

CHAPTER 6

INTRODUCTION TO ISAIAH 6

This chapter contains a vision of the glory and majesty of Christ, the mission and commission of the prophet, and the destruction of the Jews. In the vision may be observed the time of it, and the object seen; who is described by the throne on which he sat, (^{236b}Isaiah 6:1) and by his ministers about him; and these, by their name, by their situation, by their wings and the use of them, and by their employment, (^{236b}Isaiah 6:2,3) and by the effects their crying to one another had upon the place where they were, (^{236b}Isaiah 6:4) and next follows the effect the whole vision had on the prophet, which threw him into great distress of mind; and the relief he had by one of the seraphim, and the manner of it, (^{236b}Isaiah 6:6,7) upon which a question being put, concerning sending some person, the prophet makes answer, expressing his readiness to go, (^{236b}Isaiah 6:8) when a commission is given him, and the message he is sent with is declared, (^{236b}Isaiah 6:9,10) whereupon he asks how long it would be the case of the Jews mentioned in the message he was sent with; and he is told it would continue until the utter destruction of them, (^{236b}Isaiah 6:11,12) and yet, for the comfort of him and other saints, it is intimated that there would be a remnant among them, according to the election of grace, (^{236b}Isaiah 6:13).

Ver. 1. *In the year that King Uzziah died, &c.]* Which was the fifty second year of his reign, and in the year 3246 from the creation of the world; and, according to Jerom^{f108}, was the year in which Romulus, the founder of the Roman empire, was born: some understand this not of his proper death, but of his being stricken with leprosy, upon his attempt to burn incense in the temple; upon which he was shut up in a separate house, which was a kind of a civil death: so the Targum,

“in the year in which King Uzziah was smitten;”

that is, with leprosy; and so Jarchi and others interpret it, from the ancient writers; but the first sense is the best. Some, as Aben Ezra, would have this to be the beginning of the prophecy of Isaiah, because of the mission of the prophet in it; but others rightly observe, that this mission respects not the

prophecy in general, but the particular reproof the prophet was sent to give to the Jews herein mentioned. The title of this chapter, in the Arabic version, is remarkable; according to which, this chapter contains the vision which Isaiah, the son of Amos, saw three years, or, as others affirm, thirty years, after prophecy was taken from him. He had prophesied about ten years before this, in the reign of Uzziah; and only this vision was in the reign of Jotham; the next prophecy was delivered out in the reign of Ahaz, (²⁰⁰⁰Isaiah 7:1) and others in the time of Hezekiah; and the date of this vision is only mentioned, to observe the order of the visions, agreeably to (²⁰⁰⁰Isaiah 1:1) and moreover it may be observed from hence, that kings must die as well as others; but the King of kings ever lives, he is the living God, and the everlasting King, as follows:

I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; not God essentially considered, whose essence is not to be seen; but personally, Father, Son, and Spirit, for all the three Persons appear in this vision, (²⁰⁰⁰Isaiah 6:3,8) particularly Christ, as, is clear from (⁴⁰²⁴John 12:41) who is the “Adonai”, or Lord; he is Lord of all, of all men, even of the greatest among them, and of all the angels in heaven, and of the church of God, by his Father’s gift, by his own purchase, in right of marriage, and through the conquest of his grace. This sight was not corporeal, but with the eyes of the understanding, in the vision of prophecy; and to have a sight of Christ as the Lord, and especially as our Lord, is very delightful and comfortable; for though he is a sovereign Lord, he is no tyrannical one, is very powerful to protect and defend, and has all fulness for supply; and particularly as “sitting upon a throne” as a king, for he having done his work as a priest, sits down on his throne as a king; and a lovely sight it is to see him enthroned at the right hand of the Majesty on high; and therefore is said to be “high and lifted up”; for this is to be understood not of his throne, as if that was high and lifted up in the highest heavens, as the Targum paraphrases it; but of himself, who is high and exalted above all creatures, as Aben Ezra observes; and this sense the accents determine for: the vision refers to the exaltation of Christ, after his humiliation here on earth; and to behold him crowned with glory and honour is very delightful, since he is exalted as our head and representative in our nature, and acts for us in this his exalted state; and we may be assured of being exalted also. It follows,

and his train filled the temple; either the material temple visionally seen, where his feet were, and his throne in heaven, as Jarchi interprets it; or heaven, as Kimchi, which is the Lord’s holy temple, where his throne is,

