

CHAPTER 28

INTRODUCTION TO ISAIAH 28

In this chapter the ten tribes of Israel and the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin, are threatened with divine judgments, because of their sins and iniquities mentioned. The ten tribes, under the name of Ephraim, for their pride and drunkenness, (^{2381B} Isaiah 28:1) the means of their destruction, the Assyrian monarch, compared to a hail storm, and a flood of mighty waters, (^{2382B} Isaiah 28:2) which destruction, for their sins, is repeated, and represented as sudden and swift; when they would be like a fading flower and hasty fruit, (^{2383B} Isaiah 28:3,4) and then, as for the two tribes, though they had a glorious prince at the head of them, who had a spirit of wisdom and judgment for government, and of valour and courage for war, (^{2385B} Isaiah 28:5,6) yet the generality of the people, led on by the example of priest and prophet, went into the same sensual gratifications as they of the ten tribes did, (^{2387B} Isaiah 28:7,8) and became sottish and unteachable, and were like children just taken from the breast, and to be used as such, (^{2389B} Isaiah 28:9-11) and though the doctrine proposed to be taught them was such as, if received, would be of the greatest advantage to them, for their comfort and refreshment, yet it was refused by them with the utmost contempt; which was to be their ruin, (^{2391B} Isaiah 28:12,13), wherefore the rulers of Jerusalem are threatened with the judgments of God, which should come upon them night and day, the report of which would be a vexation to them; and from which they should not be screened by their covenant with death and hell, or by their shelters and coverings with lies and falsehood, in which they placed their confidence, (^{2394B} Isaiah 28:14,15) (^{2397B} Isaiah 28:17-22) in the midst of which account, for the comfort of the Lord's people, stands a glorious prophecy, concerning the sure foundation laid in Zion, on which all that are built are safe and happy, (^{2396B} Isaiah 28:16) and the certainty of these judgments is illustrated by the method which the ploughman takes in sowing his corn, and threshing it out; for which he has instruction and direction from the Lord of hosts, (^{2392B} Isaiah 28:23-29).

Ver. 1. *Woe to the crown of pride, to the drunkards of Ephraim, &c.]* Or, “of the drunkards of Ephraim”: or, “O crown of pride, O drunkards of Ephraim^{f546}”; who are both called upon, and a woe denounced against them. Ephraim is put for the ten tribes, who were drunk either in a literal sense, for to the sin of drunkenness were they addicted, (^{<280B>}Hosea 7:5) (^{<308B>}Amos 6:6). The Jews say^{f547}, that wine of Prugiatha (which perhaps was a place noted for good wine), and the waters of Diomasit (baths), cut off the ten tribes from Israel; which both Jarchi and Kimchi, on the place, make mention of; that is, as Buxtorf^{f548} interprets it, pleasures and delights destroyed the ten tribes. The inhabitants of Samaria, and the places adjacent, especially were addicted to this vice; these places abounding with excellent wines. Sichem, which were in these parts, is thought to be called, from the drunkenness of its inhabitants, Sychar, (^{<404B>}John 4:5) this is a sin very uncomely in any, but especially in professors of religion, as these were, and ought to be declaimed against: or they were drunkards in a metaphorical sense, either with idolatry, the two calves being set up in Daniel and Bethel, which belonged to the ten tribes; just as the kings of the earth are said to be drunk with the wine of antichrist’s fornication, or the idolatry of the church of Rome, (^{<667D>}Revelation 17:2) or with pride and haughtiness, being elated with the fruitfulness of their country, their great affluence and riches, and numbers of people; in all which they were superior to the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, and in which they piqued themselves, and are therefore called “the crown of pride”; and especially their king may be meant, who was lifted up with pride that he ruled over such a country and people; or rather the city of Samaria, the metropolis of the ten tribes, and the royal city. Perhaps there may be an allusion to the crowns wore by drunkards at their revels, and particularly by such who were mighty to drink wine or strong drink, and overcame others, and triumphed in it: pride and sensuality are the vices condemned, and they often go together:

whose glorious beauty; which lay in the numbers of their inhabitants, in their wealth and riches, and in their fruits of corn and wine:

[is] a fading flower; not to be depended on, soon destroyed, and quickly gone:

which [are] on the head of the fat valleys; meaning particularly the corn and wine, the harvest and vintage, with which the fruitful valleys being covered, looked very beautiful and glorious: very probably particular

respect is had to Samaria, the head of the kingdom, and which was situated on a hill, and surrounded with fruitful valleys; for not Jerusalem is here meant, as Cocceius; nor Gethsemane, by the fat valleys, as Jerom:

of them that are overcome with wine; or smitten, beaten ^{f549} knocked down with it, as with a hammer, and laid prostrate on the ground, where they lie fixed to it, not able to get up; a true picture of a drunkard, that is conquered by wine, and enslaved unto it; (see ~~238B~~ Isaiah 28:3).

Ver. 2. *Behold, the Lord hath a mighty and strong one*, &c.] That is, a powerful king, with a mighty army, meaning Shalmaneser king of Assyria; whom the Lord had at his beck and command, and could use at his pleasure, as his instrument, to bring down the towering pride of Ephraim, and chastise him for his sensuality:

[which] as a tempest of hail; that beats down herbs and plants, and branches of trees, and men and beasts:

[and] a destroying storm; which carries all before it, blows down houses and trees, and makes terrible devastation wherever it comes:

as a flood of mighty waters overflowing; whose torrent is so strong there is no stopping it: so this mighty and powerful prince

shall cast down to the earth with the hand; the crown of pride, the people of Israel, and the king of it; he shall take the crown from his head, and cast it to the ground with a strong hand, as the Jews interpret it, with great violence; or very easily, with one hand, as it were, without any trouble at all. The Targum is,

“so shall people come against them, and remove them out of their own land into another land, because of the sins which were in their hands;”

(see ~~238B~~ Isaiah 8:7).

