

CHAPTER 14

INTRODUCTION TO ISAIAH 14

This chapter contains prophecies of the restoration of the Jews, of the fall of the king of Babylon, and the destruction of the Assyrian empire, and of the ruin of Palestine. The moving cause of the restoration of the Jews, and their settlement in their own land, is the distinguishing mercy of God towards them; the accomplishment of it, proselytes joined unto them; the means, people of other nations, who should bring them into it, and whom they should possess and rule over; and the consequence of it, rest from sorrow, fear, and hard bondage, (^{2340b}Isaiah 14:1-3) upon which they are introduced as taking up a proverb, or a triumphant song, concerning the king of Babylon, wondering at his fall, and ascribing it to the Lord, (^{2340b}Isaiah 14:4,5) representing the inhabitants of the earth, and great men of it, as at peace, and rest, and rejoicing, who before were continually disturbed, and smitten by him, (^{2340b}Isaiah 14:6-8) introducing the dead, and those in hell, meeting him, and welcoming him into their regions, with taunts and jeers; upbraiding him with his weakness, shame, and disgrace he was come into; putting him in mind of his former pomp and splendour, pride, arrogance, and haughtiness, (^{2340b}Isaiah 14:9-15) spectators are brought in, as amazed at the low, mean, and despicable condition he was brought into, considering what he had done in the world, in kingdoms and cities, but was now denied a burial, when other kings lay in their pompous sepulchres, (^{2340b}Isaiah 14:16-20) and then it is foretold that that whole royal family should be cut off, and Babylon, the metropolis of his kingdom, should be utterly destroyed, (^{2340b}Isaiah 14:21-23) all which was settled and fixed by the purpose of God, which could not be made void, (^{2340b}Isaiah 14:24-27) and next follows a prophecy of the destruction of Palestine; the date of the prophecy is given (^{2340b}Isaiah 14:28) the inhabitants of Palestine are bid not to rejoice at the death of one of the kings of Judah, since another should arise, who would be fatal to them, (^{2340b}Isaiah 14:29) and while the Jews would be in safety, they would be destroyed by famine and war, (^{2340b}Isaiah 14:30,31) from all which it would appear, and it might be told the messengers of the nations, or any inquiring persons, that Zion is of

the Lord's founding, and under his care and protection, and that his people have great reason and encouragement to trust in him, (~~234B~~ Isaiah 14:32).

Ver. 1. *For the Lord will have mercy on Jacob, will yet choose Israel,* &c.] While the Jews were in captivity, the Lord seemed to have no pity for them, or compassion on them, and it looked as if he had rejected them, and wholly cast them off; but by delivering them from thence, he showed that he had a merciful regard unto them, and made it to appear that they were his chosen people, and beloved by him: and this is a reason why Babylon should be destroyed, and her destruction be no longer deferred, because the Lord's heart of compassion yearned towards his own people, so that his mercy to them brought ruin upon others: a choice of persons to everlasting salvation, though it is not made in time, but before the foundation of the world, yet is made to appear by the effectual calling, which therefore is sometimes expressed by choosing, (~~41D~~ 1 Corinthians 1:26,27) and is the fruit and effect of sovereign grace and mercy, and may be intended here; the words may be rendered, "and will yet choose in Israel",^{f262}, some from among them; that is, have mercy on them, and call them by his grace, and so show them to be a remnant, according to the election of grace; and such a chosen remnant there was among them in the times of Christ, and his apostles, by which it appeared that the Lord had not cast off the people whom he foreknew:

and set them in their own land: or "cause them to rest upon their own land",^{f263}; for the word not only denotes settlement and continuance, but rest, which they had not in Babylon; but now should have, when brought into their own land; and no doubt but reference is had to the original character of the land of Canaan, as a land of rest; and hither shall the Jews be brought again, and be settled when mystical Babylon is destroyed:

and the stranger shall be joined with them, and they shall cleave to the house of Jacob; by which is meant, that proselytes should be made to the Jewish religion, who should be admitted into their church state, as well as into their commonwealth, and should abide faithful to the profession they made; which doubtless was fulfilled in part at the time of the Jews' return from the Babylonish captivity, when many, who had embraced their religion, cleaved to them, and would not leave them, but went along with them into their land, that they might join with them in religious worship there; but had a greater accomplishment in Gospel times, when Gentiles were incorporated into the same Gospel church state with the believing

Jews, and became fellow heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of the same promises and privileges; and so Kimchi and Ben Melech apply this to the times of the Messiah; and Jarchi to time to come, when Israel should be redeemed with a perfect redemption: because from the word translated “cleave” is derived another, which signifies a scab; hence the Jews^{f264} have a saying,

“proselytes are grievous to Israel as a scab.”

Ver. 2. *And the people shall take them, and bring them to their place,* &c.] That is, the people among whom the Jews dwelt in Babylon, who had a kindness for them, and especially such of them as were proselyted to their religion should attend them in their journey home, and supply them with all necessaries for provision and carriage, as they were allowed to do by the edict of Cyrus, (^{<15004>}Ezra 1:4) and this will have a further accomplishment in the latter day, when the Gentiles shall bring their sons and daughters in their arms, and on their shoulders, and on horses, and in chariots, to Jerusalem, (^{<2342>}Isaiah 49:21) (^{<2360>}Isaiah 66:20) which last passage Kimchi refers to, as explanative of this:

and the house of Israel shall possess them in the land of the Lord, for servants and handmaids; by the “land of the Lord” is meant the land of Israel, which was peculiarly his; for though the whole earth is his, yet he chose this above all others for the place of his worship, under the former dispensation; and where his son, in the fulness of time, should appear in human nature, preach the Gospel, perform miracles, and work out the salvation of his people; and where his feet shall stand at the latter day, when he comes to judge the world; this is the same with Immanuel’s land, (^{<2388>}Isaiah 8:8) hither many of the Chaldeans coming along with the Jews, and having embraced their religion, chose rather to be servants and handmaids to them, than to return to their own land, and who were a kind of inheritance or possession to the Jews; though some think that these were such as they bought of the Babylonians, that came with them to be their servants, and not they themselves. It may be understood of Gentile converts in Gospel times, who would willingly and cheerfully engage in the service of the church of God, and by love serve his people, and one another. Kimchi explains this clause by (^{<2305>}Isaiah 61:5):

and they shall take them captives, whose captives they were; and they shall rule over their oppressors: that is, the Babylonians, who had carried the Jews captive, should be taken captives by them, and made slaves of;

which might be true of those they bought of them, when they returned to their own land; or, as some think, this had its accomplishment in the times of the Maccabees, when they conquered many people, who before had carried them captive, and oppressed them; and in a spiritual and mystical sense has been fulfilled in the times of the Gospel, through the spread of it in the Gentile world, by the ministry of the apostles, who were Jews; by which means many of the nations of the world were brought to the obedience of Christ and his church.