(^{<3104>}Psalm 11:4) or rather the human nature of Christ, the temple where the fulness of the Godhead dwells bodily, and which the train of divine perfections fill; though it may be best of all to understand it of the church, the temple of the living God; and “his train” may denote the effects of Christ’s kingly and priestly offices, with which the Church was filled upon his exaltation; as the gifts and graces of his Spirit in an extraordinary manner on the day of Pentecost, and since in a more ordinary way; whereby men have been made ministers of the New Testament, and churches filled with them, and these made useful in filling the churches with members. The Targum is,

“and the temple was filled with the splendour of his glory;”

the “train” is the skirts, borders, or lower parts of the garments, in allusion to those of a king, or rather of the high priest, a type of Christ.

Ver. 2. *Above it stood the seraphims, &c.*] Not above the temple, nor above the throne, much less above him that sat upon it, but either “by him”, on the right hand and on the left, as Aben Ezra; or “near him”, as Kimchi and Ben Melech; or “before him”, as the Targum; or “round about him”, as the Septuagint; all which denote the ministering form in which they stood; by whom are meant, not the Son and Spirit, as some of the ancients thought, who imagined the Father to be the Person sitting on the throne; nor the two Testaments, as Jerom; nor angels, which is the common interpretation; but ministers of the Gospel, the same with the four beasts in (^{<4006>}Revelation 4:6) and the four living creatures in (^{<3005>}Ezekiel 1:5) the Jewish commentators in general agree that these are the same with Ezekiel’s living creatures; so Jarchi, Aben Ezra, and Kimchi; and the first of these cites the Midrash Agada, as saying this is the Mercavah, which is the name they give to Ezekiel’s vision of the living creatures and wheels; and this appears by their name “seraphim”, which signifies “burning”, and so Ezekiel’s living creatures are said to be “like burning coals of fire”, (^{<3013>}Ezekiel 1:13) and the ministers of the Gospel are so called, because of their ministerial gifts, compared to fire, as the gifts of the spirit of God are, especially those which the apostles had bestowed on them, who were baptized with the Holy Spirit and fire, (^{<4011>}Matthew 3:11 ^{<4005>}Acts 1:5 2:3) and even the ordinary gifts of the spirit are signified by the same figure, (^{<5005>}1 Timothy 1:6 ^{<3159>}1 Thessalonians 5:19) and because of their light, which they have in the truths of the Gospel; and because of their fervent and ardent love to Christ and immortal souls; and because of their flaming

zeal for his cause and interest: and this also appears by their situation near the throne, (see ^{<3025>}Ezekiel 1:26 ^{<6046>}Revelation 4:6) and Christ on it; where they stand as servants waiting upon him, and in order to receive from him, and where they enjoy communion with him; or “above” it may mean the temple, the church, where they stand in the highest place in it, and are over others in the Lord; they stand as servants to Christ, but preside in the church as the rulers and governors of it; to which agrees the Targum,

“holy ministers on high before him:”

and this further appears by their wings,

each one had six wings; as Ezekiel’s living creatures, (^{<3004>}Ezekiel 1:4,11,23) and John’s four beasts, (^{<6048>}Revelation 4:8):

with twain he covered his face; that it might not be seen, as the Targum adds; expressive of their modesty and humility, looking, upon themselves as less than the least of all the saints, and the chief of sinners, and as ashamed of themselves before the Lord; or that they might not look upon the divine Majesty, as Jarchi; or rather as being unable to look upon the dazzling glory and infinite perfections of his being; so Elijah wrapped his face in a mantle, when he heard the still small voice of the Lord, (^{<1192>}1 Kings 19:12,13) and as Moses before him did, (^{<0086>}Exodus 3:6) being afraid to look upon God, conscious of creature distance, and of sinfulness and unworthiness; and therefore not so suitable to angels, who always beheld the face of God, (^{<0880>}Matthew 18:10):

with twain he covered his feet; or body, that it might not be seen, as the Targum; as conscious of the imperfection of their conduct, walk, and conversation, as ministers and Christians, in the sight of God, however beautiful their feet may appear to others, (^{<2507>}Isaiah 52:7):

and with twain he did fly: or minister, as the Targum; this denotes their readiness and swiftness in preaching the everlasting Gospel, running to and fro with it, having their feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace: (see ^{<6046>}Revelation 14:6 ^{<0065>}Ephesians 6:15).

