

CHAPTER 29

INTRODUCTION TO ISAIAH 29

This chapter contains a prophecy concerning the destruction of the temple and city of Jerusalem by the Romans; the character and condition of the people of the Jews, previous to it; the calling of the Gentiles, by the preaching of the Gospel; the ruin of antichrist, and the conversion of the Jews, in the latter day. The siege and destruction of Jerusalem are described in (²³⁰¹Isaiah 29:1-6) the disappointment of their enemies, notwithstanding their taking and destroying it, (²³⁰⁷Isaiah 29:7,8) the stupidity, judicial blindness, and hardness of the Jews, which brought on their ruin, are predicted, (²³⁰⁹Isaiah 29:9,10) the ignorance of their learned, as well as of their unlearned men, with respect to the Scripture, and the prophecies of it, (²³¹¹Isaiah 29:11,12) their hypocrisy and formality in worship, (²³¹³Isaiah 29:13) a blast upon all their wisdom and prudence, who thought to be wiser than the Lord, and too many for him, whose folly and atheism are exposed, (²³¹⁴Isaiah 29:14-16), and a great change both in Judea and the Gentile world, by the removal of the Gospel from the one to the other, (²³¹⁷Isaiah 29:17) the effects of which are, deaf sinners hear the word, dark minds are enlightened, and joy increased among the meek and poor, (²³¹⁸Isaiah 29:18,19) the fall of the Jews, or else of antichrist, is foretold, (²³²¹Isaiah 29:20,21) and the chapter is closed with a promise and prophecy of the conversion of the seed of Abraham and Jacob, (²³²²Isaiah 29:22-24).

Ver. 1. *Woe to Ariel, to Ariel, the city [where] David dwelt, &c.*] Many Jewish writers by “Ariel” understand the altar of burnt offerings; and so the Targum,

“woe, altar, altar, which was built in the city where David dwelt;”

and so it is called in (³⁶¹⁵Ezekiel 43:15,16) it signifies “the lion of God”; and the reason why it is so called, the Jews say^{f568}, is, because the fire lay upon it in the form of a lion; but rather the reason is, because it devoured the sacrifices that were laid upon it, as a lion does its prey; though others of them interpret it of the temple, which they say was built like a lion,

narrow behind and broad before^{f569}; but it seems better to understand it of the city of Jerusalem, in which David encamped, as the word^{f570} signifies; or “encamped against”, as some; which he besieged, and took from the Jebusites, and fortified, and dwelt in; and which may be so called from its strength and fortifications, natural and artificial, and from its being the chief city of Judah, called a lion, (^{0440}Genesis 49:9) whose standard had a lion on it, and from whence came the Messiah, the Lion of the tribe of Judah; or rather from its cruelty in shedding the blood of the prophets, and was, as the Lord says, as a lion unto him that cried against him, (^{2478}Jeremiah 12:8) and so the words may be considered as of one calling to Jerusalem, and lamenting over it, as Christ did, “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets”, &c. (^{4237}Matthew 23:37) and the mention of David’s name, and of his dwelling in it, is not only to point out what city is meant, and the greatness and glory of it; but to show that this would not secure it from ruin and destruction^{f571}:

add ye year to year; which some understand of two precise years, at the end of which Jerusalem should be besieged by the army of Sennacherib; but that is not here meant. Cocceius thinks that large measure of time is meant, that one year is the length of time from David’s dwelling in Jerusalem to the Babylonish captivity; and the other year from the time of Zerubbabel and Nehemiah to the destruction by the Romans, which is more likely; but rather the sense is, go on from year to year in your security and vain confidence; or keep your yearly feasts, and offer your yearly sacrifices; as follows:

let them kill sacrifices; the daily and yearly sacrifices; let the people bring them, and the priests offer them, for the time is coming when an end will be put to them; “the feasts shall be cut off”: so the words may be rendered; the festivals shall cease, and be no more observed; and so the Targum,

“the festivities shall cease;”

or, feasts being put for lambs, so in (^{4887}Psalm 118:27) as Ben Melech observes, the sense is, their heads should be cut off^{f572}.