Ver. 3. *And it shall come to pass in the day that the Lord shall give thee rest from thy sorrow, &c.*] In captivity, and on account of that, being out of their own land, deprived of the free exercise of their religion, and at a distance from the house of God, and continually hearing the reproaches and blaspheming of the enemy, and seeing their idolatrous practices, and their ungodly conversation; all which must create sorrow of heart to the sincere lovers and worshippers of God:

and from thy fear; of worse evils, most cruel usage, and death itself, under the terror of which they lived:

and from the hard bondage wherein thou wast made to serve; as before in Egypt, so now in Babylon; but what that was is not particularly expressed anywhere, as the former is, (see ^{<00113>}Exodus 1:13,14) and when they had rest from all this in their own land, then they should do as follows:

Ver. 4. *That thou shall take up this proverb against the king of Babylon, &c.*] Or “concerning” him, his fall, and the fall of the Babylonish monarchy with him; if we understand this of any particular king of Babylon, it seems best not to interpret it of Nebuchadnezzar, whom Jerom mentions, in whom the empire was in its greatest glory: but of Belshazzar, in whom it ended; the king of Babylon may be here considered as a type of antichrist, and what is said of the one may be applied to the other: the “proverb” or “parable” taken up into the mouth, and expressed concerning him, signifies a sharp and acute speech, a taunting one, full of ironies and sarcasms, and biting expressions, as the following one is. The Septuagint render it, a “lamentation”; and the Arabic version, a “mournful song”; but as this was to be taken up by the church and people of God, concerning their great enemy, whose destruction is here described, it may rather be called a triumphant song, rejoicing at his ruin, and insulting over him:

and say, how hath the oppressor ceased! he who oppressed us, and other nations, exacted tribute of us, and of others, and made us to serve with hard bondage, how is he come to nothing? by what means is he brought to ruin; by whom is this accomplished? who has been the author of it, and by whom effected? this is said as wondering how it should be brought about, and rejoicing that so it was:

the golden city ceased! the city of Babylon, full of gold, drawn thither from the various parts of the world, called a golden cup, (^{<3510>}Jeremiah 51:7) and the Babylonish monarchy, in the times of Nebuchadnezzar, was signified by a golden head, (^{<2122>}Daniel 2:32,38) so mystical Babylon, or the Romish antichrist, is represented as decked with gold, and having a golden cup in her hand; and as a city abounding with gold, (^{<6674>}Revelation 17:4 18:16). The word here used is a Chaldee or Syriac word ^{f265}, and perhaps is what was used by themselves, and is the name by which they called this city, and is now tauntingly returned; the word city is not in the text, but supplied. Some render “tribute”^{f266}, a golden pension, a tribute of gold, which was exacted of the nations in subjection, but now ceased; and when that tyrant and oppressor, the Romish antichrist, shall cease that tribute which he exacts of the nations of the earth will cease also, as tithes, first fruits, annates, Peter’s pence, &c.

Ver. 5. *The Lord hath broken the staff of the wicked, &c.*] This is an answer to the above question, how the exactor and his tribute came to cease; this was not by man, but by the Lord himself; for though he made use of Cyrus, the work was his own, he broke the power of the wicked kings of Babylon:

[and] the sceptre of the rulers; that were under the king of Babylon; or of the several kings themselves, Nebuchadnezzar, Evilmerodach, and Belshazzar; so Kimchi interprets it. This may be applied to the kingdom of antichrist, and the antichristian states, which shall be broken to shivers as a potter’s vessel by Christ, the King of kings, and Lord of lords, (^{<6177>}Revelation 2:27 19:15,16). The “staff” and “sceptre” are emblems of power and government; and “breaking” them signifies the utter destruction and cessation of authority and dominion.

Ver. 6. *He who smote the people in wrath with a continual stroke, &c.*] The king of Babylon, who made war with the people and nations of the earth, and conquered them, smote them with the edge of the sword to gratify his passions, and satiate his bloodthirsty mind; and those that were

spared, he ruled with rigour, and oppressed them with tribute and hard bondage; and, when he had conquered one nation, attacked another, and so went on pursuing his victories without intermission, giving no respite neither to his army, nor to the people:

he that ruled the nations in anger; not with justice and clemency, but in a tyrannical and oppressive way, even his own nation, as well as the nations whom he subdued:

is persecuted; is, pursued by the justice of God, overtaken and seized, and brought to condign punishment;

[and] none hindereth; the execution of the righteous judgment upon him; none of the neighbouring kings and nations, either tributary to him, or in alliance with him, give him the least help or assistance, or attempt to ward off the blow upon him, given him, under the direction and appointment of God, by Cyrus the Persian. So the Romish antichrist, who has made war with the saints, and has smitten them with the sword, and gone on to do so without any intermission for ages together, and has tyrannised over them in a most cruel manner, he shall be persecuted, and taken, and brought to his end, and there shall be none to help him; (see ^{<6611>}Revelation 13:7,10 ^{<7145>}Daniel 11:45).

Ver. 7. *The whole earth is at rest, [and] is quiet, &c.*] The troubler of them being gone; and which will be the ease of the people of God, who in the latter day will fill the face of the earth, when the beast and false prophet will be taken and cast alive into the lake of fire; and especially when Satan shall be bound, and put in prison for a thousand years, that he may deceive the nations no more, (^{<6619>}Revelation 19:20) (^{<6620>}Revelation 20:2,3):

they break forth into singing; that is, the inhabitants of the earth, because of the fall of the king of Babylon, they being delivered from so great a tyrant or oppressor; or, “utter a song of praise”, as the Targum, Aben Ezra says the word in the Arabic language is expressive of “clearness”, and so it does signify to speak purely, dearly, and fluently, with open, mouth, and a clear voice^{f267}; it is rendered in (^{<1398>}Psalms 98:4) “make a loud noise”; by singing a joyful song; and such a song will be sung by the church, when the mystical Babylon is fallen; (see ^{<6615>}Revelation 15:2,3 19:1,2).