Ver. 3. *And one cried unto another*, &c.] This denotes the publicness of their ministry, and their harmony and unity in it; they answered to one another, and agreed in what they said; their preaching was not yea and nay, (^{<4019>}2 Corinthians 1:19):

and said, holy, holy, holy [is] the Lord of hosts; this expresses the subject matter of the Gospel ministry, respecting the holiness of God; all the doctrines of the Gospel are pure and holy, and have a tendency to promote holiness of heart and life, and are agreeable to the holiness of God, and in them the holiness of God in each of the divine Persons is declared; particularly the Gospel ministry affirms that there is one God, who is the Lord of hosts, of armies above and below, of angels and men; that there are three Persons in the Godhead, Father, Son, and Spirit; and that each of these three are glorious in holiness; there is the Holy Father, and the Holy Son, and the Holy Ghost, and the holiness of them is displayed in each of the doctrines of grace: the holiness of the Father appears in the choice of persons to eternal life, through sanctification of the Spirit; in the covenant of grace, which provides for the holiness of covenant ones; and in the justification of his people through Christ, and redemption by him, whereby the honour of his justice and holiness is secured: the holiness of the Son appears in his incarnation and life; in redemption from sin by him, and in satisfying for it, and justifying from it: and the holiness of the Spirit is seen in the doctrines of regeneration and sanctification, ascribed unto him.

The whole earth [is] full of his glory; as it was when Christ dwelt in it, wrought his miracles, and manifested forth his glory, and when his Gospel was preached everywhere by his apostles; and as it will be, more especially in the latter day, when it will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord; when the kingdoms of this world will become his, and his kingdom will be everywhere, even from sea to sea, and from the rivers to the ends of the earth; and this is what Gospel ministers declare will be: or “the fulness of the whole earth is his glory”^{f109}; the earth is his, and all that is in it, and all declare his glory; (see ^{<648>}Revelation 4:8).

Ver. 4. *And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried,* &c.] That is, the posts of the door of the temple, as the Targum adds, where this vision was seen, as represented to the prophet. Some think this respects the earthquake in Uzziah’s time, mentioned in (^{<3845>}Zechariah 14:5 ^{<300>}Amos 1:1) and which they suppose was at the time he attempted to offer incense, and was smitten with leprosy; but, as Kimchi observes, this moving of the door posts was only in the vision of prophecy, and not in reality; this shaking therefore may denote either the shaking and removing of the temple service and worship, at the death of Christ, and through the preaching of the Gospel; or rather the shaking of the consciences of men by the word, which made them cry out, what shall we do to be saved?

And the house was filled with smoke; this was a token either of the burning of the temple, or of the anger of God against the Jews, (^{<B988>}Psalm 18:8) or of their superstition and will worship, the cause of it, (^{<B901>}Revelation 9:1) or of the judicial blindness and darkness they were given up unto, (^{<2969>}Isaiah 6:9,10) or rather of the presence of God in his church, and with his ministers, (^{<B008>}Exodus 40:3,4 ^{<1080>}1 Kings 8:10) the allusion may be to the cloud of incense that covered the mercy seat, on the day of atonement, (^{<B163>}Leviticus 16:13) the passage is cited on this account in the Talmud^{f110}.

Ver. 5. *Then said I, woe [is] me, &c.*] There's no woe to a good man, all woes are to the wicked; but a good man may think himself wretched and miserable, partly on account of his own corruptions, the body of sin and death he carries about with him; and partly on account of wicked men, among whom he dwells, (^{<B124>}Romans 7:24 ^{<B005>}Psalm 120:5):

for I am undone; a good man cannot be undone, or be lost and perish; he is lost in Adam with the rest; in effectual calling he is made sensible of his lost and undone state; and under the power of unbelief may write bitter things against himself; but he can never perish, or be lost and undone for ever. The Targum is,

“for I have sinned;”

and his particular sin is after mentioned: some^{f111} render it, “for I have been silent”; as if he had not performed the duty of his office, in reproof for sin, or declaring the will of God: others^{f112}, “for I am reduced to silence”, I am forced to be silent; he could not join with the “seraphim”, being conscious to himself of his vileness, and of his unworthiness to take the holy name of God into his polluted lips, as follows:

because I [am] a man of unclean lips; he says nothing of the uncleanness of his heart, nor of his actions; not that he was free from such impurity; but only of his lips, because it was the sin of his office that lay upon his mind, and gave him present uneasiness; there is no man but offends in words, and of all men persons in public office should be careful of what they say; godly ministers are conscious of many failings in their ministry. The Targum is,

“because I am a sinful man to reprove;”

and so unfit for it.

