fifty years after this prophecy; and which was but a shadow and figure of their restoration in the latter day, yet to come; which might be said to be at hand, or near, with respect to God, with whom two or three thousand years are as nothing. The Targum is,

“for the day of my redemption is near to come.”

Ver. 9. *For, behold, I am for you, &c.*] For the mountains, that they might be cultivated and become fruitful, and be of advantage to their proprietors, and appear beautiful and lovely to behold, as well as to be useful:

and I will turn unto you; the Lord had turned from them, and left them a prey to the enemy, whereby they were become desolate; but now he would turn unto them, and bless them, and make them fruitful, and return the right owners of them to them, who should greatly improve them:

and ye shall be tilled and sown; manured and cultivated, and sown with wheat and barley, as in former times.

Ver. 10. *And I will multiply men upon you, &c.*] Who should inhabit the cities on the mountains, and increase very much:

all the house of Israel, even all of it: not the Heathens should be multiplied on them, but the Israelites, all of them, and them only; all the tribes of Israel, the ten tribes as well as the other; and which is repeated for the confirmation of it: by this it appears that the prophecy has a further view than to the return of the Jews from the Babylonish captivity; for all did not return, many remained in the provinces of Babylon; and those that returned were chiefly of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin; but few of the rest came with them. Kimchi thinks the words have respect to the ten tribes, which he says are hid to this day; so Ben Melech.

And the cities shall be inhabited, and the wastes shall be builded; in a literal sense; as well as the church of God, and inheritance of Christ, shall then be in a flourishing condition.

Ver. 11. *And I will multiply upon you man and beast,* &c.] Not only men, but beasts also, of which the mountains had been deprived, being killed by the enemy for present use, or drove off for future subsistence; but now there should be an increase of them, which should feed upon the herbage of the mountains, and the rich pastures on them, to the great advantage of the proprietors:

and they shall increase and bring forth; or, “multiply and increase”^{f604}; both men and beasts:

and I will settle you after your old estates; that is, you mountains shall be inhabited by those that formerly dwelt in you, and you shall be enjoyed by your right owners; by those who had you in possession from the beginning, from the times of Joshua; by whom you were settled on them by lot, according to their several tribes:

and will do better unto you than at your beginnings; not that the land should be better or more fruitful than in the times of Joshua, who led the people into and found it a land flowing with milk and honey, and abounding with all kind of fruit; or that the people should be more flourishing in temporal things than in the times of David and Solomon; for no such fruitfulness and prosperity took place upon the return from the Babylonish captivity: but rather this is to be understood of spiritual blessings and privileges in the times of the Messiah; and particularly when the Jews will be converted in the latter day:

and ye shall know that I am the Lord; that is, the inhabitants of the mountains of Israel, the converted Jews, shall know and own the Messiah, and that he is Jehovah, the eternal God, and not a mere man.

Ver. 12. *Yea, I will cause men to walk upon you, &c.*] And not beasts, as during the captivity; and that without fear of wild beasts, or any enemy; and not as travellers upon them, but as inhabitants of them; who shall walk to and fro upon them, as the owners of them, and doing their proper business there:

even my people Israel; and them only: some read it, “with my people Israel”^{f605}; as if other men, Gentiles called by grace, should dwell with the Jews at this time, particularly at their restoration in the latter day; which may be true, and, which seems to be the sense of the whole sixtieth chapter of Isaiah’s prophecy:

and they shall possess thee, and thou shall be their inheritance; that is, thou mountain; a change of number, meaning everyone of the mountains, even the whole land of Canaan, which was given to the Israelites for an inheritance; and was typical of the eternal inheritance in heaven:

and thou shall no more henceforth bereave them; of men, or of children; or be no more the cause of their being childless, or of bereaving them of men; sins committed on the mountains being the cause of provoking the Lord to bereave them; or men should be no more killed upon them, as they had been.

