

CHAPTER 52

INTRODUCTION TO ISAIAH 52

This chapter is a prophecy of the glorious state of the church in the latter day, typified by the deliverance of the Jews from Babylon. The church, under the names of Zion and Jerusalem, is exhorted to awake and clothe herself with strength, and with beautiful garments, to shake off her dust, and loose her bands, since she should become a pure and separate people, (^{<2816>}Isaiah 52:1,2) and whereas the Lord's people had been afflicted formerly by the Egyptians, and more lately by the Assyrians, a free redemption is promised them; and the rather they might expect it, since the Lord was no gainer by their affliction, but a loser in his name and honour, as well as they distressed, (^{<2818>}Isaiah 52:3-5). And it is suggested, that the knowledge of the Lord should be spread, the good tidings of peace and salvation be delightfully published, and that the ministers of the Gospel should have clear light, and be harmonious and unanimous in the publishing of it, (^{<2816>}Isaiah 52:6-8). Upon which the waste places of Jerusalem are called upon to rejoice, both because of the restoration of the Jews, and the conversion of the Gentiles, (^{<2810>}Isaiah 2:9,10). And the people of God are called to go out of Babylon, the manner of their departure is directed, and something said for their encouragement, (^{<2811>}Isaiah 52:11,12). And the chapter is concluded with some account of the Messiah, of his humiliation and exaltation, and of his work and office, (^{<2813>}Isaiah 52:13-15), and which are enlarged upon in the next chapter, which ought properly to begin with these last verses.

Ver. 1. *Awake, awake, put on thy strength, O Zion,* &c.] Aben Ezra says, all interpreters agree that this prophecy is yet to be fulfilled, and so it is: by Zion is meant the church in Gospel times, in the latter day glory, which is called upon to awake out of sleep; and this repeated to show what a deep sleep had fallen on her, the danger she was in through it, and the vehemency of the speaker, or the great concern the Lord had for her; and this is the very state and case of the church of Christ now, and the prophecy respects our times, and what follow. There is a general carnal security, and spiritual drowsiness, which has seized the people of God; a

non-exercise of grace among them, at least it is not a lively one; a sluggishness to and in duty; a contentment in the external performance of it; an indifference about the cause of Christ, and power of religion; and an unconcernedness about the truths and ordinances of the Gospel, the discipline of Christ's house, and the honour of it; which the enemy takes the advantage of, and sows his tares of false doctrine and worship; wherefore it is high time to "awake" out of sleep, and to "put on strength", or "clothe"^{f1023} with it, and do the Lord's will, and work and oppose the enemy. Saints are weak in themselves, but they have strength in Christ, and on him should they wait, to him should they look, and on him should they exercise faith for it; they should put on the whole armour of God, clothe themselves with it, resume courage, pluck up a good heart and spirit, and not fear any difficulties, dangers, and enemies.

Put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city; another name for the Gospel church, (see ~~8022~~ Hebrews 12:22), and which is called "the holy city"; referring to the times in the latter day, when holiness shall more appear and prevail in the churches; when saints shall be built up in their holy faith, and more closely attend to holy ordinances, and walk in an holy conversation and godliness; and especially the New Jerusalem church state will answer to this name, and so it is called, (~~6202~~ Revelation 21:2,10), and when the saints will "put on" their "beautiful garments", as on holy days, and times of rejoicing; their mourning will be over, and all signs of it shall be laid aside; the witnesses will no more prophesy in sackcloth; the marriage of the Lamb will be come; the bride made ready, being clothed with fine linen, clean and white, the righteousness of the saints, the garments of Christ's salvation, and the robe of his righteousness; which are the beautiful garments here meant, which serve for many, and answer all the purposes of a garment; as to cover nakedness, preserve from the inclemency of the weather, keep warm and comfortable, beautify and adorn; and beautiful they are, being all of a piece, large and long, pure and spotless, rich and glorious, and which make those beautiful that wear them; and though, being once on, they are never off again; yet saints sometimes are remiss in their acts of faith in putting them on, to which they are here exhorted; (see ~~6697~~ Revelation 19:7,8),