Ver. 3. *The crown of pride, the drunkards of Ephraim, shall be trodden under feet.*] Not only cast down with the hand, but trampled upon with the feet; showing their utter destruction, and the contempt with which they should be used; which, with their character, is repeated, to point out their sins, the cause of it, to denote the certainty of it, and that it might be taken notice of.

Ver. 4. *And the glorious beauty which is on the head of the fat valley,* &c.] Meaning the riches and fruitfulness of the ten tribes, and especially of Samaria the head of them:

shall be a fading flower; as before declared, (^{<2300>}Isaiah 28:1) and here repeated to show the certainty of it, and to awaken their attention to it:

[*and*] *as the hasty fruit before the summer;* the first ripe fruit, that which is ripe before the summer fruits in common are. The Septuagint render it the first ripe fig; and so the Targum and Aben Ezra:

which [when] he that looketh upon it seeth it; that it is goodly and desirable, and so gathers it, (^{<3000>}Micah 7:1):

while it is yet in his hand he eateth it up; and as soon as he has got it into his hand, he cannot keep it there to look at, or forbear eating it, but greedily devours it, and swallows it down at once; denoting what a desirable prey the ten tribes would be to the Assyrian monarch, and how swift, sudden, and inevitable, would be their destruction.

Ver. 5. *In that day shall the Lord of hosts be for a crown of glory,* &c.] Or, “glorious crown”^{f550}; surrounding, adorning, and protecting his people; granting them his presence; giving them his grace, and large measures of it; causing them to live soberly, righteously, and godly: this stands opposed to “the crown of pride” before mentioned, and refers to the time when that should be trampled under foot, or when the ten tribes should be carried into captivity, which was in the sixth year of Hezekiah’s reign, (^{<1280>}2 Kings 18:10) at which time, and in whose reign, as well as in the reign of Josiah, this prophecy had its accomplishment:

and for a diadem of beauty; or, “a beautiful diadem”^{f551}; the same as expressed by different words, for the confirmation and illustration of it:

unto the residue of his people; the Arabic version adds, “in Egypt”; the people that remained there, when the others were carried captive, but without any foundation. Jarchi interprets it of the righteous that were left in it, in Samaria, or in Ephraim, in the ten tribes before spoken of; but it is to be understood, as Kimchi observes, of the other two tribes, Judah and Benjamin, which remained in their own land, when others were carried captive, to whom God gave his favours, spiritual and temporal, in the times of Hezekiah and Josiah; and especially the former is meant, and who was a

type of Christ, to whom this passage may be applied, who is the glory of his people Israel; and so the Targum paraphrases it,

“in that day shall the Messiah of the Lord of hosts be for a crown of joy;”

and Kimchi says their Rabbins expound this of the King Messiah, in time to come, when both the kingly and priestly glory should be restored; the one being signified by the “crown of glory”, the other by the “diadem of beauty”.

Ver. 6. *And for a spirit of judgment to him that sitteth in judgment, &c.*] That is, as the Lord would give honour and glory to the people in general, so wisdom and prudence, a spirit of judgment and discerning, to the king in particular, who sat on the throne of judgment to do justice, and execute judgment among his subjects: though this need not be restrained to the king, but be applied to all the judges and magistrates in the land, who sat and heard causes and complaints brought before them, for which they should be qualified by the Lord; so Aben Ezra interprets it of the sanhedrim:

and for strength to them that turn the battle to the gate; as wisdom is promised to the king and judges of the land, so strength of body and mind, valour and courage, to the prince and his army; so that they should turn the battle, and cause their enemies to fly before them, and pursue them to the very gates of their cities, as Hezekiah did, (~~2~~² Kings 18:8). The Syriac version is, “who turn the battle from the gate”; who, when besieged, sally out upon the besiegers, and drive them from their gates, oblige them to break up the siege, and fly before them. The Vulgate Latin version renders it, “and strength to them that return from war to the gate”: that come home victorious to their own houses; and so the Targum,

“that he may give victory to them that go out in war, to return them in peace to their own houses.”

Wisdom in the cabinet and courts of judicature, and courage in the camp, are two great blessings to a nation, and serve much to explain the glory and beauty before promised.

Ver. 7. *But they also have erred through wine, &c.*] Either they that sat in judgment, and turned the battle to the gate, as Jarchi interprets it: or rather, since the Lord was a spirit of judgment and strength to those, the two

tribes of Judah and Benjamin in later times are meant, in the latter end of Hezekiah's reign, or in the times of Manasseh, or nearer the Babylonish captivity; these tribes, which professed the true religion, and who had the word, and worship, and ordinances of God among them, even these were guilty of the same sin of drunkenness, as the ten tribes that had apostatized; there were the drunkards of Judah, as well Ephraim, who "erred through wine"; they erred and strayed from the rule of the divine word by excessive drinking, and this led them on to other sins, as drunkenness commonly does; and they were not only through it guilty of errors in practice, but in principle also; they made sad mistakes, as in life and conversation, so in doctrine, their memories, understandings, and judgments, being sadly affected and beclouded through this sin:

and through strong drink are out the of way; of God and his word; out of the way of truth and godliness: it signifies the same as before, only expressed in different words. The Targum renders the word for "strong drink", which designs any liquor that makes men drunk, by "old wine", which is accounted the best:

the priest and the prophet have erred through strong drink; committed sin, by drinking to excess, and made themselves unfit for the duties of their office, and were guilty of sad mistakes in the performance of it; the priest sinned by so doing against an express command, and made himself incapable of distinguishing between the holy and unholy, the clean and the unclean, (⁸¹⁰⁰Leviticus 10:9,10) though this need not be restrained to the priest only, for the word "cohen" signifies a prince as well as priest; and it is not fitting for kings to drink wine, nor princes strong drink, to excess, (⁸¹⁰⁴Proverbs 31:4,5) civil as well as ecclesiastical rulers may be here designed, though chiefly the latter, men that should set the best of examples to others; and the "prophet", as Kimchi observes, intends not the true, but false prophets. The Targum renders it a "scribe"; these and the priests are frequently mentioned together in the New Testament, and were both erroneous; and their errors here, both as to doctrine and practice, are imputed to their drunkenness; a very scandalous sin, especially in persons of such a character:

they are swallowed up of wine; they not only greedily swallowed it down, and were filled with it, but were swallowed up by it, drowned in it, and lost the exercise of their sense and reason, and were ruined and destroyed by it, and made wholly unfit for such sacred offices in which they were:

they are out of the way through strong drink; out of the of their duty, by sinning in this manner; and out the way of the performance of their office, being rendered incapable of it:

they err in vision: these were the prophets, the seers, who pretended to the visions of God, and related them to the people as such; but they mistook the imaginations of their crazy heads, intoxicated with liquor, for the visions of God; they erred in prophesying, which may be meant by “vision”, they delivered out false prophecies, false doctrines, and grievous errors, of fatal consequence to the people; or, as Kimchi further interprets it, they erred “in seeing”; they mistook in those things which were plain and obvious to the eye of everyone, in things clear and manifest; drunkenness affects the eyes both of the body and of the mind, that a man can see clearly with neither. The Targum is,

“they turned after, or declined unto, sweet meat;”

as if they were guilty of gluttony as well as drunkenness; but it is not usual for drunkards to crave sweet meat, but rather what is relishing:

they stumble [in] judgment; or “reel”¹⁵⁵² and stagger, as drunken men do: this refers to the priest, who, through drunkenness, made sad hobbling work in expounding the law, and giving the sense of it, and in pronouncing sentence of judgment in matters of controversy brought before him, to whom those things appertained, (³⁴⁰⁷Malachi 2:7,8) (⁴⁵⁷⁸Deuteronomy 17:8-11).

Ver. 8. *For all tables are full of vomit [and] filthiness, &c.*] The one signifies what is spued out of a man’s mouth, his stomach being overcharged, and the other his excrements; and both give a just, though nauseous, idea of a drunken man. This vice was very common; men of all ranks and degrees were infected with it, rulers and people; and no wonder that the common people ran into it, when such examples were set them; the tables of the priests, who ate of the holy things in the holy place, and the tables of the prophets, who pretended to see visions, and to prophesy of things to come, were all defiled through this prevailing sin;

[so that there is] no place [clean] or free from vomit and filthiness, no table, or part of one, of prince, prophet, priest, and people; the Targum adds,

“pure from rapine or violence.”

R. Simeon, as De. Dieu observes, makes “beli Makom” to signify “without God”, seeing God is sometimes with the Jews called Makom, “place”, because he fills all places; and as if the sense was, their tables were without God, no mention being made of him at their table, or in their table talk, or while eating and drinking; but this does not seem to be the sense of the passage. Vitringa interprets this of schools and public auditoriums, where false doctrines were taught, comparable to vomit for filthiness; hence it follows:

Ver. 9. *Whom shall he teach knowledge?* &c.] Not the drunken priest or prophet, who were both unfit for teaching men knowledge; but either the true and godly priest or prophet of the Lord, or the Lord himself, before spoken of as a spirit of judgment, (²³¹⁶Isaiah 28:6) namely, by his prophets and ministers, the latter seem rather intended; whom may or can such an one teach the knowledge of God, and of themselves; the knowledge of the law, and of the Gospel; the knowledge of divine truths, of things necessary to salvation, and the conduct of human life; of Jesus Christ, and the way of salvation by him, and of him, as a foundation of the Lord’s laying in Zion, hereafter mentioned in this chapter? who are capable of receiving such instructions? it intimates the stupidity and sottishness of the Jews, whose minds were so impaired by excessive drinking, that they were not able to take in the knowledge of these things:

and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? or “hearing”; the hearing of the word, or the word heard, the report of the Gospel; so the word is used in (²⁵¹¹Isaiah 53:1) this will never be understood, believed, and received, unless the arm of the Lord is revealed, or his power be exerted; prophets and ministers may speak to the ears of men, but they cannot give them an understanding of divine things, God only can do that: here it designs, as before, the unteachableness of the people of the Jews, being in the circumstances they were, as appears by what follows:

[them that are] weaned from the milk, [and] drawn from the breasts; signifying, that one might as well take children from the breast, such as are just weaned, and instruct them, as to pretend to teach these people the knowledge of divine things, or cause them to understand sound doctrine, that which is agreeable to law and Gospel; so sottish were they become through excessive drinking. Some understand this as a serious answer to the questions, and of persons in a metaphorical sense, who desire and thirst after the sincere milk of the word, as children just taken from the breast,

and deprived of it, do; and who are afflicted and distressed, and without the milk of divine comfort, and are like weaned children, humble, meek, and lowly; (see ^{<4112>}Matthew 11:25,26). Jarchi makes mention of such an interpretation as this, “them that are weaned from the milk”; from the law, which is called milk: “and drawn from the breasts”; drawn from the disciples of the wise men. It may be understood of such who departed from the sincere milk of the word; and embraced the traditions of the elders.

Ver. 10. *For precept [must be] upon precept, precept upon precept, &c.]* Signifying, that they must be dealt with as children were, when first instructed in the rudiments of a language, first had one rule given them, and then another, and so one after another till they had gone through the whole:

line upon line, line upon line; who are taught first to write one line, and then another; or to draw one line, and write after that, and then another; or where to begin one line, and, when finished, where to begin another; for the allusion is to writing by line, and not to a line used in building, as Kimchi and Ben Melech think:

here a little, [and] there a little; a small lesson out of one book, and a small lesson out of another; a little one day, and a little on the next, and so on, that their memories may not be overburdened.