Ver. 2. *Yet I will distress Ariel*, &c.] Or “straiten” it, by causing it to be besieged; and this he would do, notwithstanding their yearly sacrifices, and their observance of their solemn feasts, and other ceremonies of the law, in which they placed their confidence, and neglected weightier matters:

and there shall be heaviness and sorrow; on account of the siege; by reason of the devastations of the enemy without, made on all the cities and towns in Judea round about; and because of the famine and bloodshed in the city:

and it shall be unto me as Ariel; the whole city shall be as the altar; as that was covered with the blood and carcasses of slain beasts, so this with the blood and carcasses of men; and so the Targum,

“and I will distress the city where the altar is, and it shall be desolate and empty; and it shall be surrounded before me with the blood of the slain, as the altar is surrounded with the blood of the holy sacrifices on a solemn feast day all around;”

so Jarchi and Kimchi.

Ver. 3. *And I will camp against thee round about*, &c.] Or as a “ball” or “globe”^{f573}; a camp all around; the Lord is said to do that which the enemy should do, because it was by his will, and according to his order, and which he would succeed and prosper, and therefore the prophecy of it is the more terrible; and it might be concluded that it would certainly be fulfilled, as it was; (see ^{<219B>}Luke 19:43 21:20):

and will lay siege against thee with a mount: raised up for soldiers to get up upon, and cast their arrows into the city from, and scale the walls; Kimchi and Ben Melech interpret it a wooden tower. This cannot be understood of Sennacherib’s siege, for he was not suffered to raise a bank against the city, nor shoot an arrow into it, (^{<237B>}Isaiah 37:33) but well agrees with the siege of Jerusalem by the Romans, as related by Josephus^{f574}:

and I will raise forts against thee; from whence to batter the city; the Romans had their battering rams.

Ver. 4. *And thou shalt be brought down*, &c.] To the ground, and laid level with it, even the city of Jerusalem, as it was by the Romans; and as it was predicted by Christ it would, (^{<219A>}Luke 19:44) though some understand this of the humbling of the inhabitants of it, by the appearance of Sennacherib’s army before it, and of which they interpret the following clauses:

[and] shalt speak out of the ground, and thy speech shall be low out of the dust; which some explain of the submissive language of Hezekiah to Sennacherib, and of his messengers to Rabshakeh, (^{<12184>}2 Kings 18:14,26) as Aben Ezra and Kimchi; but it is expressive of the great famine in Jerusalem, at the time of its siege by the Romans, when the inhabitants were so reduced by it, as that they were scarce able to speak as to be heard, and could not stand upon their legs, but fell to the ground, and lay in the dust, uttering from thence their speech, with a faint and feeble voice:

and thy voice shall be as one that hath a familiar spirit, out of the ground, and thy speech shall whisper out of the dust: or peep and chirp, as little birds, as Jarchi and Kimchi, as those did that had familiar spirits; and as the Heathen oracles were delivered, as if they came out of the bellies of those that spoke, or out of caves and hollow places in the earth; and this was in just retaliation to these people, who imitated such practices, and made use of such spirits; (see ^{<23089>}Isaiah 8:19).

Ver. 5. *Moreover, the multitude of thy strangers shall be like small dust, &c.]* Or “of those that fan thee”^{<f575>}, as the Vulgate Latin Version; and so the Targum,

“of those that scatter thee;”

or of thine enemies, as others; meaning the Romans, who were a strange people to them, who got the dominion over them, and scattered them abroad in the world: and the simile of “small dust”, to which they are compared, is not used to express the weakness of them, but the greatness of their number, which was not to be counted, any more than the dust of the earth; (see ^{<04230>}Numbers 23:10):

and the multitude of the terrible ones [shall be] as chaff that passeth away; designing the same numerous army of the Romans as before, who were terrible to the Jews: nor does this metaphor signify any imbecility in them, and much less the ruin of them, but their swiftness in executing the judgments of God upon his people, who moved as quick as chaff, or any such light thing, before a mighty wind:

yea, it shall be at an instant suddenly; either the numerous army should be suddenly before Jerusalem, or the destruction of that city should be as it were in a moment; and though the siege of it lasted long, yet the last sack and ruin of it was suddenly, and in so short a time, that it might be said to be in an instant, in a moment, as it were. The Jewish writers interpret this

of the sudden destruction of Sennacherib's army by the angel, (~~2195~~ 2 Kings 19:35) but the next words show that the destruction of Jerusalem is meant.