And I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; such were the Jews, not only in Isaiah's time, but in the times of Christ and his apostles, who traduced him, as if he was a wicked person, calumniated his miracles, said he was a Samaritan, and had a devil; they taught for doctrines the commandments of men, and opposed and blasphemed the truths of the Gospel; and to live among men of a filthy speech and conversation is a concern to a good man; he is vexed and distressed hereby; he is in danger of learning their words, and of suffering with them in a common calamity.

For mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts; the same divine and glorious Person described in (²⁰⁰¹Isaiah 6:1) who is no other than the Lord Christ, King of kings, and Lord of lords, King of saints, and Lord of the armies, in heaven and in earth; and a lovely sight it is to see him by faith, in the glory and beauty of his person, and in the fulness of his grace; such a sight is spiritual, saving, assimilating, appropriating, very endearing, and very glorious and delightful: wherefore it may seem strange that a sight of Christ should fill the prophet with dread; one would think he should rather have said, happy man that I am, because I have seen this glorious Person, whom to see and know is life eternal; but the reason of it is, because in this view of Christ he saw the impurity of himself, and was out of conceit with himself, and therefore cries out in the manner he does; just as in a sunbeam a man beholds those innumerable motes and atoms, which before were invisible to him. It was not because of his sight of Christ he reckoned himself undone; but because of the impurity of himself, and those among whom he dwelt, which he had a view of through his sight of Christ: his sight of Christ is given as a reason of his view of his impurity, and his impurity as the reason of his being undone in his apprehension of things. The prophet, in these his circumstances, represents a sensible sinner, under a sight and sense of his sinfulness and vileness; as the seraph in the following verses represents a Gospel minister bringing the good news of pardon, by the blood and sacrifice of Christ.

Ver. 6. *Then flew one of the seraphim unto me, &c.]* When the prophet had confessed his sin; for upon that follows the application of pardon; and when the seraph, or minister of the Gospel, had an order from the Lord to publish the doctrine of it: it is God's act alone to forgive sin; it is the work of his ministers to preach forgiveness of sin, and that to sensible sinners; who when they are made sensible of sin, and distressed with it, the Lord takes notice of them, and sends messengers to them, to comfort them, by acquainting them that their iniquity is forgiven; who go on such an errand

cheerfully and swiftly; and though they do not know the particular person, yet the Lord directs their ministration to him, and makes it effectual.

Having a live coal in his hand: by which is meant the word of God, comparable to fire, and to a burning coal of fire, (³²³Jeremiah 23:29) for the light and heat which it gives both to saints and sinners, and for its purity and purifying nature:

[which] he had taken with the tongs from off the altar; of burnt offering, where the fire was always burning; which was a type of Christ, and his sacrifice; and this shows what particular doctrine of the word it was the seraph or Gospel minister took, and delivered in this visionary way; it was the doctrine of pardon, founded upon the sacrifice and satisfaction of Christ. To this sense of the words the Targum agrees, which paraphrases them thus,

“and there flew to me one of the ministers, and in his mouth a word which he received from his Shechinah, upon the throne of glory, in the highest heavens, above the altar,”

(see ⁶⁴⁶Revelation 14:6).

Ver. 7. *And he laid [it] upon my mouth,* &c.] Because he had complained of the impurity of his lips, and that his mouth might take in by faith this comfortable doctrine of pardon, and it might be filled with praise and thankfulness; it denotes the ministration of the Gospel, as a means of the application of pardoning grace:

and said, lo, this hath touched thy lips; this coal, as a symbol of the word; the particle “lo”, or “behold”, is prefixed to this declaration, as requiring attention to a matter of importance, and as expressing something wonderful, and declaring something sure and certain; all which the pardon of sin is, and which is spoken of without a figure in the next words:

and thine iniquity is taken away: which was abominable in his sight; a burden to him, and the cause of his distress; even all his iniquity, and particularly the iniquity of his lips he had been mourning over, and confessing; this was taken away, as by the sacrifice of Christ, from the sight of God, so from his own conscience, by the application of pardon:

and thy sin purged; or “atoned for”, or “covered”^{f113}; which is done meritoriously, only by the blood and sacrifice of Christ; and in a way of

application by the Spirit of God, through a promise, and by the ministry of the word; which latter is here meant. The Targum is,

“and he disposed “it” in my mouth; and said, lo, I have put the words of my prophecy in thy mouth, and thine iniquities are removed, and thy sins are expiated, or forgiven.”