Ver. 11. *For with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people.]* Or “hath spoken”^{f553}; as parents and nurses, in a lisping manner, and in a language and tone different from what they use in common, speak unto their children, accommodating themselves according to their capacities and weakness; and so it is a continuation of the method to be used in instructing the Jews, as being like children: or else these words are to be considered as a reason why, since they refused instruction in this plain, easy, and gentle manner, by the ministry of the prophets of the Lord, he would speak to them in a more severe and in a rougher manner in his providences, and bring a people against them of a strange language they understood not, and so should not be able to treat and make peace with them, and who would carry them captive into a strange land; which was fulfilled by bringing the Chaldean army upon them, (^{<2415>}Jeremiah 5:15) (see ^{<4121>}1 Corinthians 14:21) and afterwards the Romans.

Ver. 12. *To whom he said, &c.]* Either the Lord himself, or the prophet Isaiah; or rather the Lord by him, and other prophets; so the Targum,

“to whom the prophets said;”

that is, the true prophets of the Lord said to the people, or to the priests and other prophets; or Christ and his apostles, as follows:

This [is] the rest [wherewith] ye may cause the weary to rest: and this [is] the refreshing: that is, by teaching the word of God, the true knowledge of him, and the sound doctrines of the Gospel, and the duties of religion; this would be the best way of casing and refreshing the minds and consciences of the people, burdened with a sense of sin, or distressed and disconsolate through afflictions and calamities upon them, and be the most effectual method of continuing them in ease and peace in their own land, and of preserving them from captivity, and other judgments threatened with; (see ~~401B~~ Matthew 11:28):

yet they would not hear; having no regard to the Lord and his prophets; nor any compassion to their countrymen, afflicted and distressed in mind or body; nor to the doctrine of Christ and his apostles.

Ver. 13. *But the word of the Lord was unto them precept upon precept,* &c.] Was despised and derided by them; they took the prophet’s words out of his mouth, and in a scoffing manner repeated them; which, in the Hebrew text, is in a rhyming form, and were sung and drawled out by them, “Tsau lotsau, Tsau lotsau, Kau lakau, Kau lakau”: this is all he can say to us, and we have from him:

precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line; here a little, [and] there a little; or the words may be rendered, “and the word of the Lord was unto them precept upon precept”, &c.; as it had been, so it still was; the same method was continued to be taken with them, and they still treated as children; and it is suggested that they should remain so, and not be men in understanding; and that they should be ever learning like children, and never come to the knowledge of the truth. Moreover, the words may be rendered, “though the word of the Lord was unto them precept upon precept”, &c.; though it was delivered in so plain and easy a manner to them, and such methods of instruction were used gradually and gently, to instil knowledge into them, yet so stupid were they as not to receive it, and so perverse and stubborn as wilfully to reject it; hence they were given up to judicial blindness and hardness, (~~411B~~ Romans 11:8,11):

that they might go and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken: go on in their own sinful ways, backslide from God, and be broken

by his judgments; and be ensnared and taken in the net of the Babylonians, and be carried by them into captivity; (see ²³²¹³Ezekiel 12:13) compare with this (⁴²⁴⁴Matthew 21:44 ⁴¹¹⁸1 Peter 2:8) or rather fall into the hands of the Romans, and be taken and dispersed by them among the nations.

Ver. 14. *Wherefore hear the word of the Lord, ye scornful men, &c.*] Men of scorn and mockery, that scoffed and mocked at the word of God, as in the preceding verse (²³⁸³Isaiah 28:13); or at the threatenings of punishment; and even made a jest of death and hell, as in the following words: “the word of the Lord” they are called upon to hear, hearken, and attend to, is either the word of promise of the Messiah, (²³⁸⁶Isaiah 28:16) or rather the word threatening them with ruin, (²³⁸⁸Isaiah 28:18) or it may be both:

that rule this people which [is] in Jerusalem; which must not be understood of the chief ruler Hezekiah, but rather of some subordinate rulers, such as Shebna and others; these set a very bad example to the common people: no wonder that irreligion and profaneness prevail, when civil magistrates are scoffers at religion. It agrees best with the rulers of the Jewish people in the times of Christ, who mocked at him and his ministry, and that of his apostles.

Ver. 15. *Because ye have said, &c.*] Within themselves; they thought so, if they did not say it in express words; and their conduct and behaviour showed that these were the sentiments and presumptions of their minds:

We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement: as safe from death, and secure from hell, or the grave, as if a covenant and compact had been formally entered into between them. The phrases are expressive of their being fearless of them, and of their confidence and assurance that they should not be hurt by them. Some interpret this of their deadly enemies, as Sennacherib king of Assyria particularly, with whom they had made peace, and had entered into a covenant of friendship and alliance, and so had nothing to fear from the threatenings of the Lord by the prophet; but Vitringa, better, of the covenant and agreement with the Romans, which the Jewish rulers were careful to observe, and thought themselves safe on account of it; (see ⁴¹¹⁸Revelation 6:8):

when the overflowing scourge shall pass through; when the judgments of God shall come upon the earth, and pass through the whole world, as a chastisement and correction of men for their sins, and as a punishment for them, like a mighty torrent spreading itself, and carrying all before it; or

particularly when the Assyrian monarch with his army shall pass through the land of Judea, signified, in (^{233B}Isaiah 28:2), by a tempest of hail, a destroying storm, a flood of mighty waters overflowing; or rather the Roman army invading Judea:

it shall not come unto us; who were in the city of Jerusalem:

for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves; not what they themselves reckoned so, but what the prophet Isaiah, or the Lord by him, called so, whose words they used, and in whose language they spoke; meaning either their lying prophets, as Kimchi, and the false doctrines they delivered to them, promising them peace when destruction was at hand; or their idols, as Jarchi, which are falsehood, lying vanities, and work of errors; or their carnal policy, arts of dissimulation, sinful compliances, and crafty methods of acting with their enemies, by which they hoped to deceive them, and secure themselves from destruction, as others; or else their wealth and riches, got by lying and fraud, which is the sense of some interpreters; and perhaps all may be intended in which they might put their trust and confidence, and on account of them expect security from threatened evils, though no other than lies and falsehood; and the same may be observed of all outward acts of religion, rites and ceremonies, and works of righteousness done by men, in which they place their trust, and hope to be saved by them from wrath to come.