for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean; this shows that the prophecy cannot be understood of Jerusalem literally, nor of the times of the Babylonish captivity, and deliverance from it, since after this the uncircumcised and the unclean did

enter into it, Antiochus Epiphanes, Pompey, and the Romans; but of the mystical Jerusalem, the church of Christ, in the latter day, the spiritual reign of Christ; when the Gentiles, the Papists, meant by the uncircumcised and the unclean, shall no more “come against” them, as the words^{f1024} may be rendered, and persecute them; and when there will be no more a mixture of Papists and Protestants, of heretics and orthodox, of hypocrites and saints; and when there will be few or none under a profession but will have the truth of grace in them; when every pot and vessel in Jerusalem will be holiness to the Lord, and the Heathen will be perished out of the land, (~~3842~~Zechariah 14:21 ~~3906~~Psalms 10:16), and especially this will be true in the personal reign of Christ, in the New Jerusalem church state, into which nothing shall enter that defiles, or makes an abomination, and a lie, (~~6027~~Revelation 21:27).

Ver. 2. *Shake thyself from the dust*, &c.] Or “the dust from thee”^{f1025}, in which she had sat, or rolled herself as a mourner; or where she had been trampled upon by her persecutors and oppressors; but now being delivered from them, as well as from all carnal professors and false teachers, she is called upon to shake herself from the dust of debasement and distress, of false doctrine, superstition, and will worship, in every form and shape, a great deal of which adheres to those churches called reformed.

Arise, and sit down, O Jerusalem; or “sit up”, as it may be rendered; arise from thy low estate, from the ground and dust where thou art cast;

“and sit upon the throne of thy glory,”

so the Targum: it denotes the exaltation of the church from a low to a high estate, signified by the ascension of the witnesses to heaven, (~~6112~~Revelation 11:12). Some render it, “arise, O captivity”; or “captive”^{f1026}; so the word is used in (~~2342~~Isaiah 49:24,25) and agrees with what follows:

loose thyself from the bands of thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion; or loose thou “the bands off thy neck from thee”; which seems to denote the people of God in mystical Babylon, a little before its destruction, who will be called out of it, as they afterwards are in this chapter; and to throw off the Romish yoke, and release themselves from that captivity and bondage they have been brought into by the man of sin, who now himself shall be led captive, (~~6630~~Revelation 13:10).

Ver. 3. *For thus saith the Lord, ye have sold yourselves for nought, &c.]* As Ahab did to work wickedness; as men do freely, and get nothing by it; for there is nothing got in the service of sin, Satan, and antichrist, or by being slaves and vassals to them; not profit, but loss; not pleasure, but pain; not honour, but shame; not liberty, but bondage; not riches and wealth, but poverty and want, which Popery always brings into those countries and people where it obtains.

And ye shall be redeemed without money; in like manner as our spiritual and eternal redemption from sin, Satan, and the law, the world, death, and hell, is obtained; not without the price of the precious blood of the Lamb, but without such corruptible things as silver and gold, (~~1~~ 1 Peter 1:18,19) and without any price paid to those by whom we are held captive, but to God, against whom we have sinned, whose law we have broken, and whose justice must be satisfied; and the blood of Christ is a sufficient price to answer all: hence redemption, though it cost Christ much, is entirely free to us; so will the redemption of the church, from the bondage and slavery of antichrist, be brought about by the power of God undeserved by them; not through their merits, and without any ransom price paid to those who held them captives.

Ver. 4. *For thus saith the Lord God, &c.]* The Lord confirms what he had before said of redeeming his people without money, who had been sold for nothing, by past instances of his deliverance of them:

my people went down aforetime into Egypt to sojourn there; Jacob and his family went down there of their own accord, where they were supplied with food in a time of famine, and settled in a very fruitful part of it; but when they were oppressed, and cried to the Lord, he appeared for them, and delivered them:

and the Assyrian oppressed them without cause; which some understand of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, who they say was an Assyrian, or so called, because of his power and cruelty; or it being usual to call any enemy of the Jews an Assyrian: or rather the words may be rendered, “but the Assyrian”, &c. Pharaoh had some pretence for what he did; the Israelites came into his country, he did not carry them captive; they received many benefits and favours there, and were settled in a part of his dominions, so that he might claim them as his subjects, and refuse to dismiss them; but the Assyrians had nothing to do with them; could not make any pretence why they should invade them, and oppress them; and therefore if the Lord had delivered