Ver. 13. *Thus saith the Lord God, because they say unto you, &c.*] The Heathens that dwelt round about the land of Judea said to the mountains, or to the whole land,

thou land devourest up men; eats up the inhabitants of it; which is part of the ill report the spies, in the times of Moses, brought on it, (~~4132~~ Numbers 13:32), to which the allusion is here; suggesting, that either the air was unwholesome; or that the land did not produce a sufficiency of food to support the inhabitants of it; or that the curse of God was upon it; and that one judgment or another was ever on it; either famine, or pestilence, or the sword of the enemy, or internal broils among themselves, or wild beasts, whereby the inhabitants of the land were wasted and consumed:

and hast bereaved thy nations; the several tribes, of men and children; so that they were diminished and depopulated: the allusion seems to be to

miscarrying women, or such who kill their children in the womb, and become abortive.

Ver. 14. *Therefore thou shalt devour men no more*, &c.] Or they shall be no more destroyed in thee by pestilence, famine, sword, or other means:

neither bereave that nations any more, saith the Lord; or, “thou shalt not cause them to fall any more”^{f606}, for so it is written, as in (~~2665~~ Ezekiel 36:15), though the marginal reading is, “thou shalt not bereave”, which we follow; and both are to be received, since miscarriages often come by falls.

Ver. 15. *Neither will I cause men to hear in thee the shame of the Heathen any more*, &c.] Their calumnies and revilings, their scoffs and jeers:

neither shalt thou bear the reproach of the people any more; or be any more a taunt and a curse, a proverb and a byword of the people; or be their laughing stock, and the object of their derision:

neither shalt thou cause thy nations to fall any more, saith the Lord God; by famine, sword, or pestilence, or any other judgment caused by sin: or, “thou shalt not bereave”^{f607}, as the marginal reading is; and which the Targum and many versions follow: now what is here promised, in this and the preceding verse, had not its full accomplishment upon the Jews’ return from the Babylonish captivity; for since that time their men have been devoured, and their tribes have been bereaved of them by famine, sword, and pestilence; and they have heard and bore the shame and reproach of the nations where they have been dispersed, and do to this day; wherefore these prophecies must refer to a future restoration of that people.

Ver. 16. *Moreover the word of the Lord came unto me*, &c.] Here begins another prophecy, which was delivered about the same time with the former:

saying; as follows:

Ver. 17. *Son of man, when the house of Israel dwelt in their own land*, &c.] The land of Canaan, which the Lord their God gave unto them; a land abounding with all good things, where they dwelt in great ease, plenty, and prosperity; and which also was a holy land, peculiarly chosen of God for his worship and service:

they defiled it by their own way and by their doings: by their sinful ways and evil works: sin is of a defiling nature; it defiles the bodies and souls of

men; it defiles their own, and it defiles others; it defiles a land, and the inhabitants of it, and makes them loathsome and abominable to a pure and holy God:

their way was before me, as the uncleanness of a removed woman: of a menstruous woman in the time of her separation; when she was debarred the company of her husband, and might not enter into the sanctuary of the Lord: this shows what an evil thing sin is, what an uncleanness it is in the sight of God, how abhorrent sinful ways are to him; and though he was the husband of these people, yet, because of their sins, he separated from them, and removed them from and out of their land, as not fit to be in his presence, nor to live there.

Ver. 18. *Wherefore I poured my fury on them,* &c.] Like a mighty flood that carries all before it, in just retaliation

for the blood they had shed upon the land; the innocent blood, as the Targum; the blood of righteous men, that opposed and reprov'd them for their sinful ways; the blood of the prophets, that were sent to warn them of them; and especially the blood of the Son of God; for this prophecy reaches further than to the times of the Babylonish captivity:

and for their idols wherewith they had polluted it; or, “for their dung”^{f608}; their dunghill gods; not only for their idols, and their idolatry, before the Babylonish captivity, which they after that were free from; but for the traditions of their elders, they set up against and above the word of God; and their own legal righteousness, their idols, the works of their hands, which wore as dung; and through their attachment to which they rejected Christ and his righteousness; and which brought wrath upon them, and them into their present captivity.