Ver. 8. *Yea, the fir trees rejoice at thee, [and] the cedars of Lebanon, &c.*] Which by, a prosopopoeia are represented as singing and rejoicing, as inanimate creatures often are in Scripture, these being now in no danger of

being cut down, to make way for his armies; (see ²³⁷³Isaiah 37:34) or to furnish him with timber for shipping, or building of houses: or else these words are to be understood metaphorically of kings and princes of the earth, comparable to such trees, for their height, strength, and substance; (see ³¹¹²Zechariah 11:2) who would now be no longer in fear of him, or in subjection to him. So the Targum,

“the rulers also rejoiced over thee, the rich in substance said;”

not only the common people, the inhabitants of the earth, as before, but the princes of it rejoiced at his ruin; and so will the kings of the earth rejoice at the destruction of the whore of Rome, when they shall hate her, eat her flesh, and burn her with fire; though others, that have committed fornication with her, will lament her case, (⁶⁷⁶Revelation 17:16 18:9):

[saying], since thou art, laid down; or “art asleep”^{f268}; that is, dead; it being usual in the eastern nations to express death by sleep:

no feller is come up against us; or “cutter of wood”, to whom the king of Babylon is compared, for cutting down nations, and bringing them into subjection to him, in whose heart it was to destroy and cut off nations, not a few; being as an axe in the hand of the Lord, whereby trees, large and high, were cut down; (see ²³⁰⁵Isaiah 10:5,7,15) but now, since this feller of wood was gone, the axe was laid aside, and broke to pieces, there was none to give the nations any disturbance; and so it will be when antichrist is destroyed, there will be no more persecution of the church and people of God.

Ver. 9. *Hell from beneath is moved for thee,* &c.] Or the “grave”, or the place and state of the dead, and particularly of the damned, meaning those that are in such a place and state; and the sense is, that not only the inhabitants of the earth, and the trees upon it, express their joy at the fall of the king of Babylon, but those that are under the earth, in the grave, or in hell, are affected with it, and moved on account of it, not with fear and dread, as they were in his and their life time, as Kimchi suggests; but they are represented as in motion, and that as attended with a great noise, because of the multitude of them, upon hearing of his death, and his entrance into the regions of the dead:

to meet [thee] at thy coming: as kings used to be met when they, and as he used to be when he, entered into any city that was taken, to salute him, and

congratulate him upon his entrance into the dark regions of death, the grave, and hell; a biting sarcasm:

it stirreth up the dead for thee; the dead that are in it, in hell or the grave; not to oppose him, but to welcome him into their parts, as being now one of them, and to be joined to their company; hell or the grave is said to rouse them, as if they were asleep, and took no notice of the death of so great a monarch, who was just making his public entry among them. The word “Rephaim”, here used, is sometimes rendered “giants”, as in (^(R11)Deuteronomy 2:11,20) and Jarchi interprets it of the Anakim; and so the Targum,

“it raiseth up unto thee mighty men;”

for not the common people among the dead, but the princes and great ones of the earth, whom the Babylonian monarch had subdued and slain, and to whom he was well known, are intended, as appears by what follows:

[even] all the chief ones of the earth; or the “great goats”; the leaders and commanders of the people, who, as goats go before and lead the flock, so they the people. The Targum calls them

“all the rich in substance;”

who were persons of wealth, power, and authority, when on earth:

it hath raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations; to offer in a jeering manner their thrones to him, who had been obliged, in their life time and his, to surrender to him their crowns, and thrones, and kingdoms; but by their thrones here are meant their sepulchres, built, as many of them were, in great pomp and splendour; for kings at death have no other thrones but their graves. Aben Ezra says, it was the custom of the Babylonians to set thrones in the sepulchres of their kings.

Ver. 10. *All they shall speak, and say unto thee*, &c.] So they would say, could they speak, and are here represented as if they did:

art thou become also weak as we? who had been more powerful than they, had been too many for them, and had subdued them, and ruled over them, and was not only looked upon as invincible but as immortal, yea, as a deity; and yet now was become “sick”, as the word^{f269} signifies, or by sickness brought to death, and by death enfeebled and rendered weak and without

strength, stripped of all natural strength, as well as of all civil power and authority:

art thou become like unto us? who thought himself, and was flattered by others, that there were none like unto him; but now as the rest of the dead, and upon a level with them. So will it be with the Romish antichrist, who now exalts himself above all that is called God, and reigns over the kings of the earth, and shows himself as if he was God, and of whom his parasites say, “who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?” when he shall be consumed by Christ, and cast into the lake of fire with the devil and false prophet, he will be like the kings of the earth deceived by him, and the rest of the worshippers of him, and be as weak as they, (^{<5104>}2 Thessalonians 2:4,8 ^{<6104>}Revelation 13:4) (^{<6100>}Revelation 20:10).

Ver. 11. *Thy pomp is brought down to the grave, &c.]* Or “hell”; all the state and majesty in which he appeared, when sitting on the throne of his kingdom, with a glittering crown on his head, a sceptre in his hand, clad in the richest apparel, and attended by his princes and nobles with the utmost reverence and submission; all this, with much more, followed him to the regions of the dead, and there it left him; (see ^{<4917>}Psalm 49:17):

[and] the noise of thy viols; or musical instruments, even all of them, one being put for all; such as were used at festivals, and at times of joy and rejoicing, of which the Babylonians had many, and very probably were used at the feast by Belshazzar, when the city was taken, and he was slain; to which reference may be had in this place, (^{<2105>}Daniel 3:5 5:1,30) compare with this (^{<6106>}Revelation 18:16,22):

the worm is spread under thee, and the worms cover thee; who used to have rich carpets spread for him to tread upon, and stately canopies under which he sat, beds of down to lie upon, and the richest covering over him, and now, nothing but worms over him, and worms under him; or instead of being wrapped in gold and silk, and embalmed with the most precious spices, as the eastern kings used to be, he had not so much as a grave, but was cast out of that, as is after said, and so was liable to putrefaction, and to be covered with worms at once; worms in his bed, and worms in his bed clothes! (see ^{<8213>}Job 21:26).