them from the one, he would also deliver them from the other. This may be understood of the several invasions and captivities by Pul, Tiglathpileser, Shalmaneser, Sennacherib, and even Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon; Babylon having been the metropolis of Assyria, and a branch of the Assyrian empire, though now translated to the Chaldeans: or the sense is, and the Assyrians also oppressed Israel, as well as the Egyptians, without any just reason, and I delivered them out of their hands; and so I will redeem my church and people out of antichristian bondage and slavery.

Ver. 5. *Now therefore what have I here, saith the Lord, that my people is taken away for nought?* &c.] Or what do I get by it, that my people should be taken and held in captivity without cause? I am no gainer, but a loser by it, as it afterwards appears; and therefore why should I sit still, and delay the deliverance of my people any longer? but as I have delivered Israel out of Egypt, and the Jews from Babylon, so will I deliver my people out of mystical Babylon, spiritually called Sodom and Egypt.

They that rule over them cause them to howl, saith the Lord; they that hath carried them captive, and exercised a tyrannical power over them, cause them to howl under their bondage and slavery, as the Israelites formerly in Egypt; wherefore the Lord is moved with compassion to them, and since neither he nor they were gainers, but losers by their captivity, he determines to deliver them: or it may be rendered, “they cause its rulers to howl”^{f1027}, or his rulers howl; not the common people only, but their governors, civil and ecclesiastical; so Aben Ezra interprets it not of Heathen rulers, but of the great men of Israel:

and my name continually every day is blasphemed; by ascribing their extent of power and authority, their dominions and conquests, not to the Lord, but to their idols, whom they worship, to such or such a saint; opening their mouths in blasphemy against God, his name and tabernacle, and his people, (⁶¹¹⁵ Revelation 13:5,6). The Targum is,

“and always, all the day, because of the worship of my name, they provoke.”

The Septuagint is, “for you always my name is blasphemed among the Gentiles”; (see ⁶¹²⁴ Romans 2:24).

Ver. 6. *Therefore my people shall know my name,* &c.] His nature and perfections; his faithfulness in fulfilling his promises to them; his power in

delivering them out of their bondage; and his justice in punishing their enemies.

Therefore they shall know on that day that I am he that doth speak: behold, it is I; they shall then see, when the people of God are delivered from the antichristian slavery and bondage, and when Babylon is fallen, that all the promises God has spoken are yea and amen; that Jesus Christ is the true and faithful witness; and that these are his true and faithful sayings, which he has spoken.

Ver. 7. *How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings,* &c.] Not of the messenger that brought the news of Cyrus's proclamation of liberty to the Jews; rather of John the Baptist, the forerunner of our Lord; best of Christ himself, the messenger of the covenant, who was anointed to preach glad tidings to the meek, and by whom grace, peace, life, and salvation came; and also of the apostles of Christ, for to Gospel times are these words applied, and to more persons than one, (~~5015~~ Romans 10:15), who were not only seen "upon the mountains" of the land of Israel, as the Targum paraphrases it, where both Christ and his apostles preached, but upon the mountains of the Gentile world; and may denote the pains they took, the circuit they made, and the difficulties they had to encounter with; and the publicness of their ministrations, which lay in bringing "good tidings" of the incarnate Saviour, of God manifest in the flesh, for the word^{f1028} here used has the signification of flesh in it; of good things in the heart of God for his people, in the covenant of grace, in the hands of Christ, and as come by him, and to be had from him; as pardon by his blood; justification by his righteousness; eternal life and happiness through him; and of all good things to be enjoyed now and hereafter. It may be applied to all other ministers of the Gospel in later ages, who are bringers of the same good tidings to the children of men, to whom their very feet are beautiful, and even at a distance, upon the high mountains; not to carnal men, but sensible sinners, to whom the good news of salvation by Christ is welcome. Feet are mentioned instead of their whole persons, because the instruments of motion, and so of bringing the tidings, and of running to and fro with them from place to place, and even though they are dirty and defiled with sin; for Gospel ministers are not free from it, and are men of like passions with others; yet are beautiful when their walk and ministry, conversation and doctrine, agree together; and their feet are particularly so, being shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace. The words may with the greatest propriety, and in agreement