Ver. 6. *Thou shalt be visited of the Lord of hosts with thunder, and with earthquake, and great noise, &c.*] That is, not the multitude of strangers and terrible ones, unless they could be understood of the wicked among the Jews; but thou Ariel, or Jerusalem, shalt be punished by the Lord of hosts; for this visitation or punishment was from him, for their sins and iniquities; the Romans were only the instruments he made use of, and the executioners of his vengeance; which was attended with thunder in the heavens, a shaking of the earth, and a great noise or voice heard in the temple, saying, let us depart hence; at which time comets were seen in the heavens, and chariots and armed men in the air, and one of the gates of the temple opened of itself⁴⁵⁷⁶: it is added,

with storm and tempest, and the flame of devouring fire; with which the temple was burnt by the Roman army, when it came in like a storm and tempest, and carried all before it.

Ver. 7. *And the multitude of all the nations that fight against Ariel, &c.*] The Roman army, which consisted of men of all nations, that fought against Jerusalem; the city in which was the altar, as the Targum paraphrases it:

even all that fight against her, and her munition, and that distress her; that besieged it, and endeavoured to demolish its walls, towns, and fortifications, as they did:

shall be as a dream of a night vision: meaning either that the Roman empire should quickly fall, and pass away, and come to nothing, like a dream in the night, as it soon began to decay after the destruction of Jerusalem, and also the Pagan religion in it; or that the Roman army would be disappointed at the taking of the city, expecting to find much riches, and a great spoil, and should not; and so be like a man that dreams, and fancies he is in the possession of what he craves, but, when he awakes, finds he has got nothing. This is more largely exemplified in the following verse (~~2218~~ Isaiah 29:8).

Ver. 8. *It shall be even as when a hungry [man] dreameth, and, behold, he eateth, &c.*] That is, he dreams of food, and imagines it before him, and that he is really eating it:

but he awaketh, and his soul is empty; his stomach is empty when he awakes, and he finds he has not ate anything at all:

or as when a thirsty man dreameth, and, behold, he drinketh: who fancies that he has got a cup of liquor in his hand, and at his mouth, and is drinking it with a great deal of eagerness and pleasure:

but he awaketh, and, behold, [he is] faint, and his soul hath appetite; when he awakes, he is not at all refreshed with his imaginary drinking, but still desires liquor to revive his fainting spirits, and extinguish his thirst:

so shall the multitude of all the nations be, that fight against Mount Zion; either shall quickly perish; or, having raised their expectations, and pleased themselves with the booty they should obtain, of which they thought themselves sure, shall find themselves mistaken, and all like an illusive dream. Some interpret this of the disappointment of Sennacherib's army; and others of the insatiable cruelty of the Chaldeans; but rather, if the above sense pleases not, it would be better to understand it of the Jews, who, amidst their greatest danger, flattered themselves with the hope of deliverance, which was all a dream and an illusion; and to which sense the following words seem to incline.

Ver. 9. *Stay yourselves, and wonder*, &c.] Stop a while, pause a little, consider within yourselves the case and circumstances of these people, and wonder at their stupidity. Kimchi thinks these words were spoken in the times of Ahaz, with respect to the men of Judah; and so Aben Ezra says, they are directed to the men of Zion; and it is generally thought that they are spoken to the more religious and sober part of them; though, by the following verse (²³⁹⁰Isaiah 29:10), it appears that the case was general, and that the people to whom this address is made were as stupid as others:

cry ye out, and cry; or, “delight yourselves”⁵⁷⁷, as in the margin; take your pleasure, indulge yourselves in carnal mirth, gratify your sensual appetite in rioting and wantonness, and then “cry” and lament, as you will have reason to do. Kimchi says, his father rendered the words, “awake yourselves, and awake others”; that is, from that deep sleep they were fallen into, afterwards mentioned:

they are drunken, but not with wine; not with that only, for otherwise many of them were given to drunkenness in a literal sense, (²³⁰⁷Isaiah 28:7) but they were like drunken men, as stupid, senseless, and secure, though in the utmost danger:

they stagger, but not with strong drink; unsteady in their counsels and resolutions, in their principles and practices, and stumble in their goings.