Ver. 19. *And I scattered them among the Heathen,* &c.] First by the Chaldeans, in the various provinces of Babylon; and next by the Romans, in the various parts of the world; and in this condition they now are:

and they were dispersed through the countries; or blown about as chaff, stubble, or any such like thing, is by the wind:

according to their way and according to their doings I judged them; condemned and punished them as their evil ways and wicked works deserved, according to the rules of justice and equity; so that no injustice

was done them, nor could any fault be justly found in the proceedings of God towards them.

Ver. 20. *And when they entered unto the Heathen, whither they went, &c.]* When the Jews went into the Heathen countries, whither they were carried captive, either by the Chaldeans, or by the Romans:

they profaned my holy name; by their irreligion and immorality; by their violation of both tables of the law; by their wicked lives and conversations, whereby they gave the enemy an occasion to reproach them, their religion, and their God, (⁴¹²⁴Romans 2:24):

when they said to them, these are the people of the Lord, and are gone forth out of his land; these are the men that boast they are the people of the Lord, whom he has chosen above all people, and see what a wicked people they are; for their sins they are driven out of the land, and become our captives: or though they were the Lord's people, as they pretend, and were under his care and protection; yet he was not able to keep them in their own land, and deliver them out of our hands, but they are carried captive by us; and thus the name of God, his being and perfections, were blasphemed, and his word, worship, and worshippers, were ridiculed by them. The Targum is,

“if these are the people of the Lord, how is it that they are gone out of the land of the house of his majesty?”

Ver. 21. *But I had pity for my holy name, &c.]* Had pity on the Jews for his name's sake, and not theirs; or he had a tender concern for his own honour and glory:

which the house of Israel had profaned among the Heathen, whither they went; and therefore was resolved to take a method for the glorifying of it, and that in a way of special grace and mercy to his people; (See Gill on ²⁵⁵⁰Ezekiel 36:20”).

Ver. 22. *Therefore say unto the house of Israel, &c.]* This is an order to the prophet, the son of man, (²⁵⁶⁷Ezekiel 36:17):

thus saith the Lord God, I do not this for your sakes, O house of Israel; what he hereafter promises to do for them, both with respect to things temporal and spiritual; which he did, not on account of any deserts or

worthiness in them; for they had none, having done nothing to merit his favour, but, on the contrary, everything to provoke the eyes of his glory:

but for my holy name's sake, which ye have profaned among the Heathen, whither ye went; for the honour of his holy name, for the glory of his holy word, holy worship, and holy religion; all which were traduced and reproached among the Heathen, by reason of the ungodly behaviour of the Jews.

Ver. 23. *And I will sanctify my great name, &c.*] The same with his holy name; for his greatness lies in his holiness; which name he sanctifies when he clears it from all charges and imputations; when he makes it appear to be holy and himself to be glorious in holiness; when he vindicates the honour of his name, not in a way of punishment, as he justly might, but in a way of grace and mercy; he sanctifies his name when he proclaims it, a God gracious and merciful; for it was in this way and manner he determined to make himself illustrious and glorious, and do honour to his name:

which was profaned among the Heathen, which ye have profaned in the midst of them; this is repeated again and again, to show the heinousness of this sin, how ill he took it at their hands, and what a concern it gave him:

and the Heathen shall know that I am the Lord, saith the Lord God, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes; when the Lord shall fulfil his promises, and deliver his people; when he shall sanctify, justify, and save them; and he shall be sanctified, served, and worshipped by them, and among them: it will be taken notice of by infidels themselves; and they shall hereby know, and be obliged to acknowledge, that the God of Israel is the only Lord God; that he is true and faithful to his word, righteous and holy, in his ways, the Lord God omniscient and omnipotent.