with the context, be understood of that angel, or set of Gospel ministers in the latter day, represented as flying in the midst of the heavens, having the everlasting Gospel to preach to all nations, which will precede the fall of Babylon, (~~6946~~ Revelation 14:6,8):

that publisheth peace; peace by the blood of Jesus Christ, a principal article of the Gospel, and of its good news; hence it is called the Gospel of peace, and the word of reconciliation; peace of conscience, which flows from the same blood applied, and of which the Gospel is the means; and peace among the saints one with another, and among men, which shall at this time be enjoyed; there, will be no discord nor animosities among themselves, nor persecution from their enemies: happy times! halcyon days! welcome the publishers of such tidings!

that bringeth good tidings of good; or, “that bringeth good tidings”^{f1029}; for the original does not require such a tautology; it means the same good tidings as before, and which follow after:

that publisheth salvation; by Jesus Christ, as wrought out by him for sinners, which is full, complete, and suitable for them, and to be had of him freely; and what better tidings than this? (see ~~6906~~ Revelation 19:1):

that sitteth unto Zion, thy God reigneth; that saith to Zion, the church of Christ, that Christ, who is truly God, and their God, has taken to himself, in a more open and visible manner, his great power and reigns as the Lord God omnipotent; and this is good news and glad tidings; (see ~~4970~~ Psalm 97:1 ~~6946~~ Revelation 19:6 11:15,17). The Targum is,

“the kingdom of thy God is revealed;”

(see ~~4182~~ Matthew 3:2). This passage is interpreted of the Messiah and his times, by many Jewish^{f1030} writers, ancient and modern; (See Gill on “~~6105~~ Romans 10:15”).

Ver. 8. *The watchmen shall lift up the voice*, &c.] Not the Levites in the temple, nor the prophets of the Old Testament; rather the evangelists and apostles of Christ; best of all Gospel ministers in the latter day, so called in allusion to watch men on the walls of cities looking out, and giving notice of approaching danger; (see ~~2946~~ Isaiah 62:6,7). The words may be rendered, “the voice of the watchmen; they shall lift up the voice; together shall they sing”; that is, this is the voice of the watchmen, namely, the voice of peace and salvation, which the bringer of good tidings, the same with these

watchmen, publish. “Lifting up” their “voice” denotes the publicness of their ministrations, the vehemency of them, and their importance; “singing together”, their joy and cheerfulness, their harmony and unity.

For they shall see eye to eye; most clearly, Zion’s King reigning before his ancients gloriously; the great doctrines of peace and salvation published by them; and the great and wonderful things God will do for his church, in fulfilling prophecies relating thereunto. So the Targum,

“for with their eyes they shall see the great things which the Lord will do;”

and as their light and discerning will be most clear, like the light of seven days, so it will be alike in them; their sentiments and doctrines will exactly agree; there will be no difference nor dissension among them:

when the Lord shall bring again Zion: return his church and people to their former state, from whence they were declined; restore them as at the beginning; revive his work among them; cause his Gospel and ordinances to be professed and observed in their purity; call in his ancient people the Jews, and bring in the fulness of the Gentiles; pour out his spirit in a plentiful manner on them, and grant his gracious presence to them; so the Targum,

“when he shall return his Shechinah or divine Majesty to Zion.”

This text is by the Jews^{f1031} applied to the times of the Messiah, and to the resurrection of the dead^{f1032}.