Ver. 10. *For the Lord hath poured out upon you a spirit of deep sleep, &c.*] Gave them up to a stupid frame of spirit; to a reprobate mind, a mind void of judgment and sense; to judicial blindness and hardness of heart: this was remarkably fulfilled in the Jews, in the times of Christ and his apostles, who choosing darkness rather than the light of the Gospel, which shone around them, were righteously given up to such a temper of mind; and to nothing else can be imputed their obstinate rejection of the Messiah, against the most glaring light and evidence. The Apostle Paul produces this passage, in proof of that blindness that had happened unto them in his time, (~~410~~Romans 11:7,8):

and hath closed your eyes; that is, the eyes of their understandings, so that they could not see the characters of the Messiah, and the fulfilment of prophecies in Jesus of Nazareth; nor the danger they were in, nor the ruin that was coming upon their nation, nor even when it was come, still flattering themselves with safety and deliverance:

the prophets and your rulers, the seers hath he covered; the eyes of them, as before; not only the common people were blinded, but even the Scribes and Pharisees, the elders of the people, their ecclesiastical rulers, who pretended to be seers, and to know more than others; even “for judgment”, for the judicial blindness and hardness of these Christ “came, that they which see might be made blind”, (~~409~~John 9:39). The words may be rendered, “your heads, the seers, hath he covered”^{f578}; and there may be an allusion to the covering of the head with a veil, an emblem of that veil of ignorance and infidelity which still remains upon the Jews. The Targum renders it,

“the prophets, and the Scribes, and the teachers that teach the law.”

Ver. 11. *And the vision of all is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed, &c.*] The prophecies of all the prophets contained in the Scriptures; or all the prophecies in the book of Isaiah, concerning the Messiah, were no more seen, known, and understood, both by the priests and the people, than if they had been in a book, written, rolled up, and sealed. And this was owing, not to the obscurity of these writings, or because they were really sealed up, but to the blindness and stupidity of the people, whose eyes were closed, and their heads covered; and the

prophecies of the Scriptures were only so to them, “unto you”, not unto others; not to the apostles of Christ, whose understandings were opened by him, to understand the things written concerning him, in the law, in the prophets, and in the psalms; but the Jewish rulers, civil and ecclesiastical, as well as the common people, understood them not, though they were the means of fulfilling many of them; and they were as ignorant of the prophecies concerning their own ruin and destruction, for their rejection of Christ; (see ^{<4247>}Luke 24:27,44,45 ^{<4487>}Acts 3:17,18 13:27):

which [men] deliver to one that is learned; or, “that knows the book”^{f579}; or “letters”, as the Septuagint; (see ^{<4075>}John 7:15) such were the Scribes, called γραμματεῖς, or “letter men”, men that could read well, and understood language:

saying, Read this, I pray thee; or read this now, as the Targum, and interpret it, and tell the meaning of it:

and he saith, I cannot, for it [is] sealed; which Kimchi says was an excuse invented, because he had no mind to read it, or otherwise he could have said, open, and I will read it; or he might have broke off the seal; but knowing there were difficult things, and things hard to be understood, in it, did not care to look into it, and read it, and attempt to explain it to others.

Ver. 12. *And the book is delivered to him that is not learned*, &c.] Or that knows not a book or letters, as before, and so consequently cannot read, having never been put to school, or learned to read:

saying, Read this, I pray thee; or “now”^{f580}, at once, immediately:

and he saith, I am not learned; he does not excuse himself on account of its being sealed, but on account of his want of learning; which shows the former was but an excuse. In short, the sum of it is this, that neither the learned nor unlearned, among the Jews, cared to read their Bibles, or to search the Scriptures, and the prophecies in them, concerning the Messiah, and that neither of them understood them; these things were hid from the wise and prudent, as well as from the ignorant and unlearned of the people, in common, and were only made known to a few babes and sucklings. There was great ignorance of the Scriptures in the times of Christ, to which these passages truly belong, (^{<4112>}Matthew 11:25,26 22:29).