Ver. 12. *How art thou fallen from heaven, &c.]* This is not to be understood of the fall of Satan, and the apostate angels, from their first estate, when they were cast down from heaven to hell, though there may be

an allusion to it; (see ^{<2108>}Luke 10:18) but the words are a continuation of the speech of the dead to the king of Babylon, wondering at it, as a thing almost incredible, that he who seemed to be so established on the throne of his kingdom, which was his heaven, that he should be deposed or fall from it. So the destruction of the Roman Pagan emperors is signified by the casting out of the dragon and his angels from heaven, (^{<6117>}Revelation 12:7-9) and in like manner Rome Papal, or the Romish antichrist, will fall from his heaven of outward splendour and happiness, of honour and authority, now, possessed by him:

O Lucifer, son of the morning! alluding to the star Venus, which is the phosphorus or morning star, which ushers in the light of the morning, and shows that day is at hand; by which is meant, not Satan, who is never in Scripture called Lucifer, though he was once an angel of light, and sometimes transforms himself into one, and the good angels are called morning stars, (^{<18307>}Job 38:7) and such he and his angels once were; but the king of Babylon is intended, whose royal glory and majesty, as outshining all the rest of the kings of the earth, is expressed by those names; and which perhaps were such as he took himself, or were given him by his courtiers. The Targum is,

“how art thou fallen from on high, who was shining among the sons of men, as the star Venus among the stars.”

Jarchi, as the Talmud^{f270}, applies it to Nebuchadnezzar; though, if any particular person is pointed at, Belshazzar is rather designed, the last of the kings of Babylon. The church of Rome, in the times of the apostles, was famous for its light and knowledge; its faith was spoken of throughout all the earth; and its bishops or pastors were bright stars, in the morning of the Gospel dispensation:

how art thou cut down to the ground; like a tall tree that is cut down, and laid along the ground, and can never rise and flourish more, to which sometimes great monarchs and monarchies are compared; (see ^{<2308>}Isaiah 10:18,19 ^{<2303>}Ezekiel 31:3 ^{<2040>}Daniel 4:10,22) and this denotes that the king of Babylon should die, not a natural, but a violent death, as Belshazzar did, with whom the Babylonish monarchy fell, and never rose more; and this is a representation of the sudden, violent, and irrecoverable ruin of the Romish antichrist, (^{<6121>}Revelation 18:21):

which didst weaken the nations! by subduing them, taking cities and towns, plundering the inhabitants of their substance, carrying them captive, or obliging them to a yearly tribute, by which means he weakened them, and kept them under. So the Romish antichrist has got the power over many nations of the earth, and has reigned over the kings of it, and by various methods has drained them of their wealth and riches, and so greatly enfeebled them; nay, they have of themselves given their power and strength unto the beast, (^{<6672>}Revelation 17:12,13,15,17,18). Several of the Jewish writers observe, that the word here used signifies to cast lots; and so it is used in the Misna^{f271}, and explained in the Talmud^{f272}; and is applied to the king of Babylon casting lots upon the nations and kingdoms whom he should go to war with, and subdue first; (see ^{<3219>}Ezekiel 21:19-23). The Targum is,

“thou art cast down to the earth, who killedst the people:”

a fit description of antichrist, (^{<6107>}Revelation 11:7 13:7,10,15).

Ver. 13. *For thou hast said in thine heart, &c.]* Which shows the pride and haughtiness that were in his heart; and were the cause and reason of his fall, for pride goes before a fall; it was the cause of the fall of angels, and of Adam, and of many kings and kingdoms; (see ^{<2068>}Proverbs 16:18) with this compare (^{<6607>}Revelation 18:7,8):

I will ascend into heaven; be above all men, rule over the whole world; and so the Targum.

“I will ascend on high;”

unless by it is meant the temple at Jerusalem, where Jehovah dwelt, an emblem of heaven, to which sense the following clauses incline; and so the Romish antichrist sits in the temple of God, and on his throne as if he was God, (^{<3004>}2 Thessalonians 2:4).

I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; which he has made and set in the heavens, and preserves; meaning either the angels, (^{<1807>}Job 38:7) or rather the kings and princes of the earth, over whom he placed himself, having subdued them under him. It may be applied to ecclesiastical persons, pastors, and bishops of churches, compared to stars, (^{<6100>}Revelation 1:20) the third part of which the dragon drew with his tail, (^{<6104>}Revelation 12:4) and over whom the bishop of Rome has usurped an universal dominion. The Targum is,

“over the people of God I will put the throne of my kingdom;”

notoriously true of the man of sin:

I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: that is, as some think, in the temple where the tribes of Israel gathered together for worship, which was built upon Mount Zion; which, as Kimchi says, lay north of Jerusalem; (see ^{<980>}Psalm 48:2) so the tabernacle is often called the tabernacle of the congregation; but, as Cocceius and Vitringa observe, Mount Zion was not to the north, but to the south of Jerusalem; wherefore not that mount, but Mount Moriah, which was to the north of Mount Zion, is designed; however, not Babylon is here meant, as R. Joseph Kimchi thought; called, as he supposes, “the mount of the congregation”, because all the world were gathered thither to the king of Babylon; and a “mount”, because a strong city; and said to be “in the sides of the north”, because it lay north east to the continent; but, as one observes, he had no need to boast of sitting there, where he was already. Jarchi thinks the last clause refers to the north side of the altar, in the court, where the sacrifice was killed, (^{<8011>}Leviticus 1:11) and may point at the seat of the Romish antichrist, and the sacerdotal power usurped by him, to offer sacrifice for the sins of men, particularly the bloodless sacrifice of the Mass.

Ver. 14. *I will ascend above the heights of the clouds,* &c.] Which are the chariots of God, and in which he rides, and so this proud monarch affected to be as he; perhaps some reference is had to the cloud in which Jehovah dwelt in the temple. The Targum is,

“I will ascend above all people,”

compared to clouds for their multitude. In the mystical sense, the true ministers of the word may be meant, so called for their height, motion, swiftness, and fulness of Gospel doctrine, compared to rain; (see ^{<2186>}Isaiah 5:6 ^{<6116>}Revelation 11:6,7).