Ver. 9. *Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem, &c.*] This is what the watchmen shall say when they lift up their voice; this will be one part of their song, and the intent of it; to observe to the members of the churches, which shall be constituted in those parts which were formerly barren and desolate, what wonderful things the Lord has done in bringing again Zion; in building up the ruins of it; in the clear light of the Gospel he has caused to break forth, and in the good tidings of peace and salvation published; on account of all which they are called upon to express the greatest joy in a social manner, with the utmost unanimity, as having everyone a concern therein:

for the Lord hath comforted his people; with his divine presence, and the light of his countenance; with the discoveries of his love; with the joys of

his salvation by Christ; with the comforts of his Spirit; with the doctrines of the Gospel, and the exceeding great and precious promises of it; with the ordinances of his house, those breasts of consolation; and by enlarging his kingdom and interest with the conversion of Jews and Gentiles; and particularly by the donation and application of the various blessings of grace through Christ, and especially that which follows:

he hath redeemed Jerusalem; the same with his people, particularly the Jews, now converted; who will have the blessing of redemption, obtained by the Messiah, made known and applied unto them; which will be matter of comfort to them: as it is to all sensible sinners, who see themselves lost and undone; liable to the wrath of God, and curses of the law; under a sentence of condemnation; the captives of sin and Satan, and prisoners of law and justice; unable to redeem themselves, or any creature capable of giving a ransom for them.

Ver. 10. *The Lord hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations*, &c.] Revealed his Gospel, which is a system of holy doctrines, and is the power of God unto salvation, openly, in the sight of all men, and given it a general spread all the world over; and with it has exerted his almighty power, in the marvellous conversion of multitudes of souls everywhere, in which his holiness, as well as his power, is displayed: or else Christ is here meant, who is the power of God; by whom he has made the world, and upholds it; by whom he has redeemed his people, and saved them; and by whom he keeps and preserves them; and by whom he will raise them from the dead at the last day; and who is holy in his nature, and in his works: this arm of his was made bare or revealed at his incarnation; is evidently seen in his word and ordinances; and will be more clearly revealed therein in the latter day, as he will be most fully manifested in person at the last day, even in the eyes of the whole world. The allusion is to military persons preparing for battle, especially in the eastern countries, where they wore loose and long garments, which they tucked up on their arms, that they might be more expeditious in it, and so in any other service. Scanderbeg used to fight the Turks with his arm bare, as the writer of his life observes.

And all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God; the salvation which Christ, God manifest in the flesh, has wrought out: the people of God, in the several parts of the world, shall see their need of this salvation; the suitableness of it to them; the necessity of going to Christ for

it; their interest in it; and shall partake of the blessings of it: or Christ himself is meant, the Saviour of God's providing, sending, and giving; of whom multitudes, in the several parts of the world, shall have a spiritual sight, by faith, in the latter day; and all shall have a corporeal sight of him, when he comes in person, or appears a second time, without sin unto salvation.

Ver. 11. *Depart ye, depart ye, &c.*] Not from Jerusalem, as some, for that is now said to be redeemed, and its waste places made joyful; but Babylon, even mystical Babylon. The Targum is, "be ye separated, be ye separated": and so the apostle, (~~4067~~ 2 Corinthians 6:17). It denotes a separation from the idolatrous church of Rome; and the exhortation is repeated, to hasten the thing, to urge the necessity of it, and point at the danger of delaying it; and it may be it may respect a two fold separation, one that has been already at the time of the Reformation, and another that will be just before the destruction of Babylon, (~~6804~~ Revelation 18:4):

go ye out from thence: not only protest against the false doctrines, idolatries, and superstitions of that apostate church, but entirely relinquish her communion:

touch no unclean thing; have no fellowship with her in any of her unclean and idolatrous actions, and bring none of her abominations along with you. It was the fault of the first reformers from Popery, that they brought so many of the impurities of the church of Rome along with them, which are retained to this day; in this last separation, care is to be taken, and will be taken, that those that come out keep clear of all her defilements; (see ~~6444~~ Revelation 14:4,5):

go ye out of the midst of her; which signifies much the same as before, and is repeated again and again, to show the importance of it:

be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord; not the vessels of the Lord's sanctuary, as the Targum, restored by Cyrus to the Jews, at their return from the Babylonish captivity, (~~15007~~ Ezra 1:7,8), and so Jarchi interprets it of the priests and Levites that bore the vessels of the Lord in the wilderness; but Kimchi of the mercies and kindnesses of the Lord; Aben Ezra of the law: but it may much better be understood of the ministers of the Gospel, and of the treasure of the Gospel which they have in their earthen vessels; or the name of the Lord, which they are chosen vessels to bear and carry in the world; who ought to be pure from false doctrine, superstitious worship,

and an evil conversation: though it may be applied to every Christian, since all true believers are priests under the Gospel dispensation; and as they bear the whole armour of God, and it is their duty to attend all the ordinances of the Gospel, they ought to have their conversation as becomes it. In Zohar^{f1033}, these vessels are interpreted of the righteous, brought as a gift to the King Messiah.