Ver. 13. *Wherefore the Lord said, &c.*] Concerning the hypocritical people of the Jews in Christ's time, as the words are applied by our Lord himself, (⁴¹⁸⁷Matthew 15:7):

Forasmuch as this people draw near to [me] with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me; Kimchi observes, there is a double reading of the word **צָנַן**, rendered "draw near": in one reading of it, it signifies to be "afflicted"; and then the sense is, "when this people are afflicted, with their mouth, and with their lips, they honour me"; that is, when they are in distress, they pray unto him, and profess a great regard for him, speak honourably of him, and reverently to him, hoping he will help and relieve them; (see ²³⁶⁶Isaiah 26:16) but the other reading of the word, in which it has the signification of "drawing near", is confirmed, not only by the Masora on the text, but by the citation of it in (⁴¹⁸⁷Matthew 15:7,8) and designs the approach of these people to God, in acts of religion and devotion, in praying to him, and praising of him, and expressing great love and affection for him, and zeal for his cause and interest; but were all outwardly, with their lips and mouths only:

but have removed their heart far from me; these were not employed in his service, which is the main thing he requires and regards, but were engaged elsewhere; while their bodies were presented before him, and their mouths and lips were moving to him, their affections were not set upon him, nor the desires of their souls unto him, nor had they any real hearty concern for his glory:

and their fear towards me is taught by the precept of men; their worship of God was not according to the prescription of God, and his revealed will; but according to the traditions of the elders, which they preferred to the word of God, and, by observing them, transgressed it, and made it of no effect; (see ⁴¹⁸⁸Matthew 15:3,6,9).

Ver. 14. *Therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvellous work among this people, &c.*] Because of their hypocrisy and formality, their regard to men, their doctrines and commandments, and not to the will and word of God, therefore he determines "to deal marvellously with this people":

[even] a marvellous work, and a wonder; that is, something exceedingly marvellous, which would be matter of astonishment to everyone that observed it; and is as follows:

for the wisdom of their wise [men] shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent [men] shall be hid; and be no more: this was eminently fulfilled in the wise men, the doctors and learned Rabbins of the Jews; and they themselves own^{f581}, that, from the time the temple was destroyed, the wise men became like to Scribes, and the Scribes to those that looked after the synagogues, and these became like the common people, and they grew worse and worse: and Maimonides acknowledges^{f582}, that this respects their present case; he says, when the Heathen princes destroyed their best things, took away their wisdom, and their books, and killed their wise men, they became ignorant and unlearned; which evil God threatened them for their iniquities, as is said in this passage: and also this had its accomplishment in the wise philosophers of the Gentiles; (see ~~408~~1 Corinthians 1:18-20).

Ver. 15. *Woe unto them*, &c.] Or, “O ye”,

that seek deep to hide their counsel from the Lord; which they consulted against Christ, to take away his life, to persecute his apostles, and hinder the spread of his Gospel; which though they consulted in private, and formed deep schemes, imagining they were not observed by the Lord, yet he that sits in the heaven saw them, and laughed at their vain imaginations, (~~410~~Psalm 2:1-4):

and their works are in the dark; in the dark night, as if the darkness could conceal them from the all seeing eye of God; such works are truly works of darkness, but cannot be hid, though they flatter themselves they will:

and they say, Who seeth us? and who knoweth us? as no man, they imagined, did, so not God himself; into such atheism do wicked men sink, when desirous of bringing their schemes into execution, they have taken great pains to form; and which they please themselves are so deeply laid, as that they cannot fail of succeeding; but hear what follows (~~2916~~Isaiah 29:16).

Ver. 16. *Surely your turning of things upside down*, &c.] Revolving things in their minds, throwing them into different shapes, forming various schemes, and inverting the order of things by their deep counsels, and seeking to hide things from the Lord: or, “O the perverseness of you”^{f583}; in imagining and saying that no eye saw, nor anyone knew, what they did, not the Lord himself. So the Vulgate Latin version, “this is your perverse thought”; namely, what is before related. The Targum is,

“do you seek to pervert your works?”

Our version joins it with what follows; though a stop should be made here, because of the accent:

shall be esteemed as the potter's clay: their perverse counsels and designs shall be made of no more account with God, and be as easily turned about and brought to nought, as the clay can be formed, and shaped, and marred by the potter, at his pleasure: “if” or “surely as the potter's clay shall it be esteemed”, as the words may be rendered; or it may refer to their persons, as well as their counsels. So the Septuagint version, “shall ye not be reckoned as the potter's clay?” ye shall. To which agrees the Targum,