I will be like the most High; so Satan affected to be, and this was the bait he laid for our first parents, and with which they were taken; and nothing less than deity could satisfy some ambitious princes, as Caligula, and others; and this was what the Babylonish monarch aspired to, and ordered to be ascribed to him, and be regarded as such, either while living, or at least after death, which was what had been done to many Heathen princes. So antichrist is represented as showing himself to be God, (^{<3104>}2

Thessalonians 2:4) by calling and suffering himself to be called God; by assuming all power in heaven and in earth; taking upon him to depose kings and dispose of kingdoms at pleasure; dispensing with the laws of God, and making new ones; absolving men from their oaths, pardoning their sins, setting up himself as infallible, as the sole interpreter of Scripture, and judge of controversies. The Targum is,

“I will be higher than them all;”

than the kings of the earth, and all other bishops.

Ver. 15. *Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell,* &c.] Into a very low and miserable condition; (see ^{<412>}Matthew 11:23) instead of ascending to heaven: or “to the grave”; though, inasmuch as afterwards a burial is denied him, the word may be taken for the infernal pit, and so is, as much as can be, opposed to heaven; and this will be true of antichrist, when the beast and false prophet will be cast alive into the lake of fire, (^{<690>}Revelation 19:20):

to the sides of the pit; instead of being on the mount of the congregation in the sides of the north; another word for hell, the pit of corruption, and the bottomless pit. The Targum is,

“to the ends of the lake of the house of perdition;”

the place of everlasting destruction.

Ver. 16. *They that see thee,* &c.] These are the words of the dead, speaking of the living, who when they should see the carcass of the king of Babylon lying on the ground,

shall narrowly look upon thee, [and] consider thee; whether it is he or not, not knowing at first sight who he was, the alteration being so great; he that was but just now on his throne of glory, with all the ensigns of majesty about him, and on him, now cast to the earth, deprived of life, besmeared with blood, and so disfigured as scarcely to be known; these phrases are used to express the great change made in him, and in his state and condition:

[saying]; scarce believing what they saw, and as wondering at the sudden and strange alteration, and yet in an insulting manner:

[Is] this the man that made the earth to tremble: the inhabitants of it, when they heard of his coming against them, with his numerous and conquering army, dreading that he would do to them as he had done to others, destroy their cities, rob them of their substance, put them to the sword, or carry them captive, or make them tributary:

that did shake kingdoms; depose their kings, and set up others; alter their constitution, change their form of government, and added their kingdoms to his own.

Ver. 17. *[That] made the world as a wilderness, &c.*] Both by destroying the inhabitants of it, and by laying waste cities, towns, villages, fields, vineyards, gardens, and all places improved and cultivated, wherever he came, as it follows:

and destroyed the cities thereof; as the Assyrian kings had done, some of which are mentioned in (²³⁰¹⁹Isaiah 10:9 37:11-13,18):

[that] opened not the house of his prisoners; the prison house, in, which they were held; or,

“the gate to his prisoners,”

as the Targum; or rather the words may be rendered, “that opened not to his prisoners”, that they might go “home”; or as Deuteronomy Dieu, in short, yet fully, expresses it, “that did not dismiss his prisoners home”; he not only cruelly and inhumanly put many to the sword, but such as surrendered, and were taken captives, he detained them in prison, and would not loose their bonds, but let them die there; which was an instance of great cruelty and inhumanity.

Ver. 18. *All the kings of the nations, &c.*] Of other nations, besides those he governed, and even of those whom he had subdued, at least their ancestors, the greatest part of them however; for the word “all” does not always signify every individual, though by the repetition of it, it here bids fair for such a sense, there being but very few, or scarce any exceptions to this observation; for, on some account or another, both good and bad kings are interred in great state:

[even] all of them lie in glory; in rich tombs and stately monuments, erected for the honour of them; and where they “sleep”, as the word

signifies, with their fathers, their ancestors, and are at rest, in the state of the dead, where they will continue to the resurrection:

everyone in his own house; or grave, (see ^{<1812>}Job 30:23) the same with his long home, (^{<2115>}Ecclesiastes 12:5) or the house of his world: in reference to which, the Targum paraphrases it by the same phrase here; and though their graves were not in their dwelling houses or palaces, yet often near them, and in their own country, and were what had been erected, or caused to be erected by them, in their lifetime.

Ver. 19. *But thou art cast out of thy grave*, &c.] Or rather “from” it^{f273}; that is, he was not suffered to be put into it, or to have a burial, as the following words show, at least not to be laid in the grave designed for him; though the Jews^{f274}, who apply this to Nebuchadnezzar, have a fabulous story that he was taken out of his grave by his son, to confirm this prophecy; and which their commentators, Aben Ezra, Jarchi, Kimchi, and Abendana, tell in this manner: that when Nebuchadnezzar was driven from men, and was with the beasts of the field for seven years, the people made his son Evilmerodach king; but when Nebuchadnezzar came to his right mind, and returned to his palace at Babylon, and found his son upon the throne, he put him in prison, where he lay till Nebuchadnezzar died, when the people took him out to make him king; but he refused to be king, saying, he did not believe his father was dead; and that if he should come again, as before, and find him, he would kill him; upon which they took him out of his grave, to show him that he was dead: but the sense here is not that the king of Babylon should be taken out of his grave, after he was laid in it, but that he should be hindered from being put into it; which very likely was the case of Belshazzar.

Like an abominable branch; cut off from a tree as useless and hurtful, and cast upon the ground, where it lies and rots, and is good for nothing, neither for fuel, nor anything else, but is neglected and despised of all:

[and as] the raiment of those that are slain; in battle, which being rolled in blood, nobody cares to take up and wear, nor even touch; for such persons were accounted unclean by the ceremonial law, and by the touch of them uncleanness was contracted; and perhaps with a view to this the simile is used, to express the very mean and abject condition this monarch should be in:

thrust through with a sword; which was added for explanation sake, to show in which way the persons were slain whose raiment is referred to; the clothes of such being stained with blood, when those that died by other means might not have their raiment so defiled. The word ^{f275} rendered “thrust through”, is only used in this place, and in (^{<0457>}Genesis 45:17) where it is rendered “lade”, or put on a burden; but, as the several Jewish commentators before mentioned observe ^{f276}, in the Arabic language it signifies to pierce or thrust through with sword or spear, and so it is used in the Arabic version of (^{<488>}John 19:34,37):

that go down to the stones of the pit; into which dead bodies after a battle are usually cast, and which have often stones at the bottom; and into which being cast, stones are also thrown over them:

as a carcass trodden underfoot; which is frequently the case of those that fall in battle; and very probably was the case of Belshazzar, when slain by the Chaldeans, whose body in a tumult might be neglected and trodden upon, and afterwards have no other burial than that of a common soldier in a pit; and instead of having a sepulchral monument erected over him, as kings used to have, had nothing but a heap of stones thrown upon him.