Ver. 24. *For I will take you from among the Heathen, &c.*] The Chaldeans and other nations, among whom they were carried captive; and the Papists, among whom many of them now are, often called Heathens and Gentiles in Scripture: this will be fully completed at the time of the Jews' conversion in the latter day: the phrase fitly expresses the act of divine grace, in taking his people from among the world by the effectual calling:

and gather you out of all countries; to himself, and to his Son, and to his church, and to some certain place from whence they will go up in a body to their own land, as follows: (see ³⁰¹¹Hosea 1:11):

and will bring you into your own land; into the land of Canaan literally understood, as well as into the church of God here, and into the heavenly country hereafter, of which Canaan was a type.

Ver. 25. *Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you,* &c.] Not baptismal water, as Jerom; an ordinance indeed of the Gospel, and to which the Jews will submit when converted; and which is performed by water, but not by sprinkling, nor does it cleanse from sin; and is administered by men, and is not an operation of God, as this is: rather the regenerating grace of the Spirit; though this does not purify from all sin, and besides is intended in the next verse: it seems best to understand it of the blood of Christ, the blood of sprinkling, and of justification from sin, and pardon of it by it; so Kimchi and Jarchi interpret of purification by atonement; and the Targum is,

“I will forgive your sins, as one is cleansed by the water of sprinkling, and the ashes of a heifer, which is for a sin offering:”

and ye shall be clean from all your filthiness, and from all your idols will I cleanse you; the blood of Christ cleanses from all sin; by it men are justified from all things, and are made perfectly pure and spotless in the sight of God; they are cleansed from original sin, the pollution of their nature; from all actual sins and transgressions, which are very defiling; from sins of heart, lip, and life; even from such as are idols, set up in the heart, and served.

Ver. 26. *A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you,* &c.] A “new heart” and a “new spirit” are one and the same; that is, a renewed one; renewed by the Spirit and grace of God; in which a new principle of life is put; new light is infused; a new will, filled with new purposes and resolutions; where new affections are placed, and new desires are formed; and where there are new delights and joys, as well as new sorrows and troubles; the same which in the New Testament is called the “new man”, and the new creature, (⁴⁰²¹Ephesians 4:24 ⁴⁰¹⁷2 Corinthians 5:17). The Targum paraphrases it,

“a heart fearing, and a spirit fearing;”

where the true fear of God is, a truly gracious heart; and which is purely the gift of God, and is the fruit of his rich grace, abundant mercy, and great love:

and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh; the Targum is,

“and I will break the heart of the wicked, which is hard as a stone;”

this is a heart hardened by sin, and confirmed in it; destitute of spiritual life and motion; senseless and stupid, stubborn and inflexible; on which no impressions are made; and which remains hard and impenitent: now this is in “the flesh”, in corrupt nature; and this hardness of heart is natural to men; and all who have it are after the flesh, or are carnal; and it requires omnipotence to remove it; it cannot be taken out by men of themselves: nor by ministers of the word; nor by the bare mercies and judgments of God; but by the powerful and efficacious grace of God; giving repentance unto life; working faith in the soul, to look to a crucified Christ; and shedding abroad the love of God in the heart, which softens and melts it; all which is done by the Spirit, and frequently by means of the word. This is interpreted, in the Talmud^{f609}, of the evil imagination, or corruption of nature; and is one of the names of it, a stone; and it refers, it is said^{f610}, to the time or world to come, the days of the Messiah:

and I will give you an heart of flesh; a heart sensible of sin and danger; a penitent one, soft and tender, through the love and fear of God; a spiritual and sanctified heart; submissive to the will of God; flexible and obsequious to the commands of Christ; on which impressions are made by the grace of God; where the laws of God are written, the Gospel of Christ is put; where Christ himself is formed; where are the fear of God, faith, hope, and love, and every other grace.