Ver. 12. *For ye shall not go out with haste, nor go by flight, &c.*] As persons afraid of their enemies, of being pursued, overtaken, and detained by them; privily or by stealth, like fugitives, as the Oriental versions render it; in like manner as the Israelites went out of Egypt: but it signifies, that they should go out openly, boldly, quietly, and safely, and without fear of their enemies; yea, their enemies rather being afraid of them. So the witnesses, when they shall rise, will ascend to heaven in the sight of their enemies; which will be followed with a great slaughter of some, and the terror of others, ([¶]Revelation 11:12,13):

for the Lord will go before you, and the God of Israel will be your rearward; the Lord will be their Captain, and will lead the van, so that they shall follow in order, and without any tumult or fear; and though they shall make all necessary dispatch, yet no more haste than good speed; the Lord, going before, will check all tumultuous and disorderly motions; and he also will bring up the rear, so that they shall be in no fear of the enemy attacking them behind, and where generally the weaker and more feeble part are; but the Lord will be gathering them up, or closing them, as the word^{f1034} signifies; so that they shall be in the utmost safety, and march out of Babylon with the greatest ease and freedom, without any molestation or disturbance. The allusion may be to the Lord's going before, and sometimes behind Israel, in a pillar of fire and cloud by night and day, as they passed through the wilderness.

Ver. 13. *Behold, my servant shall deal prudently, &c.*] Here properly a new chapter should begin, these three last verses treating of the same person and subject as the following chapter; even of Christ, his person, offices, humiliation, and exaltation, and the effects and fruits thereof; for of him undoubtedly the whole is to be understood. The Jews say it is a difficult prophecy; and so it is to them, being contrary to their notions and schemes, or otherwise it is plain and easy, respecting the Messiah; but rather than he should be thought to be meant, the modern ones have invented a variety of interpretations. Some apply this prophecy to

Abraham; others to Moses; others to Ezra; others to Zerubbabel; and others to any righteous person: the more principal and prevailing opinions among them are, that it is to be understood either of the whole body of the people of Israel in captivity, as Jarchi, Aben Ezra, and Kimchi; or of King Josiah, slain by Pharaohnecho, as Abarbinel; or of Jeremiah, as Saadiah Gaon; all which are weak and impertinent, and, as they disagree with each other, show the perplexity they are under^{f1035}. The Targum interprets it of the Messiah; and so did the ancient Rabbins, as Aben Ezra and Alshech confess; and several parts of the prophecy are applied to him, both by ancient and modern ones, as will be seen in the exposition of it. Christ, as man and Mediator, is the servant of God, of his choosing and calling, sending, bringing forth, and supporting; (see ^{<2301>}Isaiah 42:1), from whom he had both his work and his wages: the principal part of his service lay in working out the redemption and salvation of his people, in which he willingly and cheerfully engaged, and which he diligently and faithfully performed; in which he showed a regard to his Father's will, love to his people, and great condescension, as well as wisdom; for, as it is here promised he would, so he did deal "prudently": as in his infancy, when he disputed with the doctors in the temple, so throughout the whole of his public life, in preaching the Gospel, in answering the questions of his enemies, and in his behaviour at his apprehension, arraignment, condemnation, and crucifixion: or "he shall cause to understand"^{f1036}; make others wise and prudent; he caused them to understand his Father's mind and will, the Scriptures, and the Gospel in them; he made men wise unto salvation, and instructed in those things which belong to their peace; and he still does by his spirit, through the ministry of the word: or "he shall prosper"^{f1037}; the pleasure of the Lord prospered in his hands; he rode forth prosperously, destroying his and our enemies was very successful in working out salvation, as he is in his advocacy and intercession for his people, and in the ministration of his Gospel; and is the author of all prosperity in his churches, and to particular believers. The Targum is,