Ver. 20. *Thou shall not be joined with them in burial*, &c.] The kings before mentioned; not that the sense is that he should not be interred in the same place they were, or lie in the same stately monuments they did, for that was never designed by him or others; but that he should not be buried in like manner, be embalmed as they, or have odours burned for him, or lie in such state and pomp, or have a “pyramid” or “mausoleum”, or any rich monument, erected over him; unless this can be understood of his ancestors, the kings that were before him; and the sense be, that he should not have a burial with the kings of Babylon, or be interred where they were, but, as before said, should be cast out, or be kept from the place of sepulture. The Targum is,

“thou shall not be as one of them in the grave;”

shall not be like them, or equal to them, in the glory and pomp of a funeral, not having the same funeral rites; obsequies, and ornaments they have had. So the whore of Rome shall have no funeral, but the kings of the earth will eat her flesh, and burn her with fire (^{<6716>}Revelation 17:16),

because thou hast destroyed thy land; not only other lands and nations, but also his own, and the inhabitants of it, by his tyrannical government, by

levies and exactions, by mulcts and fines, on various pretences: or, “hast corrupted, thy land”^{f277}; which phrase is used of mystical Babylon, (~~661D~~ Revelation 19:2) see also (~~661B~~ Revelation 11:18) whose land or earth is the whole Romish jurisdiction, corrupted by her idolatries, and wasted and destroyed by the various methods used to drain away the substance thereof:

[and] slain thy people; put them to death at pleasure, without any just cause, for trifling matters; which is often done by arbitrary princes. Jarchi and Kimchi apply this to Nebuchadnezzar’s slaying the wise men of Babylon, because they could not tell him his dream, and the interpretation of it. It is true of antichrist slaying such, that would not worship his image, and receive his mark, (~~6630~~ Revelation 13:10,15).

The seed of evildoers shall never be renowned; or, “not for ever”; though they may have a name, and be very famous for a while, yet not always; in process of time their honour is laid in the dust; or, “shall not be called for ever”^{f278}; their name and their memory shall not always last; their name shall be cut off, and their memory shall rot; they shall have none to keep up their name, and they shall not be spoken of with respect; such a seed of evildoers were Belshazzar and his family, who descended from Nebuchadnezzar and Evilmerodach, and were at once extinct, as follows:

Ver. 21. *Prepare slaughter for his children*, &c.] These words are directed to the Medes and Persians, to prepare instruments of slaughter, and make use of them; and prepare themselves for the slaughter of the whole royal family, Belshazzar and all his children. So it is threatened to Jezebel, or the Romish antichrist, that all her children should be killed with death, (~~6623~~ Revelation 2:23):

for the iniquity of their fathers; they imitating and following them in their sins, partaking of them, and filling up the measure of their iniquities:

that they do not rise, nor possess the land; stand up and succeed him in the government of the land, as their inheritance:

nor fill the face of the world with cities; as their ancestors had done, which were built by them to perpetuate their name and glory, and to keep the nations in awe subdued by them. The Targum renders it, “with enemies”; which is followed by Aben Ezra, Jarchi, and Kimchi; and so the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions, “with wars”; to the great disturbance of the

peace of the world, and to the disquietude of the inhabitants of it; which is a great plague to the world, and a judgment in it.

Ver. 22. *For I will rise up against them, saith the Lord of hosts, &c.*] That is, against the children of the Babylonish monarch; and therefore they shall not rise and possess the earth, and disturb it, since he who is the Lord of armies in heaven and earth, and has all power in both worlds, and has everything at his beck and command, will rise up, who seemed, as it were, asleep, and unconcerned about the affairs of this world, and will set himself against them, and exert his power in their destruction:

and cut off from Babylon; the king of Babylon, and the inhabitants of it:

the name; not of the city, which is mentioned long after, and still is; but of the king and his family:

and remnant; his flesh, or those that were akin to him, as Kimchi interprets it:

and son, and nephew; his son, and son's son as the Targum, and after that other Jewish writers; the whole family was destroyed with Belshazzar, after whom none of that race was ever heard of any more.

Ver. 23. *I will also make it a possession for the bittern, &c.*] Instead of being possessed by any of the family of the king of Babylon. The “bittern” is a kind of water fowl, which, by putting its bill into mire, or a broken reed, is said to make a most horrible noise. Some think the “owl” is meant, which dwells in desolate and ruinous places; and others take it to be the “ospray”, a sort of eagle that preys upon fish and ducks; according to Kimchi, the “tortoise” is meant; some will have it that the “beaver” or castor is intended; Jarchi understands it of the porcupine or “hedgehog”; and in the Arabic language this creature is called “kunphud”, which is pretty near the Hebrew word “kippod”, here used; to which Bochartus agrees; but, whatever creature is meant, the design is to show that Babylon should not be inhabited by men, but by birds or beasts of prey, or noxious animals; and so mystical Babylon is said to be a cage of every unclean and hateful bird, (~~668D~~ Revelation 18:2):

and pools of water; Babylon being situated in a marshy ground, and by the river Euphrates; and when that river was turned by Cyrus^{f279}, and afterwards its banks neglected, in course of time the water overflowed the

place where the city was, and all about it, and so easily came to be what is here predicted it should; (see ^{<fr82>}Revelation 18:21):

and I will sweep it with the besom of destruction, saith the Lord of hosts; and so clear it at once of all its inhabitants, wealth, and riches, and entirely remove its large walls and stately buildings, no more to be seen, just as a house is swept clean of all its dust; intimating, that this superb city, and all belonging to it, should be reduced to dust, and be as easily swept away as dust is with a besom. The word for “sweep”, and a “besom”, is only used in this place, and has this signification in the Arabic language; it is said in the Talmud^{f280}, that the Rabbins knew not the meaning of this word, till they heard an Arabian girl say to her fellow servant,

“take this besom, and sweep the house.”

expressing the word here used.