Ver. 8. *Also I heard the voice of the Lord, &c.*] The Targum renders it, the voice of the Word of the Lord, as if it was the second Person, the Word, that was heard speaking; but it seems rather to be the voice of the first Person, the Father:

saying, Whom shall I send? to the people of Israel, to reprove them for their blindness and stupidity, and to threaten them, and foretell unto them their ruin and destruction; intimating that it was a difficult thing to pitch upon a proper person; and that there were but few that were fit to go on such an errand: this is spoken after the manner of men; otherwise the Lord knew whom to send, and whom he would send; and could easily qualify anyone he pleased, and send with such a message:

and who will go for us? not directing his discourse to the seraphim, as Aben Ezra and Kimchi; as if he consulted with them: for who of all the creatures is the Lord’s counsellor? but to the Son and Spirit, who it is certain were concerned in this mission; for the following words were said when Isaiah saw the glory of Christ, and spake of him, (^{<3124>}John 12:41) and they are expressly attributed to the Holy Ghost in (^{<4025>}Acts 28:25,26) the Septuagint and Arabic versions, instead of “for us”, read “unto this people”; and the Targum is,

“whom shall I send to prophesy? and who will go to teach?”

then said I, here [am] I, send me: for he who before thought himself undone, and unworthy to be employed in the service of God, now having a discovery and application of pardoning grace, freely offers himself to God: this shows the true nature and effect of an application of pardon; it gives a man freedom and boldness in the presence of God, and stimulates to a ready and cheerful obedience to his will, and engages him with the utmost alacrity in his service; so far is the doctrine of free and full pardon by the blood of Christ from being a licentious doctrine.

Ver. 9. *And he said, go, and tell this people, &c.*] What is and will be their case and condition, as follows:

hear ye indeed; the words of the prophets sent unto them, yea, Christ himself incarnate preaching among them; the great Prophet Moses said should be raised up unto them:

but understand not; neither that he is the Messiah, nor the doctrines delivered by him; which were spoken to them in parables; (see ^{<0313>}Matthew 13:13-15):

and see ye indeed: the miracles wrought by him, as raising the dead, cleansing the lepers, restoring sight to the blind, causing the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak:

but perceive not; that he is the Messiah, though all the characteristics pointed at in prophecy are upon him, and such miracles are done by him.

Ver. 10. *Make the heart of this people fat, &c.*] Gross and heavy, stupid and unteachable, hard and obdurate; which is sometimes done by the preaching of the Gospel, through the wickedness of man's heart, that being the savour of death unto death to some, just as the sun hardens the clay; or declare that their hearts are thus gross and stupid; or that I will give them up to a judicial hardness of heart:

and make their ears heavy: that they cannot hear the word, so as to understand it; they having stopped the ear, and plucked away the shoulder, it is in righteous judgment that they are given up to such an insensibility as not to be capable of hearing and understanding what is delivered in the ministry of the word:

and shut their eyes; they having wilfully shut their own eyes against all evidence of the Messiah, and the truth of his doctrines, they are given up to a judicial blindness; which still continues upon them, and will until the fulness of the Gentiles is brought in:

lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understated with their heart; though only in a notional way, the things relating to the Messiah, the truths of the Gospel, and the ordinances thereof, and what may belong to their outward peace:

and convert; or turn themselves by external repentance and reformation:

and be healed: or forgiven in such sense as to be preserved from national ruin; which God willed not; for seeing they went such great lengths in sin, in rejecting the Messiah, and his Gospel, they were given up to a reprobate

mind, to do things that were not convenient, that they might be destroyed; which destruction is after prophesied of.