"behold, my servant the Messiah shall prosper;"

and so another Jewish writer says^{f1038}, that the section which begins with these words is concerning the Messiah:

he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high; as he has been exalted by his Father, by raising him from the dead, and giving him glory; by placing him at his own right hand, and giving him all power in heaven and

in earth; by committing all judgment into his hands, that all men may honour him as they do the Father: and he is “extolled” by his people, in his person and offices, by giving him the glory of their salvation, in their hearts, thoughts, and affections, with their mouths and lips; and so he is in his house and ordinances, by his ministers and churches: and is made “very high”; higher than the kings of the earth; higher than the angels of heaven; higher than the heavens themselves. The Jews^{f1039} say of the Messiah, in reference to these words, that he is exalted above Abraham, extolled above Moses, and made higher than the ministering angels; and in another ancient book^{f1040} of theirs it is said, the kingdom of Israel shall be exalted in the days of the Messiah, as it is written,

he shall be exalted and extolled, &c.

Ver. 14. *As many were astonished at thee, &c.*] Not so much at the miracles he wrought, the doctrines he taught, and the work he did; or at his greatness and glory, at his exaltation and dignity, though very wonderful; as at his humiliation, the mean appearance he made, the low estate he was brought into; the sufferings and death which he underwent. These words are placed between the account of his exaltation and humiliation, and may be thought to have respect to both; and indeed it is astonishing that one so great as he was, and is, should become so low as he did; and also that one that was brought so low should be raised so high:

his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men; though fairer than the children of men, as he was the immediate workmanship of the divine Spirit, and without sin; yet, what with his griefs and sorrows he bore, and troubles he met with; what with watchings and fastings, with laborious preaching, and constant travelling about to do good; what with sweat and blood, with buffetings and scourgings, never was any man’s face more marred, or his form more altered, than his was.

Ver. 15. *So shall he sprinkle many nations, &c.*] This is not to be understood of water baptism, for though this has been administered in many nations, yet not by Christ, nor done by sprinkling; rather of the grace of the Spirit, which is expressed by water, and its application by sprinkling, and is of a cleansing and sanctifying nature, and which Gentiles are made partakers of; but better of the blood of Christ, called the blood of sprinkling, by which the conscience is purged from dead works, and the heart from an evil conscience, and by which multitudes of many nations are

justified and sanctified; though it seems best of all to interpret it of the doctrine of Christ, which is compared to rain and dew, and is dropped, distilled, and sprinkled, and falls gently upon the souls of men, and has been published in many nations, with good effect and success. So Kimchi and Ben Melech say the phrase is expressive of speaking. This passage is applied to the Messiah by a Jewish writer^{f1041}. The Targum is,

“he will scatter many people;”

and Aben Ezra interprets it of pouring out their blood and taking vengeance on them.

The kings shall shut their mouths at him; astonished at the glories and excellencies of his person and office, as outshining theirs; at his wonderful works of grace and salvation, and as having nothing to object to his doctrines; and if they do not profess them, yet dare not blaspheme them. It seems to denote a reverent attention to them, and a subjection to Christ and his ordinances; and must be understood of their subjects as well as of themselves.

For that which had not been told them shall they see, and that which they had not heard shall they consider; or “understand”^{f1042}; this is applied to Christ and his Gospel, in the times of the apostles, (~~cf~~ Romans 15:20,21). The Gentiles had not the oracles of God committed to them; could not be told the things of the Gospel, and what relate to Christ, by their oracles, or by their philosophers; nor could they be come at by the light of nature, or by carnal reason; such as the doctrines of a trinity of Persons in the Godhead; of the deity, sonship, and incarnation of Christ; of salvation by him; of justification by his righteousness, pardon by his blood, and atonement by his sacrifice; of the resurrection of the dead, and eternal life: but now Christ and his Gospel are seen and understood by spiritual men; who, besides having a revelation given them, and the Gospel preached unto them, have their eyes opened, and indeed new eyes and understandings given them; so that they have a sight of Christ, of the glory, beauty, and fulness of his person by faith, through the glass of the word, so as to approve of him, appropriate him, and become like unto him; and of his Gospel, and the doctrines of it, so as to like and esteem them, believe them, distinguish them, and look upon them with wonder and pleasure.