Ver. 24. *The Lord of hosts hath sworn, saying, &c.*] The Septuagint only read, “these things saith the Lord of hosts”; for, as Kimchi on the place observes, his word is his oath; but for the comfort of his people, and for the confirmation either of the prophecies concerning the fall of Babylon, or of the following concerning the destruction of the Assyrian monarchy, or both, he adds his oath to his word, to show that the sentence passed in his mind, and now expressed, was irrevocable:

surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; as he had shaped and schemed it, and drew the form and image in his own mind, or fixed and settled it there, so should it be done in due time, as every thing is that is determined by the Lord; and this shows that nothing is casual, or comes by chance, but everything as it is purposed of God; and that as everything comes to pass which he has resolved, so every such resolution proceeds from thought, and is the produce of the highest wisdom and prudence:

and as I have purposed, so it shall stand; or “counselled”^{f281}; within himself, for he does all things according to the counsel of his will; and which always stands firm, sure, and unalterable, let what devices soever be in the heart of man.

Ver. 25. *That I will break the Assyrian in my land, &c.*] This was his thought, counsel, purpose, and decree; which must be understood either of the king of Babylon, as before, called the Assyrian; as the king of Babylon seems to be called the king of Assyria in (^{<fr81b>}2 Chronicles 33:11

~~(1012)~~ Nehemiah 9:32), but then his destruction was not in the land of Israel, or on the mountains of Judea, as is here predicted; or rather, therefore, this is a new prophecy, or a return to what is foretold in the tenth chapter (~~(2301)~~ Isaiah 10:1-34) concerning Sennacherib and his army, and the destruction of it; which, coming to pass long before the destruction of Babylon, is mentioned for the comfort of God's people, as a pledge and assurance of the latter: though some think that it was now past, and is observed to strengthen the faith of the Jews, with respect to the preceding prediction, and read the words thus, as "in breaking the Assyrian in my land"; and then the sense is, what I have thought, purposed, and sworn to, to come to pass, concerning the fall of Babylon, shall as surely be accomplished, and you may depend upon it, as I have broke the Assyrian army in my land before your eyes, of which ye yourselves are witnesses. Some think that Gog and Magog are intended by the Assyrian, of whom it is predicted that they should fall upon the mountains of Israel, as here, (~~(2304)~~ Ezekiel 39:4) it may be, that as the king of Babylon was a type of the Romish antichrist in the preceding prophecy, the Assyrian here may represent the Turks, who now possess the land of Israel, and shall be destroyed:

and upon my mountains tread him under foot; the mountainous part of Judea, particularly the mountains which were round about Jerusalem, where the Assyrian army under Sennacherib was, when besieged by him, and where they fell and were trodden under foot; and now the Lord may be said to break the Assyrian troops, and trample upon them, because it was not only done according to his will, but without the use of men, by an angel that was sent immediately from heaven, and destroyed the whole host, (~~(1285)~~ 2 Kings 19:35):

there shall his yoke depart from off them, and his burden depart from off their shoulders: meaning, that hereby the siege of Jerusalem would be broken up, and the city rid of such a troublesome enemy; and the parts adjacent eased of the burden of having such a numerous army quartered upon them; and the whole land freed from the subjection of this monarch, and from paying tribute to him. The same is said in (~~(2307)~~ Isaiah 10:27). This, in the Talmud^{f282}, is interpreted of Sennacherib.

Ver. 26. *This [is] the purpose that is purposed upon the whole earth, &c*] Or, "counsel that is counselled". The Targum is,

"all the inhabitants of the earth;"

and the Septuagint version, “the whole world”, meaning the Assyrian empire, and all states depending on it; as the Roman empire is called, (^{<4011>}Luke 2:1) for this purpose respects not the end of the world, and the judgment of it at the last day, as some have thought; but the preceding prophecy, purpose, or counsel, concerning breaking and trampling under foot the Assyrians, and delivering the Jews from subjection to them:

and this [is] the hand that is stretched out upon all the nations; of which the Assyrian army consisted, or which made up the Assyrian monarchy, or depended on it, and fell with it. “Purpose” denotes the counsel, will, and decree of God, about this business; and “hand” the execution of it. The Targum renders it “power”; so “hand” and “counsel” go together in (^{<4013>}Acts 4:28). The Targum is

“on all kingdoms.”

Ver. 27. *For the Lord of hosts hath purposed, &c.*] What is before declared, the fall of Babylon, and the destruction of the Assyrian, and everything else that comes to pass in this world; there is nothing comes to pass but he has purposed, and everything he has purposed does come to pass:

and who shall disannul [it]? not the most powerful monarch, or most powerful armies, or the most refined councils of men, or the greatest politicians on earth:

and his hand [is] stretched out, and who shall turn it back? or aside, from giving the blow it is designed to give; no power on earth is equal to it.

Ver. 28. *In the year that King Ahaz died was this burden.*] The following heavy prophecy, concerning the destruction of the Philistines; whether it was delivered out before or after his death is not certain. Here some begin the “fifteenth” chapter (^{<2151>}Isaiah 15:1), and not improperly; henceforward prophecies are delivered out under another reign, as before under Uzziah, Jotham, and Ahaz, now under Hezekiah. This, according to Bishop Usher, was A. M. 3278 and before the Christian era 726.

Ver. 29. *Rejoice not thou, whole Palestina, &c.*] The land of the Philistines; the inhabitants of Palestine are meant, who rejoiced at the death of Uzziah, who was too powerful for them, and during the reign of Ahaz, of whom they had the better; and, now he was dead, they hoped things would still be more favourable to them, since a young prince, Hezekiah,

succeeded him; but they would find, by sad experience, that they had no occasion to rejoice in these changes: “whole Palestine” is mentioned, because it was divided into five districts or lordships, over which there were five lords, (^{463B}Joshua 13:3) (^{000B}1 Samuel 6:4) and as they were all rejoicing in their late successes in Ahaz’s time, and in hopes of still greater, so they would all suffer in the calamity hereafter threatened:

because the rod of him that smote thee is broken: meaning not Ahaz, for he did not smite the Philistines, but was smitten by them, for they invaded his country, and took many of his cities; (see ^{443B}2 Chronicles 28:18) but rather Uzziah, who broke down the walls of their cities, and built others, (^{441B}2 Chronicles 26:6,7) wherefore they rejoiced at his death; and their joy continued during the reigns of Jotham and Ahaz, and was increased at the death of Ahaz, a new and young king being placed on the throne. Some understand this of the breaking of the Assyrian, the rod of God’s anger, (^{294B}Isaiah 14:25) by whom the Philistines had been smitten, and therefore rejoiced at his ruin; and to this the Targum seems to incline, paraphrasing it thus,

“because the government is broken, whom ye served.”