Ver. 16. *Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, &c.*] In order to show what is the true foundation of hope and trust for security from death and hell, and to convince men of their vain and false confidence, as well as to comfort the people of God, such as truly feared him in Jerusalem; who, bearing the judgment denounced, might conclude that they were going to be cut off from being a nation, and that the family and kingdom of David would be at an end, and then where was the promise of the Messiah? wherefore, to relieve the minds of such, a promise of him is delivered out in the midst of a denunciation of judgment upon the wicked:

Behold, (a note of attention and admiration, as well as asseveration,)

I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone; which the Targum interprets of a king; and Jarchi of the King Messiah, who undoubtedly is meant, as is clear from (^{813B}Romans 9:33 ⁴¹¹⁶1 Peter 2:6) and not Hezekiah, as Kimchi, and others, who was now king, when this prophecy was made, and therefore

cannot respect him; but Christ, who is frequently spoken of, under the simile of a stone, (^{<0424>}Genesis 49:24 ^{<1182>}Psalm 118:22 ^{<705>}Daniel 2:45 ^{<389>}Zechariah 3:9) and may be compared to one for his usefulness in the spiritual building, being both foundation and cornerstone, and for his great strength and durability; and this is a stone of the Lord's laying, which he had been laying in his eternal purposes and decrees, as the Mediator, Saviour, and Redeemer of his people; and whom he was about to lay, by sending him forth, in the fulness of time, to be incarnate, suffer, and die for them: and whom he lays as the foundation in the effectual calling of his people, to build their faith and hope upon; and this is done in Zion, in the church, which is built upon him, and where he is revealed and made known to be what he is, and as here described:

a tried stone; by the Old Testament saints, and by saints in all ages, who have ventured their souls on him, and laid the whole stress of their salvation upon him, and have been saved by him; and by Satan, and his principalities and powers, by his temptations of him in the wilderness, and by his attacks upon him in the garden, and on the cross, and found him to be an immovable stone, and were broken by him; and by his divine Father, who tried his faithfulness by trusting him with all his elect, and the salvation of them; and his great strength, by laying upon him all their sins, and the punishment due unto them. Some render it, "a stone of trial", or "a trying stone"^{f554}; by which men are tried, and discovered to be what they are, whether believers or unbelievers, sincere Christians or hypocrites; which may be known by their conduct and behaviour to Christ; if they come to him as a living stone, and he is precious to them, they are true believers; but if he is to them a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, they are unbelievers, and reprobate persons, (^{<1014>}1 Peter 2:4,7,8):

a precious corner [stone]; which, as it is both for the beauty and strength of the building, so it knits, cements, and keeps the parts together; and of this use is Christ in the spiritual building; angels and men are knit together in him, Jews and Gentiles, Old and New Testament saints, saints above and saints below, saints in all ages, times, and places: and a "precious" stone he is, a pearl of great price; precious to his Father, who loves him, and delights in him, and has chosen and laid him as the foundation of his church, and of every true believer; to whom also he is precious, his person, names, offices, and relations, his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice, his word, ordinances, and people, and everything belonging to him:

a sure foundation; a well founded one^{f555}; which will never give way; a rock on which the church is built, and the gates of hell cannot prevail against it; a sure foundation of faith and hope, of peace, joy, and comfort, and of eternal happiness, to all that build upon it; a foundation firm and strong, immovable and everlasting; and so is every thing that is laid or depends upon it, the covenant of grace, and the promises of it, the persons of the Lord's people, and their salvation:

he that believeth; either those things, as the Targum adds, this promise and prophecy, and the things contained therein; or in Christ, the foundation laid, the tried and precious cornerstone, so it is explained in (~~4016~~ 1 Peter 2:6):

shall not make haste; or be impatient for the fulfilment of this prophecy, but patiently wait for it, knowing that it is for an appointed time, and will not tarry; and that God will hasten it in his own time; or will not make haste to lay any other foundation, being satisfied with this that is laid; nor make haste to a strange god, to another Saviour, knowing there is salvation in him, and in no other. The Targum is,

“shall not be moved when trouble comes;”

being founded upon this Rock of ages, which is proof against all storms and tempests; (see ~~4074~~ Matthew 7:24,25). The Apostles Paul and Peter, agreeably to the Septuagint version, render it, “shall not be ashamed”, or “confounded”; (see Gill on “~~4033~~ Romans 9:33”) (see Gill on “~~4016~~ 1 Peter 2:6”).