“behold, as the clay in the hand of the potter, so are ye accounted before me;”

who could do with them just as seemed good in his sight. Deuteronomy Dieu renders them, “shall the potter be reckoned as the clay?” Such was the stupidity and perverseness of the Jews, in endeavouring to hide their counsels from the Lord, and in fancying that he did not see and know them, that they thought God was like themselves; which is all one as if the potter was reckoned as the clay, for they were the clay, and God the potter. The Vulgate Latin version is, “as if the clay could think against the potter”; contrive schemes to counterwork him; which, to imagine, was not more stupid, than to think they could do anything against the Lord:

for shall the work say of him that made it, He made me not? to say that God does not know what is done by his creatures, is in effect to say that he did not make them; for he that made them must needs know their actions, and even the very thoughts of their hearts; as he that makes a watch knows all that is in it, and the motions of it:

or shall the thing framed say of him that framed it, He had no understanding? or judgment, did not know how to make it as it should be. So the Septuagint version, “thou hast not made me wisely”; or he did not understand the work itself, the make and fashion of it. So the Targum,

“thou does not understand me.”

This might as well be said, as for a creature to pretend that God does not know what and where he is, or what he is doing.

Ver. 17. [*Is*] *it not yet a very little while*, &c.] In a short space of time, in a few years, what follows would come to pass; when there would be a strange change and alteration made in the world, and by which it would appear, that the Lord not only knows, but foreknows, all things:

and Lebanon shall be turned into a fruitful field; the forest of Lebanon should be as Carmel. The meaning is, that the Gentile world, which was like a forest uncultivated, and full of unfruitful trees, to which wicked men may be compared, should through the preaching of the Gospel be manured, become God's husbandry, and be like a fruitful field, abounding with people and churches, fruitful in grace and good works:

and the fruitful field shall be esteemed as a forest? the people of the Jews, who once had the word and ordinances of God, and were a fruitful and flourishing people in religion; through their rejection of the Messiah, and contempt of his Gospel, should be deprived of all their privileges, and become like a forest or barren land: this was fulfilled, when the kingdom of God was taken from them, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits of it, (^{424B}Matthew 21:43). (see ⁴³²⁵Isaiah 32:15 35:1,2).

Ver. 18. *And in that day shall the deaf hear the words of the book*, &c.] That is, in the Gospel day, or times of the Gospel dispensation, when that should be preached to the Gentiles; who before were deaf, but now should be made to hear, and be willing to hear, and hear so as to understand the doctrines contained in the Scriptures, the prophecies of them concerning the Messiah; even the words of that book that is sealed to the Jews, and could not be read, neither by the learned nor unlearned among them; but should be both read, heard, and understood, by the Gentiles, having ears given them to hear the Gospel, to receive its doctrines, and obey its ordinances:

and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity, and out of darkness; such, who before were blind and ignorant as to spiritual things, being called, through the ministry of the word, out of darkness into marvellous light, and their eyes being opened by it, should now see their sin and misery, their lost and dangerous estate, the way of life and salvation by Christ, the great and glorious truths of the Gospel, and what eye has not seen, nor ear heard.

Ver. 19. *The meek also shall increase [their] joy in the Lord*, &c.] The "meek", lowly, and humble, are such who are made sensible of sin, and

become humble under a sense of it; who see the insufficiency of their own righteousness, and submit to the righteousness of Christ; who attribute all they have, and are, to the free grace of God, and quietly submit to every dispensation of Providence; who are not easily provoked by men, but bear much and long without reviling; who envy not those that are above them in gifts and grace, nor despise those that are below them, and think the worst of themselves, and the best of others; now these have joy in the Lord, in the Word of the Lord, as the Targum, in the Lord Jesus Christ; in the greatness and glory of his person as Jehovah, and so able to save to the uttermost; in him as the Lord their righteousness; in his blood and sacrifice, for the pardon and expiation of their sins; in his fulness as theirs, to supply their wants; in his salvation, being so great, so full, so free, and suitable to them: and whereas their joy may be interrupted through the corruptions of their hearts, the temptations of Satan, and divine desertions, they “shall add”^{f584} joy in the Lord, as in the original; they shall repeat it, it shall come again, it shall be restored unto them, and they shall afresh exercise it, and “increase” in it, as we render it; for spiritual joy may be increased by the discoveries of the love of God; by fresh views of Christ, through an increase of knowledge of him, and faith in him; by means of meditation and prayer, and by reading and hearing the word:

and the poor among men shall rejoice in the Holy One of Israel; or, “the poorest of men”^{f585}, who were so in a literal sense; for such were the persons, both among Jews and Gentiles, who in the first times of the Gospel were brought to the knowledge of Christ, and faith in him, (~~4004~~ Matthew 11:4 ~~4026~~ 1 Corinthians 1:26,27) or such who are “poor in spirit”; not only spiritually poor, but who are sensible of their spiritual poverty, and apply to Christ for the true riches of grace: the words may be rendered, “Adam’s poor”; such who are impoverished by Adam’s fall, and are sensible of it; these, perceiving durable riches and righteousness, even unsearchable riches, in Christ, rejoice in him, “the Holy One of Israel”; who is holy in himself, the sanctifier of others, and is made satisfaction to all his people. The Targum is,

“in the word of the Holy One of Israel.”

This joy is not carnal, but spiritual; it is the fruit of the Spirit of God, and is called joy in the Holy Ghost; as it also is the joy of faith, which goes along with it, is through it, and increases as that does; it is peculiar to believers,

unknown to the world, and is unspeakable, and full of glory: and such kind of rejoicing, and an increase of it, are what belong to Gospel times.

Ver. 20. *For the terrible one is brought to nought, &c.*] Who before was so to the people of God; meaning not Sennacherib king of Assyria, but some formidable enemy or enemies under the Gospel dispensation; as the Scribes and Pharisees, and the Jewish sanhedrim; who were “violent”^{f586}, as it may be rendered, violent persecutors of the followers of Christ, the meek and poor before described; who were brought to nought, and their power ceased at the destruction of Jerusalem; and the Roman emperor, with all subordinate rulers and governors in the empire, who harassed the Christians in a terrible manner, but were at last brought to nought by Constantine, and their persecution ceased; and the Romish antichrist, who has been so terrible, that none could or dared oppose him; he in a little time will be brought to nought, and cease to be. The Septuagint version renders it, “the wicked one faileth”; and uses the same word^{f587}, by which antichrist is described, (~~3~~2 Thessalonians 2:8) also Satan, that terrible enemy of the saints, shall be brought to nought; first bound for a thousand years; and afterwards, being loosed, shall be taken again, and cast into the lake of fire; all which will be matter of joy to the meek and lowly:

and the scorner is consumed; the same as before, only represented under a different character; the Jew, that mocked at Christ, because of his meanness, and that of his followers, that scoffed at his doctrines and miracles; and the Gentile, that derided his cross, and the preaching of it; and antichrist, whose mouth is full of blasphemies against God, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in it:

and all that watch for iniquity are cut off; that cannot sleep unless they commit it, and seek for and take all opportunities of doing it; or watch for iniquity in others, in Christ, and the professors of his religion; or for anything they could call so, that they might have something to accuse them of, and charge them with, and a pretence to proceed against them in colour of law and justice: which has been the practice of Jews, Pagans, and Papists.

Ver. 21. *That make a man an offender for a word, &c.*] Inadvertently spoken, unwarily dropped, without any bad design or ill meaning; or for a word misplaced or misconstrued; or for preaching and professing the word of God, the Gospel of salvation, and adhering to it; which is the true character of the persecutors of good men in all ages: some render the

words, “who make a man sin by a word”^{f588}; by their words and doctrines; and so apply it to the false prophets, as Jarchi does; and very well agrees with the Pharisees in Christ’s time, who made men to sin, to transgress the word of God, by their traditions. The Targum is,

“who condemn the sons of men by their words;”

or for them; particularly for their words of reproof, for which they make them offenders, or pronounce them guilty, as follows:

and lay a snare for him that reproveth in the gate; either for just judges, who sat in the gate of the city, and faithfully reprovved and punished men for their sins; or for such that had boldness and courage enough to reprove wicked men openly, and before all, for their wickedness, the gate being a public place, where people pass and repass; and such that sin openly should be reprovved openly; and particularly the true prophets of the Lord may be referred to, who sometimes were sent to publish their messages, which were frequently reproofs of the people, in the gates of the city; but, above all, Christ seems to be respected, who in the most public manner inveighed against the Scribes and Pharisees for their wickedness, on account of which they sought to entangle him in his talk, and to lay snares for his life; (see ^{<125}Matthew 22:15 23:1-39):

and turn aside the just for a thing of nought; the Targum is,

“that falsely pervert the judgment of the innocent;”

that turn away their judgment, decline doing them justice, but condemn them on frivolous pretences, for just nothing at all, what is mere emptiness and vanity: Christ is eminently the “just” One, righteous in himself, and the author of righteousness to others; yet, on account of things for which there were no foundation, and contrary to all justice, he was proceeded against as a criminal.