Such that interpret in this way, by the “serpent” after mentioned understand Tilgathpilneser king of Assyria, whose successors were more troublesome to the Philistines than he; and by the “cockatrice” Sennacherib; and by the “fiery flying serpent” Nebuchadnezzar. Cocceius thinks that the sense of the prophecy is, that the Philistines should not rejoice at the sceptre being taken away from the Jews, and they being carried captive into Babylon, since it would not be to their advantage; for after Nebuchadnezzar and his sons, meant by the “serpent”, should come the Medes and Persians, signified by the “cockatrice”: and after them the Macedonians or Greeks, designed by the “flying fiery serpent”, under Alexander, who should “kill” their “root”, take Tyre their metropolis, at the siege of which was a famine; and then “slay [their] remnant”, the city of Gaza, the last of their cities, whose inhabitants he slew; but the first sense of the prophecy, as it is most common, so most easy and natural:

for out of the serpent’s root shall come forth a cockatrice: that is, from the posterity, of Uzziah king of Judah, who greatly annoyed the Philistines, for which reason he is compared to a “serpent”, should arise Hezekiah compared to a “cockatrice”, because he would be, and he was, more harmful and distressing to them; (see ^{428B}2 Kings 18:8):

and his fruit [shall be] a fiery flying serpent; not the fruit of the cockatrice, but of the serpent; and intends the same as before, Hezekiah, likened to such a creature, because of the fury and swiftness with which he was to come, and did come, against the Philistines, and the hurt he did to them: the “serpent” to which he is compared is called “fiery”, or “burning”, because it inflames where it bites; of which (see ⁴²¹⁶Numbers 21:6) and “flying”, not because it has wings, though some serpents are said to have them; but because, when it leaps or darts upon a man, it is with such swiftness, that it seems to fly; the serpent called “acontias”, or “serpens jaculus”, is here alluded to. The Targum applies the passage to the Messiah, thus,

“for out of the children’s children of Jesse shall come forth the Messiah, and his works shall be among you as a flying serpent.”

Ver. 30. *And the firstborn of the poor shall feed,* &c.] That is, the Jews, who were brought very low in the times of Ahaz, reduced to the greatest straits and difficulties; for so the word “firstborn” may signify the chief, or those who were of all the poorest, and in the greatest distress; these, in the times of Hezekiah, shall enjoy abundance of good things, and under his gentle government shall feed like a flock of sheep in good pastures; this signifying, that though he should be like a serpent, harmful to his enemies, yet should be kind and tender unto, and take great care of his own subjects, and under whom they should have great plenty and prosperity:

and the needy shall lie down in safety; like a flock of sheep, secure from beasts of prey, under the care of a faithful and vigilant shepherd; this shows that the Jews should not only have plenty of good things, but should live in the greatest security, without fear of any enemy, or danger from them:

and I will kill thy root with famine; this is said to Palestine, compared to a tree, whose root is dried up for want of moisture, and so dies; and the meaning is, that a sore famine should rage in their country, and utterly destroy them:

and he shall slay thy remnant: that is, Hezekiah should slay with the sword those that were left of the famine.

Ver. 31. *Howl, O gate,* &c.] Or gates of the cities of Palestine; the magistrates that sat there to execute judgment, or the people that passed through there; or because now obliged to open to their enemies; wherefore, instead of rejoicing, they are called to howling:

cry, O city; or cities, the several cities of the land, as well as their chief, because of the destruction coming upon them. The Targum is,

“howl over thy gates, and cry over thy cities;”

or concerning them:

thou, whole Palestina, [art] dissolved; or “melted”; through fear of enemies coming upon them; or it may design the entire overthrow and dissolution of their state;

for there shall come from the north a smoke; a numerous army, raising a dust like smoke as they move along, and coming with great “swiftness”, and very annoying. Some understand this of the Chaldean army under Nebuchadnezzar coming from Babylon, which lay north of Judea; so Aben Ezra; to which agrees (^{2470E}Jeremiah 47:1,2) but most interpret it of Hezekiah’s army, which came from Judea: which, Kimchi says, lay north to the land of the Philistines. Cocceius is of opinion that the Roman army is here meant, which came from the north against Judea, called whole Palestine; which country came into the hands of the Jews after the taking of Tyre and Gaza by the Greeks, and therefore the sanhedrim, which sat in the gate, and the city of Jerusalem, are called upon to howl and cry. But the first of these senses seems best, since the utter destruction of Palestine was by the Chaldean army under Nebuchadnezzar; and so the prophecy from the time of Hezekiah, with which it begins, is carried on unto the entire dissolution of this country by the Babylonians.

And none [shall be] alone in his appointed times; when the times appointed are come, for the gathering, mustering, and marching of the army, whether Hezekiah’s or the Chaldean, none shall stay at home; all will voluntarily and cheerfully flock unto it, and enlist themselves; nor will they separate or stray from it, but march on unanimously, and courageously engage the enemy, till the victory is obtained. Aben Ezra understands this of the Philistines, that they should not be able to abide alone in their palaces and houses, because of the smoke that should come in unto them.

Ver. 32. *What shall [one] then answer the messengers of the nation?* &c.] Or nations, of any of the nations. Not the messengers sent to Hezekiah, (^{2390E}Isaiah 39:1) but rather such as were sent to him, to congratulate him upon his victory over the Philistines; or any others that were sent, and came from other nations, that inquired about these matters, and the answer returned is,

That the Lord hath founded Zion; and not Hezekiah; he had given his people victory over their enemies, and protected, defended, and established them, and therefore ought to have all the glory:

and the poor of his people shall trust in it; or, “betake themselves to it”; as to a place of safety, being founded by the Lord, and under his protection. So the church of God, which often goes by the name of Zion in Scripture, is of his founding; he has laid Christ as the foundation of it, and such as are sensible of their spiritual poverty, misery, and danger, trust in him; not in Zion, but in the foundation God has laid in Zion, or built his church upon.