Ver. 17. *Judgment also will I lay to the line*, &c.] A metaphor taken from builders, who in building use the line and plummet to carry on their work even and regular, retaining such stones as agree thereunto, and rejecting such as do not; signifying, that in the spiritual building, where Christ is the foundation and cornerstone, such as are built thereon shall continue and grow up regularly into a holy temple; but those that set at nought this precious stone, and build upon the sandy foundation of their own righteousness, betake themselves to a refuge of lies, and cover themselves in their own hiding places, as well as all such who go on in their sins, shall be rejected by the righteous judgment of God:

and righteousness to the plummet; meaning the same as before; or, “I will lay judgment by the line, and righteousness by the plummet”^{f556}; the rule of the divine law, by which it will appear whether their actions are agreeable

to it, or the righteousness they trust in answerable to it; or the sense is, that at the same time that God would preserve and secure his own people upon the sure foundation Christ, he would punish others, according to the strict rules of justice, as his righteous law required, and according to the just demerit of sin. Kimchi interprets it, but very wrongly, of the justice and equity that should take place in the reign of Hezekiah, which were wanting at the time of this prophecy; but the preceding prophecy regards Christ, and not Hezekiah; and therefore is rather to be understood of the right and equal distribution of justice and judgment in the administration of government by him:

and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies; the lies they made their refuge, (²³⁸¹⁵Isaiah 28:15) their lying prophets, their idols, their riches, their righteousness, and everything in which they placed their confidence; for all refuges, be they what they will, are lying ones, and will deceive, excepting Christ and his righteousness; all which are easily and at once swept away, with the besom of avenging justice, when God takes it in hand. The phrase denotes the facility and suddenness of the destruction, and the entirety of it, which should be brought about by means of a “hail” storm, the same with that in (²³⁸¹²Isaiah 28:2) which designs the Assyrian, or rather the Roman army, since the prophecy preceding relates to the times of Christ; and it may be, by the refuge of lies may be meant the temple, in which the Jews greatly placed their confidence, as Cocceius thinks:

and the waters shall overflow the hiding place; the city of Jerusalem, where they hid, and thought themselves safe: a mighty army rushing into a city, and putting the inhabitants to the sword, or to flight, or obliging them to surrender, may be fitly signified by an inundation of water; (see ²³⁸¹⁰Isaiah 8:7,8) very probably the army of the Romans under Vespasian.

Ver. 18. *And your covenant with death shall be disannulled*, &c.] Or, “be besmeared”^{f557}, or daubed over, as the ark was with pitch, (¹⁰⁰⁶⁴Genesis 6:14) where the same word is used as here; so that it shall not be legible, as any writing that is blotted out by ink, or any other liquor, so that it cannot be read; in like manner this their covenant with death should be so obliterated, that the articles of it could not be made out, and so of no force; thus the Targum renders it,

“shall be made void;”

(see Gill on “²³⁸¹⁵Isaiah 28:15”):

and your agreement with hell shall not stand; or “vision”, or “provision”^{f558}, which they had made by compact, with the greatest care, caution, and foresight, to secure themselves from destruction, would be found insufficient. The Targum is,

“and our peace, which was with the destroyer, shall not stand;”

(see Gill on “²³⁸¹⁵Isaiah 28:15”):

when the overflowing scourge shall pass through: the land of Judea and the city of Jerusalem; (see Gill on “²³⁸¹⁵Isaiah 28:15”):

then shall ye be trodden down by it: though they flattered themselves it should not come near them, yet it would; and they would not be able to stand before it, but would be thrown down, and trampled upon by it as the mire of the streets; (see ⁴²¹²⁴Luke 21:24).

Ver. 19. *From the time that it goeth forth, it shall take you, &c.*] Or, “as soon as it passeth through”^{f559}, “it shall take you away”; as soon as it begins to overflow, and as it goes along, it shall make clear work, and carry you away with it; you will not be able to resist it, to withstand its motion, and stop its progress; but will be borne down by it, and carried away with it, either destroyed by it at once, or carried into captivity; so the Targum,

“in the time of its passing over, it shall carry you captive:”

for morning by morning shall it pass over, by day and by night; signifying that it should come very early, before they were aware of it and prepared for it, and should be constant and incessant, day after day, day and night, continually, until it had done its work thoroughly, in the utter destruction of them; which was true of the Assyrian, but especially of the Roman army:

and it shall be a vexation only [to] understand the report; the fame, the rumour of the enemy’s coming, of his invasion of the land, of the devastation he makes everywhere, and of his progress and near approach to Jerusalem; the bare report of this only being made and confirmed, so that there was reason to believe it, would produce anguish and distress of mind, cause a commotion, a fear and trembling, and shaking of the joints, as the word^{f560} signifies; and therefore, how dreadful must the calamity itself be! or else this may be meant of the report of the prophecy of the Lord, which before they would not believe; but now the judgments

threatened coming upon them, they would be made to understand it; so the Vulgate Latin version renders it, “and only vexation alone shall give understanding to the report”; and to this sense the Targum,

“and it shall be, before the time of the curse comes, that ye shall understand the words of the prophets;”

and, when it was come, should know to their sorrow, and by sad experience, the truth of what they had said.

Ver. 20. *For the bed is shorter than that [a man] can stretch himself [on it], &c.*] When a bed is short, a man cannot lie at his full length, and at ease:

and the covering narrower than that he can wrap himself [in it]; when the bedclothes are narrow a man cannot cover himself with them, so as to be warm and comfortable. These proverbial expressions are interpreted by Kimchi of Jerusalem, when besieged by the Assyrian army, when the inhabitants of it were much straitened, distressed, and made uncomfortable; perhaps it may be better understood of the same city when besieged by the Romans, to which the Jews flocked from all parts, in such numbers, for shelter, that there was not room enough for them, at least not provision, and which was the cause of that great distress and miserable condition they were reduced to: in general, the design of the words may be to show that all refuges and shelters, all means made use of for safety and protection, by which they endeavoured to cover and secure themselves, would be insufficient; and particularly such that laid themselves at ease on the bed of their own righteousness, not submitting to Christ and his righteousness, and covered themselves with the rags of their own doings, and not with the garments of his salvation, would find themselves in a very uncomfortable and unsafe state.