Ver. 27. *And I will put my Spirit within you*, &c.] My Holy Spirit, as the Targum; the Spirit of holiness; the author of internal sanctification, of the new heart and spirit, and of the fleshy one before mentioned; and through whose grace and strength the saints do what is after said they shall do:

and cause you to walk in my statutes: men are first made alive by the Spirit of God, and have spiritual strength put into them, who of themselves can do nothing; by means of which they are enabled to walk in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord, and to continue in the observation of them; which walking in them supposes:

and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them; being constrained by the love of God; influenced by the grace of Christ; and strengthened by the blessed Spirit: and such persons observe and do them willingly and cheerfully; from a principle of love; in faith, and to the glory of God;

without any mercenary and selfish views; without trusting to, and depending upon, what is done for salvation.

Ver. 28. *And ye shall dwell in the land which I gave to your fathers, &c.]* Not only shall be brought into it, but shall inhabit it, and continue there, and that in great safety and plenty; and which will be the more valued and esteemed, and reckoned a great blessing to enjoy; because this land is the gift of God, and what he gave to their fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, by promise so long ago, and to their seed; of which promise it appears he is not unmindful:

and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God; which is the sum and substance of the covenant of grace; which will now be renewed, and the blessings of it applied. The Jews will appear to be the people of God by their effectual calling and conversion; and God will show himself to be their God, by his presence with them, his protection of them, and that communion with himself he will admit them to: (see ^{<2400>}Jeremiah 31:1 32:38), “the loammi” will be taken off, and they will be again declared to be the covenant people of God, (^{<3009>}Hosea 1:9,10).

Ver. 29. *And I will also save you from all your uncleannesses, &c.]* From all their filthy lusts of pride, envy, malice, covetousness, whoredom, blasphemy, and infidelity, to which the Jews are now addicted; but at this time shall be saved from the power and dominion of them by the sanctifying grace of the Spirit; and from the guilt and pollution of them by the blood of Christ sprinkled on them; and this, not from one, or some of them only, but from all of them; all Israel will be saved, and they will be saved from all their sins, (^{<5125>}Romans 11:25,26):

and I will call for the corn, and will increase it; which shall answer to the call of God, as a servant to his master; and shall spring up out of the earth in great abundance; and which shall grow, and increase, and bring forth much fruit; and yield bread to the eater, and seed to the sower: and which is to be understood, not of corn in a literal sense only, but of corn in a spiritual sense; of all spiritual provisions, the word and ordinances, and especially the corn of wheat, Christ Jesus; who is the sum and substance of the Gospel and his ordinances, and is in them food for the faith of his people; (see ^{<3017>}Zechariah 9:17): and

lay no famine upon you; neither a famine of bread, or of water; nor of hearing the word of the Lord; but shall have plenty of provisions, both for soul and body; (see ^{<3081>}Amos 8:11).

Ver. 30. *And I will multiply the fruit of the tree, and the increase of the field, &c.]* The fruit of trees that grow in gardens, and orchards, and vineyards, as pomegranates, apples, olives, grapes, &c. and the corn and grass of the field; so that there shall be great plenty of each of these, and no want of anything for man or beast: and by these are mystically designed spiritual blessings; the fruits of righteousness, with which the saints, who are trees of righteousness, shall be laden; and an increase of gifts and grace in the churches of Christ, and the members of them:

that ye shall receive no more reproach of famine among the Heathen; who upbraided them with it, that they were forced to go to other nations for food, as in the times of their fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and that their land wanted rain, and waited for it; which, if it had not, became barren; whereas the Egyptians particularly needed it not, their land being watered yearly with the overflowings of the Nile: or the sense is, they should not be reproached with their penury and want of the things of life; and spiritually, that they should not be upbraided by the Gentiles with their want of the Gospel, and their contempt of it, their blasphemy and their unbelief; since they should now have it, receive, embrace, and love it, and feed upon it.