Ver. 11. *Then said I, Lord, how long?* &c.] That is, how long will this blindness, hardness, stupidity, and impenitence, remain with this people, or they be under such a sore judgment of God upon them:

and he answered, until the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate; until there is not an inhabitant in the cities of Judea, nor in Jerusalem, the metropolis of the land, nor a single man in any house in them; which denotes the utter desolation of the land and city; and can refer to no other than to the desolation thereof by the Romans; and till that time the blindness which happened to them continued; the things which belonged to their peace were hid from their eyes till their city was destroyed, and not one stone left upon another, (~~Q19D~~ Luke 19:42-44) till that time, and even to this day, the veil of blindness, ignorance, and and penitence, is on their hearts, and will remain until they are converted to the Lord, in the latter day; (see ~~S12S~~ Romans 11:25,26) (~~A184~~ 2 Corinthians 3:14-16).

Ver. 12. *And the Lord have removed men far away,* &c.] Not to Babylon, but to the ends of the earth, into the most distant countries, by means of the Romans; for they were but instruments of carrying the Jews captive out of their own land, and dispersing them among the several nations of the world; it was the Lord's doing, and a judgment which he inflicted upon them for their sins:

and [there be] a great forsaking in the midst of the land; not that there should be many left in the land, and multiply and increase in it; which is the sense of the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and Arabic versions; but that the land should be greatly forsaken of men; there should be many places in the midst of the land destitute of them; and this should continue a long time, as Kimchi observes, which therefore cannot be understood of the Babylonish captivity, but of their present one.

Ver. 13. *But yet in it [shall be] a tenth,* &c.] Which some understand of ten kings that should reign over Judah from this time, the death of Uzziah, unto the captivity, as Jarchi and Aben Ezra observe; and which are, as Kimchi reckons them, as follows, Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah, Manasseh, Amon, Josiah, Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, Zedekiah; but the prophecy, as we have seen, respects not the captivity of the Jews in

Babylon, but their present one; wherefore the words are to be understood of a few persons, a remnant, according to the election of grace, that should be called, and saved amidst all the blindness, darkness, and destruction that should come upon that people; and may be illustrated by the words of the apostle in (^{<5105>}Romans 11:5) and these chosen, called, and saved ones, are the “tenth”, that is, the Lord’s tenth, as the words may be rendered^{f14}. To this sense the Targum agrees,

“and there shall be left in it righteous persons, one out of ten;”

though indeed the Christians were not left in Jerusalem when it was destroyed, but were called out of it just before, and were preserved from that ruin.

And [it] shall return, and shall be eaten; or “be for burning”. I should choose to render it, “it shall return, and be burnt”^{f15}; that is, it shall be burnt again; it was burnt a first time by Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and his army, (^{<2523>}Jeremiah 52:13) and a second time by Titus Vespasian, to which this prophecy refers:

as a teil tree, and as an oak, whose substance [is] in them, when they cast [their leaves]; the word “Beshallecheth”, which we render, “when they cast their leaves”, is by some, as Jarchi, Aben Ezra, and Kimchi observe, thought to be the name of a gate in Jerusalem, called “Shallecheth”, from which a causeway went towards the king’s palace, from whence it had its name, (^{<1336>}1 Chronicles 26:16) and along which causeway, as is supposed, were planted teil trees and oaks, which are here referred to. But the Targum, Jarchi, and Kimchi, interpret the word as we do, of casting their leaves: and the sense seems to be this; that as the teil tree and oak, when they cast their leaves in autumn, and look as if they were dry, withered, and dead, yet have a substance in them, and in spring appear alive and green, and flourishing again; so the Jews, notwithstanding their miserable destruction by the Romans, when they were stripped of all their riches and glory, yet were not utterly consumed as a people, but remained an entire distinct people, and do so to this day, among the nations of the world; though, like a dry withered trunk of a tree, without verdure or beauty; the reason of this follows:

so, or “because”,

the holy seed [shall be] the substance thereof; that is, they shall subsist, or continue a distinct people, though in this miserable condition; because

there is a “holy seed”, or a certain number, whom God has chosen to be holy, that is to arise from them, and will be called and converted in the latter day; hence they have a substance, a subsistence, and shall remain till that comes, and that chosen remnant is called and saved, (^{f1125}Romans 11:25,26). The Targum is,

“as the elm and oak, when their leaves fall, and are like to dry “trees”, and yet are moist to raise up seed from them; so the captivities of Israel shall be gathered, and shall return to their land; for the seed which is holy is their plantation.”

Some, interpreting the passage of the Babylonish captivity, by the “holy seed” understand the Messiah. (see ^{f1135}Luke 1:35)^{f116}.