Ver. 21. *For the Lord shall rise up as [in] Mount Perazim, &c.*] Where the Lord broke forth on David’s enemies the Philistines, as the breach of waters; (see ²³⁸⁷Isaiah 28:17) and destroyed them, from whence the place had the name of Baalperazim, (¹⁰⁵⁰2 Samuel 5:20). The Targum is,

“for as the mountain which moved when the glory of the Lord was revealed in the days of Uzziah the king;”

referring to the earthquake in his time, (³⁰⁰⁰Amos 1:1 ³⁸⁴⁵Zechariah 14:5):

he shall be wroth as [in] the valley of Gibeon; Josephus Ben Gorion^{f561} makes mention of the valley of Gibeon, where a battle was fought between Cestius the Roman general and the Jews, in which the latter got the victory, and says it was about six miles from Jerusalem: here the Philistines were smitten, returning again after they had been vanquished before, (^{<1346>}1 Chronicles 14:16) though it is more generally thought that this refers to the discomfiture of the Canaanites in the times of Joshua, when also hailstones fell upon them, and destroyed many; (see ^{<2387>}Isaiah 28:17) and when the sun and moon stood still till Israel were avenged on their enemies, and which showed the power and presence of God with them, (^{<6100>}Joshua 10:10-13) and so the Targum, which adds,

“and in the miracles which he (the Lord) did for Joshua, in the valley of Gibeon;”

and these instances are mentioned as proofs of the divine power and vengeance, and to assure the Jews that the Lord would rise up in the same wrath and indignation against them, and consume them:

that he may do his work, his strange work, and bring to pass his act, his strange act; which may be called so, because in the above mentioned instances he fought for his people Israel, but in this he would fight against them; and because this was a work and act of strict justice and awful severity, and not so agreeable to him as acts of mercy, grace, and goodness, in which he delights; or rather, because it was an unusual one, marvellous and surprising, and would be so to the Jews themselves, and even to their enemies, and to all the world, as the destruction of Jerusalem was, especially as by the Romans; (see ^{<3005>}Habakkuk 1:5,6). Vitranga, besides this, adds the calling of the Gentiles, the seizing of the inheritance of the world, and the destruction of the kingdom of Satan in the Roman empire. The Targum interprets this in a very contrary sense, of such as do strange works, idolatry, for which they are consumed.

Ver. 22. *Now therefore be ye not mockers*, &c.] At the words of the prophets, and the judgments denounced by them, which is very common, when they are deferred, and not immediately executed: this was the case before the destruction of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans, and one cause of it, (^{<1436>}2 Chronicles 36:16) and also by the Romans; (see ^{<4131>}Acts 13:41):

lest your bands be made strong; punishment become heavier, and more grievous; and so the Syriac version renders it; as prisoners that attempt to

make their escape have their bonds and fetters made faster, and so are put to more pain and distress; to which the allusion seems to be, signifying, that by scoffing and mocking at the word of God they would bring upon themselves greater and sorer punishments, (^{<8019>}Hebrews 10:29):

for I have heard from the Lord GOD of hosts; in a vision from him, by a spirit of prophecy, as a secret communicated by him; for whatever the Lord did he usually made it known to his prophets; and it might be depended upon what they said, as being what the Lord had declared in their hearing; (see ^{<8017>}Amos 3:7):

a consumption, even determined upon the whole earth: or, “on the whole land”, the land of Judea; for this destruction seems only to respect that; and is the same with “the consummation, and that determined”, that should be “poured upon the desolate”, (^{<2027>}Daniel 9:27) which manifestly designs the destruction of the Jews by the Romans, which was an affair determined by the Lord, whose counsel shall stand, and therefore would surely come to pass.

Ver. 23. *Give ye ear, and hear my voice*, &c.] So said the prophet, as the Targum introduces the words; and because what he was about to say was of importance, and delivered in a parabolical manner, and required attention, he makes use of a variety of words to the same purpose, to engage their attention:

hearken, and hear my speech; now about to be made; listen to it, and get the understanding of it.

Ver. 24. *Doth the ploughman plough all day to sow?* &c.] Or, “every day”; he ploughs in order to sow; by ploughing he prepares the ground for sowing, that is his end in ploughing; and he may plough a whole day together when he is at it, but he does not plough every day in the year; he has other work to do besides ploughing, as is later mentioned; such as breaking of clods, sowing seed, and threshing the grain after it is ripe, and reaped, and gathered. The prophet signifies that the Lord, like a ploughman, had different sorts of work; he was not always doing one and the same thing; and particularly, that he would not be always admonishing and threatening men, and making preparation for his judgments, but in a little time he would execute them, signified by after metaphors:

doth he open and break the clods of his ground? he does, with a mallet or iron bar, or with the harrow; whereby the ground is made even, and so

more fit for sowing. The Targum interprets the whole in a mystical sense, of the instructions of the prophets, thus,

“at all times the prophets prophesy to teach, if perhaps the ears of sinners may be opened to receive instruction;”

and it may be applied to the work of the Spirit of God upon men’s hearts, by the ministry of the word: the heart of man is like the “fallow ground”, hard and obdurate, barren and unfruitful; the ministry of the word is the “plough”, and ministers are the “ploughmen”; but it is the Spirit of God that makes their ministrations useful, for the conviction of the mind, the pricking of the heart, and breaking it in pieces; (see ^{<2018>}Jeremiah 4:3 23:29).