Ver. 31. *Then shall ye remember your own evil ways, &c.]* That were of their own choosing; in which they walked, and delighted to walk: and very evil ones they were; opposite to the ways of God; such as open violation of the law of God; neglect of his worship; idolatry, and many other sins, before the captivity; adhering to the traditions of their elders; and setting up their own righteousness as a justifying one afterwards; also their disbelief and rejection of the Messiah; their blasphemy against him, and persecution of his interest and people: now these will all be remembered with shame and confusion when the Lord shall bestow upon them the above blessings, spiritual and temporal; especially when a new heart and spirit shall be given them; the goodness of God will have such an influence upon them as to refresh their memories with former sins, and bring them to repentance for them; as well as to affect their minds, and make them thankful for present mercies: sins, which were before forgotten, or were

not thought to be sins, shall now come fresh in their minds, with all their aggravated guilt:

and your doings that were not good: far from being so, they were very evil, contrary to the law of God and Gospel of Christ; as they will at this time appear to themselves to be:

and shall loath yourselves in your own sight for your iniquities and for your abominations; their sins will be abominable to them, as they are in themselves, and to the Lord; and they will not only loath them, but themselves for them, when they shall come to have a true sight of them in their own colours, and a true sense of the evil nature of them; and this shall not be expressed only in the sight of men, and so as to be observed by them; but in their own sight, secretly and within themselves, under a clear and full conviction of their sins. The Syriac version is, “your faces shall be wrinkled”; as men’s are when they are displeased with themselves for what they have done. The Targum is,

“and ye shall groan when ye shall see, because of your sins, and because of your abominations;”

which is the case of sensible sinners, (⁴⁷⁰⁴2 Corinthians 5:4 ²⁰⁰⁴Ezekiel 20:43).

Ver. 32. *Not for your sakes do I this, saith the Lord, &c.*] Not for any worth or worthiness in them; for any merit or desert of theirs; for any goodness in them, or works of righteousness done by them; no, it purely flowed from his own unmerited grace and goodness; for his own sake, and for his own glory, will he do it; (see ⁴⁸⁰⁴Deuteronomy 9:4-6):

be it known unto you; this the Lord would have this people take notice of, who were very fond of their own righteousness and merits, and to trust therein, and ascribe much thereunto, as most men are too apt to do; and therefore, to take down their pride, and take them off of their boastings and vain opinions of themselves, he would have them know and acknowledge this; and be so far from placing any of the favours bestowed on them to the account of the merit of their good works, that they ought to take shame for their evil ones, as follows:

be ashamed and confounded for your own ways, O house of Israel; as men are when they are brought to a true sight and sense of them, and reflect

upon the evil of them, and are brought to true repentance for them; (see ~~316~~ Ezekiel 16:61,63).

Ver. 33. *Thus saith the Lord God, in the day that I shall have cleansed you from all your iniquities, &c.*] By the free and full pardon of them; by sprinkling clean water on them, the blood of Christ on their consciences; and by applying the righteousness of Christ to them for their justification; as well as by creating clean hearts in them, for their sanctification; and enabling them by grace to escape and abstain from the pollutions of the world:

I will also cause you to dwell in the cities; that is, of Judea, which, as well as Jerusalem, shall be rebuilt and inhabited, as follows:

and the wastes shall be builded: such cities and towns as lay in ruins: temporal prosperity shall go along with or follow spiritual blessings to the people of the Jews at their conversion; or they shall dwell in the churches of Christ, which are as cities compact together, well regulated, and where Jews and Gentiles at this time will be fellow citizens.

Ver. 34. *And the desolate land shall be tilled, &c.*] The land of Judea, which lay desolate during the captivity, and which now is under the dominion of the Turks, and in a ruinous state, shall be manured and cultivated, and become fruitful, as it formerly was: or the people of the Jews, who, in a spiritual sense, are like barren and uncultivated ground; these shall have the fallow ground of their hearts ploughed up, and the seeds of grace, truth, and righteousness, shall be sown in them, and they shall bring forth the fruit of good works:

whereas it lay desolate in the eyes of all that passed by: as the land of Canaan now does to every traveller in it, that observes it, and compares it with what it once was; and as the present state of the Jews is, in the eyes of every Christian pilgrim and traveller, that takes notice of their blindness and ignorance, their unbelief and hardness of heart.