Ver. 22. *Therefore thus saith the Lord, who redeemed Abraham, &c.]*

That brought him from Ur of the Chaldees; that freed him from idolatry, and from a vain conversation before conversion, and delivered him from many evils and dangers afterwards; and saved him with an everlasting salvation, through the Messiah, the great Redeemer, that sprung from him, and took on him the nature of the seed of Abraham:

concerning the house of Jacob; his family and posterity, the whole body of the Jewish people; or rather the church of God in Gospel times, consisting of the posterity of Jacob; that trod in his steps, plain hearted Christians, Israelites indeed, praying souls, wrestling Jacobs, and prevailing Israels; of whom the Lord speaks the following things:

Jacob shall not now be ashamed, neither shall his face now wax pale; as formerly, when those that descended from Jacob rejected the Messiah, traduced his character, as if he was the worst of men; blasphemed his person, doctrines, and miracles; spit upon him, buffeted, scourged, and crucified him; which filled those of the same descent and nation, that believed in him, with shame and confusion, so that their faces blushed, or turned pale or white; but now this should be no longer their case, because of the conversion and salvation of that people in the latter day, which is predicted in the next verse (~~23~~ Isaiah 29:23), with which this is connected.

Ver. 23. *But when he seeth his children, the work of my hands, in the midst of him, &c.*] That is, it will be a pleasure to the church of God, signified by Jacob, when they shall observe a great number of Jacob's posterity, or of the Jews, born again, become the "children" of the church, born in her, and nursed up at her side, dandled on her knees, and sucking at the breasts of her consolation; and so in the midst of her, members of her, and in communion with her, having been begotten again, by means of her ministers, through the Gospel, by the Spirit and grace of God; and so "the work of his hands", his new creatures, formed for and by himself; his workmanship, created in Jesus Christ, curiously wrought by his hands, as well as engraven on them:

they shall sanctify my name; meaning either the spiritual seed of Jacob, those regenerated ones, the nation that shall be born at once; these shall sanctify the name of the Lord, not by making, but by declaring him to be holy; by believing in his name; by seeking to him for righteousness and holiness; by embracing his doctrines, and submitting to his ordinances; which will add to the pleasure of the church of Christ. So the Vulgate Latin version renders it, "but when he seeth his children---sanctifying my name"; or else Jacob, that is, the church of Christ, is here meant, who, upon seeing such a large number of Jewish converts, shall sanctify the name of the Lord, or give him praise and glory on account of it; which is repeated with some addition,

and sanctify the Holy One of Jacob, and shall fear the God of Israel; reverence his name and his sanctuary, his word and his ordinances, worship him inwardly and outwardly, fear the Lord and his goodness, both the church and these new converts, (²³⁸⁵Hosea 3:5).

Ver. 24. *They also that erred in spirit,* &c.] In judgment, and in spiritual things; as the Jews have done, ever since the Messiah's coming, being given up to a spirit of error, as the Targum, on (²³⁹⁰Isaiah 29:10) calls it; they have erred concerning the Scriptures, and the prophecies of them; concerning the Messiah, his work and office; concerning his truths and his ordinances, and by preferring their traditions to the word of God: but these

shall come to understanding; to a spiritual understanding of Christ, and salvation by him; of his Gospel, and the doctrines of it; as well as of themselves, their state and condition:

and they that murmured; at Christ, and what was delivered by him; at the reception of sinners by him; at the calling of the Gentiles; and at the providence of God that have attended them, ever since their rejection of the true Messiah:

shall learn doctrine; the doctrine of the Messiah; not the law, as Kimchi and Ben Melech; but the Gospel, which Christ "received" from his Father, as the word^{f589} used signifies, and his disciples received from him, and the church has received from them, and has been transmitted to us Gentiles, and will be to the Jews in the latter day, who will learn the true knowledge of it.