Ver. 25. *When he hath made plain the face thereof,* &c.] By harrowing it, after it is ploughed:

doth he not cast abroad the fitches, and scatter the cummin; in sowing them in the ground, prepared for them; the former of these does not seem to be the same we so call, but something else. The Septuagint version calls it the little “melanthion”^{f562}, the same with the “nigella”^{f563} of the Latins, and is sometimes called “gith”^{f564}, as in the Vulgate Latin version here. The Syriac and Arabic versions render it “anise”, which is mentioned along with “cummin”, as common with the Jews, and which, in Christ’s time, were tithed, (^{<4123>}Matthew 23:23) and both these in the text are by Kimchi said to be the food of man:

and cast in the principal wheat and the appointed barley and the rye in their place? each in their proper place, or in soil suitable for them; some land being more suitable for the one than for the other, which the husbandman understands: “wheat” is the choicest and most excellent grain, and therefore called “principal”; or else because it is “first” sown, or sown in the best and “principal” ground: “barley” is said to be “appointed”, or to be sowed in a place appointed for it; or “marked”^{f565}, referring either to places marked in the field, where it should be sown; which sense the Targum and the Jewish commentators favour; or to sacks of it marked, in which the best seed for sowing was put: “and the rye in its border”^{f566}; appointed for that Jarchi thinks this refers to the different places of sowing; the wheat was sown in the middle of the field; barley round about the mark or sign for that purpose; and rye upon the borders. The Targum is,

“as wheat is sown in an uncultivated field, and barley by the signs, and rye by the borders;”

but the whole is intended to express the wisdom of the husbandman, in sowing different seeds, not in the same field, which was forbidden by the law, (⁴⁸⁹⁹Leviticus 19:19) but in ground suitable to each of them; and in the mystical sense designs the execution of divine judgments on men, in proportion to their sins, after they have been admonished of them, and reproof for them; and may be applied also to the sowing of the seed of the word in the hearts of men, and illustrated by the parable of the sower in (⁴¹³⁹Matthew 13:19-23).

Ver. 26. *For his God doth instruct him to discretion, [and] doth teach him.*] God gives the husbandman instruction and discretion how to sow his seed, at what time, and in a proper place; for this refers to what goes before; though some think a new act is here intended, namely, threshing or beating out of corn, rendering the words, “and he” (the husbandman) “beateth it out, according to the discretion”, or “judgment, his God teaches him”^{f567}; which is expressed in general terms here, and is next particularly insisted on in the following verses (²³⁸⁷Isaiah 28:27-29).

Ver. 27. *For the fitches are not threshed with a threshing instrument, &c.]* A wooden sledge, dray, or cart, drawn on wheels; the bottom of which was stuck with iron teeth, and the top filled with stones, to press it down with the weight thereof, and was drawn by horses, or oxen, to and fro, over the sheaves of corn, laid in proper order, whereby the grain was separated from the husk: (see Gill on “⁴¹⁰⁰1 Corinthians 9:9”) but fitches, the grain of them being more easily separated, such an instrument was not used in threshing them:

neither is a cart wheel turned about upon the cummin; the cart wheel of the above instrument was not turned upon the cummin, that being also more easily threshed, or beaten out, and therefore another method was used with these, as follows:

but the fitches are beaten out with a staff, and the cummin with a rod: in like manner as corn is with us threshed out with a flail; so the Lord proportions the chastisement, and corrections of his people to the grace and strength that he gives them; he afflicts them either more gently, or more severely, as they are able to bear it; with some he uses his staff and rod, and with others his threshing instrument and cart wheel; some being

easier and others harder to be wrought upon by the afflictive dispensations of Providence; (see ^{<460B>}1 Corinthians 10:13) or this may point out the difference between the punishment of wicked men and the chastisement of the saints.

Ver. 28. *Bread [corn] is bruised, &c.*] The corn which bread is made of is bruised and ground in a mill:

because he will not always be threshing it; for there is another way of bringing it to flour, that so it may be made bread, namely, by grinding it in a mill; and therefore the husbandman uses his discretion in threshing it; he will not thresh it too much, nor too long, no more than what is necessary to get out the grain, but will take care that he does not bruise and break it; as follows:

nor break [it with] the wheel of his cart, nor bruise it [with] his horsemen; though he makes use of the above threshing instrument, drawn upon wheels by horses, or oxen, for the threshing out of wheat, barley, or rye, corn of which bread is made; yet he takes care that it is not crushed and spoiled by the wheels of the cart, or the feet of the horses, or oxen, going too often over it; by all which may be signified the tender regard of God in afflicting his own people; he will not always be chiding, striving, and contending with them, or be always angry, and ever afflicting, and, when he does afflict, it is in a tender and careful manner, (^{<943B>}Psalm 103:9,13 125:3 ^{<237B>}Isaiah 27:8,9 57:16).

Ver. 29. *This also cometh from the Lord of hosts, &c.*] All this wisdom the husbandman has, in manuring his ground, in sowing it with proper seed, and in threshing it out in a manner suitable to it. Agriculture or husbandry, even among the Heathens, is always ascribed to God, as an invention of his, and it was the first work which God put man to, and instructed him in, (^{<082B>}Genesis 3:23 4:2) and as this, so all other arts, and sciences, and manufactures, come from God, even all things in nature, providence, and grace, and the knowledge of them; wherefore he himself must be infinitely wise and knowing; (see ^{<991B>}Psalm 94:9,10) and be as he is next described:

[which] is wonderful in counsel: in giving counsel to man, both with respect to things temporal and spiritual; and whose counsel is always wise and good, and for the best; and, when taken, infallibly succeeds. See an instance of his wonderful counsel, (^{<688B>}Revelation 3:18) and also he is “wonderful” in forming wise plans and schemes of operation; the wise plan

of his works of creation and providence was formed in his vast and infinite mind from eternity; the wise scheme of our redemption and salvation by Christ was concerted by him, wherein he has abounded towards us in all wisdom and prudence; and the manner, means, time, and place, of his gathering and the effectual calling of his people, are all wisely fixed by him; and he does all things after “the counsel of his will”, (~~4011~~ Ephesians 1:11) and therefore it follows:

[and] excellent in working; both as to the matter or things wrought by him, which are the most excellent things in nature, providence, and grace, wrought out either by the Father, or the Son, or the Holy Spirit; and as to manner of working, all being done well and wisely; and likewise with respect to the end, his own glory, and the good of his people.