Ver. 35. *And they shall say, &c.*] Either the neighbouring nations that lived round about the land of Israel, (~~336~~ Ezekiel 36:36), or rather the travellers, as before, who having as they passed by observed what it had been, and now see what it is; these shall say to one another:

this land that was desolate is become like the garden of Eden; for delight and fruitfulness: this may well be applied to the flourishing and fruitful state of the church of God, consisting of converted Jews, in the latter day:

and the waste and desolate and ruined cities are become fenced, and are inhabited; which, as it will be true of cities in a literal sense, so of the churches of Christ in Judea in a spiritual sense; which will be rebuilt by the grace of God, fenced and fortified by his almighty power, and inhabited by true believers.

Ver. 36. *Then the Heathen that are left round about you, &c.*] Not cut off by the judgments which came upon them, according to the prophecies in chapter twenty five and twenty six, the residue of the Ammonites, Moabites, Edomites, and Tyrians; and, in the mystical sense, this may design the residue of the antichristian states not destroyed by the vials of God's wrath; (see ^{411B} Revelation 11:13):

shall know that I the Lord build the ruined places, and plant that that was desolate; this work of rebuilding Jerusalem, and other cities of Judea, and planting desolate places with trees, and all manner of corn and herbage for man and beast, as well as of building up and planting churches, will appear so manifestly the work of God, and not of men; which is brought about by his wonderful providence, or more surprising grace; that even the Heathen round about will take notice of it, and own and acknowledge it to be the Lord's work:

I the Lord have spoken it, and I will do it; he has spoken of it by his prophets; he has promised it in his word, and he will surely do it; for he is true and faithful to his promises, and able to perform.

Ver. 37. *Thus saith the Lord God, I will yet for this be inquired of by the house of Israel, &c.*] Besought and prayed unto for the accomplishment of the above promises, as well as what follows: for though God has promised and will perform, yet he expects that his people will apply to him for it; it is our duty to put the Lord in mind of his promises, to plead them with him, and pray unto him for the fulfilment of them. The Syriac version is, "even for this I seek Israel"; and so the Arabic version; as if the sense was, that the Lord will seek the people of Israel wherever they are, and find them out, and call them by his grace, and gather them out of all countries, and bring them into their own land: "to do it for them"; everything before promised, and what next follows:

I will increase them with men like a flock; as a flock of sheep is increased, which is a very increasing creature: or, “as a flock of men”^{f611}; it signifies that the people of the Jews will be very numerous at their conversion; (see ^{<3010>}Hosea 1:10).

Ver. 38. *As the holy flock, as the flock of Jerusalem in her solemn feasts,* &c.] Like flocks of sheep, which were consecrated and set apart for holy uses, for sacrifices; even like the flocks of sheep, which were brought to Jerusalem to be offered in sacrifice at the three solemn festivals in the year; especially at the passover, when the Jews came from all parts of the country to slay and eat their passover; and every family had a lamb, which in all must be a great number: we read of thirty thousand lambs and three thousand bullocks given at one time for this service by King Josiah, besides what was given by the princes, (^{<4430>}2 Chronicles 35:7-9). The Targum is,

“as the holy people, as a people that is cleansed, and comes to Jerusalem at the feasts of the passover:”

or, “as the flock of the Holy Ones”^{f612}; either of the holy God, Father, Son, and Spirit; or of holy men, who are made holy or sanctified by the Spirit of God:

so shall the waste cities be filled with flocks of men; or with men that are like sheep for meekness, harmless, patience, cleanness, society, and usefulness; and not with such as are comparable to unclean beasts, or beasts of prey; so it denotes both the quantity of persons that shall inhabit Judea, and dwelt both in the cities and churches there, and the quality of them.